

Research Trends in the Historical Traditions of Yoching

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Abstract: The yoching (yangqin—in Chinese) is a percussion-stringed musical instrument, which is one of the musical instruments that has been handed down across continents, with about 150 stringed and trapezoidal shapes from an ancient stringed instrument. Researchers from some West and East Asian countries explain the root tradition of yoching and similar instruments in connection with the history and culture of their own countries, while most researchers from Europe and the West agree with the concept that they have been handed down through traditions acquired in any country. The purpose of our current study is to analyze and outline the concept of researchers about the roots and acquired traditions of yoching-like musical instruments in the places where they are found in 60 countries around the world. The origin of yoching-like instruments has always been the focus of researchers of any nation, and although it has intensified since the 20th century, it has not been confirmed or proven today, but researchers often explain it in connection with land and sea borders communication, and with the culture of refugees and nomads. Generally, the research trends have been expressed based on the following concepts: I. In terms of distribution, it is related to Persian culture; II. In terms of making music, it is related to historical findings; III. From the point of designation, it is related to the root tradition; IV. From the ethnic point of view, it is culturally related to nomads and refugees.

Keywords: Musical Instrument, Research, Researcher, Concept, Culture, Tradition, Distribution, Designation.

1. Introduction

Researchers have been independently studying the historical process of the evolution of the yoching, a stringed percussion instrument, from an ancient stringed musical instrument to a sophisticated modern type using many scientific methods.

The major sources that studied this musical instrument in terms of its history, geographical location, features, role in society, construction, physical characteristics of sound production and musical methods are the manuscripts of French musicologists Henri (Arnaut de Zwolle) and Johannes (de Muris) [1], the "Tractatus de musica", glossaries related to ancient stringed instruments, of Paulus Paulirinus [2], and also the works of Kettlewell David, an English scholar; Gifford Paul M, an American art historian; M. L. West, a British scholar; F.W.Galpin, a musicologist; Nancy Groce, an American researcher; Farkas Gyöngyi and Viktória Herencsár, Hungarian researchers; Pui-Sze in the study of the Chinese yangqin, and Hao Yong Guang, a doctor of Korean art studies, can be mentioned. They independently researched the instrument's origin, historical evolution, distribution, and varieties in many aspects and put forward related hypotheses.

2. Characteristics of Historical Tradition of Yoching

Within the scope of this study, we reviewed the research on the historical tradition of yoching based on the research sources of international musicologists and found out that they based on the following four concepts: In terms of distribution, it is related to Persian culture; In terms of making music, it is related to historical findings; In terms of designation, it is related to the root tradition of the name; From the point of view of ethnic culture, it is related to nomads and refugees.

2.1. Distribution of Yoching

Firstly, H.G. Farmer, a British musicologist, put forward a

hypothesis on the researchers' concept that the yoching-like instrument spread from Persian culture to India, Europe, Afro-Eurasia, or Asia saying: "In the historical sources of Persian and Arabian music, it is denied that there is no record of the historical tradition of the instrument, but it is suggested that it may have entered the Iranian culture during the 17th century under the influence of Turkey" [3].

Then, Habib Hasan, a Palestinian ethnomusicologist stated that "... santoor was invented and developed in Iran and Mesopotamia (or modern Iraq), and it is the ancestor of stringed percussion instruments" [4], while Chinese researchers put forward the following three concepts.

2.1.1. Concept 1

Briefly considering the concept that Persian culture spread to the Xinjiang region through the Silk Road of India and South Asia during the Timurid Empire [5], we can see that the musical culture properly takes a part in the concept that Persian culture spread to the Xinjiang region through the Silk Road during the Timurid Empire (XIV-XVI). In this regard, Yang Yinliu, a Chinese music historian and theorist, noted in his work that the scriptures "Western Ambassador" [6] and "Yuán Shì" [7] of the Yuan dynasty mentioned that "the 72-string pipa can be compared to the "karon" of Xinjiang". [8].

2.1.2. Concept 2

The idea that it entered the Middle Kingdom from Western Europe at the end of the 16th century under the influence of religion and traders by sea is the most common concept among the researchers. Researcher Zhao Yanfang says, "Yangqin is a percussion instrument that entered the Middle Kingdom at the end of the Ming Dynasty and was introduced to the Guang-Dong region at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. According to the "Cihai"["Cihai" is a comprehensive dictionary, which was planned by Zhonghua Book Company in 1915, completed in 1936, and has undergone many major revisions since then. It is edited and published by Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House.], a Chinese encyclopedia, this musical instrument was widely

spread in the countries of Persia, Arabia and Iraq. At the end of the Ming Dynasty, it entered the country along the Guang-Dong coastal countries and later spread throughout the Middle Kingdom.

2.1.3. Concept 3

The concept that yangqin came as a gift from Europe in the 17th century during the Ming Dynasty in China was proposed by Hao Yong Guang, a Korean yangqin researcher. "It was confirmed that Matteo Ricci, an Italian preacher [Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) was an Italian preacher and one of the founders of the Chinese Mission (Catholic). He created the Kunyu Wanguo Quantu, a world map written in Chinese (1602).], introduced various western musical instruments to East Asia or Macau during the Ming Dynasty (1572~1620), and it was recorded «Yangqin entered the palace of the Ming Dynasty after 18 years on December 24, 1600» [10] he mentioned in his work.

2.2. Making Music and Historical Findings

Secondly, in terms of the function of playing the instrument by hammering the strings with a pair of special sticks (wood, bamboo, metal, etc.), some researchers have linked them to ancient historical artifacts, which are related to ancient Assyrian (21st century BC to the 14th century BC) historical monuments. For example: Arab ethnomusicologist Habib Hasan considers the starting point of this instrument to be ancient Iran and Mesopotamia, and the first evidence is recorded as Assyrian and Babylonian stone carvings [11]. Lawergren and Gurney mentioned in their work [12] the description of vertical stringed instruments being played with a stick found in the artifact named "Procession of King Assurbanipal" (669–631 BC) stored in the British museum of Assyrian relief, and some researchers noted the flat-shaped instruments of Nimrud, the capital of New Assyria in the periods of 883-859 BC and 875-860 BC, as the ancestors of stringed instruments [13].

In this way, comparing and analyzing the findings based on the above researches, it is doubtful whether the Assyrian vertical instruments are considered as the root version of the flat body assembled in a hollow, on the other hand, it is likely that the act of playing the strings with a thin stick is assumed to be the "root beginning" of the modern stringed percussion instruments.

Also, briefly considering another concept that is related to the findings of Ancient West Asia, we can see that some Chinese researchers, when proposing five concepts for the origin of the instrument from the perspective of the root tradition, equated it to the "yangqin" by the act of playing the instrument by striking the strings with something. This includes artifacts found in the Asian region and a very ancient musical instrument. [14] For example: zhu-. In some Chinese research sources, this musical instrument is recorded [Shi-Ji (Shi ji), Sui-Shu (sui shu), Jiu-Tang-Shu (Jiu Tang Shu), Yue-Shu (Yue Shu), Ming (Ming), Tong-Zhi (Tong Zhi)] as "... It is played by holding it with one hand and striking the strings with bamboo in the other hand", while another work called Shuo Wen Jie Zi states that the form of the instrument is similar to the harp and the musical instrument "Se". [15].

Also, in this concept, a bronze artifact of an instrument called "zheng" belonging to the 5th century BC and found in a tomb in Shao-Xing of Zhe Jiang Province, was highlighted [16], while instruments of the Achaemenid period (550–330 BC) including those ones found in the Eurasian region eastward along the Asian steppe zone are also mentioned [17].

These include several artifacts found in Xinjiang, China's western border region, as well as several horizontal and vertical patterns with less than ten and more than 20 strings found in Pazyryk, near Bashadar, and Olbia, Ukraine. [18].

Thus, considering the general condition of the above-mentioned historical artifacts, we can say that some researchers have put forward the hypothesis that the stringed instruments in many forms, such as vertical and horizontal, and played by striking the strings with a long and narrow thing or stick may be the first version of the yoching-like stringed instrument.

2.3. Designation and Root Tradition of Name

Thirdly, if we briefly consider the hypothesis that relates the origin of the instrument to its designation, it has been named differently depending on the language and speech characteristics of the region following its distribution.

For example: "dulce" of the dulcimer, which is widespread in most Western European countries, is the neuter form of the Latin word "dulcis" which means "sweet" or "sounds good" while the "melos" is of Greek origin and has the meaning "music" and "melody" [19], and each country and nation has transliterated it in different ways with its own pronunciation (d'ls'm'l, d'ls'm, d's'm'l, d's'm).

In the 1600s, English researchers considered that the dulcimer as a "biblical musical instrument" because the Geneva Bible (1560) and the Bishops' Bible (1568), the Book of Daniel, and the scriptures mentioned the word "dulcimer" as an Aramaic [A language that arose among the Aramaeans in the ancient region of Syria at the end of the second millennium BC] word. [20].

Judging by the naming of the instrument in accordance with its shape and the way of playing it, this instrument is called foreign fiddle, moon fiddle, and butterfly fiddle in most countries of Euro-Asia and Central Asia, while in some Eastern countries it is commonly named in the content of imported "foreign musical instrument".

Then, in China, the name "yangqin" has been called variously like yang-qin, yao-qin, hu-die-gin- ten-shan--qin, da-gin, qiao-qin, and shan-mien-gin depending on the specific features of language, dialect, transliteration and speech of different nations of the region.

Qiu-He-Chou (1880-1942), the founder of Guan-Dong music, rejected the view of most scholars that the yangqin is a "foreign musical instrument" and put forward another idea saying <<...Yangqin came from Yang-Zhu, Zhang-Su Province, so he word "yang" of Yang-Zhu was used to name the instrument because of its origin, and later Guang-Dung artisans changed this instrument into a "butterfly" shape>> [21].

The English researcher Kettlewell noted that the yoching is belonged to the "Yang-qin" of the East Asian region, and some instruments with the same pronunciation are often pronounced differently due to the accuracy of the local dialect and translation. [22] there is

Then, G. Badrah, a Mongolian researcher, noted about the name "yoching" that <<...The name "yangqin" is because the string instruments were called in the ancient Chinese language as qin (gin)>> [23], while researcher J. Badraa explained <<... The name "yoching" is a transferred and protracted version of "Yue-ching" in Chinese which means "Moon Flute", the name of another bowed and stringed instrument called "Yangchir" in Mongolian. [24].

Thus, according to the above research, researchers from

some countries where yoching-like musical instruments are found have explained the concept that the instrument originates from their own country with its name and designation.

2.4. Ethnic Culture with Nomads and Refugees

Fourthly, researchers consider the root tradition of yoching-like instruments more from the point of view of its distribution and distribution areas than from the origin. For example: In European countries, the musical culture of ancient Persia and Egypt is believed to have entered Europe from the Middle East during the Crusades in the 12th century, and the earliest versions of several instruments called lute, lure, and kanun are mentioned.

"Kanun", which is believed to be rooted in santur, has been used since the X century, and it is believed that the Spanish Moors spread it to western and southern Europe and enriched the Andalusian musical culture. [25].

It is also explained that the ancient nomads of Asia introduced the same and similar version of the instrument from India to Europe and the Middle East, and became an important force in the spread and distribution of the instrument in the territory of Eastern and Western Europe, while the second wave was the Gypsies [26].

Then, according to some research sources about the distribution of yangqin in Asia, the study of the distribution of yangqin in China based on the relationship between sea and land borders and historical conditions, based on immovable evidence, gives rise to multi-versional concepts on the yangqin tradition. For example:

The instrument called "zhù" excavated from the "Mavan" shrine belonging to the period of the Han Dynasty was recorded in the historical scripture "Warring" (A historical source compiled by Liu Xiang during the Han Dynasty) that the act of playing the instrument by striking with the right hand had changed to the playing by striking strings with a wooden stick.

However, it is believed that this instrument entered the Middle Kingdom from Western Europe after 2500 years, which was probably the sudden return of the "zhù" instrument in the history. [27].

3. Conclusion

Briefly considering the state of research on yoching-like instruments, which has intensified since the 20th century, it can be said that the origin of the instrument has not been confirmed or proven, but two concepts have been put forward: that the instrument has been handed down through root traditions and acquired traditions. In other words, when the researchers explained the origin of the instrument based on two concepts: the root tradition, which is said to be rooted in the country's heritage, and the acquired tradition, which is said to have been passed down from a foreign country to their own culture, they expressed their views on the root tradition based on ancient artifacts, names and designation in their own countries while the acquired tradition – based on land and sea border communication.

Thus, according to the research process, the concept that the origin of the instrument is related to ancient historical findings is probably explained not in terms of the shape of the instrument, but in connection with the act of playing the instrument by striking the strings using special sticks.

Some researchers agree that it is not optimal to link the pronunciation of the instrument's name, which varies

depending on the language of the country, the dialect of the speech, and the accuracy of the translation, to the origin of the instrument.

According to the above research, most researchers have unanimously expressed the acquired tradition that the instrument is inextricably linked to cultural relations and geographical location of sea and land borders (Silk Road) connecting any countries, history and culture of nomads and refugees.

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