THE CULTURAL ACCOMMODATION DIMENSION OF THE MANCHU MUSICAL IDENTITY IN NORTHEASTERN CHINA

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BY

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HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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The objective of this research is to study the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China and analyze its cultural accommodation dimension through historical documentation, fieldwork in Manchu autonomous regions, and interdisciplinary approaches integrating musicology, ethnology, and cultural studies. This encompasses examining structural characteristics such as pentatonic scales, shamanic drum rhythms like "Lao Sandian," and instruments including the octagonal drum and waist bells, alongside cultural functions in rituals and communal cohesion. The research also traces historical adaptation from ancient Sushen hunting chants to Qing dynasty court music and modern transformations, interethnic fusion with Han, Mongolian, and Korean traditions, and contemporary heritage transmission challenges. It was discovered that Manchu musical identity persists through a balance of indigenous elements, such as ritual drumming and narrative folk songs, with adaptive innovations like the integration of Han pentatonic scales and Mongolian instrumental techniques. Cultural accommodation enhances ethnic identity through four evolutionary phases: primitive integration, formative fusion, imperial synthesis, and modern revival-enabling resilience against assimilation pressures. Modern challenges, including urbanization, Manchu language decline, and fading transmission, are countered by digital archiving, community workshops, and educational initiatives in regions like Xinbin and Sanjiazi Village. Ultimately, cultural accommodation functions as a vital mechanism for musical survival, allowing Manchu traditions to enrich Northeastern China's multicultural tapestry while maintaining core spiritual symbolism and ethnic distinctiveness through dynamic interaction with external influences. These findings underscore music's role in negotiating continuity and innovation within China's intangible cultural heritage framework.

Keyword : Manchu music, Northeastern China, musical identity, cultural accommodation, pentatonic scales, shamanic drum rhythms, interethnic fusion, heritage transmission

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This thesis modestly contributes to preserving cultural diversity in a homogenizing world. While its content is my responsibility, it is the collective effort of mentors, participants, and loved ones that made it possible. May this work honor Manchu music's legacy and inspire future stewardship of global ethnomusicological heritage.

ZHAO CHONGLEI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Northeastern China, a region historically characterized by its “White Mountains and Black Waters,” has long served as a crucible of cultural interaction, where nomadic, agrarian, and fishing hunting civilizations have converged for millennia. At the heart of this dynamic cultural landscape lies Manchu music, a vital component of the ethnic identity and historical heritage of the Manchu people, one of China’s largest ethnic minorities. Rooted in ancient shamanic traditions, hunting chants, and folk practices, Manchu music in Northeastern China embodies a unique blend of spiritual symbolism, narrative expressiveness, and regional aesthetics. Yet, against the backdrop of globalization and rapid modernization, this rich musical heritage faces challenges: traditional practices are increasingly marginalized, oral traditions are fading, and the interplay between Manchu music and broader cultural shifts remains under explored.(Wen, 2019)

The Manchu people, tracing their origins to the Sushen, Mohe, and Jurchen tribes, have a long history of adapting to environmental and societal changes. (Zuodong, 2018, pp. 18-19) Their music, evolving through periods of the Bohai, Jin, and Qing dynasties, has absorbed influences from Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other ethnic traditions, forming a distinct musical identity that reflects both continuity and syncretism. However, scholarly attention has often focused on isolated aspects such as shamanic rituals or historical fragments, leaving gaps in understanding the holistic framework of how Manchu music has accommodated cultural changes while maintaining its ethnic essence. Key questions remain: How have historical migrations, political regimes, and interethnic interactions shaped the musical characteristics and forms of Manchu music in Northeastern China. What roles has cultural accommodation defined as the dynamic process of blending, adapting, and reinterpreting cultural elements played in preserving or transforming its identity.

Existing literature on Northeastern music highlights the region's diverse folk traditions, including the impact of Manchu shamanic music on genres like Errenzhuan and Dongbei Dagu. Yet, few studies systematically analyze the "cultural accommodation dimension" of Manchu musical identity. Previous research has emphasized descriptive accounts of instruments, melodies, or rituals, but a comprehensive exploration of how cultural accommodation has influenced musical structure, functional evolution, and interethnic fusion remains lacking. This gap is particularly evident in understanding how Manchu music has interacted with Han Chinese and other ethnic musical systems, especially during critical historical junctures such as the Qing dynasty's integration of Han culture and the modern era's cultural policies.

The study of Manchu musical identity in the context of cultural accommodation is urgent for several reasons. Firstly, as intangible cultural heritage, Manchu music carries symbolic value for ethnic identity and regional pride, but its survival is threatened by declining transmission and urbanization. Secondly, the Northeastern region's unique position as a crossroads of civilizations offers a rich case study for examining how minority music adapts in multicultural environments. Lastly, the interplay between tradition and modernity in Manchu music provides insights into broader debates on cultural preservation and innovation in contemporary China.

Against this backdrop, the present research aims to address two core objectives: 1) to delineate the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China, focusing on its stylistic characteristics, structural forms, instrumental traditions, and shamanic cultural roles; and 2) to analyze the dimension of cultural accommodation, exploring historical trajectories, developmental phases, interethnic musical integration, and heritage transmission. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to uncover how Manchu music has negotiated between preserving ancestral traditions and incorporating external influences, from the primitive Sushen era to modern multicultural contexts.

The research framework integrates historical documentation, fieldwork in Manchu autonomous regions, and interdisciplinary analysis, drawing on musicology, ethnology, and cultural studies. It navigates through the historical overview of Manchu music, from its embryonic forms in ancient hunting chants to its peak during the Qing dynasty and examines how cultural accommodation has shaped its melodic structures, instrumental ensembles, and ritual functions. By contextualizing Manchu music within the broader Northeastern cultural landscape, the study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of minority music's resilience and adaptive strategies in the face of cultural change. Ultimately, this research not only enriches the scholarly discourse on Manchu cultural heritage but also offers practical insights for preserving and promoting ethnic musical traditions in an increasingly interconnected world.

The objective of the study.

1. To study the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

2. To analyze the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Significance of the study

The study of "The Cultural Accommodation Dimension of the Manchu Musical Identity in Northeastern China" holds profound theoretical and practical significance, addressing critical gaps in understanding the dynamic interplay between ethnic musical traditions and cultural adaptation in a historically complex region. By examining the musical identity of Manchu music and its cultural accommodation in Northeastern China, the research contributes to both academic discourse and real world cultural preservation, offering insights into how minority cultures negotiate continuity and change in a globalized era.

Theoretically, this study enriches the field of ethnomusicology by unpacking the unique musical identity of the Manchus, a historically dominant ethnic group in Northeastern China whose cultural legacy has been shaped by centuries of interaction with Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other regional cultures. By analyzing musical

elements such as melodic structures, instrumental traditions, and ritual practices (as outlined in the thesis's focus on shamanic music and folk song genres), the research reveals how Manchu music has retained its ethnic distinctiveness while absorbing external influences. For example, the integration of Han pentatonic scales into traditional Manchu labor chants or the adaptation of Mongolian instrumental techniques into shamanic rituals demonstrates the fluidity of cultural boundaries in musical expression. This nuanced understanding of "cultural accommodation" is a process of reciprocal influence rather than one way assimilation adds depth to theories of interethnic cultural exchange, particularly in how musical practices serve as both carriers and symbols of ethnic identity.

Practically, the study addresses urgent challenges facing the preservation of Manchu musical heritage. As highlighted in the thesis, modernization and urbanization have marginalized traditional Manchu music, with fewer inheritors and eroding linguistic and ritual contexts. By identifying the core components of Manchu musical identity such as the role of shamanic drums in spiritual practices or the narrative functions of folk songs the research provides a foundational framework for developing targeted conservation strategies. These insights can inform policy initiatives, educational programs, and community led initiatives aimed at revitalizing endangered traditions. For instance, understanding the cultural significance of instruments like the octagonal drum (bajiao gu) or the spiritual role of waist bells (yaoling) can guide the design of immersive cultural experiences or digital preservation projects, ensuring that these practices remain relevant to younger generations.

Culturally, the research underscores the importance of Manchu music as a vital component of China's pluralistic cultural tapestry. Northeastern China, as a historical crossroads of nomadic, agrarian, and fishing hunting civilizations, has fostered a unique musical hybridity that reflects the region's diverse ethnic interactions. By documenting how Manchu music has adapted to changing social and cultural landscapes from imperial court rituals to modern folk performances the study reinforces the value of minority cultures in sustaining regional and national identity. This is particularly relevant

in contemporary China, where policies emphasize the protection of intangible cultural heritage and the promotion of ethnic unity. The research's focus on cultural accommodation also offers a model for other minority groups facing similar challenges, illustrating how musical traditions can serve as bridges between heritage and modernity.

Moreover, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how music functions as a marker of ethnic resilience. Despite historical disruptions such as the decline of the Manchu language or the impact of political movements the persistence of musical practices like shamanic chants or labor songs demonstrates the enduring power of sound to preserve collective memory. By examining the "cultural accommodation dimension," the research reveals not just the survival but the adaptive evolution of Manchu music, highlighting its capacity to absorb new influences while maintaining core symbolic meanings. This perspective is crucial for appreciating the complexity of ethnic identities in multicultural societies, where musical traditions act as dynamic repositories of history, spirituality, and social cohesion.

In sum, this study transcends narrow disciplinary boundaries, offering insights that resonate across musicology, cultural anthropology, and heritage studies. By situating Manchu musical identity within the framework of cultural accommodation, it not only deepens our understanding of a specific ethnic tradition but also provides a lens for analyzing how minority cultures navigate the tensions between preservation and innovation in an interconnected world. In doing so, it underscores the vital role of music as both a subject of scholarly inquiry and a living, evolving component of human cultural diversity.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study will be researched and organized through three areas: geographical scope, content scope, and cultural scope.

Geographic Scope: The geographic scope of this study is centered on Northeastern China, specifically the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang. These regions are chosen due to their status as the historical heartland of Manchu civilization and the enduring legacy of Manchu musical traditions. Northeastern China serves as the

cradle of Manchu culture, where the ethnic group's historical roots traceable to ancient Sushen, Mohe, and Jurchen tribes are most deeply embedded. Key areas of investigation include Manchu autonomous counties and townships, such as Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County (Liaoning), Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous County (Liaoning), Yitong Manchu Autonomous County (Jilin), and rural settlements in Heilongjiang's Sanjiazi Village and Sunwu County. These locations are vital because they preserve intact shamanic rituals, folk song traditions, and instrumental practices that form the core of Manchu musical identity. For example, Xinbin, as the birthplace of the Qing Dynasty, retains imperial and folk musical practices, while Sanjiazi Village is a rare repository of Manchu language and ritual music. The region's significance lies in its role as a living laboratory for observing how Manchu music has adapted to historical shifts from ancient hunting fishing societies to modern multicultural contexts against the backdrop of its native environment. Fieldwork in these areas involves documenting oral traditions, interviewing elder inheritors, and analyzing how geographical and ecological factors (e.g., mountainous landscapes of Changbai Mountain, river basins of the Songhua and Liao Rivers) have shaped musical expressions like labor chants and shamanic drum rhythms.

Content Scope: The content scope encompasses the multifaceted dimensions of Manchu musical identity and its cultural accommodation in Northeastern China. It begins with an exploration of the musical characteristics of Manchu traditions, including

Folk Song Genres: Labor songs (e.g., Pao Nanhai), ritual chants (e.g., shamanic Shenge), love songs (Qingchunge), and children's rhymes, analyzing their melodic structures (pentatonic scales, modal preferences), rhythmic patterns (e.g., "old three beats"), and lyrical themes (hunting, spirituality, daily life).

Instrumental Traditions: Shamanic instruments (e.g., Yimuqin frame drum, waist bells Yaoling), traditional tools (e.g., octagonal drum Bajiao Gu), and adapted instruments (e.g., Manchu Sanxian, influenced by Han three string lutes), examining their construction, performance techniques, and symbolic roles in rituals and folk performances.

Musical Forms: Structural analysis of solo, antiphonal, and ensemble formats, including the role of call and response in labor chants and the integration of dance with music in Mangshi performances.

Shamanic Culture: The central role of music in shamanic rituals, such as deity invocation, spirit possession, and ancestral worship, exploring how drum rhythms and vocal incantations create sacred soundscapes.

The study also delves into cultural accommodation by examining historical and contemporary interactions:

Ethnic Integration: Fusion with Han music (e.g., Northeast drum Dongbeidagu, Errenzhuan), Mongolian long song influences, and Korean instrumental techniques, analyzing how these interactions have shaped melodic modes and performance practices.

Historical Adaptation: Evolution from ancient Sushen "stomping rhythms" to Qing court music and modern transformations in response to globalization (e.g., digital preservation, fusion with pop music).

Heritage Transmission: Challenges in inheriting endangered traditions (e.g., language loss, aging inheritors) and innovative strategies (e.g., community workshops, school-based education in Xinbin and Yitong).

Cultural Scope: The cultural scope focuses on the dynamic processes of cultural accommodation that have defined Manchu musical identity in Northeastern China. This includes:

Interethnic Dialogue: The reciprocal influence between Manchu music and Han, Mongolian, and Korean cultures, such as the adoption of Han pentatonic scales in Manchu folk songs while preserving "riding and shooting" martial rhythms, or the integration of Manchu shamanic drums into Han folk dances like Yangge.

Symbolic Adaptation: How musical elements serve as cultural markers, such as the octagonal drum symbolizing the Eight Banners system or waist bells embodying shamanic cosmic beliefs, illustrating how instruments and rhythms encode ethnic history and social structure.

Modernization and Identity: The negotiation between tradition and modernity, including the role of media (e.g., Douyin short videos) in reviving folk songs, the incorporation of electronic elements into shamanic music, and the use of musical performances in cultural tourism (e.g., Wula Manchu Town's immersive rituals).

Spiritual and Social Functions: The enduring role of music in rituals (e.g., Bei Deng night ceremonies for star worship) and community cohesion, revealing how musical practices sustain spiritual beliefs and social bonds amid cultural change.

By examining these three scopes, the study situates Manchu musical identity as a product of its geographic homeland, a repository of diverse cultural contents, and a dynamic participant in interethnic and historical dialogues. This framework ensures a comprehensive understanding of how music both reflects and shapes Manchu cultural accommodation in Northeastern China, from micro level instrumental techniques to macro level historical and social transformations.

Definition of Terms

1. Manchu musical identity: Manchu musical identity refers to expressing and maintaining ethnic identity through music, encompassing traditional preservation, innovative development, and multicultural adaptation. It faces challenges from modernity and multiculturalism, serving as a key carrier of ethnic cultural identity e.g., Xinbin County strengthens Manchu identity through court and religious music, while "ChaoziHui" music in Fengning reflects dynamic ethnic interactions.

2. Accommodation of Manchu culture: Manchu cultural accommodation involves integrating with socialist culture, modernizing values, and intermingling with Han culture. It adapts traditions like dance and folk crafts to new social contexts, such as creating socialist themed works, while urbanization poses identity challenges. Historical examples include Manchu influence on Beijing's language and festivals, demonstrating a dynamic process of preservation and innovation.

3. Northeast Errenzhuan: Northeast Errenzhuan is a 300-year-old folk art blending Yangge, folk songs, and genres like Lianhualuo, featuring vibrant local characteristics. Originating from daily labor and social gatherings, it evolved into a rich

performance form with songs and dances, deeply rooted in northeastern folk culture, as seen in the saying "Better to skip a meal than miss Errenzhuan.

4. Northeast drums: Northeast drums, originating in late Qing Shenyang (Fengtianfu), are a rap form with Xiaosanxian and Jieziban accompaniment, blending Beijing Opera and folk song styles. Focusing on opera and legend narratives, they feature smooth melodies and strong expressiveness, becoming a popular art form in northeastern China.

5. Manchu music: Manchu music, rooted in hunting and shamanism, includes folk songs, dance music, and rap, sung in Manchu, Chinese, or a blend. Genres like love songs ("Qingchunge") and shamanic dances ("Mang style") reflect daily life and rituals, with unique instruments like Dangu and Taigu used in sacred activities.

6. Shamanic music: Shamanic music combines song, dance, and ritual, using instruments like sacred drums and waist bells as tools for communicating with gods. Its raw, rhythmic sounds are central to shamanic ceremonies, preserving spiritual beliefs through generations despite historical upheavals, with cultural significance distinct from non-Shamanic musical traditions.

7. Imchin (Zhuagu): The imchin, a key Manchu shamanic drum, symbolizes the shaman's spiritual connection and is used in rituals for seance and possession. Believed to carry shamans across rivers or enable flight in folklore, it is a central instrument in both court and folk shamanic practices, embodying supernatural symbolism.

8. Dangu (Taiping drum): The dangu is a single sided grip drum popular in Manchu Han mixed areas, used with waist bells in exorcism and spirit invocation rituals. Also called "one sided drum," it features intense, chaotic rhythms in ceremonies like the "running of the Heavenly Gate," spreading widely in northeastern China.

9. Waist bell (Xisha): Waist bells (Xisha) are copper, spherical instruments worn by Manchu, Mongolian, and other ethnic groups, producing clanging sounds in shamanic dances. Tied to a wooden stick or belt, they accompany drum rhythms in rituals, enhancing the sacred soundscape and embodying shared musical traditions in northern China.

10. Tiehuang (Kouxianqin): The tiehuang is a multi-ethnic plucked instrument with diverse shapes (pincer, pear), played solo or in ensembles for weddings and shamanic accompaniment. Used by Manchu, Herzhe, and others, it produces a metallic sound via oral resonance, reflecting regional musical interactions and folk customs.

11. Octagonal drum: The octagonal drum is a small, single sided drum with eight sides, embedded with copper cymbals and silk spikes, used in folk performances. Played vertically with finger strikes, it emits clear tones, blending musical and aesthetic functions in traditional Chinese culture.

12. Harmali (ringing knife): Harmali, or "God knife," is a metal/wooden shamanic instrument with ringing rings, used to "frighten" spirits through sound in dances. Modern folk versions often lack functional sound, serving as props, but historically, its clatter was central to ritual symbolism and supernatural practices.

13. Clapperboard (Carki): Carki, a Manchu clapperboard from the Bohai period, consists of wooden boards linked by cords, struck for rhythm in shamanic and court performances. Used in both sacred rituals and folk, it evolved from simple percussion to a versatile instrument, with historical examples like the Qianlong era mahogany set.

14. Zorg: The zorg is a two-string plucked instrument in the Manchu tradition, similar to the Mongolian tobshuur and the Xinjiang dongbula. Easy to play, it reflects cross ethnic musical similarities in northern China, serving as a bridge between different regional instrumental traditions.

Scope of the Study Conceptual / Study Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is structured to explore the dual objectives of analyzing Manchu musical identity and its cultural accommodation in Northeastern China, guided by a logical sequence of theoretical analysis, research steps, and hypothesized relationships.

1. Research objectives and theoretical analysis:

Objective one: Study the musical identity of Manchu music in northeastern China.

Theoretical Focus: Musical identity is conceptualized as a composite of sonic elements (melodies, instruments, vocal styles) and cultural meanings (ritual functions, social practices, ethnic symbolism).

The study posits that Manchu musical identity is shaped by three interrelated domains:

Structural Features: Pentatonic scales, rhythmic patterns (e.g., "Lao San Dian" drumbeats), and unique instruments like the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) and waist bells (Yaoling), which encode hunting and shamanic traditions.

Cultural Functions: Music as a medium for spiritual communication (Shamanic rituals) and communal cohesion (wedding songs, labor chants), reflecting the Manchu's historical reliance on collective survival.

Symbolic Meanings: Instruments and melodies as markers of ethnic distinctiveness, even as they interact with external influences (e.g., Han Chinese instrumental techniques adapted in Manchu shamanic drums).

Objective two: Analyze the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music.

Theoretical Framework: Cultural accommodation is viewed as a dynamic process of borrowing, adapting, and integrating external cultural elements while maintaining core ethnic traditions.

Key dimensions include:

Historical Adaptation: From ancient Sushen hunting chants to Qing dynasty integration of Han court music, tracing how political and social changes shaped musical forms.

Inter-ethnic Fusion: Case studies of Manchu music's interaction with Han folk music (e.g., the influence of Eight Banners music on Northeast drum songs) and Mongolian instrumental traditions, leading to hybrid genres like Errenzhuan.

Modern Challenges: Responses to contemporary pressures (e.g., urbanization, digital media), such as the revival of shamanic rituals in cultural festivals or the use of modern instrumentation in traditional melodies.

2. Research Steps and Methodology

Data Collection: Combines documentary analysis (historical texts, ethnographic records) and fieldwork (interviews with Manchu musicians, observation of shamanic rituals in Heilongjiang and Liaoning) to gather qualitative data on musical practices and cultural narratives.

Thematic Analysis: Categorizes findings into musical identity components (structure, function, symbolism) and accommodation processes (historical phases, inter-ethnic interactions, modern adaptations), using comparative methods to identify patterns of continuity and change.

Theoretical Integration: Draws on theories of cultural hybridity, ethnic identity, and musical acculturation to interpret how Manchu music has evolved through dialogue with neighboring cultures.

3. Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China is sustained through a balance of indigenous elements (e.g., shamanic rhythms, traditional instruments) and adaptive innovations (e.g., Han influenced lyrical structures).

Hypothesis 2: Cultural accommodation enhances rather than erodes ethnic musical identity, as seen in the creation of new genres (e.g., Eight Banner Children's Music) that blend Manchu roots with external influences.

4. Expected Conclusions:

Musical Identity: Manchu music in Northeastern China is defined by its shamanic ritual roots, pentatonic melodic systems, and unique instrumental ensembles, which serve as markers of ethnic identity despite centuries of external contact.

Cultural Accommodation: Music has undergone four phases of adaptation primitive integration (Sushen era), formative fusion (Bohai and Jurchen periods), imperial synthesis (Qing dynasty), and modern revival each introducing new elements while retaining core symbolic practices (e.g., drum-based rituals).

Interdisciplinary Insight: Cultural accommodation acts as a vital mechanism for ethnic musical survival, enabling Manchu music to persist through dynamic interaction

with Han and other ethnic traditions, thereby enriching Northeastern China's cultural diversity.

5. Logical Flow and Variables:

Independent Variable: Cultural accommodation processes (historical interactions, inter-ethnic exchanges, societal changes).

Dependent Variable: Manchu musical identity (structural, functional, and symbolic components).

Mediating Factors: Ritual practices, instrumental adaptations, lyrical themes, and social contexts (e.g., festivals, court ceremonies, and modern education).

This framework provides a systematic lens to explore how cultural accommodation shape's ethnic musical identity, offering both theoretical contributions and practical insights for heritage preservation in multiethnic regions.

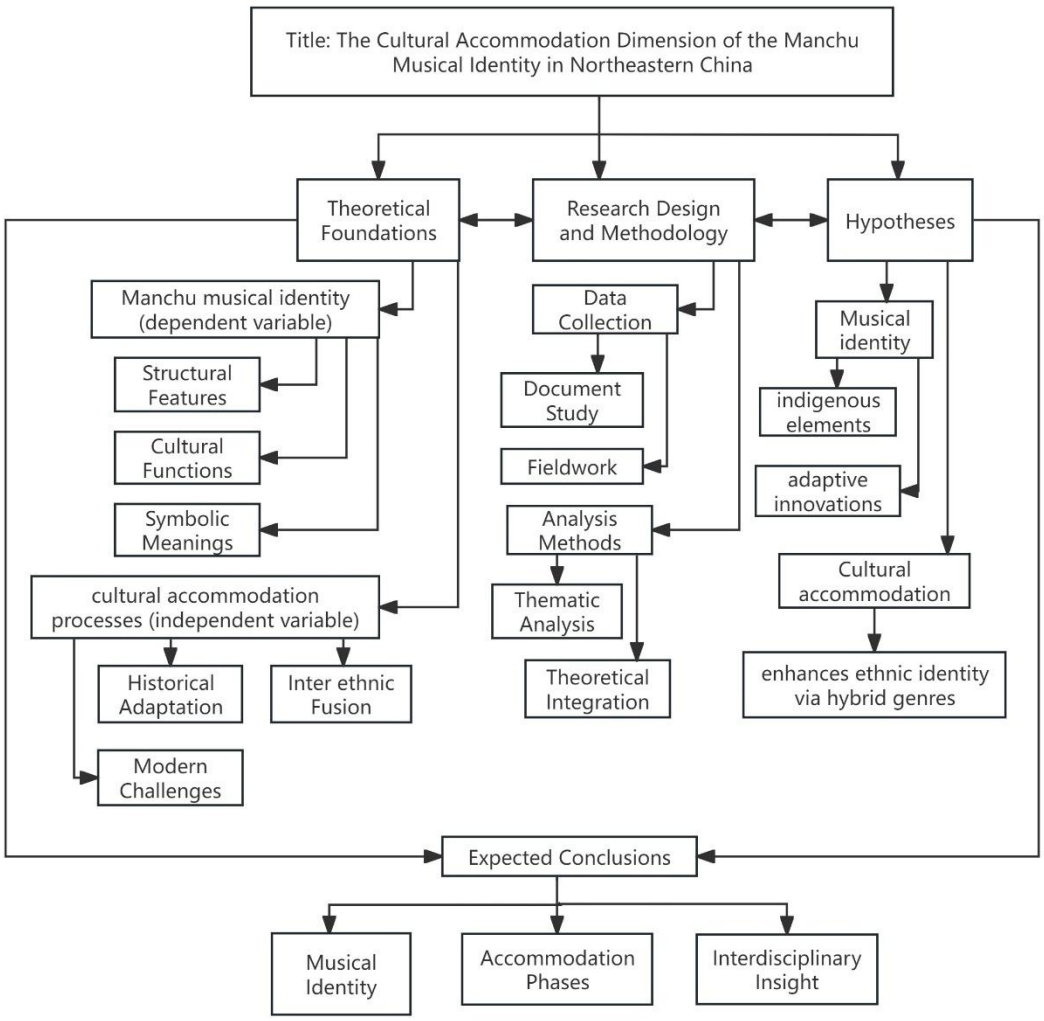

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

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CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study "The Cultural Accommodation Dimension of the Manchu Musical Identity in Northeastern China," the researchers used the China Knowledge Network (CNN), Wanfang Database, Baidu Academic, and other related research materials and results. Searching with "Manchu Music" as the keyword, a total of 357 related documents were retrieved, among which 78 documents were related to "Northeast Manchu Music." Examining this literature provided a conceptual basis for this study.

1. Northeastern China

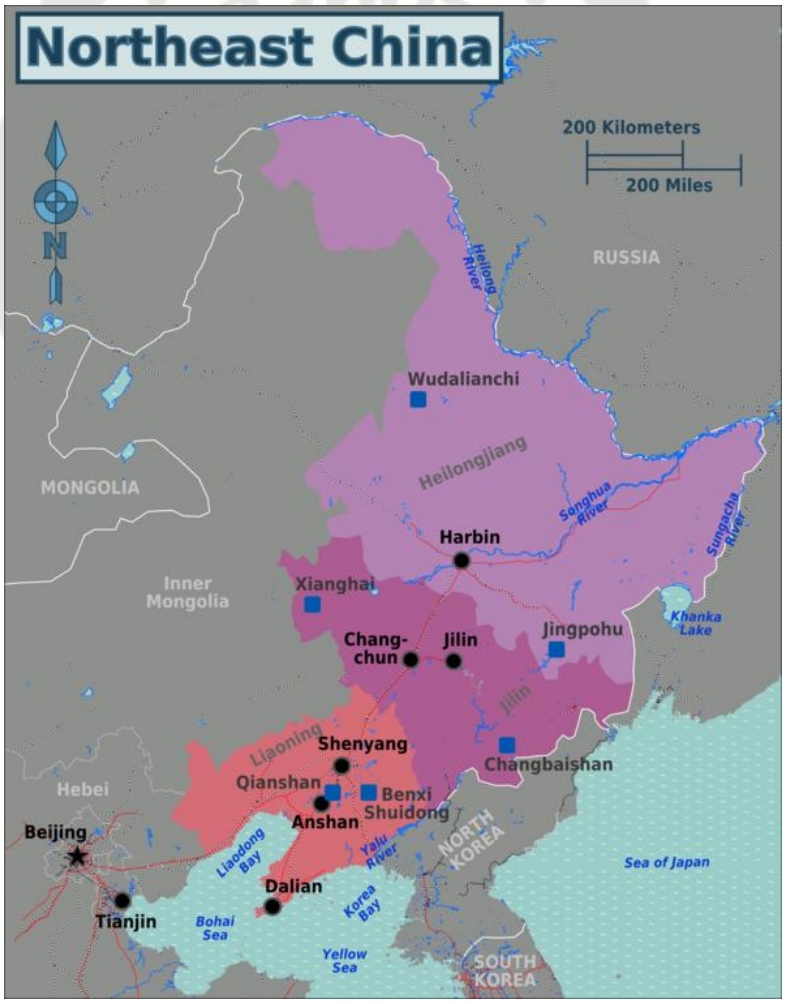


Figure 2 Three northeastern provinces

Image source is the URL: https://www.sohu.com/na/458412922_121069535

Baike (2024b) explains that the three northeastern provinces, also known as the "three eastern provinces" (two different concepts from the northeastern region), are the three provincial administrative regions in the northeastern region. The three northeastern provinces are divided into Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning Provinces, with a topographical distribution pattern of mountains surrounded by water, known as the "White Mountains and Black Waters." Compatriots of various nationalities, such as Khitans, Jurchen, Han Chinese, and Mongolians, have flourished here since ancient times, and there has been national unity and harmony. The three northeastern provinces are the window of China's opening to Northeast Asia, neighboring Russia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and other countries, each with its own strengths in terms of resources, markets, technology, and advanced management experience.

2. Northeastern Chinese Music

Liwei (2019, p. 195) explains that Northeastern China is a vast area, rich in resources, since the Qing Dynasty, Guannai Han immigrants "broke into the Guandong," migrated to the northeast to make a living, settled, and absorbed the essence of the Han Chinese, as well as Mongolia and other ethnic cultures, inter-ethnic cultural integration, and diversified coexistence; Northeastern China, as a frontier region of the motherland, shares a long border with Russia and North Korea on land. The sea separates it from South Korea and Japan by thousands of miles. The cross-border cultures of neighboring countries have also had a profound impact on the northeastern frontier. With the development of history, various ethnic groups mingled with each other, traded, exchanged cultures, and gradually formed a relatively independent regional civilization and northeastern regional culture. Northeast frontier ethnic music is an important part of the northeast regional culture, and the northeast regional culture of the same root and the same origin has an inseparable link.

Yi (2021, p. 1) explains that Chinese rap music has a long history and deep cultural heritage; there are different cultural forms in different regions, and we should not

neglect the inheritance of traditional Chinese culture while learning advanced culture. As one of the most representative folk arts in Northeastern China, the traditional rap music of Northeastern China deeply reflects the way of production and life of the people in Northeastern China and is a true reflection of the life of the people in Northeastern China. Northeast drum is an important part of the northeast traditional rap music; it has experienced more than three hundred years of history, is one of the most representative rap music in the northeast region of China, has very northeastern national characteristics, and has strong regional characteristics and research value. This study describes the formation, development, and maturity of the Northeast drums and offers constructive suggestions on the inheritance problems faced by the Northeast drums in a diverse musical culture. It is also hoped that through this paper's description and suggestions on the traditional rap music of the Northeast, it will make the people of China feel what kind of crisis the traditional Chinese music culture is facing and arouse the people's awareness of the protection and inheritance of the traditional Chinese culture.

Jiayin (2015, pp. 157-159) elaborates that Northeast Errenzhuan can be described as elegant and popular, and in its long history of development, it has created an excellent discipline for the treasury of human curiosity, especially its versatile performance style, eclectic musical characteristics, pungent and comical vernacular flavor, and witty and humorous narrative effect, which makes it a popular art form with the majority of the public. This paper comprehensively analyzes the achievements of Errenzhuan in terms of its musical expressiveness and, at the same time, warns about its worrying prospects.

Yuntian (2015, p. 1) explains that Oroqen songs are one of the earliest language arts produced in Oroqen history. Based on the language created by Oroqen ancestors, people create songs according to the needs of production and life. Primitive songs are closely related to the Oroqen's struggle for survival, either to express the desire to conquer nature, to reproduce the joyful exultation of hunting wild beasts, or to pray for the blessing of the God of all creation. Songs have also become an important part of Oroqen people's daily life. With the continuous development of Oroqen history,

class differentiation, and renewal of the social system, the aspects involved in Oroqen folk songs are more and more extensive, and their social role is more and more important. Oroqen songs have many social functions, such as regulating labor, exchanging experience, expressing love, adjudicating right and wrong, and entertaining the public.

Run (2016, p. 62) elaborated that the historical culture of the Hezhen ethnic group, which is mainly characterized by fishing and hunting culture, was gradually formed in the long process of historical development, which unfolded in parallel with the formation and development of the Hezhen ethnic group and influenced each other. With the progress and development of society, the protection, inheritance, and development of minority music culture have been put on a new agenda. Starting with the introduction of the formation and evolution of the traditional fishing and hunting culture of the Hezhen people, this paper describes the current situation of the traditional fishing and hunting culture and music life of the Hezhen people and explores the ways to protect the traditional music culture of the Hezhen people in the development.

Zhongyi (2021, pp. 79-80) explains that in the past, influenced by history, geography, humanities, and other factors, Hezhen music culture was little known; after the founding of the country, people began to pay attention to minority cultures and conduct thematic research; after the reform and opening up, the Hezhen folk songs set off a boom of innovation, and the organic fusion of national music and theater gave life to the inheritance and development of Hezhen music. Among them, shamanic music, as one of the traditional music arts of the Hezhen people, carries the Hezhen people's search for life, nature, and philosophy and has certain research value.

The three provinces of Northeastern China include Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang. Local history, geography, and ethnic composition deeply influence the music culture of this region. Northeastern China has a rich folk music tradition, which includes musical elements from many ethnic groups, such as Han, Manchu, and Korean. These musical forms usually have distinct local characteristics, beautiful melodies, brisk rhythms, and strong emotional expressions.

The music of the three northeastern provinces not only retains its traditional characteristics but also continues to incorporate modern elements to create new works with a sense of the times. Through various music festivals and seminars, musicians in the three northeastern provinces are committed to the creation and development of national instrumental music and exploring the path to the revitalization of national music in the new era. These activities not only enhance the artistic level of national music but also provide the public with opportunities to appreciate it and participate in it.

In summary, the music culture of the three northeastern provinces is in a period of active development and promotion. With the support of various cultural activities and institutions, Northeastern music is gradually moving toward a broader stage.

3. Music and its identity in the Manchu region of Northeastern China

Baike (2024a) explains that the Manchu are the second largest ethnic minority in China. According to the 2010 census of China, the population of the Manchu was 10,410,585,000, accounting for approximately 0.77 percent of China's population and 9.28 percent of the population of ethnic minorities. Among the provincial administrative regions, Liaoning and Hebei have Manchu populations of over one million, with Liaoning province having a Manchu population of 5,336,895,000, or 51.26% of the Manchu population and 12.20% of the population of Liaoning province, which is the main concentration of the Manchu population; Hebei Province has a Manchu population of 2,118,711, accounting for 20.35% of the province's Manchu population and 70.80% of the province's ethnic minority population. Jilin Province, Heilongjiang Province, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and Beijing City all have Manchu populations of more than 100,000 people; Tianjin, Henan, and 17 other provincial administrations have tens of thousands each; Anhui, Fujian, and seven other provincial administrations have hundreds of thousands each; and the Tibet Autonomous Region has the smallest population of Manchus, with only 153. In Liaoning, Hebei, Heilongjiang, and Beijing, the Manchus make up more than 50 percent of the local ethnic minorities; in Jilin, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Tianjin, Ningxia, Shaanxi, and Shanxi, the Manchus are

the second largest minority group, while in Henan, Shandong, and Anhui, the Manchus are the third largest minority group.

Bolin (2019, pp. 48-49) describes Manchu as short for Manchurians, with a total population of more than 10 million people, mainly in the provinces and cities of Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, and Beijing. While the urban diaspora primarily engages in industry and other occupations, over 80% of the Manchus are involved in agriculture. The Manchus have always been a singing and dancing people, and their folk music is colorful and has a long history.

Haixia (2019, p. 1) explains that Manchu folk songs are a form of singing formed in the natural and humanistic ecological environment of Northeastern China, with a strong ethnic rural flavor and local cultural characteristics. The content of the songs covers the production, life, and customs of the Manchu people and expresses their yearning for and pursuit of a better life. The songs are simple and unadorned; they are composed of unique Manchu tones, showing the sincere emotions of the Manchu people deeply rooted in their lives. These songs recorded the joys and sorrows of the Manchu people and thus developed a musical culture that accompanied their lives.

The paper by Zuodong (2018, p. 1) goes into more detail about how the research looks at Manchu folk songs from the Northeast region. It looks at the musical forms and singing styles of these songs by looking at how they have changed over time, doing in-depth field research, and reading other related music literature. Then, the protection and inheritance of contemporary Manchu folk songs are theoretically analyzed, and countermeasure suggestions are put forward.

Bina and Ying (2014, pp. 118-119) explained that all ethnic minorities in China have their own history of development and cultural background, and the dance music culture is also formed under different backgrounds; each ethnic group has its own diverse genres and musical characteristics, and the Manchu dance music has its own unique ethnic characteristics. A lot of information has been gathered and analyzed about the tonal mode, melodic characteristics, rhythmic beat, instrumental accompaniment, dance style, national image, and the use of decorative sounds in

Manchu folk dance music. A few important aspects of Manchu dance music have also been summed up.

Manchu culture deeply influences the music of the Northeast Manchu region, giving it distinct ethnic characteristics. The following aspects of Manchu music summarize its characteristics:

Melody characteristics: The melodies of Manchu folk songs are usually developed in the form of steps, repetitions, variations, and incomplete imitations. The melodic lines are wavy. In the melody, the main tone, the highest tone, and the lowest tone are often used in scattered and periodic positions. Manchu folk songs feature a melodic layout that is simple, concise, colorful, and easily embraced by the public.

Modal characteristics: The most common Manchu folk songs are those composed of pentatonic scales and pentatonic modes. Among the Manchu pentatonic folk songs, those with a three tone series as the main tone and pentatonic mode are dominant. Most of the Manchu folk songs in the shamanic divine songs are composed of three tone and four tone scales and tone series, and sometimes two tone series appear.

Form structure: The form structure of Manchu folk songs is mostly single segment, including three sentences, five sentences, seven sentences, etc. Manchu folk songs widely use this simple and regular form structure, which serves as the foundation for other forms.

The rhythm type of Manchu music, "Old Three Points," is a common rhythm type in folk songs and is also common in songs, dances, and instrumental music. In addition, the rhythm of Manchu music is short and angular, and the music is bold and vigorous, reflecting the characteristics of the Manchu "riding and shooting" culture.

These characteristics of Manchu music not only demonstrate the living customs and cultural psychology of the Manchu people but also reflect the unique style of Manchu music formed and developed in the long term social life and labor.

4. Cultural accommodation of the Manchu people in Northeastern China

Shuang (2019, p. 1) explains that in the Jiutai region, the rich history of Manchu shamanic culture has been preserved over a long period of socio cultural development.

The Guarjia clan and other Manchu descendants living here still regard the shamanic culture left by their ancestors as their spiritual wealth. Due to the changes in the livelihood of the Manchu society and the development of modern information, culture, and economy, the ancient traditional religious beliefs in the Manchu shamanic culture have gradually faded out of the vision of modern people. In recent years, with the revival of national culture and the increasing protection of national culture by the state, under the unremitting efforts of some knowledgeable people, Manchu shaman culture has gradually been excavated, recognized, acknowledged, and even taken a place in the domestic and international academic circles, and has become one of the hot spots of academic concern. In this context, the study of the inheritance and protection of Jutai Manchu shaman culture has both theoretical significance and practical value.

Kun (2014, p. 1) explains that Manchu music occupies an important place in China's intangible musical cultural heritage. However, due to the relative dispersion of Manchu divisions in China and their concentration in remote areas that are economically backward and poorly informed, coupled with the accelerating process of modernization in China, the popularity of modern pop music, and the lack of policy guidelines from local governments on the inheritance and development of Manchu music, as well as the long term lack of musical and cultural exchanges with the outside world, Manchu music lacks novelty in its musical form. For these reasons, Manchu music gradually disappeared. The inheritance and development of Manchu music cannot be separated from the support and guidance of a series of government policies. Research on Manchu Music Policy in Liaoning Province" mainly starts from the current situation of Manchu music policy in Liaoning Province, analyzes and researches the problems of imperfect relevant laws and regulations, inefficient policy operation, and insufficient governmental financial input that exist in Liaoning Province's Manchu music policy, and then puts forward the suggestions for perfecting the inheritance and development policy of Liaoning Province's Manchu music.

Xin (2021, p. 1) explains that shamanic music, as a part of minority culture, is a popular belief, a belief infused with popular emotions, and an integral part of national

culture. Support for minority cultures has made shamanic music culture a focus of attention and inquiry for literati and scholars from all walks of life, as well as a focal point of traditional cultural studies. Taking the Manchu and Mongolian ethnic groups as examples, this study utilizes the methods of documentary research, comparative research, and inductive summarization to conduct a comparative study of the origins of shamanic music of the Manchu and Mongolian ethnic groups, the multidimensional comparisons of shamanic music in its historical process, the ontological characteristics of shamanic music, and the current status of the development of shamanic music and its aesthetic value. Studies have shown that there are both similarities and differences in the origins, types, characteristics, and current development of Manchu and Mongolian shamanic music. Through the comparative study of the shamanic music of the two ethnic groups, it is hoped that the different cultural development histories of the two ethnic groups can be explored.

Xiaodong (2010, p. 1) describes Ning'an City (Ninguta) in Heilongjiang Province as a place where the Manchu people have lived for generations and where there are still Manchu people with various surnames, such as Guarjahara (Guan), Fuchahara (Fu), and Yimuchahara (Yang). The Manchus, who believe in shamanism, have inherited the traditional customs of their ancestors. Out of their worship of nature and their ancestors, they hold shamanistic ceremonies to celebrate the harvest, thank the tusi, and pray for a good harvest and peace in the fall. Shamanic ceremonies use a great deal of music to carry the main content of the ceremony, and ceremonial music is always present throughout the shamanic process. This paper hopes to provide information for others' research by examining the current development of shamanic ritual music in the Ning'an area and to reveal the aesthetic significance, practical function, and cultural value of shamanic ritual music in the context of Manchu culture, religious beliefs, customs, and other forms of art by studying the musical forms and symbolism of shamanic ritual music.

Simin (2019, p. 149+167) describes that in recent years, Manchu music has been officially recognized as an intangible cultural heritage item, which indicates that

local governments attach great importance to the preservation of Manchu music. However, the preservation of local culture is a very complex subject, and it is impossible to preserve a disappearing culture by merely focusing on it. Therefore, it is of enormous practical significance to explore the folk culture and artistic characteristics of Manchu music.

Shuo (2019, pp. 36-37) explains that in recent years, Manchu music has been officially recognized as an intangible cultural heritage item, which indicates that the local government attaches great importance to the preservation of Manchu music. However, the preservation of local culture is a very complex issue, and it is impossible to protect a disappearing culture simply by paying attention to it. Therefore, it is of enormous practical significance to excavate the folk culture and artistic characteristics of Manchu music.

The Manchu people in the Northeast have a profound historical and cultural background. The Manchus are one of the ethnic groups that have lived in the region for generations. In the long term historical development process, the Manchu culture has undergone extensive exchanges and integration with other ethnic cultures, especially the Han culture. This cultural interaction has not only shaped the unique regional culture of the Northeast but also promoted the adaptability and development of the Manchu culture.

The adaptability of Manchu culture in the Northeast is reflected in many aspects. First, the traditional culture of the Manchus has become part of the cultural context of the Northeast and even the Liaoshen region. The costumes, language, food culture, and folk customs of the Manchus have a profound impact on Northeastern culture. For example, some traditional customs and festival celebrations of the Manchu people have been shared by multiple ethnic groups in the Northeast and have become an important part of local culture.

Secondly, in its interactions with the Han and other ethnic minorities, Manchu culture not only maintained its own characteristics but also absorbed cultural elements from other ethnic groups. Some Manchu words were directly integrated into the

Northeast dialect, allowing the vitality of the Manchu language to be passed on. In addition, Manchu customs and habits in clothing, diet, housing, weddings, funerals, and sacrifices still strongly influence the cultural outlook of the Northeast region.

Northeastern culture itself is the product of the fusion of Manchu and multiethnic cultures. This fusion of multiple cultures not only enriches the cultural connotation of the Northeast region but also enhances the adaptability and vitality of Manchu culture. For example, folk art forms in the Northeast region, such as Errenzhuan, although deeply influenced by Han culture, still retain the shadow of Manchu culture and show the integration of Han and Manchu literature and art.

However, with the acceleration of modernization, the individuality and uniqueness of Manchu culture are facing challenges. Under the influence of modern society, the language, writing, religion, and social family traditions of the Manchu people may gradually be marginalized, and the self identity and national consciousness of Manchu culture may also be affected. Therefore, protecting and developing Manchu culture and maintaining its cultural subjectivity are crucial to the cultural accommodation and long term development of the Manchu people.

5. The influence of Manchu music culture on Northeastern China's music

The Manchu music culture, according to Xiaodong (2011, pp. 113-116), primarily consists of folk songs, song and dance music, and rap. It is more natural and closer to life and reflects the style characteristics of simplicity, roughness, cheerfulness, and sonorousness. At the same time, since the Manchus left their original living environment after entering the Shanhai Pass, they had extensive contact with Han culture, and their music culture also incorporated many contents and styles of Han music. The Manchu music culture has enhanced the national characteristics of college music education through its influence on the content of music education, the types of musical instruments, and the basic values of college music education in my country. At the same time, college music education influenced by Manchu music has also played a vital role in the inheritance, protection, and development of Manchu music culture.

Dan (2015, p. 196) explains that the Manchus have a long history, and their music culture is also unique. With the development of society, especially under the influence of multiculturalism, great changes have taken place. However, it is still necessary to better preserve its unique personality and cultural connotation and give full play to its unique national personality in world culture.

Shi (2014, p. 91) explains that the Northeastern drum is listed in the list of intangible cultural heritage of my country and is popular in Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin, and other places. The Northeast region is a cultural circle where Manchu culture is concentrated more densely. Manchu music culture has a subtle influence on Northeastern drums. This article expounds the viewpoint of the integration of Manchu music and Northeastern drum culture through the analysis of the influence of shaman rap music in Manchu music culture and Manchu Eight Banners children's books on Northeastern drum.

Mengzi (2015, pp. 44-46+43) explains that the Manchu shaman music culture of Jilin Province has a profound influence on Errenzhuan music culture. This article will analyze the influence of the Manchu shaman music culture of Jilin Province on Errenzhuan music culture. Errenzhuan is a precious folk art treasure that integrates singing, dancing, rap, and drama. Since the emergence of Errenzhuan, there has been a saying among the people: "I would rather give up a meal than Errenzhuan."

Manchu music culture has played an important role in the development of music in Northeastern China, and its influence is reflected in many aspects, such as Northeast drum, single drum music, Errenzhuan, Han folk songs, Manchu drama, etc. These influences of Manchu music culture not only enrich the musical diversity of Northeastern China but also provide valuable materials for the study of shaman culture and the development of music in Northeastern China. The melody of Manchu music suddenly appears in the seventh degree jump in the progressive rhythm, with short rhythm, sharp edges and corners, and bold and spicy musical character, all of which show the cultural characteristics of "riding and shooting" in Manchu music.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is designed to systematically explore the musical identity of Manchu music in northeastern China and its cultural accommodation dynamics, integrating qualitative approaches and interdisciplinary perspectives. Guided by the research objectives, the methodology combines documentary analysis, fieldwork, and thematic synthesis to uncover the multifaceted layers of Manchu musical traditions and their adaptive processes within the regional cultural landscape.

The study employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating musicology, ethnology, and cultural anthropology to decode the dual dimensions of musical identity and cultural accommodation. For musical identity, analytical tools include modal analysis of folk songs, structural examination of instrumental ensembles, and textual interpretation of lyrical content to identify unique sonic markers (e.g., pentatonic scales, call and response patterns) that define Manchu musical traditions. For cultural accommodation, the research applies theories of acculturation and interethnic cultural exchange to analyze how Manchu music absorbed Han Chinese instrumental practices (e.g., the sanxian lute), Mongolian rhythmic motifs, and Korean melodic influences, while retaining indigenous elements like shamanic incantations and hunting chants. Comparative analysis is used to contrast historical records with contemporary practices, revealing how adaptive processes have shaped the survival and transformation of Manchu music in modern times.

Collected data is systematically categorized and analyzed to identify recurring themes and cultural patterns. Documentary sources are coded by historical period, musical genre, and cultural function, while fieldwork data is transcribed and thematically coded to highlight interactions between musical practices and social contexts. Thematic synthesis involves cross referencing empirical observations with theoretical frameworks to explore how cultural accommodation has influenced Manchu musical identity at three levels: artistic form (e.g., hybrid instrumental ensembles), social function (e.g., rituals

and festivals), and symbolic meaning (e.g., shamanic music as a marker of ethnic identity). Critical discourse analysis is applied to interpret how narratives of resistance, adaptation, and innovation are embedded in musical texts and performances, especially in response to historical events like the Qing dynasty's sinicization policies and modern globalization.

Findings are presented through a combination of descriptive narratives, musical transcriptions, and comparative tables to illustrate the evolution of Manchu music. Case studies of representative genres (e.g., shamanic chants, labor songs, and wedding melodies) are used to exemplify how cultural accommodation has shaped musical structures and performance contexts. The study also employs visual aids, such as maps of ethnic settlements and diagrams of instrumental configurations, to enhance the interpretive clarity of spatial and cultural interactions. By situating Manchu music within the broader framework of northeastern China's multicultural landscape, the research interprets musical practices as both a product of historical adaptation and a repository of ethnic identity, offering insights into how minority cultures negotiate continuity and change in contemporary society.

This methodological approach ensures a holistic exploration of the research objectives, bridging historical depth with empirical detail to illuminate the complex interplay between musical identity and cultural accommodation in northeastern Manchu communities. By grounding analysis in both textual scholarship and on the ground observations, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how music serves as a dynamic marker of ethnic identity amidst shifting cultural landscapes.

1. Document study

This study mainly collects relevant information on the Internet, using the China Knowledge Infrastructure Project and Baidu Academic as the main platforms while referring to other literature websites, such as Wan fang and Wipu, to obtain more information in various aspects.

1.1 The Central Library of Srinakharinwirot University

1.2 China National Knowledge Infrastructure

1.3 Wan fang

1.4 Wipu

1.5 Digital media

2. Fieldwork

Field research is conducted in key Manchu settlements across northeastern China, including autonomous counties in Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces (e.g., Xinbin, Xiuyan, Yitong). These regions are chosen for their rich preservation of Manchu cultural practices, including shamanic rituals, folk songs, and instrumental traditions. Ethnographic methods involve participant observation of traditional performances, such as shamanic ceremonies (shaoxiang), folk festivals, and communal gatherings where Manchu music is performed. Semi structured interviews are conducted with (heritage bearers), including shamans, folk musicians, and elder community members, to document oral traditions, musical notations, and the social significance of music in daily life. Interviews also engage scholars and cultural activists to gain insights into academic perspectives on cultural accommodation and identity preservation. Audio visual recordings of performances and instruments (e.g., the octagonal drum, waist bells, and shamanic drums) are collected to analyze musical structures, rhythmic patterns, and instrumental techniques.

2.1 Area of the study

Because the Manchu people live mainly in Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning provinces, the scope of this study is to interview scholars who study Manchu culture in major universities in the three northeastern provinces, collect and organize the songs or music that old artists in specific Manchu autonomous regions know, and learn about the culture, background, and musical instrument techniques of Manchu music through them and organize them. It is expected that visits will be made to Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County, Liaoning Province, Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous County, Liaoning Province, and other autonomous counties.

2.2 Interview

This interview will be organized around the two research objectives of this thesis:

2.2.1 The objective is to study the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

In December 2024, the author conducted an interview with Professor Li Li from Jiamusi University College of Music at the institution's premises. The discussion focused on the musical culture of the Hezhen ethnic group, particularly examining the musical characteristics of the Hezhen Yimakan storytelling art, its adaptation to modernization, and the current state of educational transmission. Relevant issues addressed included the endangered status of Yimakan and governmental protection measures.

In November 2024, the author interviewed Professor Guan Zhiying from Heihe University College of Music at the institution's campus. The primary focus involved comparative studies between Manchu folk songs and Oroqen ethnic folk songs, as well as narrative differences between the Manchu "Shuobu" (storytelling tradition) and the Oroqen "Mosukun" epic within the Manchu Tungusic language family framework.

In October 2024, the author held discussions with Dr. Shao Likun from the Institute of Ethnology at Jilin Provincial Academy of Social Sciences at the research institute. The systematic examination covered the transmission status of Manchu folktales, current preservation challenges, inheritors of this tradition, transmission patterns, and digital preservation methods.

Through these interviews, the author specifically investigated the musical characteristics of Manchu people, traditional Manchu instruments, performance techniques, and the socio-cultural environment influencing these artistic expressions.

2.2.2 To analyze the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

In October 2024, the author interviewed Li Liping, a faculty member at the College of Music of Jilin Normal University, at the institution's premises in Changchun, Jilin Province. The discussion centered on the current challenges facing the inheritance of Manchu music culture and explored strategies such as enhancing publicity,

expanding exhibition spaces, cultivating professional talent, and developing cultural and creative products to promote its preservation. Key interview questions included:

Primary Challenges: The protection and transmission of Manchu music face critical threats due to the near extinction of the Manchu language (fewer than 20 native speakers), a severe shortage of inheritors, insufficient cultural confidence, and pressures from modernization and Mandarin dominance.

Digital Platforms & social media: Digital platforms like TikTok and YouTube could elevate Manchu music's visibility through algorithm friendly strategies such as engaging short form videos, collaborations with influencers, and optimizing metadata to align with audience trends, similar to tactics used by indie artists to boost streaming engagement.

Educational Institutions: Educational institutions in China, particularly in regions like Liaoning, are critiqued for neglecting Manchu cultural education, necessitating specialized courses, workshops, and integration into curricula to cultivate trained professionals and foster cultural continuity.

Cultural & Creative Products: Developing Manchu themed music albums, traditional instrument collaborations with contemporary artists, and market driven creative products could counter slow marketization and enhance relevance, though current efforts remain limited by insufficient cultural penetration and audience decline.

Socio Cultural Environment: Northeast China's socio-cultural environment, marked by urbanization, Mandarin prioritization, and fading ethnic identity, strains the adaptability of Manchu music, despite localized conservation efforts in areas like Sanjiazi Village.

In September 2024, the author interviewed Xu Honghao from the Northeast Folk Art Research Center at Jilin University of Arts in Changchun. The dialogue focused on the unique folk customs of the Manchu ethnic group. Through an in-depth analysis of typical artistic activities in Northeast Manchu folklore, Xu Honghao aimed to highlight the distinct cultural characteristics and aesthetic spirit of the region's Manchu community. Key questions addressed:

Manchu Folk Customs: Manchu customs like ancestor worship and seasonal rituals in rural areas (e.g., Sanjiazi Village) reflect a cultural identity tied to agrarian traditions and ethnic cohesion, though these practices are diminishing due to urbanization and language loss.

Symbolic Meanings: Shamanic dances and ballads historically symbolized spiritual communication and communal memory, but their meanings are eroding as younger generations disconnect from Manchu linguistic and cultural contexts.

Aesthetic Spirit: The differences in the aesthetic spirit of Manchu folk art and that of other ethnic groups in the region. (such as the Oroqen or Han Chinese)

Integration Measures: Integrating Manchu traditions into modernity requires balancing commercial adaptations (e.g., fusion albums) with grassroots transmission, though risks of dilution persist due to weak cultural confidence and market pressures.

Historical Roots: The influence of historical roots such as Jurchen heritage on contemporary Manchu artistic expressions.

Through these interviews, the author raised supplementary questions regarding:

Cultural Accommodation: Manchu music faces assimilation pressures from dominant Han pop and rock genres in Northeast China, complicating its distinct stylistic preservation.

Current Status: Manchu music remains largely confined to rural enclaves like Sanjiazi Village, with minimal institutional recognition or urban engagement.

Inheritance Models: Community-led efforts (e.g., local workshops) are fragmented and under-resourced compared to top-down policies, which lack tailored support for Manchu-specific needs.

Digital Preservation: Archives and databases are underutilized in documenting Manchu music, with digitization efforts lagging behind oral transmission methods.

2.3 Participant observation

2.3.1 Cha Shuyuan Inheritor of Manchu folk songs in Xinbin County

The author also learned about the folk songs and ditties popular in the Xinbin area through Mr. Cha Shuyuan, the inheritor of Manchu folk songs in Xinbin County. The folk songs sung by Mr. Cha Shuyuan are rich in content and vary in variety. Funeral and sacrificial songs are one of them. In Xinbin and surrounding areas, when an elderly person in a family passes away, the children will sing memorial songs such as "Crying at Jiubao," "Crying at Qiguan," and "Lingqiandiaoxiao" to show their filial piety and send the deceased to the west. They can also ask someone to sing on their behalf. The funeral and sacrificial songs he sang were comprehensive in content, with complete lyrics and music, gentle and sad tunes, a clear voice, and distinct pronunciation, reflecting his strong singing skills.

Mr. Cha Shuyuan has a clear and bright voice. He has loved literature and art all his life and can sing hundreds of folk songs popular in Xinbin. In this interview, Mr. Cha Shuyuan sang songs such as "Qiuyuyao," "Shiguineneen," "Laohanwangzhengbing," "Kujiuchang," and "Dongbeidagu" for us.

2.3.2 Zhang Bailing (stage name) Manchu folk singer

Zhang Bailing, a female stage name, was previously known as Zhang Xiuyun. Her ancestors lived in Lishugou Village beside the Nanzamu National Road in Xinbin County, Liaoning Province. She had a wonderful voice since she was a child and loved singing. At the age of 17, she became a disciple of Wu Yuzhen in Shenyang and learned Errenzhuan from Teacher Wu. Due to her natural conditions, she made rapid progress and could sing hundreds of Errenzhuan songs and folk tunes after two or three years of study. Since then, she has been active on the Errenzhuan stage in Fushun and is deeply loved by the general public. She was nicknamed "Zhang Bailing." Since then, people have called her "Zhang Bailing." After reaching the age of 52, she bid farewell to the Errenzhuan stage. In this interview, she sang "Youche Diao," "Chiang Kai shek Sitting in Taiwan," "Xixiang Guanhua," and so on for us.

2.4 Non Participant Observation

Because this is my first time conducting specialized research on Manchu folk music, I don't have many personal connections in this area. If I want to get in touch with the inheritors or veteran artists of Manchu music hidden among the people, I need to get

in touch with the relevant personnel of the local cultural center and scholars or experts who study Manchu music. With their help, I can obtain information about these inheritors or veteran artists more directly and effectively and find them as soon as possible. Otherwise, I will get nothing if I go there rashly, and it will be time consuming and laborious.

3. Research material

3.1 Interview Form

3.2 Observational Form

3.3 Audio Recorder

3.4 Camera

3.5 VDO Camera

4. Scrutinizing data

The authors obtained data from interviews and observations and so had categorized the data obtained from interviews and observations according to the relevant content.

The researchers classified the data into three parts:

4.1 Documentary data

Research the literature on Manchu music, Manchu culture, and Manchu history and compile relevant research documents.

4.2 Regional data

Describe all areas where field research was conducted in the three northeastern provinces and collect data.

4.3 Cultural data

Go to the field to understand Manchu culture or Manchu society related things encountered, compile and collect data.

4.4 Music data

Store data through recording, video recording, transcription of old tapes, collection of video materials, etc.

5. Analysis of data

Research on the musical characteristics of Northeastern Manchu music should be enhanced through interdisciplinary and cross domain approaches to preserve and inherit ethnic music traditions in Northeastern China. The discipline of Northeastern ethnomusicology should establish data analysis principles and content analysis methodologies, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration while focusing on the protection and transmission of diverse folk music cultures across the region.

5.1 The study of the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

5.1.1 The characteristics of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

5.1.2 The musical forms of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

5.1.3 Types and Characteristics of Manchu Musical Instruments in Northeastern China.

5.1.4 The role of Manchu music in Northeastern China in the Shamanic Culture dimension.

5.2 The analysis of the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

5.2.1 The historical overview of Manchu in Northeastern China.

5.2.2 The development of Manchu music under cultural accommodation.

5.2.3 The musical integration of Manchu music with the other ethnic music.

5.2.4 The cultural heritage transmission of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

6. Research Presentation

The Cultural Accommodation Dimension of the Manchu Musical Identity in Northeastern China uses the compilation of stylistic descriptive writings and sequencing of the data as follows:

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Review of the Literature

6.3 Methodology

6.4 Finding

6.5 Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

This chapter investigates the intricate dynamics of Manchu musical identity and cultural accommodation in Northeastern China, offering a detailed exploration of how this ethnic music tradition has evolved through historical continuity and intercultural interaction. The chapter unfolds across two interconnected sections, each shedding

light on distinct yet complementary aspects of Manchu music's enduring legacy and adaptive resilience.

The first section, centered on the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China, establishes the genre as a living expression of the Manchu people's historical experiences and spiritual worldviews. Rooted in fishing-hunting civilizations and shamanic traditions, Manchu music is characterized by a dynamic balance between preservation and innovation. The analysis highlights its structural components, such as the pentatonic modal system (dominated by Gong and Yu modes), rhythmic patterns tied to labor chants (e.g., call-and-response structures in Laodong Haozi) and shamanic rituals (e.g., the "Laosandian" triplet drum rhythm), and thematic diversity spanning labor, politics, rituals, and love. These elements converge to form a musical language that not only encodes ecological wisdom and collective memory but also navigates the tensions between tradition and modernity for example, in how court music and folk genres in regions like Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County incorporate Han cultural influences while reinforcing ethnic boundaries. The section underscores music's role as a vital marker of Manchu identity, blending archaic pentatonic traditions with adaptive storytelling to sustain cultural continuity.

The second section explores the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music, tracing its historical journey of integration with Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other ethnic cultures. From the ancient Sushen and Jurchen eras to the Qing Dynasty and contemporary times, Manchu music has absorbed diverse influences, such as Han court music's formal structures, Mongolian instrumental techniques (e.g., the Mokouni jaw harp), and Korean folk rhythms, evident in instruments like the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) and shamanic rituals that blend sacred chants with secular dance. The chapter highlights how these interactions have shaped both musical forms (e.g., the evolution of shamanic chants into folk operatic styles) and cultural functions, such as the transformation of ritual music into a tool for political symbolism during the Qing Dynasty. Modern challenges, including urbanization and the decline of the Manchu language, are

juxtaposed with innovative preservation efforts such as digital archiving and cross-genre collaborations that seek to revitalize the tradition while honoring its roots.

In synthesizing these themes, Manchu music in Northeastern China is a testament to the fluidity of ethnic identity, where cultural accommodation serves not as a loss of heritage but as a mechanism for survival and growth. By examining both the intrinsic characteristics of its musical identity and the external forces that have shaped it, the chapter offers a nuanced understanding of how this tradition has evolved into a vibrant, multifaceted component of China's multicultural tapestry, balancing deep historical roots with the demands of a changing world.

1. The study of the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

The musical identity of the Manchu people in Northeastern China is a dynamic interplay of cultural preservation, adaptation, and innovation, rooted in their historical fishing hunting civilization and shamanic traditions. As both an artistic expression and a vehicle for ethnic identity, Manchu music transcends mere aesthetic form, encapsulating ecological wisdom, spiritual beliefs, and collective memory. In contemporary contexts, this identity navigates the intersection of tradition and modernity, exemplified by initiatives in regions like Xinbin and Fengning Manchu Autonomous Counties, where court music, ritual hymns, and adapted folk genres reinforce ethnic boundaries while accommodating Han cultural influences. Such efforts highlight music's role in sustaining Manchu heritage amid multicultural dynamics.

Structurally, Northeastern Manchu music is characterized by its pentatonic modal system and narrative driven compositions. The Gong (do) and Yu (la) modes form a dual modal framework: Gong mode anthems, with expansive intervals like Gong Shang (do re), evoke communal labor in work chants, while Yu mode melodies, through restrained Yu Jue (la mi) progressions, convey introspective emotion. Additional modes Shang (re) for solemn ballads, Zhi (sol) for festive energy, and Jue (mi) for ritual contexts create a multi layered expressive system. Rhythmic patterns further encode cultural practices, such as call and response labor chants that synchronize collective efforts and shamanic drumming cycles like the "Laosandian" triplet, which intertwine with narrow

interval recitatives to induce trance states. These elements reflect the Manchu worldview, were music bridges human action and spiritual realms.

Melodic construction reveals a duality of vigor and subtlety. Fish hunting chants mimic physical labor through Yu mode arpeggios and rhythmic cadences, while love songs employ free meter preludes and undulating ornamentation to express longing. Shamanic hymns, structured with "tail concealing, head omitting" phrasing akin to Mongolian Khoomei, oscillate between Gong and Yu tones to invoke ancestral communion. Even children's songs, such as "Fortress Chase," embed militaristic pedagogy through octave leaping motifs, preserving the Manchu equestrian legacy. Through such innovations ornamental phrasing, mechanical rhythmic repetition, and recitative treatments Manchu music balances archaic pentatonic traditions with adaptive storytelling.

Ultimately, Northeastern Manchu music stands as a resonant testament to the ethnic group's historical resilience and cultural synthesis. By archiving ecological practices, spiritual beliefs, and collective struggles, it not only strengthens national pride but also enriches China's multicultural tapestry. Its continued study and revitalization underscore music's power to sustain identity while fostering interethnic dialogue in an evolving society.

1.1 The characteristics of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Northeastern Manchu music, influenced by factors across dynasties, historical periods, cultural contexts, and environmental conditions, has undergone millennial refinement, development, and continuity throughout history. This process has yielded an extensive repository of exceptional musical culture. The breadth of its scope, diversity of genres, richness of modes, and level of melodic beauty in these musical traditions rival the musical heritage of any ethnic group. The vast collection of Manchu music compiled and organized in this research sufficiently substantiates this claim. Below we conduct multidimensional analysis and investigation into Manchu music from perspectives including thematic content and musical morphology.

The formal structures of Manchu music predominantly employ single section forms, single movement structures, one part forms, and two part forms, with three part or more complex structures being relatively uncommon. Thematic content primarily manifests through labor themed compositions, political commentary, ritual music, daily life depictions, love songs, and nursery rhymes. Each category exhibits distinct characteristics. Our analysis will focus on these principal thematic classifications:

1.1.1 Manchu Labor Chants (Laodong Haozi)

Labor songs, also known as work chants, authentically document the Manchu people's historical engagement in fishing, hunting, and mounted archery. Characterized by simple structures, fluid melodies, vivid lyrics, and robust emotional expression, these songs embody rhythmic vitality and a resilient spirit against natural challenges. Deeply rooted in Manchu life, they carry a distinct ethnic character. A quintessential example is Pao Nanhai, a labor chant widely circulated prior to 1860 across the Tumen River estuary to the Vladivostok region, exemplifying the fusion of maritime labor rhythms with authentic Manchu cultural essence.

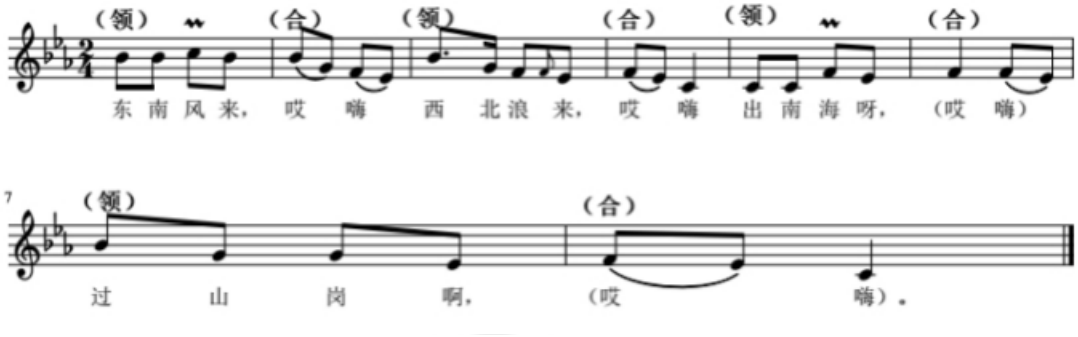


Figure 3 Pao Nanhai (Running to the South Sea)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 816.

Lyrics:

dong nan feng lai, ai hai

The southeast wind comes, oh hey

xi bei lang lai, ai hai

The northwest waves come, oh hey

chu nan hai ya, (ai hai)

Sailing out to South China Sea, (oh hey)

guo shan gang a, (ai hai)

Over the mountain ridge, (oh hey)

This folk song vividly portrays the rugged labor scenes of Manchu men through call and response interplay between lead vocals and chorus. Pao Nanhai adopts a single movement structure contrasting upper and lower phrases, concluding with a Yu mode (la based) tonal resolution.

Other hunting songs demonstrate varied structures:

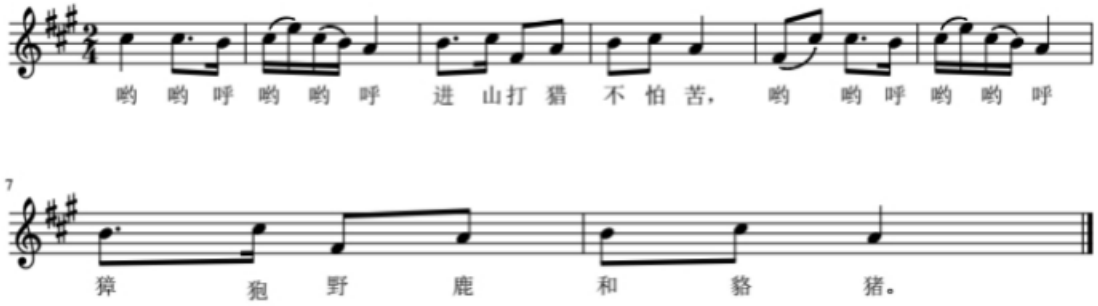


Figure 4 Dalie Ge (Hunting Song)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1995). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Liaoning volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 609.

Lyrics:

yo yo hu yo yo hu jin shan da lie bu pa ku, yo yo hu yo yo hu

Yo yo hu, yo yo hu, going into the mountains to hunt, not afraid of hardship, yo yo hu, yo yo hu

zhang pao ye lu he he zhu

Muntjac, roe deer, wild deer, and raccoon dog, pig.

An ancient melody transmitted from the Liaoshen region to Xinjiang, this parallel two phrase composition in Gong mode (do based) survives in both Xibe and Shamanic singing traditions.

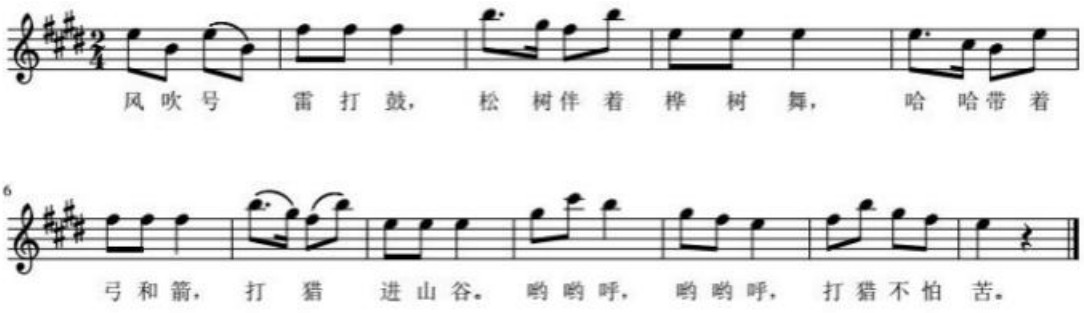


Figure 5 alie Ge (Hunting Song)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 3.

Lyrics:

feng chui hao lei da gu, song shu ban zhe hua shu wu, ha ha dai zhe

Wind blows the horn, thunder beats the drum, pine trees dance with birch trees, ha ha brings

gong he jian, da lie jin shan gu. yo yo hu, yo yo yo hu, da lie bu pa ku

Bow and arrow, hunting into the valley. Yo yo hu, yo yo yo hu, hunting is not afraid of hardship

Featuring an expanded single movement structure with contrasting dual phrases, this work vividly depicts traditional Manchu mounted archery practices through musical imagery.

Labor chants from Northeastern China exhibit regional variations:

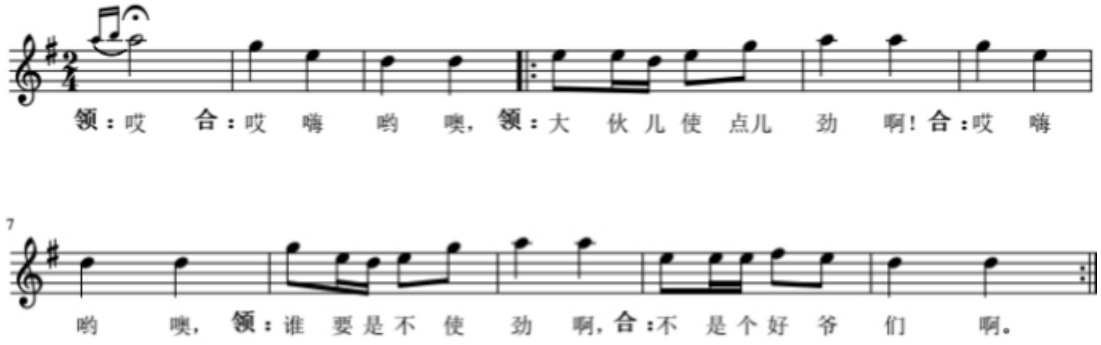


Figure 6 Laodong Haozi (Work Chant)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 4.

Lyrics:

ling: ai, he: ai hai yo o. ling: da huo er shi dian er jin a! he: ai hai

Leader: Ai, Chorus: Ai hai yo o. Leader: Everyone, put in some effort! Chorus: Ai hai.

yo o, ling: shui yao shi bu shi jin a, he: bu shi ge hao ye men a

Yo o, Leader: If anyone doesn't put in effort, Chorus: Isn't a good fellow.

Hailing from the Chaoyang region of Liaoning Province, these songs exemplify universal labor coordination patterns. The leader's calls regulate rhythm and pace while collective responses amplify energy, achieving perfect synergy between individual guidance and group power.

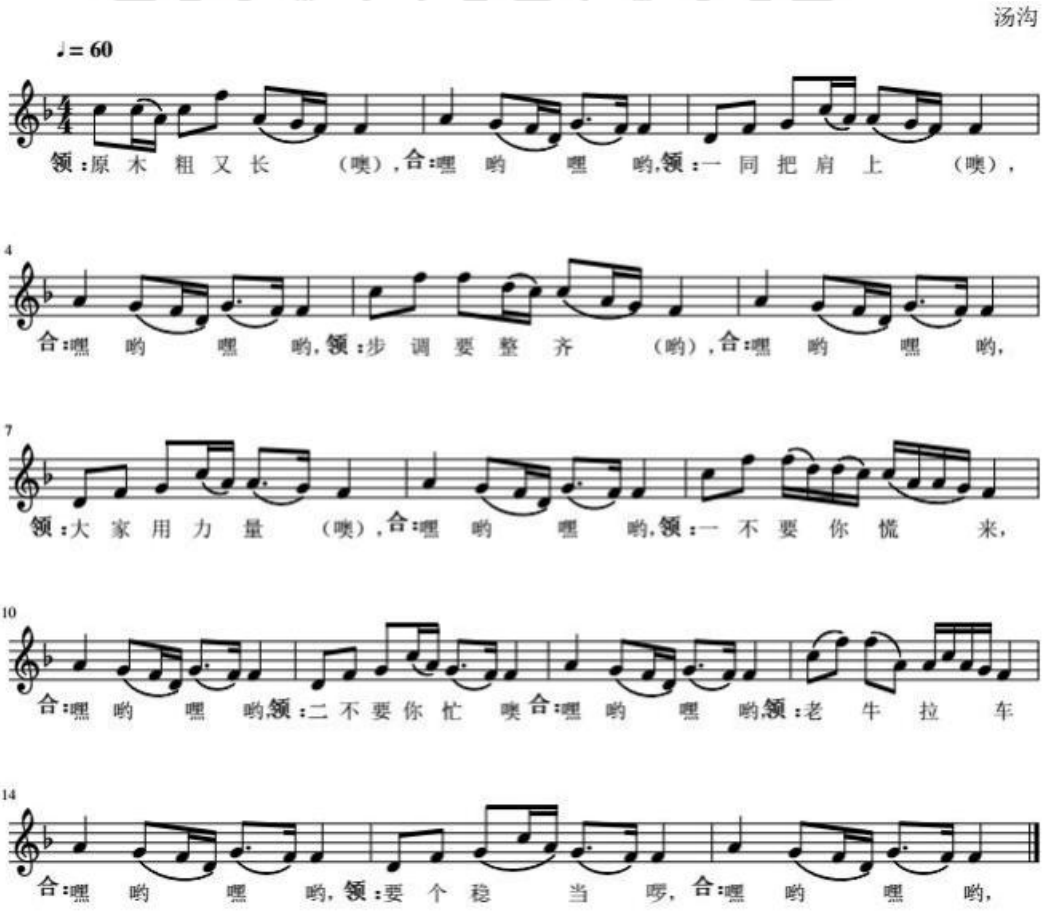


Figure 7 Tai Muyao (Timber Hauling Chant)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 5.

Lyrics:

ling: yuan mu cu you chang (o), he: hei yo hei yo, ling: yi tong ba jian shang (o)

Leader: The log is thick and long (oh), Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: Together put it on the shoulder (oh)

he: hei yo hei yo, ling: bu diao yao zheng qi (yo), he: hei yo hey yo

Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: Keep the step in order (yo), Chorus: Hey yo hey yo

ling: da jia yong li liang (o), he: hei yo hey yo, ling: yi bu yao ni huang lai

Leader: Everyone use strength (oh), Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: First, don't you panic

he: hei yo hey yo, ling: er bu yao ni mang o, he: hei yo hey yo, ling: lao niu la che

Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: Second, don't you be busy oh, Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: The old ox pulls the cart

he: hei yo hey yo, ling: yao ge wen dang luo, he: hei yo hey yo

Chorus: Hey yo hey yo, Leader: Need it steady, Chorus: Hey yo hey yo

This labor chant employs call and response interplay between lead singers and chorus to dynamically portray collective work scenes. Through this antiphonal structure, the physically demanding task of log carrying achieves perfect synchronization in both coordinated effort and rhythmic unity. The music maintains a repetitive two phrase pattern anchored on the Gong mode tonal center (do), creating a simple yet memorable melody that enables seamless integration between the leader's directives and the group's unified movements. This musical framework transforms

strenuous manual labor into a harmonized collective endeavor through its accessible melodic design.

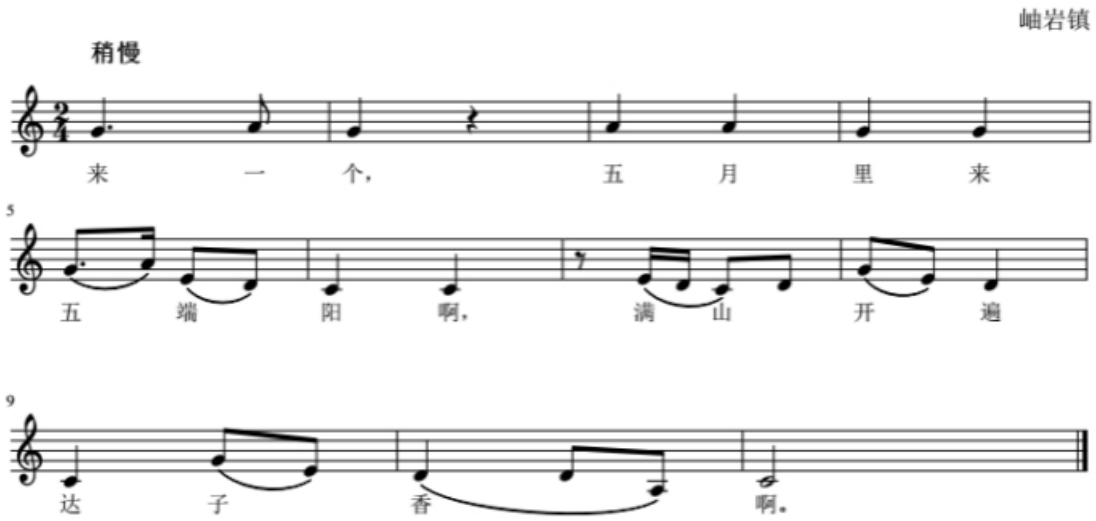


Figure 8 Da Shui Ge (Water Fetching Song)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 7.

Lyrics:

lai yi ge, wu yue li lai

Come one, come in the month of May.

wu duan yang a, man shan kai bian

The Fifth Duan Yang, all over the mountains in bloom.

da zi xiang a

Dazi Xiang ah.

This work chant exhibits lyrical qualities akin to folk ballads, using vivid imagery to convey the joy of labor. Structured in six bar phrases with contrasting upper and lower sections, it employs the Gong mode (do based) to create a buoyant tonal framework.

Many labor songs, like Water Fetching Song, share this expressive approach. Daily work routines are musically encoded in compositions such as:

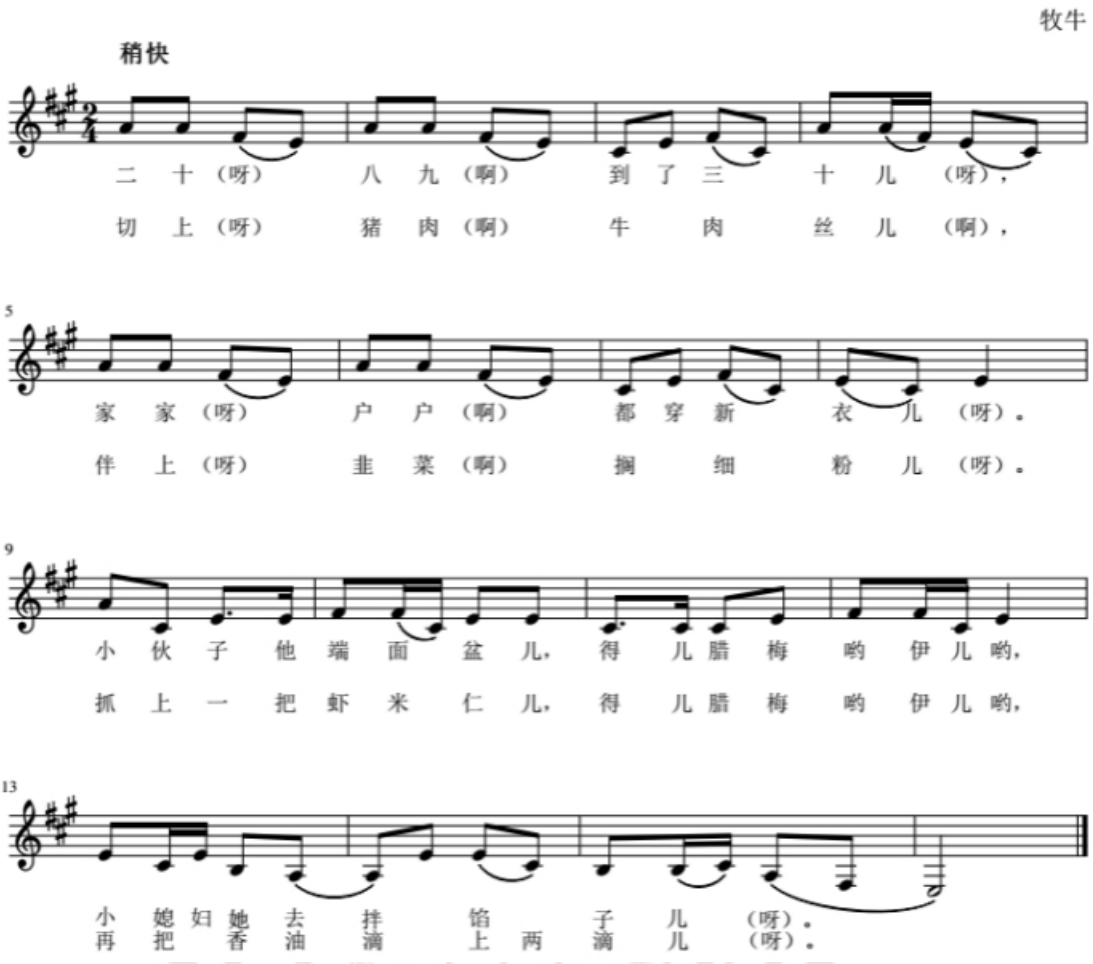


Figure 9 Bao Jiaozi (Dumpling Making Song)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 9.

Lyrics:

er shi ba jiu a dao le san shi er ya

Twenty eight, twenty nine, ah, reaching thirty, ah

jia jia hu hu ya dou chuan xin yi er ya

Every household, ah, all wearing new clothes, ah

xiao huo zi ta duan mian pen er

The young man carries the washbasin

de er la mei yo yi er yo

Der la mei yo yi er yo

xiao xi fu ta qu ban xian zi er ya

The young wife goes to mix the filling, ah

This four phase unitary composition animates the dumpling crafting process through narrative progression (introduction, development, transition, conclusion). Its lively decomposition of culinary steps exemplifies classic folk performative traditions.

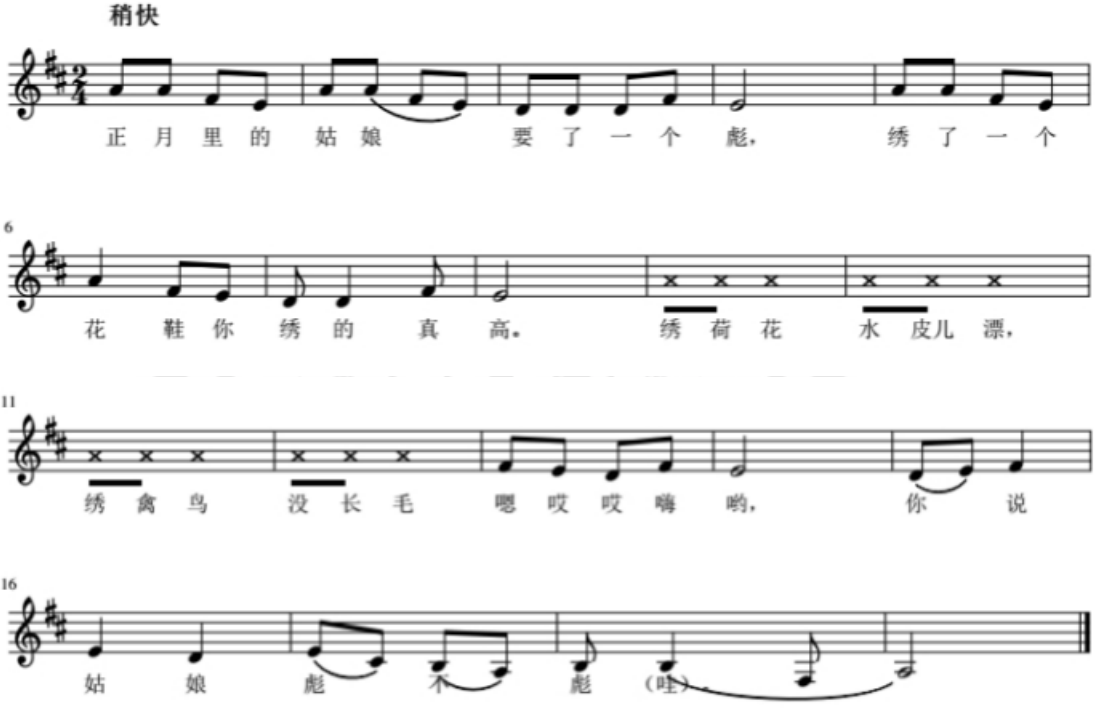


Figure 10 Guniang Xiuhuaxie (Maiden Embroidering Slippers)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu Folk Songs Anthology. (1990). Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 13.

Lyrics:

zheng yue li de gu niang yao le yi ge biao xiu le yi ge

In the first month, the girl asked for a biao, embroidered one.

hua xie ni xiu de zhen gao xiu he hua shui pi er piao

The flower shoes you embroidered are really exquisite. Embroidering lotus flowers, the water skin floats.

xiu qin niao mei chang mao en ai ai hai yo ni shuo

Embroidering birds without long hair, hmm, ai, ai, hi yo, you say.

gu niang biao bu biao wa

Girl, is it biao or not (wow)?

Depicting needlework practices, this song reveals early proto rap elements in ancient Manchu vocal arts. Its expanded unitary structure showcases distinctive Northeast regional flavors through Zhi mode (sol based) melodies infused with playful humor.

Labor celebratory songs further demonstrate this tradition:

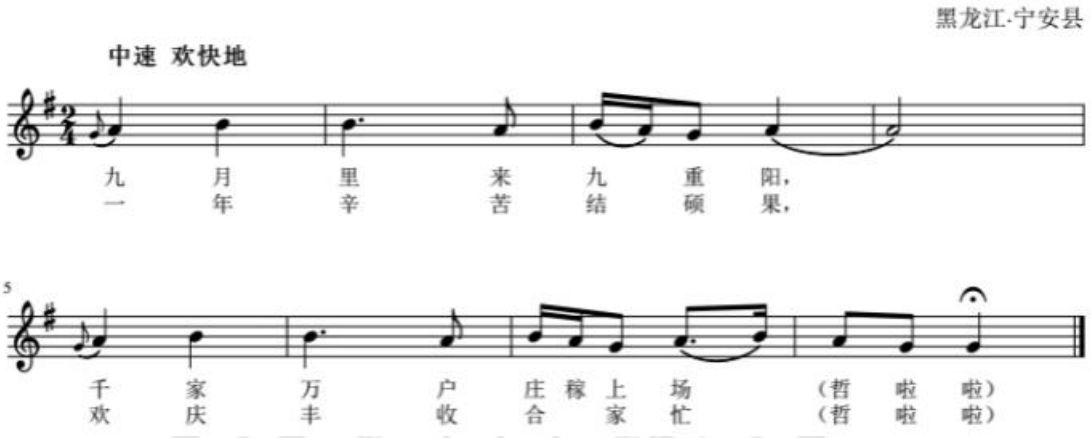


Figure 11 Qing Fengshou (Harvest Celebration)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 1027.

Lyrics:

jiu yue li lai jiu chong yang

In September comes the Double Ninth Festival.

qian jia wan hu zhuang jia shang chang

Thousands of households' crops come to the field.

yi nian xin ku jie shuo guo

A year's hard work bears great fruits.

huan qing feng shou he jia mang

Celebrating the harvest, the whole family is busy.

Common across ethnic musical traditions, such harvest songs proliferate in Manchu repertoire. This Harvest Celebration employs parallel dual phrase construction with imitative repetition for easy memorization, allowing performers interpretive flexibility while resolving conclusively on the Gong tonic. Spanning a major third interval (do mi) within a pentatonic framework (do re mi), it represents one of the simplest yet most characteristic folk compositions.

1.1.2 Manchu Political Music

Political songs hold significant importance in Manchu folk music, reflecting historical dynastic changes, resistance against foreign invasions, aspirations for new lives, and the spirit of struggle. Evolving with historical shifts, these songs increasingly intertwined with ethnic and national destinies, serving as vehicles for sociopolitical consciousness. Examples include:

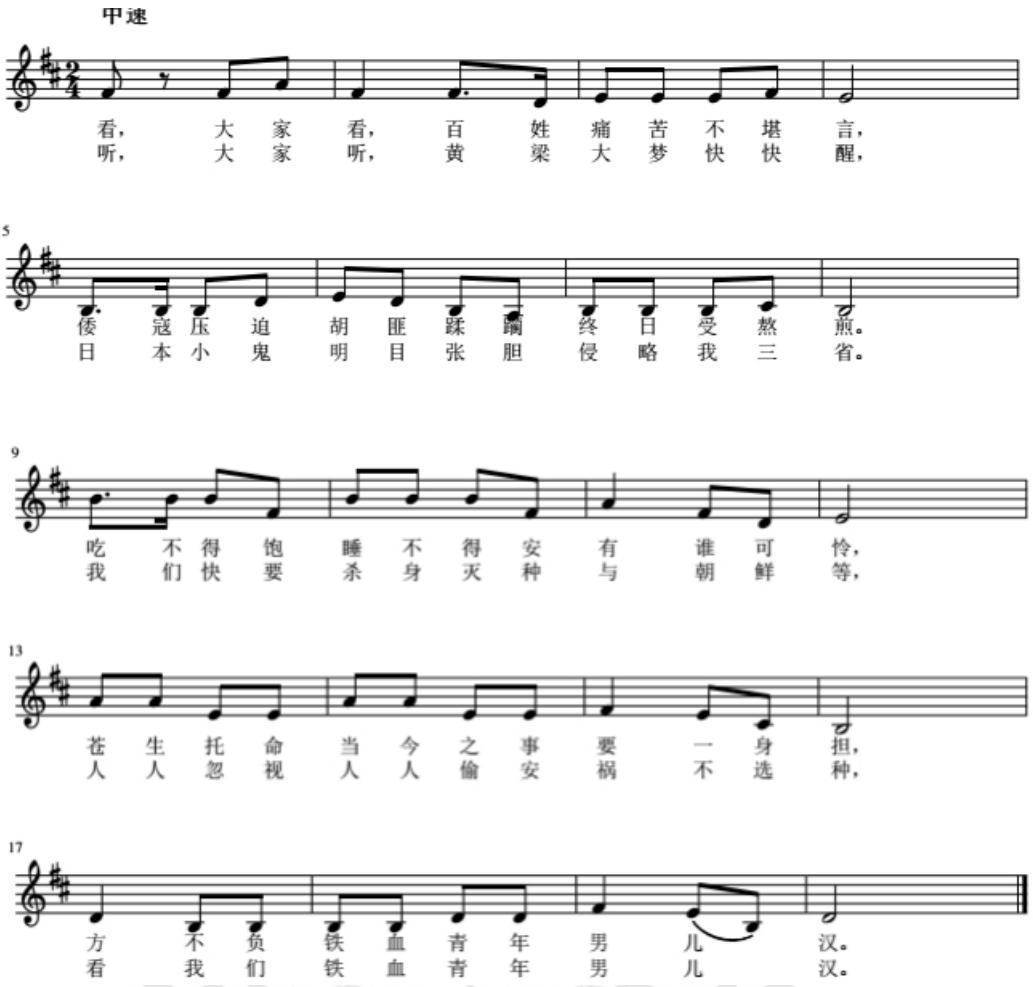


Figure 12 Tiexue Junge (Iron Blooded Army Anthem)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 89.

Lyrics:

kan dajia kan baixing tongku bukan yan wokou yapo hufei rourin zhongri shou aojian chi bude bao shui bude an you shui kelian cangsheng tuoming dangjin zhi shi yao yishen xuan dan fang bufu tiexue qingnian naner han

Look, everyone look, the common people's pain is beyond words. Japanese pirates oppress, bandits ravage, suffering all day. Can't eat enough, can't sleep safely, who has pity? The common people entrust their lives, today's affairs require one to take responsibility. To live up to the iron blooded young men.

ting dajia ting huangliang dameng kuaikuai xing riben xiaogui mingmu zhangdan qinlue wo sansheng women kuai yao shashen miezhong yu chaoxian deng renren hushi renren touan huo bu xuan zhong kan women tiexue qingnian naner han

Listen, everyone listen, the fond dream wake up quickly. The Japanese devils brazenly invade our three provinces. We are about to be exterminated like Korea. Everyone ignores, everyone seeks peace, disaster will not choose. Look at our iron blooded young men.

Composed by Manchu lyricist Miao Kexiu following the 1931 Mukden Incident, this anti Japanese war anthem inspired resistance efforts. Miao, a leader in the Northeast Student Anti Japanese Salvation Association and commander of the "Young Iron Blood Army," was executed by Japanese forces in 1935. Structured as an expanded unitary form with five phrases, the first four resolve in Yu (la based) and Shang (re based) modes, culminating in a Gong (do based) finale to symbolize the people's transition from suffering to determined rebellion. Elderly communities in Liaoning's Xiuyan region still sing this historic piece.

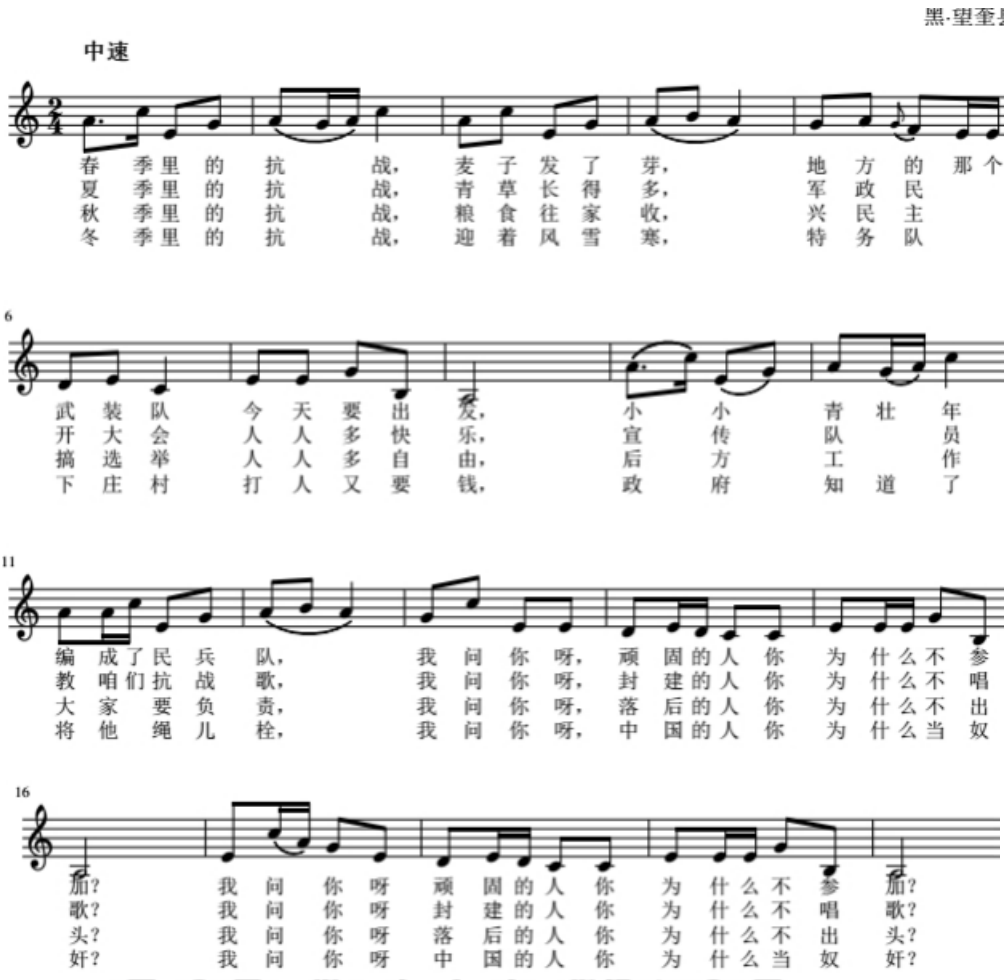


Figure 13 Siji Kangzhan Ge (Four Seasons Resistance Song)

Source: Huang, L., & Shi, G. (1999). Anthology of Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House. p. 139.

Lyrics:

chun ji li de kang zhan mai zi fa le ya di fang de na ge

In spring, during the resistance war, the wheat has sprouted, that of the local area.

wu zhuang dui jin tian yao chu fa xiao xiao qing zhuang nian

The armed team is going to set out today, the young lads.

bian cheng le min bing dui wo wen ni ya wan gu de ren ni wei shen me bu can

Formed into a militia team, I ask you, why don't the stubborn people participate.

jia wo wen ni ya wan gu de ren ni wei shen me bu can jia

Join? I ask you, why don't the stubborn people join?

Effectively mobilizing masses during the Northeast resistance, this narrative work adopts a decomposed song structure tracing seasonal changes. Its expanded unitary form and Yu mode minor style create an approachable, persuasive quality through conversational melodic delivery.

Some historical political songs glorified imperial authority:

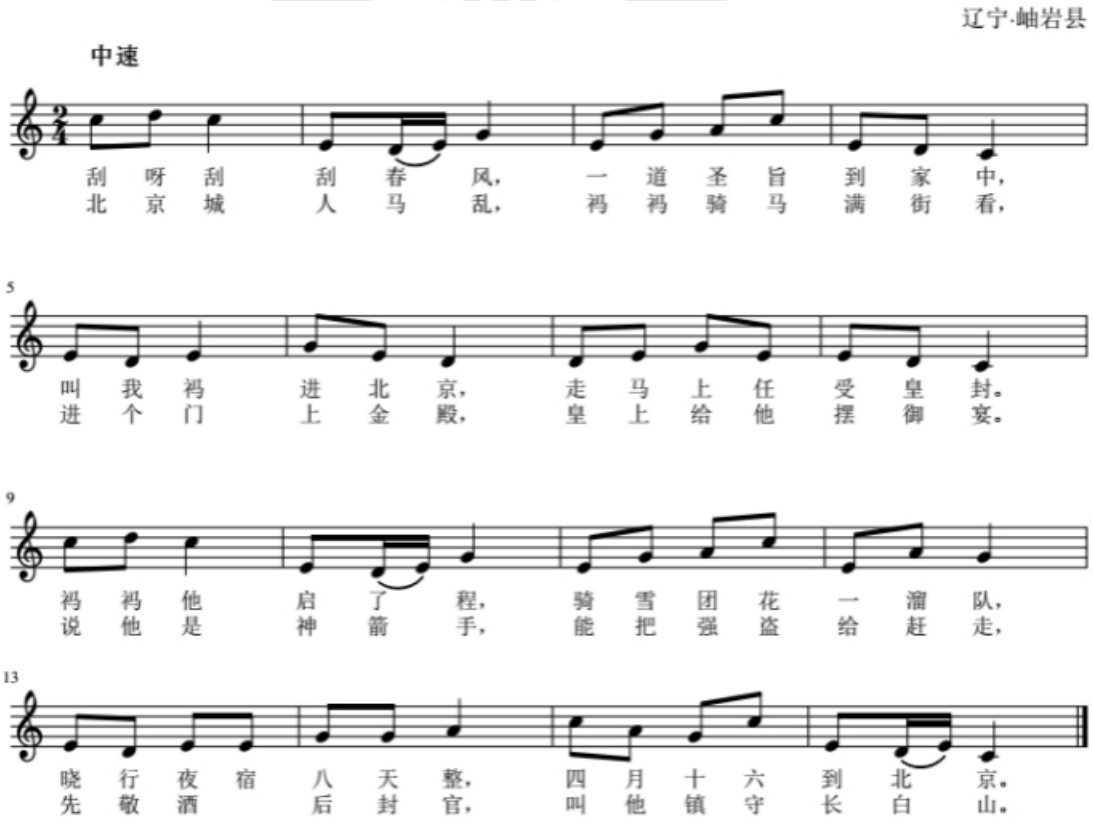


Figure 14 Anjia Shouguo Huangshang Feng (My Family Received Imperial Honors)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 70.

Lyrics: gua ya gua gua chun feng, yi dao sheng zhi dao jia zhong, bei jing cheng gua ren ma luan, feng feng qi ma man jie kan

Scrape, scrape, scrape the spring breeze, an imperial edict arrives at home, in Beijing city, people and horses are in chaos, Feng Feng rides a horse and looks all over the street.

jiao wo feng jin bei jing, zou ma shang ren shou huang feng. jin ge men shang jin dian, huang shang gei ta bai yu yan

Call me Feng to enter Beijing, take office immediately and receive imperial conferment. Enter a gate, go up to the golden hall, the emperor sets a royal banquet for him.

feng feng ta qi le cheng, qi xue tuan hua yi liu dui, shuo ta shi shen jian shou, neng ba qiang dao gei gan zou

Feng Feng sets off on his journey, rides a snow mass flower in a line, say he is a magic archer, can drive the robbers away.

xiao xing ye su ba tian zheng, si yue shi liu dao bei jing. xian jing jiu hou feng guan, jiao ta zhen shou chang bai shan

Travel by day and rest by night for eight full days, arrive in Beijing on the sixteenth of April. First offer wine, then confer official title, order him to guard Changbai Mountain.

This Qing Dynasty era song narrates imperial ceremonies where the emperor personally selected elite troops, depicting the vivid process of recruiting royal guards, summoning generals to the capital for edicts, and bestowing honors based on merit before dispatching them to border defenses. Structured as a balanced binary form, both sections adhere to the Gong mode (do based). Its melody combines imitative upper and lower phrases resembling classical narrative progression (introduction, development, transition, conclusion) with modified concluding phrases intensifying cadential closure for structural cohesion.

In contrast, folk seasonal songs exhibit stark simplicity:

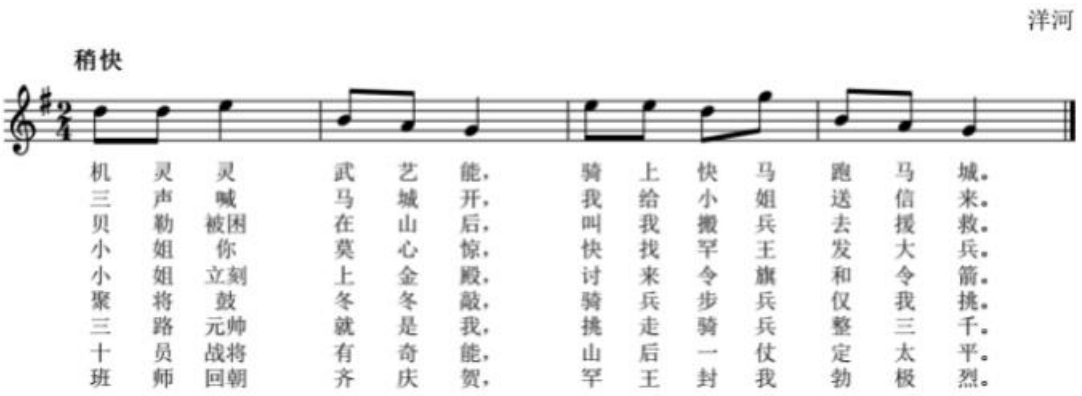


Figure 15 Paomacheng (Fortress Chase)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 74.

Note: "Fortress Chase": A traditional Manchu children's game. "Beile": Jurchen term for "general," later a Qing nobility title.

Lyrics:

ji ling ling wu yi neng, qi shang kuai ma pao ma cheng

Resourceful and skilled in martial arts, ride a fast horse to Pao Ma Cheng.

san sheng han ma cheng kai, wo jiao kuai tao qi tiao shan

Three shouts, Ma Cheng opens, I call for a quick charge to ride and challenge the mountain.

bei jie jie ni li ke, gei wo zhao lai bing zou hou

Sister Bei, immediately, find me soldiers to follow.

bei kun zai mo shang dong, ling bu qi yi feng wang

Trapped in Mo Shang Dong, order the infantry and cavalry to seal the king.

xiao ju jiang yuan shuai zhan, ma jie han ling tiao bing wang

Little Ju Jiang, Marshal's battle, Sister Ma Han orders to select the soldier king.

san shi ban lu yuan shi, jiang lai bing zou hou wang qi

Thirty classes, Road Officer, future soldiers follow the king's flag.

Though categorized as a nursery rhyme, this work profoundly embodies Manchu militaristic values. Its narrative systematically progresses from battle preparations to envisioned victories, functioning as a fantastical political pedagogy that instills martial aspirations through childlike imagination. The melody's single phrase structure, confined to an octave range and resolving on Gong tonic, ensures rhythmic memorability while clarifying its methodical, step by step storytelling.

Anti-Japanese resistance songs from wartime include:

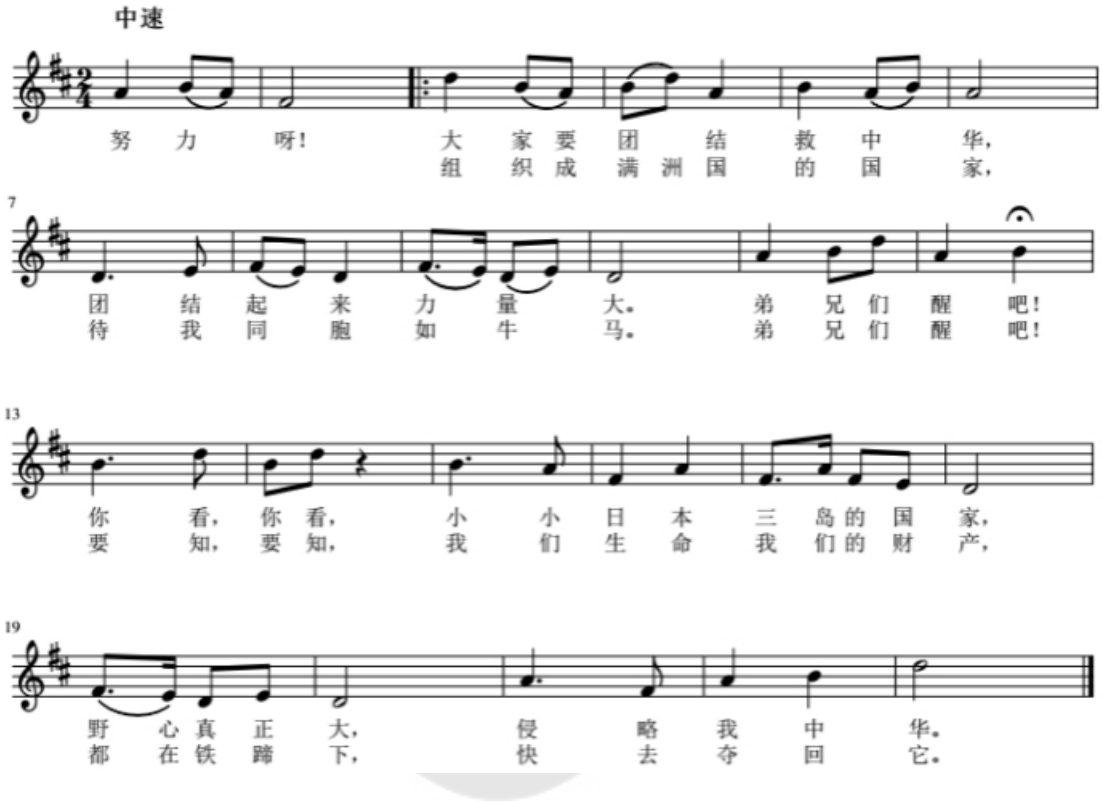


Figure 16 Dajia Tuanjie Jiu Zhonghua (Unite to Save China)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 93.

Lyrics:

nu li ya! da jia yao tuan jie jiu zhong hua, zu zhi cheng man zhou guo de guo jia.

tuan jie qi lai li liang da. di xiong men xing ba! dai wo tong bao ru niu ma. di di xiong men xing ba!

ni kan, ni kan, xiao xiao ri ben, san ben de guo jia, yao zhi, yao zhi, wo men sheng ming wo men de cai chan.

Ye xin zhen zheng da, qin lve wo zhong hua. dou zai tie ti xia, kuai qu duo hui ta.

This anthem carries a potent rallying cry, awakening and uniting people during the arduous years of resistance against Japanese aggression to reclaim lost territories and save the nation. Structured in binary form, it concludes emphatically in Gong mode (do based). Its musically straightforward and memorable style features an expanded cadence that sonically reinforces anti Japanese resolve through deliberate tonal emphasis.

Diverse styles of resistance songs continued to emerge, exemplified by:

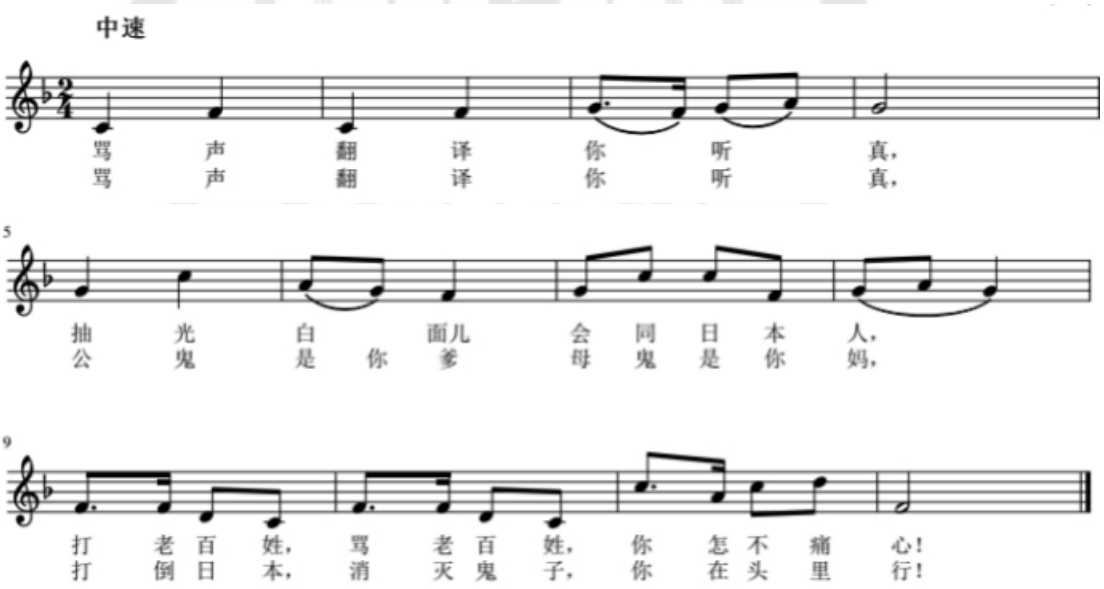


Figure 17 Ma Fanyi (Condemn the Traitors)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 96.

Representing a satirical subgenre of wartime songs, this work humorously channels hatred toward collaborators and traitors through rap like delivery. Its single movement structure comprises three phrases with a Gong mode (do based) conclusion, employing catchy simplicity to amplify its scathing critique of betrayal.

Other compositions expressed aspirations for China's future, such as:

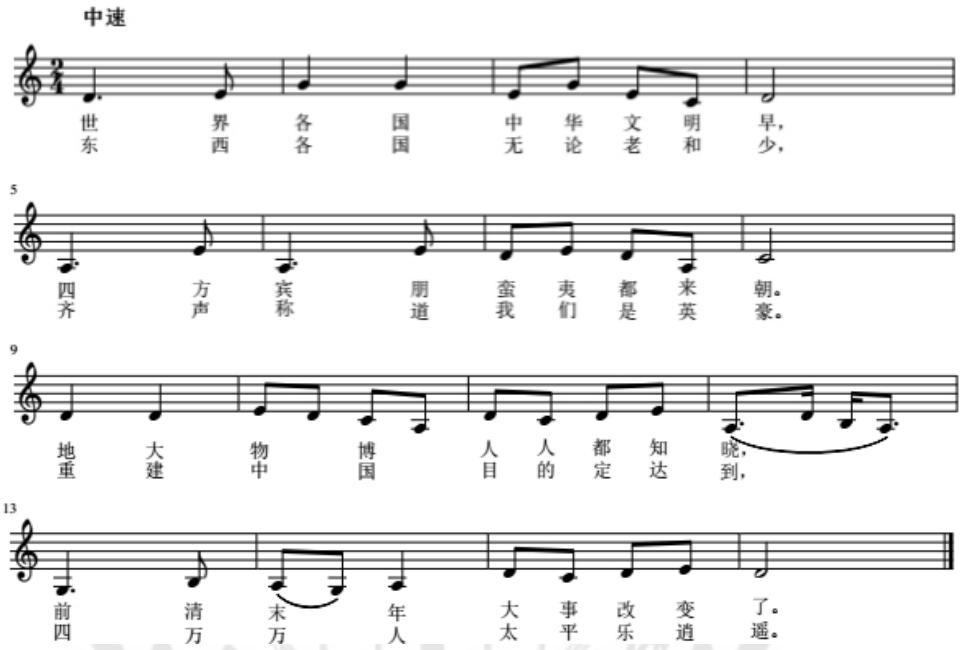


Figure 18 Wenming Zhonghua (Civilized China)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p. 91.

This song circulated during the Anti Japanese War with lyrics originating from Liaoning's Dayingzi region. It adapts a Shaanxi folk melody and originally contained eleven verses, though only two are preserved here. Set to the tune of Three Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention, its lyrics focus on expelling invaders and rebuilding a new China, documenting the era's collective aspirations.

The composition employs a Shang mode (re based) within a unitary structure. Performed in strophic variations across eleven verses, it combines vivid imagery with rhythmic vitality.

Songs emerging during the Liberation War period further articulated these ideals:

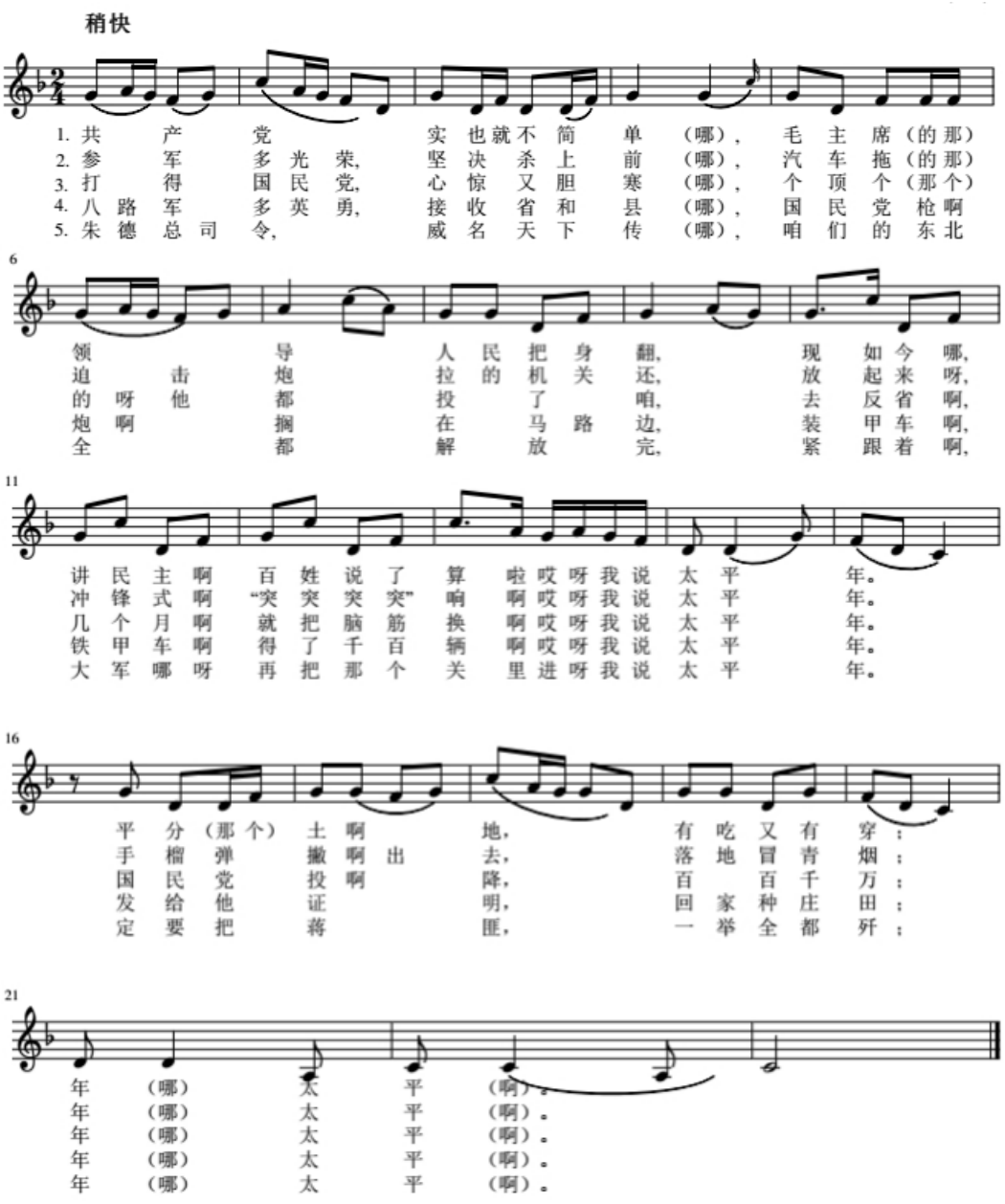


Figure 19 Taiping Nian (Years of Peace)

Source: Selected Manchu folk songs of Xiuyan. (1990). Liaoning Ethnic Publishing House. p.115.

This Liberation War era song encapsulates Northeastern China's jubilation at newfound freedom and aspirations for a prosperous New China, embodying the joy of emerging from prolonged suffering into hope. Incorporating Northeast Yangge folk rhythms and allegro pacing, its song dance performance format mirrors the people's elation at becoming masters of their destiny. Structured as an expanded unitary form in Zhi mode (sol based), the composition spans a tenth interval, following classical narrative progression (introduction, development, transition, conclusion). Extended phrases intensify the cadence, amplifying the triumphant resolution to underscore the era's transformative spirit.

1.1.3 Manchu Traditional Ritual Music

The Manchu people, deeply rooted in ceremonial traditions, observe elaborate rituals during significant occasions such as festivals, weddings, and funerals. These ceremonies vary in nature some are grand, others solemn, some fervent, and many steeped in mystery.

The Manchu incense burning ritual (shaoxiang), a celebratory sacrificial practice, is conducted with exceptional grandeur. It comprises four distinct types: 1) Shaotaipingxiang (Peace Ritual), 2) Shaohuanyuanxiang (Votive Fulfillment Ritual), 3) Shaotaitouxiang (Elevation Ritual), and 4) Shaoguanxiang (Clan Ritual). The first three are family centered, while Shaoguanxiang involves entire clans. Shaotaipingxiang and Shaohuanyuanxiang span three days and nights, Shaotaitouxiang extends to three days and four nights, and Shaoguanxiang lasts seven days and seven nights.

The incense burning and spirit invoking ritual dance (shaoxiang tiaoshen) stands as a foundational Manchu rite. Both commoners and the imperial court adhered to ancestral codes, treating these rituals as the bedrock of ethnic spirituality and collective identity. As exemplified in:

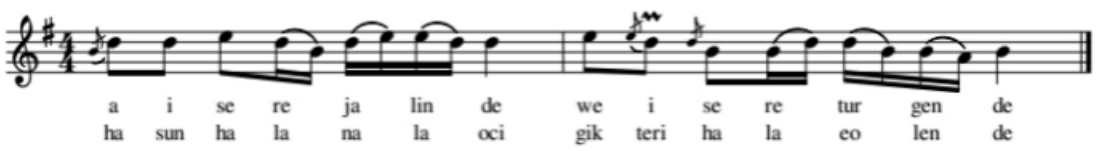


Figure 20 Shaotaiping Xiang Shenge (Divine Chant for the Peace Ritual)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 809.

Lyrics summary: For what cause, for whom? Hasurei Hala the Shi clan worships. Shamans of specific birth years kneel with Shi descendants to venerate Grandmaster Spirits, warrior deities, and ancestral patriarchs. Witness these offerings: Three tiered tributes invite deities from Changbai Mountain.

First Grandmaster (Rat), Second (Tiger), Third (Rabbit), Fourth (Horse), Fifth (Snake), Sixth (Dragon) attend this feast! Grant wisdom, prosperity, and divine protection. (Abridged)

Notes: Daye: Deified shamans. Manni: Ancient warrior gods. Mafa: Manchu for "venerated ancestor."

This ritual chant, commonly used in incense burning ceremonies, employs single phrase structures and improvisational singing to invoke blessings and commemorate ancestors while praying for peace. Set in the Jue mode (mi based) with a narrow fourth interval, its tonal framework is ideally suited for emotional storytelling. Such narrative techniques using a single melodic line with multi stanza lyrics represent characteristic features of shamanic hymns. Another illustrative example follows:

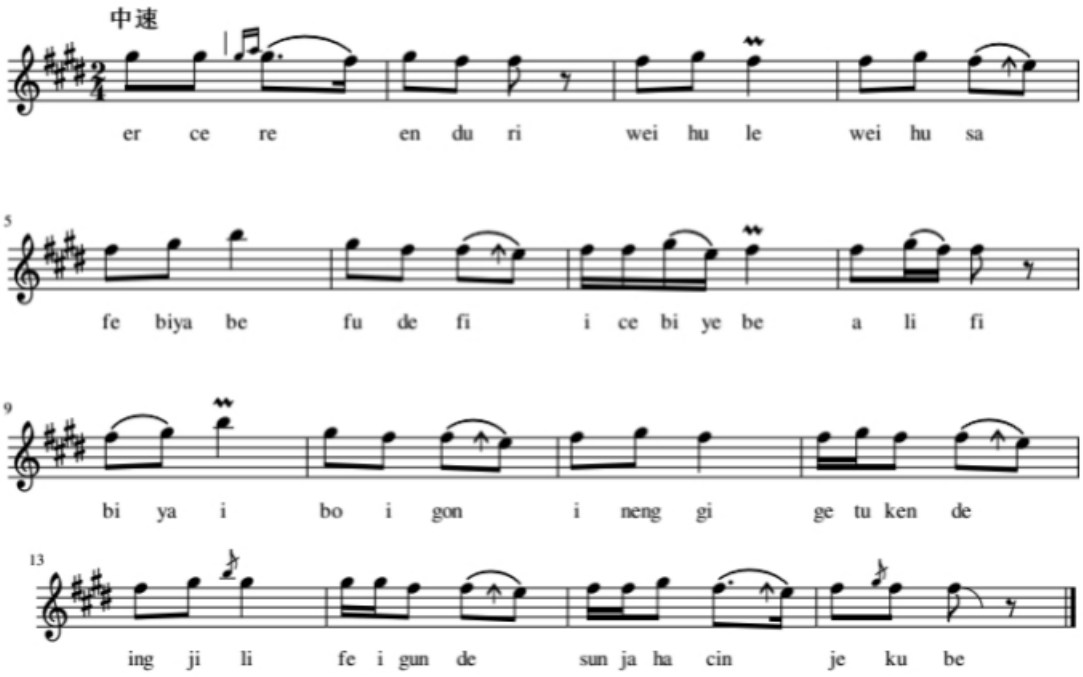


Figure 21 Tiao Shangwu Shenci (Midday Spirit Invocation Liturgy)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 850.

Lyrics summary: To honor deities, we bid the old moon farewell and greet the new. Auspicious grains are hulled, golden millet purified. Through the zhenmi ritual steaming, pounding rice cakes we prepare sacred offerings. May Bodhisattvas grant peace and deliverance from calamity.

Note: Zhenmi: A rice purification ritual involving drumming and ancestral dance before milling.

This ritual hymn adopts a balanced unitary form structured through classical narrative progression (qi cheng zhuan he: introduction, development, transition, conclusion). Centered on the Shang mode (re based), its melodic motion revolves around the Shang tonal nucleus within a fifth interval, ideal for declamatory storytelling. The recitative style delivery, reminiscent of Western operatic recitatives, tightly synchronizes with linguistic cadences to ensure textual clarity and mnemonic impact during ceremonial narrations. Another exemplar follows:

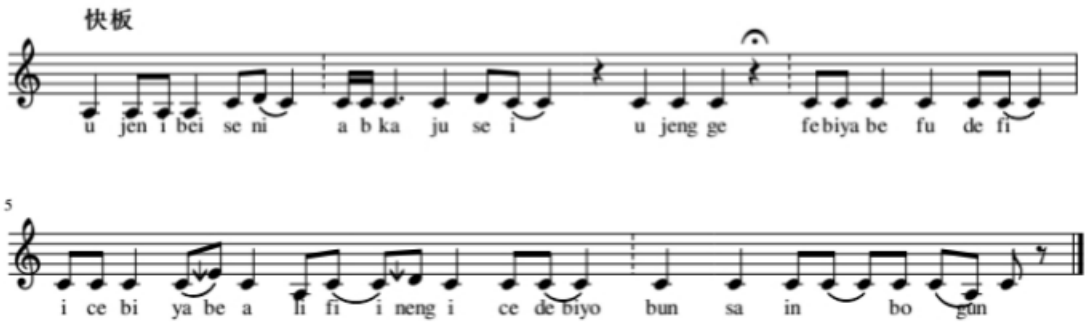


Figure 22 Tiao Bobo Shen (Bread Spirit Dance Chant)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 852.

The lyrics convey: "Reverently worshiping ancestral spirits and celestial deities, bidding farewell to the old moon and welcoming the new, conducting grand rites on this auspicious day, beseeching divine blessings to safeguard descendants' eternal peace."

This simplified chant strongly resembles operatic recitative, employing rap like delivery. Such narrative methods align with the shamanic liturgical style, a universal characteristic of sacred chants across global traditions. The melody utilizes only four tones Yu (la), Gong (do), Shang (re), and Jue (mi) resolving conclusively on the Gong tonic. Another example follows:

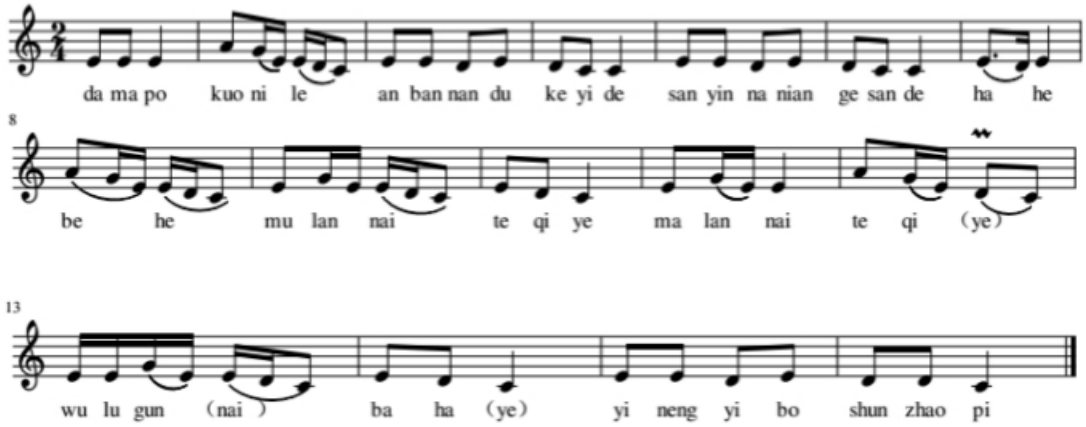


Figure 23 Baijianzi (Ritual Offering Chant)

Source: Huang, L., & Shi, G. (1999). Anthology of Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House. p. 229.

Lyrics Summary: On the fifth day of a lunar month, incense burning rituals accompany celebratory events. Amidst firecrackers and drumbeats, the household reverently invokes the White Mountain deities (sacred figures in the shamanic pantheon). Men and women of the family devoutly present offerings, culminating in the sacrifice of a fully black boar to secure domestic harmony and prosperity.

(Note: The "fully black boar" symbolizes purity in Manchu sacrificial traditions, believed to enhance ritual efficacy when offered to ancestral spirits.)

Belonging to the Shaotaipingxiang (Peace Ritual) tradition, this hymn features enhanced melodic contours compared to earlier works. Each phrase adopts tail concealing, head omitting phrasing (cangwei qutou), resolving on the Gong tonic within a sixth interval, intensifying linguistic musicality and Shamanic mystique.

Structured as a three-phrase unitary composition with parallel phrasing and uniform cadences, its mnemonic design echoes Mongolian narrative singing (Khoomei), facilitating melodic retention. Another illustration:

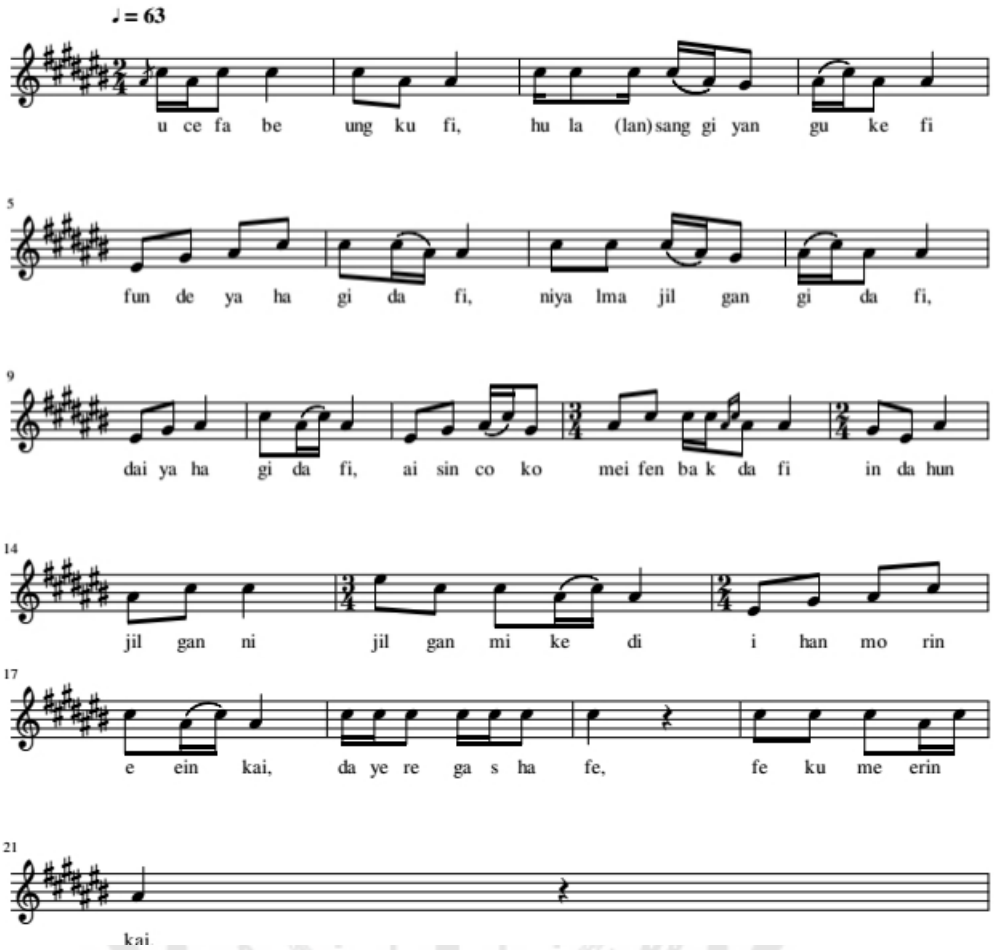


Figure 24 Beideng Diao (Lamp Bearing Tune)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1995). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Liaoning volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 692.

Lyrics summary: As dusk descends, doors and windows close. Hearth fires dim, furnaces extinguish the hour when birds retire, serpents coil, and silence reigns. Roosters nestle, hounds quiet, livestock rest Hasurei Hala the Guan clan observes. (Abridged)

This Beideng (Lamp Bearing) ritual chant, practiced universally across Manchu society during the Qing era, honors stellar deities and night guardians through "star alignment" ceremonies. Conducted in deep nocturnal stillness, the ritual culminates in communal feasting were clansmen bond over shared meals, embodying primal unity.

Musically paralleling previous examples, it features five phrases with identical cadential patterns. However, its tonal resolution alternates between Gong (do) and Yu (la), reflecting the pentatonic system's prevalence in Manchu liturgy where Gong and Yu modes dominate. Another instance follows:

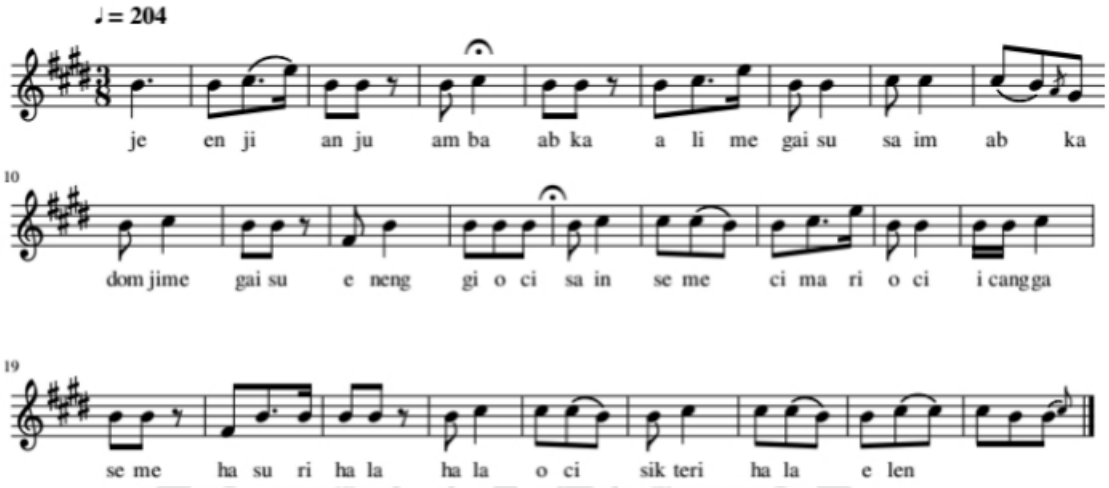


Figure 25 Ji Tian (Celestial Sacrifice Chant)

Source: National Editorial Board of Chinese Folk Song Anthology. (1997). Chinese ethnic and folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center Publishing. p. 879.

Lyrics summary: Zhe... Peace! Peace! May Heaven heed our plea. Beneath the solemn firmament, guided by the vast azure, we welcome the Ninefold Heavens. On this propitious morn, Hasurei Hala the Shi clan kneels, inquiring birth year taboos for shamans, offering homage to celestial powers. (Abridged)

This hymn accompanies Manchu sacrifices to Abuka Siduri, the supreme cosmic deity in the Shamanic pantheon. Rituals involve erecting a sacred pole (nianganzi) in courtyards, symbolizing divine communication. Shamans channel celestial decrees through this "cosmic axis," reinforcing communal aspirations for prosperity and cohesion.

Structurally mirroring earlier chants, its expanded unitary form comprises five phrases resolving on Zhi (sol) tones. This uniform cadential framework typifies shamanic recitative traditions, where musical coherence amplifies ritualistic storytelling.

1.1.4 Manchu Folk Life Music

The Manchu people's historical lifestyle centered on fishing, hunting, and agriculture shaped their rugged, forthright character, giving rise to vibrant folk songs that authentically reflect these cultural traits. Examples include:

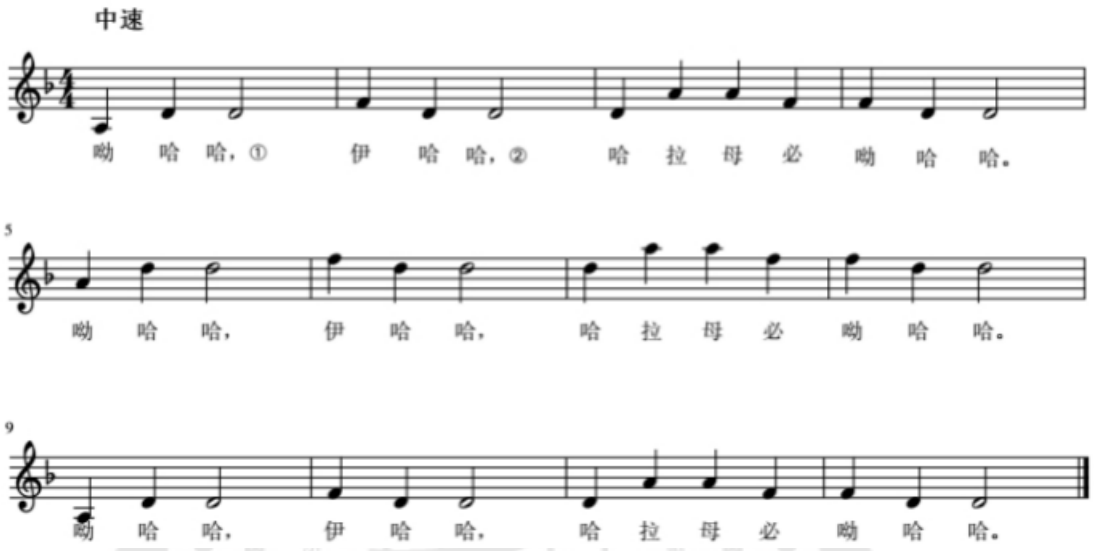


Figure 26 La Wang Diao (Net Hauling Chant)

Source: Huang, L., & Shi, G. (1999). Anthology of Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House. p. 33.

Note: "Yo haha" and "Yi haha": Manchu vocables without semantic meaning. "Halamubi": Manchu term meaning "to strive diligently."

This fishing chant embodies the decomposition of Yu mode (la based) arpeggios. Ascending melodic progressions channel aspirations for prosperity and joy through rhythmic calls, mirroring the physical exertion and communal spirit of net casting labor.

Structured as a three phase unitary composition, its first and second phrases repeat across octave registers, akin to developmental techniques in ternary forms. The third phrase recapitulates the initial motif (A B A'), sonically echoing perseverance amid harsh natural environments, whether icy winters or scorching summers.

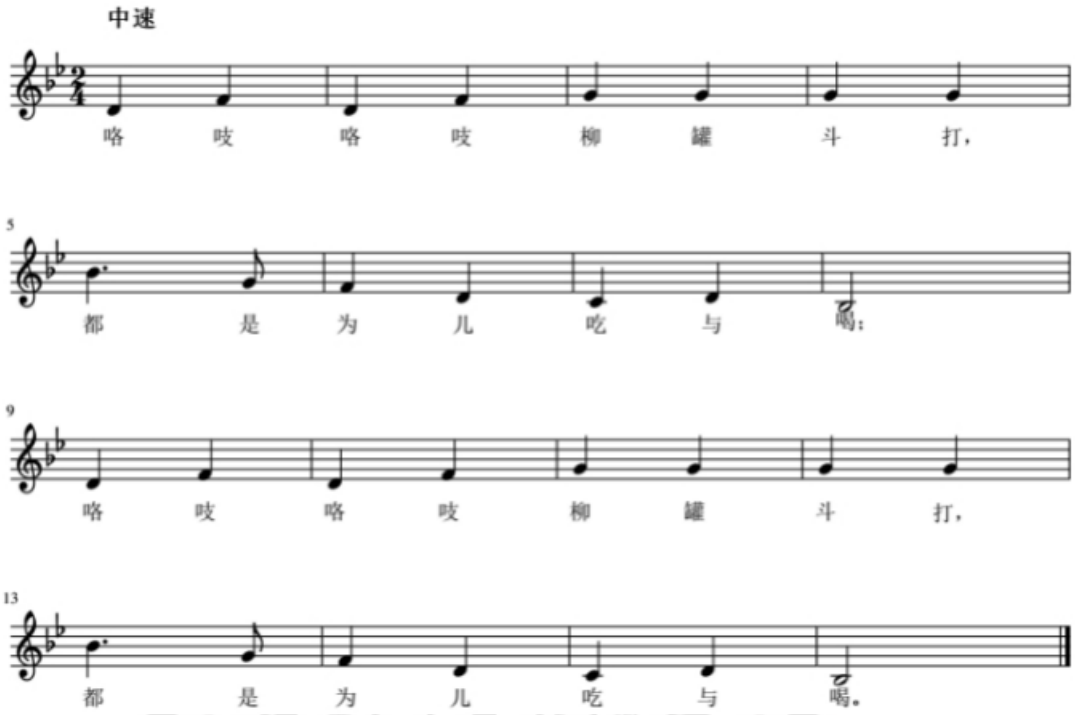


Figure 27 Da Shui Ge (Water Fetching Song)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This life song illustrates traditional water drawing methods using willow buckets. Its binary unitary form features repetitive phrases with Gong mode (do based) cadences, capturing the rhythmic simplicity and contentment of daily labor through unadorned, flowing melodies.

Numerous folk songs preserve Manchu customs, offering modern audiences glimpses into historical lifeways:

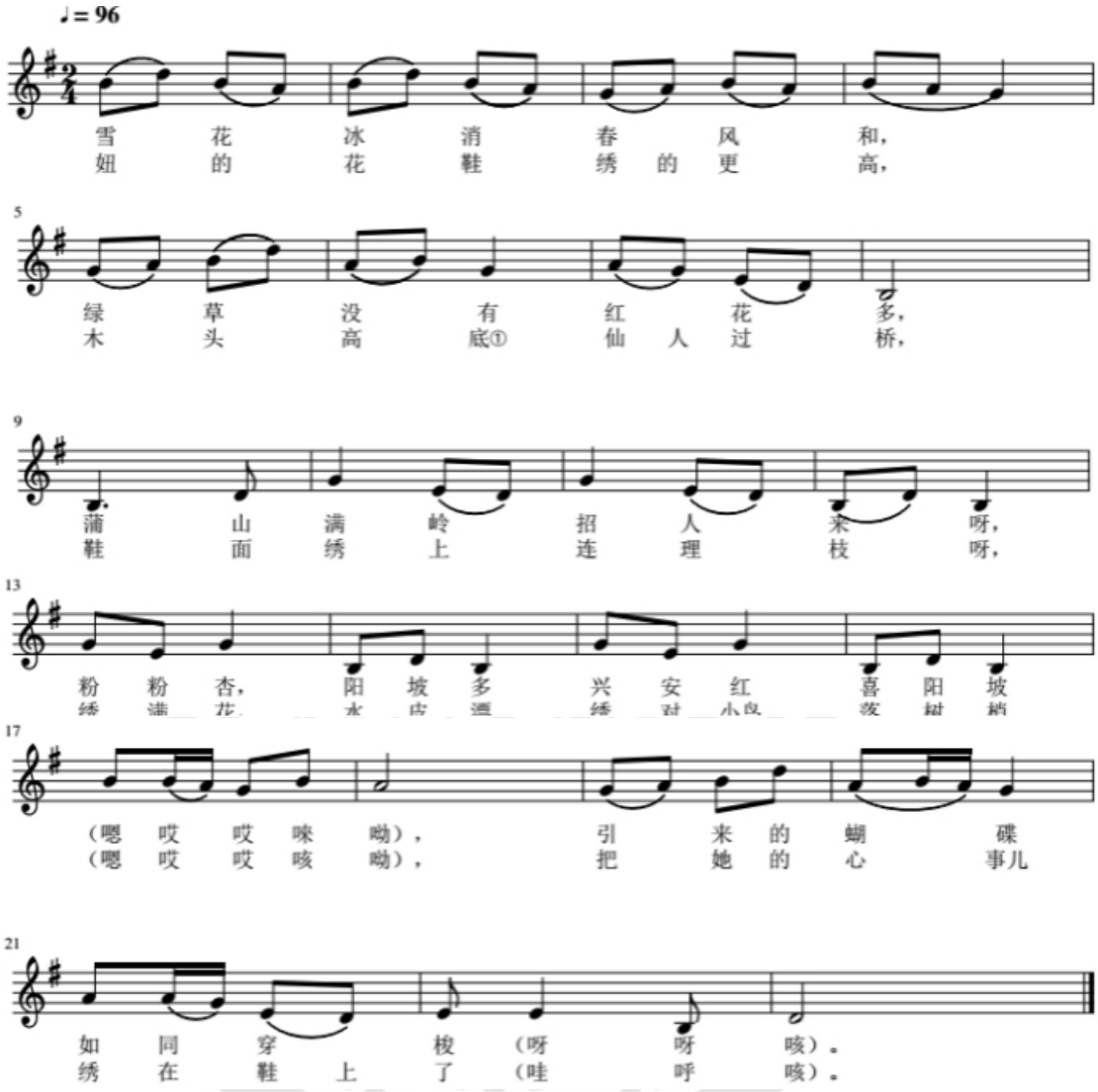


Figure 28 Guan Hua (Flower Viewing Ballad)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center.

Dual narratives intertwine in this work: admiration for natural flora and praise for embroidered patterns on women's shoes. Layered descriptions mirror meticulous observation, akin to traditional Chinese gongbi (detailed) and xieyi (freehand) painting styles, evoking spring's vitality.

The expanded unitary structure begins with a Gong tonic foundation, transitions via Jue (mi) cadences, incorporates Shang (re) tonal pivots, and ultimately

resolves in Zhi mode (sol based), utilizing dominant tonic relationships to drive harmonic progression.

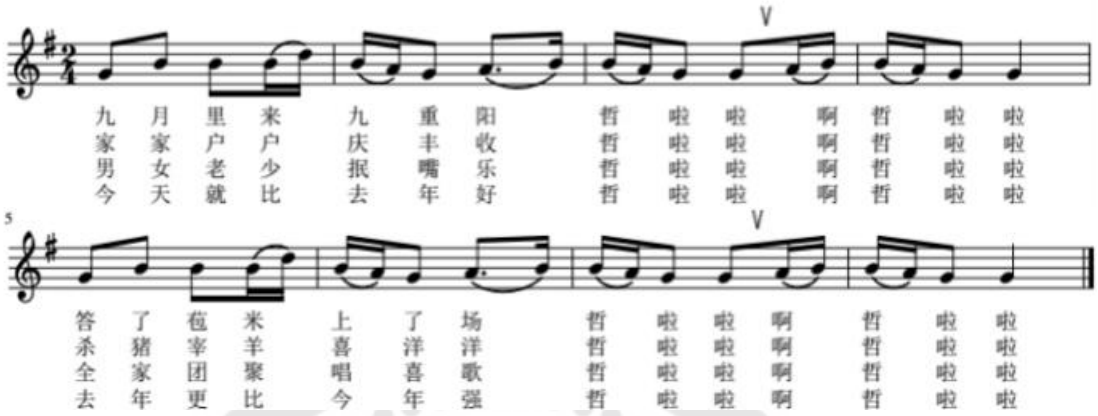


Figure 29 Xi Ge (Joyous Celebration Song)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This harvest blessing chant employs lively melodies to convey communal jubilation during abundant seasons. Structured as parallel dual phrases, its sustained exuberance is amplified by Manchu vocables (zhelala a, zhelala), seamlessly integrating into the festive atmosphere. The melody, spanning a fifth interval, oscillates within the Gong mode (do based) tonal framework, commencing and resolving on the Gong tonic.

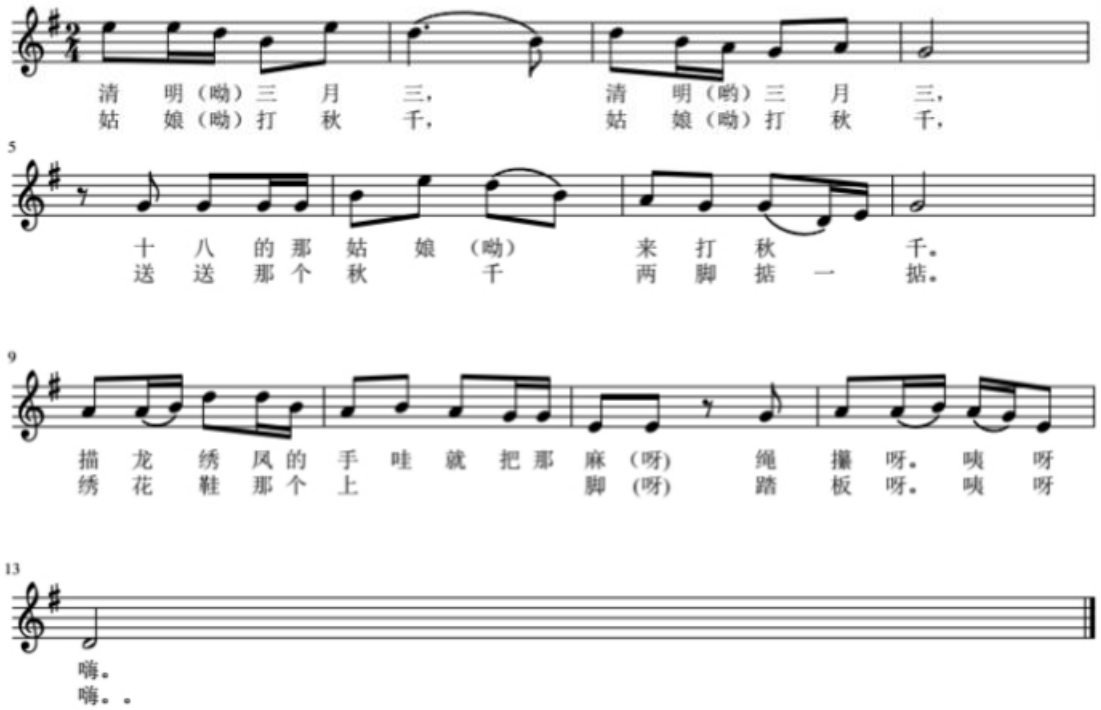


Figure 30 Da Qiuqian (Swinging Tune)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

Depicting girls' joyful swing playing during Qingming Festival, this three phrase unitary composition features Gong mode cadences in its initial phrases and a Zhi mode (sol based) resolution in the expanded final phrase. Spanning a ninth interval with dynamic melodic contours, it vividly captures the Manchu people's zest for life through its songful vitality.

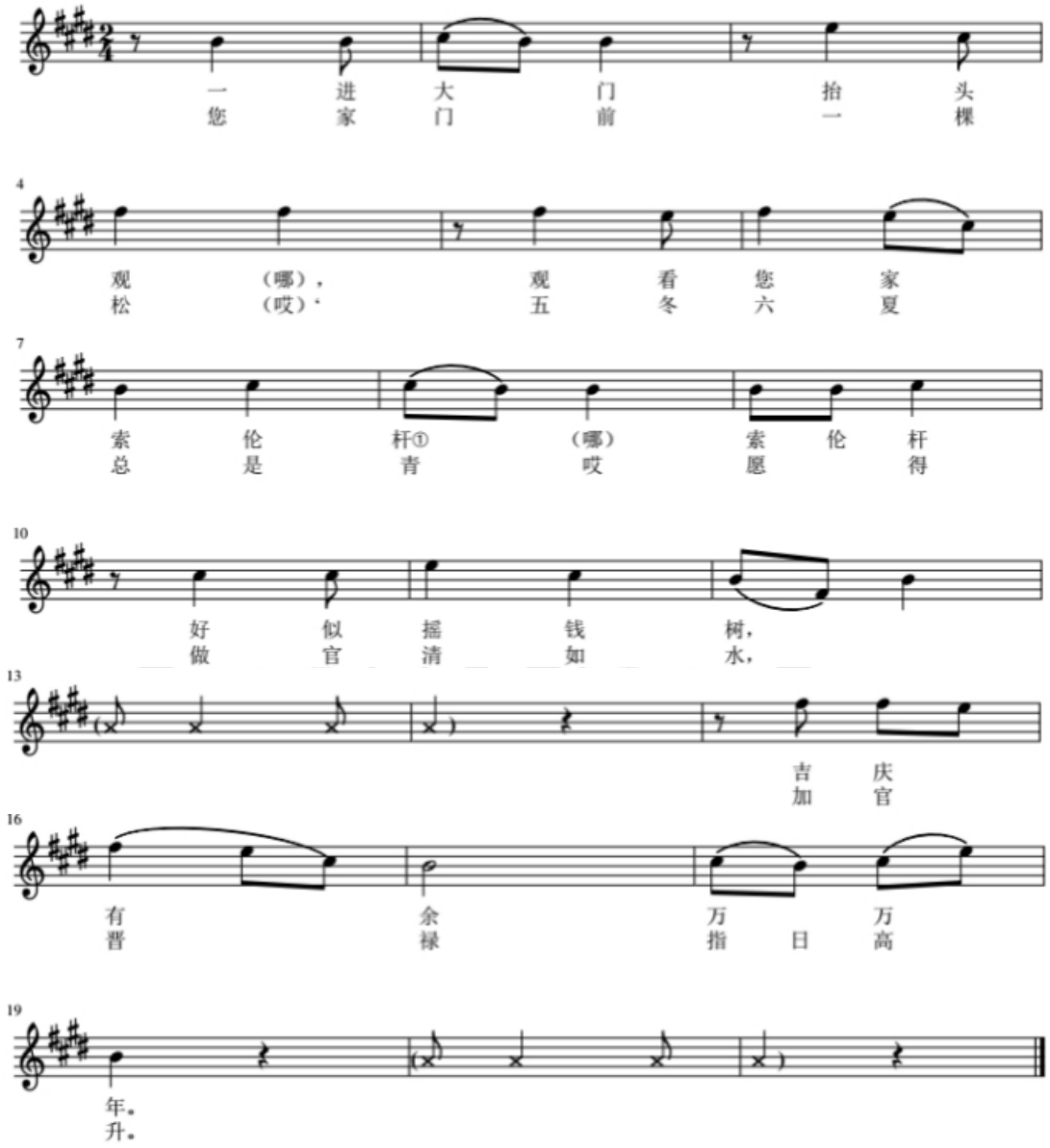


Figure 31 Bainian Ge (New Year Greeting Song)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

Note: Suolun Pole: A ritual wooden pole historically erected in Manchu courtyards for celestial communication. Approximately seven feet tall with a bowl like

diameter, it featured a tin or wooden cup atop two stone bases, symbolizing shamanic dialogue with deities.

This song documents New Year visitation customs among Manchu communities, practiced from Lunar New Year's Day through the Lantern Festival (15th day). Its asymmetrical unitary structure comprises four phrases spanning an octave, following classical narrative progression (introduction, development, transition, conclusion). Set in Zhi mode with Yangge inspired melodies and percussive accompaniments, the music radiates festive warmth, showcasing the Manchu affinity for song dance traditions.

Manchu folk repertoire also includes works reflecting social hardships:

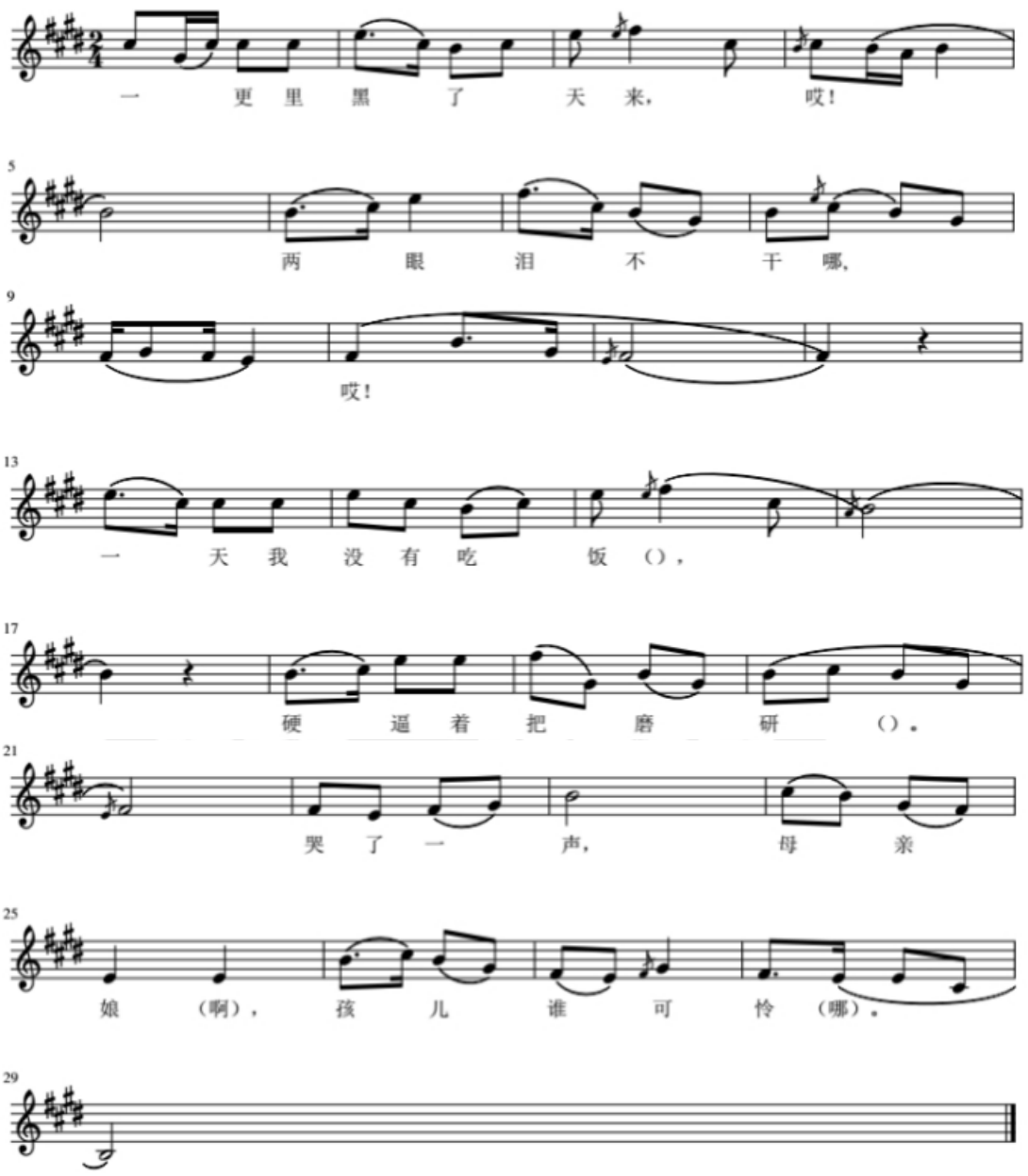


Figure 32 Ku Wugeng (Midnight Lament)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This song poignantly exposes indentured laborers' suffering in pre revolutionary society. Its winding, melancholic melody intensifies grief through melismatic phrases trailing each line. Structured as an asymmetrical five phrase unitary

composition spanning a twelfth interval, the music employs dramatic ornamentation to emulate wailing. The Zhi mode (sol based) is established by the first phrase's cadence, followed by Shang (re) tonal pivots in the second phrase. Alternations between Zhi and Shang culminate in a conclusive Zhi resolution, mirroring cyclical despair.

Other lament genres, such as grave wails (kufen) and prolonged mourning chants (kujiuchang), articulate sorrow during funerary rites:

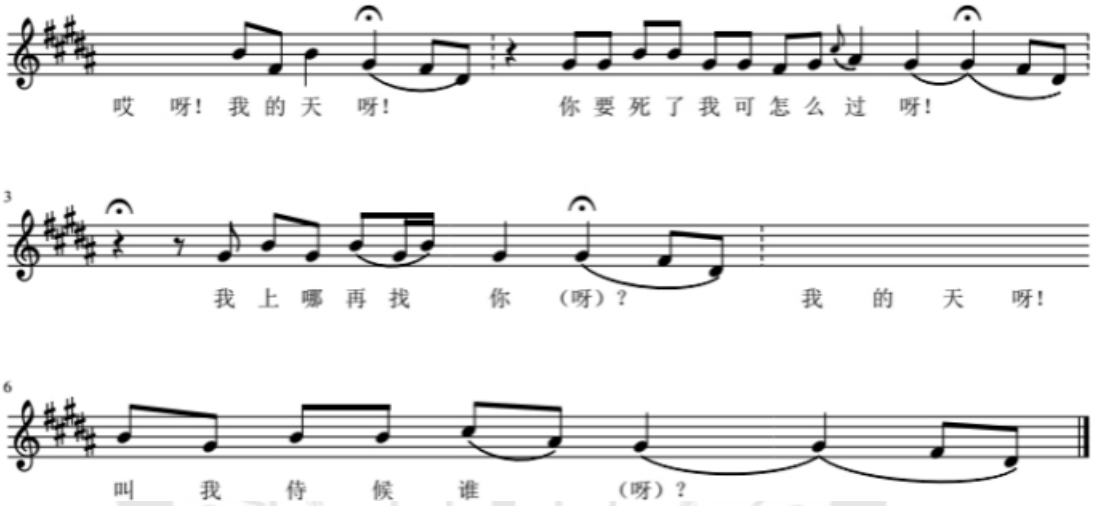


Figure 33 Ku Zhangfu Diao (Widow's Lament)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This work chronicles a widow's anguish through rubato melodies that mimic sobbing. The free metered, plaintive vocal lines authentically replicate funeral wailing traditions. Its four phase structure loosely follows narrative progression (introduction, development, transition, conclusion), with descending melodic contours amplifying desolation. Brief pauses on Jue mode (mi based) cadences evoke choked like breaks, while strategic rests mirror breathless grief silences that resonate deeper than sound.

1.1.5 Manchu Love Songs

Manchu folk songs boast a rich repertoire of love themed compositions, varying in style and form across regions. Performed predominantly as lyrical solos (xiaochang), these melodies range from tender and melancholic to jubilant and

impassioned, often centering on longing a reflection of the warrior culture's emotional depth and yearning for romantic fulfillment. Examples include:

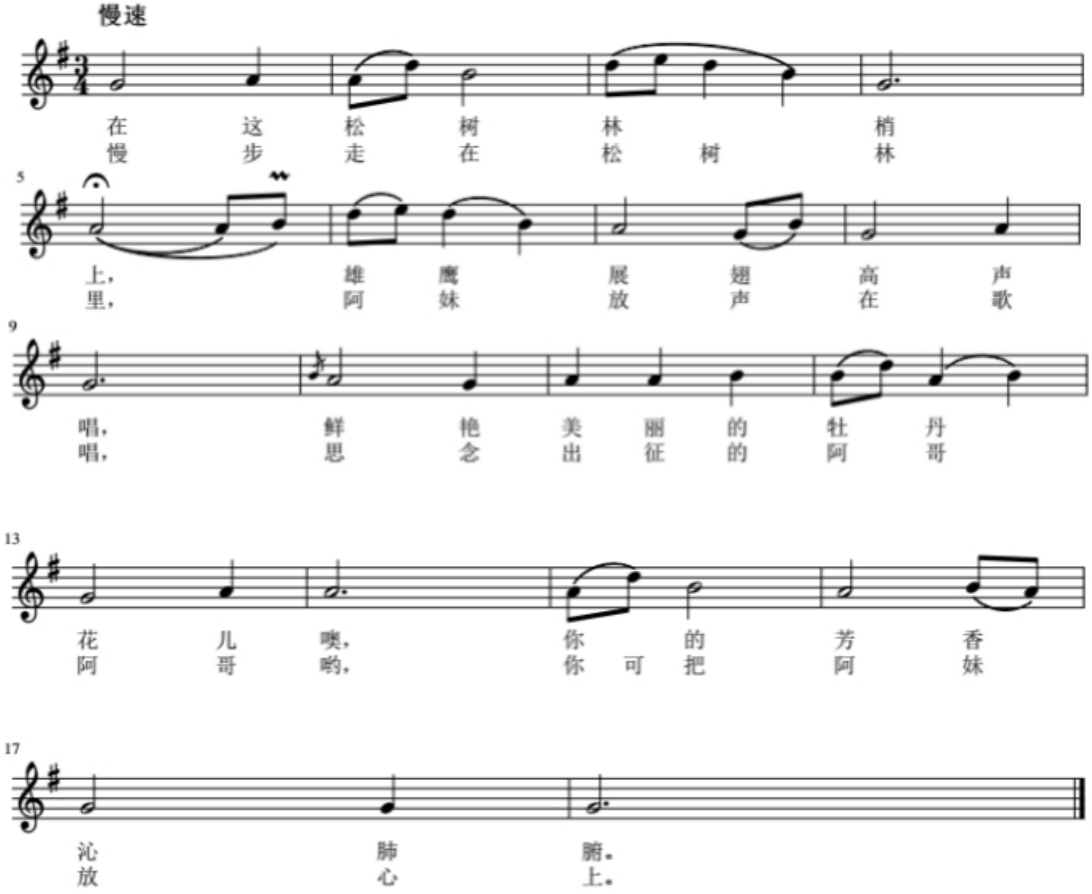


Figure 34 Huainian Age (Longing for Age)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This song expresses a maiden's longing for her beloved conscripted into military service (Age: Manchu honorific for young men). Structured as a unitary form with four asymmetrical phrases spanning a sixth interval, its winding melody follows qi cheng zhuan he (introduction, development, transition, conclusion). Alternating cadences on Shang (re) and Gong (do) culminate in a Gong tonic resolution. The cyclical 5+4 bar phrasing creates an intimate, heartrending progression.

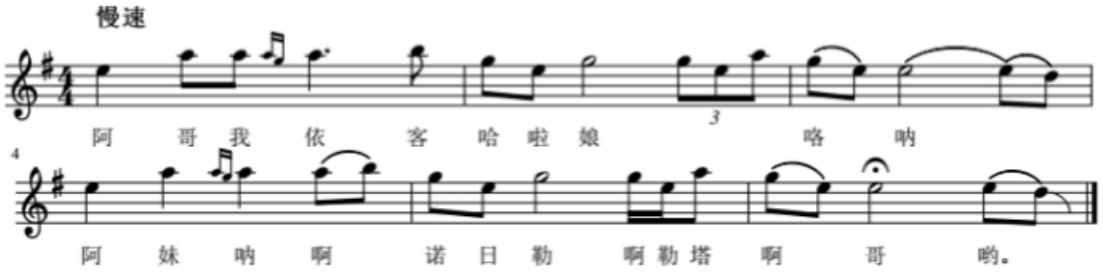


Figure 35 Deng Age (Waiting for Age)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Lyrics summary: "Age has gone wrestling with the men, leaving me, his little sister, waiting by the pine grove."

This song captures a Manchu maiden's devotion and purity during courtship. Its binary unitary structure begins with Yu (la) and Shang (re) tones, resolving on Zhi (sol) in each phrase a musical sigh mirroring her patient yearning.

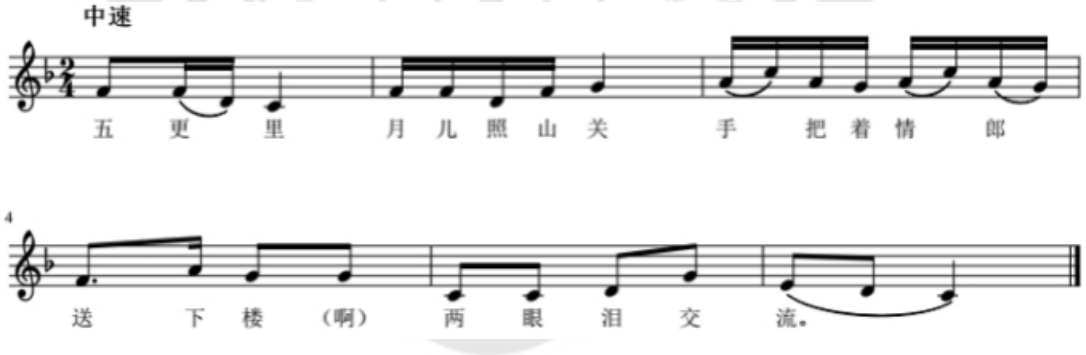


Figure 36 Qinglang Wugeng (Lover's Midnight Chant)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This song conveys a maiden's anguish after parting from her lover at dawn. Though concise in its two line structure, its single phrase unitary composition spans an octave. The melody commences on the Gong tonic (do), passes through Yu (la) with a fleeting pause on Zhi (sol), ascends back to Gong, then descends to Yu and lingers

briefly on Shang (re). These transient pauses mimic linguistic commas, followed by two identical melodic loops returning to Gong. The circuitous progression winding through Jue (mi), Shang, Zhi, Yu, and bian Gong (raised fa) ultimately resolves on Zhi, its sorrowful twists piercing the heart.

Manchu love songs also feature male perspectives:

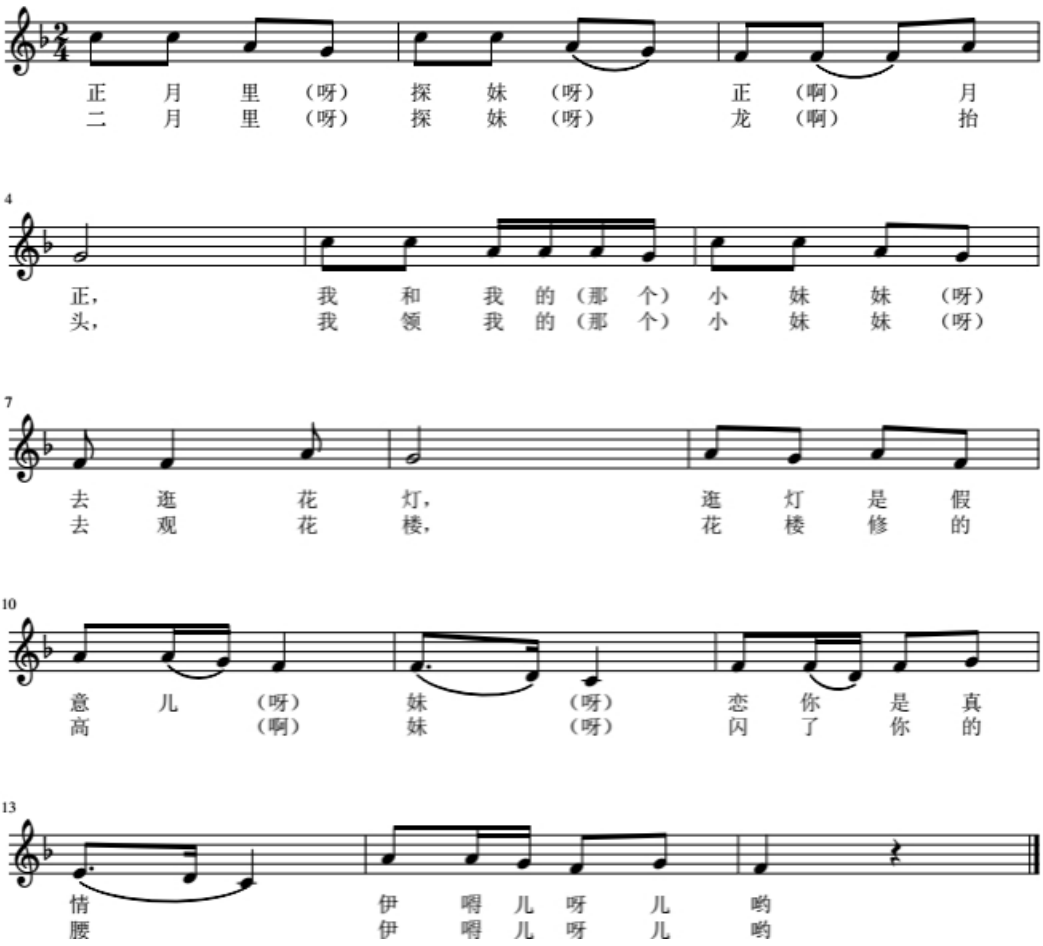


Figure 37 Tanmei (Courting the Maiden)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This love song radiates humor and playfulness, depicting romantic tension between a suitor (Age) and his beloved (Amei) during a lantern festival, concluding with witty banter. Joyful vocables at phrase endings amplify its lighthearted spirit.

Structured as a three phrase unitary composition, the first two phrases span four bars each, while the expanded final phrase extends to seven bars enhancing rhythmic vitality. Initial phrases resolve in Shang mode (re based), while the finale reiterates Zhi (sol) tones twice before settling on the Gong tonic (do), creating dynamic tonal interplay. Another example follows:

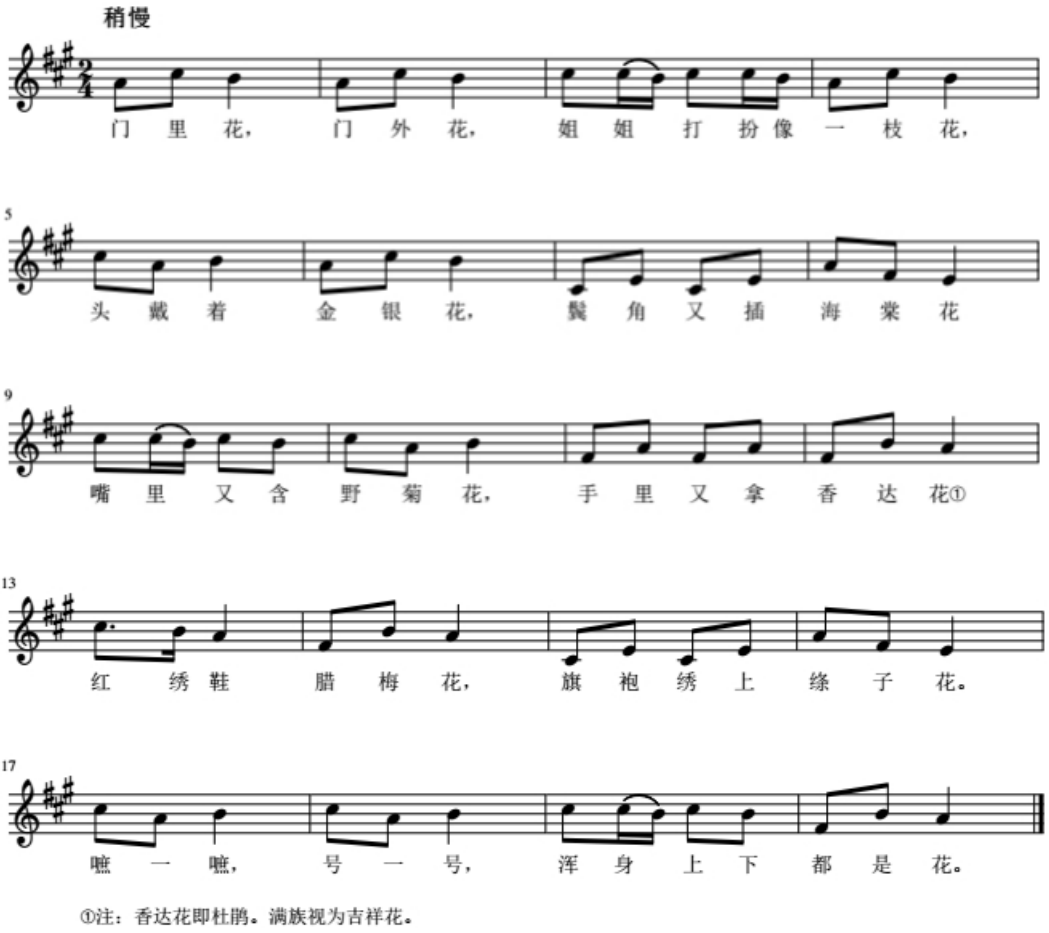


Figure 38 Jie Shi Yizhihua (Sister is a Blossom)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This love song metaphorically equates feminine beauty to floral elegance, reflecting Manchu youths' adoration for blossoms embodied in floral headdresses,

garments, and embroidered qipao patterns. Such floral symbolism crafts both a romantic ode and a vivid portrait of beauty.

Structured as a five phrase unitary composition, its melody employs "head concealing, tail omitting" phrasing. Cadences progress sequentially: first phrase on Shang (re), second on Zhi (sol), third on Gong (do), fourth returning to Zhi, and final resolution on Gong. The opening melodic cycle (Gong Jue Shang) evolves in the second phrase with Jue (mi) leaping to a lower octave, dynamically animating the coquettish imagery. This playful motif repeats until closure.

Other love songs adopt mountain folk styles:

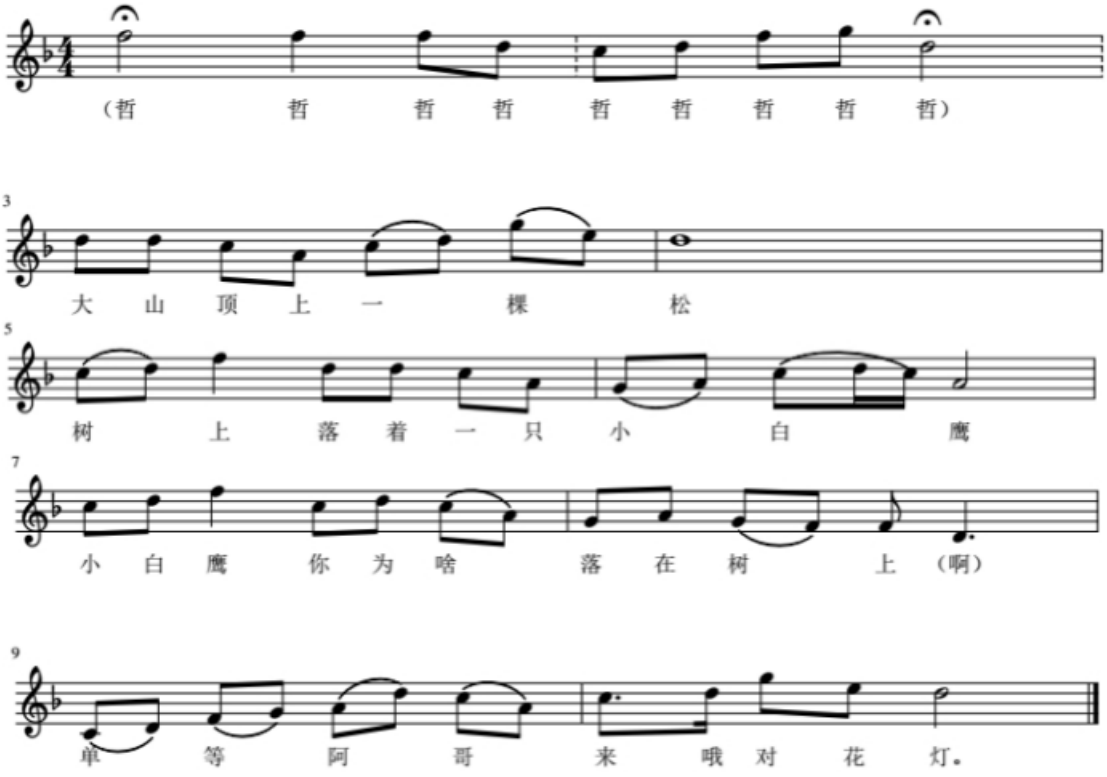


Figure 39 Fangshan Ge (Mountain Herding Song)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This love song begins with free rhythm vocalization (sanban), marked by the interjection "Zhe..."a vocable conveying emotional emphasis. It allegorizes lovers

through imagery of evergreen pines and white eagles, capturing a maiden's restless anticipation for her beloved's return.

Structured as a unitary composition, the introductory free rhythm section functions as a prelude. The first phrase establishes the Yu mode (la based), modulates to its dominant Jue (mi), transitions to a lower octave Yu in the third phrase, and ultimately resolves on Yu. Warmly lyrical, the second and third phrases engage in imitative counterpoint. The cadence ascends dramatically from the lowest Zhi (sol) to a twelfth interval climax before resolving on Yu, mirroring the maiden's escalating anxiety through undulating melodic tension.

Early Manchu love songs also included simpler forms:

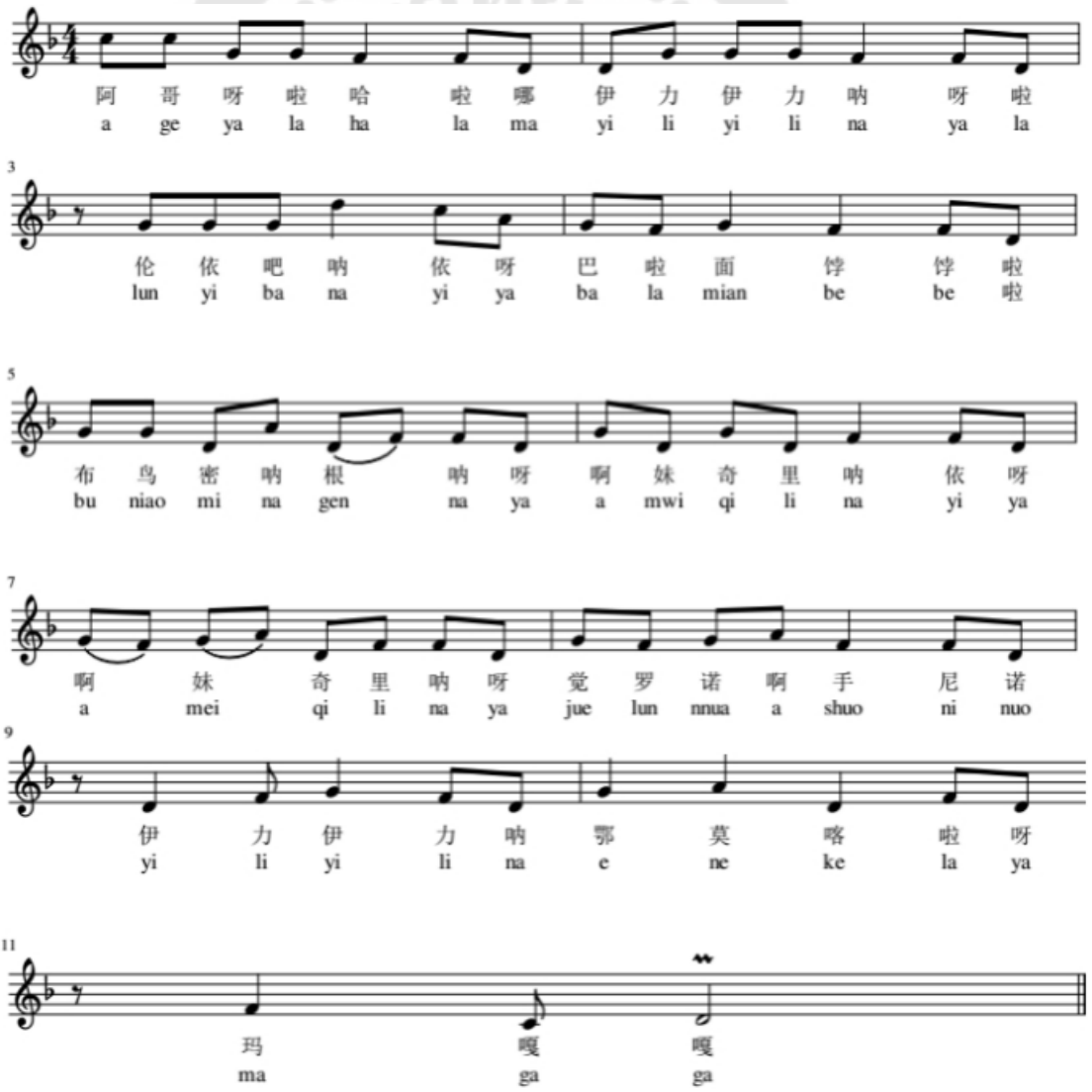


Figure 40 Xiaodongyang Diao (Little Eastern Tune)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Lyrics summary: "My dear Age (beloved), rise and awaken! Ah, the oat dumplings are steaming, and the lamb shank is tender. Little sister bows to you your belt and fish leather coat await. Time to fish on the lake, truly unavoidable!"

Note: The Dongyang Diao originated from narrative chants of the Mohe people (Manchu ancestors inhabiting the eastern coasts). Absorbed into Manchu opera Zhuchiwen during the mid Qianlong era, it became part of the Handulechun repertoire performed at imperial hunting lodges. Four melodic variants (qupai) were cyclically used, some preserved in Rehe Errenzhuan folk opera pieces like Xia Nantang.

This Xiaodongyang Diao, sung in Manchu by women to rouse their lovers for labor, reflects both feminine diligence and domestic prosperity. Its vocables overflow with affectionate urgency, embedding the maiden's gentleness and devotion within pragmatic appeals.

Musically structured as an expanded unitary form with five phrases, the composition establishes its Zhi mode (sol based) tonality in the opening phrase, descending through Shang (re) and Gong (do) to resolve softly on Yu (la). Phrases 2 4 employ truncated sequential progressions ("head omitting, tail concealing"), while the finale ascends from a rest punctuated low Yu, traversing Gong, Shang, Yu, and Jue (mi), before a syncopated cadence leaps from Gong to Zhi and settles conclusively on Yu. The sprightly melodies perfectly encapsulate this blend of coaxing charm and pragmatic romance.

1.1.6 Manchu Children's Music

Manchu nursery rhymes constitute a vital component of the ethnic group's cultural development, serving pedagogical and moral functions throughout childhood. These songs fall into two categories: spontaneous play chants sung during children's games and Youyou Diao (lullaby like "crooning tunes") improvised by mothers or

grandmothers to soothe infants. Passed down generations over centuries, these rhymes have evolved significantly in rhythmic complexity, melodic phrasing, and modal tonal sophistication. You Yaoche (Rocking Cradle) exemplifies quintessential Manchu children's music:

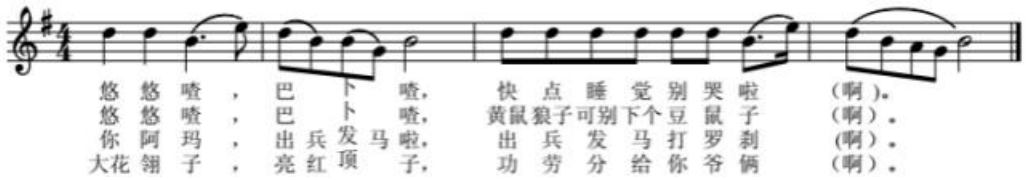


Figure 41 You Yaoche (Rocking Cradle)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Note:

(doushuzi): A field mouse species (Microtus).

(Ama): Manchu term for "father."

(Luocha): Historical Chinese term for Tsarist Russia.

This You Yaoche from Jilin Province exemplifies the Youyou Diao lullaby tradition, sung by mothers or grandmothers to lull infants. Its lyrics adhere to the fa hua rhyming scheme, enhanced by the concluding vocable "a" for phonetic cohesion. Though thematically simple, its charm lies in childlike innocence and rhythmic memorability.

Musically structured as a binary phrase unitary composition, it employs varied sequential phrasing within a sixth interval. The gentle, unembellished melody follows pentatonic development, cadencing on the Jue tone (mi). Another variation follows:

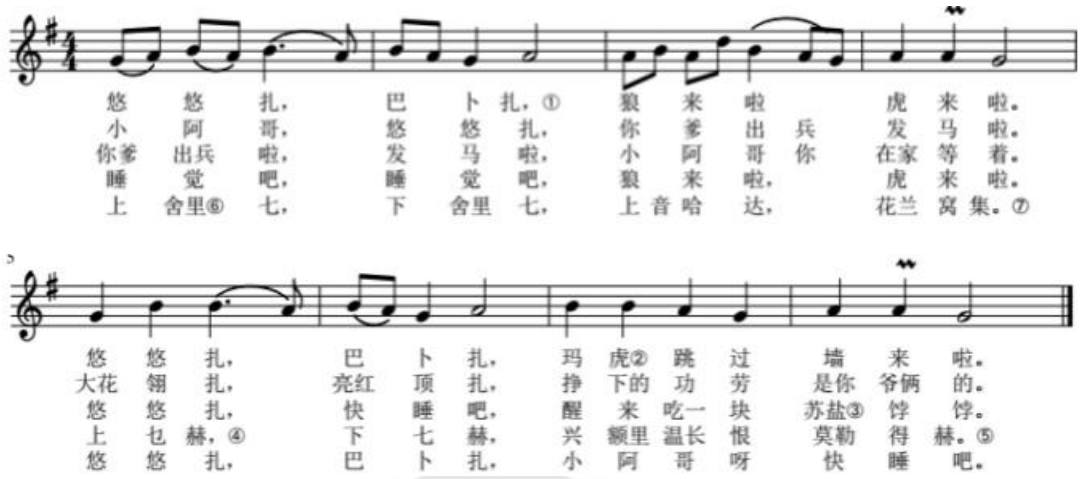


Figure 42 You Yaoche (Rocking Cradle)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Notes:

Babbu: Manchu term for lulling sounds to soothe children.

Mahu: Manchu term for "monster mask," used playfully to coax infants to sleep.

Suyan: Manchu term for "yellow."

Qihe: Manchu term for "duck."

Xing'eliwen Changhen Molehe: Manchu phrase meaning "the mouse hides its tail."

Sheli: Manchu term for "spring" (water source).

Shangyin Hada Hualan Woji: Manchu phrase describing "white mountain peaks and elm forests."

This You Yaoche from Heilongjiang's Manchu communities expands traditional lullaby narratives. Its lyrics oscillate between imagined threats ("wolves approach") and familial heroism ("Age and Ama ride to battle"), ultimately returning to soothing imagery to lull the child structured in an A B A framework.

Musically organized as a balanced unitary form (or two repeated single movement sections), it features a modified ab a'b' progression aligning with the lyrical ternary structure. The first phrase unfolds within a third interval, cadencing on Shang (re); the second phrase expands to a fifth interval, resolving on Gong (do) to establish tonality; the third phrase simplifies the initial motif through repetition; the fourth phrase concludes gently within a third interval. This warm, undulating melodic contour epitomizes lullaby aesthetics.

Another example follows:

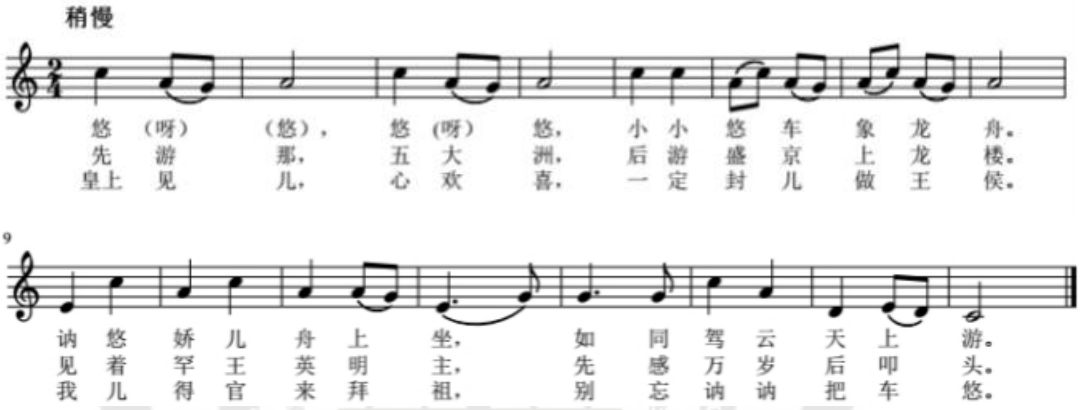


Figure 43 Xiaoxiao Youche Xiang Longzhou (Little Cradle Resembles a Dragon Boat)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This Youyou Diao from Liaoning's Manchu communities distinguishes itself from Jilin and Heilongjiang variants through layered symbolism. By likening the cradle to a dragon boat, its lyrics transcend mere lullaby functions to express aspirations for a child's future glory and ancestral pride.

Structured as a balanced unitary form, it expands the melodic range by 3 4 degrees compared to previous examples. The opening phrase initiates on a high octave Gong (do), descends through Yu (la) and Zhi (sol), then returns to Yu via two bar repetitions to establish Yu mode tonality. The second phrase circles back from high Gong to Yu, while the third phrase introduces contrast through qi cheng zhuan he

(introduction, development, transition, conclusion) motion: Jue (mi) to Gong, then Yu Gong Yu Zhi, pausing on Jue. The finale resolves emphatically on Gong. Brighter and more dynamic than earlier You Yaoche iterations, its leaping melodic contours exemplify regional stylistic innovations.

Other children's songs exhibit distinct characteristics:

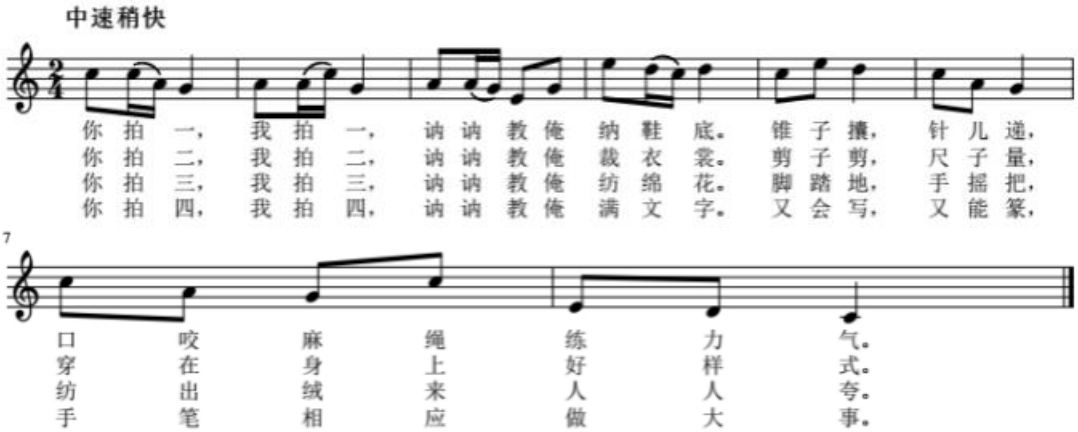


Figure 44 Paishou Ge (Clapping Song)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This Manchu children's song employs playful clapping games to impart practical skills and knowledge, with Nene (Manchu for "mother") symbolizing the transmission of ancestral wisdom and hopes for future growth. Such edutainment approaches are commonplace in Manchu nursery traditions.

Structured as a contrasting unitary form spanning a tenth interval in Gong mode (do based), the first phrase begins on Gong (do), traverses Yu (la), Zhi (sol), Jue (mi), and Shang (re), cadencing on Shang. The second phrase restarts from Gong, progresses through Jue, Shang, and Zhi, and ultimately resolves on Gong. Its lively, bouncy melodies brim with childlike exuberance. Another example follows:

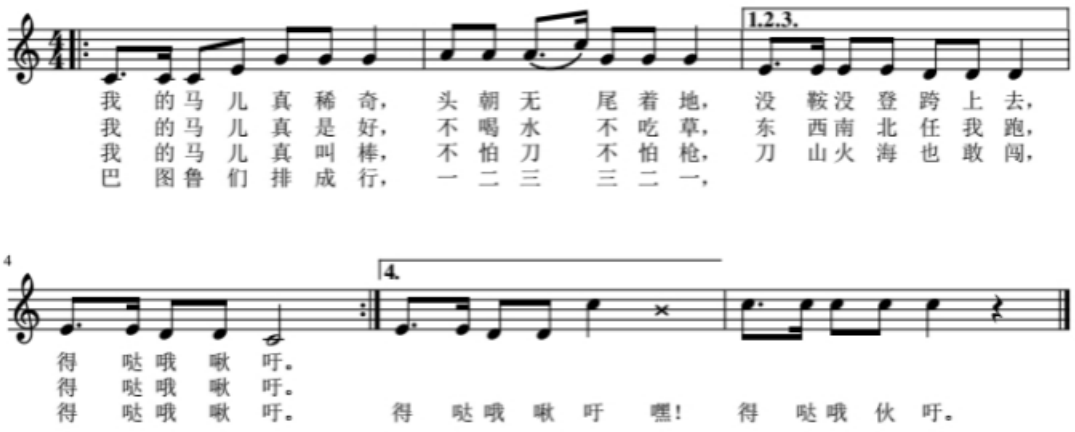


Figure 45 Qi Mumu (Riding the Wooden Horse)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This song adopts an upper lower phrase structure spanning an octave, simplifying its range by three degrees compared to the previous example. Through playful lyrics about riding a wooden horse, it channels childhood joy while instilling aspirations for battlefield valor, reflecting the Manchu ethos of martial courage.

The melody divides into two phrases: the upper phrase initiates with a Gong mode (do based) arpeggio spanning a sixth interval, resolving on Zhi (sol); the lower phrase utilizes only three tones (Gong, Jue/mi, Shang/re) before cadencing on Gong. In its fourth repetition, an emphatic vocable "Hei!" concludes on a high octave gong, sonically embodying Manchu martial resolve. As seen in:

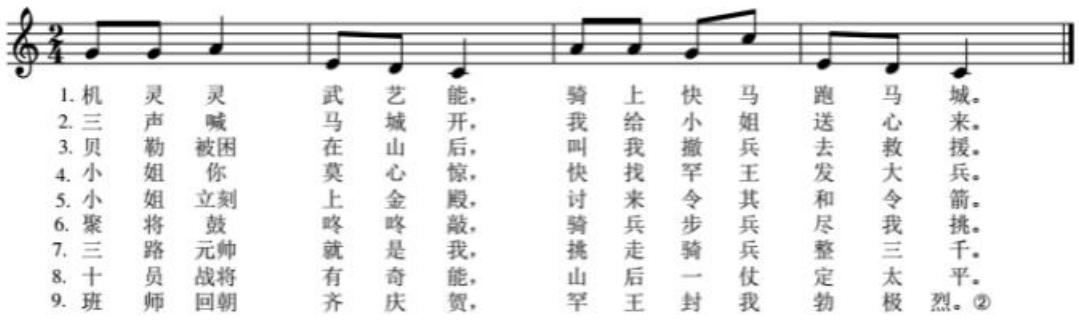


Figure 46 Paomacheng (Fortress Chase)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

Note:

Paomacheng: A Manchu children's game.

Beile: Manchu term for "general."

This song vividly illustrates the Manchu people's ancient martial traditions, narrating triumphant military campaigns and victorious homecomings. Such games mimicking warfare with remarkable realism reveal how combat training permeated childhood play, epitomizing the ethnic group's equestrian heritage.

Musically simplistic, its single phrase unitary structure spans an octave. Nine strophic verses unfold over a melody starting on Zhi (sol), undulating through Yu (la), Jue (mi), and Shang (re), before resolving on Gong (do). The straightforward, memorable tune perfectly suits children's voices.

Manchu nursery rhymes also impart moral education, exemplified by:

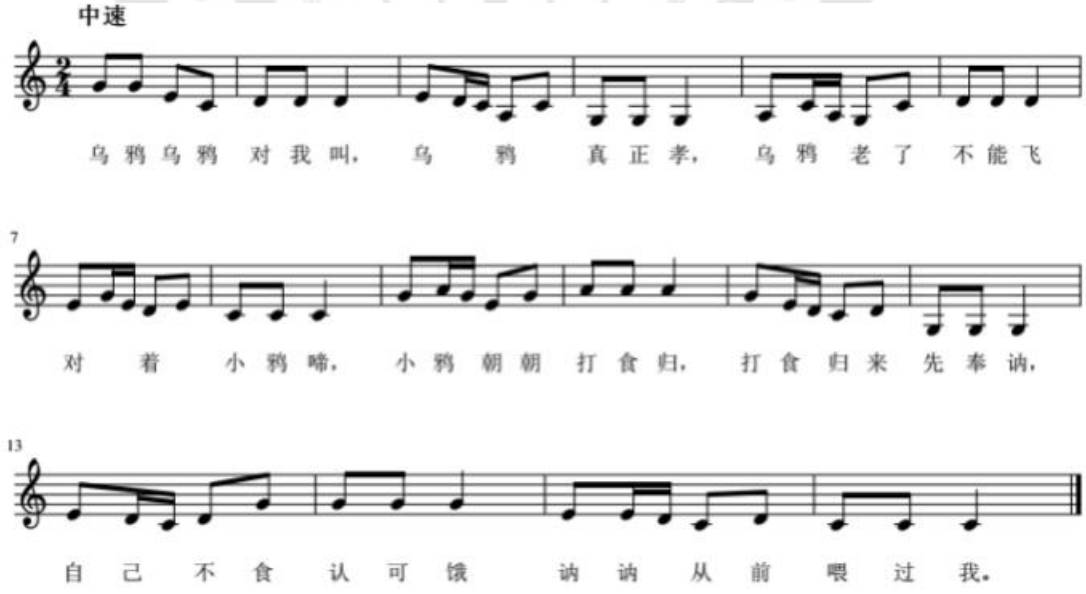


Figure 47 Wuya (The Crow)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This song conveys the moral principle of filial piety through the allegory of crows: when aging crows can no longer fly, their offspring feed them in return. The narrative educates children on respecting their parents through simple, unadorned storytelling with profound symbolism.

Structured as a balanced binary form, the composition alternates modes: phrases 1 and 3 in Zhi mode (sol based), phrases 2 and 4 in Gong mode (do based), following the qi cheng zhuan he (introduction, development, transition, conclusion) progression. Spanning a ninth interval, its melody combines playful leaps with gentle lyricism, embodying both childlike joy and tender devotion to maternal bonds.

Manchu oral traditions also feature numerous non melodic nursery rhymes resembling modern rap, such as:

La Daju (Tugging the Great Saw)

Lyrics: "Tug the saw, pull the saw, Grandma's gate hosts operatic lore. Fetch the aunt, summon the groom, Little nephew begs to join the room. Grandma hands him rotten eggs Undercooked, charred dregs Nephew sweats in frantic throes! Where's the feast? Where it goes? Behind the cowshed, a feast he'll share, With whom? The mangy dog is right there!"

These chant like rhymes, passed down generations, preserve Manchu childhood whimsy while influencing neighboring ethnic traditions. Another example:

Ju He Ju Wan Ju Dagang (Mending Boxes, Bowls, and Jars)

Lyrics: "Mend boxes, bowls, giant jars old? Princess's pants in vat unfold What fell? Weasel's theft! What hue? Egg yolk's gold! What hen? Old hens hold! What old? Tofu curd! What bean? Meat slab's sheen! What grand? Red wax brand! What wax? Chili's smack!"

Such rhymes employ the jiang yang rhyme scheme in initial lines, transitioning to the fa hua scheme unified by particles "ya" and "a." Homophonic puns create stark semantic contrasts, while truncated phrasing ("cangtou" technique) and call and response structures enhance rhythmic cohesion ideal for children's lively recitation.

1.2 The musical forms of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Manchu music shares fundamental characteristics with most Chinese ethnic musical traditions, encompassing genres such as mountain songs (shan'ge), folk ditties (xiaodiao), labor chants (laodong haozi), and love songs (qingge). It distinctively diverges from imperial court music in stylistic elements including mode, tonality, and structural composition.

1.2.1 Melodic Structure

The melodic development and expressive techniques in Manchu music exhibit rich diversity.

1.2.1.1 Free metered Melodic Style

A representative example is the unmetered rhythmic pattern found in:

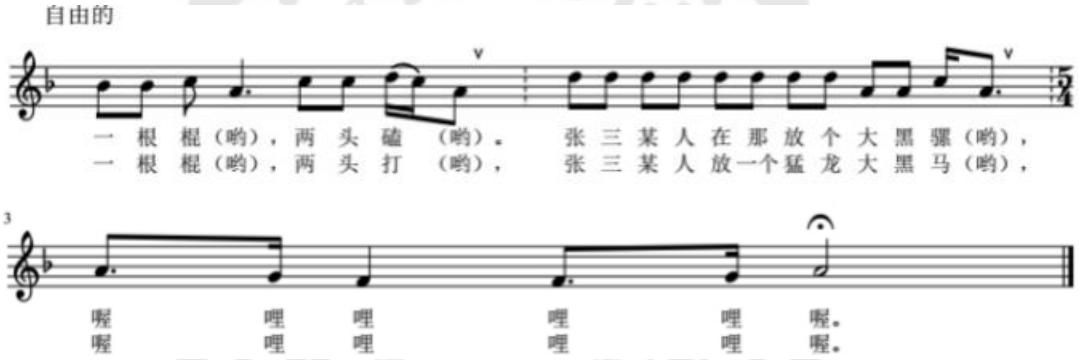


Figure 48 "Fangma Shange" (Herding Song)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1995). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Liaoning volume. China ISBN Center.

The song "Fangma Shange" (Herding Song) is performed in a free metered style. As a mountain song sung during horse herding, its lyrics are strikingly simple, devoid of elaborate imagery, and directly narrate the process of two herders Zhang and Wang guiding horses with a single stick.

The melody divides into three phrases: First Phrase: Comprising five beats, it ascends from the jiao note (third note of the Chinese pentatonic scale) through zhi (fifth) to yu (sixth), then resolves back to jiao. Second Phrase: Spanning six beats, it descends directly from yu to jiao, then oscillates between zhi and jiao. Third Phrase:

Five beats followed by a prolonged tone, descending from jiao to shang (second) and gong (first), ultimately returning to jiao to solidify the jiao mode framework. The melody flows with a leisurely, improvisatory character, evoking an untamed emotional quality.

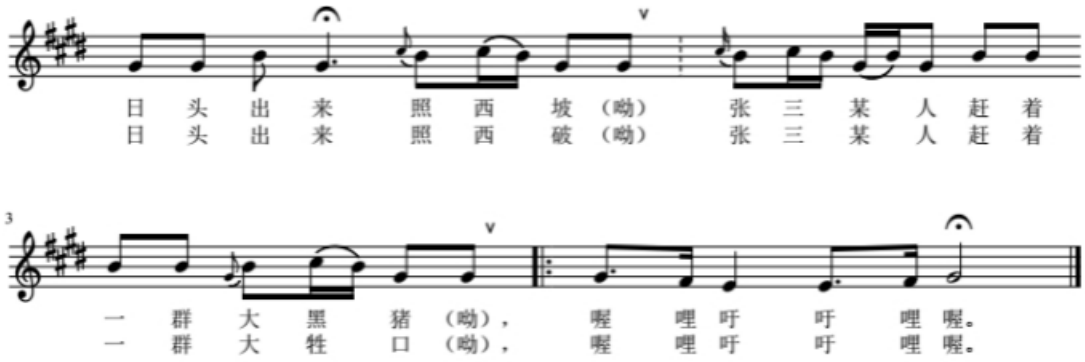


Figure 49 "Ritou Chulai Zhao Xipo" (Sunrise Over the Western Slope)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This pastoral mountain song depicts livestock drivers returning home at dusk, embodying a carefree ambiance. The sunset imagery accentuates their effortless demeanor, while the vocables "woli yu, yuli wo" enhance the free metered spontaneity.

The melody similarly unfolds in three sections: First Section: Exhibits greater rhythmic freedom than the previous example, expanding its range with prolonged tones and ornaments (huayin), intensifying melodic fluidity. Second Section: Incorporates additional ornaments, rendering the melody more playful and whimsical. Third Section: Functions as a concluding cadential phrase but employs repeat signs to amplify the lingering sense of unconstrained serenity. Free metered Prefaces in Rhythmic Contexts Some songs feature free metered passages preceding structured rhythmic melodies, as seen in:

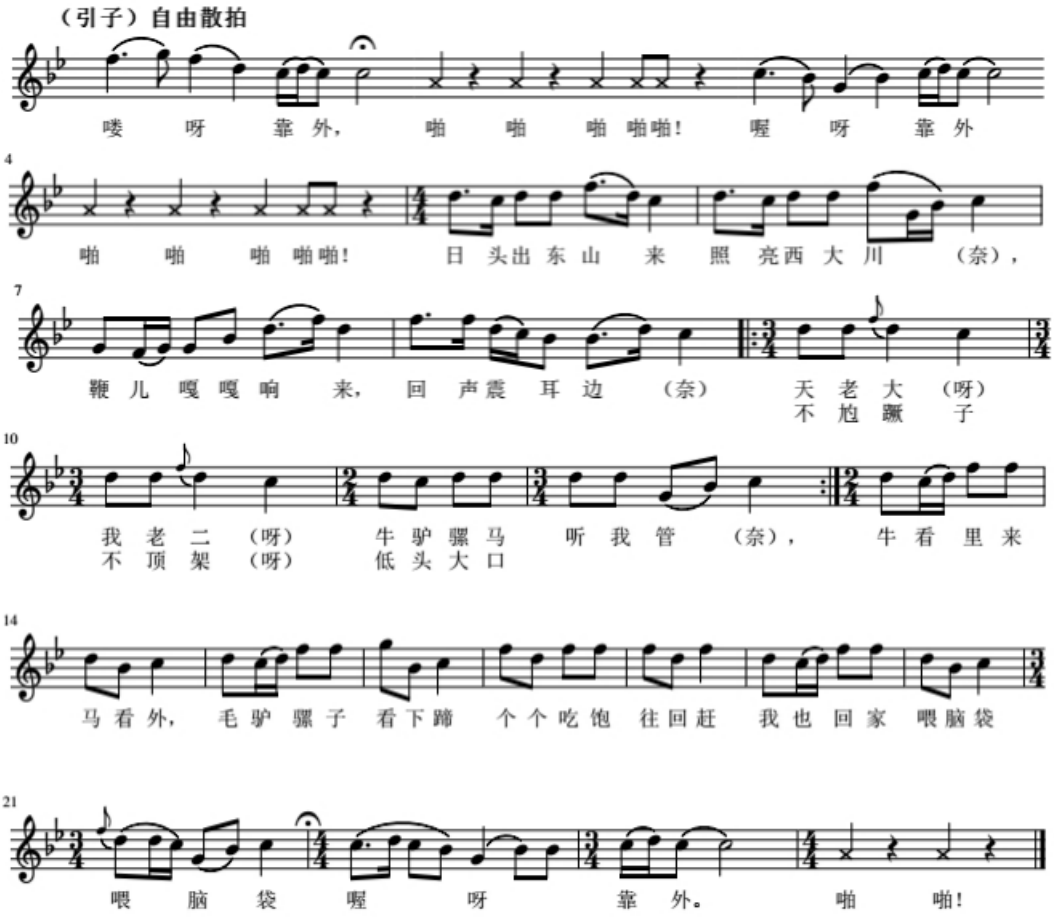


Figure 50 "Liu Xiangbian" (Whistling Whip)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

The introductory section of this piece employs a free metered style, vividly portraying the carefree spirit of herding through vocal imitations of whip cracking sounds. Its parallel dual phrase structure demonstrates the expressive power of free metered passages in crafting musical imagery, evoking strong visual associations.

Modally, the piece aligns with the shang mode (second note of the pentatonic scale). The melody ascends from zhi (fifth) to yu (sixth), then descends through jiao (third) to rest on shang, heightened by whip cracking vocables (e.g., "hui! ha!") that amplify the pastoral nonchalance. The composition then transitions into a

structured one beat three eye meter (4/4 equivalent): First Thematic Phrase: Begins on jiao, weaves through shang and zhi, dips to low yu, and cadences on shang to reinforce the modal foundation. Rhythmic Modulation: Mid phrase metric shifts return to the core 4/4 pattern, culminating in a shang centric resolution. Coda: Two emphatic whip crack effects echo the free metered introduction, their crisp reverberations mimicking a musical recapitulation.

Free metered Openings in Shamanic Music Shaman ritual chants (shen diao) frequently commence with free metered sections, as exemplified by:

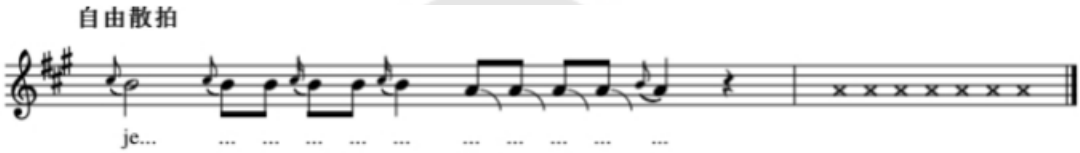


Figure 51 "Song Shen" (Deity Farewell)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center.

These openings typically use ritual vocables (e.g., "hoi! hoi!") resembling spiritual invocations or soul summoning (tongling), preceding the metered petitions for blessings or divine communication.

Musically, such passages feature:

Unadorned Contour: Limited ornamentation with stepwise motion

Recitative like Delivery: Alternating sustained tones and rapid syllabic bursts, akin to operatic recitative

Dramatic Restraint: Narrow melodic range coupled with speech inflected rhythms, creating ritualistic tension

1.2.1.2 Characteristics of Steady Melodic Styles

Manchu music also exhibits stable melodic frameworks, characterized by unembellished linear development across genres like lullabies, nursery rhymes, shamanic chants, and dance songs. A representative case is:

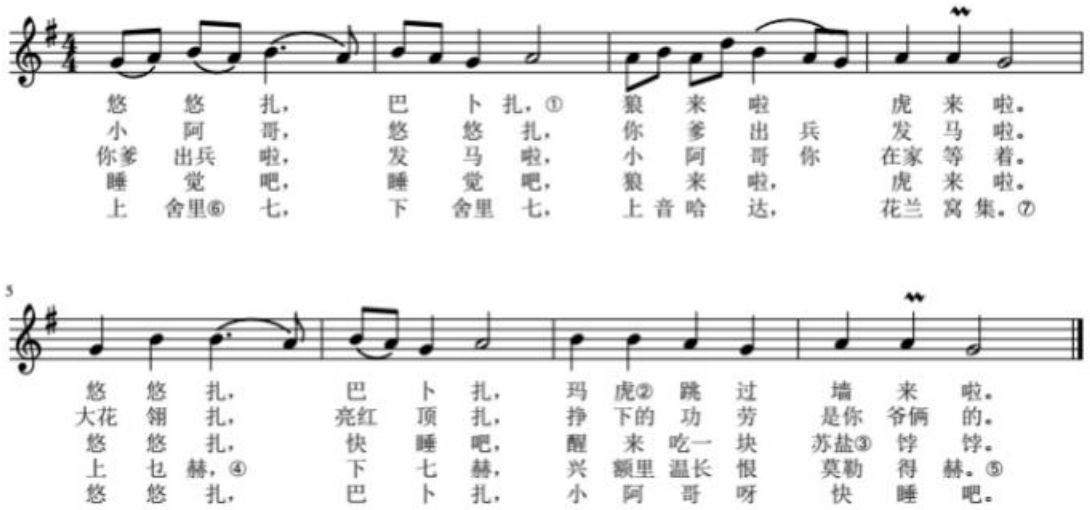


Figure 52 "You Yaoche" (Cradle Rocking Song)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This piece is a quintessential example of the steady melodic style found in Manchu lullabies. The lyrics are narratively simple, vividly depicting the process of soothing a child (babu: Manchu term for comforting infants), playful intimidation (mahu: Manchu term for making playful grimaces), and, all rendered with poetic appropriateness.

The melody progresses with stability, primarily moving within a narrow third interval, except for a single small fourth leap in the second phrase. This stepwise motion, dominated by seconds and thirds, masterfully embodies the lullaby's serene, gentle, and warm character. The quadripartite through composed form (fangzhengxing, "square structure") adheres to the Gong mode (first note of the Chinese pentatonic scale) and employs a tetratonic framework (Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zhi), achieving remarkable simplicity and purity.

Cultural Annotations in Lyrics:

Suyan: Manchu term for "yellow"

Qihe: Manchu term for "duck"

Xing'eli Wenchanghen Moleidehe: A Manchu phrase meaning "The mouse often hides its tail" (xing'eli: mouse; wenchanghen: tail; moleidehe: to hide)

Sheli: Manchu term for "spring" (water source)

Shangyin Hada Hualan Woji: A Manchu phrase describing "white mountain peaks and elm forests" (hada: white; hualan: elm tree; woji: thicket)

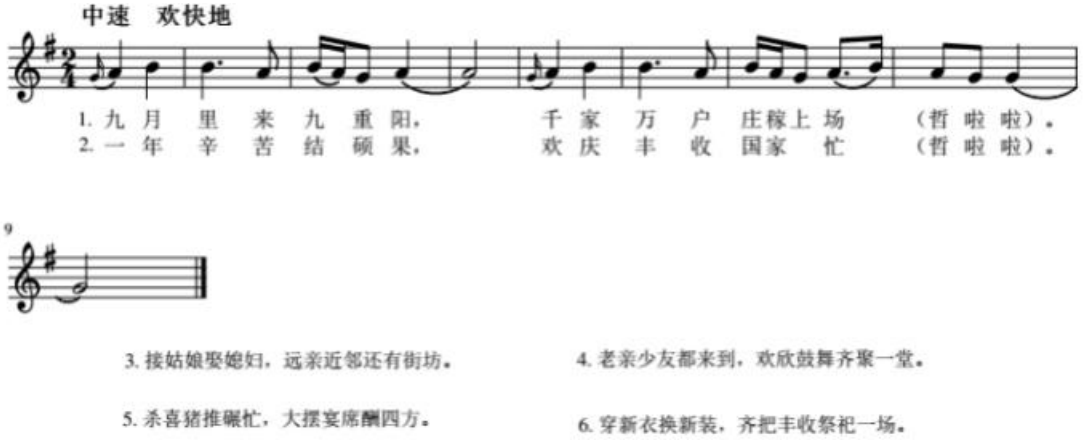


Figure 53 "Qing Fengshou" (Harvest Celebration)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This song captures the jubilant atmosphere of post harvest festivities following the Double Ninth Festival. Historically, the Manchu harvest celebration rivaled Lunar New Year in scale, mobilizing entire villages where households united in communal revelry, transcending social boundaries.

Melodically, it features two parallel sequential phrases: The first phrase cadences on shang (second pentatonic note). The second phrase resolves on gong (first note) with thematic expansion.

Spanning a narrow three note range (gong, shang, jiao), the melody's simplicity and stability enhance its memorability and resonant clarity.

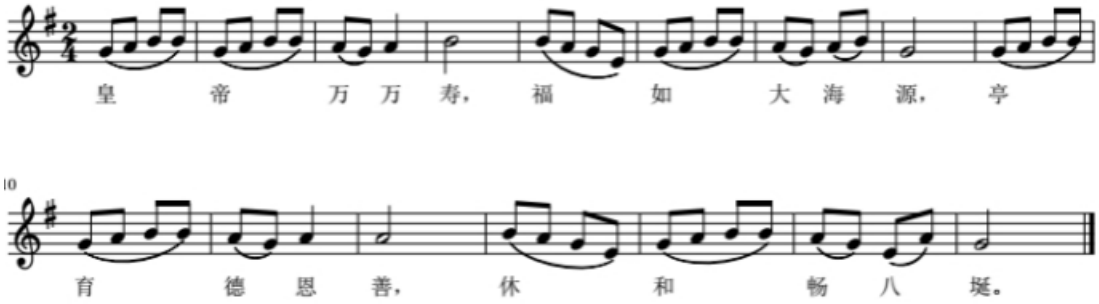


Figure 54 "Qinglong Wu" (Celebratory Dragon Dance)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This piece shares thematic kinship with the preceding example but diverges in origin and purpose. While "Qing Fengshou" embodies folk traditions, "Qinglong Wu" adopts a courtly panegyric style, extolling imperial benevolence and disseminating royal blessings across the realm.

Structural Analysis:

Quadripartite Binary Form: First Phrase: Ascends stepwise within a third interval (gong to jiao). Second Phrase: Expands ambitus to a fourth, descending from jiao through shang and gong to yu (sixth), cadencing on gong. Third Phrase: Imitates the first phrase's contour, resting on shang. Fourth Phrase: Mirrors the second phrase's progression, culminating in a gong centered final cadence. Employing a tetratonic series (jiao, shang, gong, yu), the melody balances rustic simplicity with ceremonial dignity, ensuring accessibility for communal performance.

1.2.1.3 Ornamented Melodic Characteristics

Many Manchu folk songs integrate embellishments (huayin) to amplify expressive nuance. These ornaments grace notes, trills, or microtonal inflections imbue melodies with textural richness while preserving structural coherence, as exemplified by:

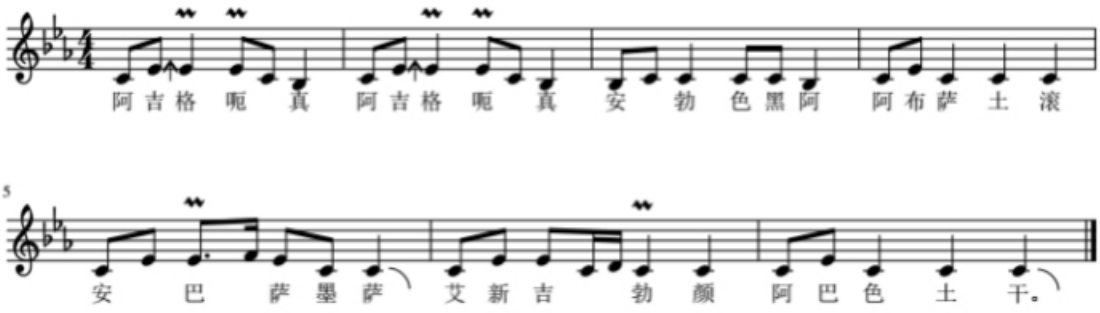


Figure 55 "Zuo Dabandeng Diao" (Bench Sitting Tune)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This piece exemplifies the distinctive use of ornamentation in Manchu music. Beyond frequent upper mordents, it incorporates microtonal raising and lowering. The raised microtones are not fixed in pitch but oscillate fluidly between adjacent notes, creating "flexible tones" (huoyin) that contrast dynamically with stable pitches. Similarly, lowered microtones descend subtly from their base tones without reaching the next semitone, imbuing the melody with a unique chromatic flavor that heightens its ethnic character.

The song comprises two extended melodic phrases, both cadencing on Yu (the sixth note of the pentatonic scale): First Phrase: A four measure phrase beginning on Yu, structured around a tetratonic series (Yu, Gong, Shang, Jiao) with dense ornamentation. Second Phrase: Expands the tetratonic framework by adding Biangong (raised seventh), yet still resolves emphatically on Yu.

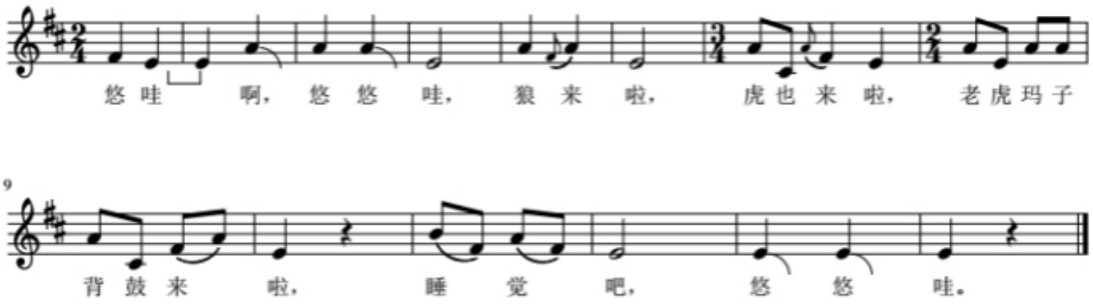


Figure 56 "You Hai'er Diao" (Child Soothing Melody)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This lullaby similarly employs microtonal lowering, complemented by appoggiaturas, to evoke the rhythmic sway of a cradle (you yaoche), a motif recurrent in Manchu folk traditions.

Melodic Structure:Two primary phrases followed by a supplemental cadence, all resolving on Shang (second note).

Modal Ambiguity: The absence of Gong (first note) and inclusion of Biangong suggest a modal modulation, notated as Re Mi So La Xi. When reinterpreted with So as the tonic (Gong), the scale transforms into So La Do Re Mi, establishing a Zhi mode (fifth note based pentatonic framework).

Ornamental Density: Six strategically placed embellishments enhance the melody's Northeastern Manchu identity, blending delicacy with rustic vitality.

1.2.1.4 Arpeggiated Chordal Melodic Characteristics

A subset of Manchu melodies derives structural logic from broken chord patterns, as heard in:

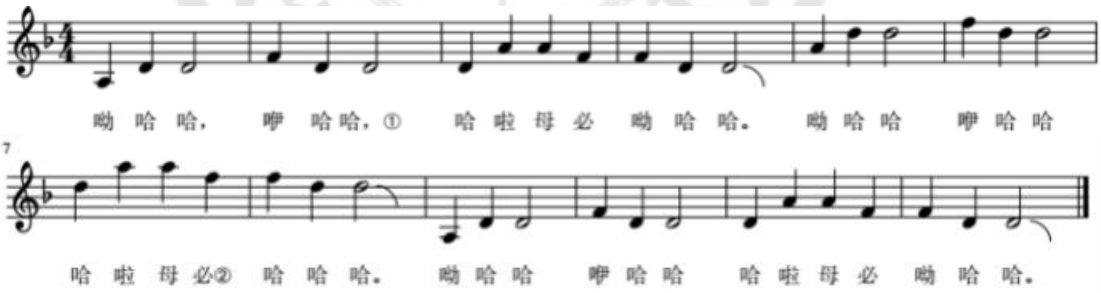


Figure 57 "Haozi" (Labor Chant)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This fishing work song, "La Wang Diao" (Net Hauling Chant), employs arpeggiated chordal melodies built on the minor third above the Yu (sixth pentatonic note). The Manchu ancestors used such songs to synchronize collective labor during

fishing, channeling communal energy through simple, chant like tunes interwoven with vocables (chenzi), ensuring unified movements and joyful productivity.

Melodic Structure:

First Phrase: Begins on the dominant note (zhi, fifth note), leaps a fourth to the tonic (yu), surges dynamically to gong (first note), then undulates back through yu and jiao (third note) before cadencing on yu.

Second Phrase: An expansive, octave higher repetition of the first phrase, intensifying momentum to a climactic peak.

Third Phrase: A restatement of the opening motif, reasserting the tonic and restoring structural equilibrium.

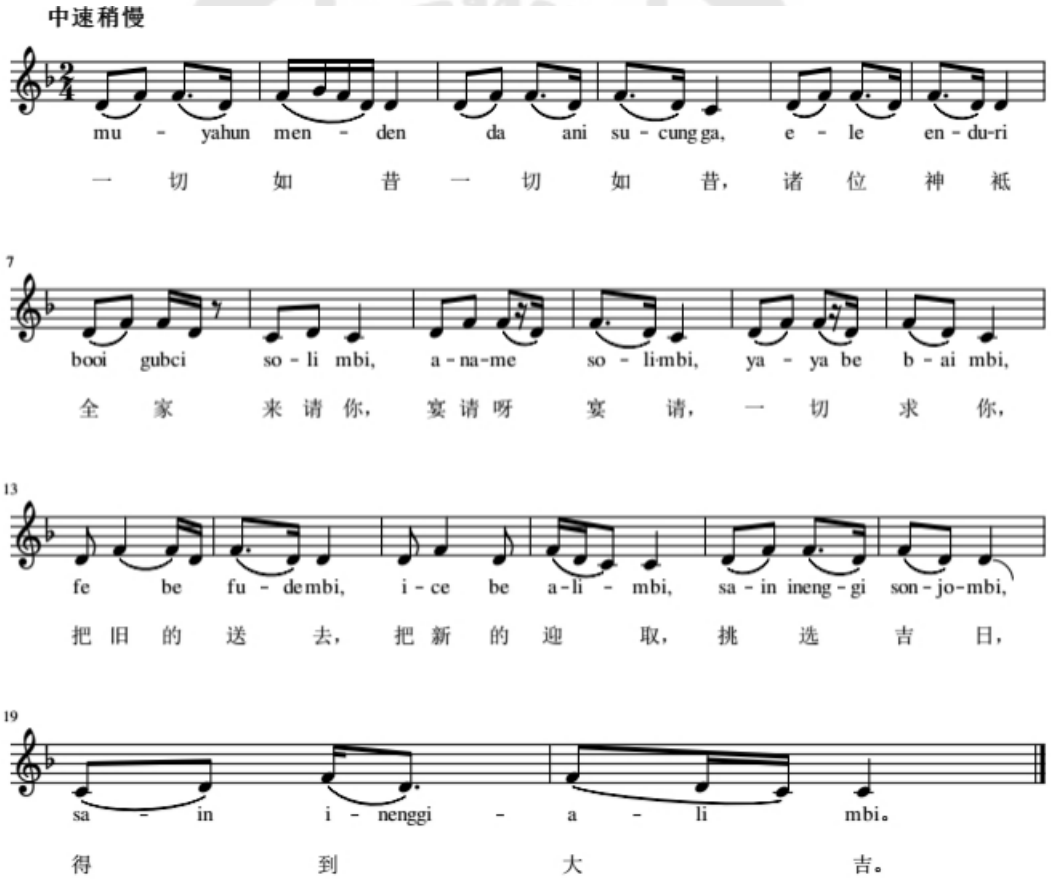


Figure 58 "Qing Peishen Ke" (Inviting Divine Guests)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This ritual song employs a tetratonic series (yu, gong, shang, jiao; Western equivalents: A, C, D, G) to narrate the ceremonial invitation of deities into households. The practice requires selecting auspicious dates aligned with celestial cycles, reflecting traditions of renewal and spiritual purification.

Structural Analysis: The melody follows an expanded single section form, constructed through arpeggiated variations of the tetratonic framework. Each four measure phrase features subtle variation imitation techniques, maintaining unified cadences on zhi (fifth note). These nuanced shifts in contour while preserving rhythmic regularity create dynamic contrasts within a cohesive modal architecture.

1.2.1.5 Hexatonic Melodic Characteristics

While most Manchu folk melodies adhere to pentatonic frameworks, a select few incorporate hexatonic or heptatonic scales, distinguished by their unique intervallic textures. A notable instance is:

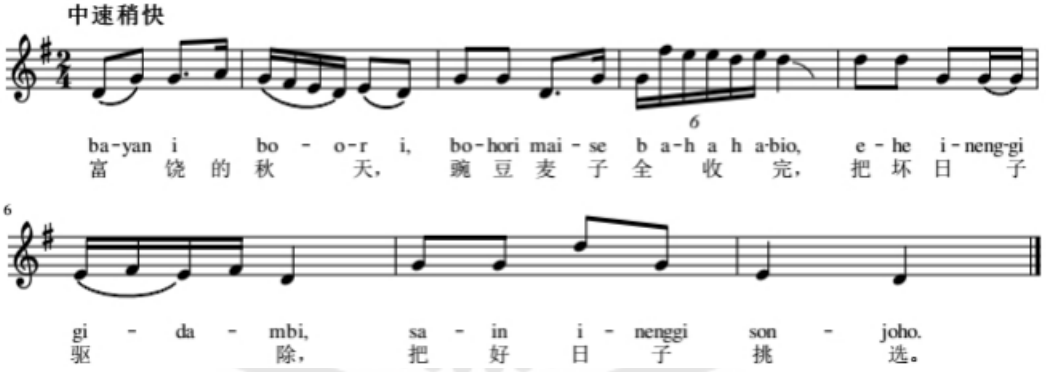


Figure 59 "Tiao Xishen" (Joyous Deity Dance)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This song celebrates the jubilation of autumn harvests, encapsulating communal prayers for prosperity and gratitude through concise yet vivid lyrics.

Melodic Structure:

Hexatonic Framework: While rooted in a pentatonic core (zhi, gong, shang, yu, plus biangong), the melody employs modal substitution (biangong

substituting for jiao), effectively redefining the tonal center. Here, the original zhi (fifth note) becomes the new gong (tonic), creating a pivotal tonal shift.

Phrase Design: Dual phrases, both cadencing on zhi, reinforce the Zhi mode foundation despite the modal ambiguity introduced by biangong.

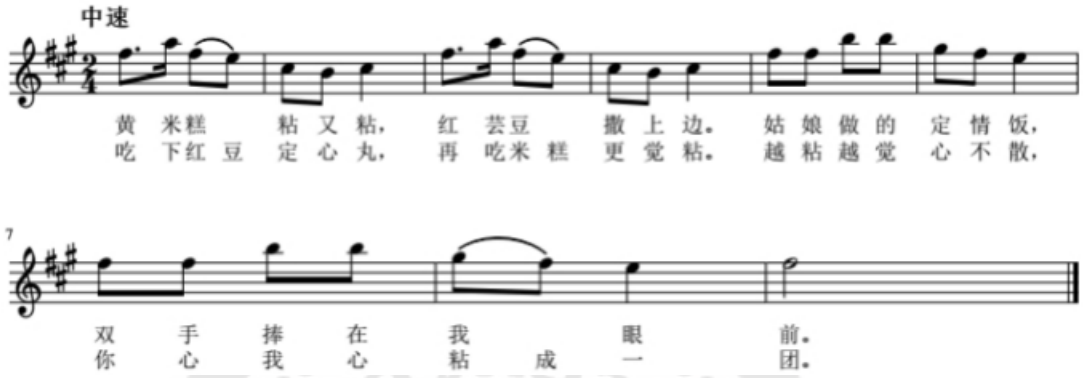


Figure 60 "Huangmi Gao" (Yellow Millet Cake)

Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

A quintessential Manchu folk song depicting the process of making millet cakes, it metaphorically parallels culinary labor with tender romantic affection, blending practicality and emotional warmth.

Musical Analysis:

Pentatonic Antiphony: Structured as call and response phrases within a gong based pentatonic scale (gong, shang, jiao, zhi, yu).

First Phrase: A two measure motif repeating and cadencing on jiao (third note).

Second Phrase: Introduces modal alternation by replacing jiao with biangong (raised seventh), culminating on yu (sixth note). This yu resolution subtly recontextualizes as shang (second note) relative to the new tonal axis, achieving a luminous, expansive aesthetic.

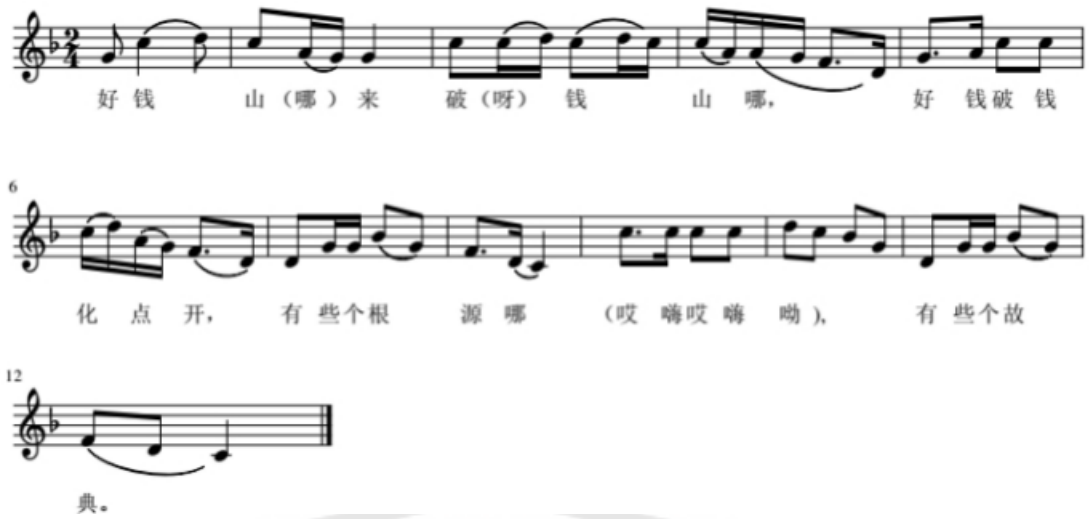


Figure 61 "Poqian Shan" (Broken Coin Mountain)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

Note: Derived from the Northern Single Drum Tune (Hanjunqi Shaoxiang Diao), this song satirizes laborers petitioning their employers for fair compensation, exposing power imbalances in labor relations.

Musical Design:

Hexatonic with Qingjiao (Added Fourth): The melody integrates qingjiao (fourth note) into a pentatonic base, creating tonal tension.

Three Phrase Structure:

First Phrase: A four measure pentatonic phrase (yu, gong, shang, zhi, jiao) cadencing humorously on yu.

Second Phrase: Introduces qingjiao for modal contrast, shifting tonal color.

Third Phrase: Replaces jiao with qingjiao and redefines gong as shang, completing a definitive modulation to Shang mode.

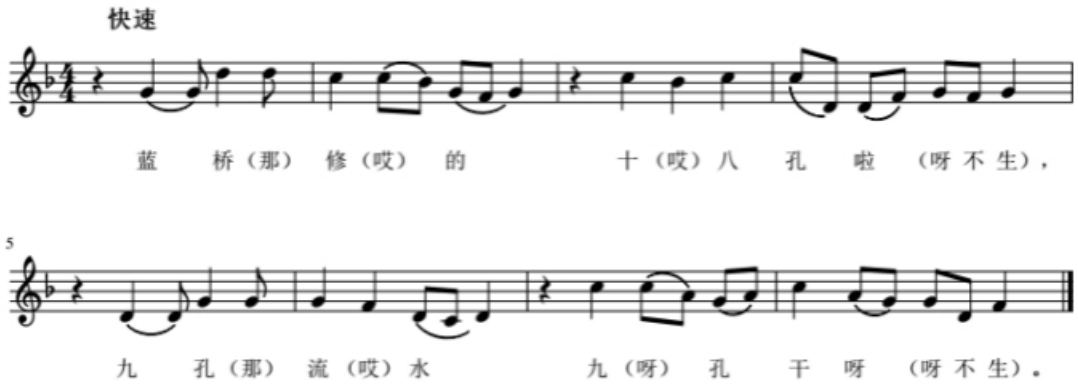


Figure 62 "Lan Qiao" (Blue Bridge)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

This song narrates the legendary romance between Lady Bai (White Snake) and Xu Xian, using evocative imagery to paint a serene, expansive setting.

Melodic Drama:

First Phrase: A four measure gong mode phrase (gong, shang, qingjiao, zhi, yu) resolving on gong.

Second Phrase: Alternates between yu and gong, creating a modal juxtaposition that mirrors the story's emotional tension.

The interplay of yu and gong across phrases transforms the melody into a dialogue of tonal identities, heightening its narrative intensity.

1.2.1.6 Heptatonic Melodic Characteristics

Heptatonic melodies, though rare in Manchu folk music, exhibit distinctive traits when qingjiao (fourth) and biangong (seventh) are employed sometimes as passing tones, other times as modal pivots. A prime example is:

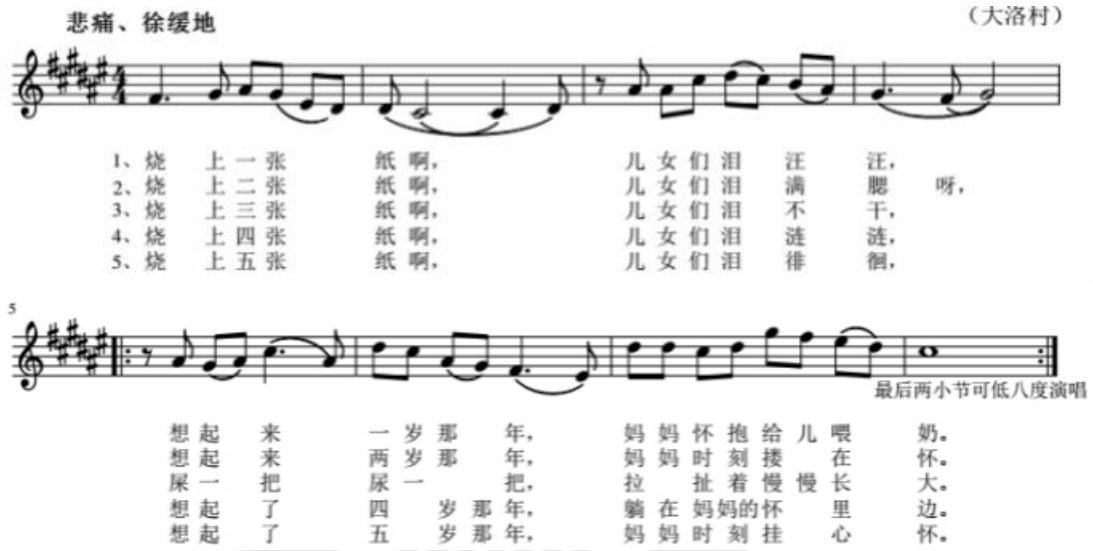


Figure 63 "Shao Qianzhang Zhi" (Burning Thousand Papers)

Source: Organized by the author based on field research

Lyrics:

Burning six sheets of paper, tears flow freely from your children

Remembering the year I turned six, when you sent me off to school, Mama.

Burning seven sheets of paper, your boundless love lingers

Every lesson you taught, Mama, is etched in my heart.

Burning eight sheets of paper, tears stream down our faces.

To see you again, Mama, we must meet in dreams.

Burning ten sheets of paper, our clothes soaked with grief

Tomorrow you depart forever; rest peacefully in the underworld.

To hold you once more, Mama, we must meet in dreams.

This lament narrates children mourning their deceased mother through paper burning rituals, intertwining gratitude for her nurturing love with profound sorrow.

Melodic Analysis:

Heptatonic Framework: The melody employs a seven note scale (gong, shang, jiao, qingjiao, zhi, yu, biangong), with biangong (raised seventh) and qingjiao (added fourth) functioning as passing tones rather than structural pillars.

Phrase Structure:

First Phrase: Four measures with a descending contour, cadencing on shang (second note). The inclusion of biangong and qingjiao as fleeting dissonances amplifies the dirge like anguish.

Second Phrase: Begins with a similar descent before surging abruptly to a climactic peak on yu (sixth note), mirroring an outburst of unresolved grief. The phrase resolves on zhi (the fifth note), leaving the tension unresolved.

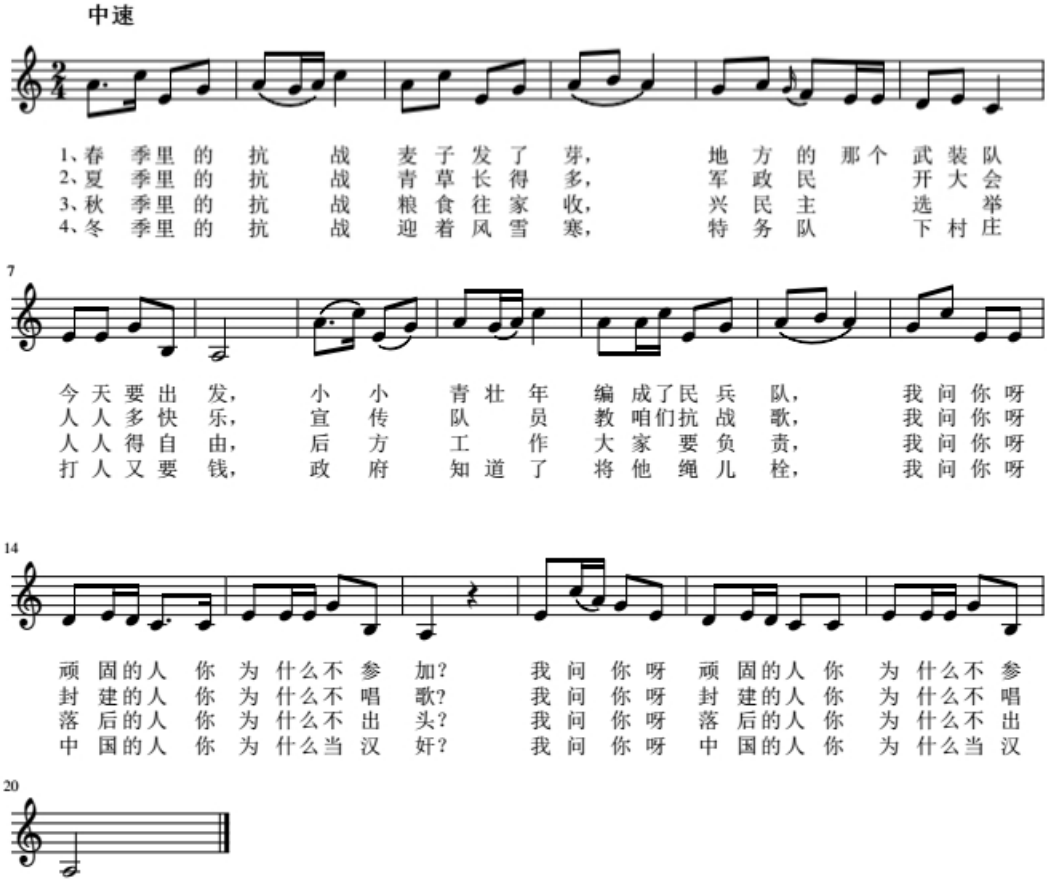


Figure 64 "Siji Kangzhan Ge" (Four Seasons Resistance Song)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This heptatonic anthem narrates the armed resistance of Northeast Chinese people against Japanese imperialism during the Anti Japanese War, mobilizing communities through seasonal allegories to join the struggle.

Melodic Analysis:

Heptatonic Nuance: The melody employs biangong (raised seventh) as a modal pivot and qingjiao (added fourth) as a passing tone, enhancing tonal contrast.

First Phrase: Begins on yu (sixth note), integrating qingjiao as a fleeting dissonance and concluding with biangong as a chromatic upper neighbor, injecting vibrant tension.

Third Phrase: A sequential repetition of the opening motif, reinforcing thematic unity.

Fourth Phrase: Develops the second phrase through truncated variation ("head removed, tail retained"), streamlining structural cohesion.

Fifth Phrase: Expansive cadence combining imitative elements from earlier phrases, resolving on yu to affirm tonal stability.

The melody's interplay of defiance and wit marked by agile leaps and rhythmic vitality embodies the unyielding optimism of wartime resilience.

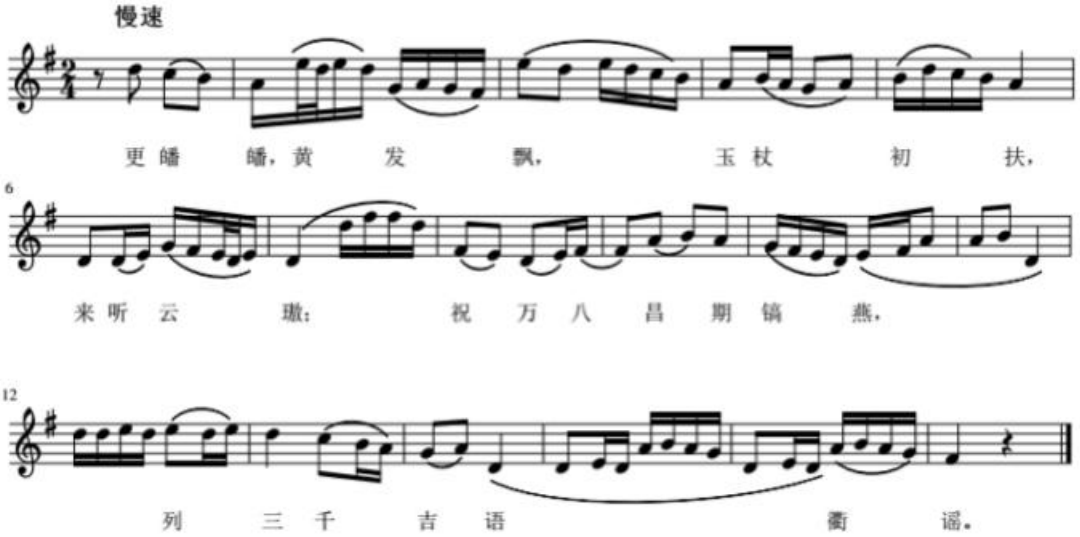


Figure 65 "Jiyu Quyao" (Auspicious Road Ballad)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This song originates from a 19th century manuscript of the Chengde Mountain Resort Music Bureau, originally notated in Gongche notation for banquet music. Transcribed in 1962 by Chen Fengyuan (aged 82), a physician in Chengde, it is said to have been performed at Emperor Qianlong's 80th birthday court celebrations before spreading among Manchu, Mongol, and Han communities in Rehe (modern Chengde) as a folk longevity anthem. The version here was transcribed from Gongche notation by Jiu Gang in 1980.

Musical Characteristics:

Heptatonic Framework: Incorporates Biangong (raised seventh) and Qingjiao (added fourth) for tonal richness.

First Phrase: Five measures cadencing on Shang (second note), enriched by chromatic inflections.

Second Phrase: Six and a half measures using Biangong within a hexatonic structure, culminating in a "throwing voice" (shuaqiang) extension that elongates the final measure. The undulating melody, infused with operatic flourishes, deliberately avoids stable resolution through Biangong, symbolizing endless blessings.

1.2.2 Rhythm and Meter

Manchu folk music exhibits diverse rhythmic and metric patterns across genres, from mountain songs and labor chants to shamanic hymns, each with distinct expressive traits.

1.2.2.1 Rhythmic Features of Labor Chants

Labor chants (haozi) typically employ simple, driving rhythms, dominated by duple (2/4) or quadruple (4/4) meters. They often follow a call and response structure between a lead caller and chorus, synchronizing collective effort. A representative example is:

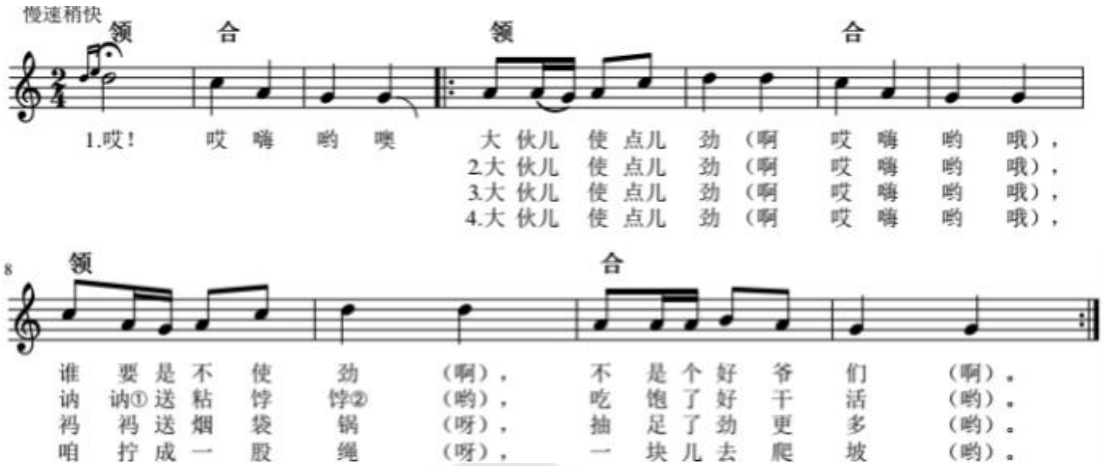


Figure 66 "Tai Mu Hao" (Log Lifting Chant)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1995). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Liaoning volume. China ISBN Center.

Note:

Nene" is a Manchu term for "mother."

Bobo: Manchu steamed bread.

Mama: Manchu term for "father."

This labor chant employs a call and response structure between the lead caller and chorus. The lead initiates with a rhythmic shout, echoed by the chorus's percussive beats. The lead repeats motivational phrases like "Let's all push harder!" while the chorus reinforces solidarity through rhythmic interjections, embodying collectivist spirit through coordinated labor.

Musical Structure:

Double Phrase Parallelism: Following an introductory call, two parallel phrases form a single section framework in 2/4 meter.

Pentatonic Simplicity: A five degree range (gong, shang, zhi, yu, biangong) omits jiao (third note), with biangong (raised seventh) introducing modal ambiguity.

Cadential Modulation: The final zhi (fifth note) subtly redefines itself as the new gong (tonic), suggesting an unresolved tonal shift.

1.2.2.2 Rhythmic Patterns in Mountain Songs

Manchu mountain songs often begin with free metered passages that transition abruptly into fixed duple (2/4) or quadruple (4/4) rhythms. This juxtaposition of improvisatory and metric elements creates dynamic tension, as heard in:

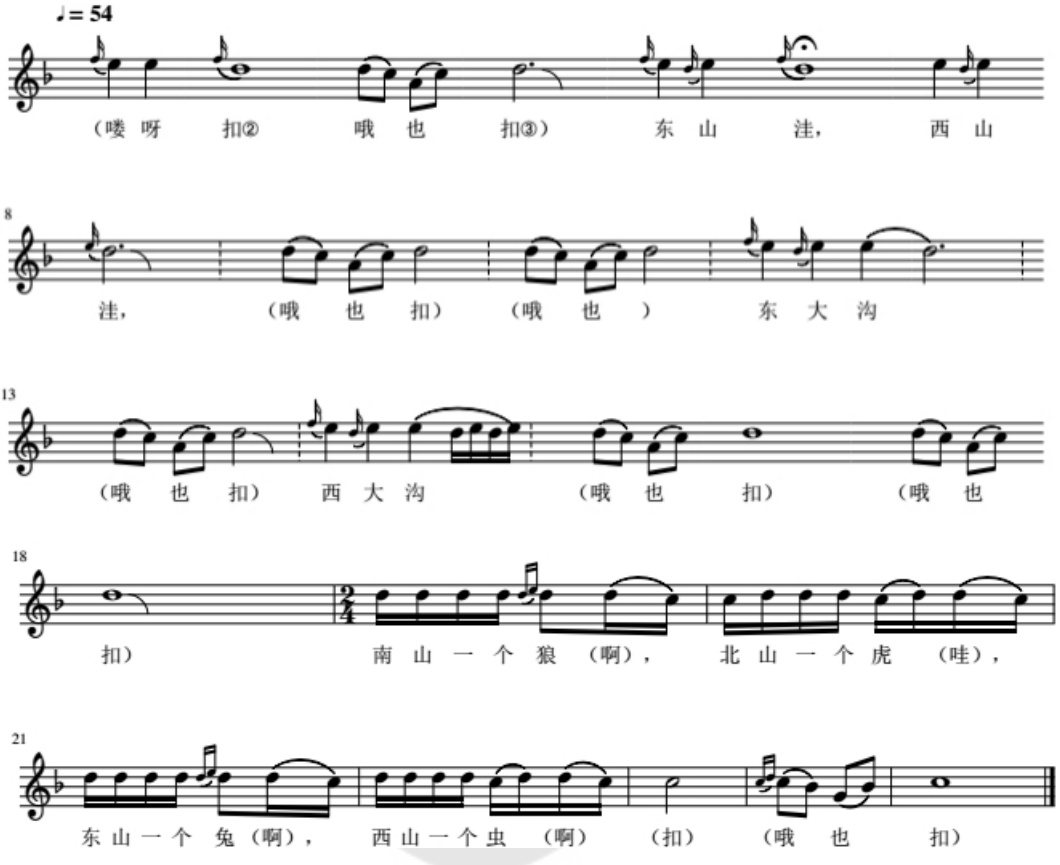


Figure 67 "Liu Xiangbian" (Whistling Whip)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center.

Note:

Shaoge: Local colloquialism for "boastful singing" (changzhe lai da xuan).

Louyakou, Oyekou: Playful exchanges of exaggerated banter, akin to mutual one upmanship.

This mountain song begins with a free metered rhythmic introduction, its improvisatory flow embodying the quintessential spontaneity of folk ballads. Vocables (chenzi) and interjections imbue the narrative with ethnic distinctiveness before transitioning into a fixed metered banqiang structure (2/4 time).

Modal Progression:

Yu mode Framework: The melody initially adheres to a Yu (sixth note) centric pentatonic scale, with each phrase cadencing firmly on Yu.

Cadential Modulation: A singular concluding phrase shifts the tonal center to Zhi (fifth note), expanding the modal palette through Qingjiao (added fourth). This substitution of Qingjiao for Gong (tonic) reorients the melody into Shang mode (second note), creating a subtle yet poignant tonal juxtaposition.

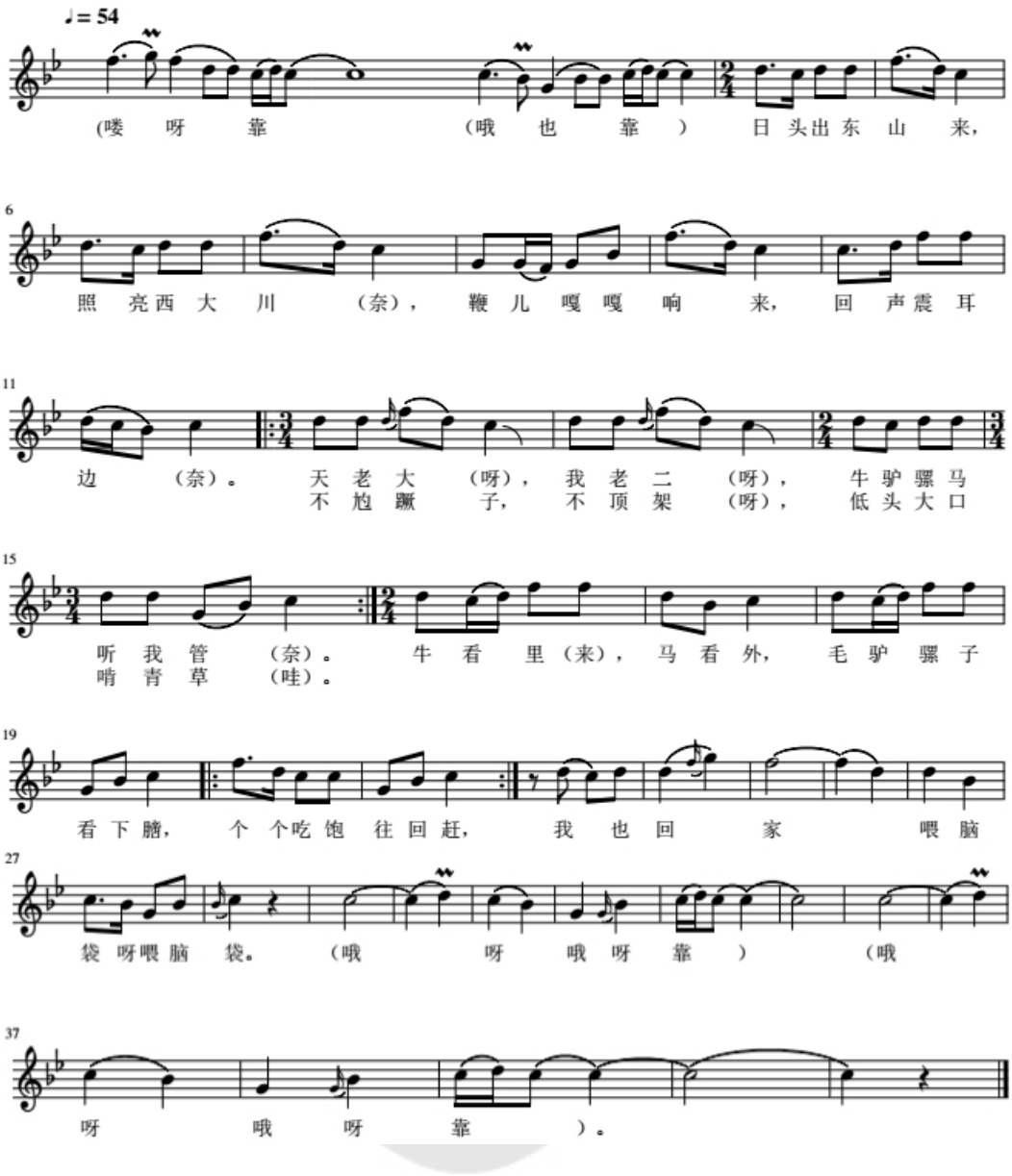


Figure 68 "Liu Xiangbian" (Whistling Whip)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Jilin volume. China ISBN Center.

This mountain song opens with a free metered rhythmic prologue, followed by a mixed meter interplay (alternating 2/4 and 3/4) that mirrors the dynamic cadence of herding livestock. The lyrics, delivered through antiphonal dialogue, radiate infectious optimism as they depict the camaraderie of guiding animal caravans.

Structural and Modal Framework:

Shang mode Foundation: The melody adheres to a Shang (second note) centric pentatonic system. Post free meter introduction, the song unfolds in paired two measure call and response phrases between singers, escalating into a unison chorus after two exchanges. This pattern repeats antiphonal verses interlaced with collective refrains before culminating in a final choral resolution on Shang.

Developmental Fluidity: Seamless transitions between exact repetition and varied sequence imitation lend the melody an organic, narrative driven flow, echoing the laborers' rhythmic coordination.

1.2.2.3 Rhythmic Patterns in Manchu Shamanic Chants

Shamanic chants (shenge) are ritually anchored by the pulsating cadence of frame drums (danpi gu) and jangling waist bells (yaoling). These percussive layers intertwine with vocal incantations and trance inducing dance, propelling participants into a mystical trance state. A foundational example is:

Figure 69 "Dan Dian" (Single Beat)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

The above drum beats are often used in backward singing and dancing movements, and the number of drum beats is determined according to the size of the performance venue and the number of dance steps.

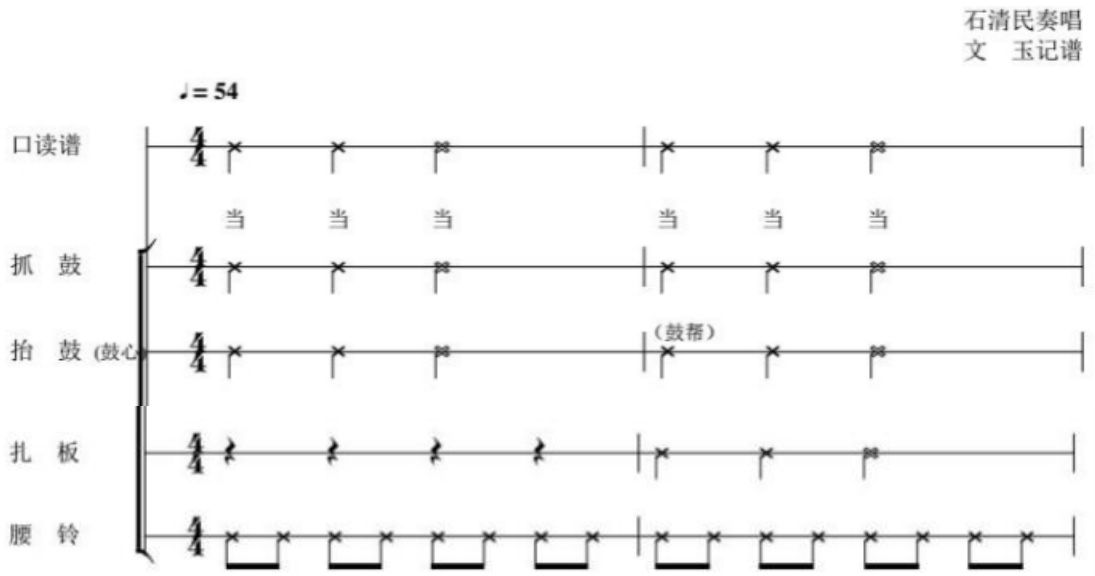


Figure 70 "Lao Sandian" (Three Point Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

As the foundational rhythm of Manchu shamanic ritual music, "Lao Sandian" (Three Point Rhythm) is the most widely used and enduring drum pattern. It frequently accompanies highly choreographed performances like "Makeji Manni" (the Maksin ceremonial dance) and "Diao Shen" (Eagle Deity Dance), providing a rhythmic backbone for expansive movements that channel the dancer's spiritual fervor.

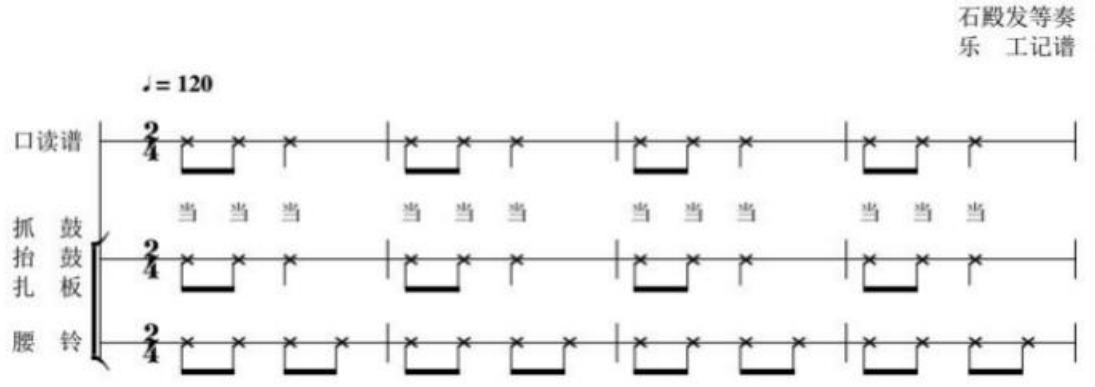


Figure 71 "Kuai Sandian" (Fast Three Point Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

A condensed variation of "Lao Sandian", this accelerated triplet pattern suits rapid, forward moving dance sequences, heightening kinetic energy while preserving the ritual's structural integrity.

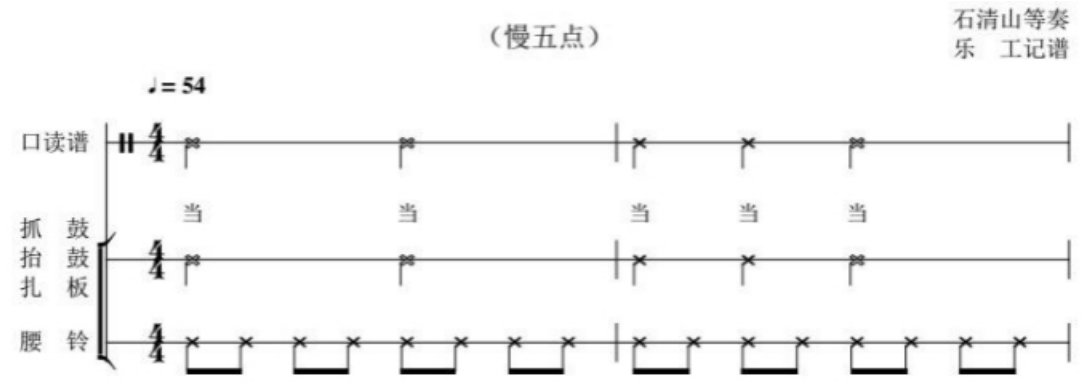


Figure 72 "Lao Wudian" (Five Point Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

Characterized by elongated beats and broader pauses, "Lao Wudian" (Five Point Rhythm) accompanies majestic dances such as "Ying Shen" (Falcon Deity Dance), its spacious cadence mirroring the avian deity's soaring grace.

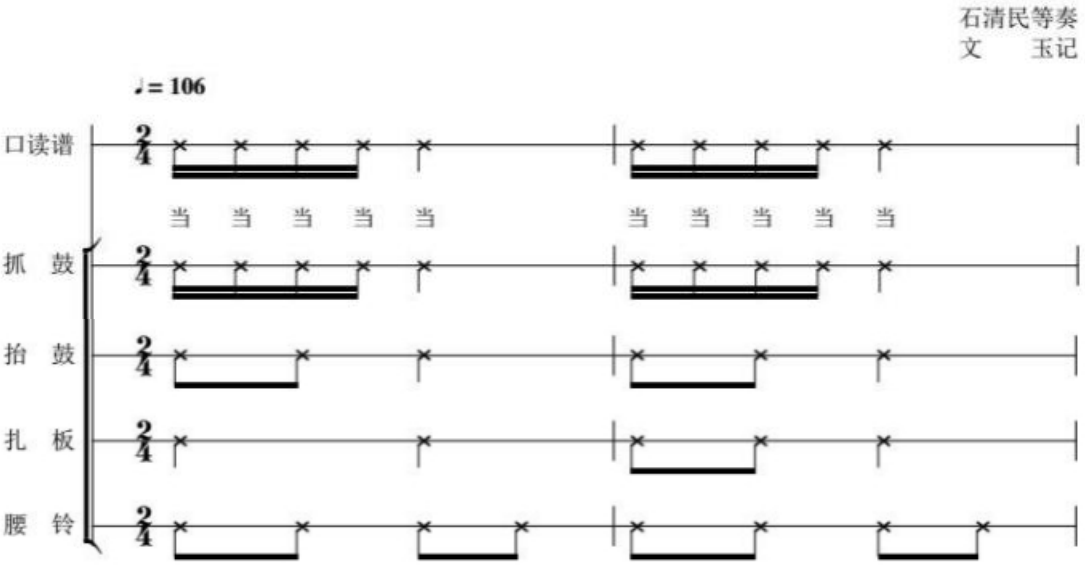


Figure 73 "Kuai Wudian" (Fast Five Point Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

This brisk five beat pattern drives dynamic, processional dance movements, balancing urgency with ceremonial precision.

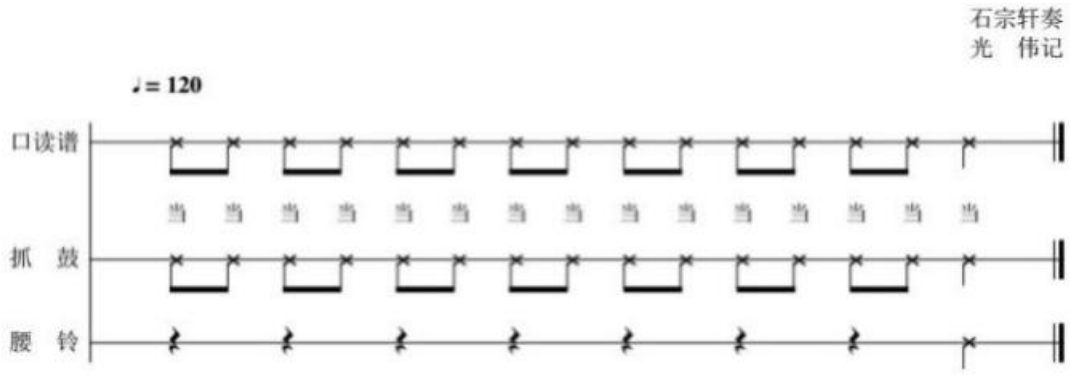


Figure 74 "Sui Dian" (Scattered Beats)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

The "Sui Dian" (Scattered Beats) rhythm dominates scenes of ecstatic spinning (xuanmi liu), rapid footwork, or climactic intensity, its irregular accents evoking chaos before spiritual resolution.

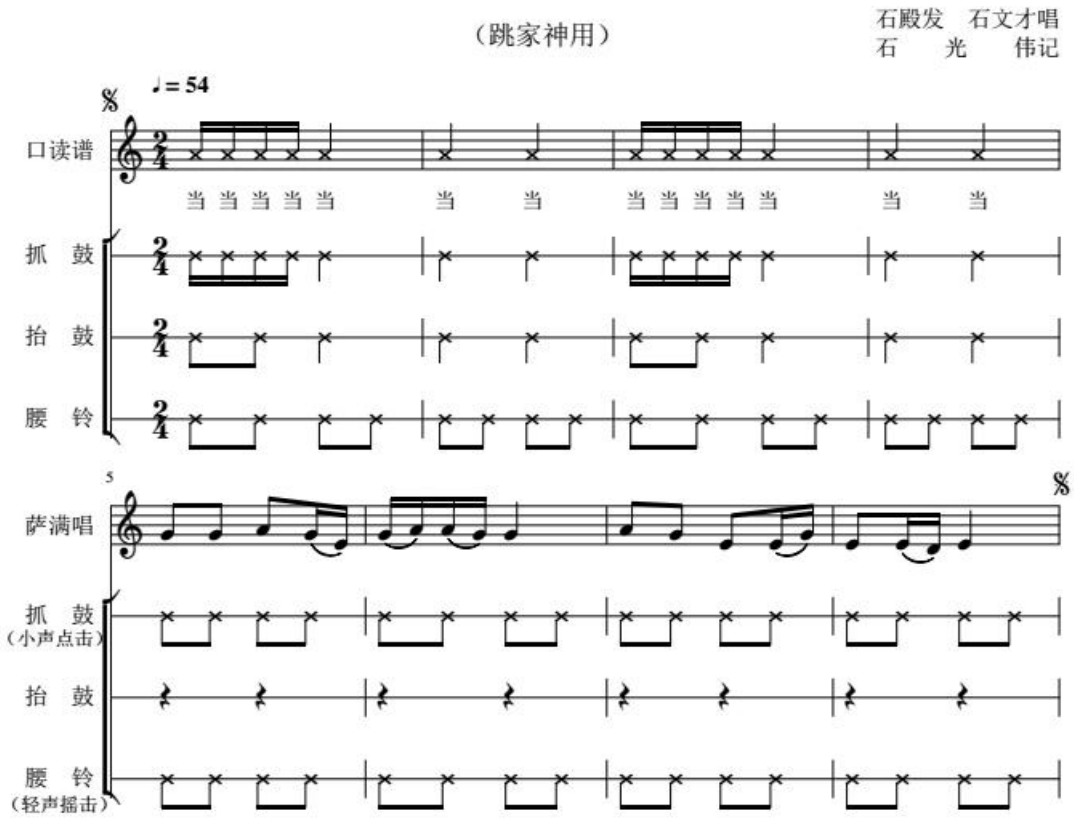


Figure 75 "Hua Qidian" (Florid Seven Point Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

Primarily used in domestic ancestor rites (jiaji), "Hua Qidian" (Florid Seven Point Rhythm) follows a strict ritual protocol: drumming initiates the dance, which halts abruptly when the drums silence, allowing solemn recitation of two line hymns. This cycle repeats until prayers conclude, forming the archetypal interplay of shamanic music, dance, and chant.

Specialized Drum Patterns Beyond common rhythms, unique patterns serve specific deities or rituals, such as:

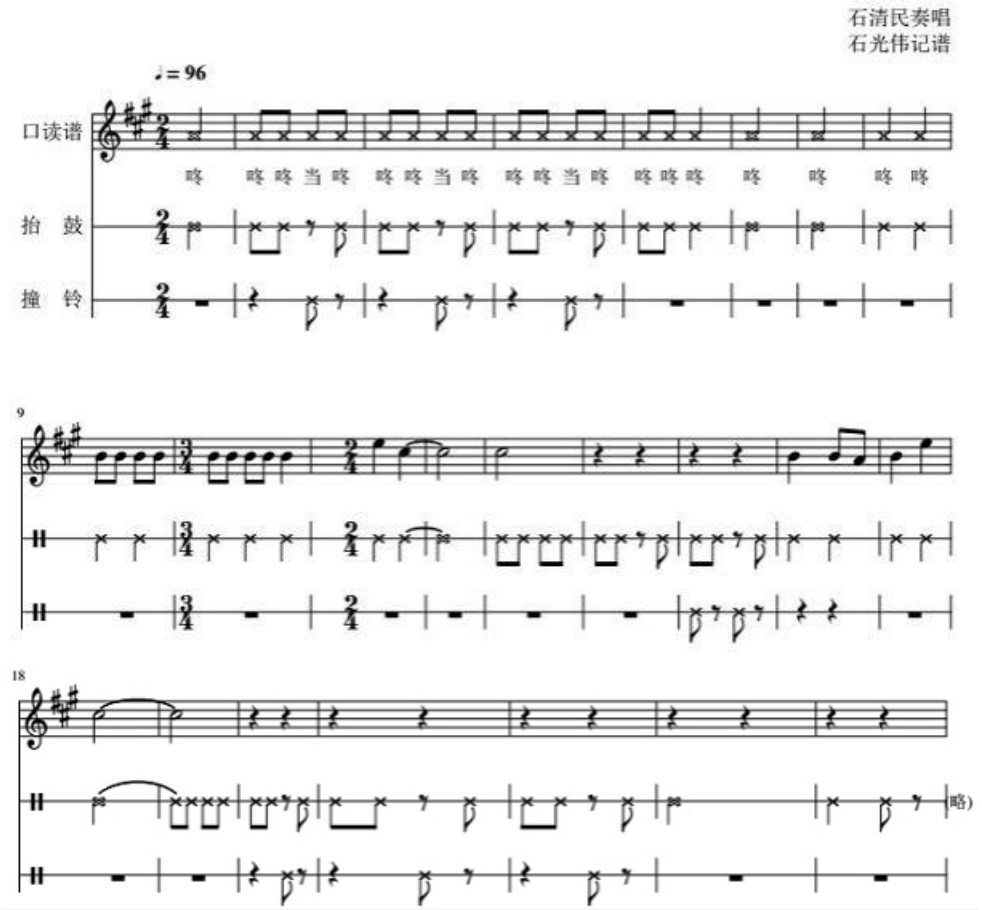


Figure 76 "Mang Shen" (Python Deity Rhythm)

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

The core essence of Manchu shamanic ritual drumming lies in its foundational use of single beat patterns to construct rhythmic sequences, adhering to the principle of "three strikes forming one unit," colloquially termed the "Old Three Beats" (Lao San Dian) in folk tradition. This Old Three Beats serves as the rhythmic and metric bedrock of Manchu shamanic music. For instance, at a tempo of ♩=54 (54 beats per minute), the pattern transforms through distinct performance styles:

When performed in a "stretched style" (chen zhe chang), the rhythm elongates the final beat, notated as | X X X - |. In contrast, the "chopped style" (dun zhe chang) abruptly concludes with a rest, written as | X X X O |. If played in a "continuous style" (lian zhe chang) without pauses, as | X X X |, it becomes the

"Slow Three Beats" (Man San Dian). Accelerating the tempo to ♩=126 generates the "Fast Three Beats" (Kuai San Dian), characterized by tightly packed patterns like | X X X | X X X 0 | or | X X X | More intricate rhythms such as the Five Beats and Seven Beats also derive from variations of this foundational three beat structure.

The rhythmic and metric diversity of Manchu shamanic songs spans time signatures from 1/4 to 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4, creating a kaleidoscope of rhythmic textures.

1.2.3 Musical Form

The formal structures of Manchu songs are remarkably diverse, ranging from single phrase arrangements and strophic forms to binary, ternary, and free variation structures, all of which can be found in Manchu music. A prominent example is:

1.2.3.1 Single phrase structure:

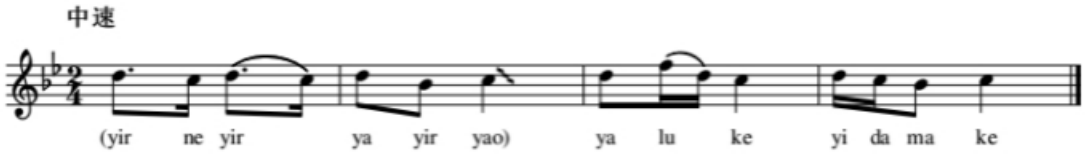


Figure 77 "Beideng" (Back Lamp Chant)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This melody roughly translates to: "Yi er he yi er ya yi yo, all lights are extinguished." The structure consists of a single phrase spanning four measures with eight beats, utilizing a four note scale (Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi). The mode is centered on Shang, with a melodic range of a fifth, embodying a recitative like narrative style.

1.2.3.2 Two Phrase Structure

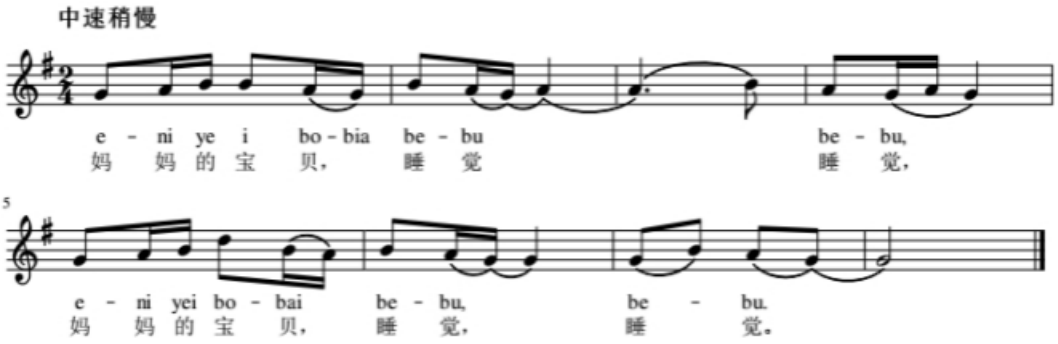


Figure 78 "You Yaoche" (Lulling Cradle Song)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This short lullaby, traditionally sung by mothers to soothe children, features a two phrase structure within a single thematic section, resembling a modified parallel form (a + a'). Built on the four note scale (Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi), it begins and ends on Gong. The first phrase spans four measures with a gentle, narrow melodic range of a third, while the second phrase expands to a fifth while maintaining closure on Gong.

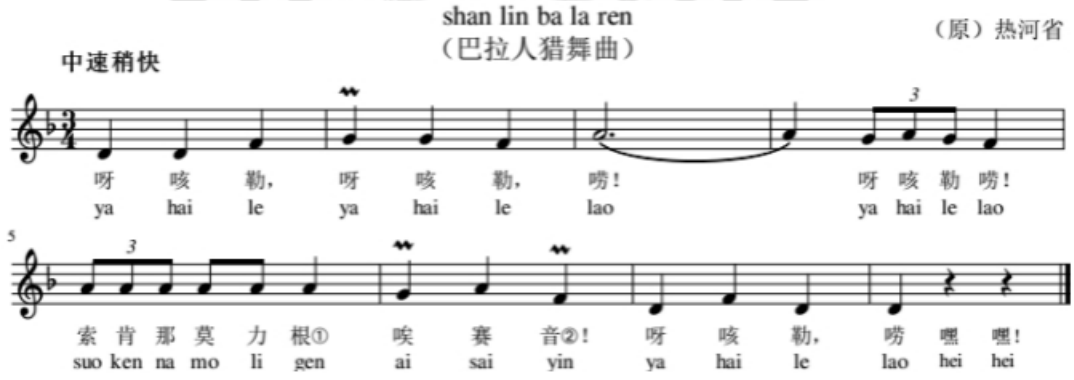


Figure 79 "Shanlin Bala Ren" (Mountain Forest Bala People)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Note: The Bala people are a subgroup of the Jurchen, also called "Balaman." This piece is a hunting dance melody from the Bala people, originally wordless and used for improvisational dance. Recorded in July 1951 in Chifeng City. "Sokena Moligen": "Sokena" means "wise and perceptive"; "Moligen" denotes "skilled hunter." "Ai Saiyin" translates to "hello" or "well wishes."

This two phrase melody praises the valor and wisdom of hunters, embodying the Jurchen ancestors' reverence for courage, diligence, and intellect. Structured as a contrasting single section (a + b), the first phrase begins on Yu and uses the four note scale Yu, Gong, Shang, Jue, resolving on Gong. The second phrase starts on Jue and concludes on Yu, showcasing a dance like rhythm that reflects the Manchu tradition of integrating song and dance.

1.2.3.3 Three Phrase Structure

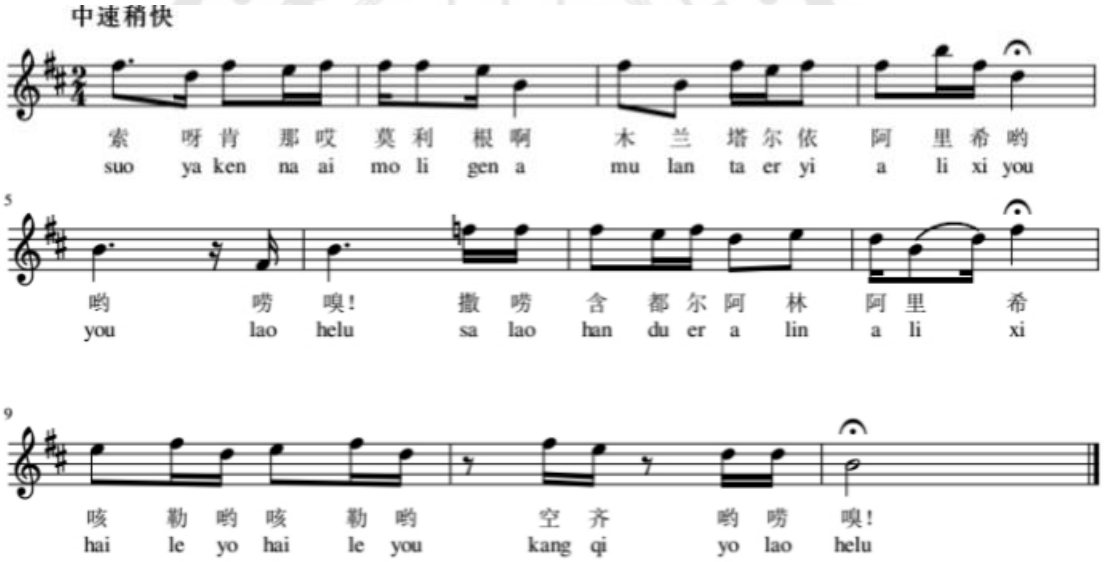


Figure 80 "Ali Xi" (Group Hunt)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

Lyrics summary: "Oh heroic hunters, head to the (deer whistle hunting grounds). Drive the game, encircle the prey, and ascend (Mount Zhui) for the hunt. Dance and chant as you pursue the quarry."

Note: "Ali Xi" refers to collective hunting or denotes enslaved hunter households. Collected in 1961 in Chengde City from descendants of the former Qing imperial hunting retinue. Transcribed by 82 year old Chen Fengyuan (Mongol ethnicity) from original Gongche notation and verified by him. "Gan Zhang" describes a driving game from the hunting grounds.

This three phrase melody narrates the valor of hunters, structured as an independent contrasting form (a + b + c). The first phrase (four note scale: Jue, Gong, Yu) resolves on Gong; the second phrase (Gong, Shang, Jue, Yu with a lowered Jue) ends on Jue; the third phrase (Shang, Jue, Gong, Yu) closes on Yu. The melody carries a storytelling quality, infused with solemn reverence.

1.2.3.4 Expanded Three Phrase Structure

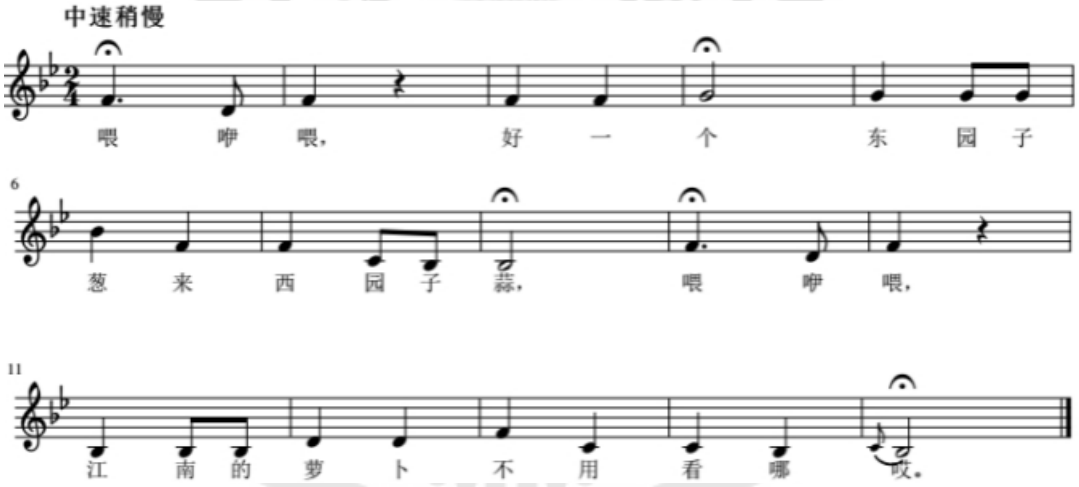


Figure 81 "Da Shui Haozi" (Water Drawing Chant)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This song narrates the labor of drawing water to irrigate fields, emphasizing that diligent care for diverse crops yields bountiful harvests. Structured as an expanded single thematic section, the first phrase spans four measures using a three note scale (Zhi, Jue, Yu) resolving on Yu. The second phrase, also four measures, employs a four note scale (Yu, Gong, Zhi, Shang) ending on Gong. The final phrase

expands to seven measures with a four note scale (Gong, Shang, Jue, Zhi) closing on Gong. The melody is straightforward, memorable, and flowing, with elongated pauses creating a serene and expansive quality.

1.2.3.5 One Part Form

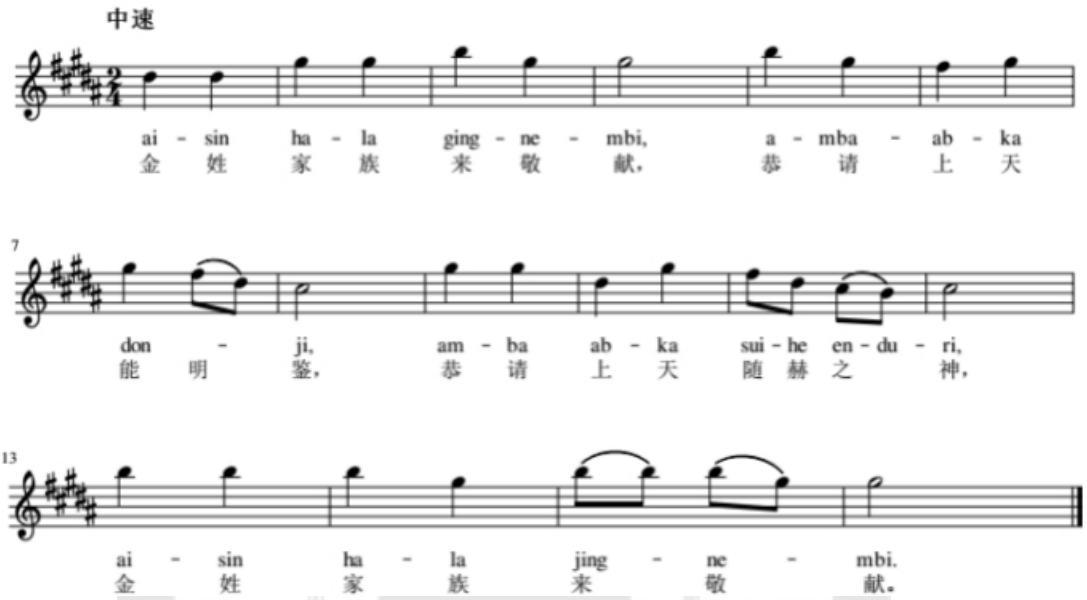


Figure 82 "Qing Sui He'en Duli" (Invocation to He'en Duli)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

A ritual song of the Manchu Jin clan for summoning deities, long preserved in Ning'an County. Its improvisational structure follows a "beginning continuation transition conclusion" framework (a + b + c + d). This square one part form comprises four phrases: the first (four measures, three note scale: Jue, Yu, Gong) ends on Yu; the second (four measures, five note scale: Gong, Yu, Zhi, Jue, Shang) resolves on Shang; the third (five note scale: Yu, Jue, Zhi, Shang, Gong) closes on Shang; the fourth (two notes: Gong, Yu) concludes on Yu. The melody's simplicity and directness enhance its ritualistic clarity.

1.2.3.6 Expanded One Part Form

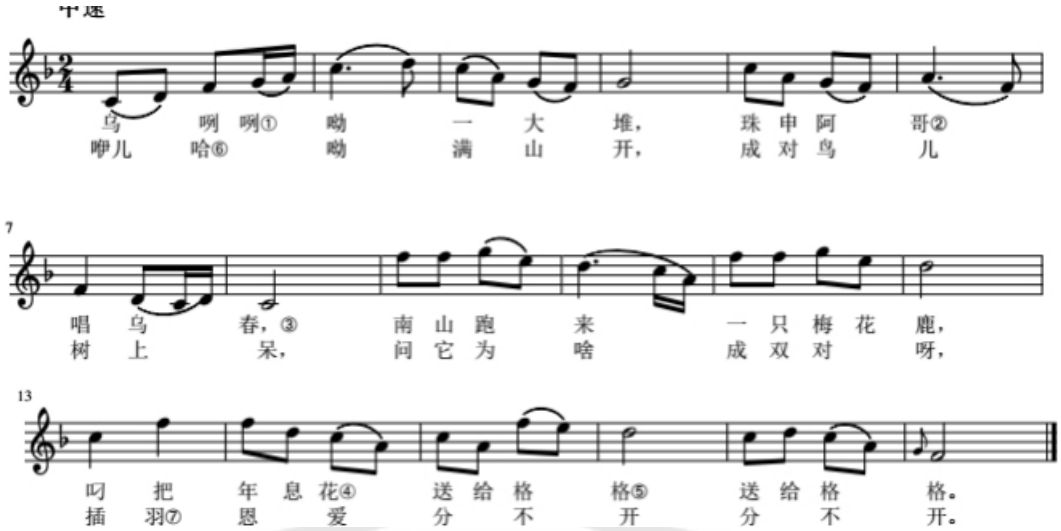


Figure 83 "Wu Lie Lie Yi Da Dui" (A Heap of Troubles)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

Lyrics: "Pines on the east hill, locust trees on the west can they never unite? Eolun Enduri's magic empowers even pines and locusts to bloom together. The bronze tuoli glows golden, illuminating my heart will the gege (young lady) gaze into it? Within the tuoli, let us pair as one."

This love song depicts a suitor courting a “gege” (noble maiden). Its expanded, asymmetrical one part form (a + b + c + d) features a first phrase (four measures, five note scale: Zhi, Yu, Gong, Shang, Jue) ending on Shang; a second (four measures, five note scale: Zhi, Jue, Shang, Gong, Yu) closing on Zhi; a third (four measures, six note scale with passing Bian Gong) resolving on Yu; and a fourth (six measures, expanded by two bars) concluding on Gong. The melody's tender twists convey heartfelt yearning.

1.2.3.7 Five Phrase Expanded One Part Form

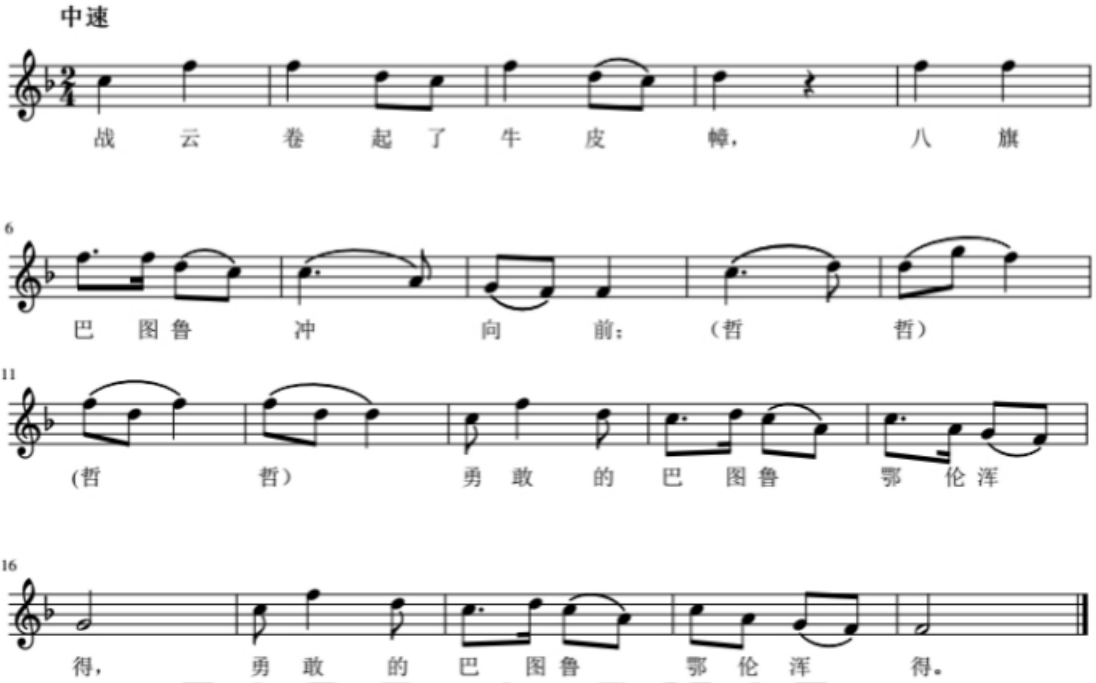


Figure 84 "Baturu Ge" (Hero's Song)

Source: National Editorial Committee of Chinese Folk Song Integration. (1997). Chinese ethnic folk songs: Heilongjiang volume. China ISBN Center.

Note: Sung among the Eight Banners troops in the late Qing Dynasty. "Baturu": Manchu for "hero."

This five phrase expanded one part structure (a + b + c + d + d') glorifies battlefield valor. The first phrase (four measures, three note scale) ends on Yu; the second (five note scale) closes on Gong; the third (four measures, four note scale: Zhi, Yu, Shang, Gong) resolves on Yu; the fourth (five note scale) concludes on Shang; the fifth (a variation of the fourth) terminates on Gong. The decisive melody embodies martial courage.

1.2.3.8 Binary Form

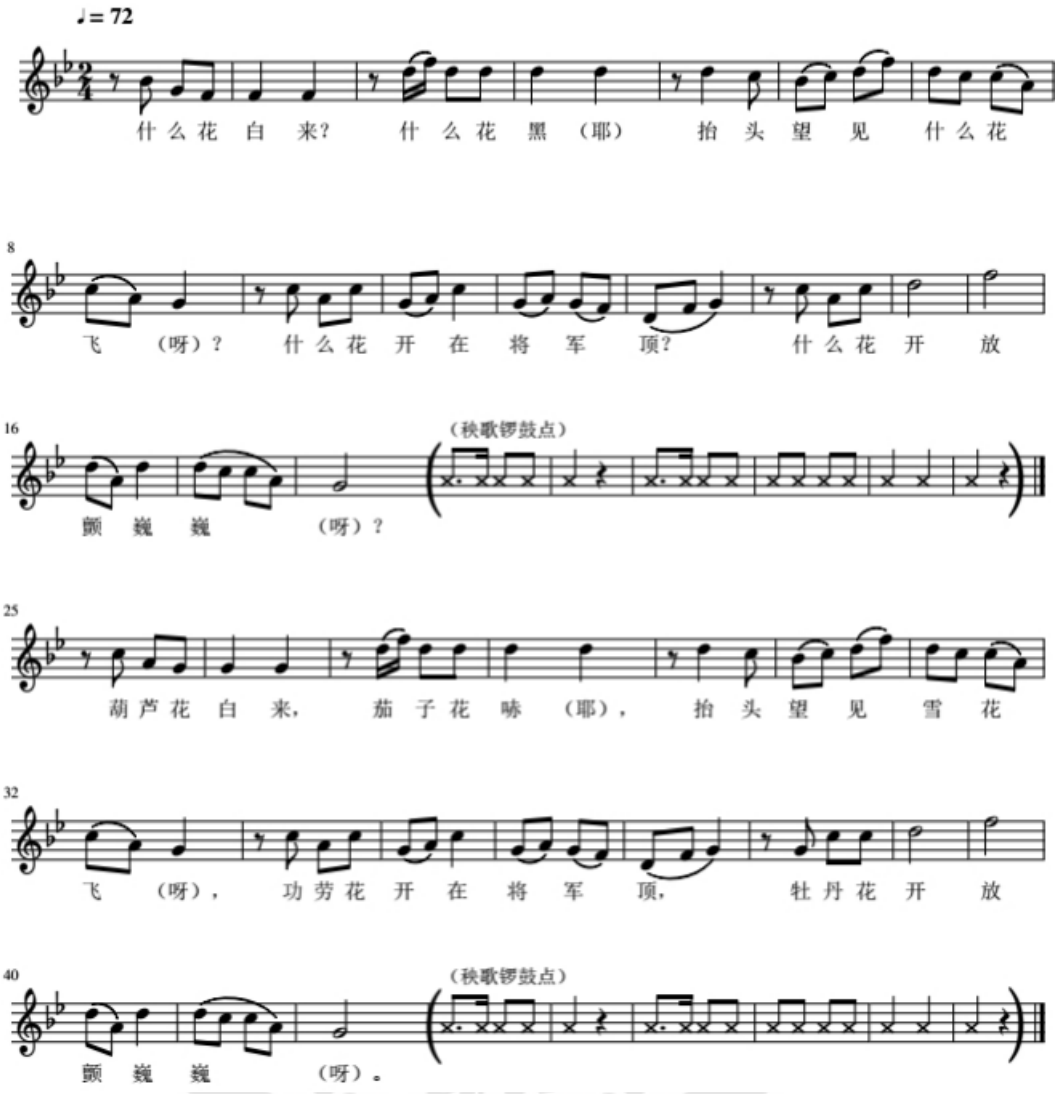


Figure 85 "Dui Ge" (Antiphonal Song)

Source: Huang, L. Y., & Shi, G. W. (1999). Selected Manchu folk songs. People's Music Publishing House.

This call and response song shifts from floral admiration to hero worship, using blossoms as metaphors for longing. Divided into two Yu mode sections, the first (a + b) features two four measure phrases with Bian Gong inflections resolving on Yu. The second (c + d) employs modal shifts via Bian Gong, culminating in a Shang cadence masked as Yu, heightened by yangko percussion for dramatic flair.

1.2.3.9 Ternary Form

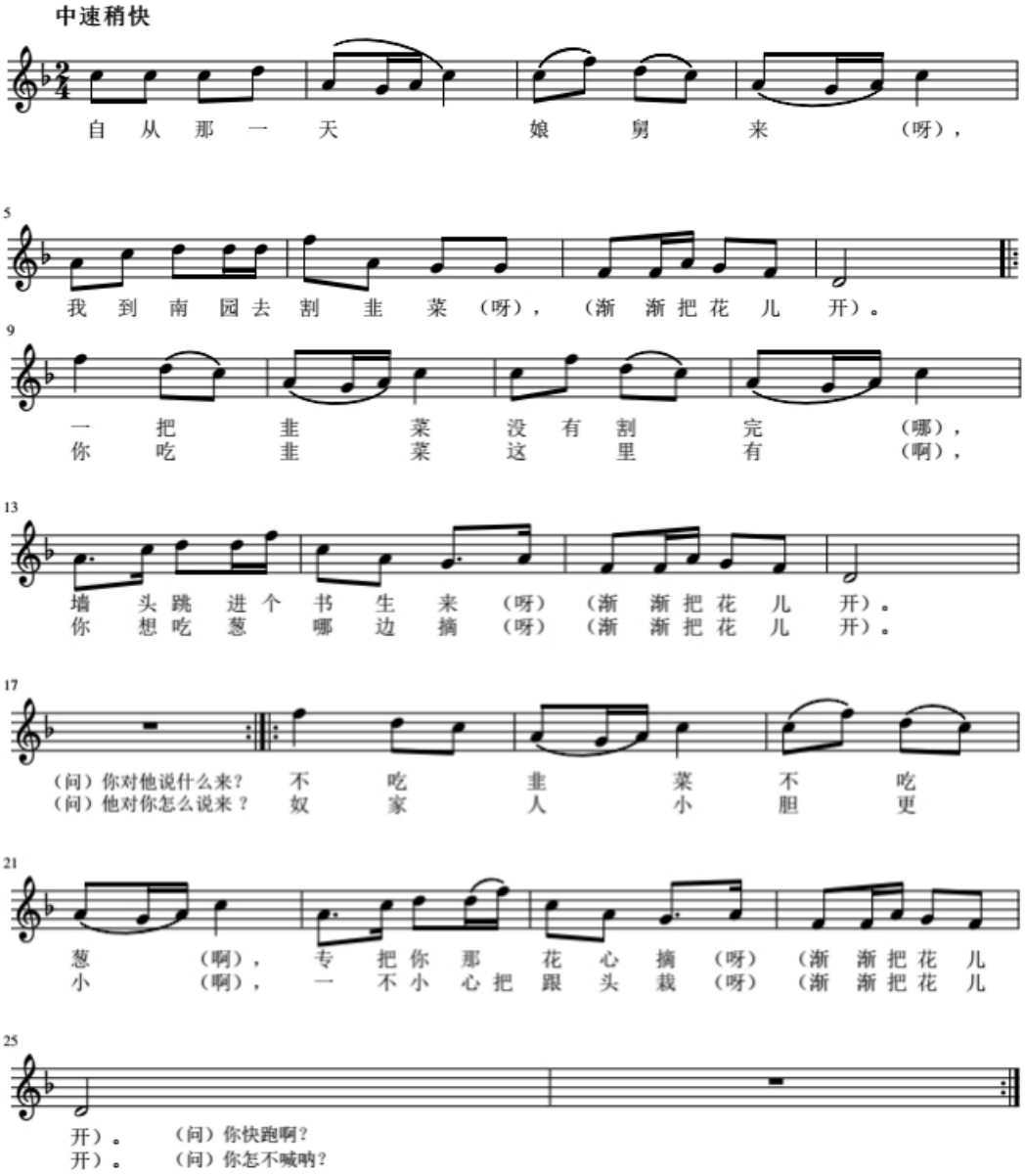


Figure 86 "Ge Jiucai" (Harvesting Chives)

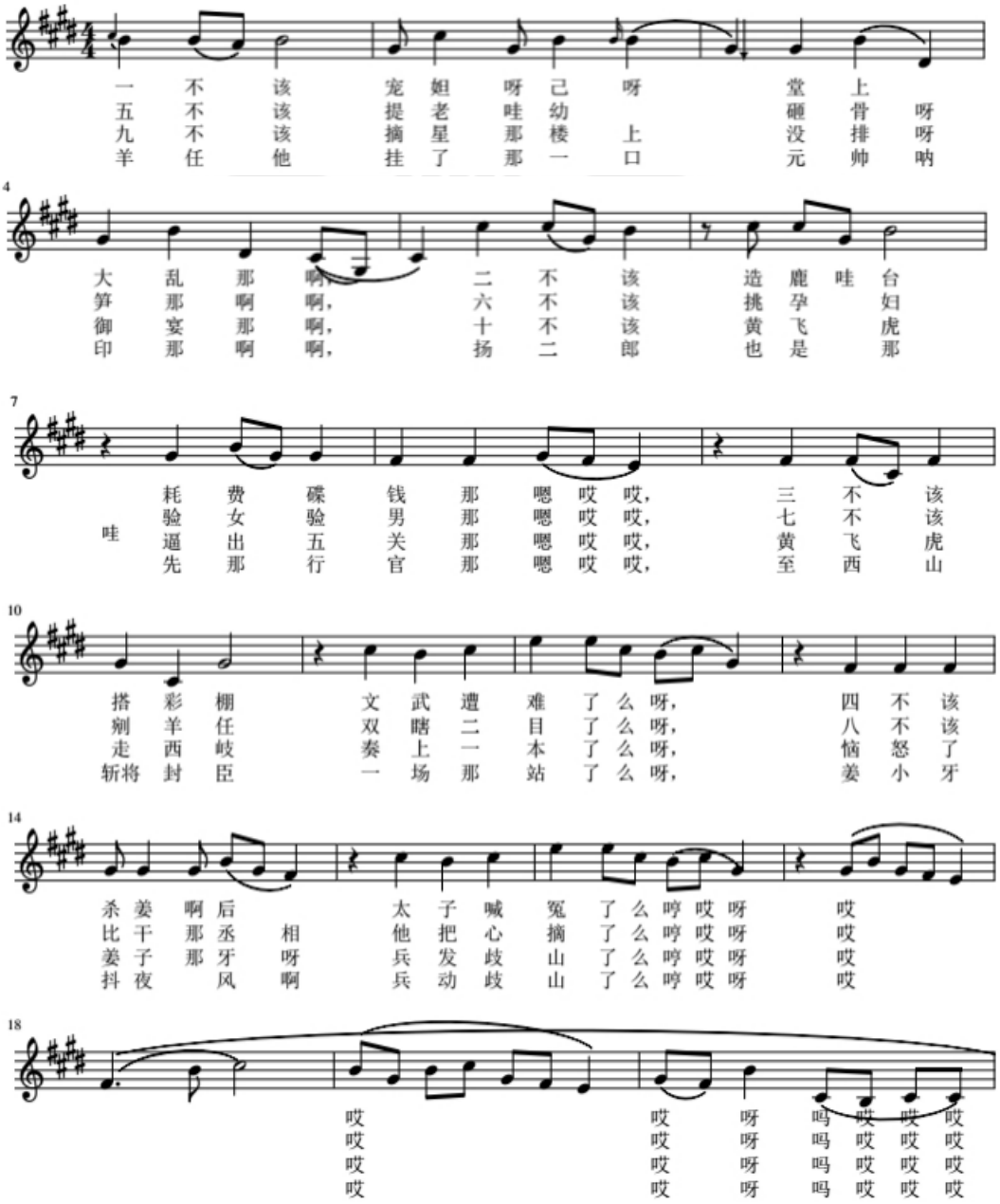
Source: Xiuyan Manchu folk songs selection. (1990). Liaoning Nationalities Publishing House.

This romantic duet weaves affection into a narrative of a scholar leaping over a wall to meet a girl harvesting chives in her southern garden. Structured in three sections (A + B + B'), the first part comprises two phrases (a + b) in a five note scale

resolving on Yu. The second part (c + d) similarly closes on Yu, transitioning via dialogue to the third part (c' + d'), a full imitation of the second, maintaining the Yu mode. The melody is bright and playful, brimming with joyous expression.

1.2.3.10 Free Ternary Form

A free ternary structure combines three distinct sections, each with independent melodies and forms.



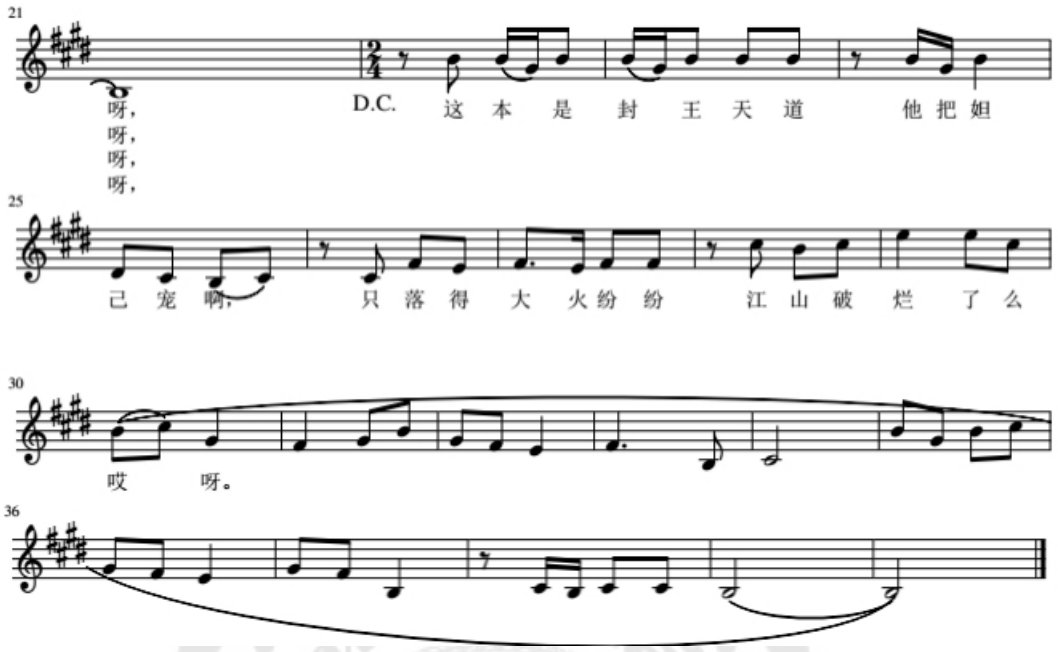


Figure 87 "Shi Bu Gai" (Ten Wrongs)

Source: Organized by the author based on field research

Narrates the downfall of King Zhou of Shang, who indulged his consort Daji, persecuted loyalists, and incited rebellion until his empire collapsed. Dramatically structured with four verses across three sections, this song was performed during "burning banner incense" rituals.

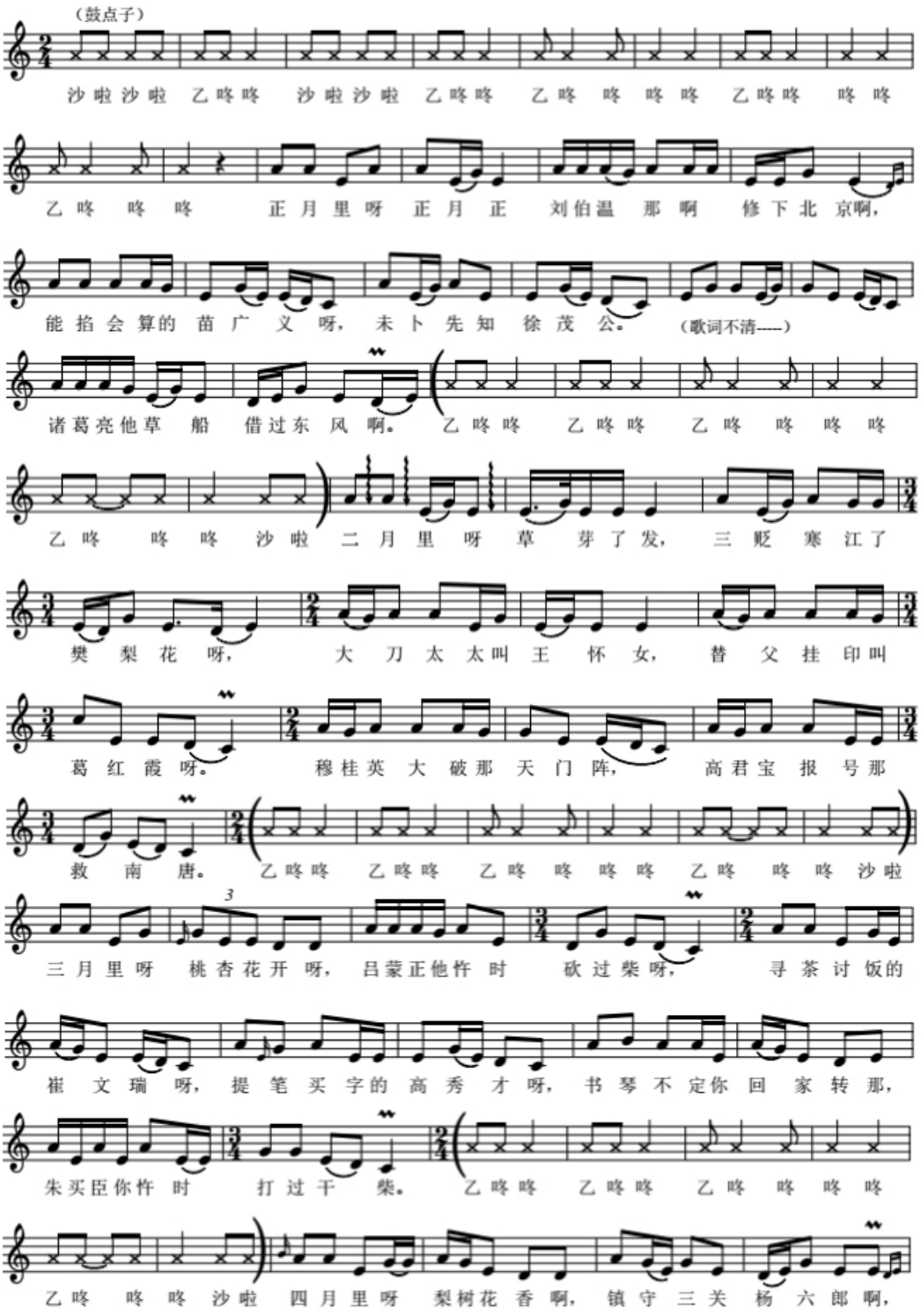
The free ternary form (A + B + C) in 4/4 time features:

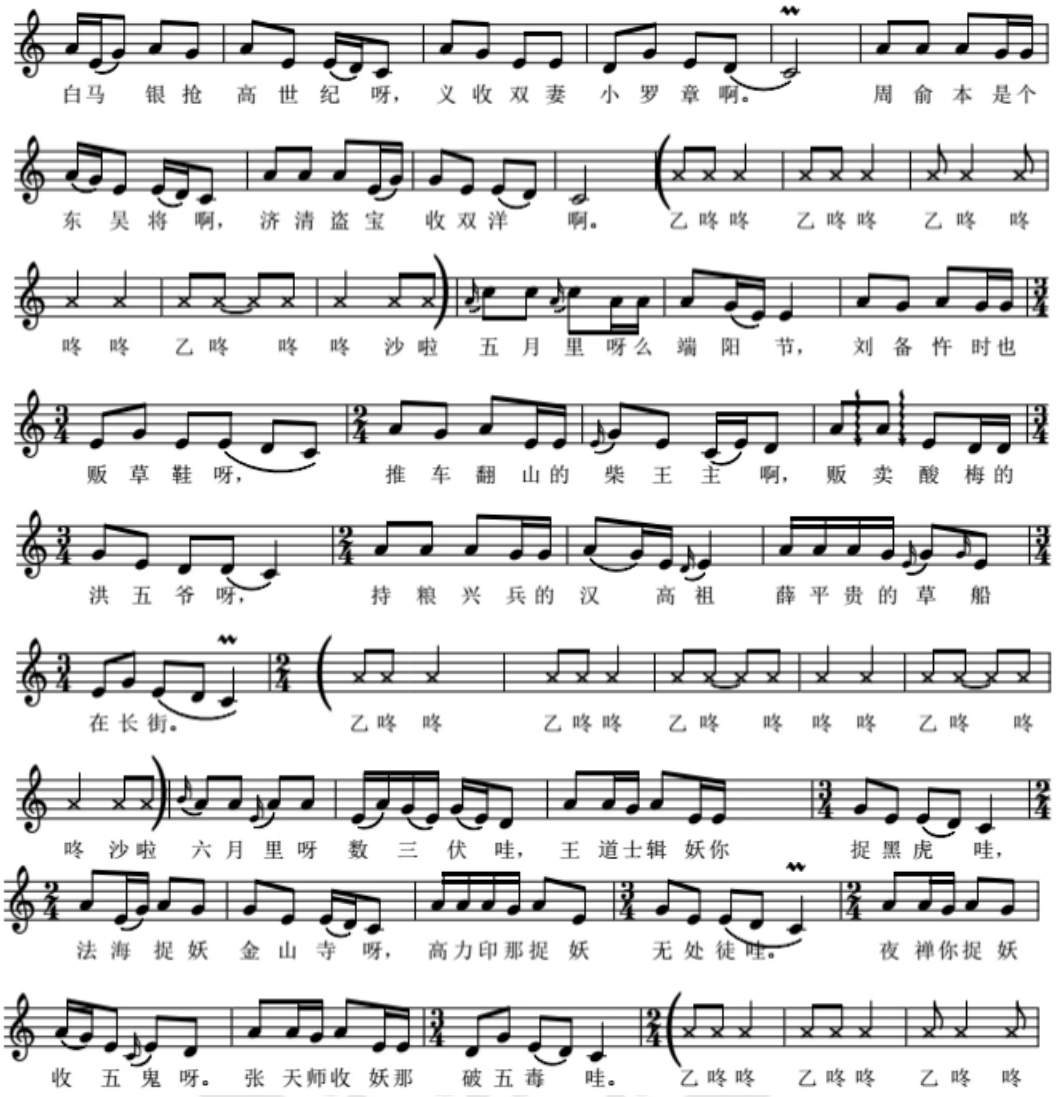
Section A: Four two measure phrases in a six note scale (five notes plus Bian Gong), resolving on Gong.

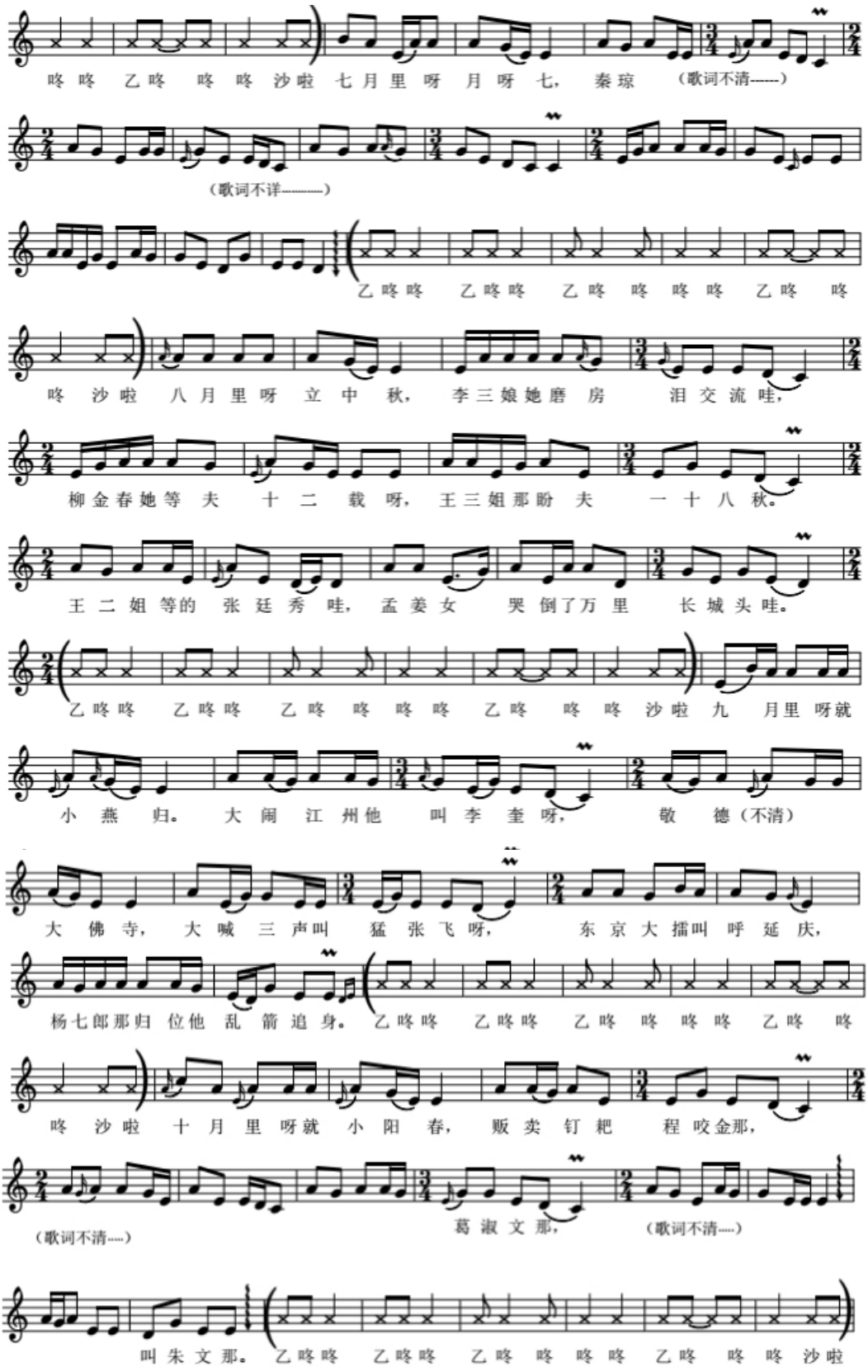
Section B: An expanded one part form with three two measure phrases and a seven measure finale using melismatic extensions.

Section C: Two phrases the first (four measures) ends on Yu; the second (fifteen measures, equivalent to three phrases) concludes with a melismatic flourish on Zhi. The operatic melody, enhanced by percussive guoban rhythms, amplifies its theatrical intensity.

1.2.3.11 Variation Form




白马 银抢 高世纪 呀， 义收双妻 小罗章 啊。 周俞本是个
东吴将 啊， 济清盗宝 收双洋 啊。 乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚
咚 咚 乙咚 咚 咚 沙啦 五月里 呀么 端阳 节， 刘备 忤时也
贩草鞋 呀， 推车翻山的 柴王主 啊， 贩卖酸梅的
洪五爷 呀， 持粮兴兵的汉 高祖 薛平贵的草船
在长街。 乙咚 咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚 咚 咚 乙咚 咚
咚 沙啦 六月里 呀 数三伏 哇， 王道士辑 妖你 捉黑虎 哇，
法海 捉妖 金山寺 呀， 高力印那捉 妖 无处徒 哇。 夜禅你捉 妖
收五鬼 呀。 张天师收 妖那 破五毒 哇。 乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚


咚 咚 乙咚 咚 咚 沙啦 七月里呀 月呀 七， 秦琼 （歌词不清------）
（歌词不详----------）
乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚 咚 咚 乙咚 咚
咚 沙啦 八月里呀 立中 秋， 李三娘她磨 房 泪交流 哇，
柳金春她等 夫 十 二 载 呀， 王三姐那盼 夫 一 十 八 秋。
王 二 姐 等的 张 廷 秀 哇， 孟 姜 女 哭 倒了万 里 长 城 头 哇。
乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚 咚 咚 乙咚 咚 咚 沙啦 九 月里呀就
小 燕 归。 大 闹 江 州他 叫 李 奎 呀， 敬 德（不清）
大 佛 寺， 大 喊 三 声叫 猛 张 飞 呀， 东 京 大 擂叫 呼 延 庆，
杨七郎那归 位他 乱 箭 追 身。 乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚 咚 咚 乙咚 咚
咚 沙啦 十 月 里 呀就 小 阳 春， 贩 卖 钉 耙 程 咬金那，
（歌词不清----）
葛 淑 文 那，
（歌词不清----）
叫 朱 文 那。 乙咚咚 乙咚咚 乙咚 咚 咚 咚 乙咚 咚 咚 沙啦

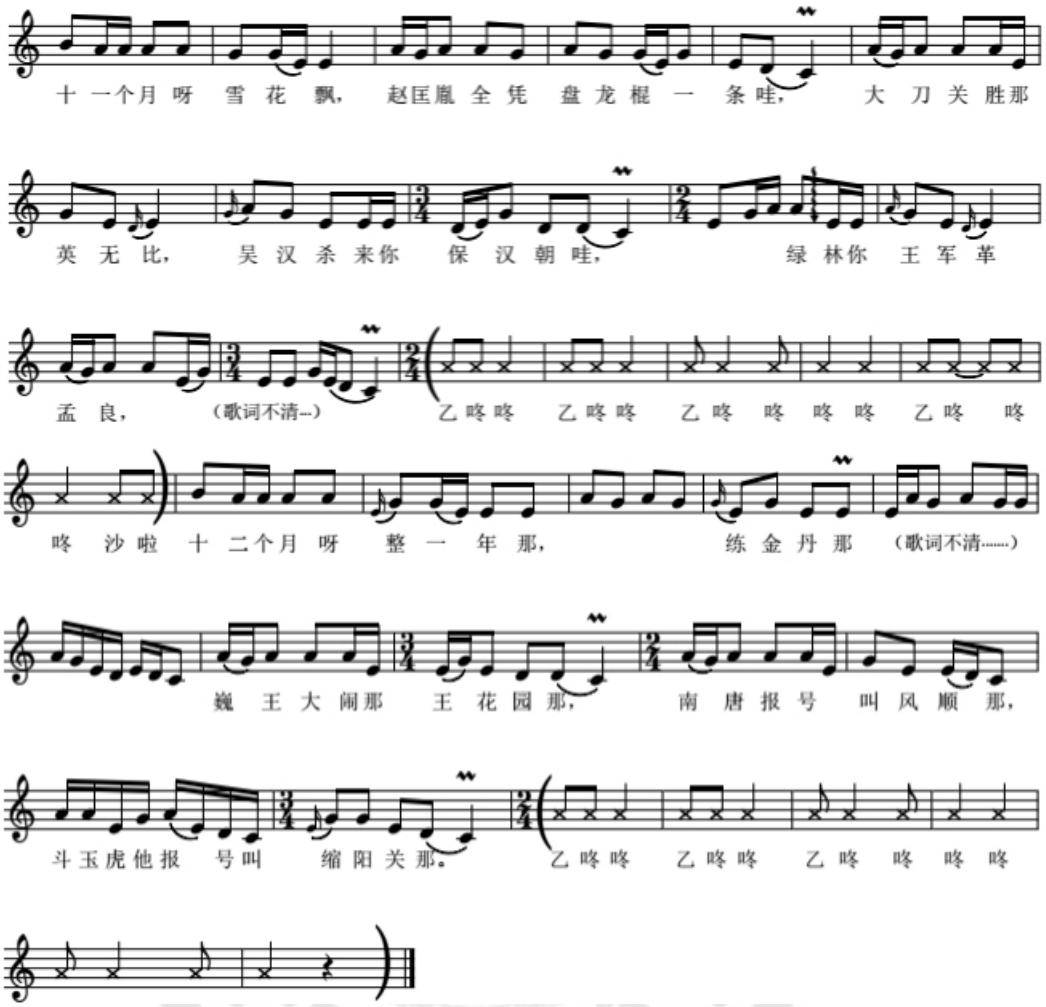


Figure 88 "Shisan Da Zhe" (Thirteen Great Rhymes)

Source: Organized by the author based on field research

This narrative driven piece, steeped in operatic tradition, interweaves twelve musical segments with twelve verses each corresponding to a month of the year to recount legendary heroes and folklore figures. Accompanied by drum interludes acting as transitions, the variation form ($A + A^1 + A^2 + ... + A^{12}$) centers on a three phrase theme reminiscent of dongbei dagu (Northeast drum song). Built on a Gong mode pentatonic scale, the melody begins on Yu, with each four measure phrase progressing through subtle rhythmic and melodic shifts. The first phrase resolves on Jue, the second on Gong, and the third extends the second. Occasional 3/4 meter in

cadences adds dramatic flexibility, while its liuzi qiang (willow tune) affinity underscores its storytelling essence.

1.3 Types and Characteristics of Manchu Musical Instruments in Northeastern China.

As a historically significant and culturally influential ethnic minority in northern China, the Manchu people have cultivated a musical tradition that embodies both unique charm and inclusive adaptability within the pluralistic framework of Chinese civilization. Tracing their roots to the Jurchen tribes of the Liao and Jin dynasties, the Manchu were renowned for their equestrian and archery skills, as well as their vibrant song and dance traditions. By the 17th century, following their establishment of the Qing dynasty, they formed a cohesive community centered in Liaoning, with settlements extending across Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, and Beijing. Through centuries of ethnic integration, the Manchu originally centered on Jurchen tribal identity absorbed cultural elements from Mongolian, Han, Korean, and other ethnic groups in the Heilongjiang River basin, forging a culturally syncretic society. This openness profoundly shaped the evolution of their musical practices.

The cornerstone of Manchu musical culture lies in its shamanic ritual system. As a vehicle of primal spirituality, shamanic music preserves the ancient sonic memories of northern ethnic groups while showcasing cultural fusion through its instruments and performance contexts. The instrumental repertoire is dominated by percussion, categorized into four groups:

Ritual Implements: Instruments derived from religious tools, such as the Yimuqin (single drum, frame drum, and stand drum), Hongwu (sacred drum), Chalaqi (clappers), and Halimali (shamanic bells), all used exclusively in ceremonies.

Folk Entertainment Instruments: Including the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) and peace drum (Taiping Gu) for narrative singing, as well as waist bells (Yaoling), bronze mirrors, and jingles for festivals.

Adapted Foreign Instruments: Incorporating the Mongolian Mokouni (jaw harp), Han Chinese Erxian (two string fiddle) and Sanxian (three string lute), and Korean Pipa (pear shaped lute).

Unique Creations: Such as the dragon flute (Longdi) and Bei (conch shell trumpet).

Functionally, these instruments serve three primary contexts: rituals, storytelling, and dance. The pairing of the single drum (Dan Gu) and waist bells epitomizes the "soul" of shamanic music. The deerhide drumheads and birchwood frames of frame drums (Zhua Gu) retain ancestral craftsmanship tied to forest dwelling traditions, while the octagonal drum's eight sided design echoes the cultural symbolism of the Manchu Eight Banners system.

The diverse origins of these instruments vividly attest to the Manchu culture's syncretic nature. According to Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzu Yueqi Zhi (Ethnic Musical Instruments of China), over 70% of the Manchu's 26 traditional instruments originated from adaptations of other ethnic groups' tools: the shamanic drum system inherits traditions from Tungusic peoples, waist bells (Yaoling) draw inspiration from decorative rattles of nomadic tribes like the Xiongnu and Xianbei, while the peace drum (Taiping Gu) blends Han Chinese fan drums with Manchu equestrian aesthetics. This cultural synthesis manifests both materially such as expanding the Mongolian jaw harp (Mokouni) into a pentatonic system and functionally, as seen in repurposing horse harness bells (Hama Dao Ling) for exorcistic rituals. Crucially, the Manchu absorption of Han instruments involved creative reinvention: the Da Sanxian (large three string lute) was modified with a smaller body and added frets to suit Manchu narrative singing's melodic nuances, while the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) retained its Han storytelling role but evolved a cosmological symbolism where "the drum's eight sides resonate with the eight directions."

From an evolutionary perspective, the Manchu instrumental system reflects the ethnic group's cultural wisdom. On one hand, shamanic ritual tools like the deerskin sacred drum (Shen Gu) preserve ancestral forest hunting legacies. On the other hand, cultural borrowing transformed Han agrarian sizhu (silk bamboo) elegance, Mongolian grassland long song elements, and Korean plucking techniques into innovative syntheses. This dual strategy of rooted preservation and adaptive innovation allowed

Manchu music to retain its northern nomadic character evident in galloping rhythms echoing equestrian traditions while harmonizing diverse regional sounds into a cohesive "peaceful symphony." Today, the crisp beats of octagonal drums still animate Beijing's storytelling arts, and the majestic pulses of peace drums resonate across Liaodong. These vibrant rhythms not only testify to the vitality of Manchu culture but also epitomize the pluralistic unity of Chinese civilization, where multiple traditions coalesce into a grand historical narrative.

1.3.1 Shamanic Ritual Implements and Manchu Musical Instruments

The Manchu people, along with other Altaic speaking ethnic groups in northern China such as the Hezhe, Daur, Ewenki, and Oroqen, share a common belief in shamanism. While their shamanic practices differ significantly in rituals, content, and language, their core ritual implements exhibit striking similarities, universally including shamanic drums, waist bells (Yaoling), ritual swords (Shen Dao), and bronze mirrors. Compared to other groups, the Manchu shamanic system boasts a more diverse array of ritual tools. The Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven) meticulously documents their ceremonial protocols: during morning rites, the ritual officiant (Sizhu) chants hymns while holding a sacred sword, accompanied by the Sanxian (three stringed lute) and Pipa (pear shaped lute); evening rites involve the officiant dancing with waist bells and a hand drum (Shou Gu), intensifying the ritual atmosphere through rhythmic drumming and clappers. Originally confined to religious contexts, these implements gradually transcended sacred spaces over time, being assimilated into court ceremonies and folk arts to form a distinct Manchu instrumental system. Representative examples include the shamanic drum (encompassing hand drums and frame drums), Halimali (evolved from ritual swords), waist bells (Yaoling), shamanic hand bells (Shaman Ling), the peace drum (Taiping Gu), ceremonial lift drum (Tai Gu), clappers (Chalaqi), Sanxian, and Pipa. Among these, the shamanic drum, waist bells, hand bells, and Halimali stand as core symbols of Manchu musical culture due to their profound cultural significance. This evolution not only reflects the functional shift of shamanic tools from sacred to secular domains but also exemplifies the Manchu

people's creative adaptation and dynamic preservation of religious elements within their musical heritage.

Figure 89 Waist Bells

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Waist Bells: Known in Manchu as Xisha and alternatively called Shaman Bells or Shaking Bells, these are traditional idiophonic percussion instruments shared among the Manchu, Mongolian, Daur, Oroqen, Ewenki, and Han ethnic groups, primarily prevalent in Northeastern China and Inner Mongolia. Their forms vary, but the core structure consists of a waist belt, cone shaped bells, and attachment rings, typically crafted from copper, iron, or alloy. Traditional waist bells fall into two categories:

Type One: A rectangular base of cowhide or horsehide adorned with 20 to 32 conical long bells. Each bell, approximately 15 cm in total length, features a nested design of short and long flared tubes (upper diameter: 2.5 cm; lower opening: 3.5—4 cm). Some variations incorporate three independent shamanic bells.

Type Two: Three to five spherical copper bells (4—5 cm in diameter) strung atop a wooden rod. These bells contain sand or iron pellets and have a slit like sound hole at the base.

Court shamanic waist bells were divided into large and small types, while folk versions showed minor variations. Some were sewn onto underskirts before being fastened to the waist, while simpler designs directly attached bells to the belt.

Figure 90 waistband performance

Image source is the URL: https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1w44y167FH/

Performance Techniques: The playing method is deeply tied to shamanic rituals. Dancers secure the bells around their waists and generate rhythmic clattering through vigorous movements swinging, swaying, jerking, trembling, and shaking. In Manchu shamanic ceremonies, waist bells are paired with single drums (Dan Gu), their metallic clangs intertwining with drumbeats to accompany dances and exorcise malevolent forces. Shamans believe the bells' spiritual power is divinely bestowed, requiring ceremonial worship by an assistant before donning. During rituals, the shaman's frenetic bell shaking is thought to intimidate evil spirits and channel courage. Modern adaptations have secularized waist bells into key props for Northeast Chinese folk dances.

Cross Cultural Resonance: The cultural significance of waist bells extends beyond northern China. Similar instruments exist among Native American communities, such as dancers in San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, who sew cone shaped bells onto garment hems rather than underskirts. Despite differing designs, the shared acoustic principles and ritual functions using bodily motion to activate sound, bridging human and divine realms reveal a cross cultural archetype. This diversity underscores the instrument's dual role as both a practical tool and a symbolic medium in ritual performance.

Figure 91 Halimali

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Halimali: Known in Manchu as Halimali, translated as "Ringing Blade" or "Sacred Sword," this ritual implement serves both as a ceremonial tool for exorcism and a musical instrument in Manchu shamanic practices. Crafted from metal (copper, iron) or wood, its blade length varies regionally and functionally, typically ranging from 52 to 73 cm, with a hilt of 15—16 cm. The blade's spine and wrist guard discs are adorned with clusters of small interlinked metal rings. A representative example is the wooden Halimali used by the Wuzhahala shamans of Xinbin, Liaoning: a 52 cm blade, a 16 cm hilt, and iron rings strung along the spine. In contrast, the iron Halimali documented in the Qing dynasty's Qinding Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven) measures 73 cm in length and 6.3 cm in width, reflecting ceremonial grandeur. The design prioritizes acoustic impact shaking the blade causes the rings to clatter against it, producing a "clattering" sound symbolizing sonic intimidation of spirits rather than physical slashing. Notably, modern

adaptations using hay cutters as substitutes retain the visual form but lack acoustic properties, diminishing their musicological significance.

Figure 92 Halimali performance

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Performance and Ritual Function: The Halimali's usage blends ritual solemnity and performative artistry. During ceremonies, shamans or assistants (Zailizi) grip the blade with both hands, positioning the edge toward themselves and the spine facing deities, rhythmically shaking it vertically three times to synchronize with chants. In certain rites, shamans wield dual blades to execute intricate "sword striking" dances requiring advanced skill. Its roles are twofold: as a rhythmic accompaniment to ritual chants and as an exorcistic tool, where frenetic motions symbolically repel malevolent forces through sound rather than steel. Often paired with waist bells (Xisha) and single drums (Dan Gu), the Halimali contributes to constructing a sacred sonic environment.

Cultural and Cross Cultural Significance: The Halimali embodies profound Manchu beliefs in human divine communication. Its metallic clangor is viewed as a medium bridging the spiritual realm, its deterrent power imbued with divine force that bolsters the shaman's "battle" against unseen evils. Though modern simplifications exist, traditional Halimali persists in grand rituals within Northeast Manchu communities,

serving as vital specimens for studying shamanic music, ritual art, and the evolution of weapon based idiophones. Cross cultural parallels such as similar clattering implements in Asian Nuo exorcism traditions highlight the universal role of sound producing ritual tools in early human religious practices, underscoring shared archetypes in spiritual acoustics.

Figure 93 Yimuqin

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Yimuqin: The Yimuqin (frame drum with handheld grip) is a quintessential instrument in Manchu shamanic culture, serving both ritual and symbolic functions. Its design features a wooden frame covered with donkey, horse, or animal hide. A central iron ring on the drum's back is secured by cross shaped leather straps or an iron stand, with a horizontal wire strung with copper coins or jingles (Hongwu in Manchu) that produce metallic clatter when shaken. The drumstick, made of thin bamboo, is held in the right hand while the left grips the iron ring. Yimuqin comes in two sizes: larger drums for outdoor rituals and smaller ones for indoor ceremonies.

Performance Techniques: The playing methods are highly systematized. Striking techniques alternate between hitting the drumhead (producing tonal shifts by targeting the center or edges) and tapping the rim (creating contrasting percussive effects). Holding postures include four primary stances: vertical hold (upright at the chest), cradling (flat, like a tray), inverted grip (tilted at the waist), and overhead lift

(raised above the head). Skilled shamans integrate these techniques with improvised dance, merging song, movement, and percussion into a trinity of performance. Dynamic drumming and bodily gestures collectively forge a sacred dialogue with the divine.

Sacred Symbolism and Cross Cultural Parallels: In shamanic belief, the Yimuqin transcends mere instrumentation. It is mythologized as a supernatural vehicle (ferrying shamans across rivers or skies) and a spiritual conduit. Invocation chants from Jilin's Shi clan shamans "As the Yimuqin resounds and the thunder drum roars… descend swiftly!" underscore its role in spirit possession. This ritual drum pervades Northeast Asian cultures, with analogous versions among the Hezhe, Oroqen, and Russian Far East indigenes. Cross cultural analysis reveals striking homology: Norwegian shamanic drums, despite Europeanized beaters, share core traits like single headed hide and handheld straps, hinting at potential Eurasian cultural diffusion.

Academic Hypotheses: Scholars propose that shamanic drums originated in Northeast Asia's forest cultures, later spreading to Northern Europe via historical migrations. Norwegian specimens' retained core features support this theory, though field research is needed for validation. If confirmed, it would illuminate deep rooted connections in Eurasian primal rituals and demonstrate shamanism's transregional resilience. The Yimuqin's echoes across time and space thus offer vital musicological clues for studying humanity's early spiritual interconnectedness.

Figure 94 Dan Gu

Image source is the URL: https://www.sohu.com/a/278449569_274343

Dan Gu: The Dan Gu, also known as the "single headed drum" or "Peace Drum," is a pivotal handheld frame drum in Manchu shamanic rituals. Its origins trace to the Tang Dynasty, initially serving as a hunting drum for coordinating group actions among northern nomadic tribes before evolving into a musical and ceremonial tool. Qing era texts like Yao Yuanzhi's Zhuye Ting Zalu (Miscellaneous Records from the Bamboo Leaf Pavilion) describe shamans dancing with the Dan Gu while wearing ritual headdresses and waist bells (Yaoling), blending sacred and artistic roles. Though its Manchu name has been lost due to prolonged Manchu Han cultural integration, its defining feature the synchronized use of drum and waist bells persists. In rituals like "Pao Wang Huan Quanzi" (Running the Spirit Circle), its frenetic beats and bell clatter create trance inducing atmospheres, retaining visceral impact even without formal spirit possession practices.

Figure 95 Performance by Dan Gu

Image source is the URL:

https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9B%B2%E5%B8%85/53236792

Construction and Performance Techniques: The Dan Gu features an iron frame covered with donkey, horse, or sheep hide, shaped into flat circles, round fans, peaches, or octagons (a Qing innovation). The handle, approximately 13 cm long, dangles dozens of iron rings. Drumsticks, made of bamboo or rattan (~30 cm long), strike the drumhead's center, edges, or frame. Advanced techniques include:

Da (striking): Varying force and position for tonal shifts.

Shua Gu Wei (brushing the drum tail): Shaking the handle to rustle iron rings.

Bai Gu (splitting): Alternating between large and small drums to build rhythmic climaxes.

Players combine these with finger taps and wrist flicks, while the left hand manipulates the handle for percussive accents. When paired with waist belts, layered textures emerge.

Cultural Evolution and Regional Adaptations: Initially exclusive to shamanic rites, the Dan Gu secularized during the Qing Dynasty. Male performers supplanted female shamans, integrating it into folk dances and festivals like the Hanjun Banner's

"Shao Xiang Huanyuan" (Incense Burning Vow Fulfillment) and Gansu's Xuan Gu (Spinning Drum). Its geographic spread from Manchuria to Liaoxi, Beijing, and the Northwest spawned regional variants, such as Wudang's semicircular Xuan Gu, still revered as a "sacred drum" for exorcism. Cross culturally, Japan's Tsuzumi (hand drum) shares visual similarities (wooden frame, no handle) but lacks confirmed historical ties.

Relationship to Frame Drums: The Dan Gu shares lineage with the handheld frame drum (Zhua Gu). Both are single headed, ring adorned circular drums, but the Dan Gu's handle distinguishes it. A 1930s photograph of a Chahar shamanic drum from Inner Mongolia reveals a hybrid form: a wide rimmed frame drum with a handle and a symbolic "bird tail" extension, evoking shamanic flight. This artifact suggests the Dan Gu evolved from handleless frame drums through ergonomic adaptation, reflecting northern ethnic groups' instrumental innovation and cross cultural exchange. Such morphological transitions underscore the dynamic interplay between ritual utility and artistic reinvention in Manchu Mongolian shamanic traditions.

Figure 96 Hongwu

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Hongwu: Known in Manchu as Hongwu, this instrument alternately called "Copper Bells," "Divine Bells," or "Bell Staff" is a core shamanic tool formally documented in the Qinding Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven). Its cultural symbolism runs deep: shamans regard

the bells' chimes as a tangible sonic medium for deities, capable of summoning divine presence. For instance, in Jilin's Shi clan rituals, the deity "Makeji Manni" is depicted as "entering while playfully shaking golden divine bells," where the bells' sound merges with sacred light (Tuoli) to symbolize divine manifestation.

Construction and Variations: The Hongwu comprises a wooden staff and copper bells. Local gazetteers like Hulan Fu Zhi (Hulan Prefecture Records) describe it as "a 2.5 foot wooden staff with multiple copper bells attached to the top," while Yilan Xian Zhi (Yilan County Chronicles) notes "two 3 foot oak rods, each tipped with five copper bells." Clan specific designs vary:

The Fuchahala clan's staff measures 96 cm, thicker at the top, with two bell groups three bells (one large, two small) and four bells (one large, three small) adorned with taotie motifs (mythical gluttonous beast patterns).

The Wuzhahala clan's shorter staff (66.5 cm) features two equal sized bells per group, suspended from forged iron quadrangular rings.

All bells are hollow with internal pellets, producing rhythmic and ethereal clangs when shaken.

Performance Techniques: The Hongwu often pairs with waist bells (Yaoling) to intensify ritual atmospheres. Usage divides into two modes:

Fixed Mode: Bells remain attached to the staff, activated by shaking, striking the ground ("dun ling"), or tapping the staff ("zhen ling").

Detached Mode: Bells are removed and shaken by hand.

Post Qing practices predominantly favor the fixed mode, emphasizing the staff bell unity. Contrary to Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzu Yueqi Zhi (Ethnic Musical Instruments of China), which erroneously lists these as separate instruments ("Shaman Bells" and Hongwu), fieldwork (e.g., Ningguta's Fuchahala shamans) confirms they are operational variants of the same tool. Detached bell use is situational, not a distinct instrument.

Materiality and Symbolic Craftsmanship: The staffs, carved from northern hardwoods like pine, birch, or oak, and bells cast in copper with archaic motifs (e.g.,

taotie), embody divine authority. Dimensional variations (staffs: 60—100 cm; bells: 3—4 cm diameter) accommodate ergonomic preferences, while iron rings and leather straps enhance acoustic layering and ritual dynamism. As a core tool for "sonic deity conjuring," the Hongwu transforms abstract divinities into audible presences through timbral and rhythmic control, epitomizing the Manchu shamanic ethos of bridging human and spiritual realms.

Figure 97 Tongken

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Tongken: The Tongken, a double headed flat wooden frame drum central to Manchu shamanic rituals, embodies the profound cultural logic of Manchu religious artistry. Traditionally crafted from elm or birch, its drumheads are affixed with symbolic and functional techniques: folk versions use donkey or horse hide secured by crisscrossed leather straps, reflecting nomadic heritage, while court drums employ iron nailed cowhide, with diameters up to 53 cm and heights varying between 13.6—20 cm depending on ceremonial rank. This dimensional hierarchy mirrors ritual spatiality folk drums hung on shrine pillars prioritize resonance, while court versions mounted on ornate stands (1.5 m tall) carved with dragons and clouds emphasize visual grandeur.

Performance Practices and Symbolism: The Tongken's dual nature manifests in both technical and symbolic realms. Technically, its playing methods are

rigorously codified: the lead shaman uses specialized mallets (33.3 cm long, with spherical heads) to perform standing, controlling ritual cadence through dynamic strikes, as documented in the Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven). Assistants kneel, clasping the drum between their knees to hand strike it, modulating tone via strap tension. Symbolically, its sounds mimic thunderous divine wrath (through rapid strikes) and metaphorize cosmic rhythms (via steady pulses), collaborating with frame drums (Zhua Gu) and bell staffs (Hongwu) to construct a tripartite "heaven earth human" sonic field. Notably, the leather strap lacing technique of Ning'an's Fuchahala clan parallels Korean flat drum craftsmanship, revealing Northeast Asian shamanic instrumentality's cross cultural DNA.

Evolution and Cultural Synthesis: The Tongken's transformation underscores Manchu music's syncretic trajectory. During early hunting fishing eras, its portable design with adjustable straps suited migratory rituals. Qing court adaptations integrated Han Chinese metalworking for iron nailed heads and blended Manchu Han aesthetics through dragon phoenix motifs. Modern stagings like Shengjing Jian Gu (Shengjing Drum Construction) amplify it to 80 cm with electronic amplification, transitioning it from ritual tool to cultural symbol. Scholars emphasize three defining features distinguishing it from Han Chinese tanggu (hall drums): crisscrossed strap lacing, flat resonance chamber, and ritual context. Current field research reveals only Xibe shamans fully preserve its crafting techniques, making the Tongken a critical specimen for studying Manchu musical heritage's erosion and adaptation.

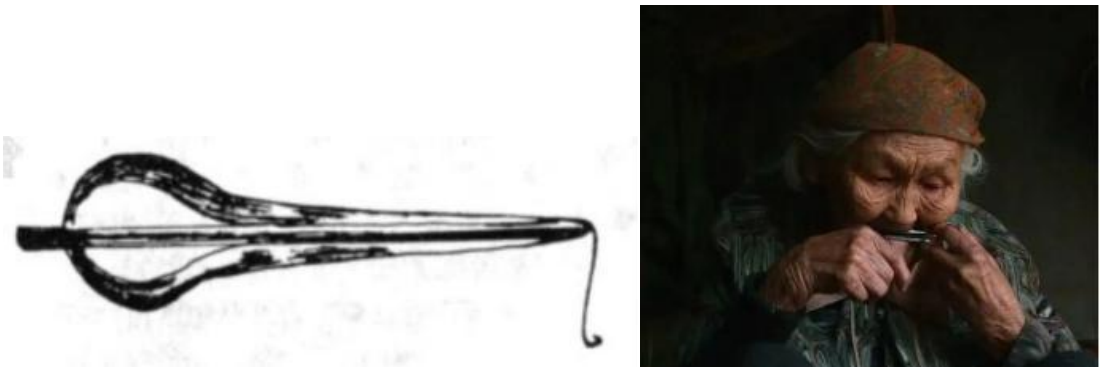


Figure 98 Tiehuang

Image source is the URL:

https://weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2309404822574482981374

Tiehuang: The Tiehuang, a historic composite idiophonic instrument, is widely played among ethnic groups in Northeast and Northwest China, including the Manchu, Hezhe, Daur, Ewenki, and Oroqen. Each culture assigns distinct names: Mokouni in Manchu, Kongkangji in Hezhe, and Benkulian in Daur. Its forms vary, with common shapes resembling pliers, rings, swords, leaves, or pears, crafted primarily from copper, iron, or bullet casings. In Northeastern China, steel, iron, and alloys dominate, featuring a 10–13 cm frame, a central conical reed (14–17 cm long), and a 45 degree curved tip adorned with a small bead. The Manchu pear shaped Mokouni measures ~20 cm, with a red tassel dangling from the reed's end. To play, the left hand grips the base while teeth stabilize the frame; the right hand plucks the bead to vibrate the reed, modulated by oral exhalation to create metallic jing jing tones spanning a range of a fifth. Capable of solo folk melodies or ensemble harmonies, the Tiehuang serves both utilitarian and symbolic roles, featured in Manchu weddings, festivals (often performed by women and children in processions), and shamanic rituals.

Figure 99 Zhujie

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Zhujie: The Jie, a traditional Chinese instrument and dance prop also known as "Winnowing Basket" or "Bamboo Jie," is woven from bamboo strips or wheat straw into a winnowing basket shape, adorned with red and green tiger motifs that blend utility and symbolism. Its form varies by context: court versions, crafted from bamboo and painted with vermilion lacquer and tiger imagery, exude solemnity; folk iterations, woven from wheat straw with rustic tiger patterns, emphasize simplicity. To play, the left hand grips the basket while the right holds two bamboo sticks between the thumb and forefinger, producing diverse rhythms through techniques like long sweeps, short flicks, strikes, and plucks across the front panel, back, and edges.

Court Rituals and Folk Practices: In Qing dynasty court music, the Jie doubled as a ceremonial regalia, most notably in the Yanglie Dance (Dance of Martial Valor). The Da Qing Hui Dian (Great Qing Statutes) details its protocol: sixteen performers flanked symmetrically, left hands holding the Jie like a basket and right hands gripping round bamboo sticks "like chopsticks," synchronizing percussive sweeps with orchestral music and choreography. This fusion of visual spectacle and rhythmic precision epitomized the ritual ideal of "harmonizing sound and form." Folk traditions, meanwhile, infused the Jie with liveliness women often performed improvised dances, merging instrumental play with bodily expression into a unique folk art.

Contemporary Revival and Innovation: Modern reinventions showcase the Jie's cultural accommodation. Artists in Liaoning Province reimagined the Yanglie Dance as a male group performance, retaining the Jie as both instrument and prop while amplifying rhythmic complexity and visual dynamism through coordinated movements. This innovation upholds the ancient principle of "sound guiding dance, dance manifesting sound" while aligning with modern aesthetics. From court rites to folk revelry and today's stages, the Jie's evolution mirrors Chinese traditional music dance culture's dynamic equilibrium rooted in intrinsic identity yet responsive to changing eras.

1.3.2 Traditional Instruments of Northern Ethnic Groups and Manchu Instruments

As a vital crossroads of multicultural exchange in Northeastern China, the Manchu musical tradition developed through distinct cross ethnic integration. Their

instrumental system not only preserved indigenous features but also absorbed elements from neighboring northern ethnic groups and Han Chinese, forming a pluralistic artistic landscape. Early Manchu music was deeply influenced by Mongolian culture, with instruments like the Bei (conch trumpet), Huajiao (painted horn, originally Han military brass but reshaped by Mongolian nomadic culture), jingles, and dragon flutes (Longdi) directly integrated into Manchu practices. The Qing court further institutionalized Mongolian drums like the Henggeleige into royal procession music, while instruments such as the hourglass drum (Zhang Gu), Hujia (reed pipe), horse head fiddle (Morin Khuur), and two string fiddle (Erxian) entered Manchu folk music via court popular exchanges, serving both imperial ceremonies and adapted folk traditions.

Korean influence on Manchu music was more systematic due to Korea's advanced cultural development. During the Later Jin period, Korean performers introduced Goryeo music and dance, which became popular among Manchu nobility and later incorporated into Qing court music. Korean Tongxiao (vertical flute) was adopted as a ceremonial instrument for Manchu khans and aristocrats, while Korean drums evolved into Manchu frame drums (Jia Gu) and lift drums (Tai Gu). The Korean Xiqin (two string fiddle) became the prototype for Qing court huqin instruments. Notably, Korean music itself carried Han Chinese cultural DNA, forming a "Han Korean Manchu" transmission chain some Korean instruments originally derived from Han Chinese models were localized before being reabsorbed and adapted by the Manchu.

This cultural synthesis followed a tiered pattern: the Manchu directly adopted mature instruments from Mongols and Koreans while re engineering Han Chinese instruments that had circulated among neighboring groups. For example, the Mongolian Erxian (two string fiddle) and Korean flutes accumulated layered cultural imprints during their cross regional journeys. The Qing court's music bureau epitomized this hybridity, blending Mongolian drums, Korean fiddles, and Manchu modified instruments like the Taiping Gu (peace drum) and clappers (Paiban). Folk adaptations through material innovations (e.g., drumhead techniques) and structural tweaks (e.g., drum stand designs) transformed foreign instruments into localized cultural vessels. This

multi tiered integration allowed Manchu music to preserve diverse artistic essences while forging a unique identity, standing as a historical testament to Northeast Asia's ethnic interweaving.

Figure 100 Manchu Paiban

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Manchu Paiban: Known in Manchu as Calaqi, this ancient rhythm instrument has been used by northern ethnic groups since the Balhae period (698—926 CE) and flourished during the Qing Dynasty in shamanic rituals, court banquets, and folk dance accompaniment. The name derives from its playing method of "clapping and striking," also called Zhaban. Historical records, such as Duan Anjie's Yuefu Zalu (Miscellaneous Records of the Music Bureau) from the Tang Dynasty, mention iron clappers (Tie Paiban), while murals in Dunhuang and Bohai tombs depict musicians holding clappers, evidencing its long standing circulation between Central Plains and northern cultures. Incorporated into Yuan court music and reaching its zenith under the Qing, it became a defining symbol of Manchu musical heritage.

Construction and Variations: The Calaqi consists of rectangular wooden slats strung together, typically made of pearwood, rosewood, boxwood, or ironwood. Regional designs vary in slat count and decoration:

The Fuchahala clan's version in Ning'an, Heilongjiang, features four ironwood slats (33 cm long) with branded patterns.

The Wuzhahala clan's in Xinbin, Liaoning, uses three hardwood slats (60 cm long, 8 cm wide).

A Qing court specimen in Beijing's Palace Museum, crafted from six rosewood slats (40.5 cm long, 1.8 cm thick), tapers upward, showcasing imperial craftsmanship.

Folk versions are simpler, often adorned with red silk ribbons, while shamanic clappers bear carvings of peaches, pomegranates, or monkey heads for ritual symbolism. All slats have dual holes at the top threaded with leather or silk cords, allowing the lower ends to clap freely when struck.

Performance and Cultural Significance: Played either single handed (shaking the slats in one palm) or double handed (clapping two sets of slats), the Calaqi is central to Manchu shamanic rituals, where dual handed techniques enhance rhythmic complexity. Its sounds evoke mystical atmospheres in shamanic dances while providing lively beats for folk performances like the Mangshi Kongqi dance. This adaptability across sacred and secular contexts underscores the instrument's functional versatility. As a testament to cultural exchange, the Calaqi preserves Tang era northern musical traditions while blending Manchu aesthetics and shamanic spirituality, standing as a typical vehicle of musical cultural fusion in Northeast Asia.

Figure 101 Conch Shell

Image source is the URL: http://www.zgmzyq.cn/zh/operating-guide/origin-and-origin-of-conch.html

Conch Shell: Known as Bei, Hailuo, Faluo, or Fanbei, this instrument has been documented in religious rituals since the Tang and Song dynasties. Later, it became integral to Tibetan and Mongolian Lamaist ensembles. Crafted from a conch shell with a small circular blowing hole at the tail, it produces a resonant wuwu tone. Some versions feature leather straps threaded through both ends for wearing across the chest or under the arm. Elaborate specimens, like the silver inlaid, gem studded Bei housed in Shenyang's Imperial Palace Museum, showcase exquisite craftsmanship. Adopted by the Manchu, the Bei was used in warfare and grand ceremonies, as historical records note its role in boosting morale during battles. The Manzhou Shilu Tu (Manchu Veritable Records Illustrated) also depicts its ceremonial use. Additionally, the Bei and painted horns (Huajiao) formed part of the Later Jin (Qing) imperial processions, symbolizing state ritual music.

Figure 102 Xiangling

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Xiangling: The Xiangling, also called Zhuangling or Pengzhong, is a bronze percussion instrument resembling stemless wine cups, prevalent in Tibetan and

Mongolian Lamaist music. Each cup shaped bell has a pointed base with a central hole for threading a cord. The player holds both ends of the cord, clashing the bells to produce crisp, clear tones. Today, it remains widely used in Manchu, Mongolian, and other ethnic folk dances and musical accompaniments.

Figure 103 Longdi

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Longdi: The Longdi ("Dragon Flute"), introduced during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and later adopted as a court instrument, became a staple of Manchu aristocratic culture. After Emperor Huangtaiji's Chongde era reforms, it was formalized as part of the imperial procession's regalia. Typically made of wood or bamboo with seven finger holes, Qing court versions featured intricately carved dragon heads and tails at both ends, painted in deep brown, red, or marigold, with red silk tassels tied to the lower end. Folk variants lacked dragon motifs. To this day, the Longdi remains central to Er Ren Zhuan (Northeast Chinese folk opera) and Er Ren Tai (Inner Mongolian song dance) performances across Northeastern China and Inner Mongolia.

1.3.3 Han Chinese Instruments and Manchu Instruments

Manchu culture was profoundly shaped by Han Chinese civilization, particularly after the Qing conquest of China proper, when rulers fully adopted Han ritual music systems. Han court instruments like the Bianzhong (chime bells), Bianqing (stone chimes), Luo Gu (gongs and drums), Qin (zither), and Zheng (bridged zither) were

incorporated into Qing imperial music, forming the core of state ceremonial music. Direct transmission of Han folk instruments to the Manchu was rare, though exceptions exist historical records note Han locals welcoming Later Jin forces with drums, trumpets, and Suona (shawms) after the 1621 conquest of Liaoyang and Shenyang. Two notable cases are the Pipa (pear shaped lute) and Tongjing (bronze mirrors). The Pipa, a plucked string instrument widely used in ancient Han China, and bronze mirrors, originally Han household items, were adopted by northern ethnic groups after spreading to the Northeast. The Manchu creatively adapted these through structural modifications and functional reinvention, imprinting them with distinct ethnic attributes. For instance, the Pipa was integrated into Manchu musical performances, while bronze mirrors evolved from daily utensils into percussive ritual implements in shamanic ceremonies. This exemplifies Manchu's innovative absorption and localized reinterpretation of Han cultural elements.

Figure 104 Manchu Pipa

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Manchu Pipa: The Manchu Pipa blends Han Chinese traditions with ethnic distinctiveness in form and function. Its resonator is broader than Han Pipa, adopting a semi pear shape with a wooden soundboard, a backward curving headstock with four tuning pegs, and four silk strings spanning a wide tonal range. The neck features ten frets, flanked by crescent shaped sound windows (yinyue) near the higher frets a design likely influenced by northern nomadic aesthetics. As recorded in the Jianzhou Jicheng Tuji (Illustrated Annals of Jianzhou), Nurhaci, the Qing founder, personally played the Pipa, underscoring its elite cultural status. In Qing court banquets, the Pipa was

integrated into the "processional dance music" system, often deployed in ensembles of eight to accompany grand dances like Qinglong Wu (Dance of Celebrating Prosperity) and Shide Wu (Dance of Ancestral Virtue). Among the populace, it served shamanic rites, festivals, and dances such as Mangshi Kongqi, functioning both as a melodic instrument and a rhythmic driver via strumming and tremolo techniques. A testament to Han Manchu synthesis, the Manchu Pipa preserves the legacy of Tang era curved neck Pipa while achieving a robust, resonant timbre through innovations like enlarged soundboxes and acoustic windows, embodying Northeast Asia's musical pluralism.

Figure 105 Zhuo'erge

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Zhuo'erge: The Zhuo'erge (two string lute) merges nomadic and Han ritual music elements. Its dragon head carved headstock symbolizes Qing imperial authority, while the rectangular wooden body features a soundhole at the base, a bridge (fushou) on the soundboard, and painted dragon motifs balancing utility and artistry. Though structurally akin to Mongolian Tobshuur and Kazakh Dombra, its dragon decor and

courtly role distinguish it as quintessentially Manchu. In Qing court banquets, it joined Pipa and Sanxian ensembles to accompany ceremonial dances like Qinglong Wu, its bright tones articulating solemn melodies or mimicking natural sounds for hunting scenes. Modern revival efforts, led by Shenyang's Kamasar Band vocalist Enteheda, have reconstructed the Zhuo'erge using Qing texts like Huangchao Liqi Tushi (Illustrated Ritual Vessels of the Imperial Court) and Yuzhi Wuti Qingwen Jian (Imperial Five Script Polyglot Glossary), recovering over 30 Manchu ancient tunes and rescuing it from obscurity. As a Han Manchu hybrid, the Zhuo'erge bridges shamanic spirituality and Han ritual formalism, its evolution mirroring the Manchu transition from fishing hunting societies to feudal statehood, epitomizing Northeast Asia's multicultural soundscape.

Figure 106 Manchu Sanxian

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Manchu Sanxian: The Manchu Sanxian (three stringed lute) blends Han Chinese craftsmanship with ethnic symbolism. Its rosewood body features a peony or lotus shaped "Grand Top Flower" (Dadinghua) carving on the headstock, symbolizing wealth and auspiciousness. The square resonator, covered with python skin, incorporates a bone fingerboard along the neck and animal hide (e.g., deer leather) at the tailpiece for durability and rich timbre. Traditional Manchu cloud and fretwork

patterns adorn the instrument, reflecting nomadic aesthetics. Played with a bone plectrum (Gu Zhijia) on the thumb and index finger, techniques like plucking, strumming, sweeping, and tremolo produce a dynamic range capable of rendering intricate melodies in courtly Xiansuo Shisantao (Thirteen String Ensemble Pieces) or driving lively rhythms for folk genres like Danxian Paizi Qu and Bajiao Gu storytelling.

In Qing court banquets, the Sanxian joined Pipa and Xiqin in "string ensembles" (Xiansuo Yue) accompanying ceremonial dances such as Qinglong Wu and Yanglie Wu, as documented in the Huangchao Liqi Tushi (Illustrated Ritual Vessels of the Imperial Court). Modern preservation efforts, like Liaoning's intangible cultural heritage project "Xiuyan Manchu Sanxian," have expanded its range through silk string upgrades and added frets, reviving traditional suites such as Silai Qupai and Jiangjun Ling. A Qing era rosewood Sanxian preserved in the Shenyang Imperial Palace Museum 118 cm long with a 22 cm wide resonator serves as a key artifact for studying Manchu lutherie. Its form and techniques profoundly influenced regional folk arts like Dongbei Dagu (Northeast drum song) and Beijing Bajiao Gu, embodying the multicultural integration of Chinese musical traditions.

Figure 107 Bronze Mirrors

Source: This image was obtained from a photo taken by the author of the paper

Bronze Mirrors: As ancient Chinese artifacts, bronze mirrors emerged as early as the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600—1046 BCE), typically circular with a semicircular knob, polished on the front for reflection and cast with decorative motifs on the back. By the Tang Dynasty, their forms diversified into squares, diamonds, and intricate designs featuring landscapes, flora, figures, and animals. Among Northeastern China's ethnic groups Manchu, Daur, Ewenki, and Oroqen bronze mirrors acquired unique religious and musical roles. These communities repurposed mirrors as shamanic ritual tools and instruments, sewing two differently sized mirrors onto shamanic attire to clink rhythmically during dances, as depicted in the Nisha Shaman text, affirming their centrality in shamanic rites.

Tuoli: In Manchu, ritual bronze mirrors are termed Tuoli, distinct from everyday mirrors. These disc shaped objects, worn or held by shamans, serve dual roles as apotropaic talismans and percussion instruments akin to waist bells (Yaoling). Shamans regard Tuoli as symbols of celestial bodies the sun, moon, and stars. Their placement carries symbolic weight: mirrors on the chest and back, called Huairi Beiyue ("Embracing the Sun, Bearing the Moon"), invoke cosmic protection; those hung at the waist, termed Riyue Xianghuan ("Sun Moon Interlacing"), symbolize eternal celestial cycles. The Tuoli's sacred power is exemplified in Jilin's Shi clan rituals, where the deity Anba Manni appears as a hero brandishing twin mirrors, underscoring their divine status in shamanic cosmology.

Forms and Contemporary Usage: Tuoli fall into two categories: Huajing ("patterned mirrors") with engraved motifs and Sujing ("plain mirrors"). Sizes vary drastically, from small (3—5 cm diameter) to medium (10—15 cm) and large (over 20 cm). While rare among modern Manchu shamans, the tradition persists among Mongol shamans on the Horqin Grassland, who layer nine progressively smaller mirrors on a waist belt, creating a "waist mirror" system that clatters during dances a practice documented by Japanese ethnographer Torii Ryuzo. This continuity highlights Tuoli's cross ethnic dissemination as shamanic cultural vessels and their enduring spiritual vitality among northern minorities.

1.3.4 Fusion of Manchu and Han Drum Music Traditions

The integration of Manchu and Han drum music cultures constitutes a pivotal chapter in Chinese ethnic music history, unfolding across three historical phases. The first phase, during the Jurchen era, featured a relatively insular and monolithic musical form rooted in nomadic traditions. The second phase began with the Qing conquest of China proper, as Manchu music actively assimilated Han musical elements particularly in instrumental arrangements and melodic formula (qupai) usage. Jiangnan's Shifan Drum Music, with its Tang style Jiegu (hourglass drum) forms, and Xi'an's Drum Music (Xi'an Guyue), preserving Tang era Zuoyue (seated music) and Xingyue (processional music) structures, were incorporated into Manchu court rituals. Meanwhile, silk bamboo and percussion techniques from southern and northern opera traditions permeated Manchu music through folk exchanges, spurring instrumental innovations. The third phase, spanning the late Qing to today, saw full fusion, where Manchu and Han music became "inseparable as body and shadow" (jiao bu li meng). Examples include the interweaving of Wuxi's Shifan Luogu variation techniques with northern Guchuiyue rhythmic patterns, and the blending of Yangzhou's Qing Luogu with Manchu shamanic drumming, reflecting a reconstruction of ethnic musical DNA.

This fusion was fundamentally a bidirectional cultural adaptation. On one hand, the Manchu maintained the solemnity of ritual drumming while adopting Han expressive methods: Xi'an Drum Music's formal logic of huantou (thematic variation) and hewei (unified cadence) was applied to Manchu banquet music, while Jiangnan's Shifan "drum flute core with silk bamboo accompaniment" inspired mixed Manchu Han ensembles. Conversely, Han folk drumming absorbed Manchu aesthetic preferences for grandeur the piercing timbre of the Jiegu became a shared sonic symbol across northern and southern traditions. Notably, Manchu musical identity gradually blurred during this process; today's Manchu Han drum repertoires defy clear ethnic categorization, with most qupai preserving Tang Song musical legacies while bearing imprints of multicultural collisions.

Three centuries of integration forged China's pluralistic drum music landscape but also pose scholarly challenges. Researchers must disentangle cultural stratifications within homogenized forms through methods like organological analysis of instruments (e.g., tracing Song drums to Jurchen frame drums) and textual research on melodic formula transmission (e.g., interplay between southern/northern opera and Manchu folk songs). This profound fusion not only exemplifies the Chinese ethos of "harmony in diversity" (he er bu tong) but also provides historical insights for innovating traditional music in contemporary contexts.

Northeast Drum Song: The formation and evolution of Northeast Drum Song (Dongbei Dagu) exemplify Manchu Han cultural fusion, rooted in multiple artistic intersections during the mid to late Qing Dynasty. Historical research traces its origins to the dissemination of Zidishu ("Bannermen's Storytelling") a Manchu narrative tradition. In 1784, Beijing Zidishu performer Huang Fuchen introduced Xianzi Shu ("Lute Storytelling") to Northeastern China, establishing an early form where artists plucked the sanxian (three stringed lute) while stamping rhythms with foot bound clappers (jieziban), locally called Xianzi Shu or Xianzi Shu. This prototype retained the rhythmic heritage of Manchu shamanic "drum accompanied chanting" while incorporating Han narrative structures, laying the genetic foundation for Northeast Drum Song.

Artistic Transformations: The genre underwent two pivotal shifts. The first, during the late Qing in Fengtian Prefecture (Shenyang), saw the refinement of solo performances into a "Three Immortals" (Xiaosanxian) ensemble sanxian, jieziban, and storytelling drum (Shu Gu) earning the regional name Fengtian Gu. Male performers dominated, drawing content from Han classics like Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo Yanyi) and Water Margin (Shuihu Zhuan), yet rhythmically infused with the cadences of Manchu shamanic hymns. The second shift occurred during the Republican era's urbanization, as artists migrated to cities like Shenyang and Changchun, transitioning to female led performances with dedicated accompanists a model influenced by Peking Opera's dan (female role) conventions and evolving aesthetics from Manchu Han intermarriage.

Cross Cultural Synthesis: Northeast Drum Song's artistry thrives on hybridity. Musically, it preserves Zidishu's qupai (melodic formula) linkage while integrating Peking Drum Song's melismatic flourishes and Northeast folk song's embellished refrains. Performatively, it adapts Manchu octagonal drum rhythms (Bajiao Gu) into complex leg strapped clapper systems and borrows Peking Opera's physical gestures for visual dynamism. Thematically, it inherits Zidishu classics like Memories of Imperial Consort Zhen (Yi Zhenfei) while generating new works like Yang Jingyu's Ambush Formation (Yang Jingyu Da Bai Koudai Zhen), celebrating regional heroism. This synthesis blends Eight Banners' refinement with Northeastern China's bold expressiveness, making the genre a living archive of cross ethnic cultural exchange since the Qing era.

Liaoyang Wind and Percussion Music (Liaoyang Gu Chu):

Originating during the Han Tang periods and maturing by the Ming Qing dynasties, Liaoyang Gu Chu flourished primarily in Manchu populated regions such as Shenyang, Liaoyang, and Haicheng. Rooted in Ming era southern/northern opera tunes, Han instrumental music, and folk songs, it underwent profound integration with Manchu music after the Qing dynasty's southward expansion, crystallizing into five systematized categories: Han Chui (Han style blowing) preserves the solemn ceremonial traits of Central Plains wind percussion traditions; Da Paizi Qu (Grand Titled Tunes) showcases the grand structures of court banquet music; Xiao Paizi Qu (Small Titled Tunes) blends the lively rhythms of Han and Manchu folk ditties; Shui Qu (Water Tunes) retains the ethereal ambiance of fishing hunting cultures; and Shengguan Qu (Reed Pipe Melodies) accentuates the rhythmic DNA of Manchu shamanic music dance. Stylistically, pieces like Baqi Luogu ("Eight Banners Gong and Drum") recreate the formidable momentum of Manchu military formations through dense frame drum patterns and suona glissandi, while works such as Jiang He Shui ("River Waters") and Yi Zhi Hua ("A Sprig of Flowers") perpetuate Han musical pathos via intricate reedpipe and yunluo (cloud gongs) orchestrations.

Southern Liaoning Wind and Percussion Music (Liaonan Gu Chu):

Centered in Haicheng and Niuzhuang, Liaonan Gu Chu shares melodic roots in Yuan Ming Qing southern/northern operas with Liaoyang Gu Chu but exhibits deeper grassroots syncretism. It assimilates narrative qupai (melodic patterns) from Yuan era sanqu (free rhythm songs) and integrates improvisatory rhythmic modes from Manchu hunting chants, forming dual expressive systems: the rele (hot music) repertoire, exemplified by Man Tang Hong ("Full Hall Red"), employs suona circular breathing techniques to mimic whinnying horses and howling winds, paired with syncopated frame drum rhythms to evoke nomadic wilderness imagery; and the aile (mournful music) repertoire, using modified Han style guanzi (double reed pipes) with breath tremolos and microtones to convey the desolate emotions of pieces like Su Wu Mu Yang ("Su Wu Tending Sheep"). This "fusion of vigor and delicacy" reflects dual influences from agrarian and fishing hunting civilizations.

As two representative folk wind percussion genres of Liaoning, both musics vividly manifest the integration of Manchu Han musical cultures since the Ming Qing era. Their instrumental configurations and performance conventions bear layered cultural imprints: Liaoyang Gu Chu's Han Chui series strictly adheres to the Han "four section ensemble" (sheng guan di drums), aligning with the Han "Eight Tones" classification system, while its Shui Qu uniquely combines huangling (swaying bells) and zhaban (clappers) derived from Manchu imcin ritual drum variants. Though lacking rigid categorical divisions, Liaonan Gu Chu mandates the use of Manchu octagonal drums paired with Han panpipes in its Da Yue ("Grand Music") performances, creating cross ethnic timbral dialogues. Such instrumental symbiosis exemplifies Manchu music's evolution from Phase II (absorbing Han elements) to Phase III (deep assimilation) in the fusion process.

As living specimens of Manchu Han musical integration, Liaoyang and Liaonan Gu Chu not only preserve Tang Song grand suite remnants like Si Lai Qu ("Four Arrivals Tune") and Zhe Gu Tian ("Partridge Sky"), but also transform northeastern lived experiences into musical narratives through modern compositions like Jian Chuanghua ("Cutting Window Flowers") and Pao Nanhai ("Voyaging the Southern Seas"). Their

artistic value lies not merely in technical hybridization of ethnic elements, but in constructing an auditory medium for multicultural identity through thunderous drumbeats and mellifluous pipe melodies, they historicize the transition from "separate ethnic performances" to "sonic unity."

Figure 108 Bajiao Gu (Octagonal Drum)

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Bajiao Gu (Octagonal Drum):

As the most culturally emblematic traditional instrument of the Manchu people, the octagonal drum's design, functionality, and historical evolution profoundly reflect Manchu social structures and artistic syncretism. The drum body forms a precise octagon with a wooden frame measuring approximately 17 cm in diameter and 2 cm thick, featuring a single python skin membrane. Seven edges are inlaid with animal bone and hardwood plaques, each centered with rectangular slots housing bronze cymbals (small metal discs strung on wires), while the eighth edge suspends silk tassels with colored threads. This construction encodes Manchu Eight Banners cultural DNA legend states it originated from premium woods contributed by eight banner chieftains during the early Qing, the octagon symbolizing military alliance unity, tassels denoting the Yellow Banner's primacy, and cymbal clangor evoking battlefield clamor. Played by gripping the frame between thumb, index, and middle fingers while supporting the base with ring and pinky fingers, performers employ right hand techniques including single/double finger plucking, thumb reverse scraping, palm striking, and body shaking

to interweave drumhead vibrations with cymbal clashes, producing crisp polyrhythmic textures that serve both rhythmic control and melodic embellishment.

The octagonal drum's artistic metamorphosis parallels Manchu societal transformations. Initially a military cultural vessel, Eight Banner soldiers chanted war songs like Jie Aigen ("Receiving the Beloved") celebrating frontier exploits (lyrics like "Octagonal banners planted across lands" directly reference victories against Tsarist Russia). Post 1644 Qing expansion saw its function urbanize through Manchu Han interactions. Manchu artists synthesized campfire storytelling traditions from hunting eras with Han narrative genres like zhugongdiao (varied mode songs), zaju theater, and Jiangnan folk ditties, developing self accompanied Bajiao Gu Opera with solo, scene based, and choral formats. By the Qianlong reign, innovators like Deshou Shan revolutionized libretti by blending Manchu rhyme schemes into Han lyrics, absorbing the narrative style of Xicheng Tune from Zidishu storytelling, and adopting Chaqu melodies named after Manchu soldier Bao Heng, ultimately crystallizing into Danxian Paizi Qu (Monochord Labeled Tunes). This art form features soloists role shifting while playing the octagonal drum in "seated singing" gatherings accompanied by yangqin (hammered dulcimer) and four string instruments, later evolving into Quju (Manchu opera) during the 1950s as a major northern performing art branch.

Its dissemination trajectory reveals cross ethnic cultural osmosis: migrating south along the Grand Canal to Shandong's Liaocheng, it fused with local folk songs to become Shandong Bajiao Gu, absorbing Shandong dialect's tonal cadences; reaching Yunnan's Dali region inhabited by the Bai people, it transformed into Jinqian Gu ("Money Drum"), adorned with Bai tie dye patterns and accompanying rituals like Raosanling dances. As a trans ethnic medium, the octagonal drum preserved shamanic "sky connecting" symbolism in Manchu myths like Female Dan Shaman, morphed into urban entertainment in Han folk arts, and served as cross cultural symbolism in frontier regions.

Craftsmanship wise, the octagonal drum epitomizes Manchu artisan ingenuity: selected python skins ensure acoustic resonance, bone inlays reinforce frame durability, and adjustable cymbal metal plates fine tune harmonics, balancing portability

with sonic versatility. Its standardized 17 cm diameter (optimized for palm grip) demonstrates ergonomic consideration. Modern musicology reveals its "pluck scrape shake clash" techniques mimic natural sounds (scraping resembling wind, shaking evoking rain) sonic mimesis potentially rooted in shamanic nature worship.

Today, the octagonal drum remains vital in northeastern Danxian and Beijing Chaqu performances, while innovative adaptations like electro acoustic versions emerge through intangible cultural heritage protection. Functioning as a cultural genome, it preserves Eight Banners collective memory, Manchu Han artistic fusion codes, and traces of Eurasian instrument diffusion from Nordic shamanic drum frameworks to Southeast Asian hand drum techniques. This cross cultural resonance makes it a vibrant specimen for ethnomusicological research, embodying living musical dialogues across time and space.

1.4 The role of Manchu music in Northeastern China in the Shamanic Culture dimension.

Shamanic ritual music, as a living vessel of primal religious culture, derives its core value from the primordial integration of artistic forms and the holistic transmission of cultural DNA. Throughout rituals, music constructs a unique divine communication context through three dimensional interplay of vocal elements (shamanic spirit songs), instrumentation (frame drums [Zhua Gu], lift drums [Tai Gu], bell staffs [Hongwu]), and somatic expression (dance, ritual implement manipulation). The tonal system preserves pentatonic scale variations from fishing hunting eras, while rhythms adhere to ancestral patterns like the Lao San Dian ("Old Three Beats") and Wu Dian Bian ("Five Point Whip"). Ritual implements resonate cosmologically: the rotating strikes of frame drums echo celestial terrestrial rhythms, while lift drums mimic thunderclaps. Linguistically, the fusion of archaic Manchu lexicon, clan specific coded language, and onomatopoeic chanting paired with staccato shifts in shamanic dance steps recreates the Three Realms cosmology intrinsic to Northeast Asian shamanism.

The shamanic music of Jilin's Shi clan, the most systematically preserved specimen today, holds unparalleled significance. It not only safeguards ritual suites like

Pao Huochi ("Running Through the Fire Pool") and Fang Jinniao ("Releasing the Golden Bird") but also sustains vanishing cultural codes such as lift drum lacing techniques and sonic maps of wilderness deity worship through its trinity transmission model of "instrument spirit song movement." This living tradition offers an irreplaceable basis for studying the Manchu's indigenous belief system, bridging ancestral wisdom and contemporary ethnomusicological inquiry.

1.4.1 The Form and Performance of Shamanic Ritual Instruments

The study of Manchu shamanic instruments their forms, configurations, and cultural attributes remains a critical yet underdeveloped area of ethnomusicology. Despite eight centuries of documentation from the Southern Song to the Qianlong era of the Qing Dynasty, systematic musicological research has emerged only in the past decade. Existing historical materials disproportionately focus on ritual chants and protocols, leaving significant gaps in scientific descriptions of instruments a challenge rooted in shamanism's naturalistic diversity and the scarcity of fieldwork and textual corroboration. As living vessels of folk belief, these instruments exhibit non standardized characteristics, with clans developing unique configurations within the framework of the Qinding Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven), shaped by regional traditions. This demands interdisciplinary dialogue between religious studies and ethnology to decode their symbolic meanings within dynamic cultural contexts. Drums, as ritual cornerstones, embody Manchu cosmology: acoustically divided into single headed frame drums (Zhua Gu, mimicking celestial phenomena) and double headed lift drums (Tai Gu), with playing methods categorized as "grip held" (zhua zhi) or "clasp held" (wo zhi). Their millennial "drum language" system constructs acoustic bridges for divine communication while embodying supernatural powers to carry souls and repel evil, elevating them into auditory totems of shamanic belief. Current research must adopt multidimensional methodologies rescuing drumming lexicons through fieldwork, cross referencing Manchu Han historical texts, and analyzing the interplay of decorative motifs, materials,

and acoustic symbols to reconstruct the holistic semantic network of "sound mediated spirituality" within the cultural logic of "instruments as ritual tools."

Instrumentation in Folk Shamanic Rituals: In ordinary ceremonies, Manchu shamans primarily employ frame drums (Zhua Gu) and waist bells (Yaoling). For special rites like "Invoking Deities" (Qing Shen) and "Back Lamp Ritual" (Bei Deng), additional instruments such as bell staffs (Hongwu) and clappers (Paiban) are incorporated. Representative examples include the instrumentation of the Fuchahala shamans in Ning'an, Heilongjiang, and the Wuzhahala shamans in Xinbin, Liaoning, which reveal distinct regional configurations. These cases demonstrate how instrument combinations adapt to ritual hierarchies while preserving core symbolic functions, reflecting the interplay of prescribed norms and localized innovation in Manchu shamanic practice.

1.4.1.1 Invoking Deities (Qing Shen)

Qing Shen, meaning "Invoking Deities," constitutes a foundational ritual sequence within Manchu shamanic tiao shen (spirit jumping) ceremonies.

The entire shamanic ritual aims to establish communication with divine entities, requiring a transformative process where the shaman transitions from human to "divine" states and back. At the outset, the shaman must ceremonially "invite" required deities in sequence. During this phase, the interplay of zhua gu (frame drum) and yao ling (waist bells) creates a mystifying, ethereal atmosphere that induces trance like dissociation, transporting participants into a transcendent realm. Within this ambiance, an indescribable intensity surges through the shaman a psychic torrent that seemingly compels involuntary ascension toward celestial spheres. This psychological experience is not private; rather, it erupts through cascading rhythms, songs, and dances, mediated by assistant priests (zailizi), who interpret and transmit these divine messages to the community. Thus, personal spiritual encounters evolve into collective socio religious experiences.

The ritual employs a balanced instrumental ensemble arranged as follows: five zhua gu frame drums, two yao ling waist bells, one tai gu (elevated drum), and two paiban clappers. Their spatial configuration within the ceremonial space

corresponds to sacred geometric principles (as illustrated in accompanying diagrams), reflecting Manchu cosmological symbolism and acoustic intentionality in facilitating spirit human dialogue.

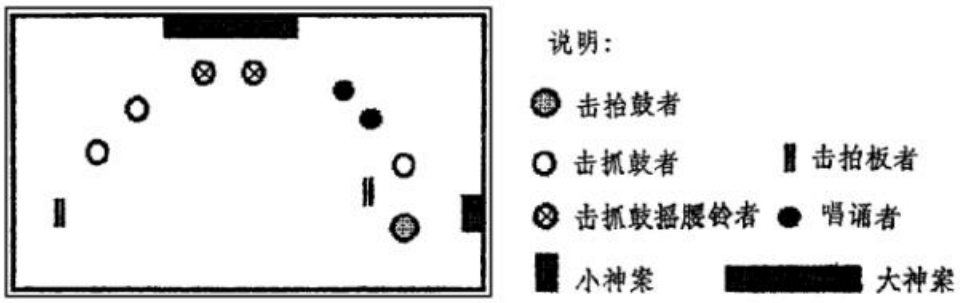


Figure 109 Location Map for Inviting the Immortals Ceremony

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

Notes:

击抬鼓者: Tai Gu Percussionist

The performer responsible for striking the tai gu (elevated drum), a large ceremonial drum positioned centrally to anchor the ritual's foundational rhythms.

击抓鼓者: Zhua Gu Percussionist

Musicians specializing in playing the zhua gu (frame drum), using handheld beaters to produce intricate rhythmic patterns that guide the ceremony's energetic flow.

击拍板者: Paiban Percussionist

Artists operating paired wooden clappers (paiban), whose crisp, punctuated strikes regulate ritual cadences and accentuate transitional moments.

击抓鼓摇腰铃者: Zhua Gu Yao Ling Player

A dual role performer simultaneously striking the zhua gu while shaking the yao ling (waist bells), creating layered textures of drumbeats and metallic jingles to induce trance states.

唱诵者: Chanters

Vocalists reciting sacred verses and invocations, their melismatic singing intertwining with instrumental sounds to mediate divine communication.

小神案: Xiao Shen'an (Minor Ritual Altar)

A subsidiary ceremonial platform housing offerings and symbolic objects for auxiliary deities, positioned peripherally to the main ritual space.

大神案: Da Shen'an (Major Ritual Altar)

The central sacred altar enshrining primary deities, adorned with ritual implements, ancestral tablets, and ceremonial banners as the focal point of spiritual interaction.

Each role and object strictly adheres to Manchu shamanic cosmology, their coordinated actions and placements constituting a sacred soundscape that bridges earthly and divine realms.

In this context, the waist bells (yao ling) are played by two zhua gu drummers one male and one female shaman. The shamans face the sacred altars (Shen'an), striking their drums and chanting liturgical verses from sacred texts (shen ben), while chanters vocalize in responsive harmony, intermittently shaking their waist bells. Ritual movements may include circling the altar space with rhythmic drumming and bell swaying, intertwining song and dance. Performances alternate between synchronized motions shamans moving in unison toward a shared direction or confronting each other in mirrored postures creating dynamic sacred geometries that embody cosmic balance and ritual dialogue.

1.4.1.2 Back Lamp Ritual (Bei Deng Ritual)

The Bei Deng Ritual is a pivotal ceremony in Manchu shamanic practice, conducted during spring and autumn. As historical records describe: "On windless nights, pigs are slaughtered and cakes prepared for offerings. Neighbors are invited to share the feast, but no lamps or candles are lit. After eating, attendees leave behind a hat or cloth, retrieved the next day as 'Wushihata Kula' (ritual meat for worshipping the Seven Stars under darkness)." The ritual unfolds in complete darkness: doors and windows are sealed, extinguishing all light and fire. Non clan members are barred from

the sacred space, while participants must remain silent and still. The shaman chants prayers accompanied by ritual instruments. Upon conclusion, lamps are relit, offerings cleared, and the clan regardless of age or status shares the sacrificial meat. This Star Worship Nocturnal Deity Veneration aims to expel malevolent forces and beseech divine protection for the clan's prosperity and lineage continuity.

For the Bei Deng Ritual, the ensemble intensifies, with instruments that include 5 frame drums (Zhua Gu), 2 waist bells (Yaoling), 1 lift drum (Tai Gu), 2 bell staffs (Hongwu), and 2 clappers (Paiban).

The instruments are arranged in a specific spatial configuration (as illustrated in the original diagram), reflecting hierarchical and symbolic roles within the ritual's acoustic architecture. This orchestration amplifies the ceremony's solemnity, blending percussive textures to channel ancestral voices and cosmic energies.

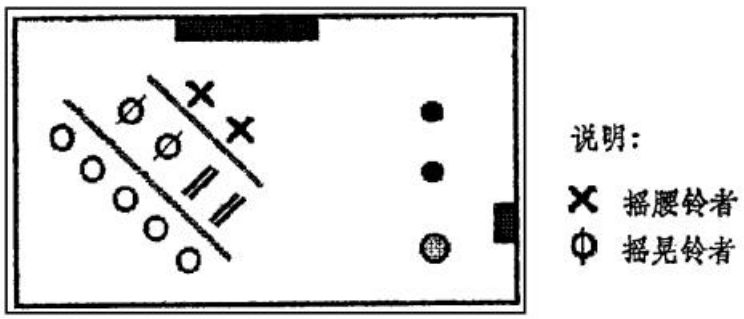


Figure 110 Back Lamp Ritual Instrument Location Map

Source: This image was created by the author of the paper

Notes:

X: Shaker 中: bell ringer

Performance Dynamics: During the ritual, the frame drums (Zhua Gu) and lift drum (Tai Gu) are played standing, while waist bells (Yaoling), bell staffs (Hongwu), and clappers (Paiban) are "struck rhythmically" (dun zou) from seated positions. The lead shaman commands the Tai Gu, its thunderous tones anchoring the ensemble, while assistant shamans play the Zhua Gu. Other instruments follow this

hierarchy, weaving layered textures. In the darkness, the deities seem to tread upon the clatter of the clappers (Calaqi), their presence evoked by the drums' primal pulses that "knock upon the soul's gate." The shaman modulates intensity as needed lightly shaking the Yaoling, forcefully striking the Zhua Gu, or unleashing crescendos of bells, clappers, and drums in unison.

Flexibility in Instrumentation: These examples epitomize two foundational models of instrument configuration and spatial arrangement in Manchu shamanic rituals. However, the ensemble's composition and positioning are not rigidly fixed. Variations occur based on regional resources, clan traditions, and individual shamans' practices, with adjustments made to the number and types of instruments. This adaptability reflects shamanism's organic nature, where ritual efficacy transcends standardization, embracing both ancestral continuity and contextual innovation.

1.4.2 Drum Rhythms in Manchu Shamanic Ritual Music

The Qinding Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven) records: "...The ritual officiant (shaman) first sits on a stool before the deity altar, striking the drum and chanting invocation hymns. A drumming assistant taps the drum once to sync with the hand drum; the officiant stands, pivots backward with measured steps in prayer, while the assistant strikes three drumbeats in unison. The officiant then advances with circling steps, accompanied by five drumbeats and three clapper strikes..." Ancient texts describe shamans holding the sacred drum (Shen Gu) in one hand and a drumstick in the other (some veteran shamans ambidextrously switch hands), dancing and chanting simultaneously. Whether in imperial heaven worship, clan ancestor veneration, or folk exorcisms, the sacred drum remains indispensable guiding shamans to the "world's axis" and bridging the human and divine realms.

Among ritual instruments, the drum reigns supreme, anchoring ceremonies as both a prop and an accompaniment to song and dance. "Drum patterns" (Gu Dian) refer to the rhythmic motifs played by shamans, who conceptualize rhythm not through modern theory but as "points" (Dian) and "patterns" (Huayang). As the soul of shamanic

music, these rhythms encode ritual logic. The frame drum (Zhua Gu), central to invocations, spirit descents, and deity send offs, accompanies all ritual acts chanting, dancing, and incantations solidifying its paramount role. Over centuries, shamans developed rich rhythmic "patterns," with five core instruments (sacred drum, waist bells [Yaoling], lift drum [Tai Gu], clappers [Paiban], and ritual bells [Shen Ling]) collaborating under strict rules to shape ceremonial atmospheres.

"Three Strikes as a Unit": Known colloquially as Lao San Dian ("Old Three Beats"), this foundational rhythm built on single beat units forms the backbone of Manchu shamanic music. From it evolved patterns such as Lao Wu Dian ("Old Five Beats"), Kuai Wu Dian ("Fast Five Beats"), Zheng Qi Dian ("Standard Seven Beats"), Hua Qi Dian ("Florid Seven Beats"), Jiu Dian ("Nine Beats"), Shi Yi Dian ("Eleven Beats"), and Sui Dian ("Fragmented Beats"). Their interweaving creates the dynamic Manchu Shamanic Drum Suites.

1.4.2.1 Lao San Dian ("Old Three Beats")

Characterized by a slow, steady tempo, Lao San Dian is the most ancient and widely used rhythm in shamanic music. It exists in two tempos: slow (Man) and fast (Kuai). The slow variant accompanies expansive dance movements in performances like Makesi Manni and Ying Shen (Eagle Deity), allowing dancers to express profound emotionality. It also underpins ceremonial chants. The fast variant (Kuai San Dian), a condensed form of Lao San Dian, drives rapid forward dance steps. These rhythms, rooted in ancestral memory, embody the symbiotic relationship between sound, movement, and spirituality in Manchu shamanic practice.

"Man San Dian": 4/4 X X X - | X X X - | X X X - ||

"Kuai San Dian": 2/4 X X X | X X X | X X X ||

1.4.2.2 "Lao Wu Dian" ("Old Five Beats")

The Lao Wu Dian, also called Man Wu Dian ("Slow Five Beats"), evolved from the Lao San Dian with an even more relaxed tempo. It is ideal for expansive dance performances like Ying Shen (Eagle Deity), recreational activities during grain blessing rituals (Zhen Mi), and the "waist bell swirling" (Shuai Yaoling) procession. In Zhen Mi, two

shamans circle the shrine one leading, the other following advancing one step every eight beats (left foot on beat 1, right foot on beat 8), repeating the pattern. Accompanied by frame drums (Zhua Gu), waist bells (Yaoling), lift drums (Tai Gu), and clappers (Paiban), the shamans emphasize strong beats with forceful drum strikes while waist bells sway rhythmically at half beat intervals. The Kuai Wu Dian ("Fast Five Beats"), a sped up variant of Lao Wu Dian, propels forward moving dance sequences.

Rhythmic Notation:

Lao Wu Dian: 4/4 X - X - | X X X - | X - X - | X X X - ||

Kuai Wu Dian: 2/4 X X X X X | X X X X X ||

1.4.2.3 "Dan Dian" ("Single Beat")

Used when two shamans retreat after chanting invocations, the Dan Dian accompanies backward steps six beats per step, totaling six steps before transitioning to circular processions.

Rhythmic Notation:

Dan Dian: 1/4 X | X | X | X ||

1.4.2.4 "Sui Dian" ("Fragmented Beats")

Characterized by rapid, urgent patterns, Sui Dian heightens tension during intense ritual moments, such as shamans spiraling (mi liu) or executing quick steps (pao sui bu).

Rhythmic Notation:

Sui Dian: 4/4 X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X | X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X ||

1.4.2.5 "Hua Qi Dian" ("Florid Seven Beats")

Primarily used in domestic ancestor worship (Jia Shen), Hua Qi Dian follows a cyclical structure: drumming initiates dance, silence halts movement for standing chants (typically couplets), then drumming resumes. This pattern repeats until lyrics conclude, reflecting the archetypal integration of music, dance, and song in Manchu shamanism.

Rhythmic Notation:

Hua Qi Dian: 2/4 X X X X | X X | X X X X | X X ||

Interplay of Rhythms: In Shi clan rituals, Sui Dian and Dan Dian alternate dynamically Sui Dian interwoven with Dan Dian, and vice versa during the Qing Shen (Invoking Deities) and Pai Shen (Arranging Deities) phases. For shamans, these rhythms transcend mere timekeeping; they symbolize the sacred act of "summoning" divine presence through percussive invocation.

The waist bells (Yao Ling) are employed in both Tiao Shen (Spirit Jumping Ritual) and Bei Deng (Back Lamp Ritual). During Tiao Shen, the rhythmic swaying of waist bells follows patterns like Man San Dian (slow three beat) and Man Wu Dian (slow five beat), forming the foundational "dance steps" of the ritual. In Bei Deng, the waist bells and Shen Ling (divine bells) adhere to Lao San Dian (old three beat) and Sui Dian (broken beats). Notably, Shen Ling are exclusive to Bei Deng, primarily amplifying the ritual's mystical ambiance through their shimmering, cascading tones.

The Tiao Shen ritual marks the climax of shamanic worship. During this ecstatic dance, the shaman refrains from vocalization, instead wielding the Shen Gu (sacred drum) and swaying the Yao Ling in tandem transforming these instruments into both an accompaniment ensemble and essential choreographic props. Moving in sync with bodily undulations, the Shen Gu and Yao Ling adopt the Man Wu Dian (slow five beat) rhythm. The shaman, wholly immersed, circles the sacrificial black pig with "three sways per step," striking the drum and shaking bells while accompanied by the Tai Gu (elevated drum) and Zhaban clappers. Clan members gather excitedly around the sacred space, sharing in the sacrificial joy and communal spiritual fulfillment.

The foundational rhythmic logic of Manchu shamanic ritual music centers on "single beat foundations forming drum patterns, structured in three stroke units." This framework evolves through improvisational flourishes by skilled ritualists, who enrich originally simplistic rhythms with dynamic variations in speed and intensity. In practice, Sui Dian (broken beats) and Dan Dian (single beats) operate synergistically: Sui Dian accompanies shamanic chants with rapid, fragmented pulses, while Dan Dian serves as interlude motifs between musical phrases. This interplay creates a rhythmic

architecture that balances ritual precision with expressive spontaneity, embodying the sacred profane duality central to Manchu shamanic soundscapes.

1.4.3 Analysis of Shamanic Spirit Songs in Manchu Rituals

Shamanic Spirit Songs (Shen Ge) are vocal expressions of Manchu belief systems, performed exclusively during shamanic rituals. These songs preserve a primal aesthetic characterized by chant like recitation, interwoven music, dance, and song emerging from the shaman's psychological states, emotional intensity, and spiritual communion. Over time, they crystallized into distinct melodic structures and styles, passed down as sacred, inviolable "divine utterances" (Shen Yu Shen Yin) unique to each clan. Transmission occurs orally through generations of shamans (Da Saman), with no fixed pitch or notation, relying entirely on the successor's innate talent, diligence, and lived experience.

Transmission through Ritual Apprenticeship: The teaching of Shen Ge occurs via Jiao Wu Yun (ritual apprenticeship), where elder shamans mentor novices. Despite most shamans' limited fluency in classical Manchu, they rely on oral repetition of sacred texts (Shen Benzi spirit manuals). Mastery varies seasoned shamans adeptly weave "universal" ritual formulas with improvised narratives, their artistry shaped by poetic intuition and divine inspiration. This oral tradition fosters both continuity and individuality, as each shaman's interpretive skill and expressive nuance redefine the songs' emotional contours.

Musical Structure of Shamanic Spirit Songs: Shamanic rituals integrate song, dance, and music as equal components. Melodies and vocal styles shift dynamically, adapting to deities invoked, ritual contexts, and narrative content.

Scale Modulation of Shamanic Songs: Shen Ge melodies adhere to China's traditional pentatonic system, predominantly using the Gong, Shang, Jue, and Yu modes, with Zhi mode appearing less frequently. This modal flexibility allows shamans to modulate emotional resonance elevating Gong for celestial invocations, grounding Yu for chthonic rites while maintaining a core tonal identity rooted in Manchu sonic cosmology.

Melodic Characteristics of Shamanic Spirit Songs: Shi clan shamanic melodies exhibit minimal pitch fluctuation, relying on repetition and consonant intervals to create a recitative like flow. To add variation, shamans employ ornaments appoggiaturas, vibrato, mordents, glissandi alongside microtonal lifts and unstable tones, enhancing rhythmic dynamism and aesthetic richness. Melodic motion primarily progresses stepwise, structured around ditonic, tritonic, tetratonic, and pentatonic scales, with the latter two dominating. This approach suits narrative and prayerful content, evoking a dialogic quality between shaman and deity a reverent, meditative atmosphere that blurs speech and song.

Formal Structure of Shamanic Spirit Songs: Shi clan shamanic songs feature narrow vocal ranges, minimal melodic contour, and recitative like declamation. Main melodies are built on unison, second, third, and fourth intervals, with some songs using only two or three pitches.

Artistic Features of Shamanic Songs: Typical Manchu music prioritizes Gong mode, characterized by simplicity and clarity. Performance formats diversify into solo, antiphonal, call and response, seated, kneeling, mobile, and standing singing. The lyrics retain a primal quality half sung, half spoken interwoven with dance and music, epitomizing shamanism's syncretic artistry.

Call and Response Singing: Spirit songs alternate between solo shamanic chants and group responses from ritual assistants (Zaili) or participants. This call and response structure reflects the collective nature of shamanic rites and embodies the Manchu ethos of unity, transforming individual devotion into communal spiritual dialogue.

Musical Uniqueness in Shamanic Rituals: Manchu shamanic music represents a syncretic art form combining song, dance, instrumental accompaniment, and recitation of sacred texts. While sharing primal musical elements with other traditions, its distinctiveness lies in the seamless integration of performance with the entire ritual process. The interweaving of spiritual lyrics creates a holistic sensory experience that is both religious practice and artistic expression.

Non-Replicability of Shamanic Songs: Lacking formal musical training, shamans produce variable performances of the same melody due to differing vocal timbres and improvisational choices. Generational shifts and educational backgrounds further diverge interpretations. Transmitted orally and reliant on spontaneous inspiration during rituals, these songs resist exact duplication. Even notated versions lose the original's nuanced expressivity, preserving their ephemeral, one-of-a-kind essence.

The musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China emerges as a profound synthesis of historical depth, cultural resilience, and adaptive vitality, rooted in the ethnic group's fishing-hunting legacy and shamanic cosmology. This study reveals how Manchu music transcends mere aesthetic expression to become a living archive of ecological knowledge, spiritual beliefs, and collective memory, while dynamically engaging with modernity and multiculturalism.

At its core, Manchu music is defined by a pentatonic modal system that structures both spiritual and secular expressions. The dual framework of Gong (do) and Yu (la) modes anchors its melodic logic: Gong mode anthems, with their broad intervals, evoke the communal energy of labor chants like Pao Nanhai, while Yu mode melodies, through restrained progressions, convey the introspective nature of shamanic rituals and laments. Additional modes (Shang, Zhi, Jue) enrich its expressive palette, enabling nuanced storytelling in genres ranging from solemn ballads to festive dances. Rhythmically, the music encodes cultural practices—such as the call-and-response patterns in labor chants that synchronize collective effort and the hypnotic "Laosandian" triplet drumming in shamanic rituals, which mirrors the trance-like communion with ancestral spirits.

Melodically, Manchu music balances tradition and innovation. Hunting chants mimic the physicality of labor through arpeggios and rhythmic drive, while love songs employ free-meter introductions and ornamentation to articulate emotional depth (e.g., Huainian Age). Shamanic hymns, with their "tail concealing, head omitting" phrasing, evoke Mongolian Khoomei traditions, illustrating cross-ethnic musical

dialogue, while children's songs like Fortress Chase embed militaristic values through octave leaps, preserving equestrian legacies.

In contemporary contexts, Manchu music navigates the tension between preservation and adaptation. Regions like Xinbin and Fengning Manchu Autonomous Counties exemplify this balance, where court music and folk genres integrate Han Chinese influences—such as lyrical structures and instrumental timbres—while retaining core ethnic markers like modal frameworks and ritual chants. This dual strategy ensures that Manchu music remains both a vital symbol of ethnic identity and a dynamic participant in China's multicultural landscape.

Ultimately, the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China is a testament to the ethnic group's ability to sustain cultural continuity through artistic innovation. By preserving ancient tonal systems and ritual practices while embracing intercultural exchange, it enriches China's musical heritage and offers a compelling model of how traditional art forms can evolve without losing their soul. As a living tradition that bridges past and present, it underscores the power of music to embody and transmit collective memory, making it an indispensable component of Northeastern China's cultural tapestry.

2. The analysis of the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Northeastern China serves as a "crossroads" where diverse cultures in China converge, and its music and cultural ecosystem exhibit unique composite characteristics. This vast region, spanning from 40°N to 53°N latitude, has witnessed the profound integration of fishing and hunting civilization, nomadic civilization, and farming civilization throughout history. Geographically speaking, the plain areas of the Songhua River and Liao River basins have given birth to farming civilization, while mountainous areas such as Changbai Mountain and the Greater Khingan Mountains have preserved the traditions of fishing and hunting culture. This special geographical environment has led to the coexistence pattern of the cultures of the four main ethnic groups, namely the

Han, Manchu, Mongolian, and Korean ethnic groups, in Northeastern China, forming a special "White Mountains and Black Waters Cultural Circle."

As a core gene carrier of this cultural ecosystem, the development trajectory of Manchu music deeply reflects the dynamic process of cultural accommodation. According to the statistics in "Collection of Chinese Folk Music · Liaoning Volume," 73% of the existing traditional Manchu music pieces show obvious characteristics of cross-cultural integration. This also fully demonstrates that it is highly reasonable to conduct a systematic interpretation from the theoretical perspective of cultural accommodation.

The cultural accommodation of Manchu music in Northeastern China represents a dynamic process of historical interaction, ethnic fusion, and adaptive evolution, shaped by the region's unique geopolitical and social context. Rooted in the fishing hunting and shamanic traditions of ancient Sushen, Yilou, and Mohe ancestors, Manchu music has continuously absorbed and integrated cultural elements from neighboring Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other ethnic groups, forming a distinctive musical identity that reflects both indigenous heritage and cross-cultural synthesis.

2.1 The historical overview of Manchu in Northeastern China.

The cultural accommodation of Manchu music in Northeast China is rooted in a millennia long history of ethnic interaction and environmental adaptation. As descendants of ancient Sushen, Yilou, and Mohe tribes, the Manchus emerged as a distinct cultural group through successive waves of migration, conflict, and integration in the region. Their musical traditions, initially shaped by hunting, fishing, and shamanic rituals, began to absorb influences from neighboring Han, Mongolian, and Korean cultures as early as the Bohai Kingdom (7th–10th centuries CE), when contact with the Tang Dynasty introduced new musical forms and instruments. The Jurchen era (12th–13th centuries CE) further catalyzed cross cultural exchange, as the Jin Dynasty's adoption of Han administrative and artistic systems led to the blending of nomadic rhythms with agrarian musical aesthetics. By the Qing Dynasty (17th–20th centuries CE), the Manchu's rise to imperial power solidified their role as cultural intermediaries, integrating Han court music with indigenous shamanic chants and folk traditions. This

historical trajectory laid the foundation for a musical identity that is both rooted in ethnic heritage and shaped by continuous dialogue with external cultural forces.

2.1.1 Ethnic Origins

On October 13, 1635 (9th year of the Tiancong era), Emperor Huangtaiji issued an imperial edict: "Our nation is now named Manchu, a title with profound historical continuity destined to endure for generations. Henceforth, all shall refer to our state solely by its original Manchu name, abandoning previous erroneous designations." This marked the official emergence of the ethnonym "Manchu."The ancestry of the Manchu people, however, traces back to ancient Tungusic speaking groups of the Neolithic era. Archaeological evidence from the Xinkailiu Culture site (7,000 years ago) in Heilongjiang Province reveals bone harpoons and birch bark canoe components, demonstrating a clear cultural lineage to the Sushen people a group recorded in pre Qin Chinese texts for presenting "arrowheads made of hardwood and stone" as tribute to Central Plains dynasties.

Subsequent historical groups including the Wuji and Yilou (Han to Three Kingdoms periods), Mohe (Sui Tang eras), and Jurchen (Jin, Yuan, Ming dynasties) are classified by ethnohistorians as part of the "Sushen Manchu lineage." Their territories centered on northeastern China, encompassing areas north of the Changbai Mountains, the Songhua River basin, and the middle lower reaches of the Heilong (Amur) River.

During the Northern Dynasties and Sui Tang periods, historical records referred to the descendants of the Sushen and Yilou peoples as the "Wuji" and "Mohe," respectively. These two names represent different transliterations of the same ethnic term across eras. The Wuji, initially comprising dozens of tribes, gradually consolidated into seven major groups: Sumo, Baishan, Bodu, Anchegu, Funie, Haoshi, and Heishui (Black Water). Their territory stretched from the eastern coast to the Nen River in the west, south to present day Jilin City, and north beyond the Heilongjiang (Amur) River.

By the early 7th century, the Baishan and Sumo Mohe tribes fell under the control of the powerful Goguryeo Kingdom. However, after Emperor Taizong of Tang defeated Goguryeo in 645, the Mohe tribes regained independence. During this period,

the Sumo Mohe grew dominant under their leader Da Zuorong, who established the Zhen Kingdom in 698 near the upper Songhua River and northern foothills of the Changbai Mountains. The Zhen Kingdom's population was primarily Mohe, with some assimilated Goguryeo people. In 713, Emperor Xuanzong of Tang granted Da Zuorong the title "Prince of Bohai Commandery," after which the state became known as the Bohai Kingdom. Lasting over 200 years, Bohai adopted Tang style political and military systems, used Chinese script, and became a regional power hailed as the "Prosperous Kingdom East of the Sea." At its peak, its domain extended south to northern Korea, east to the sea, north to the lower Songhua River, and southwest to a diagonal border between modern Kaiyuan and Dandong in Liaoning Province.

Meanwhile, the Heishui (Black Water) Mohe expanded during the Sui Tang transition, dividing into 16 clans across the Heilongjiang (Amur) River basin. The Tang court established the Heishui Prefecture to formalize ties with them. While some Heishui Mohe submitted to Bohai during its zenith, they reasserted independence as Bohai declined. In 924, during the Later Tang dynasty, they reconnected with the Central Plains regimes. When the Khitan overthrew Bohai in 926, the Khitan rulers relocated Bohai's population southward, and the Heishui Mohe migrated alongside them. The Khitan renamed the Heishui Mohe "Nuzhi" (later "Jurchen"). As Emperor Taizu of Jin (Aguda) declared, "The Jurchen and Bohai share the same roots," the term "Jurchen" gradually replaced "Mohe" in historical records.

The Division of Jurchens under the Liao Dynasty. The Liao Dynasty (907–1125) categorized the Jurchen people into two groups: "Shu Jurchen" (Civilized Jurchen) and "Sheng Jurchen" (Wild Jurchen). The Shu Jurchen, representing the more assimilated and advanced group, lived south of the Songhua River and were governed directly by the Liao. The Sheng Jurchen considered less developed, inhabited regions north of the Songhua River, the middle lower reaches of the Heilongjiang (Amur) River, and eastward to the coast. The Liao rulers controlled the Sheng Jurchen by granting titles to their tribal leaders.

Rise of the Wanyan Clan and the Jin Dynasty. By the early Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), the Wanyan tribe of the Sheng Jurchen had grown powerful. In 1115, under their leader Aguda, the Jurchens defeated the Liao and established the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234). In 1119, Wanyan Xiyin created the Jurchen script (later called the "Large Script"), modeled on Chinese and Khitan characters. A simplified "small script" was later developed. Despite Jin rulers enacting bans to prevent Jurchens from adopting Han Chinese languages, surnames, and customs, cultural assimilation proved unstoppable. By the late Jin period, Jurchens in Central Plains China had largely lost their ethnic identity. By the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), they were classified as "Han people" and indistinguishable from local Han Chinese.

Mongol Influence and Ming Era Transformations. Under the Yuan Dynasty, the Jurchens were subjected to Mongol political control and cultural influence, leading to deep intermarriage and socio economic ties between the two groups. After the Yuan's collapse, many Mongol defectors and remnants settled in Northeastern China, blending with Jurchen tribes through intermarriage. The Haisi Jurchen, living near Mongol territories, interacted closely with Mongols. According to the Qing era "Comprehensive Genealogy of the Manchu Clans of the Eight Banners," the ancestors of the Yehe tribe (the strongest of the Haisi Jurchen) were Mongols. Mengge Temur, the sixth generation ancestor of Nurhaci (founder of the Qing Dynasty), bore a Mongol influenced name. The Haisi and Jianzhou Jurchen, after migrating southward, faced similar oppression by the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) as the Mongols did, fostering a shared sense of grievance. By this time, the Jurchens had abandoned their complex script and adopted the Mongol alphabet for written communication.

After the 14th century, the Jurchen people living outside the Ming Dynasty's Liaodong frontier wall gradually split into groups such as the Jianzhou and Haixi tribes. In the late 16th century, under the leadership of Nurhaci, the Jianzhou Jurchen unified the various Jurchen tribes. This core group later absorbed other ethnicities to form the Manchu people. Some Jurchen tribes, however, lived in remote areas and were not fully

integrated into the Manchu community, eventually evolving into smaller ethnic minorities such as the Ewenki, Oroqen, and Hezhen.

The descendants of the ancient Sushen people (a prehistoric ethnic group in Northeast Asia) are closely linked to the Manchu, but they should not be equated as the same. “It is incorrect to view the historical progression from Sushen, Yilou, Wuji, Mohe, to Jurchen as the direct lineage of the Manchu people. However, in studying Manchu history, severing the centuries old connections between the Sushen lineage (up to the Ming era Jurchen) and the Manchu would also fail to reflect the true depth of the Manchu’s long historical roots.”

Historically, the Donghu ethnic group, a nomadic people who “migrated with water and grasslands,” inhabited the northwestern part of Northeastern China. The southern regions were predominantly home to the Han Chinese, who practiced agrarian culture. The “Sushen Manchu” lineage thrived between these two major civilizational systems (nomadic and agrarian) and was significantly enriched by their influences.

2.1.2 Population Distribution

According to the 2020 Seventh National Population Census, China’s Manchu population totals approximately 10.42 million, with about 60% concentrated in the three northeastern provinces (Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang) and eastern Inner Mongolia. Liaoning Province has the highest density of Manchu people, accounting for 51% (about 5.34 million), primarily distributed in Manchu autonomous counties such as Xinbin, Xiuyan, and Qingyuan, located in the Liaodong mountainous area and the Liao River Basin. Jilin and Heilongjiang follow with around 1.1 million and 740,000 Manchu residents, respectively, clustered in regions like Yitong Manchu Autonomous County, Jilin’s Wula Street, and Harbin’s Shuangcheng District. In eastern Inner Mongolia, smaller communities descendants of the Qing Dynasty’s Eight Banners garrison troops are scattered in areas like Hulunbuir and Chifeng. The Manchu population in Northeastern China exhibits a “widely dispersed but locally concentrated” pattern: rural traditional communities center around autonomous counties and ethnic townships, while urban Manchu populations often live mixed with other ethnic groups.

This demographic landscape is deeply shaped by history. During the Qing Dynasty, the Eight Banners system dispersed Manchu communities to military hubs like Shengjing (Shenyang) and Jilin Wula, forming early settlements. From the late Qing to the Republican era (early 20th century), massive Han Chinese migration into Northeastern China known as “Chuang Guandong” (literally “braving the northeastern frontier”) drastically reduced the Manchu proportion in the region and accelerated cultural assimilation. Today, the Manchu language is nearly extinct, spoken only by a few elderly individuals in rural Heilongjiang. Traditional customs, such as the Banjin Festival (celebrating Manchu heritage) and paper cutting, now serve as primary vehicles for cultural preservation. Younger generations increasingly migrate to cities, leaving rural communities grappling with aging populations. Despite challenges, the Manchu people leverage autonomous county policies (e.g., Xinbin in Liaoning, Yitong in Jilin) to protect cultural heritage while exploring new development paths through agriculture, forestry, and tourism (e.g., Hetu Ala City, the birthplace of the Qing Dynasty).

The Manchu population distribution reflects the complexity of ethnic integration and historical migration. Policy shifts, such as the 1981 restoration of ethnic identification, spurred rapid growth in the Manchu population from just 80,000 in the early years of the People’s Republic. However, urbanization and language loss continue to threaten cultural continuity. Today, the Manchu sustain their identity through autonomous regions, restoration of historical sites (e.g., Shenyang Imperial Palace), and promotion of traditional festivals. Moving forward, balancing cultural preservation with modern development is critical. Strategies include integrating rural tourism with intangible cultural heritage skills to revitalize cultural economies, alongside advancing Manchu language research and digital preservation to ensure sustainable cultural transmission.

2.1.3 Language and Script

The Manchu language belongs to the Altaic language family, specifically the Manchu Tungusic branch. In 1115, under the leadership of Wanyan Aguda, the Jurchen people successfully rebelled against the Liao Dynasty and established the Jin

Dynasty. To meet the needs of Jurchen socio economic development, Wanyan Xiyin was ordered by Aguda four years later to create a Jurchen script. This script, known as the "Jurchen Large Script," drew inspiration from Chinese and Khitan characters. During the reign of Emperor Xizong of Jin, additional characters called the "Jurchen Small Script" were developed. However, due to its complexity, the Jurchen script fell into limited use by the Ming Dynasty (mid 15th century), surviving only among a small number of Jurchen communities in Northeastern China. Ming era records, such as the "Jurchen Archives Correspondence" section of the multilingual glossary Huayi Yiyu (Sino Barbarian Lexicon), preserved letters sent by Jurchen elites (Ming appointed officials) to the Ming court.

During the Ming Dynasty, Mongolian script became widely used in general Jurchen inhabited areas. At this time, the Jurchen people held a strong admiration for Mongolian culture. Nurhaci, the founder of the Later Jin (precursor to the Qing Dynasty), even boasted to Koreans, "I am a descendant of the Mongols." However, the reliance on Mongolian script for official communications requiring Jurchen elites to "learn Mongolian writing and translate Mongolian speech" proved inadequate for the rapidly consolidating Manchu community. In 1599, Nurhaci ordered Erdeni and Gagai to create a Manchu script by "adapting Mongolian letters to fit the sounds of our [Jurchen] language and combining them into sentences." Mongolian influence on Manchu was profound, with numerous Mongolian loanwords particularly terms related to pastoral life, such as horse coat colors, traits, and equipment absorbed into the Manchu lexicon.

Due to phonetic differences between Mongolian and Manchu, the borrowed Mongolian letters could not fully represent Manchu sounds, leading to ambiguities where "upper and lower characters became indistinguishable" and "errors in personal and place names." To address this, in 1632, Dahai (titled "Baksi, meaning "scholar" or "teacher" in Mongolian) was commissioned by Emperor Hong Taiji (Nurhaci's successor) to reform the script. Dahai, who had studied Chinese from a young age and mastered both Manchu and Chinese, had previously served as a key translator for diplomatic documents between the Later Jin, Korea, and the Ming. Official Qing records praised

him for "assisting in the civilized governance of Emperor Taizu's [Nurhaci's] reign," referencing his role in translating Chinese classics into Manchu.

Dahai's reforms involved adding "dots" or "circles" to borrowed Mongolian letters to distinguish Manchu pronunciations. He also standardized 12 primary character groups and created additional symbols for foreign loanwords. The improved script became known as the "New Manchu Script" (or "Script with Dots and Circles"), while the original version was retroactively termed the "Old Manchu Script" (or "Script Without Dots and Circles"). Compared to its predecessor, the New Manchu Script offered greater clarity in writing, unifying and standardizing the form and pronunciation of Manchu characters.

The Old Manchu Script (Script Without Dots and Circles) was used for over two decades as the early writing system of the Manchu people, recording important texts such as the Manwen Laodang (Old Manchu Archives) and Manzhou Shilu (Manchu Veritable Records). Shortly after the script's creation, the Manchu entered the Liaoshen region (modern Liaoning). Confronted with advanced Han Chinese culture, the Manchu urgently needed to translate Chinese classics, leading to a decline in original Manchu literary creation. To address challenges in transcribing Chinese loanwords, Dahai introduced "specialized letters" and "phonetic compounds" in the New Manchu Script (Script with Dots and Circles), greatly facilitating the translation of Chinese texts. Translation efforts began in 1630 after the establishment of the Historiography Academy, led by Dahai, who was fluent in both Manchu and Chinese. He translated works such as Xingbu Huidian (Legal Code of the Ministry of Justice), Sanlue (Three Strategies), and Wanbao Quanshu (Encyclopedia of Ten Thousand Treasures). Other texts, including Mengzi (Mencius), Sanguo Yanyi (Romance of the Three Kingdoms), Zizhi Tongjian (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Governance), Liutao (Six Secret Teachings), and Dachengjing (Mahayana Sutras), remained incomplete at his death. Dahai's translations were widely circulated among the Manchu. In 1650, the Romance of the Three Kingdoms was finally translated and ordered by Emperor Shunzhi to be disseminated nationwide. The text profoundly influenced Manchu culture; historical records note that

even Manchu military leaders unfamiliar with Chinese benefited from it. In 1655, the Manchu Great Qing Legal Code was promulgated. These translations highlight the Manchu script's role in fostering cultural exchange, though the flow of influence was predominantly from Han to Manchu.

Over the three centuries of the New Manchu Script's use until the Qing Dynasty's fall (1644–1912), it generated vast archives documenting the empire's politics, economy, history, and diplomacy. Additionally, during the reigns of Kangxi, Qianlong, and Jiaqing emperors (late 17th to early 19th centuries), Manchu calligraphy flourished among the elite, attaining high artistic value.

The script's survival was intertwined with the Manchu rulers' efforts to preserve their identity. Emperor Hong Taiji (r. 1626–1643) shifted from outright resistance to selective adoption of Han practices, fearing total assimilation akin to the Jurchen, Xianbei, and Khitan peoples. He sought to balance Confucian governance with Manchu martial traditions while abolishing outdated customs. However, early Qing policies vacillated. After the Shunzhi Emperor's accession, the pro Han faction under Dorgon initially prevailed over conservatives led by Jirgalang. Following Dorgon's death, Emperor Shunzhi grew wary of Han cultural influence. In 1654, he banned Manchu nobles from studying Han texts, fearing erosion of Manchu identity. A year later, he restricted the number of Eight Banners youth allowed to pursue literary education to curb neglect of martial skills. In 1752, Emperor Qianlong declared "archery and the Manchu language" as the dynasty's foundational principles, enshrining them as state policy.

Despite imperial efforts, the decline of Manchu language and identity proved inevitable. The Manchu population was vastly outnumbered by the Han, and as rulers, they inevitably engaged with Han society politically, economically, and culturally. Most high ranking regional officials were Manchu, and the Green Standard Army often had Manchu commanders. By the Yongzheng era (1723–1735), officials noted that legal documents were written in Chinese, leaving Manchu officials illiterate in Han script and vulnerable to manipulation. Emperor Yongzheng urged Manchu ministers to learn

Chinese. Those reliant on Bithesi (Manchu language secretaries) for translation faced operational inefficiencies. Manchu's linguistic limitations such as inadequate terms for legal, fiscal, or military matters further necessitated Han literacy. Even Qianlong, the most vocal advocate of "Manchu essence," required officials to use Chinese for critical reports.

Thus, while the Qing civil exams included separate Manchu and Han tracks, proficiency in Chinese became essential for career advancement. Banner members fluent in Chinese could serve as regional magistrates, while those limited to Manchu were confined to Eight Banners posts. As Chinese proficiency offered broader opportunities, Manchu gradually lost practical utility. Language, as a tool, fades when its function diminishes a fate the Manchu tongue could not escape.

The decline of the Manchu language was not abrupt but a gradual process. During the Kangxi era (1661–1722), some Manchu nobles reportedly no longer practiced archery or spoke Manchu fluently, though such cases were rare. The abandonment of Manchu first occurred among Hanjun Bannermen (ethnic Han incorporated into the Manchu Eight Banners system), who were originally Chinese speaking but had been forced to learn Manchu under Qing rule. By the Yongzheng era (1723–1735), many Hanjun Bannermen, especially those stationed in garrisons outside Manchuria, lost their Manchu proficiency due to the lack of a linguistic environment. Historical records note the decline of Manchu among garrisons in Guangzhou and Fuzhou. Manchu and Mongol Bannermen retained the language longer, but by the early Qianlong era (1735–1796), Mandarin Chinese dominated official proceedings in Beijing, and many Manchu officials resisted learning their ancestral tongue. Additionally, Manchu began incorporating Chinese pronunciations, reflecting cultural exchange but also signaling its decline.

After the mid Qianlong period, Manchu eroded rapidly among garrison Bannermen. Officials increasingly drafted reports in Chinese, and even soldiers stationed in Xinjiang mixed Manchu words into Chinese speech. Though Emperor Qianlong reprimanded such practices, he tolerated Chinese written memorials for clarity.

By the late 18th century, some Manchu elites not only struggled with the language but also adopted Han mannerisms, embodying a “Han cultural aura.” Despite Qianlong’s insistence on Manchu as a criterion for official promotion and military selection, the language’s decline continued. Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820) repeatedly lamented Manchu illiteracy and established charity schools (yixue) in each Banner to revive the language though some instructors themselves lacked fluency. By this time, the Qing Dynasty’s declining power hindered rigorous language enforcement.

The decline also varied geographically. By the Daoguang era (1820–1850), Manchu documents dwindled in official archives, replaced by Chinese. By Emperor Guangxu’s reign (1875–1908), Manchu was largely obsolete. Empress Dowager Cixi (of the Yehe Nara clan) reportedly understood little Manchu, reviewing only Chinese documents. By 1900, the Boxer Protocol with the Eight Nation Alliance was drafted in French, English, German, and Chinese Manchu was absent.

Outside the Shanhai Pass (Northeastern China), the Manchus’ survival was tied to migration patterns. After Qianlong’s reign, Han migration into Manchuria caused Manchu proficiency among Banner troops to plummet. In Shengjing (modern Shenyang), many Manchus could no longer speak the language fluently. By the Jiaqing Daoguang periods, even in remote Heilongjiang, Manchu speakers were rare, while Chinese became universal among Manchu communities. By the modern era, the Manchu survived only in isolated rural pockets of the northeast.

Though Manchu has faded from daily life, its legacy persists in two key areas: linguistic influence and academic study.

Linguistic Influence: While Manchu is now a “dead language,” it enriched regional dialects. Northeastern and Beijing Mandarin retain numerous Manchu loanwords, such as “En’na” (yes), “Sachima” (a pastry), Lahu” (“careless), Moji” (“procrastinate), Lata” (messy), “Luosuo” (“long winded), and Bieniu” (“awkward”). These terms blend seamlessly into modern Chinese, reflecting subtle cultural integration. Linguists argue that Beijing Mandarin’s intonation and cadence were shaped by Manchu, particularly the “rhythm” unique to Banner communities.

Academic Function: Manchu remains a subject of scholarly study. Universities like Minzu University of China and Heilongjiang University offer Manchu language courses. Archives and research institutions also employ specialists to interpret historical Manchu documents, preserving their role as a key to Qing era records.

2.1.4 Folk Culture of the Manchu Ethnic Group

The Manchu people, who historically inhabited the cold northeastern regions of China and relied on hunting, developed unique folk customs shaped by their harsh environment, frequent interactions with neighboring ethnic groups, and influences from neighboring civilizations.

Genealogy (Family Registers): Known as jiapu ("family register"), zupu ("clan register"), or pudie ("genealogical record"), these documents trace a family's lineage, notable members, and historical continuity. Manchu genealogy originated in shamanic rituals. The goddess Fodo Mama ("Mother Buddha"), also called the "Goddess of Descendants," was symbolized by a yellow cloth pouch containing a rope the Line of Descendants marked with knots representing ancestors. This "knot recorded genealogy" reflected early Manchu oral traditions. After the creation of the Manchu script, written genealogies ("written archives") emerged, exemplified by the Old Manchu Archives. Post Qing conquest (1644), Manchu clans adopted Han Chinese practices, blending Manchu and Chinese scripts in their genealogies.

Manchu genealogies focus on patrilineal lineage, structured as either pushu (detailed books) or pudan (simplified charts). During the Qing dynasty, under the Eight Banners system, genealogies became vital for proving status and inheriting titles, leading nearly every Manchu family to maintain one. Compiling a genealogy followed strict rituals, typically done every 30 years in the Year of the Dragon or Tiger, with the belief that "failing to update it for three generations is unfilial."

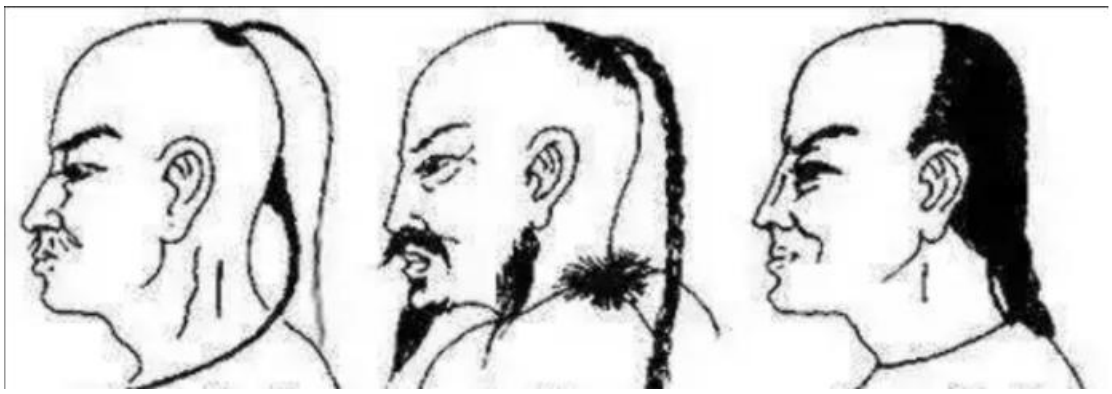


Figure 111 Manchu hairstyle

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Manchu hairstyle: Hairstyles held profound cultural and political significance in Chinese tradition. Confucius once equated the collapse of civilization to "disheveled hair and left fastened robes" (The Analects), imbuing hairstyles with symbolic power. The Manchu queue a braided hairstyle became a defining feature of their identity during the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). Adult Manchu men wore their hair in a queue that hung over the shoulders, with the back hair retained. In shamanism, the queue was believed to house the soul's essence, making it deeply revered. Fallen soldiers whose bodies could not be retrieved had their queues ceremonially buried to "return their spirits home."

This tradition originated during the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), as recorded in History of the Great Jin: "Jurchen men braided their hair, leaving the back hair tied with colored silk." By the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the queue was widespread among the Manchus. After the Qing conquest of China, the Hair Shaving Decree mandated Han Chinese men adopt the Manchu queue as a sign of submission, sparking decades of resistance in southern China. The Qing government suppressed rebellions after 40 years, enforcing the queue as the standard male hairstyle nationwide.

Meanwhile, Manchu women preserved a distinct Jurchen inspired hairstyle, braiding their hair into a topknot. This contrasted with Han traditions and underscored the Manchus' cultural roots. The queue thus became not only a political symbol of Qing

authority but also a spiritual and ethnic marker, reflecting the interplay of power, identity, and belief in imperial China.

Manchu clothing: The traditional attire of the Manchu ethnic group carries profound cultural significance, shaping not only the "national dress" during the Qing dynasty but also laying the foundation for modern Chinese style clothing. Its most iconic contributions include the cheongsam (qipao), magua (riding jacket), and kanjian (waistcoat), each reflecting distinct historical and functional origins.

Figure 112 Cheongsam (Qipao)

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Cheongsam (Qipao): Originating from the hunting traditions of Manchu ancestors in forested regions, early male cheongsams were designed for practicality. As recorded in the History of Jin, Jurchen people (Manchu predecessors) during the Liao Jin period (10th—13th centuries) wore "white narrow sleeved robes with round collars and side seams, reaching mid calf for ease of horseback riding." Post 1644, Manchu

styles evolved under Han Chinese influence, with arrow shaped sleeves transitioning to flared designs.

Manchu women's cheongsams retained traditional features: dark colored tuanshan (blouses) with left front closures and black or purple aprons. These garments emphasized modesty, featuring up to 18 decorative borders along collars, cuffs, and hems, with straight cut silhouettes concealing body curves beneath tall, stiff collars. By the mid 1930s, the cheongsam underwent modernization lengthened, side slit, and tailored to accentuate feminine contours becoming the precursor to today's globally recognized version. Notably, formal male court robes (e.g., chaopao, mangpao) differ from this lineage.

Figure 113 Magua (Riding Jacket)

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Magua (Riding Jacket): Initially worn by Eight Banners cavalry during horseback activities, this waist length, four sided slit outer garment evolved into a Qing era status symbol. By Emperor Yongzheng's reign (1720s), it permeated mainstream fashion as a formal coat worn over robes. Though fading post 1949, its legacy persists in northeastern China's button front quilted jackets.

Figure 114 Kanjian (Waistcoat)

Source: This image is courtesy of Baidu

Kanjian (Waistcoat): Derived from magua designs, these sleeveless vests gained popularity for their aesthetic versatility and practicality. Crafted from fine materials with elaborate embroidery, variants like the Baturu (Manchu: "hero") waistcoat became iconic among Beijing's Eight Banners elites.

Additional traditions included leatherwear and waist sashes, reflecting the Manchu's adaptability to both nomadic and agrarian lifestyles. Through these innovations, Manchu attire profoundly shaped China's sartorial identity, blending functionality with enduring cultural symbolism.

Marriage Customs in Manchu Culture: Marriage traditions are a vital aspect of folk culture, reflecting the core values and social structures of ethnic identity. Early Manchu wedding customs retained traces of late clan based societies, characterized by two distinctive practices:

Flexible Generational Hierarchy: Marriages between individuals of different generations were not strictly taboo.

Widow Remarriage: Unlike Han Chinese traditions, widows in Manchu society commonly remarried without social stigma. Additionally, levirate marriage (shoujihun) was practiced, where a widow could marry her brother in law or even a non biological stepson. This reflected the clan era view of women as inheritable property within the husband's family, ensuring the retention of labor and resources.

Marriage Structure: While Manchu society traditionally upheld monogamy, the Eight Banners system introduced during the Qing dynasty allowed nobility and the wealthy to practice polygyny. Common households, however, largely maintained monogamous unions.

Qing to Republican Era Evolution: From the mid Qing dynasty to the early Republic of China (18th—20th centuries), Manchu wedding customs stabilized into a formalized structure. Families prioritized social status compatibility over the groom's wealth, with some clans even forbidding financial negotiations in marriage arrangements.

Rituals and Ceremonies, Manchu weddings featured elaborate rituals, including:

Song Xingli (sending dowry): The bride's family delivered gifts to the groom's household.

Baojiao (bridal carriage rituals): The groom carried the bride into the wedding sedan.

Guo Huopen (crossing a fire basin): Symbolized purification and warding off evil.

Jie Gaitou (unveiling the bride): The groom removed the bride's red veil.

Peisong (bridal escort): Female relatives accompanied the bride to her new home.

Huimen (post wedding visit to the bride's family): The couple returned to the bride's family three days after the wedding.

These customs highlight the Manchu people's blend of pragmatic clan traditions and evolving social norms, offering a window into their historical interplay of gender, kinship, and cultural identity.

Funeral Customs in Manchu Culture: Funerary practices are a crucial aspect of cultural traditions, reflecting beliefs about death, spirituality, and social values. The Manchu people historically practiced diverse burial rites, including sky burial (exposing the deceased to nature), tree burial (placing the body in trees), and cremation, with the latter becoming dominant in the early Qing dynasty.

Cremation: Initially reserved for Jurchen chieftains (Manchu ancestors), cremation evolved into a widespread practice. As recorded in the Veritable Records of King Sejong's Reign (Joseon Dynasty), "chieftain Jurchens cremate their dead." This ritual held deep symbolic meaning: fire was revered as purifying and sacred, transforming the deceased into a spiritually cleansed state. Cremation was both an elite "honorary burial" and a solemn communal ceremony.

Shift to Han Style Burials: After the Yongzheng era (1720s), the Qing court banned cremation among Manchu commoners, enforcing Han Chinese customs like coffin burials and earth interment. This policy aimed to align Manchu practices with Confucian norms emphasizing bodily integrity and ancestral reverence.

Key Manchu funeral customs included:

Hair cutting rituals: Family members cut their hair as a visible sign of mourning.

100 day (bairi titou): A prohibition on haircutting for 100 days post funeral, symbolizing prolonged grief.

Mourning attire: Specific clothing worn to signify bereavement, often in plain colors like white or blue.

These practices illustrate the Manchu people's evolving relationship with death, blending ancestral animist beliefs (e.g., fire worship) with later influences from Han Chinese philosophy and state mandated norms.

Manchu Residential Architecture and Cultural Practices: Residential architecture embodies a nation's aesthetic sensibilities, shaped profoundly by its natural environment. The Manchu ancestors initially lived in treehouses and caves, as recorded in the Book of Jin: Accounts of the Sushen (3rd—5th centuries CE): "The Sushen dwell in

tree nests during summer and underground caves in winter." These treehouses were not flimsy bird like nests but sturdy wooden structures elevated on tree trunks. Due to their vulnerability to fire, fire worship rituals became central to Manchu spiritual life, marked by solemnity and reverence. Cave dwellings, meanwhile, provided warmth and protection from wild animals.

By the time of the Wuji and Mohe peoples (5th—10th centuries), semi subterranean houses emerged "mound like chambers dug into earthen embankments." Even during the prosperous Bohai Kingdom (698—926 CE), while elites in central regions built palaces and tiled houses, most frontier commoners retained semi underground homes. During the Liao Jin period (10th—13th centuries), the Jurchen (Manchu ancestors) transitioned to ground level houses called nageli , enabled by the widespread adoption of heated kang (brick beds). This innovation was pivotal for survival in harsh winters and contributed to the rise of the Wanyan clan, founders of the Jin dynasty. Another Jurchen custom was interlocked wooden palisades, which replaced earthen walls while preserving the tradition of communal clan living.

The emergence of the Manchu as a distinct ethnic group marked a cultural leap. Their dwellings evolved from simple nageli to spacious "Manchu old houses" (laowu). Villages, often nestled near mountains and rivers, were enclosed by palisaded fences to deter invaders. Clan identity was marked by symbolic pillars: bird totems (niaozhu), animal head pillars (shoutouzhu), or five color banners (wuseqi).

In early Qing dynasty Manchu homes, houses typically faced south. The "pocket style house" (koudaifang), with its entrance at the southeastern corner, became standard. The layout included an outer kitchen area and inner bedrooms, exemplified by Shenyang's Qingning Palace. By the mid Qing era, houses expanded into quadrangular courtyards, precursors to Beijing's siheyuan. Wealthier families added east and west wing rooms the east for grain storage and the west for miscellaneous items. Social hierarchy governed room usage: west rooms were reserved for elders, reflecting the cultural principle of "revering the west" (xi wei gui), while the east housed younger generations.

By the late Qing and early Republican era, Manchu homes featured a spirit wall (yingbi) inside the gate, often adorned with dragons, phoenixes, or landscapes symbolizing auspiciousness. Folklore claims it wards off mahu a mythical masked beast by acting as a "false face." Behind the wall stood the Souluo Pole, a 9 foot wooden post with a tin basket holding grains and pig offal to feed crows and magpies, honoring ancestral legends. Exterior chimneys (hulan) were built beside houses to enhance heating efficiency. A distinctive practice was "windows papered outside," where durable oil coated paper (tantahahua) resisted weathering, becoming a hallmark of Manchurian architecture.

Scholars note that the core of Manchu residential culture lies in "revering the west" (shang xi). This principle dictated construction order (the west wing was built first) and room hierarchy: the west room housed elders, and its west wall enshrined the "Wocheku," a clan's ancestral box. The west kang (brick bed) was sacred, used only during shamanic rituals, and forbidden for ordinary use. This reverence stems from shamanic beliefs: the west, where the sun sets, symbolizes eternity and the cycle of life, reflecting a blend of ancestral worship and spiritual symbolism. From heated kang to spirit walls, Manchu architecture harmonized practicality with cultural narratives, leaving a legacy visible in Beijing's siheyuan and Shenyang's historic sites.

2.1.5 Religious Beliefs

The Manchu culture and shamanism are deeply intertwined, sharing a symbiotic relationship through history. Shamanism flourished and waned alongside the evolution of Manchu society, while its rituals, beliefs, and practices became ingrained in the very fabric of Manchu daily life, spirituality, and identity.

The term "shaman" (saman) first appeared in Chinese historical records during the 12th century. In 1194 CE (the fifth year of the Shaoxi era in the Southern Song dynasty), scholar Xu Mengxin documented in his Compilation of Treaties with the Northern Dynasties: "Shanman refers to a female sorceress in the Jurchen language." The Jurchen word shanman evolved into the modern term "shaman." Across Manchu Tungusic languages including Manchu, Oroqen, Evenki, Hezhen, and Xibe the term

"shaman" carries similar phonetic roots. Interpretations of the word vary. DiPu's Studies on Shamanism defines a shaman as "an agitated, restless, and frenzied person." The Modern Chinese Dictionary describes a shaman as a "wizard who performs spirit rituals." Scholar Zhao Zhizhong, in his etymological analysis, interprets "shaman" as "one who sees all," "an omniscient being," or "a sage." The Manchu Rituals for Worshiping Deities and Heaven refer to shamans as "ritual officiants."

In ceremonial contexts, shamans functioned similarly to modern day "hosts," guiding rituals and mediating between the human and spiritual realms. Outwardly, their performances marked by ecstatic dances, chants, and trances appeared frenzied or "mad." Yet inwardly, they were revered as repositories of wisdom, healers, and custodians of tribal knowledge. Thus, the role of the shaman embodies a paradox: a fusion of "madness" and "sagehood."

Scholars debate the scope of shamanism's influence. Broadly, it is considered a global phenomenon, with significant activity concentrated in Central and Northern Asia, though traces appear in Europe, the Americas, and Africa. Narrowly, it is viewed as a tradition rooted in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly in Northeastern China, Siberia, and Indigenous tribes of the Americas. These differing perspectives highlight Shamanism's adaptability, blending localized practices with universal themes of spirit communication and cosmic harmony.

Both Shamanism and historical records of the Manchu ethnic group document, yet the application of totem worship in Shamanic rituals far exceeds that within Manchu traditions. Due to backward production techniques and cognitive limitations, the ancestors of the Manchu people primarily sustained themselves through hunting. Humans sought to harness external forces to ensure favorable conditions in daily life, praying for celestial benevolence. This fostered a hierarchical worship pattern progressing from animals to plants, nature, and finally ancestors. Animal worship deified creatures such as wolves, jackals, tigers, leopards, pythons, and snakes. Plant worship sanctified specific vegetation like willow trees, elms, and grasses, with willow holding primacy. Nature worship elevated elemental forces like fire as divine manifestations.

These venerated entities collectively constituted "totem worship," reflecting humanity's reliance on external powers.

During daily production activities, humans transformed these worshiped subjects into symbolic patterns representing specific clans, thereby establishing tribal emblems. The gradual evolution of totem worship into ancestor worship marked significant progress in human development, demonstrating growing confidence in human capabilities. Ancestor worship manifested in two forms: veneration of mythological ancestors and reverence for historical figures. Mythological ancestors included deity like figures from Manchu legends such as the "Primordial Mother Goddess" and "Celestial Mother Goddess," while historical ancestor worship honored real life heroes. Over time, these two forms became interwoven, evolving into collective praise for ancestral virtues within Manchu culture.

Ancestor worship necessitated intermediaries for divine communication, giving rise to ritual specialists known as "shamans" ("Saman" in Manchu tradition). To facilitate this sacred dialogue during ceremonies, shamanic dance emerged as a vital medium bridging the human and spiritual realms. This ritualized movement became an essential component of transcendental communication in shamanic practices.

The earliest Manchu shamans were predominantly women, as reflected in the Manchu creation myth The Cosmic War (Tiangong Dazhan), which opens with a female shaman narrating the origins of the world. Legendary figures like Ubusheben Mama (Mother Wubuxiben) and Nishan Saman (Nishan Shaman) further exemplify the revered role of female shamans in Manchu lore. Historically, each Manchu clan maintained its own shaman, whose selection followed two primary paths: divine selection (shen ze) and human selection (ren ze). Divine selection involved spiritual possession or a calling through illness, where individuals often after making vows to deities during sickness were deemed chosen by the gods. This designation required validation by an existing shaman. Human selection, by contrast, was a communal decision made by clan leaders, current shamans, and respected elders, emphasizing the shaman's role as both a spiritual and social anchor.

Shamans adhered to strict codes of conduct while bearing immense responsibility for their clans. They presided over rituals, healed the sick, soothed the souls of the deceased, performed divination to predict fortunes or misfortunes, mediated disputes, and trained successors. Beyond these duties, shamans served as vital custodians of cultural heritage, preserving oral traditions, myths, and ancestral knowledge. Their dual role as spiritual intermediaries and community leaders underscored their centrality in sustaining Manchu identity and cohesion across generations.

Current archaeological findings suggest that shamanism had already emerged among the Manchu ancestors during the Neolithic era prior to the Sushen period. During the Wuji and Mohe periods, the development of agricultural economies fostered hierarchical concepts of the soul within Shamanism, which began serving tribal warfare, political needs, and economic activities, thereby elevating the status of shamans. By the Jurchen era, shamanism had attained mainstream prominence, with the term "shaman" (Saman) first appearing in historical records. It became integrated into royal politics, participating in and legitimizing major imperial decisions and activities while mythologizing royal authority. Correspondingly, shamanic rituals and sacred spaces became formalized, with standardized dynastic ceremonies established.

Nurhaci, who unified the Jurchen tribes, also consolidated the diverse shamanic practices of various clans. Under this centralized system, the imperial Aisin Gioro clan's shamanic traditions became the officially sanctioned state religion of the new dynasty. The Qing court subsequently codified these practices in the Manchu Ritual Code for Worshiping Deities and Heaven, which remained effective until the late Qing. However, the growing influence of Buddhism on Qing rulers gradually diminished Shamanism's prominence in imperial courts. Following the Xinhai Revolution, intensified Manchu Han integration and the implementation of anti Manchu policies accelerated Shamanism's decline, disrupting its transmission. Oral shamanic traditions were interrupted or fragmented, while rituals became simplified or vanished entirely.

Paradoxically, some clan specific shamanic practices began reviving after the Qing dynasty's collapse. These surviving traditions, preserved intact to this day, now serve as vital living records for understanding historical shamanic practices.

While organized religions typically utilize dedicated architectural structures to propagate their beliefs, shamanism fundamentally differs in this regard. Deeply interwoven with the daily lives of the Manchu people, shamanic rituals and practices permeate every aspect of their existence from domestic customs to cultural traditions. This integration manifests in spatial arrangements within traditional Manchu dwellings, particularly through the cultural privileging of western orientations. The western kang (heated brick platform) in residential western rooms became sacred ritual spaces for shamanic ceremonies. Consequently, numerous Manchu customs evolved specifically around shamanic frameworks, making it an inseparable thread in the fabric of their cultural identity.

Simultaneously, Buddhism exerted profound influence on Manchu spiritual practices. As a polytheistic primal religion, shamanism demonstrated remarkable inclusivity toward external belief systems. Prior to the Manchu conquest of China, Buddhist elements had already been incorporated into the shamanic court rituals of the Later Jin regime, with deities like Buddha and Guanyin (Avalokitesvara) appearing in imperial ceremonies. Nurhaci, founding leader of the Later Jin, established temples honoring the Three Ages Buddhas and the Jade Emperor alongside shamanic altars in Hetu Ala, constructing seven major religious complexes. Following the Manchu entry into China proper, Buddhist influence intensified: shamanic practices assimilated Buddhist doctrines, while Buddhist deities including Sakyamuni Buddha, Guanyin Bodhisattva, and the deified Guan Yu (Guandi) became central to Qing imperial worship.

Qing emperors strategically patronized Buddhism the Shunzhi Emperor maintained a lifelong fascination with Buddhist teachings, the Kangxi Emperor actively restored temples and inscribed ceremonial plaques, and Empress Dowager Cixi famously adopted the title "Old Buddha." However, imperial sponsorship maintained calculated restrictions, deliberately curbing Buddhism's independent growth. The Qing

court harnessed Buddhist appeal as a political tool to consolidate authority and placate Han Chinese subjects, ensuring religious practices remained subordinate to state interests. This dual approach of patronage and control characterized the dynasty's nuanced management of spiritual affairs.

Tibetan Buddhism held significant influence during the Manchu rule over China, particularly under Emperor Qianlong's reign (1735—1796). The emperor standardized religious rituals by promulgating the Imperially Commissioned Manchu Rites for Worshiping Heaven and Deities, which synthesized multiple religious traditions into court ceremonies. The Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, commonly known as the Yellow Sect, gained prominence after its founding by Tsongkhapa in the 15th century. His disciples, Gendun Drup (1st Dalai Lama) and Khedrup Je (1st Panchen Erdeni), expanded its reach, establishing the reincarnation systems of the Dalai and Panchen lamas. By the early Qing era, Mongol tribes across the western and northern steppes fervently revered the Yellow Sect, regarding the Dalai Lama as a "living deity" and "divine authority." This devotion facilitated Tibetan Buddhism's integration into both Manchu imperial policy and popular consciousness.

From Nurhaci's reign onward, religion served as a "tool to govern the frontiers", becoming central to Qing ethnic policies. The Qing court formalized its patronage of Tibetan Buddhism by conferring titles: the Dalai Lama was recognized in 1652, and the Panchen Erdeni in 1713, solidifying their spiritual political authority. Subsequently, the Qing built numerous Lamaist temples in Beijing and Shenyang, while state sponsored and privately funded monasteries proliferated nationwide. However, the Qing tightly regulated the activities of the Dalai and Panchen lamas to ensure their alignment with imperial interests, ultimately consolidating Manchu control over frontier regions.

After Tibetan Buddhism entered the Manchu court, it intertwined with indigenous Manchu shamanistic practices. Court rituals incorporated Gelug Buddhist ceremonies, notably the Cham dance (tiao buzha), a masked ritual performance described as a "religious dance drama." As recorded in the Statutes and Precedents of

the Qing Dynasty: Miscellaneous Regulations of the Imperial Household Department: "On the 29th day of the 12th lunar month, 184 lamas performed the Cham dance at the Front Hall of Zhongzheng Palace." The Zhongzheng Hall, located south of the Jianfu Palace Garden in the Forbidden City's northwest corner, served as the focal point for imperial Buddhist rituals.

This fusion of Tibetan Buddhist and Manchu shamanistic elements exemplified the Qing court's pragmatic approach to religion harnessing its spiritual authority to legitimize rule while maintaining cultural cohesion. The Cham dance, with its elaborate costumes and symbolic gestures, became a spectacle of divine endorsement, blending transcendental symbolism with political theater to reinforce the emperor's dual role as both a Confucian sovereign and a Buddhist chakravartin (universal monarch).

2.2 The development of Manchu music under cultural accommodation.

The development of Manchu music has undergone a complex and unique process. The Sushen, Yilou, Woji, and Mohe periods marked the embryonic stage of Manchu music; the Jurchen era represented its developmental phase; the Qing Dynasty witnessed its integration and flourishing; while modern Manchu music adopted themes of resisting aggression, opposing oppression, and longing for a better life. Cultural accommodation, as the core mechanism for the survival and evolution of ethnic cultures, assumes new research significance in today's context of global culture. As a vital representative of northern Chinese minority music, Manchu music's trajectory vividly illustrates the dynamic process of cultural accommodation. Over millennia, it has retained its indigenous characteristics while absorbing musical elements from neighboring Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other ethnic groups, forming a pluralistic artistic style. Moreover, Manchu music fulfills essential functions in rituals, festivals, labor, and other social activities, embodying profound cultural connotations. Studying its cultural accommodation not only enhances understanding of its historical survival strategies but also provides valuable insights for the contemporary heritage and innovation of ethnic music.

2.2.1 The Significance of Manchu Music Cultural accommodation for National Music Development

Acculturation is a fundamental concept reflecting cultural characteristics and functions, primarily referring to culture's adaptation to its environment, and sometimes the mutual adaptation between different cultural components. When people from different cultural groups engage in continuous direct contact, the changes occurring in the original cultural types of one or both sides are called acculturation. The cultural adaptation of Manchu music is mainly manifested in three dimensions: First, at the level of artistic form, it achieves innovative development by absorbing diverse musical elements; Second, at the level of social function, it adjusts its expression forms according to the needs of the times; Third, at the level of cultural identity, it maintains the stable inheritance of core values. These three dimensions together form a complete picture of Manchu music's cultural adaptation.

In a multi ethnic country like China, cultural adaptation holds extremely important significance for the development of national music. First, acculturation promotes the inheritance of ethnic music. Music from different ethnic groups carries unique historical memories, values, and lifestyles. When ethnic music adapts to its cultural environment, it can better integrate into people's daily lives and be accepted and passed down from generation to generation. For example, during traditional Manchu festivals, music serves as a vital component, and within such cultural contexts, younger generations learn and inherit their ethnic music through immersion. Second, it drives innovation in ethnic music. Cultural adaptation enables ethnic music to interact and learn from other cultures. When different ethnic musics come into contact, they absorb each other's musical elements and compositional techniques. For instance, some ethnic music incorporates modern harmonic and rhythmic elements to create works that better align with contemporary standards, infusing new vitality into ethnic music. Third, it enhances the dissemination of ethnic music. Adaptation to a multicultural environment helps ethnic music transcend geographical and ethnic boundaries and reach broader audiences. Through integration with mainstream culture or other ethnic cultures, ethnic music becomes more accessible and appealing to people of different

ethnicities, thereby expanding its reach. This is evident in how some minority music has gained international acclaim by maintaining its unique characteristics while adapting to the demands of global cultural exchanges. Finally, it consolidates national identity and unity. Cultural adaptation fosters mutual understanding and respect among ethnic groups through musical exchanges. When people appreciate and love the music of other ethnicities, they develop deeper insights into those cultures, thereby promoting solidarity among all ethnic groups and contributing to the construction of the pluralistic and integrated cultural landscape of the Chinese nation.

2.2.2 Historical Tracing of Manchu Music Cultural accommodation

Archaeological discoveries corroborated by documentary records reveal the developmental trajectory of Manchu ancestors' music. First, the Ancient Period (Sushen to Jin Dynasty). During the Sushen era (approximately 11th century BCE – 5th century CE), music primarily served hunting and sacrificial activities. Bone flutes and clay ocarinas unearthed from the Xituanshan site in Jilin province confirm early musical instrument making techniques. During the Yilou period (1st–3rd centuries CE), musical activities took on social characteristics; the "group singing and dancing" recorded in Hou Hanshu (Book of the Later Han) indicates music became a vital social medium. Second, the Bohai Kingdom Period (698–926 CE). This era marked a critical stage in institutionalizing Manchu music. Musical scores of "Bohai Music" preserved in Japan's Shosoin Repository demonstrate the formation of a complete scale system. The establishment of imperial court music systems during the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) signaled mature development, with the "Benchao Yuequ" (Court Music of Our Dynasty) classification recorded in Jinshi (History of Jin) reflecting professionalized functional trends.

Third, the Qing Dynasty Period (1636–1912). Manchu music during this era featured parallel development in court and folk spheres. In court music, the Qinding Manzhou Jishen Jitian Dianli (Imperially Compiled Manchu Rituals for Ancestor and Heaven Worship) promulgated during the Qianlong reign standardized sacrificial music procedures. The Zhonghe Shaoyue gongche notation scores held in the Palace

Museum document complete performance norms. Folk music displayed stronger integrative characteristics; the Bajiao Guchi (Eight Corner Drum Lyrics) manuscript preserved in the National Library of China illustrates this storytelling art's blending of Manchu and Chinese bilingual features. Instrumental development also reflected cultural adaptation: the Qing dynasty zhuagu drum collected in Shenyang Imperial Palace combines Mongolian and Han craftsmanship, while the Sinicized transformation of Han instruments like the sanxian demonstrates localized adoption.

Fourth, the Modern and Contemporary Period (1912–present). Republican era music fieldwork preserved substantial precious materials: the 1936 Manzhou Minge Ji (Manchurian Folk Song Collection) includes 217 folk songs, 43 with Manchu lyrics. Post 1949 music compilation projects achieved significant results, with the Zhongguo Minjian Gequ Jicheng·Liaoning Juan (Chinese Folk Song Anthology·Liaoning Volume) containing 89 Manchu folk songs, accounting for 12% of the total. Contemporary innovative practices show diversified trends: fusion works represented by "Manchu Xinminyao" (Manchu New Folk) saw a 300% output increase between 2010–2020, with digital platforms reporting annual plays exceeding 50 million. This innovation retains traditional musical DNA while adapting to modern aesthetics. In recent years, musicians have experimented with blending Manchu music with modern pop, as seen in singer Harin's Menggu Ma (Mongolian Horse), which incorporates Manchu elements to widespread acclaim.

2.2.3 Characteristics of Manchu Music in the Context of Cultural accommodation

Manchu music demonstrates integration across two dimensions: horizontal ethnic blending and vertical ancient modern fusion.

In terms of ethnic integration, long term coexistence with Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other ethnic groups has fostered deep musical exchanges. For example, the melody structure of the Manchu folk song Pao Nanhai shares similarities with the Han folk song Mo Li Hua yet retains unique Manchu "vibrato" techniques in vocal performance. The Manchu instrument Xi Qin combines Mongolian Matouqin harmonics with distinct Manchu glissando techniques.

In terms of ancient modern fusion, contemporary Manchu composers like Bao Yuankai have creatively incorporated traditional Manchu melodies into works like his Taiwan Impressions symphonic suite. Young musicians blend electronic and rock elements with traditional Manchu music, creating hybrid genres that expand audience reach while preserving cultural roots.

Regional Distinctiveness: Manchu music reflects natural environmental influences and regional cultural diversity.

Northeastern China's landscapes shaped its musical style: the broad, undulating melodies of Changbai Mountain folk songs like Cai Shen Ge evoke vast forests, while the gentle rhythms of Songhua River works like Da Yu Ge mirror flowing waters, embodying the Manchu philosophy of harmony between humanity and nature. Regional variations also exist: Liaoning's Manchu music incorporates Errenzhuan flavors (e.g., Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous County), Jilin preserves pure Manchu Shamanic chants (e.g., Jiutai's shamanic songs), and Heilongjiang's music displays robust rhythms influenced by Oroqen traditions.

Ritual Functionality: Manchu music serves ceremonial roles in both shamanic rituals and folk festivals.

Shamanic music, among the oldest forms, centers on drums accompanied by bells and mirrors, with strict rhythmic structures for spirit invocation, descent, and dismissal. For instance, in Wula Manchu Town's rituals, drumbeats slow during spirit summoning, accelerate during possession, and calm during dismissal. Folk festival music emphasizes celebration: the lively Taiwan Drum Dance at Ban Jin Jie and Manchu influenced Yangge Dance at Lunar New Year blend entertainment with cultural identity reinforcement.

Artless Emotionality: Manchu music expresses sincere emotions through simplicity.

Work songs like Da Hang Ge use repetitive rhythms to unify laborers, while ballads like Pan Qing Lang convey raw longing. Ancient songs like Zu Xian Ge and Quan Xue Ge preserve historical narratives and moral values through unadorned lyrics.

Contemporary works such as Wo De Manzu Laojia maintain this authenticity, using plain language to evoke cultural nostalgia.

2.2.4 Challenges and Opportunities for Manchu Music Cultural accommodation

As a vital carrier of Manchu culture, northeast Manchu music preserves profound historical memories and ethnic wisdom. According to 2020 statistics, China's Manchu population totals approximately 10.42 million, with over 60% residing in Northeastern China, making this region the core area for Manchu music inheritance. However, rapid modernization has precipitated an unprecedented crisis: research indicates that traditional Manchu music inheritors decreased by nearly 40% over the past decade, with many precious repertoires on the verge of extinction. Studying Manchu cultural adaptation not only fills gaps in systematic Manchu music research but also provides evidence for scientific preservation policies, playing a critical role in safeguarding cultural diversity and enhancing national cultural confidence.

Challenges: The primary challenge is the succession gap.

Most performers capable of fully rendering traditional Manchu folk songs are over 60 years old, with severe shortages among younger generations. In Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County, Liaoning province, only 3 inheritors remain who master complete shamanic sacrificial music repertoires. This issue stems from lifestyle changes during modernization, eroding traditional music's original social context.

Commercialization pressures also threaten authenticity. To cater to tourists, some Manchu music performances in scenic spots simplify or distort traditions. For example, certain "shamanic dance" shows incorporate excessive modern dance moves, stripping away their religious significance. Such over commercialization risks cultural alienation.

Opportunities: Policy support provides institutional.

Implementation of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Law has legalized Manchu music protection, complemented by local measures like Jilin province's special funds for inheritor training programs. These policies create favorable conditions for preservation.

New media technologies offer unprecedented opportunities. Short video platforms like Douyin have provided exposure for Manchu music, with some folk song videos garnering over one million views. Digital music platforms enable commercial viability, allowing Manchu musicians to generate substantial income through online releases.

Cultural industry development expands application scenarios. Manchu musical elements are increasingly used in film/TV scores and stage productions e.g., Kangxi Dynasty drama series incorporated extensive Manchu music. Cultural tourism also creates new performance venues: Manchu cultural villages in Liaoning and Jilin feature music shows as key attractions.

2.3 The musical integration of Manchu music with the other ethnic music.

Manchu music has a long history. After several ethnic integrations, "Bohai Music" (during the Bohai period), "Jurchen Music" (during the Jurchen period), and "Manchu Music" (during the Qing Dynasty) are the main stages in the development of Manchu music. In traditional music, the genres of Manchu music include mountain songs, small songs, labor chants, folk custom songs, children's songs, Yoyo tunes, fishing songs, hunting songs, etc. The themes cover aspects such as women's lives, love, and labor.

The Manchu people are a nation good at integration, innovation, and development. Through long term historical development, they have formed a music culture rich in national characteristics. During the process of ethnic integration and communication, the lyrics have developed into three types: Manchu language, Chinese language, and the concurrent use of Manchu and Chinese languages. Unfortunately, up to now, only a few elderly people in the remote areas of Heilongjiang Province can speak the Manchu language, and the Manchu people in other regions have all switched to using the Chinese language.

According to current research, Heilongjiang Province pays relatively more attention to the overall research of Manchu music, and most of the research focuses on shamanism, accounting for 90% of the total research on Manchu music. Manchu

shamanic myths have also been listed as one of the intangible cultural heritages in Heilongjiang Province. However, there is relatively little research on the regional characteristics of Manchu music in Heilongjiang, and even less on its historical aspects. The current academic community does not pay much attention to Manchu Mountain songs and small songs in Heilongjiang, which has led to the gradual loss of many Manchu Mountain songs and small songs. Manchu mountain songs are not even recorded in the "Collection of Chinese Folk Songs · Heilongjiang Volume," and their situation is precarious.

Taking time as a clue, we will elaborate on the process of the integrated development of Manchu music in the Heilongjiang region and the music of other ethnic groups during historical changes from five periods: the music of Sushen, Yilou, Woji, and Mohe in the embryonic stage; the Bohai music in the initial growth stage; the Jurchen music in the development stage; the Manchu music in the heyday stage; and the Manchu music in the People's Republic of China during the integration stage.

2.3.1 The Integrativity of Primitive Manchu Music

During the ancient Sushen period, due to the harsh living environment, the content and form of Manchu music exhibited a primitive nature. The ancestors living in clan tribes were mainly engaged in primitive hunting, fishing, and animal husbandry. Because of the poor living conditions, they lived in nests in summer and in caves in winter. They wore leaves and animal skins, and in winter, they smeared thick ointment on their bodies to keep warm because of the cold. Limited by their living environment, the ancestors of the Manchu people made a living by fishing and hunting. They often migrated due to wars and experienced processes of differentiation and integration with other ethnic groups. Manchu music also blended with other ethnic groups as they migrated and jointly resisted natural disasters and wars. Gradually, unique style characteristics were formed in their arduous life and joyful labor.

To explore the integrativity of Manchu music culture in its primitive state, we can only start with the native myths and legends of the Manchu people and relevant historical documents and try to glimpse the music style of that time from these materials.

The Sushen were an ethnic group in ancient Northeastern China and one of the ancestors of modern Tungusic ethnic groups such as the Manchu people. There is a legend called "The Great War in the Celestial Palace" in Shamanic mythology, which reflects the form of primitive Manchu music. At this time, Manchu music was born out of production labor and struggles, and it had strong imitativeness, conveying the social spirit of praising the true, the good, and the beautiful and criticizing the false, the evil, and the ugly.

Since the era of Shun and Yu in legend, Sushen had already established a tributary relationship with the Central Plains. At the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty (the early 11th century BC), the Sushen tribe presented "hu shi shi nu" to the Zhou Dynasty. "Hu shi shi nu" was a unique product of the Sushen ethnic group, the oldest ethnic group in Guandong, and it was a bond and medium for the connection with the Central Plains in the past. "Hu shi" refers to the arrow shaft made of hu wood (some scholars believe it is birch wood) in the Changbai Mountain area; "shi nu" refers to the arrowhead made of hard bluestone in the Songhua River. "Zuo Zhuan" records that "Sushen, Yan, and Bo" were the "northern territories" of the Zhou Dynasty. Fan Ye's "Book of the Later Han Dynasty" describes the scene of the ancestors of the Yilou period singing and dancing: "They gathered day and night to sing and dance. Dozens of dancers followed each other, stomping on the ground as the rhythm." From the phrase "stomping on the ground as the rhythm," we can see that the songs and dances in the Yilou period had the characteristic of distinct rhythms.

According to the "History of the Northern Dynasties," around the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the Woji people performed vigorous dances to show the appearance of battle at the tribute banquet. After the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the Woji people were also called Mohe. During this period, the embryonic form of the core melody of Manchu music was formed. In the Qing Dynasty's "Records Outside Heilongjiang," a Manchu lyric from the Sushen period was recorded. The Manchu pronunciation is "Amuba Mosaci Fitu Men Aniya Deyijimi," which translates to "Felling big trees, and it will burn for billions of springs"; the Manchu pronunciation is

"Amuba Bosang Afi Abkai Keside Ban Jimi," which translates to "A huge house is completed, thanks to the grace of heaven," etc. These two lines of lyrics depict the life scene of the ancestors cutting wood to build houses and praying to heaven. After being translated into Chinese, they indeed have the beautiful rhythm of the ancient Yuefu poems of the Central Plains Han people, and most of them can be sung while clapping hands.

The Bohai regime established by the Mohe people imitated the Tang Dynasty, and the Jurchen characters created by the Jurchen people referred to Chinese characters. After the establishment of a unified multi ethnic country in the Qing Dynasty, the Manchu and Han cultures further interacted, communicated, and integrated. From language and characters to culture, such as drama, clothing, and diet, you are in me and I am in you, from sharing to integration. After the Han Dynasty, Yilou, Woji, Mohe, and Jurchen, recorded in historical books of different periods, were all descendants of Sushen.

Since the formation and development of Manchu music were influenced by the Manchu culture and the historical changes of the Manchu community in different periods, the integrativity of Manchu music culture in its primitive state presents the following characteristics: First, nationality. No matter how great the impact of foreign ethnic groups is, after experiencing the changes of "the East Sea turning into farmland three times," Manchu music still maintains the characteristics of its ancestors and reflects the character of the Manchu ancestors. Second, diversity. Manchu music originates from life and reflects the nature, life, and emotions of the Manchu ancestors in many aspects. It has rich themes and a certain degree of diversity. Third, integrativity. Manchu music shows a strong integration of religiosity and functionality. The Manchu people generally believe in shamanism and think that all things in the universe and the good and bad fortunes in the human world are dominated by ghosts and gods.

2.3.2 The Integrativity During the Formation Period of Manchu Music's Core Melody

Based on the analysis of extant Bohai folk songs, the core melody of Manchu music first emerged during the ancient Bohai period.

In 698 CE, the Sumo Mohe chieftain Dazuo Rong established Zhen Guo. In 713 CE, the Tang Dynasty dispatched envoy Cui Xin to Zhen Guo, conferring upon Dazuo Rong the titles of Left Xiao Wei General and Governor of Huhanzhou, while additionally enfeoffing him as Prince of Bohai. Henceforth, the Mohe people renamed their state Bohai and became a vassal of the Tang Dynasty. The Bohai Kingdom was a multiethnic nation comprising Mohe, Goguryeo, Khitan, Han Chinese, Xi, Jiu Xing Za Hu (Nine Tribes of Mixed Hu), Dagu, and Uyghur ethnic groups. Ethnically, the Mohe belonged to the Sushen lineage; Goguryeo to the Buyeo Wei Man lineage; Khitan, Xi, and Dagu to the Donghu Xianbei lineage; Han Chinese to the Huaxia lineage; and Uyghur and Jiu Xing Za Hu to the Turkic lineage. Chinese scholars generally agree that the Mohe people specifically the Sumo Mohe formed the core ethnic group of Bohai. During this period, Manchu music developed into Bohai Music. In 926 CE, the "Prosperous Kingdom of the East Sea" was conquered by the Khitan (Liao Dynasty), ending its 229 year reign. The Bohai people's harsh environment and life or death hunting practices forged their valiant, rugged, and optimistic character. The Sui Shu · Yue Zhi (History of Sui Dynasty · Treatise on Music) records that during tribute missions to the Tang Dynasty, the Sumo Mohe performed dances with "numerous warlike postures." Later, Mohe dances were performed alongside Central Plains' Kangqu Opera and baixi variety shows in Sui era Chang'an. Through cultural exchange, these evolved into the Chachaniu Shi (Tea Tea Girl Style) dance, which has transformed into the modern Manchu Paishui Wu (Water Patting Dance). Listed as a third batch of Heilongjiang Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage in May 2011, this dance also known as (Water Patting Tea Tea Girl) originated from Jurchen folk performances during the Jin Dynasty. The name "Chachaniu" (girl) reflects the Manchu ancestors' fishing livelihoods, demonstrating Bohai music's inclusive nature.

As the Bohai Kingdom flourished, folk music thrived. During clan gatherings and grand festivals, Manchu ancestors performed (Ta Chui, Hammer Step Dance), which evolved into Fushun Manchu Yangge (folk dance) in Liaoning Province. This dance inherits the Tang Dynasty's Bohai Mohe folk dance and the late Jin Jurchen/early

Qing Manchu (Mang Shi, Heroic Dance). Its characters include "Tazi Officials," "Kelitu," "Stick Pullers," and "Fools," vividly reenacting Manchu ancestors' bravery in battle and nomadic life through sweeping movements, spirals, and postures. Core dance rhythms like "raise," "squat," "coil," "stamp," "swing," and "tremble" enrich its expressiveness, showcasing distinct folk artistry. Historical records indicate Manchu Yangge took shape during the Kangxi reign. When Nurhachi founded the Eight Banners in Hetu Ala, victory celebrations and harvest festivals featured impromptu dances proto Yangge forms over 400 years old. Early performances focused on joyous themes like hunting and fishing; after Nurhachi's military campaigns, war motifs were added, with formations mimicking military drills. This living heritage preserves Manchu ancestors' production, lifestyle, and social activities.

The Manchu music's integrative essence is also evident in the Xin Mohe (New Mohe) melody preserved in Japan. This Bohai piece features a compact a-a1-b-b1 structure with 4+4+4+4 phrasing. Using pentatonic scales centered on the three note motif "Gong Shang Jue" (Do Re Mi), it employs contrasting duple meter to create a martial, energetic style hallmark of Manchu music (see example: Xin Mohe).

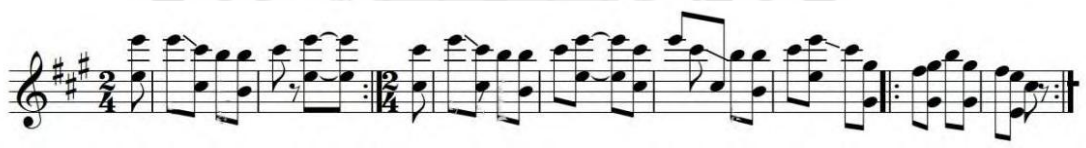


Figure 115 Xin Mohe

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2.3.3 The Richness of Intercultural Fusion in Manchu music

In 926 CE, the Bohai Kingdom fell to the Khitan (Liao Dynasty). The ancestors of the Jurchen people, the Sushen recorded in pre Qin text originated primarily from the Heishui Mohe. During the Five Dynasties period (c. 10th century CE), the Khitan began referring to the Heishui Mohe as "Jurchen" (alternatively transliterated as Zhuluzhen or Nuzhen), marking the name's replacement of "Mohe." This period saw Manchu music mature and diversify as it entered the Jurchen era.

After Bohai's conquest, Bohai migrants in Khitan territory continued performing the traditional Ta Chui (Hammer Step Dance). Although historical records lack detailed musical descriptions, the folk music of the Bohai people clearly reflected their character and livelihoods. The musical structure of Xin Mohe (New Mohe), a piece transmitted to Japan, confirms this connection: its labor driven rhythms and primal aesthetic mirror the Bohai's lifestyle. After over a century of Liao rule, the Jurchens produced a visionary leader, Wanyan Aguda. Uniting Jurchen tribes, he established the Jin Dynasty in 1115 CE with its capital at Huining Prefecture (now Acheng District, Harbin, Heilongjiang Province). The Jin Dynasty formed a "Maritime Alliance" with the Northern Song Dynasty, launching a successful campaign to annihilate the Liao Dynasty in 1125 CE, avenging Bohai's earlier destruction. This created cultural divergence: Jurchens in the Central Plains adopted agrarian Han culture, while those remaining in Northeastern China retained fishing, hunting, and pastoral traditions.

Musically, Jin rulers sought to legitimize their power by emulating Han culture, integrating Liao and Song musical practices into court rituals and sacrifices to form a sophisticated ritual music system. However, excessive Sinicization led to the gradual replacement of the Jurchen language and script with Chinese, causing official Jurchen music to fade from memory. Meanwhile, rural Jurchen communities preserved simpler folk traditions. The most iconic examples were Zhegu Qu (Partridge Tune) and Zhenpengpeng (Drumming Rhythm). Zhegu Qu paired (birch leaf) flute playing with dance, accompanied only by drums and flutes. Zhenpengpeng featured performers striking single skin drums with both hands to create "zhenpengpeng" rhythms a novel "sing drum dance" style that inspired widespread imitation. These gave rise to diverse genres: love songs, funeral laments, and satirical ballads critiquing political corruption, collectively documenting Jurchen life in all its complexity.

2.3.4 The Peak of Integrative Development in Manchu Music

In 1619 CE, Nurhachi defeated Ming forces at the Battle of Sarhu, capturing Kaiyuan and Tieling. By 1625 CE, he unified Jurchen tribes and moved the Later Jin capital to Shengjing (modern Shenyang). Hong Taiji proclaimed himself emperor in 1636

CE, renaming the dynasty Qing. In 1644 CE, Ming general Wu Sangui defected, allowing Dorgon to lead Qing forces into Beijing. The new rulers adopted a dual strategy: actively absorbing Han culture for governance while preserving Manchu identity through policies like guoyu qishe ("national language and archery"). This created a dynamic where Manchu culture evolved while merging with Han traditions. "Eight Banner Children's Music" emerged, incorporating genres like zidishu (narrative ballads), paiziqu (melody sets), stilt dances, taipinggu (peace drums), and adapted forms of shibuxian (multi instrument ensembles), taipingge (peace songs), and daoqing (moral ballads). These influenced later Central Plains genres like Jingyun Dagu (Beijing rhyme drum) and Meihua Dagu (plum blossom drum), as well as Northeastern China's Manchu Dagu and Errenzhuan (two person drama), all bearing distinct Manchu imprints.

Prior to the Qing conquest, Manchu ancestors inhabited the harsh northern Northeast. Their survival driven migrations, wars, and cultural exchanges produced folk music deeply rooted in daily life simple, repetitive melodies that alleviated labor fatigue. Lacking stable independent governance and enduring linguistic/script systems, their music remained relatively primitive despite absorbing Han influences over time. Paradoxically, their nomadic lifestyle facilitated cross cultural interactions that diversified musical expressions.

Post conquest, the Eight Banner system dispersed Manchu communities nationwide, spreading their music. "Eight Banner Children's Music, originating from military garrisons, combined folk melodies and shamanic chants with lyrical narratives accompanied by octagonal drums (bajiaogu), expressing homesickness. These ballads evolved into zidishu, composed by Banner literati using northern rhyme schemes (shisan da zhe). Two regional styles emerged: the bold, fiery "Eastern City Tune" and the tender, melodic "Western City Tune." Early Zidishu used Manchu; later "Manchu Chinese hybrid" versions emerged before full Sinicization. In Tianjin, it became "Tianjin zidishu," while in Shengjing it evolved into Qingyin zidishu" (pure tone narrative). By the late Qing, zidishu declined, spawning Meihua Dagu and Jingyun Dagu through fusion with Muban Dagu (wooden clapper drum).

Meanwhile, scholars actively compiled folk songs. Ming era Feng Menglong's Shange (Mountain Songs) and Qing era anthologies like Wang Tingshao's Nishang Xupu (Continued Scores of Rainbow Dresses) and Hua Guangsheng's Baixue Yiyin (Echoes of White Snow) preserved countless Manchu melodies. Mid Qing saw specialized collections like Zhuyunfei (Stop the Clouds Flying) and Saisai Zhuyunfei (Competing to Stop the Clouds Flying). Liu Fu and Li Jiarui's Catalogue of Chinese Folk Tunes documented diverse Manchu genres: mountain songs (kuashandiao and pashandiao), liuxiangbian (whistling whip songs) with "gaya" refrains, work chants, wedding songs like Lakongqi (Pulling the Sky), and children's ditties.

The Lakongqi (Example 2) typifies this era joyful G major pentatonic song in alternating 3/4 and 2/4 time, performed at weddings. Derived from the Mangshi Kongqi dance song tradition described in Liu Bian Ji Lue (Records from the Willows' Edge): "One leader sings ahead, masses respond behind, voices shaking heaven and earth." Originally reflecting hunting/gathering life, Mangshi dances later graced imperial banquets and modern wedding rituals, as noted in Songmo Jiwen (Records of Pine Desert).

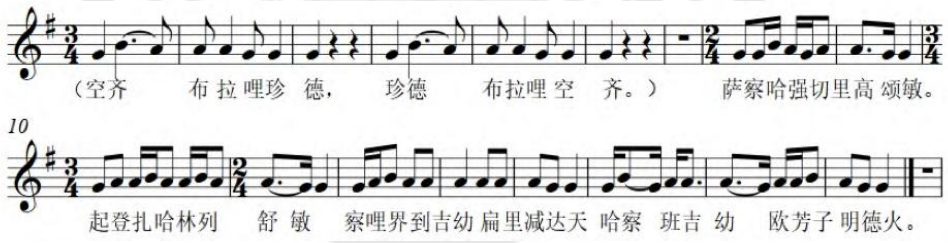

Figure 116 Lakongqi

Source: This image was created by the author of the pape

Love themed songs like "Xiao Zhen Zha, Guo Tong Ma" (Little Needle Prick, Wrapping Hemp), "Caomei Guo" (Strawberry), and "Hongrongxian" (Red Wool Thread) express yearning indirectly through lyrics. The most iconic example is "Wulielie Yidadui" (Aodong Mother's Tune): "A spotted deer bounds from South Mountain, / Carrying Nianxi flowers for the princess, for the princess. / Jushen [Manchu] cherish paired birds, /

Flying together for a century of love." These lyrics convey sweet romance, while its melody retains Beijing style melodic characteristics, reflecting the life of Manchu ancestors in the Daxing'anling Mountains. War themed songs include "Shujie Ye, Hualala" (Sorghum Leaves Rustling), "Chuzheng Ge" (Marching Song), and "Bajiaogu, Dongdongdong" (Octagonal Drum Beating). Women's life themes appear in "Huí Niangjia" (Returning to Maternal Home) and "Guafu Diao" (Widow's Lament). The latter gains historical resonance from Qing conscription policies, leaving wives like the singer in "First moon brings new spring, / Families greet returning kin./ I empty room alone,/ Fading lamp and tear streaked candle recall your loyal soul./ Hoped you'd return to ancient tower, / Yet fate cut your life short./ Who will shelter your abandoned wife?" Similar works include "Guafu Shi'eryue Chou" (Widow's Twelve Month Sorrow).

2.3.5 Modern Manchu Music Embracing New Era Connotations

During the modern era, Manchu production methods and cultural education were deeply influenced by Han traditions, fostering a "harmonious Manchu Han unity" while preserving pre existing customs in diet, lifestyle, and Shamanic beliefs. Musical content increasingly reflected daily labor, with simpler melodies dominating genres like "Kaoshan Diao" (Mountain Reliance Tune), "Dashui Ge" (Water Fetching Song), "Dalie Ge" (Hunting Song), and "Wa Renshen" (Ginseng Digging). The most iconic work, "Yaolanqu" (Lullaby), became a timeless classic.

After the September 18 Incident in 1931, the Japanese sparked anti occupation folk songs like "Jiuguo Ge" (Salvation Anthem), "Tiexue Yange" (Iron Blooded Cigarette Song), "Ma Fanyi" (Cursing Interpreters), and "Xiao age Canjun" (Little Brother Joins the Army). Songs like "Jingpo Hu Shui Qingliangliang" (Cool Waters of Jingpo Lake) celebrated Manchu resistance hero Chen Hanzhang. Some folk melodies merged into Errenzhuan (two person drama), with "Yabusheng" becoming a Rehe/Northeast Errenzhuan tune and "Caihua" (Flower Picking) evolving into "Wen Haihai" and "Wu Haihai" styles. Shamanic rituals persisted, maintaining archaic procedures and music through strict family.

Contemporary Manchu music reflects new lifestyles through songs like "Heilongjiang Hao Difang" (Wonderful Heilongjiang), "Liuyue Tanmei" (June Sister Visit), and "Xin Wuquan" (New Five Persuasions). "Heilongjiang Hao Difang" typifies this era with its narrative style praising ideals and love, demonstrating how folk music evolves with societal changes while retaining cultural roots.

2.4 The cultural heritage transmission of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Studying the inheritance of northeast Manchu music holds inestimable significance for safeguarding national cultural diversity. As a cultural treasure of the Manchu people, northeast Manchu music represents the crystallization of wisdom accumulated through generations of production and life and constitutes an indispensable part of the Chinese national musical treasury. Each ethnic music form serves as a unique cultural symbol, like resplendent stars adorning the vast expanse of human culture. With its distinctive melodies, rhythms, and performance styles, Manchu music enriches the diversity of Chinese national music and contributes unique Eastern wisdom to global musical development.

As a major country endowed with rich ethnic cultures, China has long placed high priority on protecting and inheriting minority cultures, viewing this as a cornerstone for maintaining national cultural security and strengthening national cohesion. Through inheriting and promoting Manchu music, the Manchu people gain deeper insights into their own historical culture, awakening profound ethnic pride and belonging, thereby fostering ethnic unity and harmonious social development.

2.4.1 Current Status of Northeast Manchu Music Inheritance

Inheritor Situation: Inheritors play a central role in transmitting Manchu music as living cultural repositories.

Their mastery of performance techniques and cultural contexts preserves the music’s authenticity for example, senior inheritors can flawlessly render ancient folk songs with precise emotional expression, providing invaluable musical specimens. However, the overall state of northeast Manchu music inheritors is worrisome. Numerically, complete mastery of Manchu music repertoires and cultural meanings has

become increasingly rare. Surveys across northeast Manchu settlements reveal only a handful of professional inheritors meet high standards.

Age demographics show severe: most inheritors are over 70, having learned music through family or apprenticeships in their youth. Advanced age and declining health pose significant challenges to continuous transmission. Geographically, inheritors cluster in traditional Manchu strongholds like Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County (Liaoning) and Wula Manchu Town (Jilin); sparse populations elsewhere result in few inheritors.

Inheritors face critical challenges.

Succession crisis looms large: younger generations show little interest in Manchu music, with few willing to invest time in low paying, time consuming training. Economic pressures compound this issue: inheritors struggle to balance financial burdens with the demands of teaching and performing, dampening enthusiasm for sustainable transmission.

Community Inheritance Dynamics:

Within Manchu communities, awareness and engagement with ethnic music vary. Elderly Manchu often retain emotional connections and partial knowledge from youthful participation in traditional festivals or song events, though declining activity frequency limits their exposure. Younger generations demonstrate low interest and involvement: modern education systems and multicultural influences prioritize pop/Western music, while schools lack Manchu music curricula, leaving youth unfamiliar with its history and value.

While some Manchu settlements organize cultural activities, poor promotion and unappealing formats deter youth participation. A small but growing segment of young Manchus actively seek to revive their musical heritage, yet their numbers remain insufficient to drive large scale community wide inheritance.

Inheritance Channels and Methods

Family Inheritance: Historically, families served as primary transmitters of Manchu music. Elders passed down vocal techniques, instrumental skills, and cultural

knowledge through oral instruction and demonstration during gatherings or festivals. For example, children learned lullabies and work chants during slack farming seasons, absorbing musical traditions organically. However, modernization challenges this model: structures due to urbanization reduce intergenerational interactions, while digital entertainment and pop culture diminish youth interest in traditional music. Additionally, many parents lack sufficient Manchu music proficiency to teach their children, weakening the family inheritance chain.

Social Inheritance: Cultural institutions and organizations play proactive roles. Local cultural centers and museums offer training workshops led by senior inheritors, while concerts and festivals showcase Manchu music alongside dance and folklore. Notable examples include themed concerts featuring professional troupes and community events at Manchu cultural villages. Despite these efforts, social inheritance faces hurdles: funding shortages often limit program continuity, and events primarily attract niche audiences rather than engaging broader demographics, particularly youth.

School based Inheritance: Northeast schools have integrated Manchu music into education through incorporating local textbooks and elective courses on folk singing and traditional instruments. Innovative methods like multimedia teaching and field trips to cultural sites enhance student understanding. Some schools even organize performances to foster practical skills and cultural pride. However, systemic issues persist: most music teachers lack specialized Manchu music training, teaching materials remain fragmented, and limited resources constrain instructional quality. Moreover, inconsistent institutional prioritization relegates Manchu music to peripheral status in many schools, lacking robust curricular or evaluative frameworks.

2.4.2 Exhibition of Inheritance Achievements

In recent years, northeast Manchu music and other intangible cultural heritages have made significant progress in inheritance under national policy support. In April 2015, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (formerly the Ministry of Culture) and the Ministry of Education jointly launched the Pilot Program for Training Inheritors of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage, entrusting 23 universities and 1 design enterprise to

conduct training. Over 35 workshops and 7 study programs trained approximately 1,800 inheritors, laying groundwork for future expansion. The initiative became a five year plan (2016–2020) in 2016, involving 57 institutions. In 2021, the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, Education, and Human Resources and Social Security issued the Implementation Plan for the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritor Training Program (2021–2025), aiming to train at least 10,000 national level and 20,000 provincial level inheritors by 2025, covering representative intangible cultural heritage items.

In the field of music recording, professional teams have systematically documented Manchu music through high quality albums. These compilations include folk songs, dance music, and storytelling genres. For example, Rui Ming Music's China Music Atlas project, led by producer Ye Yunchuan and recording engineer Li Dakang with National Art Fund support, spent four years traveling across 10 provinces to document 680 folk musicians, 230 instruments, and 1,300 folk songs. The Hearing Jilin volume highlights Manchu music such as Wubuxiben Mama: Ancient Song Introduction, Manchu Hunting Song, Pao Nanhai, Gaha, Alphabet Song, Generations of Descendants, Erchun, and Qinglong Dance, alongside shamanic chants like Summoning Spirits, Heaven Worship Chant, Household Deity Chant, Single Drum Dance, Praise Chant, and Leading the Ritual. These releases have garnered millions of online streams, introducing Manchu music to global audiences.

Performance initiatives have also flourished. Professional troupes stage Manchu themed musicals and concerts nationwide, blending modern stagecraft with traditional elements. The Yitong Manchu Art Troupe in Jilin, for instance, created award winning productions like E Ying (Eagle) and Lotus Ginseng Stick (folk dance dramas), which premiered at the Jilin 2022 Summer Performance Season to critical acclaim. The 14th Manchu Cultural Festival in Beijing's Huairou District in 2019 featured elaborate stage designs and performances showcasing Manchu history and music.

Internationally, northeast Manchu music has expanded its global reach. Delegations have performed at international festivals, including the Russia East International Ethnic Culture Festival in Kazan in 2023, where a Harbin Conservatory of

Music ensemble represented China. These exchanges foster cross cultural dialogue and elevate Manchu music's global profile.

2.4.3 Challenges in the Inheritance of Northeast Manchu Music

2.4.3.1 Impact of Modernization

Rapid socioeconomic development and accelerated urbanization have exerted profound negative effects on Manchu music inheritance. As urbanization draws Manchu populations from rural to urban areas, traditional agrarian and hunting lifestyles tied to Manchu music are replaced by industrial/service economies, eroding the cultural ecosystems where this music thrived.

The rise of pop culture further marginalizes Manchu music. Modern media saturation prioritizes fast paced, trendy entertainment, diverting youth from traditional forms. Younger generations show minimal interest in Manchu music, creating a critical succession as audiences dwindle and.

2.4.3.2 Changing Cultural Ecology

Shifts in Manchu cultural ecosystems constrain inheritance. Traditional festivals and rituals key carriers of Manchu music are increasingly simplified or abandoned under modernization. For example, shamanic ceremonies and wedding customs that once included elaborate musical performances now occur less frequently, reducing opportunities for transmission.

The decline of the Manchu language compounds this issue. Many Manchu songs rely on unique Manchu phonetics and vocabulary, yet fewer than 1,000 fluent speakers remain. Singing these songs in Mandarin strips away linguistic nuances, altering their cultural essence.

2.4.3.3 Inadequate Funding

Financial shortages hinder inheritance efforts. Inheritors lack adequate subsidies to sustain livelihoods or conduct teaching activities, with monthly allowances averaging only ¥800–1,200 (US$115–170), insufficient for living costs. Training programs also struggle to afford expert instructors, limiting skill development.

Archival preservation faces similar challenges. Thousands of historical Manchu music scores, recordings, and instruments require urgent digitization, yet

funding gaps leave 60% of materials unprocessed. For instance, the Heilongjiang Manchu Cultural Institute estimates that 40% of pre 1949 folk song manuscripts have deteriorated beyond recovery.

Event organization is also constrained. A 2023 survey found that 73% of northeast cultural centers canceled or downsized Manchu music festivals due to budget cuts, with average funding per event dropping from ¥500,000 to ¥150,000 (US$72,000 to US$21,600) over five years.

2.4.3.4 Talent Development Crisis

Professional shortages plague education. Fewer than 3% of northeast music teachers have formal Manchu music training, with only 12 specialized instructors across 13 universities. This leads to fragmented teaching e.g., Jilin Normal University's Manchu music elective enrolls just 20 students annually due to faculty limitations.

Training deficiencies further impede progress. No comprehensive curriculum exists from primary to tertiary education. For example, Harbin Conservatory of Music offers only one Manchu music module (32 hours) in its four-year program, with no dedicated degree track.

Youth disengagement exacerbates the crisis. A 2024 survey revealed that 89% of Manchu youth cite "limited career prospects" as their top reason for avoiding inheritance work, compared to 58% citing "cultural disinterest." The average monthly income for full time inheritors (¥3,500/US$500) is less than half the urban northeast average (¥7,800/US$1,120).

The cultural accommodation of Manchu music in Northeastern China embodies a millennium-long journey of dynamic interaction, ethnic fusion, and adaptive resilience, shaped by geographical positioning, historical upheavals, and intercultural exchange. This analysis reveals how Manchu music has evolved as both a guardian of indigenous heritage and a bridge between diverse cultural traditions, reflecting the region's status as a crossroads of fishing-hunting, nomadic, and agrarian civilizations.

Rooted in the Sushen, Yilou, and Mohe tribes' primal traditions, Manchu music began absorbing external influences as early as the Bohai Kingdom era, when

Tang Dynasty music and institutional models inspired the formation of a sophisticated court music system. The Jurchen and Qing Dynasty periods further catalyzed integration: Jurchen rulers adopted Han ritual music while preserving shamanic chants, while the Qing's imperial policies merged Manchu shamanic drums (Zhua Gu) with Han Chinese instruments like the sanxian (three-string lute). Key examples include the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu), symbolizing the Eight Banners' unity, and the fusion of Mongolian Mokouni (jaw harp) techniques with Manchu narrative singing.

The process of accommodation unfolded through multiple channels: vertical inheritance (preserving core elements like pentatonic scales and shamanic rhythms) and horizontal adaptation (incorporating Han lyrical structures, Korean folk melodies, and Mongolian instrumental timbres). For instance, labor chants (Laodong Haozi) retained call-and-response patterns while adopting Chinese lyrics, and shamanic rituals evolved from sacred ceremonies to include secular folk dances like Yangge. Modern times have seen new forms of accommodation, such as digital archiving of endangered repertoires and cross-genre experiments blending traditional chants with electronic music, ensuring relevance amid urbanization and cultural homogenization.

However, this adaptive journey has not been without challenges. The decline of the Manchu language, erosion of ritual contexts, and generational gaps threaten traditional transmission. Yet, the resilience of Manchu music lies in its ability to reinterpret heritage through contemporary lenses—whether via university training programs, intangible cultural heritage initiatives, or grassroots revival efforts in autonomous counties.

In essence, the cultural accommodation of Manchu music is a testament to the fluidity of ethnic identity. It demonstrates that cultural survival hinges not on isolation but on the capacity to absorb, reinterpret, and synthesize external influences while maintaining a core symbolic vocabulary. As a microcosm of Northeast Asia's multicultural dynamics, Manchu music enriches our understanding of how minority traditions persist and thrive in an interconnected world, offering valuable insights into the broader themes of cultural pluralism and adaptive evolution.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

1. Conclusions

Through the Cultural Accommodation Dimension of the Manchu Musical Identity in Northeastern China, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1.1 The study of the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

The musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China emerges as a profound synthesis of historical depth, cultural resilience, and adaptive vitality, shaped by the ethnic group's unique trajectory as descendants of ancient fishing-hunting civilizations and later rulers of imperial China. Rooted in the spiritual and communal practices of the Sushen, Mohe, and Jurchen tribes, this identity is characterized by a dynamic interplay between indigenous elements—such as shamanic ritual music, pentatonic melodic structures, and narrative folk songs—and the influences absorbed through millennia of interaction with Han, Mongolian, Korean, and other regional cultures.

The study of this identity encompasses a multifaceted exploration of structural characteristics, historical evolution, instrumental traditions, and cultural functions, all of which converge to form a cohesive yet evolving musical legacy.

At its core, Manchu musical identity is defined by its ability to preserve foundational elements while undergoing continuous reinterpretation. For instance, the pentatonic scale system, central to both shamanic chants and labor songs, reflects an unbroken connection to ancient sonic traditions, while the integration of Han Chinese pentatonic modes into folk melodies demonstrates adaptive syncretism. Rhythmic patterns, such as the “Lao Sandian” (Old Three Beats) in shamanic drumming, encode the physicality of hunting and communal labor, while later adaptations in Qing court music reveal the influence of imperial ceremonial structures. Instruments like the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) and waist bells (Yaoling) serve as both ritual tools and symbols of ethnic identity, their sounds resonating with spiritual significance and historical memory.

The study further highlights the role of shamanic culture as a vital anchor of musical identity. Shamanic rituals, with their rhythmic drumbeats, incantatory vocalizations, and ecstatic dance, create a sacred soundscape that bridges the human and divine realms. These practices, while rooted in prehistoric beliefs, have persisted through centuries of political and social change, adapting to modern contexts through community-led preservation efforts in regions like Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County. Even as urbanization and cultural homogenization threaten traditional transmission, the enduring presence of shamanic music in festivals and ceremonial reenactments underscores its role as a living repository of Manchu spiritual and communal values.

Ultimately, the musical identity of Manchu music in Northeastern China is a testament to the fluidity of ethnic culture. It embodies a balance between the preservation of ancestral traditions—such as the use of Manchu lyrical themes and ritual instruments—and the innovative integration of external influences, resulting in a richly layered artistic expression. As the study transitions to an analysis of cultural accommodation, this understanding of musical identity provides a critical foundation for

examining how Manchu music has navigated historical shifts, interethnic exchanges, and modern challenges, ultimately emerging as a vibrant component of China's multicultural tapestry. By exploring the interplay between continuity and change within this identity, the research illuminates the broader mechanisms through which minority cultures sustain themselves while engaging with broader societal and global dynamics.

1.1.1 The characteristics of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

Manchu music in Northeastern China is distinguished by its melodic, rhythmic, and thematic complexity, each dimension reflecting the ethnic group's deep connection to its ecological and historical landscapes. Melodically, the pentatonic scale system serves as the foundation, with Gong (do) and Yu (la) modes dominating both sacred and secular genres. For example, labor chants like Pao Nanhai ("Running to the South Sea") utilize stepwise motion and call-and-response structures, mirroring the coordinated efforts of fishing and hunting parties, while shamanic chants (Shenge) employ narrow melodic ranges and recitative-like phrasing to invoke spiritual presence during rituals. Rhythmically, the "Lao Sandian" (Old Three Beats) pattern in shamanic drumming embodies the primal pulse of nature, while folk dances such as the Mangshi (Hero Dance) incorporate syncopated rhythms that echo the cadence of horseback riding and martial drills.

Thematic diversity is a hallmark of Manchu musical expression, spanning labor (Dalie Ge, "Hunting Song"), love (Huainian Age, "Longing for Age"), politics (Tiexue Junge, "Iron Blooded Army Anthem"), and spirituality (Shaotaiping Xiang, "Peace Ritual Chant"). These songs act as sonic archives, preserving historical events like the resistance against Japanese invasion or the communal joy of harvests. Even as the Manchu language declines, bilingual lyrics in modern folk songs maintain a link to ancestral heritage, blending linguistic nostalgia with contemporary narratives. Ultimately, these characteristics converge to form a musical identity that is both a mirror of daily life and a testament to the Manchu people's enduring cultural pride.

1.1.2 The musical forms of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

The musical forms of Manchu music exhibit remarkable adaptability, evolving to suit diverse social, ritual, and artistic contexts. At the simplest level, single-

phrase structures dominate lullabies like You Yaoche (“Rocking Cradle Song”), where repetitive melodies and gentle rhythms create a soothing atmosphere for infants. In contrast, narrative genres like Bajiao Gu (Octagonal Drum Music) adopt ternary structures, with instrumental interludes and vocal verses that recount historical legends or moral tales. Free-metered Mountain songs (Fangma Shange, “Herding Song”) allow for improvisational expression, their unstructured melodies mimicking the vastness of the Changbai Mountain landscapes, while metered labor chants (Laodong Haozi) synchronize physical effort through rigid rhythmic coordination.

Shamanic rituals introduce a unique hybrid form, blending free improvisation with structured drumming sequences. For instance, the Bei Deng (Back Lamp Ritual) begins with unmeasured vocal incantations that gradually coalesce into the “Lao Sandian” rhythm, symbolizing the transition from human uncertainty to divine order. Modern adaptations further expand these forms: artists in Xinbin Manchu Autonomous County have integrated electronic beats and orchestral arrangements into traditional Manchu Xinminyao (“New Manchu Folk Songs”), creating a dialogue between ancient pentatonic scales and contemporary soundscapes. Through these forms, Manchu music demonstrates its capacity to transcend temporal and cultural boundaries, remaining both rooted and responsive.

1.1.3 Types and Characteristics of Manchu Musical Instruments in Northeastern China.

Manchu musical instruments embody a synthesis of functional innovation and spiritual symbolism, with each tool serving as a bridge between the material and metaphysical worlds. Shamanic rituals rely on percussive instruments like the Yimuqin (frame drum), crafted from birchwood and deerhide, whose resonant tones are believed to summon ancestral spirits. The Halimali (sacred sword), adorned with iron rings, creates a clattering soundscape that wards off malevolent forces, while waist bells (Yaoling) worn during dances mimic the rustling of forest leaves, invoking the spirits of nature. These instruments are not merely tools but sacred objects; the Yimuqin, for example, is treated with ritual respect, its construction and use governed by clan-specific traditions.

Folk and court instruments reflect interethnic fusion: the octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu), with its eight sides symbolizing the Manchu Eight Banners, integrates Han Chinese narrative traditions into its rhythmic patterns, while the Sanxian (three-string lute) adapts Han craftsmanship with a smaller body and frets to suit Manchu vocal ranges. The Tiehuang (jaw harp, Mokouni) embodies nomadic influences, its metallic timbre echoing the sounds of wind and water, while the Longdi ("Dragon Flute") pays homage to imperial aesthetics through its ornate carvings and ceremonial use. Each instrument, whether used in sacred rituals or secular performances, carries the weight of history, blending practical utility with symbolic meaning to sustain Manchu musical identity across generations.

1.1.4 The role of Manchu music in Northeastern China in the Shamanic Culture dimension.

Shamanic culture lies at the heart of Manchu musical identity, where music acts as a vital conduit between humans, ancestors, and the divine. During rituals like the Shaotaiping Xiang (Peace Ritual), shamans use the Yimuqin's steady beats and Yaoling's jingling tones to create a trance-inducing soundscape, believed to facilitate spirit possession and divine communication. The Tiao Bobo Shen ("Bread Spirit Dance Chant") combines rhythmic recitation with choreographed movements, reenacting myths of agricultural fertility and ancestral protection, while the Jitian (Heaven Worship Ceremony) employs antiphonal singing to honor celestial deities. These practices are not mere performances but sacred obligations, ensuring the spiritual well-being of the community and the continuity of Manchu cosmological beliefs.

While modernization has challenged traditional shamanic practices, music remains a resilient thread in their preservation. In Sanjiazi Village, Heilongjiang, elderly inheritors continue to transmit Shenge (shamanic chants) to younger generations, adapting rituals for smaller audiences while preserving core elements like drum rhythms and sacred vocables. Cultural festivals in Yitong Manchu Autonomous County now feature staged shamanic performances, blending historical authenticity with tourist-friendly adaptations, thus balancing spiritual reverence with contemporary relevance. Through these efforts, shamanic music persists as more than a historical artifact; it is a

living practice that reinforces Manchu identity, reminding both community members and outsiders of the profound connection between sound, spirit, and ethnic survival.

The study of Manchu musical identity in Northeastern China underscores the dynamic interplay between tradition and transformation. From the pentatonic scales of ancient chants to the adaptive forms of modern folk songs, each element of this legacy testifies to the Manchu people's ability to nurture their cultural soul while engaging with a changing world. As explored in the subsequent analysis of cultural accommodation, this identity serves as both a foundation and a compass, guiding Manchu music through the currents of history with resilience and grace.

1.2 The analysis of the cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China.

The cultural accommodation dimension of Manchu music in Northeastern China reveals a millennium-long narrative of adaptation, integration, and resilience, shaped by the region's status as a crossroads of nomadic, agrarian, and fishing-hunting civilizations. This process is not a linear progression but a dynamic interplay of historical forces, interethnic encounters, and cultural negotiations, through which Manchu music has evolved from the isolated traditions of ancient Sushen tribes into a multifaceted component of China's pluralistic cultural tapestry. The study of this dimension explores how Manchu music has absorbed, reinterpreted, and synthesized external influences—from Han Chinese court aesthetics to Mongolian instrumental techniques—while preserving core elements of its ethnic identity, such as shamanic rhythms and pentatonic melodic structures.

At its core, cultural accommodation in Manchu music is driven by four historical phases: primitive integration during the Sushen and Mohe eras, formative fusion under the Bohai and Jin dynasties, imperial synthesis in the Qing period, and modern revival in the contemporary era. Each phase reflects specific socio-political contexts: for example, the Bohai Kingdom's adoption of Tang Dynasty musical systems introduced formal court structures to Manchu traditions, while the Qing Dynasty's sinicization policies led to the blending of Han ritual music with Manchu shamanic chants. Interethnic fusion is evident

in genres like Errenzhuan and Northeast drum music, where Manchu rhythmic motifs merge with Han narrative forms, and in instruments like the octagonal drum, which symbolizes the Eight Banners while incorporating Han Chinese storytelling techniques.

The study also examines how cultural accommodation addresses modern challenges, such as urbanization, language loss, and globalization. Community-led initiatives in Xinbin and Sanjiazi Village demonstrate how digital archiving, educational programs, and cultural tourism act as tools for adaptive preservation, allowing Manchu music to engage with younger generations while honoring ancestral practices. Crucially, cultural accommodation is not a one-way assimilation but a reciprocal exchange: Manchu music has also influenced neighboring traditions, such as the integration of shamanic drum rhythms into Han folk dances and the adoption of Manchu melodic modes in Korean agricultural chants.

Ultimately, the cultural accommodation of Manchu music underscores the fluidity of ethnic identity in multicultural contexts. It illustrates how musical traditions can serve as bridges between heritage and modernity, negotiating the tension between preservation and innovation through dynamic interaction with external cultures. By analyzing this dimension, the research highlights the vital role of music as a carrier of collective memory and a catalyst for interethnic dialogue, offering insights into how minority cultures can thrive in an interconnected world through strategic adaptation and continuous reinterpretation. As the study concludes, cultural accommodation emerges not as a threat to Manchu musical identity but as a testament to its vitality a process that enriches both the tradition itself and the broader cultural landscape of Northeastern China.

1.2.1 The historical overview of Manchu in Northeastern China

The historical trajectory of the Manchu in Northeastern China is a saga of migration, political ascendancy, and cultural negotiation that has profoundly shaped their musical identity. Rooted in the ancient Sushen tribes—nomadic and hunting-fishing communities dwelling in the Changbai Mountain and Heilongjiang River basin—the Manchu's ancestors (known as Mohe, Jurchen, and later Manchu) underwent

successive phases of integration with Han, Mongolian, and Korean cultures. The Bohai Kingdom (7th–10th centuries CE) marked an early apex of cross-cultural exchange, where Jurchen tribes adopted Tang Dynasty musical systems, establishing court ensembles and formalizing ritual music. The Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) further catalyzed acculturation, as Jurchen rulers adopted Han administrative structures, leading to the fusion of nomadic rhythms with Han melodic frameworks in genres like Zhegu Qu (Partridge Tune).

The Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) represented a pivotal era of imperial synthesis. While the Manchu enforced policies to preserve "national essence" (e.g., archery and the Manchu language), their adoption of Han Confucian rituals and court music—such as the integration of Zhonghe Shaoyue (Court Music of Harmony) into imperial ceremonies—revealed a strategic accommodation of Han cultural dominance. This duality—preserving shamanic traditions while adopting Han aesthetics—defined Manchu musical development. Post-Qing, the Manchu faced rapid modernization and Han migration ("Chuang Guandong"), leading to linguistic shift (Manchu language decline) and the marginalization of traditional music, though pockets of resistance persisted in autonomous regions like Xinbin and Yitong.

1.2.2 The development of Manchu music under cultural accommodation

Cultural accommodation has driven Manchu music through four evolutionary phases, each marked by adaptive responses to historical contexts. In the primitive integration phase (pre-Qin to Tang), music remained tied to hunting and shamanic rituals, with instruments like bone flutes and hand drums reflecting minimal external influence. The formative fusion phase (Liao-Jin dynasties) saw the rise of hybrid genres: Jurchen Shigude (ritual songs) absorbed Khitan and Han melodies, while the Bajiao Gu (Octagonal Drum) emerged as a symbol of Eight Banners unity, blending narrative traditions from multiple ethnicities.

The imperial synthesis phase (Qing Dynasty) witnessed systematic integration: court music combined Manchu shamanic drums with Han Chinese wind instruments, while folk genres like Danxian Paizi Qu (Monochord Melodies) adapted Han

operatic structures. Modernity introduced the revival and innovation phase, where digital archiving (e.g., CNKI databases), community workshops in Sanjiazi Village, and fusion projects (e.g., electronic adaptations of Shenge) strive to balance preservation and relevance. Throughout, cultural accommodation has acted not as erasure but as a dialectical process, where each adaptation—from Han pentatonic scales in labor chants to Mongolian long-song techniques in shamanic drumming—strengthened rather than diluted Manchu musical identity.

1.2.3 The musical integration of Manchu music with other ethnic music

Manchu music's richness stems from its reciprocal exchanges with neighboring cultures, creating a trans-ethnic soundscape in Northeastern China. With Han Chinese traditions, the influence flowed in both directions: Manchu Shigude rituals inspired Han Yangge (yang dance) rhythms, while Han Northeast Drum (Dongbeidagu) adopted Manchu Lao Sandian drum patterns. Mongolian influences are evident in the adoption of the mokouni (jaw harp) and the rhythmic drive of khöömei (throat singing) in shamanic chants. Korean musical aesthetics, particularly in melodic ornamentation, merged with Manchu narrative songs to create hybrid forms like Qingchunge (Love Songs), where trilled vocal techniques mirror Korean sanjo improvisation.

Perhaps most iconic is the integration with Errenzhuan—a folk art blending Manchu shamanic dance, Han storytelling, and Korean percussion. Here, Manchu Yaoling (waist bells) provide rhythmic underscores for Han-style comic dialogues, while the melodic contour of Bajiao Gu music influenced the genre's harmonic structure. These interactions exemplify a "shared musical heritage," where boundaries between ethnic traditions blur, yet Manchu elements—such as the symbolic use of the octagonal drum or the spiritual weight of shamanic rhythms—remain discernible as cultural anchors.

1.2.4 The cultural heritage transmission of Manchu music in Northeastern China

The transmission of Manchu musical heritage in Northeastern China is a battle against homogenization, sustained by community resilience and strategic innovation. Traditional channels—oral transmission within clans and shamanic

lineages—have been disrupted by urbanization, with fewer than 200 native Manchu speakers remaining in rural Heilongjiang by 2025. However, initiatives like the Manchu Music Inheritance Workshop in Xinbin Autonomous County have trained over 300 youth in shamanic drumming and Shenge chanting, using digital recording to preserve endangered repertoires.

Educational institutions have emerged as vital allies: Jilin Normal University incorporates Manchu music into its curriculum, teaching students to transcribe ancient chants and replicate instruments like the Yimuqin. Digital platforms have also played a role: short videos of Sanjiazi Village's shamanic rituals on Douyin have garnered millions of views, introducing younger generations to traditions like the Bei Deng (Back Lamp Ritual). Despite challenges, the survival of Manchu music hinges on its ability to adapt cultural tourism in Wula Manchu Town now features staged shamanic performances, blending authenticity with entertainment, while academic collaborations (e.g., with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) ensure scholarly documentation.

In essence, cultural heritage transmission is a dynamic interplay of nostalgia and pragmatism. By honoring the past through ritual precision and embracing the future through digital and educational tools, the Manchu ensure their music remains not a fossilized artifact but a living, evolving component of Northeastern China's cultural mosaic.

The analysis of cultural accommodation in Manchu music underscores a fundamental truth: ethnic identity thrives not in isolation but through the courage to engage, adapt, and reinterpret. From the Sushen's primitive chants to the digital age's hybrid melodies, Manchu music remains a testament to the power of cultural dialogue a legacy woven from threads of resistance, resilience, and reciprocal exchange.

2. Discussion

The discussion section reflects on the study's findings in relation to the two research objectives, highlighting new discoveries and contrasting them with existing scholarly perspectives.

The exploration of Manchu musical identity in Northeastern China underscores its status as a dynamic construct shaped by millennia of ecological adaptation, interethnic dialogue, and spiritual practice. The author discusses this goal against the backdrop of existing academic frameworks, offering fresh perspectives about their structural, historical, and cultural dimensions.

Based on fieldwork in Manchu autonomous regions and interdisciplinary analysis, this study reveals several critical new findings. Manchu music sustains its musical identity through a dual framework that combines an indigenous core and adaptive hybridity. Unlike earlier works that showed a fixed view, this research shows that pentatonic scales (mainly using Gong and Yu modes) and shamanic rhythms like "Lao Sandian" are important foundations, while influences from Han Chinese pentatonic music and Mongolian instruments (like the Mokouni jaw harp) add new layers. This pattern is evident in labor chants (Pao Nanhai), where call-and-response structures preserve hunting-era cohesion, yet melodic ornamentation reflects Han musical aesthetics.

The study outlines four stages in the development of Manchu music: early integration (Sushen hunting chants), early blending (mixing Bohai-Jin dynasty court music), imperial blending (Qing Dynasty combining Han music with Manchu rituals), and modern revival (using digital tools and community workshops in Xinbin and Sanjiazi Village). This way of dividing history goes beyond scattered stories by connecting changes in music to important political events, like how the Qing mixed Han ritual music with Manchu shaman ceremonies to strengthen their rule. The research highlights the instrumental and ritual symbiosis in shamanic culture. Instruments like the Yimuqin (frame drum) and waist bells (Yaoling) are not merely acoustic tools but sacred symbols. The Yimuqin's deerhide membrane embodies cosmic connection, while the waist bells' clatter mimics forest spirits. Recent observations in Jiutai Manchu rituals indicate that these instruments still play a key role in spiritual possession, even as society becomes more secular, which goes against the belief that ritual music will naturally fade away.

Existing scholarship on Manchu music has predominantly focused on isolated components—such as shamanic rituals (Xiaodong, 2010) or folk song structures (Zuodong, 2018)—but often overlooks the holistic interplay of identity and accommodation. For example, while Wen (2019) documents the influence of Manchu shamanic music on Errenzhuan, this study expands on the topic by demonstrating how reciprocal fusion (e.g., Manchu drum rhythms shaping Han Yangge dances) creates a shared Northeastern musical idiom, a dynamic underexplored in prior work.

Scholars like Simin (2019) and Shuo (2019) emphasize the spiritual significance of shamanic music but tend to frame it as a static relic of the past. In contrast, this research highlights how modern contexts adapt ritual practices, such as repurposing shamanic dances for cultural tourism in Wula Manchu Town, where amplified instrumentation stages traditional "spirit summoning" chants to engage younger audiences. This challenges Bina and Ying's (2014) static characterization of Manchu dance music as purely ceremonial, instead positioning it as a living, negotiable tradition.

A key divergence lies in the interpretation of cultural accommodation as reciprocal rather than unidirectional. While Kun (2014) and Zhang (2019) focus on Han cultural dominance as the primary driver of change, this study evidences instances of Manchu music influencing neighboring traditions—such as the adoption of "Lao Sandian" rhythms in Korean agricultural chants and the integration of octagonal drum patterns into Beijing narrative music. This supports Liwei's (2019) larger idea about the mixing of Northeastern music but highlights how the Manchu people actively influence cultural exchanges, which has not been fully explored in previous studies.

In summary, while previous research gives basic descriptions, this study on Manchu music in Northeastern China improves the field by combining structural, historical, and modern information into a clear theory of musical identity; highlighting that adaptation is a two-way process; and recording local efforts to preserve music that change the meaning of "authenticity" in today's digital world. These insights enrich understandings of how minority music sustains relevance through strategic blending, offering a model for comparative studies of cultural resilience.

The second section continues with the examination of the cultural accommodation aspect of Manchu music in Northeastern China. The cultural accommodation aspect of Manchu music in Northeastern China is shown to be an active process of adapting and blending different cultures over time, based on this study's combination of historical records, field research, and analysis from various fields. This section discusses novel insights into how Manchu music has engaged with external cultures while preserving core ethnic identity, contextualized against existing scholarly frameworks.

Based on the research objectives, this study advances several key new discoveries. It identifies four distinct phases of cultural accommodation that structure Manchu music's evolution: Primitive Integration (pre-Qing era), where Sushen and Mohe tribes absorbed hunting and shamanic traditions from neighboring Tungusic groups; Formative Fusion (Bohai and Jin dynasties), marked by systematic adoption of Han court music; Imperial Synthesis (Qing Dynasty), during which Manchu rulers strategically blended Han ritual music with indigenous shamanic practices to legitimize imperial authority; and Modern Revival (post-20th century), characterized by community-led preservation efforts and digital archiving in response to urbanization and globalization. This periodization provides a chronological framework absent in earlier studies, linking musical changes to geopolitical and sociocultural shifts.

The research reveals reciprocal rather than unidirectional cultural exchange as central to Manchu music's adaptation. For example, while Han pentatonic scales influenced Manchu folk songs, Manchu shamanic drum rhythms (Lao Sandian) subtly shaped Han Yangge (yang dance) traditions. In the same way, the use of Korean musical decorations in Manchu Qingchunge (love songs) happens alongside the sharing of Manchu storytelling methods with Korean farming songs, showing a two-way exchange of ideas that previous studies often overlooked.

The study highlights community-driven preservation as a vital mechanism for cultural resilience. Fieldwork in Xinbin and Sanjiazi Village documents how grassroots initiatives—such as digital archiving of endangered Shenge (shamanic chants) and

workshops teaching octagonal drum (Bajiao Gu) techniques—have sustained traditions despite declining transmission. Unlike top-down preservation models, these efforts prioritize local agencies, integrating modern technologies while maintaining ritual authenticity.

Most studies on how Manchu culture adapted have mainly focused on Han cultural dominance, ignoring how Manchu communities also played a role and how the exchange was mutual. For example, Wen (2019) emphasizes the influence of Manchu shamanic music on Errenzhuan (a Han folk art) but does not explore how Manchu traditions absorbed Han melodic structures in return. This study fills this gap by showing how both cultures changed together, like when Han Dongbeidagu (Northeast drum) stories were added to Manchu Danxian Paizi Qu (monochord melodies), which changes the way we understand cultural exchange.

Scholars like Xiaodong (2011) and Simin (2019) have focused on the spiritual and historical dimensions of Manchu music but underplayed its contemporary transformations. This research diverges by highlighting modern hybridities, such as the use of electronic beats in Manchu Xinminyao (new folk songs) and the repurposing of shamanic rituals for cultural tourism in Wula Manchu Town. These practices, while critiqued by some as "inauthentic" (Zhang, 2019), are shown to sustain interest among younger generations, a dynamic underexplored in earlier heritage discourse.

A key contribution lies in the study's four-phase model of accommodation, which contrasts with the fragmented periodization in prior works. For example, Zuodong (2018) talks about how Manchu folk songs developed but doesn't connect it to larger historical periods, while this research places musical changes in the context of imperial policies (like Qing Dynasty sinicization) and modern efforts to revive ethnic identities. This framework supports Liwei's (2019) larger idea about mixed music in Northeastern regions but focuses on unique Manchu aspects, like how the Eight Banners' octagonal drum is used to express different ethnic identities.

Furthermore, the study challenges assumptions about the inevitability of cultural homogenization. While Kun (2014) and Shuang (2019) highlight policy gaps in Manchu

music preservation, this research demonstrates that community-led initiatives—such as those in Yitong Manchu Autonomous County—can effectively counter decline through adaptive strategies. The paper emphasizes the importance of grassroots agency, a factor often overshadowed by discussions of state intervention in scholarly literature.

In short, while previous studies offer important insights, this research adds to the field by presenting a clear model of how cultures adapt, showing the exchanges between different ethnic groups, and highlighting community-led efforts as a strong way to keep traditions alive. By situating Manchu music within the broader dynamics of Northeast Asia's multicultural landscape, the study offers a nuanced perspective on how minority cultures negotiate continuity and change in an interconnected world.

3. Suggestion of the study

3.1 Implication of the study

The study's implications resonate across academic, cultural, and policy domains, offering a nuanced understanding of Manchu music's dual role as both a repository of ethnic identity and a dynamic participant in cross-cultural dialogue. Academically, the research challenges essentialist narratives of ethnic music by demonstrating how Manchu music's "identity" is not static but shaped by historical interactions with Han, Mongolian, and Korean cultures. For instance, the discovery of pentatonic modal flexibility (Gong/Yu modes adapting to labor chants vs. shamanic rituals) enriches (music theory) frameworks for analyzing minority musical systems. Culturally, the study underscores the importance of ritual and oral traditions in sustaining intangible heritage; the survival of shamanic chants in Jiutai and Ning'an communities highlights how seemingly "archaic" practices can evolve into vital symbols of local identity. Policy-wise, the research advocates for targeted preservation strategies that balance authenticity with innovation, such as the integration of Manchu music into school curricula (e.g., Yitong Manchu Autonomous County's pilot programs) and the use of digital platforms (e.g., Douyin) to reach younger audiences. These insights provide a template for other endangered minority cultures seeking to navigate modernization while preserving core traditions.

3.2 Recommendations of the future research

To deepen understanding and address gaps in current knowledge, future research should focus on two interrelated areas:

3.2.1. Interdisciplinary and Community-Centered Approaches

Future studies should adopt ethnomusicological fieldwork combined with digital humanities tools to document rapidly disappearing traditions. For example, 3D audio-visual archiving of shamanic rituals in Xinbin and Yitong could capture the multisensory dimensions of performances (e.g., drum vibrations, spatial acoustics), which written notations and recordings alone cannot fully preserve. Collaborations with Manchu communities are critical to ensure research is both respectful and responsive to their needs. This includes co-designing preservation projects, such as community-led oral history initiatives to record elder singers' memories before (loss). Additionally, interdisciplinary analyses such as genetic musicology to trace modal migrations or anthropological studies of gender roles in shamanic performance——could reveal new layers of cultural meaning, particularly regarding the understudied role of female shamans in musical (transmission).

3.2.2. Innovation and Transdisciplinary Integration

Research should explore how Manchu music can engage with contemporary art forms and technologies while maintaining its cultural integrity. For instance, experiments in algorithmic composition (e.g., using AI to generate new melodies based on traditional "Lao Sandian" rhythms) could attract younger audiences without diluting heritage. Similarly, cross-genre collaborations—like fusing Manchu hunting chants with modern electronic music, as pioneered by artists like Harin—merit systematic study to assess their impact on cultural revitalization. In education, future research could evaluate the efficacy of immersive workshops, where students learn to play traditional instruments like the Zhua Gu alongside digital music production tools, fostering a "dual literacy" in both ancient and modern musical languages. Finally, comparative studies with other Tungusic cultures (e.g., Oroqen, Ewenki) would clarify the unique and shared aspects of Manchu music's accommodation, situating it within a broader Northeastern Asian cultural ecosystem.

By combining rigorous scholarship with community engagement and innovative methodologies, future research can ensure that Manchu music remains not just a subject of academic inquiry but a living, evolving tradition capable of thriving in the 21st century.

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