
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CONFUCIUS'S THOUGHT AND PRACTICE ON MUSIC AND IT'S INFLUENCE

Yang Song

Abstract

For scholars outside China, everyone may know that Confucius (BC551-BC479) is a great thinker and educator. He is one of the giants of the Axis Age in China and the East, same status like Plato in the West and Buddha in India defined; but Confucius as a musician and a practitioner and a thinker who associates music with politics is not well known. This paper, through library surveys the musical beliefs of Confucius and the findings portrays Confucius firm conviction that music education is the basic means of shaping people's psychological and emotional structure and for cultivating human beings. It goes to express that the quality of any music should be evaluated by its ideological and artistic standard for its harmony to reach the highest realm.

Keywords: China, Confucius's thought and Music education.

Introduction

If we look for a character among the pre-Qin philosophers who are both eager to work and turn the ideal political dream to reality and handle the spiritual life with elegance and poetry, then it must be Confucius. He is not only a great thinker, politician, educator, but also a musician. Among the various schools of thought in ancient China, only Confucianism, especially early Confucianism, really valued music. Confucius is a veteran and elegant music lover compared with Taoist who advocates “Sound from Nature” and Mohist who advocates “Entertainment is guilty”. He once studied "Wen Wang Cao" to the musicians of the time, and also created "Chastity" for mourning Dou Mingzhen and Shun Hua.

As the founder of Confucianism, Confucius did a lot of work in music collection, sorting, revision, and teaching consciously. The analects of Confucius recorded nearly 30 speeches and practices in his music. Confucius has formed a relatively clear view of music and it has first proposed rich musical ideas in history. It can be said that Confucius is a great thinker, an educator, and an amazing musician. When Confucius was in the era of "ritual ruin and decay", he was distressed by the "Ritual and Music from the Princes, not from the Emperor" and indignant in the Princes of "the Emperor dance in the court of the Princes" to restore and promote the culture of ritual and music for a lifetime aim.

He "modify and polished poetry, booked music" and used music as one of the "six arts" to educate students (it is said that he also compiled "The Book of Music" as a textbook, but unfortunately it has not been handed down). His disciple, Gong Sun Ni Zi (BC 498), had "Le Ji", which is a systematic theory of music theory of Confucianism. It is generally believed that Confucius's musical thoughts are also embodied. Study of Confucius's view of music is very important to understand Chinese people's tradition and transformation in every discipline.

Confucius's view of music is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

- **Music as an Important Political Tool and a Tool for Moral Education**

Confucius mainly emphasizes the importance of music from the perspective of the social and political functions of music and the function of moral education. Although our ancients realized earlier on that music was born naturally from people's hearts and connected with people's emotions, more than human beings could not have connected. Confucius not only recognizes that music is a form of expression of people's thoughts and feelings, but also a way of spiritual enjoyment, soothing and catharsis, but it is not a simple art, "art for art", and it is an important political tool to reach a unified national identity. "The Analects of Confucius" and "On Music" are mostly about "courtesy" and "music". All the arguments emphasize the same rules of music and ritual, and are crucial tools of the Chinese style of governance. As an external compulsory norm, "Ritual" can make the difference between the top and the bottom, the nobles have their own, the people have their own, but music can share to unify people's thoughts and feelings, make people close to each other with harmony, no contradiction.

We know that the Confucian school has a strong spirit of reason and reality, and it sets four stages of aim to a perfect noble man, these are: soul and body self-fulfilment, "contribute to the family", "governing the community", "peace the world", "love the Whole World", and "Cultivate the inner sanctuary" as the goal. Therefore, it is not surprising that Confucian music theory highlights the political enlightenment function of music. The reality is that the art form of music is only a small detail, and the political education function is its big end. Confucius's Disciple, Noble You has a deep understanding of Confucian teaching and practice. When he managed the small town Wucheng, he got the song of singing and dancing, and the sound of string songs everywhere. Confucius came down with a group of Disciples and made a joke, saying: "Kill the chicken with a Bull-Butcher's knife?" But immediately, Disciple Noble You retorted back and said: "I used to listen to the teacher and said, 'the gentleman learns to love others, and the little one learns to follow.'" Confucius listened and quickly admits the mistake.

Concomitant with the political function of paying attention to music, Confucius also has a deep-rooted view of music. He insists that the Emperor, Princes, Ministers, and officials each have a corresponding level of music and dance standard, and must not be exceeded. When Aristocratic Ji of Lu State used the emperor's dance, Confucius thought that it was a big rebellion and hatred. He also criticized the three Nobles for accompaniment with the emperor's music when the ceremonies were withdrawn.

Today, it seems that Confucius and Confucianism pay too much attention to the political enlightenment function of music, and there is a tendency for "Art to serve politics." But we also have to see that Confucius does not go left to it "as long as it is political, not artistic," he emphasizes that music must be "perfect" and should not neglect the aesthetic function of music. Music is to make people happy. Confucius himself used to be obsessed with the beautiful music art in Qi State.

- **Confucius's Educational Function of Music**

Music education is the basic means of shaping people's psychological and emotional structure and cultivating "human beings". Confucius values music education. He has one piece of music in his teaching curriculum and is one of the Fundamental Courses, "Six Talent" (Ritual, Music, Literature, Mathematics, Martial Arts, equestrian skill). However, the purpose of Confucius' running school is not just to cultivate professional skills or artistic talents, furthermore, is to carry out moral education, shape ideal personality, and cultivate "gentleman" "devoted man," and "world leader". Confucius had clearly stated that music is the means to finally accomplish the cultivation of human beings and make people human. Poetry enlightens people and leads people to the path of humanity; rites enable people to be regulated, cultivate humanity, and establish personality; music can make people get humanity done. It can be seen from this that Confucius recognizes that music as a human desire cannot be removed or allowed to be indulged. Instead, it should be made through proper music and education. His method is to introduce, infiltrate, and melt rationality into emotions. Through subtle influences, rational desires are reconciled which not only allows emotions to obtain personal cathartic and resonance but also makes people's psychological and emotional structures sublimated and reshaped.

It is precise because music can "rule from the heart", so Confucius and early Confucianism attach great importance to the implementation of music education. It is believed that the monarchs in ancient times attached importance to music education, guided and controlled people's desires through music education, and improved morality and customs. They attach importance to the inheritance and revision of traditional music, music and dance, poetry (the trinity of poetry, music and dance), attach importance to the collection and adaptation of folk music, and believe that the educational function is related, and it is imperative to make it reasonable. Confucius believes that elegant and serious music can touch people's kindness and save people from the influence of debauchery. Confucius himself once said that after he travelled around the country, he compiled music books and classified elegant music. Confucius's disciples also inherited his doctrine well and put it into practice to a certain extent. It was mentioned that one of Disciple Noble You's practices in the small town Wucheng, was to promote music education among the people.

- **Confucius's Standard of Music Evaluation**

Confucius established a "sincere and perfect" music evaluation standard because of his belief in "perfection, righteous and peace". He strongly advocated "impartiality, righteousness, peace, harmony, quaintness and elegance". He respected healthy folk music, and criticized the sound of obscenity.

Confucius's first criterion for evaluating the quality of music is ideologically political, but he also attaches importance to the artistic standard of music and requires the unity of ideological and artistic harmony to reach the highest realm. Confucius once praised the chaotic part of the "Guan Guan" that was performed by Master Lu, which is very rich and complex and artistic. The Analects has a record of Confucius' remarks on Music, "The Music of Shao is

perfect and also good but Wu is beautiful but not perfect." The Music of Shao is music for Emperor Shun who respects harmony and sacrifices for the people, "Wu" is from Emperor Wu, which is promoting to conquer the world and to advocate the war; so Confucius believes it cannot be considered perfect music. He also proposed that the content and form of music should be well unified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

China is an emerging industrialized country, and cultural exchanges between China and Africa are constantly deepening. Many aspects of Chinese culture are still a mystery to scholars and people in most of the African countries. As the exchanges between China and Africa deepening, the two sides will have more understanding. The author believes that the cultural Communication between China and Africa will go deeper and wilder. In order to promote the friendship and progress of both sides, scholars from both sides, should introduce more about the mutual culture

Confucius, a cultural icon lived in two thousand years ago, his thought dominated the mainstream of Chinese culture in the past dynasties with same influence like Jesus and Muhammad. Studying Confucius School is an important way to unlock the Chinese people's soul code. Understanding Confucius and Confucius' thoughts on music is helpful for understanding the influence of Chinese traditional culture in Chinese people's soul and the influence to Chinese political, economic and cultural practice.

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