Ritual Music in a North China Village: The Continuing Confucian and Buddhist Heritage

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B.A., The Northwest Normal University of China, 1965

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(School of Music)
We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April 2002
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Date June 10, 2002
ABSTRACT

Beixinzhuang village, with a population of about one thousand, is located in the suburbs of Beijing, about twenty-five kilometres to the southeast of the city centre. In 1951, some youths of the village organized a music association and started to learn Beijing yinyue (jing yinyue 京音乐 “Beijing music”) from a monk living in the village. Over the past half century, the main goal of the Association has been to maintain this music tradition, its most important activity being the performance of music for funeral ceremonies.

There has been great change over this period, and the Association has been struggling to keep its tradition. In order to survive, it has had to enlarge its repertoire to fit the changing society. Today, although their repertoire has been greatly expanded, with many different styles of music added, the most important pieces are of two types: Beijing yinyue pieces learned from the monk, and popular songs adopted mainly from the media.

The present work is a study of the Beixinzhuang Music Association and its repertoire as influenced by Confucianism, the predominant traditional ideology of China, and in terms of the fundamentals of traditional Chinese music theory.

Chapter I introduces the cultural background and existing research of Beijing yinyue. Chapter II reviews Confucian belief in theory and practice. Chapter III addresses the organization of the Association and its activities, and Chapter IV introduces its material culture. Chapter V analyzes the local repertoire and Chapter VI examines the integration of this music into the funeral rituals. A postscript attempts to explain the reasons for change in the repertoire.
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PREFACE

This work is a study of a music association (yinyue hui 音乐会) and its repertoire in Beixinzhuang village, located in the suburbs of Beijing. The Beixinzhuang Music Association (BMA) is a laicised Buddhist band, its membership consisting of fifteen “peasants” living in the village. During the 1950s, they learned Beijing yinyue (jing yinyue 京音乐 “Beijing music”) from a local monk. To my knowledge, this is the only laicised Buddhist band organized by peasants playing Beijing yinyue in the region.

In China, there are several performance genres that originated in Beijing. Beijing yinyue is one of them. It is performed primarily in the Beijing area, some counties of Hebei Province, and Tianjin Municipality, which lies to the southeast of Beijing. Related traditions are found in other areas of North China as well, notably in Shanxi and Liaoning provinces. With more comparative research done in these regions, a better picture will emerge on northern Buddhist music as a whole.

Beijing yinyue is a Buddhist instrumental music played by a wind and percussion band. Its repertoire includes over one hundred “labeled melodies” (qupai曲牌), which musicians arrange into suites of ten or more tunes. The musical instruments used are two cylindrical reed-pipes (guanzi 管子), two mouth organs (sheng 笙), two bamboo flutes (dizi 笛子), two frames of gongs (yunluo 云锣) and several

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1 Originally, qupai was a type of verse for singing, which emerged in the Southern Song (1127-1279) and Jin (1115-1234) Dynasties and became popular in the Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasty. After Yuan, many popular songs and instrumental music pieces were also called qupai, though it is not clear to what extent these melodies were passed on unchanged. Every qupai has its own name. These pieces have been widely used in Chinese traditional music.
percussion.²

During the last century, many Chinese scholars regarded Western culture (including music) as categorically superior to their own. As a result, most forms of traditional Chinese music were officially rejected in school systems and classical European music and theory taught instead. Today, professional composers, all thoroughly trained exclusively in Western music theory, write in an essentially Western style. The composing of traditional Chinese music has virtually come to a standstill. The influence of Western music has also brought about basic changes in the construction of instruments, musical orchestrations, and attitudes regarding vocal production. Musicians in the conservatories and Chinese ensembles now mostly play “improved traditional music.” Actually, local musicians in the countryside still play the older traditional music, but this kind of music is rarely heard abroad. Unfortunately, many Chinese music scholars still use the principles of Western European art music theory and scholarship to explain Chinese traditional music.

The first purpose of my study is to examine the BMA and its repertoire, using the principles of traditional Chinese music theory. In this way, the repertoire can be described and interpreted as it is understood by local practitioners, based upon Chinese music aesthetics and theory.

According to Alan Merriam, the task of ethnomusicology is not only to study the music but also to discover the functions of music in relation to other aspects of culture (Merriam 1964:47). Beijing yinyue is generally thought to be Buddhist music, yet it has been strongly influenced by Confucianism. As Chinese have

² The instruments used in Beijing yinyue will be discussed in Chapter IV.
always been extremely tolerant in religious matters, Buddhism and Daoism have flourished along with Confucianism as the three principal faiths of China (Tian 1997:3). Understanding the function of Beijing *yinyue* requires a study of it in relation to Confucianism.

As one of the greatest ideologies of China, Confucianism has had very strong influence on Chinese people. Many Chinese scholars have studied its importance. Ding Wangdao believes that “Confucius had an incomparably extensive, profound, and lasting influence on Chinese society” (Ding 1997:213). He further argues that during the last two thousand years, Confucianism was the mainstream of Chinese thought, and throughout this long period, the thinking and behaviour of people from all walks of society were invariably permeated with Confucianism. He concludes that whether in court, politics, or in the daily life of the common people, signs of Confucian influence can be seen everywhere. “Therefore, to understand China one has to understand Confucius ” (ibid.6). Thus, in order to properly understand Chinese traditional music, the ethnomusicologist must research the relationship between it and Confucian ideology and theory. The present thesis is the result of such research conducted over a ten-year period. It is essential to note that the Confucian interpretations are based upon my own analysis of local culture and belief, for Chinese villagers can rarely explain the backgrounds of their tradition.

Another purpose of my research is to study musical change. Again, Alan Merriam points out that: “It is important that we record [world musics] as widely and as swiftly as possible, but it is even more important that we study the processes of change …” (Merriam 1964: 9). The musicians of the BMA play what is considered
to be Buddhist music, but they are not Buddhist monks. When they play at funerals, their repertoire includes not only Beijing yinyue, but also popular songs and other pieces. In other words, the BMA maintains its traditional music, yet acquires new (even popular) repertoire, in keeping with its own innate sense of tradition and adaptation.

I have lived in Beijing for over twenty years, and undertook my fieldwork in the area during the last eleven years. After the Beixinzhuang Villagers' Committee invited me to study their music in 1991, I often went to the village on weekends, or during vacations and holidays, to interview informants and learn their notation and music. Occasionally, I performed with the BMA band during actual funeral rituals. Ultimately, we became good friends. During the last eleven years, I arranged for their band to perform in Beijing several times, and Radio Beijing has broadcast their music. These activities gave them higher social status in the Beijing area and made their music better known.

In this thesis, all translations are my own except as identified. Terms that require more than one English word are hyphenated to identify them as specific, translated terms (e.g. “blowing-and-drumming players”). Chinese names and terms are transliterated throughout this paper in modern standard Mandarin. Pinyin spelling, the official romanization system of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is used as a pronunciation guide.

This work will reveal two neglected treasures of China:

1. The continuing vitality of traditional Chinese music. Many Beijing yinyue pieces preserved by the BMA are ancient ones and therefore of great value.
Yet, they are scarcely known outside of this region.

2. The continuing vitality of Confucianism. In the future, as the world moves inexorably into an era of globalization, I believe the Chinese would benefit greatly from a renewed sense of appreciation for their ancient and time-honoured principles of philosophy and behaviour as embodied in Confucianism, just as the BMA has endeavoured to do. The wisdom of Confucius allows the Chinese people to maintain their unique identity and to provide insights for their cultural survival into the twenty-first century and beyond.
Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the guidance and support of many people. First, I would like to thank Mr. Lian Dehai, the leader of the Beixinzhuang Villagers’ Committee, who invited me to visit his village to do fieldwork and offered me accommodations while there. My most heartfelt thanks go to the BMA, which has virtually adopted me and made my fieldwork and studies fruitful — notably to Mr. Zhang Guangcai and Mr. Zhang Zhenyu, for their generosity and artistry.

A great debt is owed to Professor Alan Thrasher, who has given me many valuable suggestions. I thank him not only for his assistance in guiding this dissertation, but also for his advice and encouragement. I further extend my appreciation to Professor Michael Tenzer who taught me courses in methodology and gave me important guidance to see things from an ethnomusicological perspective. Thanks for Professor Vera Micznik for her comments during the final stages.

I am also grateful for receipt of a Killam fellowship, which has supported this study during my two years at the University of British Columbia.

Special thanks go to my friend Mr. Norman Stanfield and Ms. Mary Nyland whose help in the final preparation of this work has been indispensable.

This work is dedicated to my wife, Izabella Horvath. Although she is not Chinese, she loves Chinese culture and has helped me extensively throughout.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter discusses the cultural background of the Beixinzhuang Music Association (BMA). The first section introduces the region and the village where the BMA is located. The second section is devoted to a discussion of the classification of Chinese traditional music and the function these music genres have served in history. The third section reviews the scholarly literature of Beijing yinyue and related traditions.

Beijing and Beixinzhuang

History

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since it is one of four municipalities in the country that lies under the direct jurisdiction of the central government, it is not represented in the administration of Hebei Province, which surrounds the city.

At present, Beijing has twelve urban districts and six rural counties, each consisting of sub-districts, townships and villages, all of which are governed by local authorities. In 1998, Beijing had a population of more than twelve million people, within a territory of about sixteen thousand square kilometres. The urban districts

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1 The districts are Dongcheng, Xicheng, Chongwen, Xuanwu, Chaoyang, Fengtai, Haidian, Mentougou, Shijingshan, Fangshan, Tongzhou and Shunyi. The counties are Changping, Daxing, Pinggu, Huairou, Miyun and Yanqing.
occupy only 360 square kilometres, while the rural counties (which are devoted principally to farming) account for the rest (Jiang 1999: 4). Beixinzhuang village is located in Zhangziying Township, Daxing County, about twenty-five kilometres to the southeast of downtown Beijing.

Figure 1.1 Map of Beijing administered areas.
The Beijing area has a long and interesting history. Records show that four thousand years ago, during the Xia Dynasty (21st-16th centuries BC), there was already a town on the site of the present city of Beijing by the name of Yuzhou (Hikotaro 1972:22). However, there was human life here long before this. In 1929, in Fangshan District, an exciting discovery was made of the earliest-known man-like inhabitant of the area, known to the world as Peking Man (Sinanthropus Pekinensis). This discovery indicated that humans had settled in the region of Beijing as early as five hundred thousand years ago. Beixinzhuang village is about fifty kilometres to the east of the site where Peking Man was found.

Around 1000 BC, the Yan Kingdom established its capital in Beijing and called it Ji. Beixinzhuang is about sixty kilometres to the east of the Ji city site, and the area of the village was probably controlled by Ji city during that time. As shown by Wang Canzhi (1982), in 938 AD, Ji's name was changed to Jibei, and then in 1012, it was renamed Xijin. In 1153, Xijin was renamed Daxing ("great prosperity"). It included the whole of today's Beijing Municipality, and became the capital of the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234). In 1284, the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) again made this its capital, calling it Dadu ("great capital"), and began construction on a large scale. In 1368, Dadu was renamed Beiping ("northern peace"). In 1420, after the decline of the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) moved its capital from Nanjing to Beijing and changed the name to Shuntian. After the Ming Dynasty, during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), this city — now known as Beijing — remained the capital of the country, and additions were made to the city's foundations established by Ming. After 1911, the city was once again called Beiping. In 1928, the government
excluded some outlying areas of Beiping (including today’s Daxing County), and put it under the control of Hebei Province. In 1958, these areas were returned to Beijing Municipality (Wang 1982: 273). Therefore, during the last three thousand years, except for the thirty years when it was under Hebei jurisdiction, Beixinzhuang village was under the control of Beijing Municipality.

**The villagers of Beixinzhuang**

The villagers of Beixinzhuang call themselves “urban peasants of Beijing” (Beijing shi de nongmin 北京市的农民). According to Norman A. Chance, an American anthropologist, there is a marked difference between a farmer and a peasant.

In his book *China’s Urban Villager*, he explains:

> Farmers produce primarily for others, exchanging what they make for quite different goods and services, often at the national and even international level. Peasants, on the other hand, produce mostly for themselves — for their own use — and only secondarily for others through the medium of local and regional markets, rent, taxes, and the like (Chance 1991:1).

According to Chance’s definition, twenty years ago the villagers of Beixinzhuang were peasants, though they are slowly becoming farmers. This change can be understood in relation to the history of the village in the twentieth century.

As understood throughout China, the villagers of Beixinzhuang divide history of the twentieth century into four periods:

4. "Reform and open period" (1976—the end of the century).

Prior to 1949, the farmland of Beixinzhuang belonged to several landlords and one Buddhist temple. Almost every peasant living in the village had to work for the landlords and the temple, but they received only grain as payment. For example, during that time, in one year a peasant working for a landlord received about 500 to 600 kilograms of corn, which was hardly enough for his family to survive. In the 1940s, the slogan of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), “land to the tiller” (gengzhe you qi tian 耕者有其田), summed up the sentiments of the peasantry, and many peasants in Beixinzhuang became supporters of the CCP.

On October 1, 1949, in front of a huge crowd of supporters in Tian’anmen Square in downtown Beijing, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP, proclaimed the establishment of the PRC. The government immediately initiated a massive new program called “land reform,” aimed at completely restructuring land ownership. Millions of needy peasants, including those in Beixinzhuang, took ownership of the land formerly possessed by landlords and temples.

By the mid-1950s, peasants throughout northern China had joined agricultural producers’ cooperatives (APC). These cooperatives, organized under the leadership of the CCP, comprised between ten and thirty households, which shared labour, land, and small tools for their common benefit. At that time, the peasants of Beixinzhuang also organized several APCs, and Zhang Tingyuan, the head of the BMA, was the leader of the largest APC in the village.

In 1958, during the movement called the “Great Leap Forward,” APCs throughout China became known as “People’s Communes.” Before 1958, the
township was the lowest level of public administration in the rural area of Beijing, but with the formation of communes, agricultural and small industrial enterprises also came under control of the communes, as did commerce, the militia, education, health, and other human services. The communes soon replaced the political administration of the township. One of these communes included several production brigades; Beixinzhuang was organized as one such brigade. The commune system was continued in the rural areas of Beijing for twenty-five years.2

In early 1963, the Socialist Education Movement was started in the communes throughout the country. The movement caused a fundamental upheaval in those communities because of a drive known as the “four purifications movement,” the goal being to “clean up” political, ideological, organizational, and economic behaviour. The CCP committee of Beijing sent cadres to Beixinzhuang to lead the movement and to organize a struggle against “economism,” “feudalism,” “superstitions” and “bureaucratism” in the village.

In 1966, Mao launched his last big campaign, “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” Its stated aim was to replace ingrained bourgeois and bureaucratic values with socialist ones and to remove from power those individuals — “class enemies” — who would turn China away from its socialist path. “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” aimed not only at rectifying administrative and technical contradictions arising in the course of socialist construction, but also at getting rid of the so-called “four olds” (sijiu 四旧): old ideas, old culture, old customs.

2 During that time, the leaders of Beixinzhuang brigade were Zhang Tingyuan (1958-1959), Wang Wenlin (1959-1963), Zhang Yuzhe (1964-1973) and Lian Dehai (1973-1983).
and old ways. This revolution lasted about ten years.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping assumed power. China undertook economic reform that began in 1979 and continued to the end of the twentieth century. With this, Beixinzhuang started a new page in its history.

Lian Dehai told the author that during the seventeen years after "liberation," when Beixinzhuang had the APC, a peasant's wage was about ten fen for a whole day's work. During the time of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," the situation became even worse: sometimes he received only five fen per day. After 1979, the situation changed drastically. The commune system was dissolved, and the peasants received land from the government again. Besides planting grain, they planted vegetables and cotton. The village even set up some factories, and many peasants started to run chicken farms, pig farms, rabbit warrens, and fishponds.

Today the villagers produce many goods for the market as well as for their own use, and from the market their income has increased sharply. At present, a villager's average income is about five yuan a day, some farmers earning substantially more. This amount is about one hundred times greater than that earned during the Cultural Revolution.

There was another significant change in the life of the village during the 1980s. The Beijing city government bought about six hectares of farmland from the village for about one million yuan. The village used this money to buy farm machinery and many villagers had to become mechanics and tractor drivers. In the meantime, a new developing industrial area owned jointly by Chinese and foreign companies was built.

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3 One fen=1/100 of a yuan; five yuan equal one Canadian dollar.
about five kilometres to the north of Beixinzhuang village, where large factories were constructed. Many young people of the village became seasonal or permanent workers in these factories. This resulted in a substantial increase in their income to fifty yuan per head per day, about ten times greater than that of the other people who remained in the village.

Today, because the peasants of the village are producing both for their own use and for exchange, they are changing status from peasants into farmers, while some of the younger peasants have become factory workers and engineers.

Figure 1.2 A corner in Beixinzhuang.
The village

The typical Beixinzhuang residence encloses a square courtyard called yuanzi, which always has a south-facing gate (Figures 1.3 and 1.4). The main wing of the house also faces south, opposite the gate. The toilet and pigsty face the north. Outside of the gate, on either side, stand trees, and in the middle of the courtyard there is a garden (Figure 1.5). These residences were designed according to the yin-yang (阴阳) theory in the classic book Yijing.

Figure 1.3  A courtyard in Beixinzhuang.

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4 According to yin-yang theory, the main gates of a city, palace, temple, or the main door of a private home must face the south, since to face the south is yang, the symbol of purity, luck and warmth. To face the north is yin, the symbol of dirt, negativity, and cold (Too 1997:11-14).
Figure 1.4 A gate to a typical Beixinzhuang courtyard.

Figure 1.5 Diagram of a typical courtyard.
Usually, a family living in a courtyard complex includes only two generations. Parents live in the east bedroom, children in the west one. The principle of assigning bedrooms follows *yin-yang* theory also.  

The people in Beixinzhuang use the Chinese calendar, which is called “calendar of the Xia Dynasty” (*Xiali* 夏历) or “agricultural calendar” (*nongli* 农历). The Xia Dynasty, its centre being in the middle reaches of the Yellow River, was the first Dynasty of China, governing between the twenty-first and sixteenth century BC. This ancient calendar follows the cycles of the moon and the seasonal changes, and the peasants do their farming according to it.

For the peasants of Beixinzhuang, what is known as “the turn of the year” does not normally refer to the New Year according to the Julian calendar, but to the “Spring Festival” by the Chinese lunar (or Xia) calendar. Other days celebrated according to this calendar are the fifteenth of the first lunar month (Lantern Festival), the fifth of the fifth lunar month (Dragon Boat Festival), and the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month (Mid-Autumn Festival). Even though the old calendar remains, some customs such as those of visiting temples and holding religious ceremonies have disappeared. For example, the *Qingming* Festival (Julian: early April) was formerly the day for visiting temples and graves of ancestors. Today people still visit the graves, but no longer go to the temples since there are none near the village.

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5 According to *yin-yang* theory and the practice of *fengshui*, the east adversely affects children, the west adversely affects parents (Too 1997: 25).
Chinese music genres

The purpose of this section is to review several classification systems of Chinese music and the different genres, in order to contextualize the repertoire of the BMA.

Chinese traditional music typology

Chinese music can be classified in several ways. At its broadest, Chinese music as a whole can be divided into “new music” (xinyinyue 新音乐) and “traditional music” (chuantong yinyue 传统音乐). “New music” is the music composed by Chinese composers who have learned and used Western compositional methods. Traditional music normally employs Chinese instruments and pre-1840 compositional methods. Traditional music is sometimes divided into four broad categories according to social constituency and function (Wang and Du 1999: 3):

1. “Folk music” (minjian yinyue 民间音乐). Folk music is popular among peasants and towns-people. It includes folk songs (minge 民歌), folk dances (minjian gewu 民间歌舞), folk instrumental music (minjian qiyue 民间器乐), traditional opera (xiqu 戏曲) and narrative song (shuochang 说唱).

2. “Scholars’ music” (wenren yinyue 文人音乐). This category is popular among Chinese scholars and those who aspire to this traditional ideal. It

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6 Following the beginning of the Opium War of 1840, China received extensive Western influence, making this year a major dividing line of Chinese history. Pre-1840 is considered “ancient times” (gudai 古代); post-1840 is considered “modern times” (xiandai 现代) (Wang 1994:1). For a review of traditional methods of composition, see Thrasher 1988 and Du 2000.

7 The Chinese term minjian yinyue is often translated as “folk music” (Zhu 1986:167); but minjian means “of the common people.” So, minjian yinyue must be understood to mean “music of the common people.”
includes the singing of pre-1840 poetry and prose, and traditional guqin (古琴) music.

3. “Religious music” (zongjiao yinyue 宗教音乐). Religious music is performed by monks and worshippers in religious ceremonies, including Buddhist, Daoist, Islamic, Christian and Confucian rituals.

4. “Palace music” (gongting yinyue 宫廷音乐). Palace music was used to serve or entertain the royal family in the palace. It included ceremonial music and royal banquet music. After 1911, these types of music were abandoned with the demise of the imperial system of government.

During the late 1950s, Chinese musicologists at the Music Research Institute in Beijing (Zhongguo yinyue yanjiusuo 中国音乐研究所), in accordance with the new ideology, held that music created by the “working people” was the only legitimate source of musical material for study, and effectively excluded music of the ruling classes (that is, scholars’ music, religious music and palace music) (YYS 1964: 3). A five-part system was then devised to classify Chinese traditional music genres:

1. Folk songs (minge 民歌)

2. Opera (xiqu 戏曲)

3. Narrative song (quyi or shuochang 曲艺, 说唱)

4. Instrumental music (qiyue 器乐)

5. Song-and-dance music (gewu 歌舞) (ibid. 2)

This classification system, only a framework, has several apparent shortcomings. It allows no place for many traditional music genres, such as poetry singing (shici
yinsong 词曲吟诵), or hymns and carols of different religions. As well, the traditional music genre nanyin (南音) of southern Fujian Province and Taiwan is also excluded, since it combines both narrative song and instrumental music. Yet, this was the officially recognized classification system of Chinese traditional music during the last half century. Most recently, the bulky Zhongguo Minjian Yinyue Jicheng (中国民间音乐集成 “Anthology of Chinese Folk Music”) has adopted this system and many musicologists still use it in their research of Chinese traditional music.

In the book Minzu Yinyue Gailun (民族音乐概论 “An Introduction to Chinese Traditional Music”), published in 1964, instrumental music alone is divided into solo and ensemble genres. In the ensemble half, broad genres are identified:

1. Percussion (luoguyue hezou 锣鼓乐合奏)

2. Winds (guanyue hezou 管乐合奏）

3. Strings (xianyue hezou 弦乐合奏）

4. Silk-bamboo (sizhuyue hezou 丝竹乐合奏）

5. Silk-bamboo and percussion (sizhu luoguyue hezou 丝竹锣鼓乐合奏）

While this taxonomy of instrumental music was accepted at the time, problems in classifying percussion music subsequently arose. In this system, “drumming- and -blowing music” (guchui yue 鼓吹乐) is assigned to the second category, while “blowing-and-hitting music” (chuida yue 吹打乐) is placed under the last category
In 1981, Gao Houyong published his frequently-quoted book, *Minzu Qiyue Gailun* (民族器乐概论 “An Outline of Chinese Instrumental Music”), in which he divides the traditional instrumental ensemble into a different five genres:

1. “Gong-and-drum music” (*luoguoyue* 钹鼓乐) — comprised of drums, gongs and cymbals.


3. “Blowing-and-beating music” (*chuidayue* 吹打乐) — utilizing wind and percussion instruments, (with several types of aerophones), some large and more important percussion sections, and often strings.

4. “String ensemble music” (*xiansuoyue* 弦索乐) — comprised of plucked and bowed instruments.

5. “Silk-and-bamboo music” (*sizhuyue* 丝竹乐) — mostly plucked and bowed strings, with aerophones made of bamboo, such as *dizi*, *xiao* and *sheng* (Gao 1981: 3).

According to Gao's classification, Beijing *yinyue* belongs to the second genre, "drumming-and-blowing music."

Alan Thrasher, following the thinking of yet other Chinese musicologists, classifies instrumental ensemble music into two very basic types: "silk-and-bamboo

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8 The author explains the difference between *chuida yue* and *guchui yue*, saying that *chuida yue* includes some sections played only by percussion, while *guchui yue* has no such section (YYS 1964:261).
music” (sizhu yue 丝竹乐) and “blowing-and-beating music” (chuida yue 吹打乐) (Thrasher 2000:viii). In reference to the “blowing-and-beating” genre, he states “Known by such names as guchui (“drumming-blowing”) and, much later, chuida (“blowing-beating”), processional ensembles performed for military functions and for auspicious events such as funerals (as they do today)” (ibid. 42). According to this classification, Beijing yinyue — the tradition of the BMA — originally belonged to the “drumming-and-blowing music” genre.

**Development of guchui music**

*Guchui* (“drumming-and-blowing” music) has a very long history. This kind of music appeared in the early Western Han Dynasty (206 BC - 24 AD). According to Yang Yinliu’s research, at first it was an acculturated music genre originating in the northern grasslands. During the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), Ban Yi travelled to these steppes, learned this music from the nomads, and then introduced it to the Chinese people (Yang 1981:110). The leading melodic instruments were panpipes (paixiao 排箫) and a cylindrical double-reed pipe called jia (笳). Drums and other percussion were included in the band as well, occupying important roles (Yang 1981:109).
At the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), *guchui* was a military music played in marching and processional activities. Subsequently, it was played in funerals, and it even became a type of entertainment music in the palace (Yang 1981:113). During this period, there were four types:

1. "Yellow gate" *guchui* (*huangmen guchui* 黄门鼓吹) — played in the palace by the emperor's guards of honour.

2. "Blowing on horseback" (*qichui* 骑吹) — unique to the cavalry.

3. "Short xiao and bells songs" (*duanxiao nao ge* 短箫铙歌) — performed in meetings and at temples.

4. "Horizontal blowing" (*hengchui* 横吹) — a music genre originating from
Central Asia (Miao 1985:126).

According to ancient records, when Zhang Qian (? -114 BC)\(^9\) returned from Central Asia in 119 BC, he brought back a musical piece called “Mohedoule” (摩诃兜勒). Li Yannian, a composer working in the royal palace, rearranged twenty-eight pieces according to the melodies of “Mohedoule” and created the genre of hengchui (cited above), which became military music (ibid.). Because this music was not notated, it is difficult to say to what extent these early melodies may be preserved in today’s tradition.

In the Sui (581-618) and Tang Dynasties (618-907), the tradition of guchui was continued.\(^10\) According to the Jiu Tang Shu, Yinyue Zhi (旧唐书·音乐志 “Music Volume of the Old Tang History Book”), the most important change during that period was the addition of the bili (筚篥), a wind instrument introduced from Central Asia and later called guanzi (Miao 1985:378).

During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), records tell us that there were three main music genres in the palace: “elegant music” (yayue 雅乐), “banquet music” (yanyue 宴乐) and “drumming-and-blowing music” (guchui yue 鼓吹乐).

According to Yang Yinliu, there was a huge guchui orchestra consisting of 1793 musicians in the emperor’s guard of honour. They not only played instruments but also sang songs, the texts of which were written by the officers working in the palace.

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\(^9\) As an ambassador of the Western Han Dynasty, Zhang Qian went to Central Asia two times. It is believed that he founded the system of trade that came to be known as the Silk Road.

\(^10\) At that time, the “yellow gate” guchui was called guchuibu (駃吹部), music played by short xiao and cymbals songs (duanxiao nao ge) was called naogubu (銃鼓部) and yubaobu (羽葆部); blowing on horseback was called “great hengchui” (大横吹); and horizontal blowing (hengchui) was called “small hengchui” (小横吹) (Miao 1985:378).
After the thirteenth century, *guchui* was played by monks and peasants, and the *suona* started to be used in ensembles. According to Gao Houyong, people have been playing *guchui* in wedding and funeral ceremonies ever since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) (Gao 1981:128). Yang says the most important genres of *guchui* during the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) were “Shaanxi drum music”(*Shaanxi Guyue* 陕西鼓乐), “Beijing yinyue” (*jing yinyue* 京音乐), “Shanxi eight great suites”(*Shanxi badatao* 山西八大套), “Central Hebei wind music,”(*Jizhong guanyue* 冀中管乐) and “Shifan gong-drum music” (*shifan luogu* 十番锣鼓) of Jiangsu Province (Yang 1981: 989). These *guchui* types survive to this day.

**Chinese Buddhist music**

The Beijing-based Buddhist scholar, Tian Qing believes that “Mohedoule” (cited above) was a Buddhist hymn, perhaps the earliest Buddhist piece of music introduced into China. He thinks that *Doule* was a person who converted to Buddhism by the direct intervention of the historical Buddha himself. Tian states that “mohe” ("maha") means “the great” in Sanskrit. Thus, “Mohedoule” means “Doule the Great.” In the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C-24 A.D), the Chinese rearranged it into the sub-category of *guchui* called *hengchui* (横吹) military music (Tian 1997:6). Therefore, as Tian’s research shows, *guchui* became associated with Buddhist activities.

Tian classifies Chinese Buddhist music into two categories:
1. Temple music or “service music.” This genre includes hymns (zan 赞), gatha (ji 僧), incantations (zhou 咒), and chants (song 诵). Temple music uses only percussion in accompaniment, such as “wooden fish” (muyu 木鱼) and “resting bells” (qing 磬). It is chanted in honour of Buddha, Bodhisattvas and “hungry ghosts,” but not for human beings.

2. Secular Buddhist music or “folk Buddhist music.” This kind of music, for the most part, is instrumental music, played for the local community. It uses wind instruments and percussion, such as guanzi, sheng, various cymbals and drums. Tian is of the opinion that this music genre was created by Buddhist monks during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), who rearranged some ancient pieces and folk songs popular at that time.

Tian contends that Beijing yinyue belongs to this category (Tian 1997:15).

Guchui was certainly played within the contexts of palace music, religious music and folk music (see Wang and Du categories, p.12). Although there are some differences in the music of the three categories, they all have guchui in their repertoires and even share a number of pieces among them. For example, a piece of guchui music entitled Wang Jiangnan (望江南 “Looking toward the Jiangnan Region”), originating from palace music of the Tang Dynasty, is maintained in the Buddhist temple music of Wutaishan mountain, and is also found as a piece of “folk music” called “Shanxi eight great suites” (Shanxi badatao 山西八大套) (Chen 1982:55). This piece is found in the repertoire of the BMA.
Literature review

During the last half-century, only a few scholars studied Beijing yinyue. Among them, Yang Yinliu, Yuan Jingfang, Xue Yibing, Wu Ben, Stephen Jones, and Zhang Zhentao made important contributions. This section will review their achievements and points of view.

According Yang Yinliu’s important studies of the early 1950s, by the nineteenth century this music was already known as “Beijing yinyue” (Yang 1953:1). As an academic authority in the field of Chinese music history, Yang paid careful attention to the historical aspect of this music genre. Yang reported that he found a band playing Beijing yinyue in the Zhihua Temple (zhihuasi 智化寺), which was founded as early as 1446. He suggested that even at the time of the temple’s founding, this kind of music was being played (Yang 1981:989). Yang studied the instruments used by the monks and noted, for example, that the mouth organ with seventeen pipes was of the same style as the ancient instruments of the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties. He was of the opinion that some pieces in the Zhihua Temple repertoire consisted of pre-existing vocal melodies while others were derived from instrumental tunes. The melodies are from the repertoire called “labeled melodies” (qupai). His view was that very few pieces had any connection with religion, and he emphasized that “working people” created the music, while Buddhists not only used

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11 Yang published his research result in his important work entitled Zhongguo Gudai Yinyueshi Gao (中国古代音乐史稿 “Draft History of Ancient Chinese Music”) (Yang 1981).
12 Originally, qupai was a type of verse for singing, which emerged in the Southern Song (1127-1279) and Jin (1115-1234) Dynasties and became popular in the Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasty. After Yuan, many popular songs and instrumental music pieces were also called qupai. Every qupai has its own name. These pieces have been widely used in Chinese traditional music. See “On Qupai” (Gao 1989).
but also distorted the music. Yang also researched the tonal system, and he pointed out that the monks of the temple band played in four different keys (gong) (examined in Chapter V), and emphasized that their music notation was a unique variation of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) style (examined in Chapter IV) (Yang 1981:990).

Yang Yinliu’s study is the first milestone in Beijing yinyue research. He is responsible for introducing this historical music genre to the public, and his efforts had widespread influence among musicologists. From this work, Chinese musicologists learned not only about the beauty and value of Beijing yinyue, but also the fact that such an old music style could still be found in Buddhist temples today.

Following Yang’s research in the 1950s, some Chinese musicologists studied Buddhist music from this period to the beginning of the 1960s, with some important results (Tian 1997:5). But from 1963 to the end of the 1970s, Buddhist music was labeled as “feudal superstition,” and no Chinese musicologists researched it in the PRC (ibid.7).

During the 1980s and 1990s, Yuan Jingfang continued Yang Yinliu’s study. In her book Yuezhong Xue (乐种学 “A Study of [Instrumental] Music Genres”), Yuan researched the origin of the repertoire of the Zhihua Temple band. She found evidence to suggest that among eighty-four qupai melodies in the monks’ notation books, nine were composed during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), thirteen were compositions of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), twenty-four were created in the Jin (1115-1234) and Yuan Dynasties (1271-1368), and eleven appeared after the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). As for the twenty-seven pieces that could not be found in

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13 Yang did not explain what he meant by “distorted.”
historic documents, she thinks they were compositions of monks at the Zhihua Temple (Yuan 1999:205). Yuan believes that the original Beijing yinyue was related to the palace ceremonial music and Buddhist music used by the imperial family (ibid. 192).

Yuan Jingfang’s study is very important, since she studied the original sources of each qupai played by the Zhihua monks and concluded that the “working people” did not create this music genre.¹⁴ Yuan states that Beijing yinyue is a Buddhist genre and emphasizes the importance of Buddhist music in Chinese music culture (ibid. 213).

In 1986, one of the leaders of Qujiaying village, Gu’an County, Hebei Province, went to the Music Research Institute in Beijing and invited musicologists to his village to hear the music played by its local music association. Subsequently, Xue Yibing and Wu Ben visited this village and did fieldwork there.¹⁵ They found that the music was very similar to the Beijing yinyue Yang had collected at the Zhihua Temple more than thirty years earlier. In 1987, Xue and Wu published a paper on this music (Xue & Wu 1987). They introduced the instruments, notation, music repertoire and history of the Association. They also did comparative research between Qujiaying music and Zhihua Temple music (of thirty years earlier), and pointed out that there were many similarities between the two: the instruments were the same, the sitting position of each player was similar, some characters in the notation were the same and other were similar, and the names of many qupai melodies were the same (Xue & Wu

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¹⁴ Yuan thinks the monks at the Zhihua Temple created more than twenty pieces after the Ming Dynasty, but she did not say who created other pieces.

¹⁵ The village is about ninety kilometers to the south of Beijing.
Xue and Wu also studied the differences between the instruments of the Qujiaying Music Association and those used at Zhihua Temple. They found that the guanzi of the Zhihua Temple had nine holes in it. According to Yang Yinliu, the guanzi with nine holes belongs to an ancient type of instrument which had been used to play palace music during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). The guanzi of the Qujiaying Music Association, with only eight holes, is believed to have been derived from the more ancient nine-hole instrument.

According to this evidence, Xue and Wu concluded that the music of the Zhihua Temple must be older than the music of Qujiaying. They believed that after Beijing yinyue spread from the temples in Beijing to the rural areas, this Buddhist music became the music of the Qujiaying Music Association.

Xue and Wu’s survey and research is the second milestone in Beijing yinyue research, because it proved that Beijing yinyue could be found not only in temples in Beijing, played by Buddhist monks, but was also performed by peasant bands in the rural areas around Beijing. In Qujiaying village, Xue and Wu learned from the

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16 The names appearing in the notation books of the Zhihua Temple could be found in the ancient documents, but the names written in Qujiaying notation book had some incorrectly written characters.

17 Guanzi is a cylindrical reed pipe, usually with eight finger holes (seven in the front of the pipe and one in the back). The guanzi in Zhihua Temple has two finger holes in the back.

18 Although the music of the Qujiaying Association originated from the Buddhist temple in Beijing, Xue and Wu suggested that it should be classified as minjian yinyue (民间音乐 “folk music”), not Buddhist music, since the musicians and the context of music are different from Beijing yinyue played by the monks in the Zhihua Temple (Xue & Wu 1987:87). According to Wu Guodong’s research, the term minjian yinyue (“folk music”) appeared after 1840 in China, with the understanding that it was the music of the common folk and its authorship was unknown. Further, it was disseminated by purely aural means, and its function was primarily social in nature (Wu 1995:4). Therefore, according to Wu’s definition, the music of the Qujiaying is not folk music because it is transmitted by a written notation and its musicians are semi-professional.
musicians living in the village that there were many music associations in Gu’an, Laishui, and Baxian counties (of Hebei Province), and in Wuqing and Jinghai counties (of Tianjin Municipality). Their music was the same as, or similar to, Qujiaying and other types of Beijing yinyue (Xue & Wu 1987:86).

During this same period, the English ethnomusicologist Stephen Jones did field work jointly with Xue Yibing within the triangle whose points are Beijing, Tianjin, and Baoding. In this area they found numerous ensembles playing wind and percussion instruments. Local informants classified these bands into two categories: 1. “shawm-and-percussion bands” (chuida ban 吹打班) or the “southern music associations” (nanyue hui 南乐会), and 2. “amateur ceremonial music associations,” or the “northern music associations” (beiyue hui 北乐会) (Jones & Xue 1991:3).

According to Jones and Xue, the musicians of the shawm-and-percussion bands are called “blowing-and-drumming players” (chuigushou 吹鼓手), their ensembles employing two shawms (suona 唢呐) and various percussion instruments. These bands, like some others, still play a “classical ceremonial repertoire.” However, for about a century, many have also played a more popular repertoire based on the melodies of “planting songs” (yangge 秧歌). This music was known as “rustic music” (qie yinyue 怯音乐), distinguishing it from Beijing yinyue. They also noticed that the shawm-and-percussion bands received payment for performing at popular festivities, such as weddings, funerals, and fairs (ibid. 4).

As for the northern music associations, say Jones and Xue, they use four melodic

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19 Yangge is a northern Chinese folk dance performed during the Spring festival. It appeared in Song Dynasty and includes several different styles.
instruments: guanzi, sheng, dizi, yunluo and percussion. They again pointed out that their music is “related to the instrumental music of Buddhist temples in Beijing and elsewhere, and also to instrumental genres of the former imperial court” (Jones & Xue 1991:3). Jones and Xue note that these associations play for funerals but not for weddings, and do not receive any payment for performances (ibid. 12), a questionable statement that requires further investigation.

Their conclusion is that the music of northern music associations shows a relationship with Buddhist Beijing yinyue, but the southern music associations may also have learned from either Buddhist or Daoist monks (ibid. 6). Jones and Xue also studied tonal systems and styles of the northern music associations and they introduced the function of the music (ibid. 9). Jones and Xue’s brief study is the third milestone in Beijing yinyue research. Their research shows that Beijing yinyue is still popular in a wide area, and has influenced other genres as well.

After Jones and Xue published their joint paper, Jones published his book *Folk Music of China: Living Instrumental Traditions* (Jones 1995). He discussed the music of the Northern Music Associations in the eleventh chapter, entitled “Northern Ritual Ensemble: Hebei, Beijing and Tianjin.” In the book, Jones pays great attention to performance contexts. He points out that the music is used mainly for calendrical rituals, such as prayers for rain, and for funerals (Jones 1995:188). Since his book deals with the entire range of Chinese folk music, he discusses the context of Beijing yinyue only very briefly.

Zhang Zhentao researched the same area where Jones and Xue visited, and he also did fieldwork in Beixinzhuang. Zhang studied music notation books, the social
background of musicians, and the *yunluo* gongs of all areas. He published three papers. The first compares different *yunluo* of the northern music associations (Zhang 1997). The second takes inventory of notation books of music associations in Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei (Zhang 1999a: 206). The third paper reports on the social background of the musicians (Zhang 1999b: 241). Zhang’s study is a continuation of those scholars’ works mentioned above.
CHAPTER II

Confucian Belief and Practice

This chapter examines Confucian belief and practice. Initially, I will discuss Confucian music theory, followed by some thoughts on the Yijing, one of most important canons of Confucianism. Then, local beliefs, and relationship between these beliefs and the BMA repertoire will be examined.

Confucian music theory and practice

Confucius’ contribution

Confucius is widely regarded not only as a great philosopher, educator, writer and editor, but also as a musicologist. As an educator, he is believed to have set up the first private school in China and to have taught 3,000 pupils (Ding 1997:44). It is said that he wrote and edited many books, including the Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn Annals), recording the history of his own time; the Shangshu (Ancient Writings), which includes the historical documents from the most ancient period until his day; and the Shijing (Book of Songs), a selection of three hundred and five poems and folk songs (Ding 1997:46). He explained and analyzed the Yijing (Book of Changes) and provided general philosophical commentaries in the “Shiyr” (Ten Expositions) (Zhang 2000:136). In addition to those works, there is another important book, the Lunyu (论语
"Analects"), which is a collection of quotations of his lectures and dialogues between him and his pupils. During the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD) these books formed a core of the classics of Confucianism.

Confucianism in China was manifested through a system of education, ceremony, and civil administration. In more than 2200 years, from the second century BC to the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the main ideology of the country. The civil service examination, starting in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and ending in 1905, greatly encouraged studies in the Confucian classics and deeply implanted Confucian values in Chinese minds. Although during the last century Confucianism was criticized in China very seriously, Chinese people today can hardly be said to have discarded the customs, habits and thought patterns derived from Confucian teachings.

The thought of Confucius embraced no consideration of the supernatural; in this sense, Confucianism is not a religion. But as ages passed, later followers canonized Confucius and his principal disciples as a means of inculcating their doctrines among the people. Those doctrines can be found everywhere in Chinese literature and folk songs, tales, narrative singings, opera performance, and proverbs. Chinese People are familiar with them from their childhood, so this belief system founded 2500 years ago still works in China today.

Though it is common knowledge that Confucius was the founder of the unique and enduring school of philosophy that bears his name, his musicology is less well known. It is believed by many Chinese musicologists that Confucius was able to develop his music theory not only because he was an accomplished performer, but
also because he loved to contemplate music. According to historical records, he could sing and play many different instruments, including qin (琴), se (瑟), sheng (笙) and qing (磬) (Yang 1981:89). His thought indeed merged music and philosophy. One report says that after he heard shaoyue (韶乐) music in the Qi Kingdom, he stated that the piece was an example of the union of perfect moral content with the highest form of beauty. The piece so affected him that for three months he was unaware of the taste of meat. He said: “I never imagined that any music can be so beautiful” (YYS 1983:10).

One of the most important concepts to emerge as part of the Confucian ideology, is that of “propriety and music” (li-yue 礼乐), a principle that has guided Chinese musical life for the last 2500 years.

**Li-yue theory**

Confucian music theory is called the li-yue theory. Li and yue have many different meanings. According to Zhou Gucheng’s research, the original character for li (禮) has three basic structural elements in addition to the radical 礼: there are 王, meaning jade; 王, meaning basin, and 王, meaning basin stand. By the Zhou Dynasty (11th century BC-221 BC), people used to give such jade objects

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1 Confucius taught six subjects: propriety (li 礼), music (yue 乐), archery (she 射), charioteering (yu 御), literature, history and calligraphy (shu 书), and mathematics (shu 数). We can see from his curriculum, that it contained both li and yue.
(placed on stands) as presents; hence, the first meaning of *li*: "gift."² Zhou believes that people used gifts when they worshiped the gods during rituals; therefore, *li* also means "ceremonies" and "rituals." When a ritual was held, the participants followed certain rules in a regular pattern and order. Consequently, *li* also means "regulation" and "sequence." Zhou further cites the two classics of the Warring States Period (475-221 BC): "In the book *Guoyu* (国语), we read that ‘*li* is the discipline of a country’, and the book *Zuozhuan* (左传) says: ‘*li* is defined as discipline’.” In conclusion, he says that *li* means regular pattern, discipline, gift and ritual (Zhou 1962:4).

Regarding the meaning of the *yue*, Zhou controversially suggests that the character “” can be divided into two parts: the lower one “木,” a wooden stand; and the upper part, a big drum and four little drums. Zhou therefore concludes that the original meaning of the character must have referred to a musical instrument. In support of his argument, he cites Confucius: “When one talks repeatedly of *yue*, does one really only mean bells and drums?”⁴ Zhou thinks, therefore, that *yue* was a type of instrument (Zhou 1962:4). Luo Zhenyu, on the other hand, thinks that the upper section of the character was originally not a picture of drums, but of silk. Therefore, the original character could represent a plucked instrument such as *qin* (Xiu 1989:136), an explanation now accepted by many scholars. Regardless of which of

² Zhou Gucheng cites a question of Confucius recorded in "the Analects" as proof for this definition. He writes: Confucius once asked “When one talks repeatedly of *li*, does one really only mean jade and silk?” (Zhou 1962:4)
³ *Guoyu* and *Zuozhuan* are two historic books written by Zuo Qiuming, a historian who lived in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 B.C – 476 B.C).
⁴ This explanation can be found in the *Shuowen*, a dictionary published in 100 AD, edited by Xu Shen, a famous Confucian scholar (Xiu 1989:136).
these etymologies is more accurate, every scholar agrees that the origin of the
character yue was a musical instrument (either a drum or a zither), and then by
extension, it came to mean “music” and “happiness.”

Confucius always puts li and yue together: when he mentions li, he also says
something about yue; when he discusses yue, he also talks about li. For example, in
“The Analects” (Lunyu) Confucius says: “A superior man’s accomplishment starts
with learning poetry, continues with li and is completed with yue” (YYS 1983:10).
Once Zilu, a pupil of Confucius, asked him how one could become a superior man.
Confucius instructed him: “Be as wise as Zang Wuzhong, be as honest as Meng
Gongchuo, be as brave as Bian Zhuangzi, be as talented as Ran Qiu, then add the
accomplishment of li and yue, and you will be a superior man” (Ji 1959:7). Once
Zilu asked Confucius if he had a chance to be in charge of formal ritual music in a
kingdom, what would he do first? Confucius answered: “First, I would like to
define the terms.” Then he explained:

If names are not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language is not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on success, li and yue will not flourish. If the li and yue cannot flourish, the punishment will not fit. When the punishment will not fit, the people will not know how to do things (Ji 1959: 6).

Confucius’ li-yue theory was developed in Gongsun Nizi’s book, Yueji (乐记
“Record of Music”). Gongsun Nizi, believed to have been a second generation
pupil of Confucius, said of the former kings’ attitudes toward the people:

Thus ritual (li) was used to direct their wills, Music (yue) was used to
harmonize their voices, Administration (zheng 政) was used to unify their
actions, and Punishment (xing 刑) was used to prevent their violations. Ritual, Music, Punishment, and Administration — their ends are one: they are that which is used to unify the people’s hearts and put forth the Way of Governance (Cook 1995:28).

Thus, we can see that according to traditional Confucian thinking, music (yue) was thought to be one of the fundamental functions of society. It worked together with punishment, administration, and ritual. We can see how music is placed on the same level with civil administration, to control and harmonize the behaviour of human beings in attempt to create a well-ordered society.

Confucius classified music into good and bad. He praised “elegant music” (yayue 雅乐) but criticized “popular music” (suyue 俗乐). The yayue, because it was polished and refined was considered appropriate for use in ritual. Suyue, because it was common and unrefined, was not. According to Wu Guodong’s research, the concept of suyue during the Confucian period is very similar to today’s concept of minjian yinyue (“folk music”) (Wu 1995:9). Confucius said: “I hate the sound of the Zheng Kingdom since they disturb the pureness of yayue” (YYS 1983:11). Here, Confucius used the term “sound” (sheng 声) to refer to “folk songs” — rather than the term “music” (yue 乐). Therefore, since these folk songs were not considered “music,” they could not be used to accompany ritual.

Finally, the Yueji suggests that music can unite different people in harmony with each other:

Therefore in the ancestral temple, rulers and ministers, high and low, listen together to the music, and all is harmony and reverence; at the district and village meetings of the heads of the clans, old and young listen together to it, and all is harmony and deference. Within the gate of the family, fathers and sons, brothers and cousins listen together to it, and
all is harmony and affection. Thus in music, there is careful
discrimination of the voices to blend them in unison to bring out the
harmony; there is a unison of the various instruments to give ornamental
effect to its different parts; and these parts are combined and performed so
as to complete its elegance. In this way, fathers and sons, rulers and
subjects are united in harmony, and the people of the myriad states are
associated in love. Such was the method of the ancient kings when they
framed their music (Wiant 1965:21).

According to this viewpoint, music forms the basis of all virtue and its function
is to create universal harmony, while assisting people achieve a more refined and
enlightened life.

Li and yue in Practice

Does li-yue theory, which was formulated about 2500 years ago, still function in
China? Do people still practice this? I will examine the situation in Beixinzhuang
village.

The people of Beixinzhuang and the members of the BMA know about
Confucius, though they have not read his books or Gongsun Nizi’s Yueji. Nevertheless, Confucian ideas underlie their behaviour, and his thoughts guide their
music practice.

First we examine their concept of music. Both the BMA musicians and
villagers call the instrumental pieces “music” (yinyue 音乐), a term not generally
applied to opera, folk song or narrative song. Xue and Wu report that the people
and musicians of nearby Qujiaying village share this interpretation: they only

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5 The ancient texts were written in classical Chinese, an ancient form of writing rarely
understood by the peasants of China.
identify Buddhist instrumental pieces as "music," but do not use this term for other genres (Xue & Wu 1987:89). In the many villages where Beijing yinyue is performed, I found almost unanimous agreement on this point. Their concept clearly follows the thoughts of Confucius: only the instrumental music, but no other genre, is played during a ritual. If, according to Confucius, li and yue are always linked to each other, only the pieces accompanying the ritual can be called "music." Zhang Zhenyu, a BMA member, cited the following proverb: "If there is no music (yue), there can be no ritual (li). If there is no wine, there can be no feast." This illustrates the ongoing relationship between li and yue very well.

The fact that Beixinzhuang villagers hold funeral ceremonies also shows that Confucian ideology is still a very strong influence in the village. By Beijing standards, Beixinzhuang is not a rich village. According to my investigation, a peasant's average income is presently about 150 to 200 yuan per month, but a funeral ceremony costs about 20,000 to 40,000 yuan--more than a peasant's income for a ten-year period! Most families do not have this kind of savings, and they must borrow a great deal of money. Why people would spend so much money on a funeral ceremony for their parents or relatives is a question that needs to be addressed. Shi Huaishen, the head of the BMA, informed me that: "A funeral is not for the dead, but for the living." Funerals reflect this, because their main purpose is to sustain harmony among family members and people living in the same village. Again, we see that the function follows the ideals of Confucianism.

After a person dies, the first thing his or her eldest son (or eldest grandson) must

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6 "wu yue bu cheng li; wu jiu bu cheng xi." (无乐不成礼,无酒不成席。)
do is to go to every house in the village, report the news and invite them to the
funeral feast and ceremony. He goes not only to the deceased’s friends’ houses, but
also to the deceased’s enemies’ houses. When he arrives at the house of an
unfriendly family, he kowtows to the head of the family, tells him the news, and
invites him and his family to the feast. The enemy then thanks the son or grandson,
and promises to attend. The intent of this practice is that after the head of the
family, who bears a grudge toward the deceased, goes to the funeral ceremony, eats
at the feast and listens to the music, the hatred between the two families will
disappear, and the two families will again be in harmony.

After asking everybody in the village to attend the funeral, the son invites every
relative from outside the village. Usually the relatives will come. During the
funeral procession, anyone who has a grudge or disagreement toward the deceased or
his family can stop the procession and mention the issue. The sons or grandsons
will then explain the problem. After much explanation, apologies and entreaties,
the problem is usually resolved.

A funeral usually lasts for several days. In the evening, the musicians are
invited to play music in the courtyard of the bereaved family. If the family is rich,
they may invite several bands to perform. Family members and guests, both friends
and enemies, will sit in the yard to enjoy the music. As Gongsun Nizi said in the
ancient text Yueji:

At the district and village meetings of the heads of the clans, old and young
listen to it [the music] together, and all is harmony and deference. Within
the gate of the family, fathers and sons, brothers and cousins listen to it
together, and all is harmony and affection (Wiant 1965:21).
Another important aspect of li-yue theory in practice is the fact that the people of this area rank music into different classes. The idea of good and bad music is actually a Confucian concept (see the discussion of yayue and suyue above). Religious music, played by Buddhist monks or Daoist priests, is locally assigned a high position, while the “folk music” played by peasant musicians is assigned a low position.

In Beixinzhuang, non-religious musicians are called “blowing-and-drumming players” (chuigushou 吹鼓手) and their bands are “blowing-and-drumming bands” (chuiguban 吹鼓班). Religious musicians, like the BMA musicians who are called “Buddhist monks” (heshang 和尚) and the Daoist musicians who are called “Daoist priests” (daoshi 道士), have bands that are called “music associations” (yinyue hui 音乐会). When a funeral is held, usually the chuigushou musicians are not allowed to play in the courtyard, but must remain at the gate. According to the yin-yang theory, the area outside of the gate is reflective of yin, the symbol of dirt, negativity, and cold (Too 1997:14). For that reason, these musicians must stand there to play. The BMA musicians even call them “dogs guarding at the gate” (kanmen gou 看门狗).

There is a special step in the funeral ritual called fengling (封灵), where relatives kowtow to the coffin and say goodbye for the last time before the coffin is carried to the cemetery. During this ceremony, it is customary to ask the chuigushou musicians to play. However, sometimes a family cannot afford a chuigushou band, and the hosts must ask the members of the BMA to play “low class” music.
Usually, they will refuse to play, complaining to the hosts: “Who do you think we are? We are not those low class people! I tell you, we will not play that kind of music, even if you pay big money.” On occasion, two or four members of the BMA will concede since they are friends of the hosts. But before they play, they will always take off their Buddhist vestments (jiasha 僧裟). This means that when they play “low class” music, they are no longer “monks,” since traditionally monks do not play “low class” music.

As demonstrated in the above examples, the old Confucian discrimination still plays an active role in village life.

**The Yijing and its influence**

The *Yijing* (易经), one of the thirteen Confucian classics, is a book of divination based on profound philosophy. Already regarded as a classic as early as the Warring States Period (476-221 BC), it became the first of the official canons during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD) (Hu 1991:7).

In Chinese literature, the term “music” (*yinyue 音乐*) appeared for the first time in *Lushi chunqiu* 《吕氏春秋 “The Spring and Autumn of Lù Buwei”》, a history book edited by Lù Buwei during the Warring States Period (476-221 BC). The author considers the origin of music to be linked to measurement and *yin-yang* theory as explained in the *Yijing* (易经). In the chapter entitled “Great Music” (*dayue 大乐*),

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7 The original word of the vestment in Sanskrit is “kasaya”; the Chinese call it “jiasha 僧裟.” Compare figure 2.5 (playing with vestments) and figure 6.6 (playing without vestments).
The origin of music can be traced as far as the remote ages. It came from the concept of measurement, originating from the *taiyi* (太一). *Taiyi*, the primeval essence, gave birth to bi-directional *liangyi* (两仪), from which emerged *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* interact from below and above, and thus music contains harmonious proportions of *yin* and *yang* (YYS 1983: 35).

Many musicologists think that the *Yijing* has influenced Chinese music so widely and deeply that, in order to understand Chinese music culture, its study is indispensable (Liang 1976:3). I will focus on its numerological system, the *yin-yang* and five-elements theory (*yinyang wuxing xueshuo* 阴阳五行学说). Following this, I examine the influence of the *Yijing* on the traditional music of the BMA.

*Jing* means “classic.” There are, however, various interpretations as to the meaning of *yi*. Some scholars have thought that *yi* (易) means “the sun” (*ri* 日) and “the moon” (*yue* 月), since in ancient times the character was constructed of those two characters (Qin 1993:3). According to Zheng Xuan (127-200 AD), the famous Confucian scholar of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), *yi* means “change” (*bianyi* 变易), “simplicity” (*jianyi* 简易) and “invariability” (*buyi* 不易) (ibid.). Many contemporary scholars, however, do not agree with the above explanations, but believe that *yi* only means “change” (Jin 1987:8).

*Yin-yang and five-elements theory*

It is said that Fu Xi, a legendary hero of the mythical past, created the *yin-yang*
theory of Yijing. According to legend, Fu Xi looked up at the sky and down at the earth, and he created two marks: a broken one (- -) for the earth, called yin; and an unbroken one (—) for the sky, called yang (Xu 1991: 373). These two marks represent the two basic opposites. While the story is a legend, the idea of yin and yang in Chinese philosophy is certainly ancient. Initially, yin and yang were terms used to indicate whether a place faced the sun or not — yang facing the sun, yin facing away from the sun. Subsequently, through practice and observation of other natural phenomena, there evolved the thought that opposites exist in all things. Furthermore, their interaction promoted the occurrence, development, and transformation of things. As a consequence, yin and yang came to be used as the means of reasoning things out and analyzing all the phenomena in the natural world (Du 1999b: 48).

In the Dao De Jing (道德经), a philosophical work attributed to Laozi in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-256 BC), we find: “All things on earth carry yin on their backs and hold yang in their arms” (Wing 1986: 42). In other words, all things contain the two components of yin and yang. Because of yin-yang theory, Chinese people strive for balance. For example they prefer even numbers to odd numbers, because only even numbers contain a balance both yin and yang. At the most basic level, there are four possible combinations of yin (- -) and yang (—) (Figure 2.1). According to the Yijing, this represent the “four seasons” (sixiang 四象) (Xu 1991:367).
Figure 2.1 Four combinations of yin-yang.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greater yin</th>
<th>Greater yang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesser yin</td>
<td>Lesser yang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these same two signs are arranged in groups of three, there are eight possible combinations called “eight trigrams” (bagua 八卦) (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Eight trigrams and their attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigram</th>
<th>Nature (Opposite)</th>
<th>Trigram</th>
<th>Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (☰☰) yang heaven</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>8. (☷☷) yin earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (☷☳) yin lake</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>7. (☳='${\text{yin}}$ yin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (☴☲) yin fire</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>6. (☲☴) yang mountain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (☵☴) yang thunder</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>5. (☴☵) yin wind, wood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.3 shows the eight trigrams, their names, and meanings, according to the Yijing.
As seen in the Figure 2.3, there are two entwined fish — yin and yang — in the centre of the eight trigrams. The black fish is the symbol of yin and the white is the symbol of yang. The two dots in the fish symbolize the idea that when one of the two forces reaches its extreme, the seed of its opposite has already been born.

The signs of four directions — north, south, east, west — and the remaining four trigrams (dui, xun, zhen and gen) surround the fish symbols. Combining two
opposite trigrams results in six-line hexagrams. Putting the trigrams of the four directions (north, south, east, west) together produces twelve lines. Finally, we find that if we combine the eight trigrams with each other, two by two, we will get sixty-four hexagrams (since $8 \times 8 = 64$). So, the basic numbering sequence of yin-yang theory is two, four\textsuperscript{8}, six, eight, twelve and sixty-four, all even numbers.

Among the odd numbers, only five has cosmological significance in China. The “five-elements” theory (wuxing xueshuo 五行学说) is another of the basic theories of Chinese philosophy, cosmology, and traditional medicine. According to this theory, there are five basic elements in the world: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. This theory is also inseparable from traditional music. Chinese music theory asserts that the five elements are related to the five notes of the pentatonic scale\textsuperscript{9} (Geng and Su 1996: 16; Zhang 1990: 57; Wang 1991: 11).

According to Hu Wei, a specialist of Yijing who lived in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the five-elements theory appeared later than the yin-yang theory, but during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD) they were fused together (Hu 1991:34).\textsuperscript{10}

The basic principle of Yijing is thus seen to be “change,” and the basis of the book

\textsuperscript{8} The number four is pronounced “si” in Mandarin, and in some Chinese dialects, it is similar to the word “death.” For this reason, many people (Cantonese in particular) try to avoid this number.

\textsuperscript{9} Those five tones, gong (宫), shang (商), jue (角), zhi (徵) and yu (羽) are equivalent of “do,” “re,” “mi,” “sol” and “la.” According to Chinese music theory, gong is associated with earth, shang with metal, jue with wood, zhi with fire and yu with water (Du 1999b: 39).

\textsuperscript{10} The scholars of that time designated the Qian (乾) trigram as the symbol of fire, and its number as seven; the Kun (坤) trigram was the symbol of water, its number, six; the Li (离) trigram corresponded to wood and was given the number eight, and the Kan (坎) trigram embedded metal and was granted the number nine. They also agreed that the earth element’s position was in the center, represented by the number five. In this way, yin-yang theory and “five-elements” theory were fused (Hu 1991:34).
is yin-yang and five-elements theory. Auspicious numbers, such as two, four, five, six, twelve, eight and sixty-four are so important to Chinese people that, in music at least, they determine the numbers of instruments in ensembles, notes in the scales, phrases in the music, and many other aspects.

**Influence of the Yijing on the BMA music**

Among the characteristics of musical sound, pitch and duration have traditionally been considered more important than dynamics and timbre, both in China and in the West. But to pitch and duration, Chinese musicians assign a very special and time-honoured quality — that of “change.” In the West, when a musician plays a classical music piece, he is expected to play according to the notation and with only minimal modification. However, in Chinese traditional music, when a piece is played, the musician is expected to make changes (beyond that shown in the notation) in order to create his own version (see Figures 2.7, 5.15 and 5.16). In this sense, the principles of the *Yijing* and Chinese traditional music coincide in the concept of “change” (Du 1999a: 180).

Numerology plays a central role in Chinese life. Marcel Granet notes that the natural numbers gave the Chinese for thousands of years an insight “into the way things are held together and into the alternating cultural systems in which we may discern the rhythms of cosmic life” (Eberhard 1983:211). Chinese living at home and abroad use numbers as guiding forces in fortune telling, *fengshui* technique, deciding dates to hold ceremonies, traveling, choosing auspicious license plates, telephone numbers and contract prices. Numerology is so important that many
Chinese will avoid numbers with bad symbolic associations. Usually, theory follows practice, and people learn from experience; but in this case, Chinese practice follows the principles of *Yijing* numerology theory, which is used to guide practice. In BMA practice, *Yinjing* numerology has influenced ensemble organization, scale types, construction of pieces and many other aspects.

Two is the basic number of *yin-yang*. The BMA melodic instruments normally include two *yunluo*, two *guanzi*, two *dizi* and two *sheng*—eight instruments total, in groups of two. The percussion include *dangzi* (a small gong), *cha* (a pair of small cymbals), *nao* (a pair of medium-sized cymbals), *bo* (a pair of large cymbals), and *gu* (a drum)—five percussions total. According to my BMA informants, pairs of melodic instruments are indeed used to symbolize the concept of *yin-yang*, and the five percussion instruments represent the five elements.

The BMA also has two types of ritual performance: sitting and processional. Sitting refers to "sitting in the tent" (*zuopeng* 坐棚), inside the ritual building or yard, where the musicians sit around a rectangular table. Figure 2.4 shows the sitting performance arrangement. Figure 2.5 is a photo of the processional type, and Figure 2.6 shows the position of each instrument in the processional. In both types, melodic instruments in pairs are employed.
Figure 2.4  Sitting performance arrangement of the BMA.

○sheng 1  ○ guanzi 1  ○ dizī 1
○yunluo 1
○ yunluo 2

Table

○ sheng 2  ○ guanzi 2  ○ dizī 2
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
pair pair pair pair five percussion

○cha  ○ nao
○drum
○dangzi  ○ bo

Figure 2.5  The BMA in procession.
There are four different metres in the traditional repertoire: *touban* (头板), *erban* (二板), *sanban* (三板) and *siban* (四板), respectively meaning “first metre,” “second metre,” “third metre,” and “fourth metre.” The first is comparable to European 4/4 or 8/4 metre,\(^\text{11}\) the second is like 2/4. The third and the fourth are both 1/4 at different speeds, fast followed by very fast. In the 1/4 metre, each beat is divided into two sub-divisions — *yin* and *yang*.\(^\text{12}\) Local musicians believe that even numbers are more important than odd numbers in their metrical system, which explains the beat sub-divisions of *yin* and *yang*. This metrical system can be again related culturally to the cosmological principle of duality which is most evident in

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\(^{11}\) The metrical system is discussed in the first section of Chapter V.

\(^{12}\) The first sub-division is called “red ban” (*hongban* 红板), the symbol of *yang*; the second sub-division is called “black ban” (*heban* 黑板), the symbol of *yin* (Miao 1985:156; Qin & Wei: 1989:503).
The number four shows up in various ways. As seen in Figures 2.4 and 2.6, there are four kinds of melodic instruments: *yunluo*, *guanzi*, *dizi* and *sheng*. Besides this, the band plays in four different metres, traditional suites have four sections, and Beijing *yinyue* repertoire exists in four different “keys” (*gong*). Some traditional pieces bear titles according to the written characters of Chinese notation. Among these pitch names, there are four numerical characters: *yi* (— “one”), *si* (四 “four”), *wu* (五 “five”) and *liu* (六 “six”). The repertoire titles using pitch names, however, always include the number four, which represents “re”. Examples include *He si pai* (合四牌 “Melody with Do and Re”), *Si shang pai* (四上牌 “Melody with Re and Fa”), and *Si liu ban* (四六板 “Melody with Re and Do”). All this shows the importance of the number four, the symbolism further discussed in Chapter V.

The number five is an important number in other ways. As seen above, the band uses five percussion instruments, corresponding to the five elements. As well, while the repertoire is often notated in the heptatonic scale, most of the pieces are performed as if they were in the pentatonic scale. When local musicians sight-sing and play diatonic traditional pieces, during solmisation, the pitches of two notes, “fa” and “ti” are often sung as the pitches of “sol” and “do,” as if these two notes did not appear in the notation. Figure 2.7 is the beginning of “Wild Geese Passing the South Building” (*Yan guo nanlou* 雁过南楼), a traditional piece of the BMA. The top staff is a transcription from the original notation; the bottom staff shows how

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13 The notation of the BMA is called *gongche*. It will be examined in Chapter V.
Lian Kui sings it.

Figure 2.7  *Yan guo nanlou.*

When we compare the bottom and top staves, we find that they are quite different. Sometimes single notes in the notation are changed into two or four notes in performance.  

I will leave further examination of these techniques to the fifth chapter, and concentrate here on discussion of note substitutions in the second and fourth bars. Notice that the pitches “fa” (a, second bar) and “ti” (d#, fourth bar) are changed into “sol” (b) and “do” (e) in Lian’s sung version (bottom staff). In other words, Lian pentatonicizes this heptatonic melody. According to my informants, their teacher taught them *feng shang bian che* (逢上唱尺 “sing sol instead of fa”) and *feng fan zou liu* (逢凡奏六 “play do instead of ti”). I believe that influence of

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14 In the third bar, for example, the quarter note “la” is changed into two eighth notes, “la” and “sol”, then the half note “re” is changed into four eighth notes, “re,” “sol,” “mi” and “re.” Some of these added pitches are *yaosheng* (摇声), some are called *akou* (阿口) by the musicians of the BMA. In Figure 2.7, I use arrows to show the *yaosheng* and mark “+” to show the *akou.*
yin-yang and five-elements theory (notably in stressing the number five and six) causes this change.

Six is believed to be an especially auspicious number since the sign for yin (--) is equivalent to the number of six in the Yijing. As shown in the Yijing, the kun hexagram contains six yin signs, and is the emblem of “smoothness” and “success” (Zhang 2000:161). This is the reason why Chinese people say “six sixes will bring success” (六六大顺), a very well-known and influential saying.

Six is also a centrally important number in Chinese traditional music. In the BMA repertoire, Bapu (八譜 “eight notes”) (Figure 2.8) is their most important piece. It is not only the first piece local musicians learned from the monk, but it also appears in almost every suite they play. According to musicians, there are six core phrases, plus a short introduction and short coda, totaling eight phrases. They think this is the reason why the piece was named Bapu. The six phrases occupy fifty-six beats, with four beats in the introduction and coda respectively; sixty-four beats in all. Yijing theory is clearly manifest in the construction of this piece. According to Gao Houyong’s research, the sixty-four beats are representative of sixty-four hexagrams and the eight phrases are representative of the eight basic trigrams (Gao 1981:155).

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15 In southern China, this piece is called Baban — a variat with eight beats each, plus on additional four beats internally. Bapu in the BMA repertoire is unusual in that it is said to have only six phrases, plus introduction and coda. For the construction of Baban, see Thrasher’s paper Structural Continuity in Chinese Sizhu: the Baban Model (Thrasher 1989).
Figure 2.8  Bapu.

Allegretto

According to my informants, the construction of Bapu is as follows:

Phrases:  Introduction  1  2  3  4  5  6  coda

Number of beats:  4  8  8  8  12  12  4

Eight corresponds to the number of trigrams. In Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.6, we have seen that the BMA uses eight melodic instruments. Besides Bapu and Xiao pipa ling (Figure 2.9), there are other traditional pieces of eight phrases, and many phrases have eight beats to fit the number of trigrams.

The number twelve (six times two, according to some interpretations) is traditionally one of key cosmological significance, notably in the imperial palace and
Confucian temple, where the twelve chromatic pitches were consciously associated with the twelve months, and formed the basis for instrument temperament (e.g., *zhong* bells, *sheng* mouth organ). In the countryside, however, the number twelve played a less significant role. There are two phrases that have twelve beats in *Bapu*. Other pieces also have a similar structure. *Xiao pipa ling* (小琵琶令 “Small Pipa Tune”) (Figure 2.9) is an example. According to my informants, this piece is organized in eight phrases, in the following structural pattern:

Phrases: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
Beats: 8 4 10 4 12 4 5 4

The even numbered phrases, with four beats each, have the same melodic motif, whereas the odd numbered phrases have eight, ten, twelve and five beats. Each of these numbers corresponds to numeric values in the *yin-yang* and five-elements theories.

Figure 2.9 *Xiao pipa ling.*
Number sixty-four is also found in the BMA repertoire. For example *Bapu* has sixty-four beats. This *qupai* was supposedly created according to the numerological system of the *Yijing* (Gao 1981:155).

Based on these examples, it can be seen that the numbers commonly used in BMA music demonstrate a clear relationship with the *Yijing*, *yin-yang* and five-elements theory. It is reasonable to draw the conclusion that BMA musicians continuously follow the mathematical models of the *Yijing*. Zhang Zhenyu, a musician in the BMA, said to me: “Our music is linked with nature. There are four seasons in a year; we have four *diao* for performance; and our music expresses the gamut of human feelings, notably joy, anger, grief, and happiness. There are five elements, and many of our pieces have five tones.” Zhou Wenzhu, another BMA musician, believes the number of melodic instruments symbolizes the *yin* and *yang* and the eight trigrams, while the number of percussion instruments symbolizes the five elements.

One additional point: in May 1978, a set of 2,400-year old bronze bells (*bianzhong*), was excavated in Suixian County, Hubei Province. Because the bell set was unearthed from Marquis Yi’s tomb, it was named Marquis Yi bells. There are sixty-four bells in the set (Wang & Du 1999:32). This fact suggests that around the time of Confucius, the sixty-four hexagrams of *yin-yang* theory had already influenced Chinese music.

Like Confucius’ *li-yue* theory, *Yijing* and *yin-yang*, the five-elements theory is still alive and continues to influence the music of the BMA.
Local Beliefs

People of Beixinzhuang claim to be Chan Buddhists. Buddhism was founded in India and disseminated into China from Central Asia about 2000 years ago. During the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-581 AD), Buddhism spread throughout China, and Chinese Buddhist schools, including Chan, were established. During the Sui Dynasty (581-618 A.D) and Tang Dynasty (618-907), Chinese Buddhist schools spread to Korea, Japan and Vietnam (Wang & Du 1999: 131). Today, Buddhism is one of the most popular religions in China and Chan Buddhism is the most prevalent school (CDK 1988: 527).

The people in Beixinzhuang claim to be Buddhists, but their temple was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and there are no longer any services. Villagers do not have traditional Buddhist statues in the usual place of honour in their homes, and people no longer study the teachings of the Buddha. Although some people claim to believe the basics of Buddhism, nobody seems to have any substantive knowledge of its principles.

Actually, this situation is found not only in Beixinzhuang but also in other areas around Beijing. What is more, this phenomenon is quite common all over China. In order to understand this situation, we need to understand the history of Chinese attitudes toward belief and return briefly to the influence of Confucianism.

When Buddhism entered China, Confucianism had already become deeply

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16 Chan (禅) is a Chinese school of the Buddhist religion that teaches one must look inside oneself for understanding rather than depend on holy writings. In Japanese, character 禅 is pronounced as “Zen.”

17 Buddhism is based upon the “three jewels” (Sanskrit: tri-ratna) consisting of the Buddha, his teachings (Sanskrit: dharma), and his monastic community (Sanskrit: samgha).
rooted in the social fabric a thousand years earlier. According to the research of Jin Zhongming, during the Warring States Period (476-221 BC) the Chinese worshiped heaven, earth, parents, emperors, and teachers (tian, di, jun, qing, shi. 天、地、君、亲、师). Xun Zi (313-230 BC), a famous Confucian scholar during that time, said that to worship those five is “the root of propriety” (li zhi ben 礼之本) (Jin 1994:41).

During the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD), Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BC), a Confucian who was the prime minister of Emperor Wudi, merged three of the five — emperors, parents and teachers — into one, and wrote the following in his book Chunqiu fanlu (春秋繁露 “The Dew of Spring and Autumn”):

What are the origins? The origins of everything are heaven, earth and human beings. A person is born by heaven’s will; he is supported by earth and educated by teachers. Heaven gives him life along with filial piety and fraternal duty; earth supports him with clothes and food; teachers teach him with propriety and music. If a person lives without filial piety and fraternal duty, his life loses meaning. If a person lives without clothes and food, his life loses support; and if a person lives without propriety and music, his life loses achievement (YYS 1983: 55).

It is apparent that, according to Dong Zhongshu’s idea, filial piety and fraternal duty are the most important things in life, and without these life becomes meaningless.

Confucianism pays a great deal of attention to education. In the Chinese language, the word for education is jiao (教). This character is composed of two parts. The left part is “孝” (xiao), meaning filial piety; the right part is “文” (wen) meaning culture. According to this character, Jin Rikun, a Korean scholar, concludes that the educational core of the Confucianism is filial piety (Jin 1994:58).
If we study the character for filial piety — “孝,” we can see that it is made of two other characters: 老 (lao = old) and 子 (zi = children). The Shuowen (说文), a dictionary published around 100 AD, explains this character as follows: “The upper part of the character is a simplified form of ‘old’, and the lower part shows children bearing him up.” (ibid.) From this explanation, the original meaning of the word is clear: filial piety is the core of the Confucian educational system.

Luo Zhufeng and Huang Xinchuan studied the characteristics of Chinese religious belief system and they think that, traditionally, the main belief of Han Chinese people is focused upon the worship of heaven’s will (tianming chongbai 天命崇拜) and the ancestors who live there (zuxian chongbai 祖先崇拜). These two scholars believe that, since Han Chinese already believed this during the Warring States Period (476-221 BC), neither Buddhism nor Daoism could succeed in occupying a dominant position in Chinese society. This may be among the reasons why there has never been a state religion, nor has China ever experienced a religious war (CDK 1988:6).

When Confucianism became the prevailing ideology of China, it advocated the rule of virtue and the respect of heaven, but it did not require one to totally believe these concepts. Confucius’ famous epigram clearly illustrates this: “Hold ghosts and gods respectfully at bay” (jin guishen er yuanzhi 敬鬼神而远之) (Liu Qi 1999:44). Emperors thought that their power was received from heaven, so they called themselves “sons of heaven” (tianzi 天子). The emperor’s authority was

18 There are fifty-six nationalities in China, among them the Han is the majority.
always higher than any religious authority in the country. The rulers used the
religions as ruling tools, but at the same time they kept a certain distance from
religions (CDK 1988:6). Tian Qing points out that in Chinese history, religion was
always kept separate from state power, and this fact influenced the common Chinese
people's belief systems (Tian 1997: 3).

After studying the historic background, Luo and Huang summarize the
characteristics of Chinese religious attitudes:

Sometimes Chinese believe a religion and sometimes they do not believe it
at all. When they have some problem, they believe it; when they have no
problem, they do not. In order to get blessing and prosperity, they do not
care what kind of god they have to worship; they can turn to Confucianism,
Buddhism or Daoism. At the same time, they can worship Buddha, God,
ghosts, or the Virgin Mary (CDK 1988:6).

If we understand these characteristics of the Chinese attitude toward religious
belief, we can appreciate the behaviour of the Beixinzhuang people. Although they
claim to be Buddhists, the core of their belief is Confucianism, especially filial piety.

About one kilometre to the west of Beixinzhuang there is a village called Lijiafu.
Many people living in the village are Daoists. Just like people in Beixinzhuang,
they do not go to any Daoist temple to worship the gods; nor do they read the Daoist
classics. At home, nobody has a statue of any of the Daoist sages, and very few
people know basic Daoist theory. There is a Daoist Music Association in the
village and, when the people of that village hold a funeral ceremony they not only
invite the local Daoist Music Association to play, but they also invite the BMA to
play Buddhist music. They accept both Daoist and Buddhist music.

About one kilometre to the north of Beixinzhuang, there is another village
called Niufang. Most people in this village are Catholics and there is a Catholic church in the village as well. They have no Catholic Music Association, but when they hold a funeral, they invite a Catholic band from Tongzhou district\(^{19}\) to play. However, for most funerals they also invite the BMA to play Buddhist music. Like people in Lijiafu village, it does not matter whether the music is Buddhist or Catholic, or whether the funeral procedure follows the Buddhist rather than Catholic custom.

Li Huanzhi asserts that Chinese culture is not a religious one, but rather a tolerant one (Li 1997:612). The behaviour of people living in Beixinzhuang, Niufang and Lijiafu, support Li’s conclusion. In the suburbs of Beijing, no matter whether a person claims to be Buddhist, Daoist or Christian, Confucianism is ingrained in him. Filial piety is still a very important propriety and, because of this, elaborate funeral ceremonies are held to honour dead ancestors.

\(^{19}\) Tongzhou is a neighbouring district of Daxin County, in which there are several Catholic Music Associations.
CHAPTER III
Beixinzhuang Music Association

The BMA and its activities are discussed in this chapter, beginning with a description of the founder of the association, the Buddhist monk named Daguang, who gave the first instructions to the peasants. Following this, the current organization and activities of the BMA are described.

Monk Daguang and his contribution

In China, some heroes are thought to have metamorphosed into Daoist and Buddhist gods after their death. Guan Yu (162-219) was such a hero. Guan Yu was a general who served Liu Bei (161-223), king of the Shu Kingdom during Three Kingdoms’ era (220-280). He was well known for his countless outstanding military achievements. After he died, people believed that his soul was alive, and he had become a martial god of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism (Jin 1999:68). The Buddhists call him “the Protective Grandfather of Buddhism” (Hufaye 护法爷); Daoists call him “Emperor of Guan” (Guan shen dijun 关圣帝君); and the Confucians call him “the Confucius of Shanxi Province” (Shanxi fuzi 山西夫子), since he was born in Shanxi Province (Jiang 1994:22). Guan Yu has been regarded as the incarnation of loyalty, filial piety, righteousness and bravery ever since the Song Dynasty (960-1279) (Jin 1999:69).

There are a great many temples in China where Guan Yu is worshipped. There
are generally known as Lord Guan temples (guandi miao 关帝庙) and they are considered to be martial temples (wumiao 武庙), in contrast to Confucian temples, which are thought to be civil temples (wenmiao 文庙). According to historic records, in Beijing alone there were one hundred and sixteen Lord Guan temples during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), accounting for one-tenth of all temples of various kinds in that city; there were many more in the neighbouring counties (Jin 1999: 71).

Before 1958, there also existed a Buddhist Lord Guan temple in Beixinzhuang. According to the inscription engraved on the temple’s bell, now kept in the office of the Villagers’ Committee, it was in the year of 1827 that the villagers of Beixinzhuang pooled their money, had the bell made and donated it to the temple. Therefore, the temple must have been built before the year of 1827. This particular temple was under the jurisdiction of a larger and older temple, the Tanzhe Temple (潭柘寺), located in the western region of Beijing. Tanzhe was built in the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), making it the earliest Buddhist temple built in Beijing (Liao & Wang 1993:7).

Before 1950, there were five monks in the Lord Guan temple of the Beixinzhuang village. Daguang was the head of the four monks, among whom one was Daguang’s teacher and the rest were his pupils. All members of the group were accomplished musicians who regularly played at the funerals of wealthy people and who offered musical instruction to Buddhist monks from other temples.

Daguang’s temple owned six hectares of farmland, which were worked by
peasants hired to provide food and other necessities. Daguang paid an annual salary of about 400-500 *yuan* (at today’s value) to each peasant that was hired. The revenue of the temple derived mainly from payments for the monk’s services at funerals, the charge being the equivalent of about 2,500 *yuan* per funeral. This cost was well beyond the ordinary financial means of the very poor peasants, but the landlords and wealthier could manage. The monks at that time were quite well off, due to the money they received from this service.

Daguang was born in 1887 at Dongji Village, Gu’an County, Hebei Province. In 1899, when he was twelve years old, he became a monk at the Zaolin Temple in Beijing. He studied Beijing *yinyue* for eighteen years, learning percussion at the temple of Aoxiaoying and melodic instruments at the temple of Huangxidian. He was in service for about ten years at Xianghe County of Hebei Province. In 1940, he was assigned to the Beixinzhuang by Tanzhe Temple and became the leader of the Lord Guan temple.

In the “land reform campaign” (1950), the CCP took the farmland from the temple and allotted it to the peasants. As the leader of the temple, Daguang was labeled a “landowner” (*dizhu fenzi* 地主份子), which meant that he was officially declared a “counter-revolutionary.” The statue of Guan Yu was destroyed. The other four monks were forced to go home and resume their secular life, but Daguang had no home to return to, so he remained in the temple.

The Villagers’ Committee allotted a field to Daguang to farm, but Daguang did

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1 During that time, a “counter-revolutionary” had to report their activity every week to the Villagers’ Committee, and he could not leave the village without the committee’s permission.
not know agricultural methods and was too old to learn. In 1951, however, about ten young peasants from the village, who wanted to study Beijing yinyue, made an arrangement with him. The young peasants would farm Daguang’s land for him, and in return, he would teach them Beijing yinyue.

This was the origin of the BMA. In 1951, Daguang presented to the BMA all the instruments and Buddhist vestments belonging to the temple. The BMA made it a rule that members were not allowed to withdraw. Although Zhang Tingyuan was voted to be its official leader, since he was the leader of the CCP in the village, the real leader was actually Daguang. The young peasants held a ritual ceremony formally honouring Daguang as their master. In 1954 and 1956, a few more peasants joined the BMA. During the 1950s, virtually all members of the BMA were Daguang’s pupils.

According to Lian Kui, one of the original pupils, it took six years to learn Beijing yinyue well. Their learning process was organized in three stages:

1. Learning to play percussion
2. Learning to sing from gongche notation
3. Learning to play the guanzi and other melodic instruments.

In learning percussion, Daguang read the percussion notation\(^2\) phrase by phrase. The pupils repeated it in the same way. After the pupils had learned the notation, Daguang made them recite this while practicing the percussion pieces on instruments made of paper — that is, before the real instruments were used. It took them more than half a year to fulfill the objectives of learning to play percussion instruments.

\(^2\) This notation is called luogujing (锣鼓经), an onomatopoeic notation system. See Figure 4.4.
and their rhythms.

For the learning of gongche notation, the teaching method was the same. After Daguang sang a phrase, his pupils repeated it. Daguang placed great importance on sight-singing, and he used to say to the pupils: “In order to play well, first you must sing well.” and “You cannot play beautifully unless you are able to sing beautifully.” The learning objectives of this stage were to train the pupils’ ears and to teach them sight-singing. Yet, the most important objective was to be able to read the gongche notation and create variations, for the pupils were expected to learn how to create an elaborate melody based on the skeleton notation. It took them over one year to learn this phase.

The study of melodic instruments constituted the third stage. Daguang started his pupils with the guanzi. He showed the pupils how to play, before asking them to try. When a student was playing, he always played a sheng in accompaniment. Guanzi can be played with either of two different double reeds, a large one or a small one. For the first two years, pupils learned to play with the large reeds. Learning to play with small one took them another two years. They also learned how to play sheng, dizi and yunluo. In ensemble, the students were given a choice of instruments, but Daguang always played sheng or drum. Classes were usually held at night, as the pupils were busy with farm work during the day. During the winter months, however, time during the day was available because there was less work to do in the field. The pupils had their classes in the Lord Guan temple. Sometimes they also lived there.

Daguang not only taught his pupils how to play the music, but he also
introduced other notations of Beijing yinyue as employed by different temples. Daguang emphasized the importance of instrumental practice and rehearsal in his teaching. He often required his pupils to accompany him when he played for funerals. According to members of the BMA, the young peasants started to play at funerals in 1954.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Daguang was officially declared a “class enemy” and an “object of proletarian dictatorship” meaning (in part) that he was not allowed to teach, especially young peasants. However he continued teaching anyway, because the villagers supported the BMA and the leaders of the CCP in the village were members of the BMA.

During the period 1951 to 1963, Zhang Tingyuan and Wang Wenlin were the secretaries of the CCP in the village, and both were members of the BMA. Zhang not only learned music himself, but also asked his son to learn. After 1964, when the BMA was banned, he moved their belongings into his house and held the BMA meetings there.

During the Socialist Education Movement (1963), the cadres of the CCP Committee of Beijing criticized and denounced Wang Wenlin as a traitor to the CCP, since he was a member of the BMA and followed the “class enemy” to propagate “feudal superstition.” Consequently, Wang lost his position. On the fourteenth day of the eighth month of 1963 (lunar calendar), those same cadres criticized and denounced Daguang, and confiscated the instruments and vestments housed in the temple. The BMA was forced to stop its activity from then on. It was reported that Daguang was severely attacked physically and suffered greatly as a result.
In June of 1966, the Cultural Revolution began. One day in August, the Red Guard from Beijing visited Beixinzhuang and destroyed the Lord Guan temple. Daguang, who was already ill, was tortured for several days and died soon after. He was seventy-nine.

Before he died, Daguang asked his pupils to go to the Central Committee of the CCP in Beijing and ask them to return the instruments and vestments that were taken (a request that could not be made for another ten years). He believed that they were the symbols of the heritage of Chinese musical culture. His last and only wish was that his pupils would continue with the BMA traditions.

Daguang played music for funerals all his life, but at his funeral there was no
music at all because his pupils had no instruments. All they could do was sing the melodies silently in their hearts. Many people of Beixinzhuan fondly remember Daguang and his music. His photo is on a wall in every pupil’s house. They still play the music he taught them and they feel he is still alive in the music they play.

Current Organization

Although the members call their organization the Beixinzhuan Music Association, nobody in the village calls them “musicians” (yinyue jia 音乐家). Rather, they are called “monks” (heshang 和尚). The members themselves prefer this title since they follow the Confucian idea of ceremonial music being of a high class and, therefore, dignified. Thus, “monks” playing Beijing yinyue are thought to be of a considerably higher class than musicians playing chuigushou music.

When the mourner invites the BMA, he always says, “I am going to invite the monks of Beixinzhuan” to “do a Buddhist ceremony” (foshi 佛事). Everybody knows that they are not “real monks.”\(^3\) Except for Shi Huaishen, who can recite several paragraphs of Buddhist scriptures, nobody even knows how to read these scriptures at a funeral ceremony.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution (1976), Wang Wenlin and Zhang Zhenyu (two members of the BMA) went to Beijing and to meet with the Central Committee of the CCP, as Daguang had requested. Wang and Zhang complained that the cadres of the CCP had confiscated their instruments and vestments, and they

\(^3\) According to Chinese Buddhism, “real monks” must devote their entire lives to Buddhist principles, including living in the temples, not marring, vegetarian diet, etc.
asked that these things be returned. After several months, they were informed that both instruments and vestments had been kept by the county government and could now be returned. Their most beautiful and meaningful item, however, a Buddhist vestment, could not be found and, as a result, the BMA was compensated in the amount of one thousand yuan. The BMA used the money to purchase new music instruments, which allowed them in 1978 to resuscitate their music organization and perform their music again. They accepted new members into their league in 1981 and 1983, and in February 1985 took a part at a Lantern Festival parade in Huangcun, the capital of the county of Daxing. They appeared under a banner that proudly announced “Beixinzhuang Music Association,” to the applause and cheers of the spectators.

Before the Socialist Education Movement (1963), when the BMA played at funerals, they could charge about fifty yuan per day. At that time, each musician received about four yuan per day but had to turn in two yuan to the production brigade of the commune. They now charge between 700 to 1,500 yuan per day and each musician gets about 50 to 100 yuan. Annually, a musician can make as much as 2,500 yuan from playing for funerals, which is higher than the average income among the villagers of Beixinzhuang.

The BMA now has fifteen members.4 Shi Huaishen was voted to be the formal leader (huitou 会头), since he is the oldest of Daguang’s pupils. Actually, Shi is only an honorary leader and treasurer. The real leaders are Zhang Guangcai and

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4 Besides musicians, there is another man called huoji (伙计 “partner”) who manages the percussion and vestments.
Zhang Zhenyu. They were made leaders because they have the best artistry among the musicians and are skilled at bargaining with customers and making decisions. They negotiate the fees, collect the money, and distribute it to the musicians. Zhang Guangcai keeps some money on hand for repairing and buying new instruments.

After Wang Wenlin moved in 1989 to the nearby town of Huangcun to live with his son, there was only one musician left playing *dizi*. Zhang Yu'en is now too old to play. Presently, the BMA does not have enough musicians to organize a standard band. Sometimes they must ask musicians living in Lijiawu village to help them and sometimes they use only one *dizi* instead of two. From the roster of the BMA (Appendix 5), it can be seen that there is no musician whose age is under forty. The musicians worry about who will carry on the tradition, because at this moment there are no young men in the village who want to learn.

**Activities**

Prior to 1963, the BMA performed mainly for four events: praying for rain, New Year's parade, “distribution of lantern flowers” (*san deng hua* 散灯花) on the day of the Lantern Festival, and funerals. After 1978, they stopped playing for the rain-prayers, but still perform for the other three activities. Recently, they have also had some opportunities to play for conferences, radio programs, musicologists, and together with musicians from other villages, counties and provinces. They have also made tours to visit other ensembles in attempt to compare different versions and schools.
I will discuss their activities at funerals in the sixth chapter. Here I introduce their activities in at the New Year parades, distribution of lantern flowers and some other activities.

The celebration of Chinese New Year starts on the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar (generally, in the late January or early February) and lasts for fifteen days. The annual New Year's parade is the greatest event of the year since it officially brings the old year to an end and welcomes the New Year. Conventionally, in many cities, towns and villages, parades consist of bands, dance groups, opera companies (or clubs) and martial arts troupes. The bands play traditional music; opera companies perform episodes from an opera featuring the animal of the year; and martial arts shows are staged to drive away evil spirits. Occasionally competitions are held, the winners receiving “red envelopes” filled with money contributed by the audience, and thus raising their prestige in the local community.

Zhangziying Township and Daxing County always hold their parades at noon on the fifteenth of the first month, which is the Lantern Festival. Before 1963, the BMA used to take part in the Zhangziying parades. Since 1985, however, they have participated only occasionally, because they are also sometimes invited to perform in the parades of other towns. In these parades, they do not wear Buddhist vestments, so they are not acknowledged as Buddhist monks, but only as ordinary secular musicians. In the 1990s, the Zhangziying Township changed its Lantern Festival parade into a small music festival. In the afternoon, the music associations of different villages gather on the main street. Every association sets up a table, and musicians sit around it and play music. People walk among the tables, stopping and
listening as they choose. Although members of the BMA think the festival is not as enjoyable as the parade, they join the festival almost every year.

In Beixinzhuang, the “distribution of lantern flowers” ritual is also held on the morning of the Lantern Festival. Villagers believe that the ritual can protect them from ghosts, evil spirits and diseases or catastrophes that may fall upon them in the coming year. The musicians of the BMA start the ritual in a room, by hanging a picture of Buddhist gods on the wall and preparing a table with offerings and incense. Then Shi Huaishen recites the scriptures and burns incense in honour of Buddha. When he finishes, the musicians play one piece of music. After these indoor activities, they leave the room and march around the village, playing music as they go. The band stops from time to time in places where people believe there are ghosts and spirits. Shi Huaishen distributes lantern flowers in those places — flowers made of paper and soaked in oil which he burns and lets go from his hand — while chanting very loudly “Ghosts and spirits, go away!” The members say that this ritual works very well protecting the village.5

In addition to the above rituals, the BMA also organizes tours to visit other bands in Beijing and Hebei Province. They have visited the Zhihua Temple, listened to their band and studied their notation. They also listened to the band from Qujiaying village, and compared the traditions.

After the Cultural Revolution, Lian Dehai became the leader of the Villagers’ Committee. He believes that the music of the BMA is one of the most valuable

5 When this ritual was banned between 1964 and 1978, the people of the village say they encountered many problems, but since they resumed the rituals in 1978, the village has experienced no further difficulties.
heritages of the village. In order to let people and experts in Beijing know this music, he often invites musicologists to his village to do field work. Once he invited all the students of the Composition and Musicology Departments of the Conservatory of China (Beijing) to travel to his village for the week of spring break. The BMA musicians gave the musicologists valuable information, in exchange for lessons in the fundamentals of European music theory. Every BMA musician now knows different keys and metres of European music, and some have learned how to read cipher notation (i.e., numerical notation).

The musicologists who visited Beixinzhuang arranged with the BMA to give performances at the Conservatory of China, Radio Beijing, and at several national and international conferences. Because these activities created good publicity, they are now better known in North China.

Figure 3.2 The BMA members practicing in a courtyard.
CHAPTER IV

Material Culture

This chapter examines the material culture of the BMA. The first section serves as an introduction to the notations, followed by a description of musical instruments.

Music notebooks and notations

According to the members of the BMA, Daguang had several music notebooks, totaling over one hundred pieces. While the original manuscripts were lost during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), two copies had been made prior to this period. One copy, with forty-nine pieces in gongche notation and four pieces in onomatopoeic notation for percussion, is kept by Lian Kui, who had hand copied them from Daguang's books in 1952. The other, also hand copied and kept by Zhou Wenzhu, contains twenty-one percussion pieces. In this section, I will discuss these two books together with the notation for melodic instruments and for percussion.

Notation Books

On the cover of Lian's copy, the title reads: “The Notation Book of the BMA”( Beixinzhuang Yinyuehui Quzibu 北辛庄音乐会曲子簿). The contents of the book are listed in Appendix 6. Among the gongche pieces, the first and the second are called “The Prelude of the Wild Geese Passing the Southern Building”
and “The Prelude of the Labeled Melody of Si and Shang.” Those two pieces are introductions to the third and fourth pieces. Later pieces include “The Second Body of a Sorcerer’s Trance Dance,” “The Third Body of An Unbroken Piece.” Here, “the second body” and “the third body” refer to variations.

Figure 4.1 *Le tou ge, gongche notation.*

A)
The percussion notation book kept by Zhou has no cover or title. The contents of the book are listed in Appendix 7. Among the pieces in this book, there are six pieces with the word "body" in their titles, as in "the Second Body" (Ershen 二身) or "the Third Body" (Sanshen 三身). Here, "body" also means a different variation. These variations have the same closing material, but their beginnings are different.
Figure 4.2  *Shawei*, percussion notation.

A)
B) Transcription of the percussion notation.

_Gongche Notation_

The _gongche_ system of notation, employed in one form or another since the Song Dynasty (960-1279) has been used to notate common-practice music of various types (as opposed to the ritual music of the palace). In this system, there are nine
characters, which serve as equivalents of seven diatonic pitches (see Figure 4.3). 1

In the gongche notation of the BMA, three characters are written in distinctive ways: “の” for “四” (si), “ク” for 五 (wu) and “尺” for “七” (che). Characters written in this fashion are also found in the notation books of the Zhihua Temple in Beijing. According to Yang Yinliu, these are older types of gongche notation (Yang 1981:990).

Figure 4.3 Gongche pitch characters.

Standard Characters: 合四一上尺工凡六五
BMA Characters: 合の一上尺工凡六五
Pronunciation: he si yi shang che gong fan liu wu
Standard pitch equivalent: sol la ti do re mi fa sol la
BMA equivalent: do re mi fa sol la flat do re

Another unusual thing about BMA gongche notation is that, among the nine characters, he (合) is “do,” unlike standard gongche notation where shang (上) is “do” (also seen in Figure 4.3). According to Huang Xiangpeng, this association can also be found in the notations of the Zhihua Temple (Huang 1990:70). Shen Kuo’s book, Bu Bi Tan (补笔谈 “Supplement of Talking with a Pen”), 2 also shows he as “do” in the old system of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). It was not until

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1 For a full explanation of gongche notation, see Miao 1985:119.
2 Shen Kuo (1031-1095) is a famous Chinese musicologist of the eleventh century. His most important book is Mengxi bitan (梦溪笔谈 “Talking with a Pen in Mengxi”).
after the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), when operas were popularized throughout China, that shang began to be used as “do” (Liu Yong 1999:42). Using he as “do” is further evidence suggesting that the notation of the BMA maintains the older system once used in the Northern Song Dynasty.\(^3\)

In the gongche notation, rhythmic subdivisions are normally indicated with a system of dot (,) and circles (.) to show primary and secondary beats. In the BMA system, however, only the primary beat (ban) is given; there is no mark to show secondary beats (yan). Therefore, by simply reading the notation, the metre of a given piece of music cannot be known for certain. Other notational marks include repeat signs: \(\star\) and fermata / . Some Chinese characters are also used as musical terms. For example, the term rushen (入身) means “entering the main piece,” indicating that the introduction (sanban) section has finished and the main section (youban)\(^4\) follows. The term sha (杀) means “coda”; while the term wan (完) means “end.”

**Percussion notation**

BMA percussion notation uses thirteen onomatopoeic Chinese characters and four signs (Figure 4.4, the signs indicated with “ * ”). These are used to indicate both striking techniques and rhythmic subtleties. Like the gongche notation,

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\(^3\) In BMA notation, sometimes in the lower range liu (六) wu (五) are used instead of he (合) si (四), but in the higher range, he and si are never used. According to Lu Yunkui, this is also an older form of gongche notation (Lu 1987: 872). The notation system does not have key signatures and every piece can be played in four different keys.

\(^4\) Ban, yan, sanban and youban are explained in the first section of the Chapter V.
percussion notation only has the mark of the ban beat "、"," the sign of repeating "［］"," and that of fermata "／".

Figure 4.4. Characters and signs in the BMA percussion notation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Realization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>光</td>
<td>guang</td>
<td>an attack with two bo(^5) cymbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>么*</td>
<td>cha</td>
<td>an attack with two nao cymbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>力</td>
<td>li</td>
<td>nao cymbals hit at their rims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>し*</td>
<td>tong</td>
<td>the drum hit in the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一</td>
<td>yi</td>
<td>bo cymbals hit at their rims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi</td>
<td>one bo cymbal vertically struck at the centre of another bo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>舌</td>
<td>guo</td>
<td>attack using two cha cymbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>当</td>
<td>dang</td>
<td>dangzi gong solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ノ*</td>
<td>zhuo</td>
<td>drum hit near the rim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>弄</td>
<td>nong</td>
<td>drum hit twice in the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>儿</td>
<td>er</td>
<td>long fermata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>的</td>
<td>di</td>
<td>short fermata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>啊</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>牙</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>喘</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>两</td>
<td>liang</td>
<td>a note to be played twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三</td>
<td>san</td>
<td>a note to be played three times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Figure 4.2 (b), when a piece has ban beats only, then the small

\(^5\) bo, nao and cha are different cymbals, explanations of which is given in the next section.

cymbals (cha), and the small gong (dangzi) play quarter notes, and the drum plays a mixture of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Is there Confucian influence in the presence of this notation system? The Confucian legacy was transmitted in written form, which served to legitimate the ancient ways. Confucius once said that: “I am a transmitter, not a creator. I believe and love the ancient classics” (Liu Qi 1999:48). The BMA musicians value their notation for similar reasons. But they never use it to transcribe non-Buddhist pieces, the reasons being that they think notation reflects the highest values of Chinese culture and those “low class” pieces should not be written down in this system. Thus, this attitude is also part of the Confucian way.

Musical instruments

BMA musicians divide their instruments into two categories, “civil” (wen 文) and “martial” (wu 武), an ancient dichotomy used in opera and music to reflect literary and military themes respectively. Similar classification is found in many areas of China. Generally speaking, the “civil instruments” are melodic ones and the “martial instruments” are percussion. Among the percussion, the frame of gongs (yunluo 云锣) belongs to the “civil” category, for it always plays melody. In this section, I will introduce these instruments according to this division.

Civil instruments

1) Yunluo

Yunluo (云锣 “cloud gongs”) is a set of ten small tuned gongs suspended within
a wooden frame (Figure 4.5). The gongs are struck with a stick, *luozi* (锣子), its striking end in the shape of a hammer made from deer horn. When sitting, the *yunluo* is placed in a stand on a table. In procession, it is held by its handle. Usually, two sets of gongs are used, though in sitting performances one musician may occasionally play both sets.

The *Yuanshi* (元史 History of Yuan Dynasty) recorded this instrument during the fourteenth century and described how it was played (Miao 1985:487). Thrasher has shown that in paintings, the *yunluo* has been used in imperial processions and religious ceremonies from this period onward (Thrasher 2000: 52). The BMA has two *yunluo*, one of which is quite old. Zhang Guangcai heard from Daguang that this one was made in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), when the emperor Qianlong reigned (1736-1796). In the BMA, the *yunluo* establishes the standard pitch, and the mouth organs (*sheng* 笙) are tuned accordingly.6

The members of the BMA think that the *yunluo* is a valued symbol of their religious music. They believe that the associations of other villages who do not have *yunluo* in their ensemble should not be granted the title of "music association."

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6 According Zhang Zhentao, in the pre-Qin Dynasty (before 221 B.C.), bells (*bianzhong* 编钟) were the leading instruments in the palace orchestra. He believes that the bells were replaced by *fangxian* (方响) — an ancient percussion instrument composed of sixteen iron plates hanging in a frame — during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties, since bells were too heavy and thus difficult to play. Zhang also argues that *yunluo* took the place of the *fangxian*, since it was lighter and very convenient to play (Zhang 1997:38).
Figure 4.5  Zhang Zhenyu playing Yunluo.

Figure 4.6  *Yunluo* pitches (BMA).

\[\begin{align*}
c' &= 3 \\
d_2 &
\quad b_2 &\quad a_2 \\
e_2 &
\quad f_2 &\quad g_2 \\
c'^\#_2 &
\quad b_1 &\quad a_1
\end{align*}\]
2) Guanzi

The guanzi (管子) is a reed-pipe constructed of a hard-wood, with a large double reed inserted at the upper end. The instrument has seven frontal finger holes and one thumbhole on the back.\(^7\)

All of the guanzi of the BMA were purchased in the music shops of Beijing, except for two small ones which belonged to Daguang. One of these has one thumbhole in the back, while the other has two thumbholes (for left and right thumbs). The guanzi with two thumbholes is of the ancient type, the same type of which was found in the Zhihua Temple.

The guanzi, historically known as bili (筚篥), was assigned a central position in Sui and Tang court entertainment ensembles (Thrasher 2000:45). According to Yang Yinliu, the guanzi with two thumbholes was used in the palace music during the Song Dynasty (960-1279) (Xue & Wu 1987:85). Lian Kui, the keeper of the guanzi, says that the lower thumbhole was used to play “g” (xiayi 下一). However, since there is no “g” on the yunluo (the pitch-setting instrument), this note is rarely used in their Buddhist repertoire. Lian plugged this hole several years ago. The small guanzi in Figure 4.7 (right) belonged to Daguang (one thumbhole plugged).

In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), guanzi was the leading instrument in court ensembles (Miao 1985:128). Today it is still a leading instrument among melodic instruments in the BMA band, continuing the tradition.

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\(^7\) The guanzi of the BMA are in three different sizes. The large one is about thirty-three centimetres in length. The middle one is about twenty-five centimetres in length and the small one, eighteen centimetres.
Figure 4.7  Guanzi.

Figure 4.8  Lian Kui playing the guanzi.
3) Sheng

The sheng (笙 “mouth organ”) is constructed of a hemispheric wind-chest, into which are inserted bamboo pipes with free reeds of bronze. The BMA sheng has seventeen pipes, but only fourteen are furnished with reeds (in the traditional style). It is played by alternately exhaling and inhaling, producing open-fifth chords for each pitch. In his book, *Chinese Musical Instruments*, Alan Thrasher describes this process as follows:

In order to prevent all pipes from sounding continuously, each pipe also has a small fingerhole which, when open, breaks the reinforcing air column, thereby preventing that reed and pipe from sounding. Covering a fingerhole allows a given pipe to reinforce its reed for vibration and, in this manner, several pipes can be sounded at once, enabling players to perform clusters of harmonically related pitches (Thrasher 2000: 8).

Among all instrument types in the BMA ensemble, the sheng is the most ancient. Well documented in the Confucian classic literature, the mouth organ has been a vital part of both ritual and entertainment ensembles from Confucius’ time onward (Miao 1985: 348).

One of Daguang’s very old sheng is kept by Lian Kui. Three of its pipes are disabled, like the other sheng used by the BMA. According to Lian Kui, the pitches of those three reeds were “g” (xiayi 下一), “d#” (gaofan 高凡) and “c” (xiagong 下工), notes no longer used in the sheng part of their Buddhist repertoire. His sheng is similar to the sheng housed in the Zhihua Temple which, according to Yang Yinliu, is in the style of the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasty instruments (Yang 1981:989).
4) Dizi

The *dizi* (笛子 “transverse flute”) is made of a length of bamboo tube. It has one blowhole, one membrane hole which is covered with a thin reedy membrane, six finger holes, and two silk-string holes at the lower end. The *dizi* of the BMA produces “b,” when all the finger holes are covered.

Transverse flutes are also ancient in China, though this variant is believed to have been introduced with Buddhism during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C- 220 A.D). Like the other melody instruments, the *dizi* has been used in most ensemble types for the last millennium.
Figure 4.10 Luo Tingfen playing the *dizi*.

5) *Suona* (shawm)

The *suona* (唢呐), also popularly called *laba* (喇叭), is a shawm-type wind instrument, constructed of a wooden tube bored with seven holes in the front, one in the back, and a large brass bell at the end. To the upper end is affixed a small reed. Probably deriving from the Central Asian *suernai*, the instrument was introduced to the Central Plain of Northern China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) (Thrasher 2000:55). Owing to its recent introduction into China, association with minority cultures, and piercing tonal quality, the *suona* is commonly thought be a “low class” instrument in most areas of China. In the BMA, the *suona* is used to play popular songs and genres, such as folk songs, folk instrumental pieces and opera arias (Figure 6.6). It is not used, however, to play Beijing *yinyue*. 

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Martial instruments

1) Dagu (big drum)

The *dagu* (大鼓), also called *tanggu* (堂鼓), is a large barrel drum, with head diameter of about fifty centimeters. Usually it is suspended in a frame and beaten with two wooden sticks. The *dagu* is the lead rhythmic instrument of the ensemble, though played only when the musicians are seated (Figure 4.11).

2) Diangu (point drum)

The *diangu* (点鼓) is made of a flattened barrel, measuring about twenty-six centimeters in diameter. Both faces are covered with drumheads. It is beaten with a wooden stick, and sounds softer than the *dagu*. In procession, a musician holds it in his hand while striking it (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.11  Dagu.
3 ) Cha ( pair of small cymbals)

Cha (銘), also called chaguo (銘銘) or guozi (銘子), is a pair of small bronze cymbals, roughly nineteen centimetres in diameter. In the centre of each cymbal is a raised “bowl,” measuring about nine centimetres in diameter, through which pieces of silk cloth are inserted for holding. Cha are used to play the ban beats (i.e., the strong beats) in ensemble performance (Figure 4.13).

4 ) Dangzi (small gong)

The dangzi (銘子) is a single flat gong suspended in a wooden frame, its diameter being about fifteen centimetres. This gong, unlike the other instruments in the BMA ensemble, is unique to North China. It is used to play the yan beats in ensemble performance (i.e., beat 2 in 2/4, or beats 2, 3 and 4 in 4/4) (Figure 4.14).
Figure 4.13  *Cha.*

Figure 4.14  *Dangzi.*
5) Bo and nao (pairs of large cymbals)

Both bo (钹) and nao (铙) are pairs of large cymbals. As seen in Figures 4.15 and 4.16, bo are larger than nao, and their “bowls” are larger and deeper. The diameter of bo of the BMA is thirty-five centimetres; that of the nao, thirty-two centimetres. Both bo and nao are very important instruments, functioning like the big gong and pair of small cymbals in the Beijing opera ensemble. Their performance requires great artistry, as they have many difficult techniques (seen in Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.15  Bo.
6) *Qing* (resting bell)

*Qing* (磬) is a metal bowl used to accompany the vocal liturgy. The *qing* of the BMA is about twenty centimetres high, and thirty centimetres in diameter. Today the instrument is only played in the "distribution of lantern flowers" ritual when the scriptures are recited (see the third section of Chapter III). It is not otherwise employed in the funeral ensemble.
BMA musicians classify their instruments into two hierarchical levels: "high class" (gaoji 高级) and "low class" (diji 低级). Among the civil instruments, they believe the yunluo is the most elevated instrument, a symbol of upper-class values.\(^8\) The next important instrument is the guanzi, in part because of its historic role as a lead instrument in the palace music ensemble of the Tang and Song Dynasties. Dizi and sheng are lower in rank than guanzi. Martial instruments are lower than civil instruments. Although the suona is a civil instrument since it plays melodies, it is the lowest instrument in the band. The classification of the instruments above derives largely from Confucian philosophy. Confucius praised "elegant music" (yayue 雅乐) but disliked "popular music" (suyue 俗乐). As a result, the

\(^8\) See note 6 of this chapter.
instruments used in “elegant music” such as yunluo and guanzi, are commonly assigned to the highest category, whereas the instruments used in the “popular music,” such as suona, are thought to be “low class.”

On the other hand, some BMA musicians believe that civil instruments can be linked with yin, martial instruments with yang. In Confucian philosophy, yang is usually assigned to a higher position than yin, but here yang is lower than yin. Chinese Buddhists called the place where dead people dwell “yin space” (yinjian 阴间). Perhaps this is the reason why the musicians link civil instruments with yin, since they are used to play melodies for the dead. Here, we can see a mixture of Confucian and Buddhist ideas.
In this chapter, the first section introduces some fundamental principles of traditional Chinese music theory, against which the actual music of the BMA can be measured. The second section introduces the local tonal system and practice. In the third, fourth and fifth sections, representative repertoire are examined, followed by discussion of methods of melodic embellishment and musical texture and the recent inclusion of popular music.

**Fundamentals of Chinese music theory**

This section discusses three basic elements of Chinese music theory: tonal system, metrical system and suite forms.

**Tonal system**

There are several interacting pitch systems in Chinese traditional music theory. The first and primary system is known as *lîlû* (律吕), the ancient Zhou Dynasty (770-221 BC) system of twelve chromatic pitches in the octave, all with carefully calculated frequencies based upon a basic root pitch called the "yellow bell"
The “yellow bell” was the standard pitch of traditional music during the imperial period (Miao 1985:255). With the establishment of each new dynasty, however, the “yellow bell” pitch was recalculated, meaning that it tended to be different from one dynasty to another (Huang 1965: 33).

The second system, also cited in Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770 – 221 BC) literature (Miao 1985:121), is known as the “step-names” (jieming 阶名) system. Unlike the lüli system of fixed pitches, the “step-names” system is similar to European movable do solmisation in that it can be assigned to any of the twelve lüli pitches. There are nine step names in this system: gong (宫 = do), shang (商 = re), jue (角 = mi), he (和 = fa), zhong (中 = fa#), zhi (徵 = sol), yu (羽 = la), run (闰 = tib) and bian (变 = ti). Among those nine steps, gong, shang, jue, zhi and yu (do, re, mi, sol, and la) constitute the most important steps. These are called “authentic tones” (zhengsheng 正声) and usually organized as a pentatonic scale (Miao 1985:503).

In addition to these five zhengsheng, four other tones (he, zhong, run and bian = fa, fa#, ti b and ti) are called “changing tones” (biansheng 变声), since they are not members of the pentatonic scale (Miao 1985:26). While “changing tones” are widely used in traditional heptatonic scales, the basic system for most traditional music remains pentatonic.

Historically, heptatonic scales have been important in the courts. Three have

---

1 The names of the “twelve lüli” pitches are huangzhong (黄钟, for convenience taken here as equivalent “c,” the same below); dalü (大吕 c#); taicu (太簇 d); jiazhong (夹钟 d♯); guxian (姑洗 e); zhonglu (仲吕 f); rubin (宾 f♯); linzhong (林钟 g); yize (夷则 g♯-); nanlì (南吕 a); wuyi (无射 a♯) and yingzhong (应钟 b).
been well documented: the *yayue* (雅乐) scale used in the ritual music of the imperial court, the *qingyue* （清乐）scale, and the *yanyue* (燕乐) scale used in the palace entertainment music. These three scales are shown below in terms of solfeggio equivalents:

- **Yayue scale:** do-re-mi-fa#-sol-la-ti-do
- **Qingyue scale:** do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do
- **Yanyue scale:** do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti b -do

In the Chinese heptatonic system, the five “authentic tones” (do, re, mi, sol and la) are considered to be fundamental tones, and the four “changing tones” are their complements. Therefore, their structures are still pentatonic, unlike the diatonic scales of European common-practice music.

Scales, starting with *gong* (do), can be built on each *lūlū* pitch. Therefore, *gong* acquired the extended meaning of “key.” For instance, *huangzhong gong* means the *gong* (do) of the scale begins on *huangzhong* pitch, and *dalì gong* means that *gong* begins on *dalì* pitch. Therefore, there are theoretically twelve *gong* (scales, keys), though to what extent these were used is open to question.

**Metric system**

The Chinese term for “beat” is *pai* (拍). In traditional music, there are two types of “beat” — *ban* (板) and *yan* (眼). In the ensemble of traditional Chinese opera, a wooden clapper is used to mark the initial *ban* beat. Following this, the
yan beat or beats, which are in weak metric positions, are played on a small drum.²

Metres, called banshi (板式), are generally of two types: youban (有板) and sanban (散板). Here, ban (板) also means “beat,” you (有) meaning “to have” (i.e., strictly measured), and san (散) means “come loose,” or “not holding together” (i.e., unmeasured or free metre).

The youban type exists in four sub-categories, each with distinctive metric and tempo qualities:

1. Ban beats without yan (youban wuyan 有板无眼) or
   “flowing-water-ban” (liushui ban 流水板), comparable to European 1/4 metre and performed either fast or moderately fast.

2. One ban one yan (yiban yiyian 一板一眼), comparable to European 2/4 metre, and performed at moderate tempo.

3. One ban three yan (yiban sanyan 一板三眼), comparable to European 4/4 metre, and performed at relatively slow tempo.

4. One ban seven yan (an qiyan 暗七眼), comparable to European 8/4 metre and performed very slowly.

**Suite forms**

In Chinese traditional practice, music is commonly organized in extended suites, known as taoshu (套数) or taoqu (套曲). These are long forms constructed of

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² In the gongche notation using by opera companies, the marks “x” or “、” are used to identify ban, and “。” or “。” identify yan.
different qupai melodies played sequentially, or one melody played in metrical variations. Originally, qupai meant “music board.” According to Gao Houyong’s research, in the older tradition, people wrote the titles of music about to be performed on announcement boards, and it is because of this practice that the name qupai emerged for identification of the melodies themselves (Gao 1989: 4). In taoqu, various forms exist, of which the following three are common:

1. Several qupai melodies “linked” together end-to-end, known as “linked melody form” (lianquti 联曲体) — such as A+B+C+D+E+F.


3. One qupai melody and its variations, in which the variations actually appear at the beginning and the theme appears at the end. This is called “metrical variations form” (banshi bianzouti 板式变奏体), — A1+ A2+A3+A4……+A (Miao 1985:321).

In North China, suites are generally of the first type. They begin with a short prelude in free metre (sanban), continuing with slow, moderate and fast metred melodies, and end with a short coda in sanban. Similarly, among the Chaozhou and Minnan people of South China, their suites also usually progress from slow to fast tempo, though sanban sections are not common in Chaozhou music.

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3 In the formulas, different letters indicate various qupai, Arabic numbers indicating variations.
Tonal system and BMA practice

Before discussing the tonal system of the BMA, the concept of the basic pitch (diaoshou 调首) must be introduced. All Chinese instrumental genres have a “basic pitch.” For example, in Jiangnan “silk and bamboo” music of today, the basic pitch is “d”; in Cantonese music the basic pitch is “c.” The basic pitch of Beijing yinyue in Beixinzhuang is “e.”

According to Huang Xiangpeng, “e” was the “yellow bell” pitch of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), a basic pitch not taken by any dynasty after this. When Huang did his research of the music of Jinbei bayin hui (晋北八音会), a music association in northern Shanxi Province, he pointed out that the basic pitch of the association was “e,” which strongly suggests that the tradition is rooted in Tang Dynasty practice (Huang 1990:78).

Based upon the basic pitch, the primary scale of each tradition is built. This is called the “proper scale” (zhengdiao 正调), the BMA “proper scale” shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Zhengdiao scale of the BMA.

Characters: 合 四 一 上 尺 工 凡 六
Pronunciation: he si yi shang che gong fan liu
Western pitches: e f# g# a b c# d e
Western solmizations: do re mi fa sol la ti b do
Chinese step names: gong shang jue he zhi yu run gong
Note that the seventh degree is a minor 7th above the root, similar to the yanyue (燕乐) scale (diagrammed above). The yanyue scale was used in qingshang music (清商樂) during the Eastern Jin (317-420) and Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-581). Based upon historical records, qingshang music was a popular music genre between the fourth and the eighth centuries comprised of old pieces from the Central Plain and pieces from southern China (Miao 1985:316).

According to Huang’s research, the yanyue scale was also employed in the qingshang music performed in the Tang palace (Huang 1990: 69). Based on this evidence, Huang also believes that “Looking Toward the Jiangnan Region” (Wang jiangnan 望江南), a piece from Jinbei bayin hui, is an authentic “example of Tang music” (Huang 1990:91). The same piece is also found in the BMA notation book and in local performance.

In order to understand whether there are other similarities between the BMA tonal system and the Tang Dynasty palace music, we must also look at the tonal system of yanyue (燕乐), a palace “banquet music” tradition of the sixth through thirteenth centuries. The tonal system of yanyue was called “yanyue twenty-eight modes” (燕乐二十八调) or “sn Yue twenty-eight modes” (俗乐二十八调). There are now two different interpretations of this historic tonal system. One is that it had four gong (keys), each of which had seven modes, while the other is that it had seven gong, each of which had four modes. The first is the preferred theory found in

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4 According to the theory of yanyue, any tone of the scale can be a tonic and based upon it, a mode can be built. Therefore, each gong can have seven modes. About the modes of yanyue, see Miao 1985:448.
As seen in Figure 5.2, many instrumental genres in China have a four gong system, organized in a circle-of-fifths relationship (e.g., F-C-G-D). Those four gong are similar to the tonal system of the fifth century BC Marquis Yi bells, discussed in the second chapter. They are also similar to the tonal system of the song composer, Jiang Baishi (1155-1221), and the other systems shown in this chart.

Figure 5.2 Four gong of different historic traditions (Miao 1985:368).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four gong of Marquis Yi bells</th>
<th>Original name</th>
<th>Zhi</th>
<th>Yu</th>
<th>Gong</th>
<th>Shang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western name</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four gong of Jiang Baishi's compositions</td>
<td>Original name</td>
<td>jiazhong</td>
<td>zhongliu</td>
<td>yize</td>
<td>wuyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western name</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four gong of Nanyin</td>
<td>Original name</td>
<td>wu kong si che</td>
<td>beisi</td>
<td>sikong</td>
<td>wukong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western name</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four gong of Xi’an guyue⁵</td>
<td>Original name</td>
<td>liudiao</td>
<td>wudiao</td>
<td>shangdiao</td>
<td>chediao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western name</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four gong of Zhihua Temple</td>
<td>Original name</td>
<td>beidiao</td>
<td>yuediao</td>
<td>jiezhidiao</td>
<td>zhengdiao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western name</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the tonal system of the BMA (Figure 5.3), local musicians say there are four gong in their traditional repertoire: zhengdiao (正调 E = gong), beidiao (背调 A=gong), fan diao (凡调 D = gong) and xiaogongdiao (小工调 B=gong).

⁵ A “blowing-hitting” music genre, centred on the city of Xi’an and some other areas of Shaanxi Province. It became popular in the Ming Dynasty. See Miao 1985: 415 and Thrasher 2000: 55.
It is quite obvious here that, based upon the pitches of the present-day ten-gong yunluo, only the zhengdiao scale (with lowered seventh degree) has all the tones of the yanyue scale (Figure 5.3). The other scales can only be played with raised sevenths (beidiao), raised fourths and sevenths (fandiao), or a lowered third (xiaogongdiao) — making them dissimilar to the old yanyue scale. To be similar, the pitches “g,” “c” and “d#” would be needed. Interestingly, on Daguang’s old sheng, these pitches are all available, as is “g” on his old guanzi. Furthermore, according to the Yuanshi (元史 “History of the Yuan Dynasty”), the yunluo during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had thirteen (not ten) small gongs (Miao 1985:487) — very likely including “g,” “c” and “d#.” If these three pitches were in the BMA tonal system, it would be exactly the same as the tonal system of the
earlier *yanyue*, with the same basic pitch as the “yellow bell” of the Tang Dynasty, the same scale, and the same number of scales.

But the BMA tonal system is not the same as the Tang *yanyue* system, because three tones are missing. Zhang Zhentao believes this is why local musicians use “do” and “sol” in place of “ti” and “fa” (1997:40). Zhang holds that the three missing gongs on the *yunluo* is evidence of “retrogression” in the development of their music (1997:44). He might be right. From my perspective, however, it seems unusual that people of later times selected a system of five or six tones from an earlier seven-tone system. “Retrogression” or not, I see this as evidence to suggest the strong influence of the old idea of valuing the numbers five and six. By adhering to five and six notes, the tonal system of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) may have been changed by the influence of even older but more powerful Zhou Dynasty (11th century – 256 B.C) ideology — namely, *yin-yang* and five-elements theory.

**Beijing *yinyue* repertoire**

There are forty-nine pieces of Beijing *yinyue* in the BMA repertoire. Their structural organization is discussed in this section, though with a functionalist emphasis on how the music reflects Confucian ideology.

**Pitch and metre categories**

I have divided the repertoire into three categories, according to the number of pitch signs appearing in the *gongche* notation. In the first category, ten pentatonic
pieces employ the pitches *he* (do), *si* (re), *yi* (mi), *che* (sol) and *gong* (la),\(^6\) and another four employ the pitches *shang* (fa), *che* (sol), *gong* (la), *he* (do), *si* (re).\(^7\) In the second category, nineteen hexatonic pieces are organized *he* (do), *si* (re), *yi* (mi), *shang* (fa), *che* (sol) and *gong* (la),\(^8\) with another two pieces organized: *he* (do), *si* (re), *yi* (mi), *che* (sol), *gong* (la) and *fan* (ti).\(^9\) In the third category, seven pitch signs are employed.\(^10\) In this group, *shang* (fa) and *fan* (ti) are sometimes sung to the pitches of *che* (sol) and *liu* (do) respectively\(^11\), though occasionally the pitch of only one note is changed. Therefore, these pieces in performance actually may not be heptatonic, but hexatonic or even pentatonic. As seen in Chapter II, while the BMA musicians are not able to explain why these substitutions are made, I believe they demonstrate the power of the numbers five and six in governing local tonal systems and the popularity of pentatonic melodies.

In his thesis *Zhongguo Suona Yinyue Yanjiu* (中国唢呐音乐研究 “A Study of Chinese Suona Music”), Liu Yong introduces the names of the *qupai* documented in Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasty sources, together with other melodies from the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties (1999:80). I have found that many names of the BMA Buddhist *qupai* are the same as those Liu

\(^6\) These ten pieces are *Yan guo nannou tou*, *Jie la suo*, *Wu sheng fo*, *Pusa tuo*, *Fu shang qi fen*, *Xiao pipa ling*, *Bapu*, *Qie sangui zan*, *Lin qing ge* and *Yi ma san jian*.

\(^7\) These four pieces are *La bu duan*, *La bu duan ershen*, *La bu duan sanshen* and *Qingjiang yin*.

\(^8\) They are *Si shang pai tou*, *Tao jin ling*, *Zouma*, *Liu ju zan*, *Kua tianwang*, *Le tou ge*, *Liu han yan*, *Yagu ling*, *Zouma ershen*, *Pipa ling*, *Hong xiuxie*, *Da shaban*, *Si liu ban* and *Diliu zi*.

\(^9\) *Cuizhu lian* and *Cui taiping*. Since *fan* (ti) is always sung to the pitch of *liu* (do), these two pieces are not hexatonic, but rather pentatonic.

\(^10\) They are *Yan guo nannuo*, *Si shang pai*, *He si pai*, *Ji qiang*, *Xiao tiao shen*, *Wang jiangnan*, *Tangtou ling*, *Deng zan*, *Xiao chudui*, *Qi shang fu fen*, *Xiao tiao shen*, *xiao tiao shen ershen*, *Zui taiping*, *Le taiping*, *Elangzi qu* and *Yi ma san jian*.

\(^11\) See the figure 2.7.
mentions. For example, the well-known Wang jiangnan is found in Tang records. Tangtou ling is a ci-type melody which originated in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and became fully developed in the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Qingjiang yin and Hong xiuie are qupai melodies of the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties.

As introduced in Chapter II, there are four different metres in the BMA repertoire: the first metre, “one ban three yan” (4/4) (Figures 5.8) or “an qiyari” (8/4) (Figure 5.6), the second metre, “one ban one yan” (2/4) (Figure 5.9), third and fourth metres, “ban beats without yan” (1/4), where the tempo of the third metre is moderately fast (Figure 5.10) while the fourth is fast. There is only one fourth metre piece in the repertoire, that is Elangzi qu (Figure 5.11). In addition to these four categories, there are two free-tempo sanban pieces. If a piece belongs to the first metre and it is used as the initial piece of a suite, musicians change several bars in the beginning of the piece into sanban.

The pieces of the first metre can be divided into two sub-categories: the repertoire of “exiting the tent music” (chupeng qu 出棚曲) and the repertoire of “antiphonal response music” (duikou qu 对口曲). When Daguang and other monks played for funerals, they played “exiting the tent music” after they recited the scriptures in the ceremonial tent. The pieces of the second sub-category (duikou qu) were originally Buddhist chants, but the present BMA musicians did not learn how to

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12 Ci is the poetry written to certain tunes with strict tonal patterns and rhyme schemes in fixed numbers of lines and words (Wang & Du 1999:102).

13 They are Yuan guo nanluo tou and Si shang pai tou. There is no ban mark in these two pieces, only a fermata mark “f” is used.  

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chant, so they became instrumental pieces, used at the end of suites.

**Suites**

Pieces in the repertoire can be played independently, but they are usually grouped into suites. BMA suites are always in the “linked melody form” (*lianquti* 联曲体). Since the music accompanies a ceremony, the suites must necessarily fit the length of the ritual steps, therefore, making their length variable.

Each suite typically has four parts:

1. Two to four pieces in the first metre, with a short *sanban* introduction called “head” (*tou* 头), and usually including one piece from “exiting the tent music.”

2. Two to four pieces in the second metre.

3. Four to eight pieces in the third metre, followed by the piece in fourth metre (i.e., *Elangzi qu*) and a short percussion coda called *Shawei* (煞尾).

4. One piece in the first metre (usually a piece chosen from “antiphonal response music”).

Figure 5.4 illustrates the construction of a short suite. The various *qupai* melodies are connected by percussion interludes, which can be as short as eighteen beats. This particular suite lasts about 34 minutes.
Figure 5.4 Structure of a short suite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
<th>Part III</th>
<th>Part IV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>4. <em>Pipa ling</em></td>
<td>6. <em>Yi ma san jian</em></td>
<td>10. <em>Le tou ge</em> (first metre, one ban three yan 4/4, Figure 5.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(sanban Figure 5.5)</em></td>
<td><em>(second metre, one ban one yan 2/4, Figure 5.9)</em></td>
<td><em>(third metre, liushui ban 1/4, Figure 5.10)</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interlude III</td>
<td>Interlude V</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <em>Ji qiang</em></td>
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<td>7. <em>Qie sangui zan</em></td>
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<td><em>(first metre, an qian 8/4, Figure 5.6)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(third metre, liushui ban 1/4)</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interlude VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interlude I (Figure 5.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8. <em>Lin qing ge</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(third metre, liushui ban 1/4)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(first metre, one ban three yan 4/4, Figure 5.8)</em></td>
<td><em>(second metre, one ban one yan 2/4)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interlude IV</td>
<td>9. <em>Elangzi qu</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(fourth metre, liushui ban 1/4)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 5.11</td>
<td>Sha wei</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(percussion coda)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.5 Introduction *(sanban).*

**Tempo rubato**

![Musical notation](image-url)

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Figure 5.6 *Ji qiang*, beginning (*an qiyan*).

Adagio

Guanzi Sheng and dizi

Figure 5.7 Percussion interlude.

Larghetto

Guanzi

Bo

Nao

Cha

Dangzi

Drum etc
Figure 5.8  *Fu shang qi fen* (one *ban* three *yan*).

Figure 5.9  *Pipa ling* (one *ban* one *yan*).
Figure 5.10 Yi ma san jian (liushui ban).

Allegretto

Figure 5.11 Elangzi qu, beginning (liushui ban).

Allegro
Alan Thrasher notes: "Suite organization is quite similar throughout North China, beginning with a slow, free-metered prelude, followed by a longer main section of several or more melodies successively performed at slow, moderate and fast tempos, and concluding with a short coda." (Thrasher 2000:86). Suite organization of the BMA is basically similar to what Thrasher described. The only difference lies in the fact that the BMA suites have a fourth section added to the short coda. Hence, BMA suites have four parts instead of three. In Chinese language, the pronunciation of the words "four" and "dead" are identical, though spoken with different language tones. The musicians of the BMA believe that this number association makes the music meaningful and appropriate for a funeral.

As seen in the above examples, the following characteristics of musical style are noteworthy:

1. The names of many of these qupai melodies were identified in Tang Dynasty and later sources, suggesting that the tradition is rooted in the ancient practice — a Confucian ideal.

2. While the notations reflect pentatonic (Figures 5.9 and 5.11), hexatonic (Figures 5.8 and 5.10) and heptatonic (Figure 5.5) scales, the basic structure of all pieces is essentially pentatonic, with 4th and 7th degrees used infrequently. As seen in Figure 2.7, in performance, the musicians even change non-pentatonic pitches into pentatonic ones.

3. Tempo increases gradually throughout a suite, in keeping with the principles of "moderation" (zhongyong 中庸).
4. Ensemble timbre is always the same. While there is contrast among
the instruments themselves (see discussion of texture, below) and
between melodic sections and percussion interludes, there is no
contrast from phrase to phrase or from one section to another, when the
full ensemble is playing. Ensemble “harmony” (xiehe 谐和) is
emphasized over individual achievement.

Melodic embellishment and texture

As seen in Chapter IV, the BMA melodies appearing in the notation book are of
melodic skeletons only. In performance, several basic methods of melodic
embellishment are employed. In this section, I will discuss the most important
methods, together with an overview of musical texture.

“Moving tones” (yaosheng)

When individual notes are sung or played in Chinese music, their pitch is often
varied — an embellishment technique called “moving tones” (yaosheng 摇声) (Du
1999a:16). The example given in Chapter II (Figure 2.7) shows that in the third bar
(bottom line), yaosheng is present on the first and the third beat (two eighth notes)
and on the third beat of the fifth bar as well. There are various types of yaosheng in
traditional music, the most important ones being zhu (注) for a descending pitch; chuo
(绰) for an ascending pitch; hui (回) for a “returning” pitch (moving downward then
upward); yin (吟) and nao (猱) for exaggerated hui type movement.
The old texts of Yueji, in which Gongsun Nizi says: “Sheng (tones) respond to each other, and thus give birth to change. Changes form patterns, which are called yin (melodies)” (YYS 1983:70).\(^{14}\) This suggests that without change, the tones cannot be organized into melody. When BMA musicians criticize a bad melody, they say, “there are only characters (notes) but no melody” (you zi mei yin 有字没音). To them, a piece of music without “moving tones” is not considered a good melody.

Further evidence for the existence of the principle of changing notes is found in the classic text Shangshu, which says, “Sheng (tones) change their pitch according to the intonation of the language” (YYS 1983:424).\(^{15}\) It is common knowledge that the Chinese languages are largely monosyllabic and tonal. Tones in the Chinese language are important because they are supra segmental phonemes which serve the function to distinguish meanings of words. There are four tones in standard Chinese Mandarin: high tone, rising tone, low tone and falling tone. Those language tones are often explained in terms of solfeggio equivalents: the high tone stationery at sol; the rising tone ascending from mi to sol (similar to the “moving tone,” chuo); the low tone dipping from re to do, but then ascending to fa (similar to hui); and the falling tone from sol to do (similar to zhu).

Referring back to Figure 2.7 (bottom staff), there are three pitch signs (in gongche notation) showing the yaosheng principle. According to my research, the musician, Lian Kui, sings certain tones according to linguistic rules. For example, in his singing of those notes, wu (the third beat of the third bar) rises and shang (the third

\(^{14}\) “声相应，故生变，变成方，谓之音。”

\(^{15}\) “声依咏。”
beat of the fifth bar) falls. This fact shows that the yaosheng follows linguistic rules. The use of yaosheng is clear evidence of the influence of the philosophy of Yijing, that is, “change.”

Adding flowers (jiahua)

Another important method of embellishment results from the addition of extra notes to the melodies to elaborate them. This technique is generally called “adding flowers” (jiahua 加花), though in Buddhist music, it is more commonly called akou (阿口). Akou are vocables added to a melodic skeleton. The purpose of using akou is to enliven and enrich the original skeletal version with embellishments, thereby creating a highly individual melodic creation, generated by the musician himself.

“Adding flowers” (or akou) can be divided into two sub-categories, the first being “adding flowers without changing the metre” (yuanban jiahua 原板加花). In Figure 5.12, for Cui zhulian (the second phrase) is shown on the top staff. Below this, on the bottom staff, appears a performance realization with yaosheng and akou.
The second subcategory is called “adding flowers with added beats” \( (\text{tiany}an \ jiahua \ 讚眼} \ 加花) \). In practice, performers at first double the duration of each note \( (\text{tiany}an \ 讚眼} \ \text{meaning “to add yan beats”}) \); then \text{akou} \ are added as embellishments. Following this method, many different pieces are created from one basic piece. For example, the original \textit{Cui zhulian} in 2/4 (top staff of Figure 5.13) can be changed into a slower variation in 4/4 (the middle staff) and even into a very slow variation in 8/4 (the bottom staff).

\[ \text{In this example, “+” identifies the akou; arrows identify yaosheng.} \]

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“Adding flowers” (or akou) is very central to the technique of melodic embellishment in Chinese traditional music. Employing this, BMA musicians develop many different melodies, all based on a limited number of melodic skeletons.

Musical Texture

The texture of Beijing yinyue, like traditional music ensembles in other areas, is heterophonic. Musicians decorate the same basic melody in different ways, according to the idioms of each instrument. BMA musicians know the following
poem: "Guanzi is the leader, sheng accompanies it without stop; dizi ornaments the melody and yunluo plays only the important tones."\(^\text{17}\) This texture is shown in Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14  *Le tou ge*, ending.

Larghetto

It can be seen that the guanzi is the basic melody instrument. The sheng plays the same melody, together with the upper fifth (and sometimes octave) note above each pitch, and maintains constant motion. The duty of dizi is to add "flowers" to the melody and make it richer and more colourful. The yunluo typically plays eighth notes followed by two sixteenths, a performance style musicians call "three

\(^{17}\) "管子来领头，笙吹一条线，笛子耍花花，云锣打点点。"

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strikes" (san dian 三点).18

The drum (dagu or diangu), dangzi and cha are used to accompany. According to the BMA musicians, when Daguang played the drum, his rhythm was very complicated and he used it to direct the ensemble. Unfortunately, they did not learn how to do this, so their drum performance is now more simplified. The cha (cymbals) play on the strong ban beat, and the dangzi (gong) plays on the weak yan beats. When a piece is in “one ban three yan” metre, the dangzi plays only the third and fourth beats.

The theory of zhongyong (中庸 sometimes translated as “the mean”) is a central idea and virtue in Confucian philosophy (Ding 1997:198). Zhong (中) means “middle,” not leaning to one side, neither going too far nor falling short; yong (庸) means “ordinary.” Therefore, zhongyong is the opposite of extremism, excess, one-sidedness, or departure from the normal.

These qualities can be heard in the BMA tradition, as their music is performed without great or sudden contrast in tempo, tone colour or mood. Other manifestations of Confucianism can also be found in this musical style, for melodic embellishment can easily be seen as reflecting the principle of Yi jing — notably “change.” In performance, musicians are aware that elements such as pitch, duration, rhythmic pattern and embellishment, not only can be changed, but must be changed. Indeed, the philosophical principle of constant change forms part of the basis of Confucianism.

18 When the tempo is slow, more strokes are used; when the tempo is fast, the yunluo usually just plays quarter notes.
Other melodic sources

Apart from the Buddhist pieces learned from Daguang in the 1950s, today there are many other pieces in the BMA repertoire, though these are mostly played for entertainment at various times during a ceremony. The villagers call these pieces “rustic music” (qie yinyue 古音楽) to distinguish them from Beijing yinyue.

Before the 1980s, only the chuigushou bands played these. As noted earlier, the BMA musicians looked down on those players, thinking their pieces were “low class” (diji 低级). But since chuigushou bands were willing to perform any music requested for them, they gradually became competitive opponents of the BMA. For example, they were willing to play at the door to welcome guests and they played non-Buddhist folk music and popular songs throughout the ceremony — which the BMA monks/musicians were unwilling to do. By the late 1980s, the BMA began to lose business.

Therefore, they had no choice but to learn music from the chuigushou. This is the only reason that non-Buddhist music was added to their repertoire.19

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19 BMA musicians needed to compete with the chuigushou bands because their financial situation changed after the commune system was dismissed. Before 1983, peasants in the village worked for the commune, which took care of them in return. As long as they worked in the fields, they were allotted just enough grain and vegetable to live on. During that time, BMA musicians were required to turn in a certain sum, usually half of the total, to the commune to make up for the labouring work in the fields which they missed by playing in funerals. Thus, their allotment of basic necessities was secured and it did not really matter whether they had business or not. After the commune system was abandoned, everyone had to make his own living. Although the BMA musicians were able to do farm work, nobody wanted them because they were too old to learn how to drive tractors and other machines, or learn factory work. So, playing music for the funerals became their only way of make a living. If there were no business, their life would become very difficult.
*Chuigushou repertoire*

*Chuigushou* bands play for many different occasions. They not only give performances at weddings, funerals, birth parties, one-hundred-day anniversaries of newly-born babies, but also popular festivities and fairs. *Chuigushou* music does not need to be played by a set number of instruments or musicians. Three musicians can organize a small band, with one *suona*, one *sheng* and a pair of small cymbals. Sometimes they organize a band with six or eight musicians. When they play at a large fair, or are hired by a rich family, their band can have over twenty musicians, including two-stringed fiddles and many other percussion. Their repertoire is considerably richer than the BMA. According to my informants, it falls into five categories:

1. Traditional instrumental pieces — the main part of their repertoire.

2. Traditional instrumental *qupai* from local operas, such as “Eight Beat” (*Baban* 八板), “Song of the Nuptial Chamber” (*Dongfang zan* 洞房赞), “Line Up” (*Bai dui* 捣队) and “Rolling the Silk Ball” (*Gun xiuqiu* 滚绣球).

3. Buddhist pieces learned from different Buddhist bands (including the
BMA), but abbreviated, including “An Unbroken Piece” (La bu duan 拉不断), “Five Holy Buddhas” (Wu sheng fo 五圣佛) and others.

4. Folk songs and dance melodies, such as “Jasmine Flower” (Moli hua 茉莉花), “Young Cowherd” (Xiao fang niu 小放牛) and “Flying the Kites” (Fang fengzheng 放风筝).

5. Opera-mimicry (kaxi 咔戏). Kaxi is a performance given by musicians who use double-reed instruments (suona, guanzi) and others to imitate vocal music from local opera and narrative song. In performing opera mimicry, many stunts are employed, notably using double reeds with or without pipes. Suona-types are used to impersonate old men’s voices and double reeds to impersonate young women’s voices.

Opera-mimicry is not the only stunt employed by chuigushou bands. Another stunt is called “tassel” (suizi 穗子) (Figure 5.15). This is a flamboyant improvisatory ostinato section employing short phrases which revolve around several pivotal pitches. A “tassel” is used at the end of a piece to create a climactic and humorous atmosphere. Figure 5.15 is a part of a tassel for “Grazing Donkey.”

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20 Stephen Jones has translated the term kaxi into “opera-mimicry” and characterizes it as an important innovation during the twentieth century (Jones 1995:36).
While playing the “tassel,” some musicians put two cigarettes in their nostrils, and exhale the smoke through the suona. Some musicians may even play two suona in their nostrils and smoke a cigarette at the same time. These stunts are sure to entertain the public.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{21}\) Beginning in 1980, Chuigushou bands started to hire popular singers and break-dance s (\textit{piliwu 霹雳舞}) to join their band, making their performances even more colourful and attractive.
New music and popular songs

Most recently, twentieth-century instrumental compositions, film music and popular songs have been absorbed into the BMA repertoire. Among these compositions, “Torrent of the River” (Jianghe shui 江河水), “Step by Step Higher” (Bubu gao 步步高) and “Jubilance” (Xiyangyang 喜洋洋) are representative.

“Torrent of the River” is a piece for guanzi solo, composed by Wang Shilu and others in the 1950s, and based upon guchui music of southern Liaoning Province (Liaonan guchui 辽南鼓吹). In this ternary form piece, the first section is derived from a qupai called “Torrent of the River,” its original tempo changed so that many embellished notes could be added. Its middle section was arranged from another quapi, “Tip of the Tree” (Shao tou 梢头) (Qin & Wei:1989:752).

“Step by Step Higher” (Bubu gao 步步高) is a very famous Cantonese instrumental piece composed by Lü Wencheng (1898-1981) in 1926. Lü, a Cantonese Music composer, constructed the theme of this piece from a major triad.

“Jubilance” (Xiyangyang 喜洋洋) is a famous 1950s composition by Liu Mingyuan (1931-1996). Liu was a virtuoso of Chinese banhu fiddles. “Jubilance” is a lively melody, also in ternary form.

Although there were no popular songs in China during the early years of the People’s Republic (1949 to the late 1970s), there were some songs from 1960s films that were very popular. Two film songs are heard frequently: “Bitter Vegetable Flower” (Ku caihua 苦菜花), about the life of a peasant woman and her children during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Invasion (1937-1945), and...
"Farewell" (Songbie 送别), the theme song of the film "The Raging Tide" (Nuchao 怒潮), depicting a peasant revolutionist's story during the Second Civil War (1927-1937). These two songs, composed in the style of Chinese folk songs, describe very sad feelings, which fit well within the mourning environment of funerals. They are now a part of the BMA non-Buddhist repertoire.

Beyond the instrumental compositions and film music, popular songs comprise about eighty percent of the non-Buddhist repertoire. According to Zhang Guangcai, the BMA musicians play almost one hundred different popular songs. Among these, "Mother's Kiss" (Mama de wei 妈妈的吻) and "Return to Mother's Home," (Hui niangjia 回娘家) are Taiwanese popular songs disseminated into the mainland in the early 1980s. Both are similar to folk songs, the second one even labeled "a folksong of Hebei Province." Such songs as "The Moon of the Fifteenth" (Shiwude yueliang 十五的月亮), "Great China" (Da zhonghua 大中华), "CCP -- My Dear Mother" (Dang a, wo qinaide muqin 党啊，我亲爱的母亲) were popular during the 1980s. Others were popular songs of the 1990s. Some of these songs have very strong political leanings, such as "The Moon of the Fifteenth" which describes a PLA soldier missing his wife during the Sino-Vietnamese war (1980s). "CCP -- My Dear Mother" is an ode to the CCP. BMA musicians use them because the melodies are like folk songs and the contents fit the mood for funerals. For example, they usually play "CCP--My Dear Mother" for a woman's funeral. "The
Moon of the Fifteenth” is played for an old man whose wife has died.22

For these non-Buddhist pieces, the musicians use suona, guanzi dizi, sheng and percussion. The yunlou, however, because of its high status, is reserved for the Buddhist repertoire. Since yunlou is not used, the ensemble commonly plays in other keys, notably keys of G (see Figure 5.13) and D.

In performances, several non-Buddhist pieces are linked together in a suite, with percussion interludes between them. Suites usually contain music of one genre, such as folk songs with folk songs, and popular songs with popular songs. However, pieces belonging to different genres can be combined, so long as Buddhist pieces and non-Buddhist pieces are never linked.

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22 I imagine that the composers never thought the ode for the CCP and the song for the PLA would be used in this context.
CHAPTER VI

The Funeral Ritual

The traditional funeral usually takes three days and is comprised of many ritual steps. In this chapter, I will describe the process of the ritual and the integration of its music.

Before a funeral, the family holding the ritual must make three preparations:

1. Set up a tent with an altar and coffin. The tent, known as peng (棚), is a temporary awning built within the courtyard or at the gateway of the house of the presiding family (Figure 6.1).

2. Set up a large temporary kitchen and dining hall, and hire several cooks.

3. Rent a house or large room for the musicians to rest. This room is called the "single room" (danfang 单房).

After these three preparations are accomplished, the family will invite the "monks" to come, whose roles are actually played by BMA musicians during the funeral. Then the funeral starts. The process of the funeral goes through more than ten steps as discussed below.¹

¹ Appendix 8 is a timetable of a typical three-day funeral, together with a listing of the types of music played at each step.
Figure 6.1  The Tent.

The first day

The initial four steps, held on the first day, are as follows: writing the memorial tablet, meeting the cooks, presenting offerings and viewing the bier. All are accompanied by Buddhist music.

**Writing the memorial tablet** (*dianzhu* 点主)

The funeral usually begins with the ritual of *dianzhu* in the morning. After the musicians have arrived and have had a cup of tea in the *danfang*, a son or grandson of the deceased comes with a tray, containing ink, brushes and a paper tablet. At first he kowtows to the musicians and says, “We give you a lot of trouble. Thank
you very much for your patience. Please write on the tablet for my father (mother, grandfather, or grandmother).” Then a musician (monk) will write the name of the deceased on the tablet. For a man, he writes: “My honoured dead father [surname, given name], the great man’s soul’s resting place.” For a woman: “My honoured dead mother [surname of husband, surname of her father, given name], the great woman’s soul’s resting place” (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2  The Tablet.
After the musician has written on the tablet, the son puts the tablet on the tray, and holding it in front of his chest, slowly walks to the temporary kitchen. The musicians follow him in a procession, playing music. According to custom, they usually play a suite including Tiao shen, Ji qiang, Jie la suo, Cui zhulian and La bu duan while in procession.

**Meeting the cooks (anjian 安尖)**

After the musicians have arrived at the kitchen, the second ritual step, called anjian, is started. The musicians play only one piece, Liu ju zan, at this time. When he was alive, Daguang sang the text of scripture with the melody. But today, these musicians do not remember the words, so they only play the melody. Meeting the cooks has two purposes: the first is to inform the cooks the band has arrived, so they will prepare enough food. The second purpose is to tell the cooks to prepare offerings for Buddha. While the music is being played, the BMA leader gives a picture of the Buddha to a cook, and the cook puts this on the altar. When the music stops, a member of the family gives the BMA leader two white envelopes filled with money, and the leader gives one of the envelopes to the cook. Then, the musicians play more music on their way back to the danfang.

**Presenting offerings (ying gong 迎供)**

This step begins when the musicians leave their danfang to return to the kitchen. While marching, they perform a piece in the first metre. In the kitchen, the cooks
give them offerings for Buddha and a different white envelope filled with money. Usually, this money is the same amount as what the cooks have just received. After that, the band will present the offerings to Buddha, putting them in front of the picture of Buddha, while playing a suite comprised with *Ji qiang*, *Fu shang qi fen*, *Le taiping*, *Yi ma san jian* and *Qie sangui zan*.

Sometimes, people will combine the two ritual steps, meeting the cooks and presenting the offerings, into one. In such a case, the band only marches to the kitchen once.

**Viewing the bier** (*jian ling* 见灵)

This step is taken when the son (or grandson) of the deceased faces the coffin and kneels in respect. The musicians stand on his right and left side (Figure 6.3), and sing and play “the Hymn of Tri-ratna” (Buddha-Dharma-Samgha) (*Sangui zan* 三皈赞), with percussion accompaniment. The text of this hymn is as follows:

Follow the Buddha, who explains the scripture in Jiguyuan garden.  
His explanation creates humanity and heaven.

Follow dharma, controlling the dragon’s palace.  
The theory from the palace can protect towns and cities.

Follow the monks, whose hearts are as clear as water.  
When the water is clear, the autumn moon can be seen, and in the sky the moon shines brightly.  

After singing this hymn, the band plays *Wang jiangnan*, after which the son puts

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2 The Chinese text is: 皈佛，佛在祭古园，祭古园说法，说法立人天。 皈法，法宝震龙宫，龙宫降理论，理论掩三城。 皈僧，僧心似水清，水清秋月现，月现一轮明。
the tablet in front of the coffin. Then he returns to the danfang, holding the tray, followed by the musicians who perform another suite of pieces.

According to custom, the viewing of the bier should be done three times during the first day. Between these three steps, the bequeathed may ask the monks to conduct Buddhist services which include the procedures of “crossing the bridge” (pa qiao 爬桥) and “breaking the [door of] hell” (po yu 破狱) for women, and “crossing the bridge” and “running in a square” (pao fang 跑方) for men.

Buddhists believe that there is a bridge naiheqiao (奈何桥) on the way to Buddhist paradise, over which the guardian ghosts do not let the souls of the dead pass. The purpose of holding the ritual of “crossing the bridge” is to lead the soul of the dead over this bridge. A table with two carts on either end provides an imaginary bridge. A monk-musician holding a streamer stands on one end of the “bridge,” and the son holding the tray with the tablet stands behind him. Other monk-musicians stand on the two sides. At the beginning of the ritual, the monk-musician holding the streamer chants a scripture and says: “This is the bridge leading to Buddhist paradise and let (the name of the dead) pass.” After that, musicians play a suite starting with Liu ju zan, continuing with Tangtou ling and Wang jiangnan, and ending with Qingjiang yin. Accompanied by the suite, the monk/musician crosses the “bridge” and the son of the deceased follows him.
The ritual of “breaking [the door of] hell”\(^3\) is conducted for a dead woman.

Before the ritual, the monks/musicians place four tiles in the yard in the directions of west, east, north, and south as a symbolic representation of hell. A monk/musician holding a long stick then breaks the tiles, in the succession of east, south, west and north as a demonstration of opening hell’s door. The monks /musicians in this ritual regularly play the pieces *Tangtou ling*, *Wang jiangnan* and *Liu ju zan*, though occasionally other pieces are played instead.

“Running in a square” on the other hand, is held for a dead man. Before the ritual starts, the monks place one table in the middle of the yard and other four tables around it in four directions. While performing, the BMA band leads the son of the deceased, and other men who are relatives, to walk from one table to another. Their route is in the shape of the Arabic number “8.” The tempo proceeds from slow to fast, with family members and the relatives walking (then running) according to the changing tempo. It is believed that this ritual helps the deceased get to paradise.

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\(^3\) This ritual is held according to a Buddhist story, telling how *Mulian broke hell to save his mother*. Mulian was one of Sakyamuni’s ten famous students. His mother ate dog meat and abused monks during her life. After she died, she was sent to hell. One day, Mulian was listening to Sakyamuni’s lecture when he suddenly thought of his mother. He went to hell to visit her. Seeing that his mother was starving, Mulian wanted to feed her. But the food was burned by fire in her mouth. Mulian asked Sakyamuni how he could save his mother and Sakyamuni told him that he should put fruit in a basin and ask the monks to eat the fruit. Mulian did as he was told and saved his mother from hell (Lian: 2001: 3).
The second day

On the second day of the funeral, there are five steps. Only three, however, require Buddhist music: viewing the bier (described above), seeing the deceased off and sending the Lantern God. The other two steps are accompanied by non-Buddhist music.

Seeing the deceased off (*song san* 送三)

Buddhists believe a dead person’s soul will return home to visit the family three days after his or her death. His children and relatives hold this ceremony to see the soul off. Usually, because the funeral is started on the day after death, this step is
held on the second day (i.e., the “third day” after death). Since ghosts and souls are thought to come out only at night, this ritual is usually held after sunset. Nowadays, however, it is sometimes held during the afternoon.

Before the ritual, the bereaved puts a paper cart, pulled by a paper horse and a paper ox, outside the western gate of the village. In front of the paper cart, a table is set up to hold two lights, fruit, cakes and candy. Some mourners will add more things to the cart, such as two paper servants — a gold boy (jintong 侾童) and a jade girl (yunü 玉女) — or a paper television set or radio. They believe that two servants will keep the dead good company in paradise, taking these things with them.

At the beginning of the ritual, all women, led by the eldest daughter of the deceased, remain at the cart, and all men, led by the eldest son of the deceased remain in the room where the deathbed is located. The band goes to the room, playing a Buddhist “hymn” (zan, such as Liuju zan or Sangui zan). After they finish playing, all the men in the room cry and call out the dead person’s name, shouting: “Get into the cart.” This procedure is called “cleaning the room” (jingzhai 净宅). Following this, the men put several sheets of white paper on top of a broom, which represents the soul of the deceased. The son of the deceased leads the men in procession to the west of the village, followed by the band playing the piece Pusa tuo. If the family has invited several bands to perform, then the BMA band will be the first ensemble to follow the men. Next in the procession, the Daoist band marches, followed by the chuigushou band at the end.

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4 Buddhists believe paradise is in “the west” (xitian 西天) or India, which is the home for every follower of Buddhism.
As the men walk along the street, the women waiting at the cart which is outside the village gate, shout over and over: "Please come to the cart." If a family member or relative has a grudge or disagreement toward the deceased or his family, he or she is allowed to stop the procession and put forward the issue. This is called "troubling the funeral" (naosang 閒喪). Sometimes, naosang becomes a meeting of the whole family and lasts for up to several hours. Naosang usually takes place at the time when the procession of men is moving towards the paper cart. Problems are expected to be resolved by the male members of the bequeathed family.

Figure 6.4 Men carrying the broom.
After all problems are resolved and the band arrives at the gate of the village, they stop. The men, however, continue walking toward the cart. When they arrive, they put the broom into the cart and kowtow. Then the women kowtow, after which the men burn the paper representations of the cart, and animals such ox, horse and other paper things, followed by a distribution of the fruit, candy and cakes to the children. The purpose of burning paper images is to symbolically send these things with the soul to “heaven” (tiantang 天堂). As the conclusion of this ritual step, the BMA band plays a suite including Bapu, Elangzi qu with Tiao shen.

Closing the coffin (feng ling 封灵)

In closing the coffin, everyone kneels and kowtows to the coffin to say
good-bye to the deceased. The sons of the dead and their wives, and the daughters and their husbands, kowtow first. Other relatives follow them one by one. According to custom, only the *chuigushou* musicians play for this ritual. When a person kowtows to the coffin, a piece of music accompanies his or her movement. As soon as each finishes his her kowtow, the music must stop even if in the middle of the phrase. This part of the ritual lasts between thirty minutes and two hours, during which many musical excerpts are performed. Each one is rarely played from beginning to end, but rather consists of just two or three phrases. It is only since 1990 that the BMA musicians have played for this ritual step acting as *chuigushou*, and consequently using traditional pairs of *suona* and *sheng*, rather than *guanzi*. Only four musicians are involved here, but they do not wear the traditional Buddhist vestments because they are performing *chuigushou* roles.

Figure 6.6 Band playing for closing the coffin ritual.


*Sending the Lantern God* (*song deng shen* 送灯神)

According to Buddhist tradition, the Lantern God (*deng shen* 灯神) is portrayed in puppet form, standing on five lotus flowers, with a candle-holder in his hands. To prepare for this ritual step, two ropes are tied between the table in front of the coffin and the table where the musicians sit. The puppet Lantern God is suspended from one rope. When the ritual begins, a musician lights a candle, puts it in the candleholder, and pulls the ropes, so the puppet travels slowly along the ropes to the coffin. Each time the puppet arrives in front of the coffin holding a candle, the candle is then placed on the table in front of the coffin. According to custom, the number of the candles brought by the Lantern God must be the same as the age of the deceased, so this ritual step may again take one or two hours. The musicians, having changed back to their robes, play the Buddhist pieces as requested by the listeners. According to the musicians, the purpose for holding this ritual step is to worship Buddha, hoping that if the soul of the deceased is in “purgatory” (*diyu* 地狱), the Buddha will release it.

*Guarding the bier* (*da zuo* 搭座)

This process is not a Buddhist ritual, so when musicians play for it, they do not wear their vestments. The ritual process starts in the evening and ends at midnight, lasting for about four or five hours. Two different bands usually take part in this step, each sitting on either side of the table. This process is also called “competition in the tent” (*dui peng* 对棚). The musicians play different non-Buddhist pieces and
demonstrate their skills, while people attending the funeral sit in the yard and enjoy the music. When a musician demonstrates a unique technique or skill, the listeners respond warmly, often picking him up and standing him on the table to perform. This process is actually a contest for entertainment and is typified by a variety of music and great noise and excitement. Usually after one band finishes a suite, the other will start another. People may request particular pieces they would like to hear.

According to my BMA informants, before the 1980s they played Buddhist music only for this ritual, while the chuigushou played non-Buddhist music, including folk songs, popular instrumental music and opera-mimicry. Today, the BMA musicians imitating the chuigushou restrict their entertainment music to non-Buddhist pieces.

The third day

The third and final day includes five steps. The first, “Burning papers” has no accompaniment. The second step is accompanied by non-Buddhist music, while the remaining steps are accompanied by Buddhist music.

**Burning papers** (shao paizhi 烧牌纸)

At midnight of the second day, the eldest daughter of the deceased asks the musicians to stop playing. It is believed that the soul of the deceased returns home for a final visit at midnight, and the family members must express their sadness at
During this ritual, all the women attending the funeral face the coffin, kneel and worship. The eldest daughter starts to cry after which other women join in. After several minutes, they burn pieces of paper in front of the coffin. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, my understanding is that incantations were written on these pieces of papers; but now, these papers are blank. After “burning of the papers,” all the people attending the funeral eat a midnight snack, most commonly traditional dumplings (jiaozi 饺子). It is believed that this food will make them rich, since the dumplings resemble silver ingots – money used in ancient times.

**Keeping vigil beside the coffin (shouling 守灵)**

“Keeping vigil beside the coffin,” also called “sitting at night” (zuo ye 坐夜), starts after the midnight snack and usually lasts for three or four hours. Sometimes, however, it may last until daybreak. As in “guarding the bier,” two bands usually play. The BMA musicians do not wear the Buddhist vestments at this time.

In China, married daughters are called “grandaunts” (gunainai 姑奶奶). In this ceremony, everybody is allowed to sit in front of the coffin to listen to the music, but it is only the married daughters of the deceased who are permitted to request pieces. Before this performance comes to an end, the grandaunts pay each band a gratuity for their music. The grandaunts chose to listen to nothing but popular

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5 According to my informants, men also participated in this step prior to the Cultural Revolution.
6 In the period when I was doing my fieldwork, the highest payment received was five hundred yuan and the lowest was only twenty yuan.
songs. If the musicians do not know the song requested, they ask her to name another one. The amount of money they receive, however, is reduced every time they are unable to play a requested song. In such a situation, the band’s reputation would decrease accordingly.

At the end of this “vigil,” each band performs a popular song for the grandaunts. Usually they play “Farewell” (Songbie 送别) or “Returning Home to Visit” (Chang huijia kankan 常回家看看).

**Saying goodbye to the cooks** (liao zhao 了灶)

“Saying goodbye to the cooks” is held in the early morning, following the above ritual. The band starts from the danfang. Upon arrival at the kitchen, they merely play one Buddhist piece to thank the cooks for the food they have received.

**Sending cloth-wrappers** (song baofu 送包袱)

The relatives then take large envelopes filled with ceremonial money, called “paper money” (zhiqian 纸钱), and go to an intersection outside the village. The band follows, but stops at the gate of the village. At the intersection, the relatives burn the envelopes. It is believed the deceased needs this money and burning it is seen as a way for him to receive it.

**Carrying the coffin to the cemetery** (chubin 出殡)

This last ritual, which ends the funeral, is the longest. Before it starts, the
villagers set up many tea tables (chazhuo 茶桌) with tea along the main street of the village. Villagers put up the tea tables to stop the procession and ask the musicians to play music for them. It is believed that when people stop the procession, it is in respect and love for the deceased, and a gesture that they do not want him or her to leave quickly. If nobody stops the procession, this suggests that the deceased did not have a good reputation in the village and everyone wants him or her depart as quickly as possible.

Men take the lead in this procession, followed by the women, and then the bands — the Buddhist band first, the Daoist band in the middle, and the chuigushou last. A hearse (a late twentieth century addition) follows at the very end of the procession.

The procession moves very slowly and the BMA performs Buddhist pieces. A shout from the villagers standing on the sides will stop it. Villagers may request the pieces they would like to hear and the band moves to the front of the procession and plays non-Buddhist pieces to entertain them. The procession does not move again until the villagers allow it to do so. During this ritual, the procession is often stopped more than ten times and the musicians play for about twenty to thirty minutes each time. If the music lasts more than forty minutes, the son of the deceased may make a deep bow to the musicians, thank them, and suggest that it is the time to move on. The musicians stop playing, and remain on the side of the street, allowing the processions pass by. They will then follow the women again until the procession is once more stopped.
It may take about five or six hours to reach the gate of the village, at which point the family of the bequeathed goes to the cemetery. All bands remain at the gate. According to the musicians, if the mourners want them to enter the cemetery, they have to pay extra money. During the time I was doing my fieldwork, however, the bands never entered the cemetery.

The payment musicians receive for their service depends, in part, on how many days the funeral lasts. The band receives between about five hundred and a thousand yuan for each day; thus, each musician receives about thirty to fifty yuan per day. Ironically, the BMA musicians receive roughly half the amount of income as the chuigushou musicians. According to traditional thinking, Confucian scholars viewed professionalism in music as a form of cultural narrowness and, as such, tended to be critical of it. In addition, it was and still is believed that those who perform low-class work should be reimbursed at a higher rate.
Figure 6.7  Band playing while the coffin is carried to the cemetery.
POSTSCRIPT

My discussion of the BMA has covered its cultural and musical background, its organization and activities, its repertoire, and the ritual process. One might find contradictions and discrepancies in my description of the BMA. Questions might well be raised, such as whether the villagers of Beixinzhuang are still peasants, whether those villagers are Buddhists, whether those BMA musicians are monks, or whether their pieces are even Buddhist music. The answers to these questions are "yes" and "no."

Since the villagers of Beixinzhuang still follow the old life style, and what they produce in their fields is mainly for themselves, not for the market, they are in a way still peasants. However, some of them have been employed by factories from time to time, while others have started to run their own businesses. They have started to make their living in other ways rather than relying totally on the products of their fields. Feeling the changes themselves, the villagers of Beixinzhuang call themselves "peasants of the city of Beijing" to distinguish themselves from the traditional concept of "peasants" who were tied to the land.

As to the second question, the answer is again positive and negative. The villagers of Beixinzhuang are Buddhists, but also follow Confucianism, always moving back and forth between Buddhism and Confucianism. Perhaps it is better to say they believe both. When the BMA musicians play Buddhist music, people believe they are monks and they see themselves as monks. But when they do not wear Buddhist vestments, they are not monks, and they do not think they are monks.
Here we can see everything is mutable or in the process of change.

When we look at the music of the BMA, we can find contradictions and discrepancies, too. For example, we can ask the following questions: Since a written character is a note in their notation, does the tone have a fixed pitch? The musicians have notations of Buddhist music pieces, but do they play according to the notation? Does the tonal system used follow the old tradition? Do their instruments sound like the old instruments? Do the musicians actually play Buddhist music?

The answers still are “yes” and “no.” Yes, every note has a certain pitch, but at the same time, the pitch can be changed when played. When the pitch is changing, musicians must follow the pitches of the yunluo in order to be in tune. The BMA musicians follow the notation to play Buddhist music, but they also transform it into their own version. The tonal system also follows the old tradition. For example, the pitch of the “yellow bell” of the Tang Dynasty is kept, the yanyue scale is kept, but three notes have been lost. Instead of playing the four keys (gong), their yunluo can play only one completely. The instruments sound like those of ancient times, but since one hole of the guanzi and three reeds of the sheng were stopped up, they have changed to some degree. The musicians play Buddhist music, but they also play popular songs, folk songs and other non-Buddhist music; their repertoire is changing.

Contradictions and discrepancies happen because there is constant change. If we ask other questions, the answer is still “change.” For example, how do the musicians realize a melody from a notation? Do musicians keep the forms of suites?
How do they play the folk songs and popular songs? They “add flowers” and change rhythmic patterns. All of these methods are based on change. When they play folk and popular songs, they compose a suite according to the form of Buddhist suites and add “tassels,” thus changing the original form of the songs.

Change is everywhere and questions arise: Why do those changes happen? How do things change? In China, for more than 3,000 years the *Yijing* has been revered as a guide to the development of wisdom for both the individual and the community. It has spoken in diverse ways to Chinese people down through the years, affecting Chinese culture, art, philosophy, and religion (Zhang 2000:6). So let us find the answer in the *Yijing*.

James Legge, who translated the *Yijing* into English, explains the meaning of the *yi* in the introduction of the book:

The word *I* (*yi*) primarily means change. In the *I Ching* (*Yijing*) the word *I* (*yi*) is used interchangeably with the word *Tao* (*Dao*), since *Tao* (*Dao*) is life, spontaneity, evolution, or, in one word, change itself. In the *Analects*, we read: ‘Standing by a stream, Confucius said: Ah! that which is passing is just like this, never ceasing day or night.’ What is ‘passing’ is ever changeable and changing. All that happens in the universe ever flows and changes like the ‘flowing stream’: that is, to borrow an expression from Heraclitus of Ephesus (530-470 B.C), *panta rhei* (everything flows). This expresses the real meaning of the word *I* (*yi*) (Legge 1964:xl).

Here, Legge suggests that *yi* equals *Dao* and *Dao* is life. There is an explanation of the “change” in *Yijing*, too. In the “Xici” (系辞) of *Yijing*, we read that “*sheng* and *sheng* is called [the process of ] change.” (*shengsheng zhi wei yi* 生生之谓易) (Zhang 2000:232). This sentence is very difficult to translate into English since the character *sheng* (*生*) has so many meanings. Initially, *sheng*
meant “give birth to” or “bear,” and this meaning is still recognized, together with “life,” “existence,” “livelihood,” “living” and “growing” (Wu Jingrong 1995:610). I think this sentence can be translated into “life and living is called [the process of] change.” According to this idea, everything that exists, lives, or has life is in the process of change — rather, it is change itself. Music cannot be excepted. Obviously, if a music genre is to be alive, it must keep changing; otherwise it dies.

James Legge translates this sentence into: “Production and reproduction is what is called (the process of) change” (Legge 1964:356). This translation emphasizes another aspect of the original text. In the repertoire of the BMA, we can see that when the situation of production changes, it may cause the music to change. Before 1963, the repertoire did not include non-Buddhist music, but after the commune system was discontinued and Beixinzhuang entered a market economy, the situation of production again changed and the way for people to make a living changed, too. This caused competition between the BMA musicians and the chuigushou musicians, and this competition resulted in further change in their repertoire. In other words, if the commune system had not been discontinued, the BMA would not have competed with the chuigushou, and the musicians of the BMA would not have learned to play new pieces.

When we know “change is life,” there is another question to be answered: “How do things change?”

Zheng Xuan, the Confucian scholar of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), explained the meaning of yi and he also explained the process of yi. James Legge translated Zheng Xuan’s explanation into “ease and simplicity, transformation and
change, and invariability.” (Legge 1964:xl). According to Laozi, “Difficult and easy complete one another” (Wing 1986:2), though he also could have added that simplicity and complexity depend upon each other. So, if something is changed into simplicity, it is being changed into complexity, too. For example, Zhang Zhentao thinks that the frame of bells (bianzhong) was changed into the frame of iron bars (fangxiang), and later the fangxiang was replaced by the yunluo. He feels this process was a type of “retrogression” (Zhang 1997:38). Of course, compared with the huge bells, the yunluo is much lighter and easier to play. But Zhou Dynasty frame of bells must be played by several musicians, whereas a yunluo requires just one. For this musician, it is more complex to play this instrument than to perform in a group. So, if we call this process “retrogression,” it can also be called “evolution.” In the process of change, simplicity and complexity co-exist. Zheng Xuan suggests there is invariability in the process of change. If one music genre were totally changed, in changing the process without any invariability, it would have become another thing, not itself any more. When we study musical change, Zheng Xuan’s idea can assist in addressing these questions.

1 “难易相成。”
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Appendix 1  Pronunciation Guide

Below some basic guidelines are given for pronouncing the Pinyin system of Mandarin Chinese used in this work.

A: as in bar
E: as in her
I: as "ee"; For example, di = “dee”; but when preceded by z, c, s, and zh, ch, sh, r, then shorter than er. Dizi= “deedz.”
O: as in lord: bo =“bore”
U: as in boot
Ü: as in German umlaut (after x or q, the u is also effectively an umlaut)
C: as in its
Q: as in choose
X: between ss and sh
Z: as in bids
Zh: as in Joe
Ou: ou= oh
Uo: (after d, t, n, l, z, c, s, sh, and zh) same as o (see above): luo= “lore”
Ian: ee-en: Fujian = “Foo-jee-en.”
Ao: as in now.
## Appendix 2  Brief Chronological Table of Chinese History

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<td>Western Zhou Dynasty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuan Dynasty</td>
<td>1271 – 1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming Dynasty</td>
<td>1368 – 1644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing Dynasty</td>
<td>1644 – 1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of China</td>
<td>1911 – 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>1949 – present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3    Chronology 1911-2000

1911   End of Qing Dynasty, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen founded Republic of China.
1919   May Fourth movement: called for modernization, democracy, and science.
1921   CCP was founded in Shanghai.
1924-1927  The first civil war.  KMT and CCP worked together.
1927-1937  The second civil war.
1931   Japanese incursion began.
1945-1949  The third civil war between KMT and CCP.
1949   Founding of People’s Republic of China.
1950   Land Reform Campaign
1956   A movement to organize cooperatives. Through the movement, China carried out the socialist transformation of agriculture and handicrafts.
1958   Great Leap Forward and establishment of the People’s Commune.
1963   Socialist Education Movement and Four Purification Campaign.
1980s  After the third Comunist Party Plenum of the eleventh Central Committee of CCP, The Open Door Policy and Economic Liberalization started.
        Gradual revival of traditional culture.
1989   Students’ demonstrations and Tian’anmen event on June fourth.
1999   Banning Falungong and criticizing “feudal superstition.”
### Appendix 4 Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Agricultural Producers' Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA</td>
<td>Beixinzhuang Music Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cbs</td>
<td><em>chuban she</em> (publishing house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDK</td>
<td><em>Zhongguo dabaike quanshu</em> (Chinese encyclopaedia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>the Kuomintang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mim</td>
<td>mimeograph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>People's Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMYYcbs</td>
<td><em>Renmin yinyue chuban she</em> (People's music press)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>University press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YYS</td>
<td><em>Yinyue yanjiu suo</em> (Music Research Institute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YYYJ</td>
<td><em>Yinyue Yanjiu</em> (Music Study, journal) (Beijing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZGYYX</td>
<td><em>Zhongguo yinyue xue</em> (Musicology in China, journal) (Beijing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5  Roster of the Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Year of joining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shi Huaishen</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Percussion (leader)</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi Huairen</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Sheng and yunluo</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Guangcai</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>guanzi, suona, and sheng</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Guanglin</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>(Partner)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Zhenyu</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>sheng, yunluo and percussion</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lian Kui</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>guanzi and sheng</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Dechun</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Boxue</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Boxi</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhou Wenrong</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhou Wenzhu</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Yunluo and percussion</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen Yongping</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>yunluo and sheng</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Yu’en</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Liantian</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>guanzi and sheng</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lou Tingfen</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>dizi and sheng</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6   Contents of Lian Kui’s Notation Book

1. 雁过南楼头 (Yuan guo nan luo tou The Prelude of the Wild Geese Passing the Southern Building)
2. 四上排[牌]头² (Si shan pai tou The Prelude of the Labeled Melody of Si and Shang)
3. 雁过南楼（Yan guo nan luo The Wild Geese Passing the Southern Building）
4. 四上排 [牌]（Si shan pai tou The Labeled Melody of Si and Shang）
5. 合四排 [牌] (He si pai The Labeled Melody of He and Si)
6. 翠竹帘 [帘]（Cui zhulian Green Bamboo Curtain）
7. 祭枪 [腔]（Ji qiang Mourning Melody）
8. 逃军 [淘金]令 (Tao jin ling Fossicking Melody)
9. 拉拉锁（Jie la suo Linked Locks）
10. 拉不断（La bu duan An Unbroken Piece）
11. 小跳神 (Xiao tiao shen Sorcerer’s Dance in a Trance)
12. 走马 (Zuo ma Walking Horse)
13. 望江南 (Wang jiangnan Looking Toward the Jiangnan Region)
14. 唐头令 (Tangtou ling Tangtou Melody)
15. 滴溜子 (Di liu zi Diliuzi)
16. 六句赞 (Liu ju zan Hymn with Six Phrases)
17. 侏天王 (Kua tianwang Clumsy Heavenly Kings)
18. 乐头歌 (Le tou ge Song with a Happy Beginning)
19. 五声[圣]佛 (Wu sheng fo Five Holy Buddhas)
20. 柳含烟（Liu han yan Willows in the Mist）
21. 灯赞（Deng zan Hymn of Lanterns）
22. 哑古令 (Yagu ling Song of Yagu)

² There are wrong characters written in the names of the book. My corrections of these are given here in the square brackets.
23. Pusa tuo (The Mountain of Bodhisattva)
24. Qingjiang yin (Piece of Green River)
25. Xiao chu dui (Going Out in Pairs)
26. Fu shang qi fen (Husband Visits His Wife’s Tomb)
27. Qi shang fu fen (Wife Visits Her Husband’s Tomb)
28. Xia tiao shen er shen (The Second Body of Sorcerer’s Dance in a Trance)
29. Zou ma er shen (The Second Body of Walking Horse)
30. La bu duan er shen (The Second Body of An Unbroken Piece)
31. La bu duan san shen (The Third Body of An Unbroken Piece)
32. Pipa ling (A Tune of Pipa)
33. Zui taiping (Intoxicated in Time of Peace)
34. Le taiping (Joy of Peace)
35. Cui taiping (Emerald Peace)
36. Hong xiu xie (Red Embroidered Shoes)
37. Da shanban (Great Syncopation)
38. Si liu ban (Piece of Si and Liu)
39. Xiao pipa ling (Small Tune of Pipa)
40. Bapu (Eight Notes)
41. Qie sangu izan (Common Hymn of Converting to Buddhism)
42. Lin qing ge (Song of Celebration)
43. Yi ma san jian (A Horse that Runs for Three Hundred Meters at One Gallop)
44. Naozhui (Playing with a Stick)
45. Wu tou gui (The Ghost Without Head)
46. Pu’an zhou (Incantation of Pu’an Temple)
47. 大三皈赞（Da sangui zan Great Hymn of Converting to Buddhism）
48. 浣浪子曲 - 春景、夏景、秋景、冬景（Elangzi qu - Chun jing, Xia jing, Qiu jing, Dong jing Pieces of Elangzi – View of Spring, View of Summer, View of Autumn and View of Winter）
49. 叶里藏花（Ye li cang hua Flowers Hidden in the Leaves）。

The four percussion pieces are:

1. 开坛钹（Kai tan bo Percussion piece of the Beginning of a Ceremony）
2. 一二三加（Yi er san jia One, Two, Three and Adding）
3. 沙[煞]尾（Shawei Coda）
4. 七字打贺（Qi zi da he Seven Congratulatory Characters）.
Appendix 7  Contents of the Percussion Notation Book

1. 天下同(1) (Tianxia tong(1) The World of Great Harmony (A))
2. 一二三加 (Yi er san jia One, Two, Three and Adding)
3. 斗鹌鹑 (Dou anchun Fighting Quails)
4. 过七香 (Guo qixiang Passing the Seven Incenses)
5. 煞尾 (Shawei Coda)
6. 打贺 (Da he Giving Congratulatory Words)
7. 双钹楼 (Shuang bo lou A Building with Two Cymbals)
8. 引部 (Yinbu Introduction)
9. 头身 (Tou shen The First Body)
10. 二身 (Er shen The Second Body)
11. 三身 (San shen The Third Body)
12. 四身 (Si shen The Fourth Body)
13. 五身 (Wu shen The Fifth Body)
14. 六身 (Liu shen The Sixth Body)
15. 开坛钹 (Kai tan bo Percussion Piece of the Beginning of Ceremony)
16. 天下同(2) (Tianxia tong(2) The World of Great Harmony (B))
17. 七字打贺 (Qi zi da he Seven Congratulatory Characters)
18. 过七星 (Guo qi xing Passing the Big Dipper)
19. 着力条 (Zhuo li tiao Piece with Zhuo and Li)
20. 贺力条 (He li tiao Piece with He and Li)
21. 天下同(3) (Tianxia tong(3) The World of Great Harmony (C)).
### Appendix 8  Timetable of the Rituals in a Three-Day’s Funeral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days and rituals</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The first day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing memorial tablet</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the cooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting offerings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the bier</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The second day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the bier</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the deceased off</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the coffin</td>
<td>Non-Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending the Lantern God</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarding at the bier</td>
<td>Non Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The third day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning papers</td>
<td>No music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping vigil beside the coffin</td>
<td>Non-Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying goodbye to the cooks</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending cloth-wrapper</td>
<td>Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying the coffin to the cemetery</td>
<td>Buddhist and non-Buddhist music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>