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Original Article

Music and Ritual in China*

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Abstract

The relations between music and society in China are already described by the Chinese themselves. Or better say: by some of the Chinese written sources. It is probably better to look at the practices, and especially to the relation between sound, music, and ritual. The three religions, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, compete and share characteristics, including the differentiation between music and ritual, musical instruments and ritual instruments. But the music is recognized as being able to move from one world to another, from spirituality to entertainment.

Keywords

Music • Religion • Society • China • Ritual • Confucianism • Daoism • Buddhism

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“Só o silêncio é sincero. É preciso escutar o silêncio,
não como um surdo, mas como um cego!”

(Only silence is sincere. One must listen to silence,
not as a deaf man, but as a blind man!)

(Sabino, 1956).

Introduction: The Three Religions Sing with the Same Voice

Before studying directly the sound of rituals, and before addressing the question of their musicality, or of the place occupied by beauty, a detour is imposed by an ancient material, the oldest through which we know the greatest incantation of Chinese Buddhism, the “Incantation of the monk Pu’an” (*Pu’an Zhou* 普庵咒), a monk who performed miracles and when asked where his powers came from, smiled mysteriously, tracing undecipherable signs in the air and humming tunes without words (Picard, 2012)... A document in fact, attempts to treat in its own way this question of the musicality of the sound of rituals: it is the collection of notations for seven strings zither *qin* 琴 “The three religions sing with the same voice” (*Sanjiao Tongsheng* 三教同聲), compiled by Zhang Dexin 張德新 (Picard, 2005). It contains only four pieces, all with lyrics, including a major text of each of the three religions: “The Great Study” (*Da Xue* 大學) by Confucius, the “Stanzas of the Siddham” (*Shitan Zhang* 釋談章) which spell out all possible syllables of the Sanskrit language, the sacred language of Buddhism, and finally “The Canon of Pure Tranquillity” (*Qingjing Jing* 清靜經) which quotes and glosses the words of Laozi 老子 collected in the “Canon of the Way and Virtue” (*Daode Jing* 道德經); The 1592 preface is signed Zheng Bangfu 鄭邦福:

Zhang Bintong was eminently gifted in all aspects of *qin*. All that was chanted or hummed, he could immediately play it on the strings, purifying the ears of people. From the time when we were colleagues in the administration, I read his musical notation of the “Stanzas of the Siddham” and used it to study it, it was as if I were entering a monastery and heard the incantation sung by the crowd of monks. I was astounded. Two years later, when I went on a mission to the capital to present my vows, I saw that he had also established the musical notations of the sacred texts of “Great Study” and “Pure Tranquillity” and had them put [with the previous notation]. This is strange! What an extraordinary idea Mr. Bintong had of putting the three religions together in one voice. But he suddenly told me of his doubts, saying: We Confucianists and Dao practitioners have been practicing *qin* for a long time, but Buddhists still consider what is sound, music and sound phenomenon as deviant things that move away from the true Dao. Would not my score for the *siddham* be in contradiction with their fundamental principles?” But I replied: “No, the very basis of *qin* is that at any time and everywhere it abolishes what is not correct to bring it back to correctness. This incantation is composed of the Buddhist secret language, and although it cannot be explained by a discourse, it serves according to their doctrine to bring all the demons back to the right path. Thus their intention from the origin is none other than that of the Sage. A fortiori this applies to the Daoists. The only thing to fear is that people do not understand the fundamental reason for the music you do. It is enough, however, to penetrate these fundamentals so that, wherever one goes, everything can

easily become a tool for rectifying nature. According to the Buddha, nature, trees and birds can all be considered as emitting a divine music, the voice of the tide; there is no contradiction with the science of *qin*. On these words Mr. Bintong was fully enlightened, and he begged me to put these words in writing as a preface. Thereupon I made “ha” and stood still.

Time, Sound, and Beauty

Transmissions. From the study of music other than Western classical music emerges a statement: their main characteristic is not, as has long been believed, orality, but the nature of tradition, characterized by the mode of transmission. There is an obvious overlay in China of various levels of discourse about music (by the poet, the scientist, the official, the musician, the teacher) reveals them as ideology. Therefore, we should not take for truth any historical, aesthetic or even technical discourse. It leads to an analysis of the facts directly collected. These done, the way is open to a reconstruction of the theories implemented and their history.

From the chronological history divided into dynasties, the story of a society hierarchically separated in the worlds of the court, the scholars and the people, we thus move to a historical anthropology allowing the simultaneous perception of fundamental tendencies evolving at different speeds according to their modes of transmission.

Chinese music appears then as the result of a mixing of traditions found in minority peoples, the great Chinese tradition whose classical age is at the turn of our era and the Indian, Sogdian, Koutchean traditions which come from Central Asia. Finally, musical genres must be distinguished according to the criterion of their transmission: oral (liturgy), manuscript (para-liturgy, literati), printed (professionals). In the light of this criterion, the fundament is not necessarily what is preserved in the oldest document. In the imbrications between popular and scholarly cultures, the religious fact occupies a preponderant place. But in China perhaps more than elsewhere, music and ritual are part of a context of ideology and power.

Ritual and Music

For the Chinese, the sound of ritual is not in its entirety “music”; Percussions, as well as chanting, are excluded. Listening to the entirety of a Buddhist Daily Lesson tends to prove the contrary: the time of the ritual is well structured by musical oppositions between singing, recitation, chanting and percussion. Parentheses, where non-liturgical instruments play in turn, can open this time without affecting the structure. Popular and local cultures, associative life intervene and mingle in the ritual, making its study dependent on musical analysis *stricto sensu*, enriched both by ethnomusicology and organology as well as by musical archaeology and the faculty of reading and transcribing very diverse musical notations; this only makes the sound structure of the ritual and its evolution accessible.

Current Issues

What are the sound and musical instruments used in the rituals of Chinese Buddhism? How can we categorize, from inside and outside, the different aspects of vocalization such as speech, chanting, declamation, recitation, singing? Are there really differences between schools (such as Chan, Pure Land, Tiantai, Vinaya) and between regions? If so, do these differences affect singing and other musical aspects, tunes or rather styles? Was the Buddhist practice influenced by Daoism, or the reverse? But before that: what are the rituals practiced, when, by whom, where, for what intent, based on which texts, which legends, using which reference version, dated from when, transmitted how? What are the aesthetic values and criteria involved? Or, to use Goethe's words, "Young girls, what is the use of your beauty?" (*Was hilft euch Schönheit, junges Blut?*).

The imperial sacrifices. The life of the court and the empire were organized around the cult given by the emperor to his ancestors; it was thus regulated from its symbolic centre, relayed to the most distant provinces by its agents, the literary officials. The music of this cult belonged to the reigning dynasty (*Guochao yue* 國朝樂). A dynastic change involving a change of ancestors, the ritual had then to change, and thus its music. The theory was that the fall of a dynasty was due to its decadent remoteness of sources and values represented by the first emperors. Assuming that early music was lost, it was looked after by setting new music, the search of ancient music, like the calculation of the official calendar, became the object of calculations and intrigues. As a formal music, it pretended to tear itself from evolution. In fact, it has largely managed to overshadow the many changes that have undergone, fixing in a mythical past its constitution, concealing the traces of his forgeries, its mistakes and oversights. By melting an army of performers in a single mold, music obeyed the principle, stated by Confucius, "rites divide, music unites." The imperial order required that the same music should be played in each province, each district, in the "temples of literature" (*wenmiao* 文廟). After examination of texts and scores, it does not seem necessary to make a musical distinction between imperial music (*Guochao yue*) and the music at the temples of Confucius (*wenmiao*). On the other hand, it is necessary to distinguish this music from other music played at court, which had neither the same function, nor the same principles, nor the same instruments, nor the same history.

All the ritual, all the court activities were bathed in music, from the temples to the private apartments, from the rooms of reception or of deliberation to the banquets. The musicians were divided into countless departments, including (among others) sections of Mongolian music with jaws harp and viols, Uyghur music with drums, *setar* lutes, *surnai* and *baraman* shawms, Korean music, and also pure music (*Qingyue* 清樂) with gong chimes (*yunluo* 雲鑼), flutes, shawms (*guan* 管), mouth organs, drums and clapper. The Emperor himself belonging to Buddhism or Daoism, or a follower of Tibetan tantric Buddhism, the music of these religions were also played at court. But

the only ritual music proper to the imperial court remains that of the category called *Zhonghe* 中和 under the Qing (1644-1911); It has the peculiarity of having the same instruments outside (*waichao* 外潮) and inside (*neiting* 內廳) of the buildings.

The instruments of the Qing Dynasty's "Music of sacrifice of concord" (*Zhonghe shaoyue* 中和韶樂) are distributed according to the system of "eight materials" (*bayin* 八音): stone, metal, silk, bamboo, skin, calabash and earth. They include: a single bell (*bozhong* 搏鐘), a chime of sixteen bells (*bianzhong* 編鐘), a single stone (*teqing* 特磬), a chime of sixteen stones (*bianqing* 編磬), two skins drums (*jiangu* 建鼓), two leather drums filled with bran (*bofu* 搏拊), six transverse flutes (*chi* 箎), two Panpipes (*paixiao* 排簫), ten vertical flutes (*xiao* 簫), ten transverse flutes (*di* 笛), ten zithers (*qin* 琴), ten fretted zithers (*se* 瑟), ten mouth organs (*sheng* 笙), two globular, vessel flute (*xun* 埙), a wooden box (*zhu* 祝), a scraper in the form of a wooden tiger with a crenelated back (*yu* 敔). There are also ten singers, sixty-four military dancers and as many civilians, a chief, a chief chanter, and a choreographer. Banners, feathers and dummy flutes (*yue* 籥) are also part of "musical instruments" (*yueqi* 樂器).

The "Music of Rejoicing to Welcome the Spirits" (*Qingshen Huanyue* 清神歡樂) requires only fourteen singers and players of drum, clapper, vertical and transverse flutes as well as mouth organs, six of each.

A distinctive aesthetic. The analysis of the scores shows that musical principles are, if not arbitrary, at least a priori constructions that have little to do with any individual sensibility or instrumental gesture. No virtuosity, or even difficulty of execution, seems to require performers more than mere initiation. A logic pushed to its paroxysm led to distribute the instruments over the space. Rigorous, regulated, imposing, strict, homogeneous, it expresses a whole nationalist and backward ideology. It admits only the instruments attested since antiquity (the only concession being the presence of the transverse flutes, originally not known). The greatness of this music is linked to its inhumanity itself: the aesthetics of "the harmony of the centre" (*zhonghe* 中和) goes hand in hand with a hieratic monotony. It imposes a time resolutely dissociated from everyday life; The naked structure replaces the sensible. It might be regarded as the antithesis of life which circulates in Daoist rituals, in the courts where puppet dramas are played, in ballads, songs and popular songs, and even in the office of the scholar. Yet, tradition does not die so easily, and ignorant followers have kept it alive here and there, in Taiwan and perhaps elsewhere. This unheard-of art, once rediscovered, reveals the richness of the voices mixed with the instruments according to a particular art and several times millenary. And you just have play this music to discover its ineffable sensation, its depth (Lam 2011).

Buddhist Music

Les bonzes continuent la cérémonie. Agenouillés maintenant devant les colosses, ils psalmodient un chant dont le coryphée, debout devant une cloche à forme de tonne, mène le train scandé de batteries de tambour et de coups de sonnette ; il choque à chaque verset la jarre, tirant de sa panse d'airain une voix volumineuse. Puis, debout en face l'un de l'autre, sur deux lignes, ils récitent quelque litanie. (Claudel 1900)

(The monks continue the ceremony. Kneeling now before the colossi, they chant a song of which the coryphaeus, standing before a bell in the form of a ton, leads the train chanted with drum and bells; He strokes the jar at every verse, drawing from its bronze belly a voluminous voice. Then, standing in front of each other, on two lines, they recite some litany.)

The daily ritual. Somewhere far away in the temple, the wood fish, here a long struck beam, resounds. Then the harmonization of the bell and the large drum begins. Following is the song of the community, introduced by the grave voice of the master of ceremony. Singing, chanting, reading alternate, in Chinese or Sanskrit. The large slot drum (*muyu* 木魚) gives the tempo, which will accelerate; The bowl-shaped bell (*qing* 磬) punctuates the sentences. The syllabic / melismatic opposition doubles the opposition, marked by the voice and the percussions, between recitative and singing; They structure the ritual.

Derived from the Vedic recitation and developed to maintain through the displacements the exact pronunciation of Sanskrit, the sacred language of India, chanting (*fanbai* 梵唄) arrived with Buddhism at the beginning of our era (Demiéville 1929). The missionary will lead to the Chinese adaptation of ritual and preaching through the adoption of popular songs on which hymns were sung. But the *fanbai*'s own characteristic of attaching itself to the exact respect of intonation is in fact always torn between two temptations: the attraction of the pulsation, which smoothens the differences, and the attraction of the phrasing which modulates the periods. The homogeneity of the vocal group is thus traversed by the coexistence of these currents, from which voices are detached at times, an instant after being submerged. This Chinese principle of harmony, which is found more or less developed in all the ensemble music, has earned Buddhist chanting the magnificent name of *haichao* 海潮 (flow and reflux, tide).

Since the seventeenth century, the notation of percussion is included in the books of rituals by means of signs particulars to each instrument. These signs are written in front of the text syllables. The instruments form a system of complementary oppositions of the *yin/yang* 陰陽 type (ubac / adret, feminine / masculine): to the great responds the little, the metal responds to the wood; Small and large split drums, large and small bells, small and large bowls of bronze *yinqing* 引磬 and *da qing* 大磬, to which are added cymbals (*nao* 鐃), suspended gong (*dang* 鐃) and drum (*gu* 鼓). Sitting, kneeling, walking, in procession, the monks vary the space, occupy it, draw it, choosing the small

portable instruments when they walk. Morning, noon and evening, the lessons succeed each other, following a procedure unified (for all non-tantric sects) in a book of rituals published in 1600 (Zhuhong) and constantly reprinted (Günzel 1994).

The great rituals. The presence in the Buddhist paintings of so many musicians, be it angels or humans, of so many instruments, ensembles, and dances, oblige us to think, contrary to a widespread opinion, that instrumental music (except ritual percussions) is far from to be excluded by the monastic rule. On the contrary, it is, in a way similar to flowers or incense, a gift to the gods, a manifestation of gratitude, a pledge of forgiveness and success (Hellfer 1994 leads to the same conclusions).

The presence of lay musicians playing wind instruments is frequent, without being a rule. But the practice of temporary retreat tends in any case to blur the distinction between monks and laity in the eyes of the passing observer. All the Buddhist pomp is revealed during the great rituals for Water and Earth (*Shuilu zhai* 水陸齋) which include those to deliver wandering souls, *preta*, hungry spirits or “mouths on fire” (*yankou* 焰口). Nothing is neglected to impress men and gods, especially not music. Long instrumental suites, specific tunes derived from chanting, parade music and popular songs carrying pious words succeed one another and respond with all the wealth that the local set of instruments (Gao 1999).

Daoist ritual. The image of Daoism, the most Chinese thought, the religion of emptiness and non-action, of detachment, the technique of inner alchemy, which influenced Buddhism to the point of making it take the form of chan 禪 (Japanese Zen, whose Californian variant has so much inspired John Cage) would call a priori for a music of calm, of breath, to the limits of the silence, like Japanese *shakuhachi* 尺八 or the *qin* 琴 zither (Picard 1991). And what do we see?

A walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage [...] full of sound and fury (Shakespeare 1606).

April 3, 1987, the sixth day of the third lunar month and the Feast of Pure Clarity (*Qingming* 清明). The ritual has begun; It will last three days. We are at the White Cloud Belvedere (*Baiyun guan* 白雲觀), in the heart of the old city of Shanghai. He who attends a Daoist ritual takes many risks: to face a radical experience, to discover a form of total art.

Multiple occupancy of an exploded space. An altar is erected in the court, another in each room; A scribe writes the amount of gift and the corresponding names on a red sheet; A flood of drums, gongs and cymbals makes a deafening sound; Caricatures of jesters declare tirades; Dressed in the costumes of imperial officials –square headdresses, wide belts, cothurns–, the officiants sing litanies, hymns, chant recitations, brandish wooden swords, outrageous oriflammes, trace mysterious signs in the air with

a leaf dipped in a lustrous water; And then genuflexions, processions of lanterns, the sound of flutes, a ship of joss paper burning, *origami* made of silver paper, banners; A conch is resounding; On a table: five golden statuettes with banners, fruits, flowers, candles, incense; Long tables, a cushion on which an old lady kneels; Drawings on the ground, lines of grains of rice, scattered by the sword; Strolling, bowls of tea to warm up, cigarettes exchanged; Statues of terrifying guardians, one carrying a *pipa* 琵琶 lute; The mouth organ finally mingles with the voices, shouts of war respond to murmurs, pages turn, steps appear the dance of Yu the Great 大禹 tracing the Great Bear (Ursa Major Beidou 北斗): everything is decor, everything is accessory, everything is play.

A few days later, we are invited to celebrate the youth festival in a foyer of the great suburb, beyond the fields smelling human fertilizer. Pass the ferry, an unexpected halt brings us into a backyard. A low building. We enter. A ritual takes place. Incense sticks are burned. The flautists here play much better than in the central temple. Their instruments, made of dark red bamboo, are pierced with equidistant holes demanded by the old, traditional, precise temperament, unknown to modern ideologists.

Back to the Belvedere. In the upper room, while the men's clamours resound below, some women sing, accompanied by a viol, to the sound of a large drum and bell, the Blood Lake ritual (*xuehu* 血湖) for maternal death. Today we celebrate the birthday of Laozi 老子. In the inner silence, nowhere better than in the middle of noise, begins a journey into the body, a pilgrimage to visit the gods, appease wandering souls, defeat the demons, present the petitions targeted by the whole hierarchy of the celestial officials, transmitted by horsemen riding winged horses. Today we celebrate the dead.

The musical ingredients of Daoist ritual are so intertwined that they cannot easily be described: Conch, gongs, cymbals, bells, drums; Chanting along to "wood fish" (*muyu* 木魚) slot drum, recitation, shouts, singing in solo, in chorus, alternation of soloist and chorus; Voice accompanied by the drum and the bell; Shawms and percussion; The small harmony of silk and bamboo (viols, lutes, flutes, mouth organs); Instruments alone; Silence.

Melodies, instruments do not belong exclusively to Daoism, but their particular arrangement, the extreme exploitation of combinatory and contrasts, do. A true melting pot, Daoist ritual brings together and preserves all the music. However, some of its songs do not resemble anything known elsewhere, just as the drum, master of time, demands an incomparable art.

Daoist religion is inscribed in its ritual. In its practice. Old, living, dusty, luminous, it resides everywhere and nowhere: in the Daoist Canon (*Daozang* 道藏) and in memory, in gestures and in manuscripts. In the words of Master Shi Xiaojin 史孝進: "if it is not local music, it is not Daoist music" (Azera 1998).

The Ritual Function

Only music can integrate the different levels of execution during a ritual, make the meditation and breathing of the Master follow step by step the performance of the outward ritual by the acolytes. Only music can bridge the separation between the two worlds [inner and outer] and ensure the harmony of man and his environment and, beyond that, of all the spheres of the universe. (Schipper 1989: 118; see also Id. 1985).

What is the meaning of a ritual? Does it even make sense? For a ritual does not convey a signification, but a structure; It does not allow itself to be reduced to an interpretation. But we can at least explain it. The communication which the ritual establishes does not go from human beings to human beings, but from human beings to gods. A performative statement, it does not seek to express a thought. Its domain is not that of language; It escapes the translation. The articulation of rites within a ritual shows it: offerings to the gods, a common work, rites follow or combine with each other, they articulate or telescope, repeat or disappear. Everywhere, always, the musical relays, punctuates, scans, accelerates, freezes time. In a rather rare way, certain texts such as the “Canon of the Great Peace Era” (*Taiping Jing* 太平經) of the second century insist on quality as a condition put to the efficiency of ritual music:

Yue, xiaoju xiaode; qi yi zhe, yi le ren; 樂，小具小得其意者，以樂人；

Zhongju zhongde; qi yi zhe, yi le shi; 中具中得其意者，以樂治；

Shangju shangde; qi yi zhe, yi le tiandi. 上具上得其意者，以樂天地。

(Music, a small talent will only “rejoice” (樂, pronounced *le*, homograph to *yue* “music”) human beings:

An average talent will rejoice a district;

Only a great musical talent allows to rejoice earth and sky.) *Taiping jing*, in Wang 1985: 586.

Paraliturgical Music

The funeral ceremonies last a long time. During forty-nine days, prayers and rites continue. The nearest relatives of the deceased, especially the eldest son, watch over the death during entire nights. The duty is hard for the celebrants themselves. Body and the mind must rest, relax. However, it is impossible to leave the ritual. The puppeteers and the shadow-players arrive. Taking over from the Daoist masters or Buddhist monks, they participate in the celebration, in another form, in another tone. The story of Mulian 木蓮, the devoted son who goes down to the underworld to seek out his mother, is a pious legend that suits the occasion and gives the opportunity for performers to show off their talents as storytellers, entertainers, and musicians. It is the archetype of Chinese opera, still found in Tainan or Fujian. (Schipper 1990).

A wedding in a Sichuanese village. The guests arrive in turn from the four corners of the horizon to take part. Each one is welcomed by music played by percussion,

drums and gongs, and *suona* 唢呐 shawms. These peasants or craftsmen will play for hours, they were recruited for the occasion and selected according to their merits and reputation. They will not accept any payment, except alcohol, food and cigarettes, widely lavished. The same repertoire is found in the temples or on the *Chuanju* 川剧 stages, the regional opera.

Back to Pudong 浦东, Shanghai suburbs. A band of flutes, drums and gongs picks up the promise from her parents. Through the fields and through the alleys the procession leads her to her new home. The variety of tunes played in suites, the same as in the tea houses of the old town, punctuates the course, between delight and regrets, farewell and new welcome.

Paris. The community of Chaozhou 潮州immigrants settled in the region is strong, welded by its common language. Its cohesion is marked by the inauguration in great pomp of a new temple. Tradesmen, craftsmen, retirees from the orchestra, accompany the ritual to the sound of the strings, lead the procession with shawms and drums, animate the banquets with opera extracts. For a more political celebration, like the election of a new president or the anniversary of a historic event, such as the founding of the People's Republic, the need for pomp will require the use of paid, possibly foreign, professionals, playing national (*Guoyue* 國樂) or western classical music, singing popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan or excerpts from local operas.

What is played depends on who plays. Who plays depends on the occasion. The distinction between paraliturgical and profane may seem fuzzy, indecisive, but it is nevertheless radical: To identify it allows to go back in time and to delimit the social space. Thanks to this distinction, questions of repertoires, instrumentation and musical forms appear in their truth. For the form imposed by a ritual, by a series of actions like the bride's journey or the unfolding of a banquet, this form differs fundamentally and necessarily from the simplistic framework of the concert. The importance of the number of musicians confers on the latter the prestige; The beginning and the end must provoke the silence conducive to listening before triggering the applause; The variety of timbres produced by instrumentation is an imperative, if one wishes to preserve the audience of boredom, while homogeneity and harmony remain indispensable to a community music. The professional is expected to demonstrate his virtuosity, while the ritual framework imposes the rightness of expression.

Conclusion: Music as the Harmony of Heaven and Earth

At the end of this short survey, we went through a few spaces, alternately covered and open, through immemorial times and places of memory. Having reached our point of conclusion, we must return to the word itself as received and transmitted by tradition:

Yue zhe xin zhi dong ye 樂者心之動也,
Yue zhe de zhi hua ye 樂者德之花也,
Tian di dong he 天地同和,
Tian di zhi he 天地之和.

(Music is the movement of the heart. Music is the flower of virtue. Heaven and earth together resound, this is the harmony of heaven and earth.) Kongzi *Liji*, *Yueji* 樂記 I.16. In Yu 610: *juan* 105.

The same Confucius in the French translation (Couvreur 1950: II.1 58):
La grande musique imite l'harmonie qui existe entre le ciel et la terre ;
Les grandes cérémonies imitent les différents degrés qui existent dans le ciel et sur la terre.
(Great music imitates the harmony between heaven and earth;
The great ceremonies mimic the different degrees which exist in heaven and on earth.)

Or in the original version:

Dayue yu tiandi tong he 大樂與天地同和
(Great music and world: same harmony)
Da li yu tiandi tong jie 大禮與天地同節
(Great ritual and world: same rhythm)

Or in a classical English translation (Legge 1885: 99):

In music of the grandest style there is the same harmony that prevails between heaven and earth;
In ceremonies of the grandest form there is the same graduation that exists between heaven and earth.

And to finish in music, but in a Chinese way, that is to say with a discourse that inscribes itself in the body, and sometimes in the very body of the instrument, here is an inscription engraved on the *yueqin* 月琴 lute of one of the musicians, during the concert that the Paris Teo-chew Music Association gave at Radio France on May 8, 2004:

Yue zai qi zhong 樂在其中
(The music is here inside.)

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Uzun Özet

Çin’de Müzik ve Ritüel*

François Picard¹

Öz

Çin’de müzikle toplum arasındaki ilişki bizzat Çinliler tarafından, daha doğrusu Çin’in bir takım yazılı kaynaklarında zaten betimlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla biz doğrudan bu kültürdeki müzik icrasına, özellikle de ses, müzik ve ritüel arasındaki ilişkiye bakmanın daha verimli olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Çin’deki üç din, Konfüçyanizm, Daoizm ve Budizm müzik ile ritüel, müzik aletleri ile ritüellerde kullanılan gereçler arasındaki ayrım da dâhil olmak üzere ortak yönlere sahiptir ve rekabet içindedir. Diğer yandan müziğin bu farklı dünyaların birinden diğerine yani ruhani olandan seyirlik olana geçebildiği kabul edilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Müzik • Din • Toplum • Çin • Ritüel • Konfüçyanizm • Daoizm • Budizm

* 26 Ekim 2004 tarihinde, Paris’teki Cité de la musique’te bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

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Çin'de müzikle toplum arasındaki ilişki bizzat Çinliler tarafından, daha doğrusu Çin'in bir takım yazılı kaynaklarında zaten betimlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla biz doğrudan bu kültürdeki müzik icrasına, özellikle de ses, müzik ve ritüel arasındaki ilişkiye bakmanın daha verimli olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Bu açıdan, hanedanlara bölünmüş kronolojik tarihten ve saray, bilginler, halk olmak üzere hiyerarşik yönden katmanlaşmış bir toplum anlatısından ayrılıp, aktarım tarzlarına bağlı olarak farklı hızlarda evrilen temel eğilimlerin eş zamanlı olarak kavranmasını mümkün kılan bir tarihsel antropolojiye yöneldik.

Çalışmamızda Çin'in üç resmî dini, Konfüçyanizm, Daoizm ve Budizm, ses ögesi ve müzikle ilişkileri bağlamında incelenmiş, ritüeldeki duaların müziğe uyarlanması meselesi 16. yüzyıl bilgini Zheng Bangfu'nun bir metninden hareketle ele alınmıştır. Onun yaklaşımı *qin*² ile müzik yapmanın arınmışlığı ve doğruluğu temsil ettiği, bu yüzden dine aykırı sayılamayacağı yönündedir.

Hangi din, hangi ritüel söz konusu olursa olsun Çinliler nezdinde, ritüelin düzen, gelenek ve kurallarla, müziğin de uyumlu ses, ahenk, dinleme ve yanıt vermeyle ilgili olduğuna dair ortak bir inanç vardır. Melodik çalgılar (telliler ve üflemliler gibi) hiç şüphesiz ritüelden ziyade müziğin alanı içinde yer alırken, çan ve gonk gibi vurmali çalgılar arada kalır, çünkü her türlü müziğin yasak olduğu zaman ve mekânlarda bu çalgılara izin verilmiş, en seçkin müzik topluluklarında vurmali hep bulunmuştur.

“Klasik”, “popüler”, “sanat müziği”, “sözlü gelenek”, “geleneksel” gibi bağlam dışı kategorileri bir kenara bırakıp, toplumsal bağlam, edimler, icracılar³ ve musikişinaslar arasındaki gerçek ilişkileri gösteren, ritüel ya da “litürji” müziği ile din dışı müziğin kesiştiği noktada, “paralitürjik” denilen bir ara kategorinin tanımlanmasının son derece önemli olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Öyle ki sadece zaman değil, mekân da çalgıların kullanımına göre düzenlenmiştir. Ses kullanımı konuşmadan şarkı söylemeye kadar uzanan pek çok kategoriye ayrılabilir: Bağırarak, dinî şarkılar söylemek, istemek, nutuk çekmek ya da fısıldamak. Bunlara sessizliği de eklemeyi unutmamalıyız elbette.

Diğer yandan, dinler yerel kültürle litürji uygulamaları arasındaki ilişki açısından aynı kefeye konulmamalıdır: Konfüçyanizm doğası gereği merkezîdir ve merkezle kurulan o ilişki, uygulamaları, ezgileri, çalgı ve akort sistemleri imparatorluk sarayinkilerle ortak olan yerel wenmiao⁴ tapınakları tarafından biçimlendirilmiştir. Daoizm tam tersine sahne sanatlarıyla (kuklalar, opera, cambazlık, hikâye anlatımı gibi) son derece yakından ilişkilidir ve gizemli metinleri büyük ölçüde yerel uygulamalarla bir araya getirerek, insanları ve ruhları neşelendirmek amacıyla kurulmuştur. Budizm ise Hindistan'da

2 Kanun benzeri yedi telli bir çalgı. (Özetteki bu notlar editöre aittir.)

3 Makaledeki *performers – practitioners ayrımı* “icracı – musikişinas” terimleriyle verilmeye çalışılmıştır.

4 Konfüçyüs tapınaklarına verilmiş Çince adlardan biri; “edebiyat tapınakları” anlamına gelir.

doğmuş, yumuşayarak Çin gelenekleriyle uyumlu hale gelmiştir. Hindistan’da kutsalın yazıya dökülmesi ve söylenmesiyle ilgili kavrayış Çin düşüncesindekinden oldukça farklıdır ve müziğe bu iki kültür, bu iki görüş arasında köprü olma işlevi yüklenmiştir. Ama hiç şüphesiz, kutsal metinlerin şarkı biçiminde seslendirilişinde Hint adetlerine bağlı kalınırken Çin’deki Budist müzik Çin müziği karakterine bürünmüştür. Müzik icrası açısından Budizm ve Daoizm’de ortak birçok yön bulunur, ama kutsal mekân ve metinlere bağlı büyük tapınakların teşekkülüyle bu din ve okulları ayıran kesin sınırlar ve değişmez kurallar oluşmuştur. Buna rağmen yerel musikişinasların birçoğu kendisine sorulduğunda bir heykelin Daoist, Budist, hatta Katolik inanışlarından hangisine ait olduğunu nadiren bilebilecektir. Nitekim 2003 sonrasında gerçekleşen değişimlere kadar Çin’de din bir aidiyet ya da inanç değil, uygulama meselesidir ve asıl önemsenen şey güzelliği ve görkemi gözetilen ritüelin verimli olmasıdır.

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