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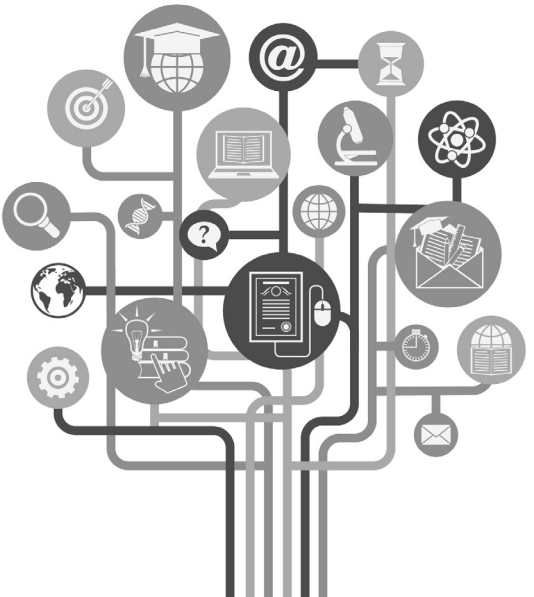

Investigation into Flower Drum Performance in Nanshan Mountain, Jing'an County, Jiangxi Province, China

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Abstract

Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance is a unique local folk art form in Jing'an County, Yichun City, Jiangxi Province, China, which was selected into the fourth batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage list in 2013. Aiming at its historical origin, artistic characteristics, and the current insufficiencies in its ritual structure, this article makes an analysis through field investigation, and draws a conclusion that the relatively closed geographical location, population migration, folk beliefs and clothing with local characteristics are the main reasons why Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance exerts a far-reaching effect locally.

Keywords : Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance; Human Geography; Historical Origin; Ritual Structure; Artistic Features

Introduction

Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum is also known as the flower drum lantern. It is mainly made by Hakka people in Nanshan Natural Village, Chazishan Town, Jing'an County, Yichun City, Jiangxi Province, China during the Spring Festival. The Flower Drum Performance is an influential folk activity, to express gratitude to God for his blessings in the past and the coming year, which mainly consists of Offering Flowers,singing lantern

songs, and playing flower drums.Offering Flowers is part of the Flower Drum Performance. Its main include four flowerpots, two carts,and four flower baskets. These flowerpots are made of paper; each of them was lifted by a girl to symbolize the four seasons. Each cart was originally seated by a child inside and now by a doll inside and pushed by an adult. Each two of the flower baskets were put on a pole and shouldered by an adult. The performance formation is changing, including five types, X, Cross, Front and Behind, Left and Right, Point. It is understood that in the past, this custom is distributed in Luowan, Zhongyuan, Zaodu and other places on the upper part of Jing'an Mountain,Jing'an is a mountainous area, which is divided into the upper part and the lower part. There are mainly townships such as Zhongyuan, Luowan, Zaodu, Sanzhualun, Shuikou and Baofeng. The lower part mainly includes townships such as Shuangxi, Leigongjian, Xiangtian, Renshou, Shuikou and Gaohu.but only the Nanshan Village of Zaodu keeps the most complete form; therefore, when Jing'an County declared it as an intangible cultural heritage, it was named "Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance" and was selected into the fourth batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage list in 2013. Judging from the existing relevant materials, there are relatively few research contents are related to Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance. The main books are Huang Jianmin (2014) and Yang Lixian (2017). The former one is based on the study of inherited population history, which covers a historical anthropological investigation of the music culture in western Jiangxi Province, China and records the detailed inheritance genealogy of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance(Huang Jianmin, 2014). The latter one elaborates on the history and culture of Nanshan Village and records the performance form of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum and part of the music of gongs and drums(Yang Lixian, 2017).

The Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum previously studied is partial. For example, previous studies have roughly recorded the performance process, but have not systematically sorted out its ritual structure. What is the process and ritual structure of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum in the first month of a year? What is its living environment? What kind of historical development has it experienced? What are the artistic features like? Only by clarifying these issues, can we understand why Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum exerts such a far-reaching influence among the people, have a deeper understanding of it and make up for the insufficiencies of the existing research. Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze on the basis of field investigation.

Human Geography

Jing'an County is located in the northwest of Jiangxi Province, north of Yichun city. Affiliated to Chazishan Village of Zaodu Town, Nanshan Village is a little-known small mountain village in Jing'an County. It consists of four groups of villagers, its location remote and surrounded by mountains.

For hundreds of years, ancestors of various surnames have come to Nanshan Village. There were mainly two relatively large population migrations. The Qing Dynasty was the first migration peak. Yang, Chen, He and other surnames migrated from Guangdong, Fujian and other places. The second migration was after the founding of New China; surnames such as Zhou, Jiang and Peng successively moved in. With the change of population, there are 13 surnames including He, Yang, and Chen of Nanshan villagers(Yang Lixian, 2017).

It is evident that the living environment of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum is relatively closed and the population comes from all over the country, which has created a certain foundation for the formation and development of Nanshan Huagu.

Historical Origin

The author collected the relevant historical data of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum by consulting relevant documents, visiting inheritors and local cultural centers. The existing historical conclusions of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum mainly have two points. Firstly, it is believed that the singing form of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum is derived from the one Hakka people absorbed from Fengyang Flower Drum; secondly, it is believed that Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum evolves from Fengyang flower drum brought by Anhui people(Huang Jianmin, 2014).These two conclusions are related to the fact that most of the villagers in Nanshan village are Hakka people and that in the early years Anhui people suffered from famine, and the refugees went begging and settled down in Jing'an.

According to these two points, the local people believe that the Jing'an Nanshan flower drum and the Fengyang flower drum have a certain historical origin.

Ritual structure

Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance is a influential folk custom held by Hakka people in Nanshan Natural Village during the Spring Festival. Its main content is Offering Flowers, singing Flower Lamp songs, and playing flower drums to thank God for blessing the peace throughout the year and praying for a good harvest in the coming year. Roughly, there are several procedures such as worshiping the *Prince*, giving New Year's greetings on the street, letting the lanterns go off and so on. The author has gone to the local area many times to conduct field investigations and, through the memories of some old artists, have sorted out the text of the folk custom. The main procedures are as follows:

Table 1 : The custom structure of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance

Time	Ceremony Activity	Location	Ceremony Music	Notes
From the 1st to the 5th day of the first lunar month	Worship the Prince , hold lantern show	In the village	none	Either day is selected
From the day of the lantern show to the evening of the 15th day of the first lunar month	giving New Year's greetings on the street	In the village and out	Beating Gong and Drum on the street- Beating gong and drum while entering the door- singing Flower Lamp songs followed by a set rhythm through beating Gong and Drum- Singing Flower Lamp songs- Beating Flower-Drum Gong and Drum - Singing Flower Lamp songs - Beating Gong and Drum while going out of the door	The leader and the actors jointly formulate the route
In the middle of the night on the 15th day of the first lunar month	Letting the lanterns go off	In the village	Beating Gong and Drum on the street	A place near the water is chosen

"It is said that Prince Zhu Xian is the son of an emperor of the Ming Dynasty. He is a Bodhisattva in Nanshan who protects the border and the people. The scope of his blessing is: up to Longtou, down to Huangshakeng, east to Xiaoxiao Jialong, Turtle Stone, Maodongli, and Nanshan Au and Baishui Cave in the north. Originally, Zhuxian Prince Hall was built at Nanshan Shuikou, but it was later destroyed. In the 1990s, a small brick hall was rebuilt on the original site by

a conscientious person, with a depth of 1 meter , 1 meter wide, about 2 meters high, no Bodhisattva is placed. Every year, the Spring Festival Lantern Festival is held here to worship, and the golden body is rebuilt after being destroyed, but it is not fixed. On the day of the Spring Festival, people in the territory will worship in front of the Bodhisattva, thank him for his blessings over the past year and pray to the Bodhisattva for blessing the health of the people, the prosperity of the six animals, and the peace in the world. In the past, some people would prepare sacrifices to worship in front of the Bodhisattva after slaughtering pigs or piglets." It can be seen that the Prince is respectful and have great influence in the hearts of the villagers (Yang Lixian,2017). According to He Chengzai, the inheritor of Nanshan Flower Drum, the local villagers usually call the Prince Master. Whether it is sad or happy in the village, they will ask for Master. The process also includes a tone of accusation but after the worship Master is to bless you with a smooth end.

He Chengzai, the inheritor, introduced that every year after the lanterns are lit, New Year's greetings on the street are held unless there are special weather reasons. The lantern show usually lasts from about 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.The lantern show extends from the village to the other or vice versa. The specific order of watching lanterns is also negotiated by the leader and the actors. Through field investigation, the author has collected the situation of Nanshan Flower Drum lantern show held in various places in the first month of 2012. This route was provided by Jing'an County Cultural Center:

Table 2 : The situation of Nanshan flower drum lanterns traveling to various places in the first month of 2012

Time	Location	Cast
On the fourth day of Chinese New Year	40 households in 4 villager groups in Nanshan, Hejia'ao, Shangnan, Longtou and Dahechang	Leader: Yang Likui Participants:More than 50 people every night. A total of more than 370 households.
On the sixth day	50 households in 3 groups of Wanhua Lishan and Xiadian	
On the seventh day	more than 80 households in Zaodu Street	
On the eighth day	government officials and their families of Zaodu town, totally 100 households	
On the ninth day	more than 30 households in the Nanbian Village Group, more than 70 households in the Cenxia Village Group and Qianjin Village Group	
On the eleventh day	a performance for the film crew of Nanshan County Cultural Bureau	

The above-mentioned lantern-watching route in the first month starts from Nanshan Village, and about 40-100 households give New Year's greetings every day. Through several field investigations, the author recorded in detail the ritual procedures and music and dance structure of each household, as shown in the following table:

Table 3 : The ritual procedures of New Year's greetings and Music and Dance Structure of EachHousehold

Procedures / Music and Dance	New Year's greetings	cheers	The band aboard the stage	Offering Flowers	Singing Flower Lamp songs	Playing Flower Drum	Singing Flower Lamp songs	Exit
music	none	Beating gong and drum on the street	Beating gong and drum while entering the door	none	Singing Flower Lamp songs followed by a set rhythm throughbeat-ing Gong and Drum , perform December Flowers, Pick Tea and so on	Beating Flower-Drum gong and drum and reading monologue in a drama tune	Singing Flower Lamp songs followed by a set rhythm through beating Gong and Drum, perform Nanjing Drum Suzhou Gong and New Year and so on	Beating gong and drum while going out of the door
Dance movements	none	none	none	Holding flower pots, shouldering flower baskets, pushing carts, etc.		rhino watching the moon, etc.	swing	none
dance formation	none	none	none	X type, cross type, point type, Front and back type, left and right type		none	none	none

The gongs and drums of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum mainly include beating gongs and drums on the road, beating gongs and drums while entering the door, beating gongs and drums while going out, playing the gongs and drums of the flower drums, singing Flower Lamp songs followed by a set rhythm through beating Gong and Drum. The gongs and drums for entering and going out include "Old Three Picks, New Three Picks, Liang Zijian, Chang Liushui", and so on. singing Flower Lamp songs followed by a set rhythm through beating Gong and Drum include "single mallet,eyebrow-painting bird jumping frame, Liangzi, double seven stars, big door", etc; playing Flower-Drum gongs and drums include "Full House" and "Waves Head".

The main performances of male and female performers include rhinos watching the moon, crows drying their wings, harriers turning over, snowflakes covering the roof, carp kissing, arhat showing belly, yellow dragon entanglement, cutting onions on the spot, driving chickens into habitat, yellow dog rotating in the kennel, winnowing and treading on rice. There are more than 10 prescribed dance movements, and each movement performance has to run 4 doors, that is, the four directions of east, west, north and west. Now usually limited by the performance time of each household, only 1-2 actions can be performed to end the performance.

During the performance of Offering Flowers and singing Flower-Lamp songs, the common formation is recorded by the author as follows(see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Figure 1 : X type
Image source: the author's notes

Figure 2 : Cross type
Image source: the author's notes

Figure3 : Front and Back type
Image source: the author's notes

Figure4 : Left and Right type
Image source : the author's notes

Figure5 : Point type
Image source: the author's notes

Artistic Features of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance

In recent years, Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance has continued to develop with the support and efforts of the government and its inheritors. The author has visited the provincial inheritor He Chengzai, the county cultural center worker Wang Yanhong and the main performers of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance. According to the existing documents and collected related field data, the artistic characteristics of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum are investigated and sorted out to a certain extent.

Composition of musical instruments

According to the classification method of Hornbostel and Sachs' musical instruments, the instruments used in Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum can be summarized as the following table:

Table 4 : The musical instrument classification of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance

No.	Category	Musical Instrument
1	Idiophone	Bass Gong (Brass Gong)
		Small Gong (Bowl Gong)
		Medium Brass Gong (Ma Gong zi)
		Cymbal
		Daguzi
		Jizi
2	Membranophone	Flat Drum
3	Chordophone	Erh-hu
4	Aerophone	Bamboo Flute, Suona

Bass Gong, also known locally as Brass Gong, has a diameter of 36cm. When played, it is struck with a drum stick covered with cotton cloth (see Figure 6).

Image6 : Bass Gong
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image7 : Medium Brass Gong
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Medium Brass Gong, also known locally as Ma Gongzi, has a diameter of 23cm. When played, it is struck with a thin wooden board (see Figure 7).

Small Gong, also known locally as Bowl Gong, has a diameter of 17cm. When played, it is struck with wooden sticks of different thicknesses at both ends (see Figure 8).

Image8 : Small Gong
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image9 : Cymbal
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Cymbal has a surface diameter of 20cm, a bowl diameter of 10cm, and a bowl depth of 4cm (See Figure 9).

Daguzi, a drum made of bamboo, the diameter of the drum surface is 18cm. It is played upside down in a bowl-shape, and the structure is hollow. It is stood up by three wooden sticks to 68cm high, and tied with Jizi for application. The three wooden sticks are connected by 20cm and 14 cm sticks in the middle, setting up a triangular space, placing the drum in the middle. When played, it plays the role of conductor, singing, dancing and percussion following its rhythm (See Figure 10).

Jizi, 14cm long and 4.5cm wide, is a rectangular shape as a whole, with an arc-shaped part at the lower end of 9.8cm in length and a hollow horizontal strip at the upper end of 8cm in length. It is connected with Daguzi(See Figure 11) .

Flat Drum, the drum body is flat and round, the drum frame is made of wood, the two sides are covered with sheepskin or cowhide, the leather edge is fixed with drum nails, and an iron drum ring is placed on each side of the drum body, tied with a red cloth rope, and the exterior is painted red. The drum surface is 20cm in diameter and 12cm in height. When playing, percuss with both hands, hang it on your body or place it in front of you (see Figure 12).

Bamboo Flute, made of natural bamboo material, has one blow hole, one membrane hole and six sound holes. Suona is composed of five parts: whistle, air card, intruder, rod and bowl. The timbre is high-pitched and loud, with softness in the rigidity and vice versa.

To sum up, the musical instruments used in Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance have very folk characteristics and are typical representatives of local folk art forms. The entire performance team is composed of 20-30 people, and the band consists of about 10 people, mainly percussion instruments, supplemented by wind instruments and stringed instruments, as shown in the following table:

Image10 : Daguzi
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

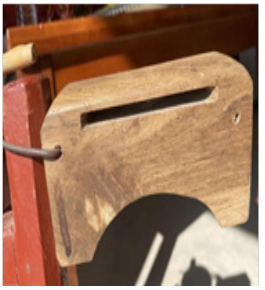

Image11 : Jizi
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image12 : Flat Drum
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Table 5 : The staffing of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Band

Types	Instruments	Number of performers	Notes
Percussion	Bass Gong	1	Essential
	Medium Brass Gong	1	Essential
	Small Gong	1	Essential
	Jizi	1	Essential
	Cymbal	1	Essential
	Daguzi	1	Essential
	Flat Drum	1	Essential
Wind	Bamboo Flute	1	Essential
	Suona	1	Essential
String	Erh-hu	1	As appropriate

Props composition

There are many performance props used in Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum, mostly lanterns, mainly bright colors and rich colors, as shown in the table below.

Table 6 : The props of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance

NO.	Props	Quantity	Color	Notes
1	The Flower Drum Lantern	1	Mainly red, yellow, blue and green	Colored
2	The Flower Whip	1	Mainly purple blue and white	Colored
3	The Flowerpot	4	Mainly red, yellow and blue	Colored
4	The Card lantern	2	Mainly red and yellow	Colored
5	The Lantern	2	Mainly red and yellow	Colored
6	The Cart	2	Mainly red and yellow	Colored
7	The Flower Basket	4	Mainly red and yellow	Colored
8	Others, such as:oil candles, firecrackers, various colored Chinese words used in the invitation cards and congratulation letters			

The Flower Drum Lantern, symbolizing the drum, is placed horizontally, with small ends and a large middle, with candles lit inside. The length is 65cm, the width 30cm; the frame is made of bamboo, and the colored thin cloth is pasted on the outside of the frame. There is a wooden board at the bottom for lighting the candle(See Figure 13).

Image13 : The Flower Drum Lantern
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image14 : The Flower Whip
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

The Flower Whip, 54cm long, is a wooden stick wrapped around by colored bright paper-cut tassels. There are two in total, which symbolize the flower drum and drumstick(See Figure 14).

Image15 : The Flowerpot Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

The Flowerpot, 27cm high, 37cm wide, with paper paste, is a hand-held type, with a shape of 6 squares and 6 corners, a diameter of about 25 cm, carved and decorated with colored paper. Candles are lit inside, and a bunch of paper flowers are tied in each pot, in place of spring peony, summer lotus, autumn chrysanthemum, winter plum. There are flower tassels hanging on the top hexagonal. The flower tassels are made of four colors to make flower patterns and are 23cm long, with red and yellow ribbon tail tassels on the bottom. The lantern cuboid is equipped with a variety of color paper blessings, all written with a brush. In addition, the lantern body also has paper-cut craftsmanship (See Figure 15).

The Card lantern, in the shape of a five-pointed star, is made of paper and paste, 61cm long, 50cm wide, with a 110cm-long wooden stick below, wrapped around a red cloth with a length of 77cm, and fixed with nails. There are two in total, each with the words Nanshan and Flower Drum written with a brush. (See Figure 16)

Image16 : The Card lantern
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image17 : The Lantern
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

The Lantern, is 44cm long, 26cm wide, 11cm in diameter at the top and bottom, with 9cm-long yellow tassels on the mouth. Wooden sticks are used to pick the lantern. Each stick is 75cm long; there are two in total(See Figure 17).

The Cart is 132cm long, 102cm wide, and 30cm wide. The front cover is covered with red paper-cut tissue, with 18cm tassels hanging on the front, and the body is wrapped in 78cm-long thin yellow cloth(See Figure 18).

The Flower Basket is 62cm high, 40cm wide. Its body is 33cm long and bottom is 23cm long. A pole is used to pick it up. The pole is 133cm long, and wrapped with red cloth(See Figure 19).

Image18 : The Cart
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Image19 : The Flower Basket
Photo time: 29th November 2021
The location:NanShan Village

Costume

The costumes of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum Performance have strong local characteristics, distinct features of the times and full local flavor. The inheritor introduced: "In the beginning, the costumes were worn because of the age. The current costumes have undergone major innovations, mainly focusing on purchasing costumes. After several adjustments before and after, the band members are mainly dressed in red, with red headscarves. Those who hold card lanterns, carry lanterns and push carts are mainly dressed in yellow. Those who carry flowerpots are mainly dressed in pink and sky blue. The princesses of Flower Drum mainly wear dark clothes, usually black, with bamboo woven hats on their heads, with fans and handkerchiefs in hand. Flower Drum females wear bright-colored clothes, usually rose-red or sky blue, and hold flower drum lanterns and flower whips. There are more than 20 pieces of headdress, headscarves, folding fans, handkerchiefs, etc."

The author thinks that the costume change in Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum is related to the change of times. With the development of economy, the costumes for performances are becoming more and more abundant. Under this situation, Huagu in Nanshan Of Jing 'an is quietly changing.

Summary

In response to the problems raised above and through the specific analysis, the following four reasons having an influence on Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum are obtained. Firstly, With the development of the times, nowadays transportation has become more convenient, and more and more foreign cultures are pouring into people's lives. But the geographical location in the remote mountainous area makes Nanshan Village less affected by foreign cultures, and the inherent culture has been better preserved. Secondly, population migration forms a fixed ethnic environment in the local area, and then the common language, common customs, and common region all make the accompanying culture obtain great cultural identity in the ethnic group. Thirdly, folk music has always contained a certain degree of belief in its history. This element is fully reflected in the rich ritual music structure of Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum, which makes the Flower Drum have a strong mass base. For example, the worship of The Prince in the Flower Drum Performance is the embodiment of faith elements in the ritual music structure.Fourthly, the folk musical instruments, performance props and costumes used in it have full local characteristics and are highly representative. Based on the above reasons, Jing'an Nanshan flower drums retain more traditional art forms.

A detailed field investigation on Jing'an Nanshan Flower Drum has been completed. This detailed textual sorting is of great significance for the study of the development of the Han culture in the Central Plains of China and the Han culture in the South, as well as the melody and dance characteristics of Chinese Han folk music.

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