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Field Investigation and Research on the Musical Culture of the Mulao Ethnic Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village, Luocheng County, Guangxi

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The Yifan Festival is a traditional folk activity of the Mulao people, shaped by their rice-based agrarian civilization and religious beliefs. Music functions as an important bridge for the Mulao people to communicate both with one another and gods during the Yifan Festival. The musical culture of the Yifan Festival reflects the lifestyle and behavioral norms of the inhabitants of Shiwei Ancient Village at specific historical moments, while also embodying ethical principles and moral standards of the broader Chinese cultural tradition. These principles and standards are grounded in values of social harmony and collective unity having long shaped the social relations of the Mulao people in Shiwei Ancient Village. The musical culture of the Yifan Festival has undergone significant change with the ongoing development of society, driven by a range of various factors. In this context, the protection and transmission of the musical culture of the Yifan Festival require a multidimensional approach. Drawing primarily on fieldwork, supplemented by literature-based research, this article examines the relationship between musical culture and social harmony in the Mulao people's Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village, Luocheng County. It further analyzes the processes, of change affecting this musical tradition, as well as strategies for its protection and inheritance.

Keywords: ritual performance, inheritance and development.

Introduction

This paper examines the musical culture of the Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village. Shiwei Ancient Village was chosen as the research site because it is home to a concentrated Mulao population and remains relatively underdeveloped, conditions that have contributed to the intact preservation of the Yifan Festival musical culture. This study employs a mixed methodological approach, combining field research, questionnaires, collection of historical data, interviews, and other methods. The research yields two principal findings: first, the musical culture of the Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village constitutes a form of material cultural heritage whose protection and development represent an important responsibility of contemporary society. Second, the Yifan Festival plays a significant role in shaping social relations, contributing to social harmony to a measurable extent. Based on these findings, this paper argues that the Chinese government and relevant institutions should establish more institutional mechanisms and policies to support the protection and development of Yifan Festival culture in Shiwei Ancient Village.

Shiwei Ancient Village is located in the northwest of Dongmen Town, Luocheng Mulao Autonomous County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, four kilometers away from the county seat of Luocheng. In Luocheng County, villages and townships are organized around shared surnames, with residents of a given settlement often related by blood. Shiwei Ancient Village follows this pattern. The village is inhabited almost entirely by members of the Yin tribe. As a result, social connections among the Mulao residents are reinforced by strong clan-based and kinship ties. Among the Mulao people, this form of clan organization is known locally as "winter." It evolved over the course of the historical development of the Mulao people in Luocheng County and embodies a rich and longstanding clan culture. The structure of Mulao villages shows that a single village may contain multiple "winters," each with clearly defined boundaries, even with in the same settlement. Members of a given "winter"customarily build their residences in the same geographical area, while residential houses belonging to different "winters" are distinctly separated. Consequently, villages

are spatially divided into corresponding sections according to the number of "winters" and members of each clan group occupy its own corresponding section.[1]

Each "winter"organization among the Mulao people has a dongtou ("winter head"). This position is typically held by an elder of the clan organization who enjoys high prestige, demonstrates the capacity of handling internal affairs, and is recognized for fairness and impartiality. The *dongtou* is responsible for overseeing a wide range of clan affairs including sacrificial rituals, weddings and funerals, the formulation of clan rules, and the mediation of disputes. Each clan maintains a set of regulations for its members, most of which are formulated by the *dongtou*. These regulations generally fall into five categories. First,when land and property is to be sold, it must be offered first to clan members before consideration is given to outsiders. Second, in cases of conflict and dispute, parties are required to seek mediation from the clan chief, and only if the matter cannot be resolved internally may it be referred to the government. Third, arbitrary behavior and incest are strictly prohibited, and marriage between brothers and sisters of the same clan is forbidden. Fourth, when mediating conflicts and disputes, the *dongtou* is required to resolve disputes impartially and is prohibited from accepting bribes or engaging in favoritism. Fifth, theft and the harboring of bandits are expressly forbidden.The Mulao people have historically maintained order in both social production and everyday life through the authority of the *dongtou* and the binding force of these regulations. In cases of serious violations of laws and regulations, the *dongtou* usually convenes a public assembly of villagers to announce the judgement. The *dongtou* holds the final decision-making authority.[2] Once a ruling is issued, it must be observed by all members of the community, serving as a cautionary example for others.

1 Shuzhen Ning, "Development Status and Countermeasures of Sacrificial Music of the Mulao People's Yifan Festival," *Peony* (2022): 111–113.

2 Lian Lian, *Research on the Relationship between the Rice Festival and Social Harmony among the Mulao People in Luocheng, Guangxi* (Master's thesis, Guangxi Normal University, 2010), 23–25.

Overview of the musical culture of the Mulao Ethnic Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village

The state and corresponding cultural authorities attach great importance to the development of Yifan Festival musical culture, and in 2006, the Mulao Yifan Festival in Luocheng County was included in the first batch of China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage. On November 28, 2009, Luocheng County hosted its inaugural Yifan Cultural Festival. The Yifan Festival ceremony in Shiwei Ancient Village was suspended for several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resuming only in November 2022 after public health conditions improved. This study is informed by direct field investigation conducted during this period, supplemented by subsequent analysis of the Yifan Festival.

Shiwei Ancient Village hosts a rich array of festival practices, each reflecting distinct ethnic characteristics of the Mulao people, among which the Yifan Festival stands out as the most important and solemn ethnic cultural event. The festival developed on the basis of the feudal political system and .is mostly structured around themes of sacrifice, gratitude, and blessing. Its rituals are heavily influenced by the formal ancestral temple sacrificial system. Over time, the Yifan Festivahas become an important source of spiritual support for the Mulao people.

The principal purposes of the Yifan Festival are:

1. To mourn and honor the deceased;
2. To pray to the gods for the expulsion of evil spirits and the prevention of disasters;
3. To celebrate the harvest;
4. To make petitions for the birth of children;
5. To pray for the longevity of the elderly;
6. To pray for the safety of people and livestock in the village;
7. To foster joy and spiritual well-being;
8. To promote communication and social bonds among people.

The musical activities of the Yifan Festival serve as a symbolic bridge, connecting heaven and earth, gods and humans, and individuals within the community. This function has made the Yifan Festival avital

carrier of spiritual support, a role recognized by the ancestors of the Mulao people and maintained to the present day. Accordingly,the Yifan Festival continues to be one of the most important cultural and religious events for the Mulao people of Shiwei Ancient Village. The Mulao of Shiwei Ancient Village belong to the Zhuang-Dong language group. Historically, the Mulao did not develop a written language of their own and thus could not record their customs and cultural practices in indigenous script. Contemporary records about the Mulao people and their Yifan Festival musical culture are preserved in Chinese characters. Most of these records come from clan genealogy of the Mulao people. For example, one record notes: "The distant ancestor Yan Zheng moved from central Fujian to the north of Yue in the Ming Dynasty. He founded Yang on the outskirts of the country and named it Xie Village... [He] started a business and established a family. He supported the two emperors of Liang and Wu and accumulated permanent fields. Every year during the Qingming Festival, sacrifices are held. The predecessors agreed on the regulations. At the end of February in the last year of Chenchou, the assembly will go to Wu Yifan." This evidence suggests that the Mulao people of Luocheng County have been observing the Yifan Festival for at least five centuries. Over time, the festival has become an important part of Mulao traditional culture, giving rise to distinctive intangible cultural practices associated with the Yifan Festival.

The Yifan Festival is both a collective ritual activity within the ethnic group and an occasion for clan members to gather according to established cycles. While the specific timing of the Yifan Festival varies by region and clan surname, it is generally celebrated around the beginning of winter, corresponding to the twenty-fourth solar term of the lunar calendar. Scheduling the festival during this period avoids conflicts with the busy period of agricultural production and labor. In Shiwei Ancient Village, the Yifan Festival is traditionally held after the beginning of winter in the years of Hai, Mao, and Wei in the fourth winter.

Prior to each Yifan Festival, the *dongtou* selects an auspicious date for the event and designates the host responsible for organizing the ceremony. In Shiwei Ancient Village, preparation for the festival is conducted on a

"winter"basis, with all expenses for the ceremony raised collectively from each household. The *dongtou* uses the funds raised not only to purchase supplies for decorating the clan ancestral hall but also to remunerate the master who presides over the performances.[3]

The musical culture of the Yifan Festival ceremony manifests in three principal forms. The first is the chanting and singing performed by the master, which is rich in content and has a storyline. The audience can participate in the ritual through singing, either in solo or chorus form, interacting with the master and thereby enlivening the atmosphere of the ceremony through dialogue with songs. This is also the easiest way for the audience to participate in the ceremony. The second form consists of instrumental performances by the master. A audience participation in instrumental music performances is limited, as the instruments used in the Yifan Festival,such as horns, drums, gongs, cymbals, or other types of instruments require specialized skills.These instruments are performed primarily by the master to fulfill the ritual requirements of the ceremony.[4] The third form is the performance of martial arts movements, which can be understood as a form of ritual dance. During the ceremony, the master dons the distinctive Taoist robes of the Meishan sect disciples and wields ritual weapons while performing martial arts sequences. The combination of the master's Taoist robes, chanting, and instrumental music serves to heighten the atmosphere of the entire ceremony, infusing the festival with color, energy, and a sense of joy.

During fieldwork conducted in Shiwei Ancient Village, Luocheng County, Guangxi in November 2022, the author recorded the musical ceremony of the Yifan Festival on site. The complete ceremonial sequence observed is as follows:

The first step of the ceremony is the "installation of the altar and invitation of the saints," during which the gods are formally invited to the ceremonial site. The master prepares thirty-six sheets of red paper in advance, each inscribed with the names of the gods to be invoked. The number thirty-six serves as a conventional standard, though each sheet may list multiple gods, sharing similar attributes or experiences. The master's association

3 Tong Yujia and Wang Kuizheng, "Analysis on the Cultural Connotation of Mulao People's 'Yifan Festival,'" *Journal of Wuhan Textile University* (2012): 80–82.

4 Wang Zhiliang, "A Brief Analysis of the Historical Reasons for the Formation of the 'Yifan Festival' Ceremony," *Voice of the Yellow River* (2011): 78–79.

strictly stipulates both the content of the chanted scriptures and the order in which the thirty-six gods are invoked.

As a result, the godsare invited to the ceremony sequentially, at the invitation of the master. During this stage, twelve kinds of sacrificial offerings prepared by the Shang people are offered. These include tea leaves, ginger, pepper, sesame, black beans, star anise, peanuts, dried vermicelli, citrus, mung beans, soybeans, and sugarcane. These offerings were sourced by the Mulao people of Shiwei Ancient Village from the 2022 harvest and are intended as symbolic nourishment for the thirty-six gods once they arrived at the site. This portion of the ritual places great emphasis on respect for the gods.[5]

The second stage is the "lighting of the sacrifice," or "ordering of the offerings," which constitutes the formal presentation of food to the gods after inviting them to the site. At the ceremony, thirty-six roosters, contributed by the participating households, were brought to the site. The master selected one of them for sacrifice, and its internal organs were placed on the altar as food for the various gods. The rooster holds special symbolic significance for the Mulao, representing a highly respected form of offering. The act of the gods consuming the rooster is equivalent to receiving the prayers of the Mulao people, conferring blessings of health, familial happiness, agricultural abundance, and protection from disasters.[6] Through this ritual, the Mulao people believe that their wishes can be realized.

The third stage of the ceremony is the "persuasion of the saints," a ritual act of worship. At this stage, additional offerings are presented to the thirty-six gods, including wine, chicken, duck, and various pork products—such as blood, belly, loin, head, heart, tail, intestines, lungs, and other cuts—prepared for consumption by the deities. Through chanting and singing, the master conveyed the Mulao people's respect, expressing their sincerity and enthusiasm, and ensuring that the gods feel honored and welcomed at the ceremony.

The fourth stage of the ceremony is known as the "singing the gods," or, alternatively, "dancing the gods." This segment lasts for an extended

5 Xie Meilin, "Field Investigation of Taoist Sacrificial Music during the Mulao Ethnic Festival," *Journal of Inner Mongolia University of the Arts* (2020): 45–47.

6 Li Xiangyang, "The Modern Significance and Value Transformation of Traditional Festival Customs and Culture in the Central Plains," *Zhongzhou Academic Journal* (2022): 83–86.

period and is the centerpiece of the Yifan Festival ceremony. During the performance, the master sequentially dons masks representing different gods, chants and sings the relevant scriptures according to the life stories of each god, and performs ritualized dances. For example, when reciting and singing the White Horse Girl's scripture, the master wore her mask, held a ceremonial gun, and danced with another master while singing: "At the banquet to send blessings, the White Horse Girl comes again..."

The fifth stage of the ceremony is *Tuanbing*, which can be translated as "joining forces."[7]

During this stage, the master bites open the comb of a rooster, pouring the blood into a cup containing wine. This mixture is then sprinkled over models of cows, pigs, and other animals made from sweet potatoes, while the remaining blood wine is distributed to the audience, who take symbolic sips to demonstrate solidarity [Fig. 1]. This ritual further emphasizes the totemic significance of the rooster in Mulao culture. The rooster



1. The Mulao Yifan master and people prepared food for the Yifan Festival, November 2022, digital photo by Xie Meilin

Mulao „Yifan" ritualų meistras su žmonėmis paruošė maistą festivaliui „Yifan", 2022 m. lapkritis, Xie Meilin skaitmeninė nuotrauka

7 Xie Meilin, "Research on the Music of the Folk Activities of the Mulao Ethnic Festival in Luocheng County, Guangxi," *Journal of Sichuan University of Arts and Sciences* (2020): 154–160.

serves as a family totem, representing the spirit and wisdom of the ancestors, the inheritance and continuation of the family, and the harmony between man and nature.

The sixth and final stage of the ceremony is the "sending off the deities," or "sending Liang Jiu away." In this concluding ritual of the Yifan Festival, the main gift is presented to Liang Jiu. The master carries a bamboo pole with a rooster tied to it and a jug of wine in his hand, singing: "When my father and I became high officials, we had aprosperous household. I have ten barns of grain." Following the singing, the villagers set off firecrackers, formally concluding the Yifan Festival ceremony.

I. The musical culture of the Mulao Ethnic Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village and harmonious social development

The Yifan Festival is an important carrier of Mulao clan culture in Shiwei Ancient Village. Through its music and ritual, the festival functions not only to preserve religious beliefs and worship gods but also to enhance national cohesion. The musical content of the Yifan Festival promote cultural continuity and social discipline among clan members. It plays a vital role in consolidating clan solidarity and promoting social harmony and stability.

The Yifan Festival embodies the spirit of harmony characteristic of traditional Chinese culture and has fostered values of harmonious coexistence, unity, and friendship within the Mulao people.

(1) Social integration function—promoting social stability and order.

Morality and law are two important ways for regulating social order and promoting the harmonious development of society. Morality originates from the social consensus of daily life, forming a system of public order and customary conduct that mainly relies on the self-discipline of community members themselves. Religious belief represents a powerful means for strengthening such self-discipline, while clan structures serve as an equally effective way for social regulation. Historically, Chinese society has commonly employed both faith and clan disciplineto strengthen moral

conduct, thereby contributing significantly to social stability and harmonious development.

Among the Mulao people, the beliefs associated with the Yifan Festival serve to encourage adherence to social laws to achieve certain legal effects, forming a potential binding force to achieve harmony in society and interpersonal relationships. Observations from Shiwei Ancient Village indicate that the moral principles embedded in the Yifan Festival closely resemble traditional ethical and moral norms, with their ultimate aim being the maintenance of social harmony and stability. By integrating social disciplines into their religious practice, the Mulao people promote moral norms and spiritual standards within the clan. Faith and clan-based regulation thus function as tools of moral reinforcement, thereby achieving social cohesion more efficiently than formal legal enforcement. The gods venerated in the musical culture of the Yifan Festival are carefully selected for their virtuous qualities or ability to maintain unity and safeguard the community. Based on their historical experience, the Mulao people choose gods with exemplary moral character as objects of worship, seeking their continued blessings for the ethnic group. The sincerity of the Mulao people's faith translates directly into into self-restraint, which is more efficient than ordinary didactic instruction.

During the Yifan Festival, Mulao people return from diverse locations to reaffirm awareness of kinship ties and to gather in the practice of shared traditional customs and values. This collective participation strengthens the unity of the clan, reinforces the connection between clans and relatives, and facilitates interpersonal communication.Such interaction reduces the sense of estrangement that can result from geographic dispersion, narrows social distances, and helps to maintain both the stability and development within the clan. By fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among clan members, the festival contributes to more harmonious interpersonal relationships and promotes the stability and development of local social structures.

(2) Moral education function—promoting integrity and social cohesion.

As a ceremonial festival, the Yifan Festival embodies important moral enlightenment functions. Its rituals express gratitude toward gods and ancestors, while also providing guidance for future generations regarding both production and daily life. The festival emphasizes virtues such as integrity, diligence, respect for the elderly, love for the virtuous, and moral persuasion, thereby shaping the character of younger generations. Unlike the Han people, whose moral education has historically been formalized through Confucianism, the Mulao have not developed systematic cultural or metaphysical methods of moral instruction. For the Mulao people in Shiwei Ancient Village, the beliefs and rituals of the Yifan Festival serve as a primary vehicle to carry out moral education.

The Mulao people rely heavily on the power of faith to educate members of their community, using religious belief as the cornerstone for a system of ethical restraints and moral norms. From childhood, traditional Mulao people are immersed in faith, listening to stories associated with the gods. These narratives are closely intertwined with moral norms and ethical restraints of the Mulao people, shaping the community's understanding of proper conduct. Rather than teaching their children to cultivate moral behavior directly, the Mulao prefer to educate their youth through the mediation of gods and religious storytelling. Within these narratives, moral behavior is reinforced by the implied authority of the gods: virtuous behavior is rewarded, while transgression is punished. In this context, fear of unknown punishment encourages adherence to moral standards and cultivates virtuous character.

Before encountering formal systems of knowledge and academic instruction, the Mulao were morally educated through the chanting and singing of gods during the Yifan Festival. The gods served both as the objects of sincere prayer and as exemplars of ethical behavior. Rituals conveyed moral standards and ethical methods in a form that was both engaging and easily accepted by ordinary members, allowing ethical lessons to be widely disseminated and internalized. The Yifan Songbook is the most important textual medium for moral education within the Mulao community. It attaches great importance to narrative coherence and authenticity,

presenting events objectively and truthfully while retaining their appeal. The religious songs contained in the text mostly focus on moral education, addressing virtues such as gratitude, integrity, and unity. Musical performances mainly revolve around the stories of the thirty-six gods venerated by the Mulao, praising their noble qualities and virtuous actions. The narratives convey moral education, illustrating the rewards of good deeds and the punishment for evil deeds the importance of harmony and mutual assistance, and the value of honesty and friendliness. Through chanting and song during the solemn occasion of Yifan Festival, the Mulao subtly instill moral concepts and ethical standards.

The content of these religious narratives both venerates the gods and provides exemplary models for moral conduct within the Mulao community. For example, in the chanting of the *Three Patriarchs*, the text conveys practical and ethical guidance:

> *The ancestors from above, middle and below come to say goodbye, and return to their old home in the tomb.*
> *I went back to the hall to get tea and wine, and stood in front of the hall to give instructions to my brother.*
> *You need to be diligent and thrifty in plowing the fields, and your granary will be filled with sesame seeds and mung beans.*
> *Do not neglect paying taxes or preparing food, and do not engage in toleration of wrongdoing.*
> *Do not commit evil deeds and steal. Those who do will forfeit their wealth.*
> *Do not be lazy but strive diligently morning and evening.*
> *The gate of Kobe is guarded in front of the Wei gate, and the evil spirits dare not provoke it.*

From this scripture chanted by the master, it is evident that the ancestors of the Mulao people used the reverence for forebears to educate future generations in the authoritative tone of the family ancestors. In agricultural production, individuals were expected to pay taxes honestly, work diligently, and practice thrift, while avoiding immoral behavior such as

adultery. Only by cultivating good intentions, demonstrating diligence, and obeying the law could individuals receive the blessings of the gods, ensure a successful harvest, and secure a prosperous future. Within the libretto of the ceremony, the master conveyed the principle that "peace is the most precious," presenting it as the voice of the gods. This approach constituted a highly effective form of moral education, as listeners were inclined to accept divine advice willingly. Therefore, both the ritual proceedings of the Yifan Festival and the communal banquet that follows are conducted within the conceptual framework of harmony, fostering emotional connection among participants and facilitating the resolution of interpersonal conflicts [Fig. 2].



2. Totem of the Mulao people, November 2022, digital photo by Xie Meilin

Mulao etninės grupės totemas, 2022 m. lapkritis, Xie Meilin skaitmeninė nuotrauka

The moral norms and ethical concepts embedded in the Mulao Yifan beliefs exert a strong binding effect over the entire community, shaping individual behavior of the Mulao people. Under this system of moral education, interpersonal conflicts are reduced, social relations are more harmonious, and social order is stabilized. The recurring ritual emphasis on the moral principle that good and evil will be duly rewarded is deeply internalized: many Mulao consciously avoid wrongdoing and strive to act virtuously, believing that the gods are ever-present and capable of dispensing karma, thereby seeking divine favor and averting misfortune. The Mulao

people's rice-based sacrificial ceremony, as a form of primitive religious moral education, differs fundamentally from secular methods of ethical instruction found in families, schools, and society at large. To a certain extent, their effectiveness lies in people's ideological and moral education through the authoritative force of ancestral and divine voices, which require participants to adhere to established moral standards.It contributes to raising the overall ethical level within Mulao communities and fosters a social atmosphere characterized by virtue, sincerity, mutual aid, and harmonious coexistence.

The changes in the musical culture of the Mulao people's Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village and its multi-dimensional protection and inheritance

(1) Current status of the musical and cultural development of the Mulao Ethnic Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village.

Since the implementation of China's reform and opening up policies, the nation's economy and cultural landscape have undergone significant transformation. Shiwei Ancient Village, which historically suffered from geographic isolation and relatively underdeveloped economy, has experienced substantial development in step with the broader national context. This modernization, along with increased exposure to external cultural influences, has led to the exchange and integration of the Mulao people's traditional culture with national and foreign elements.

Consequently, the thoughts and behaviors of the Mulao community in Shiwei Ancient Village have been affected by the development of contemporary society. Over time, this influence has gradually diminished the Mulao people's reliance on the Yifan Festival as a central cultural and spiritual practice. The traditional cultural thinking of the Mulao people, once firmly rooted in the Yifan Festival, has been increasingly challenged by the imperatives of scientific development, advanced production methods, and broader social engagement. The once mysterious aura surrounding Yifan Festival music culture has been demystified through scientific understanding and national development.

Over time, the Yifan Festival musical and cultural elements have gradually developed into contemporary forms of entertainment for the Mulao people. Today, theYifan Festival is staged as a performance, which has led to substantial divergence from the original ceremony. The ritual performances are frequently abbreviated, with their content arbitrarily omitted and the festival has become a tool for promoting tourism in Shiwei Ancient Village.

The music of the Yifan Festival follows a fixed structure of lyrics and music, yet its traditional aesthetics differs markedly from contemporary tastes, making it difficult to engage modern audiences. Traditional Yifan Festival music is selected and performed according to the ceremonial requirements of the festival,mainly based on folk songs with Chinese characteristics. Its lyrics and musical structure are relatively simple, with a strong narrative quality, and the music has a long history with distinctive melodic features. However, the cultural environment of contemporary youth differs significantly from that of traditional Mulao society. Influenced by pop, electronic, and global music trends, younger generations often find it difficult to appreciate music with stronger national characteristics embedded in Yifan Festival music, and they rarely engage with the deeper meanings contained within it. The young generation's participation in the Yifan Festival tends to be oriented toward entertainment and communal celebration rather than sacrificial observances and folk activities, limiting their exposure to national culture and its ethical dimensions. Moreover, the performance of the sacrificial music of the Yifan Festival requires a high degree of ethnic singing skill and long-term professional training. As young people are not very receptive to ethnic music culture, the lack of individuals willing to study in this musical tradition, both inside and outside the Mulao ethnic group, has created a significant gap in cultural transmission. As a result, the continuity of Yifan Festival music faces serious challenges. At present, only a small number of masters are qualified to perform the rice-based ritual in Shiwei Ancient Village, while other masters increasingly face obstacles that prevent them from performing the full ritual due to various factors.

(2) Transmission of the musical culture of the Mulao people's Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village.

The primary mode of transmitting Yifan Festival music culture among the Mulao people in Shiwei Ancient Village is oral transmission and practical demonstration. This method is characterized by the absence of fixed texts, allowing for considerable flexibility. Oral transmission occurs mainly within the boundaries of master apprentice relationships and among blood relatives, and can be divided into two forms: master-apprentice inheritance and bloodline inheritance.

In master-apprentice inheritance, senior practitioners recruit apprentices through the Yifan Festival Master Association, traditionally selecting only male apprentices. The master teaches the apprentice the full repertoire of singing, instrumental performance, and martial arts skills through oral instruction and personal demonstration. The apprenticeship continues until the apprentice is fully proficient and capable of performing independently. During the apprenticeship period, the master charges a fee to cover tuition and training costs. Bloodline inheritance, by contrast, involves the master selecting suitable male members from within the family or clan and teaching them performance skills. Instruction between blood relatives is also conducted orally and through direct demonstration, but no fees are charged. To a certain extent, this form of transmission serves both to educate the next generation of family members and to ensure the continuity of knowledge within the family lineage.

(3) Measures for the protection and inheritance of the musical culture of the Mulao people's Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village.

The transformations in the music and culture of the Mulao Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village reflect the inevitable influence of modernization. At the same time, the protection and transmission of this heritage is a responsibility of the present era, as the festival represents an invaluable component of traditional Chinese culture. Safeguarding it honors the legacy of ancestors. The music and rituals of the Yifan Festival are a concentrated expression of the Mulao heritage in Shiwei Ancient Village. It is also emblematic of broader patterns of intangible cultural heritage in China, surviving tenaciously within the rapidly developing modern society. Given these pressures, proactive strategies are required to ensure its vitality. These strategies include the following:

1.Establish a heritage station

The establishment of a heritage station is essential not only for the protection and transmission of the intangible music culture of the Yifan Festival but also for creating a systematic protection mechanism. Intangible cultural heritage is embedded within the broader context of folk culture and cannot be preserved in isolation.

To ensure the comprehensive protection of the Yifan Festival musical culture in Shiwei Ancient Village, the heritage station should address multiple elements. These include the ceremonial costumes of Taoist teachers, the evolution and symbolism of the thirty-six masks, the rooster totem culture, and other festival related practices such as the Walking Festival, Hua Po Festival, and the March 3rd Festival. Implementing protective and development measures for these cultural expressions will ensure that the musical culture of the Mulao people in Shiwei Ancient Village remains integrated within its original cultural ecosystem.[8] Systematic protection of the festival and its associated practices is crucial for maintaining the authenticity and vitality of the Mulao intangible cultural heritage.

2. Strengthen inheritance and development teams centered on practitioners.

The Taoist teacher occupies a central role in the transmission of Yifan Festival music culture. To support and motivate these practitioners, state authorities or relevant cultural organizations should combine formal recognition of inheritors with specific project-based subsidies, enabling teachers to experience the economic benefits associated with their role as Yifan Festival cultural inheritors in unobtrusive ways. By providing both economic benefits and social honor, the role of the master can become more attractive, encouraging the participation of new members in the inheritance team. Enhancing the status of these inheritors will ensure that no aspect of the intangible cultural heritage of the Yifan Festival is lost. With proper support, more individuals will be willing to become masters. This approach will not only safeguard the Yifan Festival music culture but also allow it to evolve and flourish, enriching the festival's legacy for future generations.[9]

8 Huang Chaofeng, "The Social Education Inheritance of Mulao Culture," *Ethnic Forum* (2014): 106–108.

9 Yang Kaoliang, "The Cultural Connotation of Traditional Folk Festivals and Their Value in Moral Education," *Vicissitudes of Life* (2007): 114–116.

3. Education and publicity of the music and culture of the Yifan Festival in Shiwei Ancient Village.

Education and publicity are essential strategies for promoting intangible cultural heritage and preventing its discontinuity or extinction. Education, as a subtle process, allows younger generations to understand and internalize the cultural legacy of their ancestors from an early age. Incorporating the Yifan Festival music culture into formal education—particularly colleges and universities—can further promote the intangible cultural heritage of the Mulao people while enhancing the national cultural awareness of modern students. This approach not only fosters a sense of shared community within the Chinese nation but also strengthens the foundations of national unity.[10]

Conclusion

The music culture of the Yifan Festival has evolved into a distinctive feature of the Mulao ethnic group over the long course of its history in Shiwei Ancient Village. It represents a cultural inheritance left by the ancestors of this group, encompassing profound historical, cultural, and social significance. The musical culture of the Mulao ethnic group in Shiwei Ancient Village has traditionally relied on the power of religious belief to educate the community, guide adherence to moral standards and ethical norms, promote self-restraint, and reduce interpersonal and inter-clan conflicts and contradictions. Through these mechanisms, the Yifan Festival contributes to the stability and harmony of social relations, strengthens mutual understanding and cooperation, and promotes the broader social cohesion in the Mulao ethnic area of Shiwei Ancient Village.

As a medium of emotion and cultural exchange, Yifan Festival music serves as a link between the emotions and cultural heritage of the Mulao people, fostering a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging. The festival also enhances external recognition and appreciation of Mulao ethnic culture, reinforcing both ethnic confidence and pride. The inheritance of the Yifan Festival music and culture is therefore significant not only for preserving tradition and history but also for sustaining social cohesion,

10 Zhang Yanmin and Xie Weiwei, "Research on the Moral Enlightenment Thought and Function of the Mulao People's Yifan Festival," *Ethnic Education Research* (2019): 94–99.

identity, and social harmony, enriching community values and cultural diversity, supporting economic development, and enhancing the physical and mental well-being of the Mulao people. Protecting and transmitting this musical heritage is thus critical for maintaining ethnic characteristics and diversity of Mulao society, fostering cultural prosperity and development.

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Santrauka

Mulao etninės grupės rengiamo festivalio „Yifan“ Guangsi provincijos Luočeng apygardos Šivei senoviniame kaime muzikinės kultūros tyrimas ir studijos

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Reikšminiai žodžiai: ritualinis atlikimas, paveldas, vystymasis.

Senoviniame akmeninėmis sienomis aptvertame Mulao etninės grupės kaimelyje rengiamo festivalio „Yifan“ unikali muzikinė kultūra išsivystė per ilgą istorinį laikotarpį. Tai šios etninės grupės protėvių paliktas lobis, turintis gilų istorinį ir kultūrinį pagrindą bei socialinę reikšmę. Senovinio Mulao kaimo festivalio „Yifan“ muzikinė kultūra padeda šviesti visuomenę, atskleisdama religinių tradicijų galią, skatina žmones laikytis moralės standartų ir etikos normų, didina savitvardą ir mažina konfliktus bei prieštaravimus tarp individų ir atskirų etninės grupės klanų. Tai padeda sukurti stabilesnius, darnesnius ir ilgalaikiškesnius socialinius santykius bei tvarką, stiprina tarpusavio supratimą bei bendradarbiavimą ir skatina socialinę harmoniją ir vystymąsi senovinio Mulao kaimo regione.

Festivalio „Yifan“ muzika padeda žmonėms išreikšti ir keistis emocijomis, apjungia Mulao žmonių jausmus bei kultūros paveldą ir leidžia jiems pajusti savo kultūrinę tapatybę bei priklausymo bendruomenei jausmą. Šio festivalio muzikinė kultūra ne tik didina išorinį Mulao kultūros pripažinimą ir vertinimą, bet ir stiprina Mulao etninės grupės kultūrinį pasitikėjimą bei tautinį pasididžiavimą. Festivalio muzikinės kultūros perdavimas svarbus ne tik kaip tradicijų ir istorijos išsaugojimas, bet ir kaip teigiamas poveikis Mulao bendruomenės sanglaudai, tapatybei, socialinei harmonijai, vertybių sampratai, kultūros įvairovei, ekonominei gerovei ir individualiai fizinei bei psichinei sveikatai. Todėl jo muzikinės kultūros apsauga ir perdavimas padeda išlaikyti nacionalinius ypatumus ir įvairovę, skatina kultūrinį klestėjimą ir vystymąsi.