

## **Philosophical Reflections on the Cultural Integration of Manchu Shamanism and Taoism in Musical Traditions**

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the musical cultural characteristics formed by the integration of Manchu Shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China. Through historical analysis, field investigations, and musicological research, it reveals the dynamic process of cultural exchange and religious blending in the region. The study highlights the unique musical elements, such as hybrid instruments, combined rhythms, and blended melodies, which reflect the fusion of Shamanic animism and Taoist cosmology. The integration not only preserves ancient musical traditions but also fosters social cohesion and artistic innovation. The research contributes to understanding the multicultural symbiosis in religious music and its role in maintaining cultural heritage and promoting interethnic harmony.

**Keywords:** Manchu Shamanism; Taoism; Music Culture Integration; Religious Music; Ethnic Cultural Exchange; Northeast China; Ritual Music; Multiculturalism

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

As a traditional belief of the Manchu people, Northeast Manchu shamanism has a long history, and its origin can be traced back to primitive society. In the long years, the Manchu ancestors lived between the white mountains and black waters in the northeast, and in the face of the mysterious power of nature and the unknowns in life, they gradually formed the concept of animism, believing that the mountains, rivers, animals and plants in the natural world are inhabited by gods, and these gods can affect the life and destiny of human beings (Qu, 2023a). As an intermediary between humans and the gods, shamans communicate with the gods through unique rituals, dances, music, and incantations, and pray for the gods' protection and blessings. Shamanism played a vital role in the social life of the Manchus, not only as the core of people's spiritual beliefs, but also had a profound impact on the culture, art, and customs of the Manchus. For example, Manchu rituals, folklore, traditional skills, etc., are inextricably linked to shamanism. Taoism originated in ancient China, with "Tao" as its core belief and the pursuit of immortality and immortality. Its ideological system integrates Taoist philosophy, immortal magic, yin and yang five elements theory, etc., and has a wealth of scriptures, teachings, and practice methods. In the process of development, Taoism has formed many schools and branches, such as Quanzhen Dao, Zhengyi, etc., and

there are certain differences in the interpretation of doctrines, practice methods, and ritual norms (Qu, 2023b). Historically, Taoism has had a wide and profound impact on China's politics, culture, science and technology, and many literati and writers have been deeply influenced by Taoist thought and created a large number of literary works rich in Taoist artistic conception. Taoist health concepts and cultivation methods have also had a positive impact on Chinese's health concepts and lifestyles. In Northeast China, the spread and development of Manchu shamanism and Taoism has gone through a long historical process. With the passage of time and the changes of society, the two have come into contact with each other and influenced each other in this land, and there has gradually been a trend of integration. This phenomenon of fusion is particularly evident in the aspect of music culture, where Manchu shamanic music and Taoist music borrow and penetrate each other in terms of melody, rhythm, musical instruments, and lyrics, forming a unique musical style and cultural connotation. For example, in some sacrificial ceremonies, you can not only hear the unique rhythm of the sacred drum and the chanting of mysterious mantras in shamanic music, but also feel the melodious melody and solemn atmosphere in Taoist music; The use of some musical instruments also crossed, such as the shamanic drums occasionally used in Taoist ceremonies, and Taoist bells, chimes and other musical instruments were gradually integrated into Manchu shamanic music performances (Li, 2023).

## 2. RELEVANT RESEARCH WORK

The study of Manchu shamanic music in Northeast China started early, and some Western scholars began to pay attention to this field in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, the Russian scholar S.M In the early 20th century, Shirokogorov conducted an in-depth fieldwork on the ethnic groups in Northeast China, and his book "The Social Organization of the Manchus" touched on the rituals and beliefs of Manchu shamanism, including a preliminary description of shamanic music, which provided some basic information for subsequent research. Japanese scholars have also shown a strong interest in the music of Manchu shamanism in Northeast China, and the cultural phenomenon of Manchu shamanism has been recorded and analyzed in works such as Torii Ryuzo's "Examination of Manchu Mongolian Traces", in which there are certain discussions on the instruments and performance forms of shamanic music. However, in general, most of the foreign studies focus on the investigation of shamanic culture as a whole, and the research on shamanic music is not systematic

and in-depth, and lacks a detailed analysis of the ontological characteristics of music (Heissig, 1953). In recent years, the research on the shamanic music of the Manchu people in Northeast China has achieved fruitful results. Scholar Liu Guiteng has been committed to the study of Manchu music for a long time, and his "Research on Manchu Shamanic Musical Instruments" has conducted a comprehensive and in-depth study on the shape, symbolism, configuration and relationship between Manchu shamanic musical instruments and shamanic beliefs, and has provided important theoretical support for the study of Manchu shamanic music through field investigation and literature combing. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, Meng Huiying's *Shamanism of Northern China* systematically expounds the origin, development, and belief system of shamanism, and makes an in-depth analysis of the function and cultural connotation of shamanic music in sacrificial rituals, so that people have a deeper understanding of the cultural value of shamanic music. In terms of the study of Daoist music, there are relatively few foreign studies, mainly focusing on mentioning Daoist music in the general introduction of Daoist culture, and there is a lack of special in-depth research. Pu Hengqiang's "Taoism and Traditional Chinese Music" deeply explores the relationship between Taoist music and traditional Chinese music, comprehensively analyzes Taoist music from the aspects of musical form and cultural connotation, and reveals the unique status and value of Taoist music in the traditional Chinese music system. Wang Guangqi's *History of Chinese Music* also sorts out the historical development of Taoist music, which provides a historical reference for the study of Taoist music (Lu & Tan, 2024). There are relatively few studies on the music culture under the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China. When some scholars study Manchu shamanic music or Taoist music, although they mention that there is a certain cultural exchange and integration phenomenon between the two in Northeast China, there is a lack of systematic research on the fusion of music culture (Lu & Tan, 2021). For example, some studies have simply pointed out the coexistence of shamanic and Taoist musical elements in the sacrificial activities in some regions, but the specific manifestations of this fusion, the historical process of integration, the characteristics of musical culture after integration, and the cultural significance contained in this fusion have not been deeply excavated and analyzed. There are some deficiencies and gaps in the current research. In terms of research depth, there is a lack of systematic research on the music culture under the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China from multiple dimensions such as music ontology, cultural connotation, and historical evolution. In terms of

research breadth, there are few relevant research results, which cannot fully show the distribution, inheritance and influence of this fusion music culture in Northeast China. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study the characteristics of music culture under the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China, which will help to fill the research gap in this field and enrich and improve the theoretical system of ethnomusicology and religious music research (Huang, 2000).

### 3. THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE INTEGRATION OF MANCHU SHAMANISM AND TAOISM IN NORTHEAST CHINA

As a primitive religion of the Manchu people, Northeast Manchu shamanism originated from the primitive belief of animism, and maintained the communication between people and gods through shamanic rituals and music. Taoism was introduced to Northeast China through immigration and missionary work during the Wei and Jin dynasties, and its teachings and rituals gradually merged with the local culture. The integration of the two began with the intermingling of ethnic groups and the mutual penetration of cultures, and the long-term intermingling of the Manchus and Han ethnic groups promoted the mutual learning of religious practices (Qu, 2023a). At the same time, social unrest and spiritual needs pushed people to combine shamanic nature worship with Taoist cosmology, forming a religious form with both mystical rituals and philosophical connotations. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the official policy of tolerance for multiple religions further accelerated the integration of the two in music, rituals, and deity systems, and eventually formed a composite religious culture featuring shamanic drums and Taoist songs, integrating ancestor worship and Taoism in the northeast China was shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Historical Development Comparison of Manchu Shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China

Period	Manchu Shamanism	Taoism
Primitive Society	Animistic Rituals for Hunting/Survival	Not Yet Introduced
Feudal Era	Ritual Complexity with Social Hierarchy	Initial Spread Via Central Plains Migrants
Tang-Song Dynasties	Cultural Integration with Folk Elements	Government-Supported Expansion
Modern Times	Revitalization Through Cultural Heritage	Adaptation to Modern Religious Practices

### 3.1 The Development of Manchu Shamanism in Northeast China

Shamanism originated in primitive societies and is a primitive religious belief that arose when human beings were less productive and had a limited understanding of nature. In the Manchu region of Northeast China, its origin can be traced back to the fishing and hunting life of the Manchu ancestors. At that time, the ancestors of the Manchu people lived in the mountains and forests and rivers in the northeast region, and were closely dependent on nature, and they witnessed the miraculous power of nature, such as wind, rain, thunder and lightning, the change of seasons, the growth and reproduction of animals and plants, etc., but they could not make a scientific explanation for these phenomena, so they gradually formed the concept of animism, believing that everything in nature contains gods or souls, and these gods and souls can affect the life and destiny of human beings. In its early form, the manifestations of Manchu shamanism were relatively simple and primitive. Sacrificial activities are important religious rituals and are usually performed in natural places in the wild, such as clearings in mountains and forests, riversides, etc. The objects of worship mainly include nature gods, such as the gods of heaven, the gods of the earth, the gods of mountains, the gods of water, the gods of fire, etc., which are considered to be symbols of the power of nature and control the living environment of human beings; There are also ancestral gods, the ancestors of the Manchu people believed that the souls of their ancestors would pay attention to and protect future generations in another world, and through the sacrifice of ancestral gods, they could obtain the protection and guidance of their ancestors (Qu, 2024). Shamans play a central role in Manchu shamanism, and they are believed to be messengers who can communicate between humans and gods, possessing special abilities and mystical powers. Shamans are usually members of a clan and are selected not on the basis of blood relations, but on the basis of individual gifts and abilities, such as the ability to communicate with the gods, the ability to heal diseases, and the ability to foresee the future. During the ritual, the shaman would wear a unique costume and wear a hat on his head, which was usually decorated with various patterns and ornaments that symbolized the gods, such as feathers, animal bones, shells, etc., which not only had a mysterious beauty, but also symbolized the close connection between the shaman and the gods; Dressed in vestments, the vestments are embroidered with mysterious runes and patterns, implying that the shaman can harness the power of the gods; Holding the drum, the drum is an important instrument of the shaman, its shape is mostly round, the drum

surface is covered with animal skin, the drum body is decorated with bells and other things, the shaman beats the drum, makes a rhythmic sound, in order to summon the gods, communicate with the heavens and the earth. Shamans enter a trance-like state through dancing, singing, and chanting mantras during rituals, in which they are believed to be able to communicate directly with the gods, convey the will of the gods, and pray for peace, good harvest, health, etc. for their people (Xiao et al., 2024). For example, in rituals to pray for a good harvest, shamans dance around piles of grain that symbolize a good harvest and chant words to the gods to bless the crops to thrive and reap a good harvest. In the ritual of healing illness, shamans will try to ward off the sick and bring hope of recovery to the sick by chanting mantras and touching the patient's body. In modern times, with the transformation of society and the development of science and technology, the Manchu shamanism in Northeast China is facing unprecedented challenges. On the one hand, the introduction of Western culture and modern scientific knowledge has had a huge impact on people's ideological concepts, and many people have begun to gradually abandon traditional religious beliefs and turn to a more rational and scientific way of life. On the other hand, the rapid development of society has led to the acceleration of people's pace of life, and traditional religious ceremonies and activities are difficult to adapt to the needs of modern life, and the inheritance and development of shamanism are facing difficulties. However, despite the many challenges, the Manchu shamanism in Northeast China has been preserved and passed down in some Manchu-inhabited areas, and has become one of the important symbols of Manchu culture. Some Manchu people still adhere to shamanism, inherit ancient rituals and cultural traditions, and are constantly exploring how to combine shamanism with modern society to make it glow with new vitality in the context of the new era. For example, some places have displayed and inherited shamanic culture by holding shamanic cultural festivals and establishing shamanic culture museums, which have attracted the attention of many tourists and scholars, providing new opportunities for the inheritance and development of shamanism (Jiang, 2022).

### 3.2 The Spread of Taoism in the Northeast

There are a variety of views and theories on the way and time of the introduction of Taoism into Northeast China in the academic circles, and based on historical records and related research, there are mainly the following possible ways and time inferences. The development of Taoism

in Northeast China has gone through many stages, each of which presents different characteristics and has had a wide and profound impact on local culture and folklore (Kirkland, 2002). In the early days of its introduction, Taoism spread in the northeast mainly in cities and areas with convenient transportation, and the group of believers was relatively small, mainly some Han immigrants and local upper-class people. During this period, the propagation of Taoism was mainly through the missionary activities of Taoist priests and the establishment of Taoist temples, and Taoist priests disseminated Taoist teachings and beliefs to the local people by explaining Taoist scriptures and holding ritual activities. As the center of Taoist activities, Taoist temples are not only a place for believers to carry out religious ceremonies, but also an important carrier for spreading Taoist culture. With the passage of time, Taoism gradually integrated with the local culture and folk customs in Northeast China, showing a trend of localization. In the exchange and collision with local religions such as Manchu shamanism, Taoism absorbed some elements of shamanism, such as sacrificial rituals, belief in gods, etc., and at the same time spread its own teachings and culture to shamanism, promoting the integration of the two. In the folk, some Taoist beliefs and customs are gradually integrated into local life, such as worshipping the god of the stove during the Spring Festival, pasting Spring Festival couplets and other customs, all of which have a close relationship with Taoist culture (Dean, 2014). The belief in the gods of Taoism is also deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and people regard the gods in Taoism as gods who bless the safety and happiness of themselves and their families, and will pray to the gods for help when they encounter difficulties or diseases. During the Qing Dynasty, Taoism was further developed in the northeastern region. The Qing government adopted a policy of both control and exploitation of Taoism, limiting the scale of its development on the one hand, and using Taoism to maintain social stability and ruling order on the other. During this period, the number of Taoist temples in the Northeast region increased, the number of Taoist priests also increased, and the influence of Taoism gradually expanded. Some famous Taoist temples, such as Shenyang Taiqing Palace and Thousand Mountains Wuliang Temple, have become important places for Taoist activities in Northeast China, attracting many believers to come to worship and practice. At the same time, Taoist culture and art have also been developed, such as Taoist music, painting, sculpture, etc., enriching the cultural connotation of Northeast China (Jagchid, 1980). Taoism has had a profound impact on the culture and folklore of the Northeast region.

In terms of culture, Taoist philosophical ideas and moral concepts have had an important impact on the development of local culture. Taoism emphasizes the concept of "Tao" and pursues natural harmony and self-cultivation, which is combined with the traditional culture of Northeast China to form a unique cultural atmosphere. Taoist classics and literary works are also widely disseminated in Northeast China, providing rich materials for the inheritance and development of local culture. In terms of folklore, Taoist beliefs and rituals are integrated into local traditional festivals and folk activities, such as temple fairs and sacrifices (Girardot, 1972). The temple fair is the product of the combination of Taoism and folk beliefs, and every temple fair, people will go to the Taoist temple to burn incense and pray for blessings, watch opera performances, juggling and other activities, which promotes the exchange and inheritance of folk culture. Some Taoist spells and always, such as charms and divination, are also spread among the people and become a part of people's daily lives. In addition, Taoism also had an impact on architecture, art, and other fields in the Tohoku region. The architectural style of the Taoist temple combines the architectural characteristics of the Central Plains region and the regional style of the Northeast region to form a unique architectural form. Taoist paintings, sculptures and other works of art, with their exquisite craftsmanship and unique artistic style, have added luster to the development of art in Northeast China.

### 3.3 Historical Background and Reasons for the Integration

In the long course of history, cultural exchanges between different ethnic groups have always been an important driving force for cultural development and evolution. Northeast China is a multi-ethnic region, where the Manchu and Han ethnic groups have coexisted for a long time, and cultural exchanges between them are frequent and deep. This exchange encompassed all aspects of social life, including language, customs, art, religion, etc., and laid a solid foundation for the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China (Wu, 2017). Cultural exchanges between the Manchus and the Han can be traced back to very early times. In terms of economic life, the Manchus mainly fished, hunted and nomadic herding in the early days, while the Han people mainly used agriculture as their main mode of production. With the passage of time, the economic exchanges between the Manchu and Han ethnic groups became increasingly close, and the Manchus gradually learned and borrowed from the farming techniques of the Han people and began to engage in



agricultural production, while the Han people also participated in the activities of fishing, hunting, animal husbandry and other activities of the Manchus. On the political front, historical regime changes and political rule also had an important impact on Manchu-Han cultural exchanges. During the Qing Dynasty, the Manchus established a national government, and in order to consolidate their rule and strengthen ties with the Han people, the Qing government adopted a series of measures, such as promoting Manchu-Han intermarriage, appointing Han officials, and learning Han culture. These policies promoted exchanges and integration between the Manchu and Han ethnic groups, and gave the Han culture, ideas and religious beliefs the opportunity to spread more deeply into Manchu society (Sivin, 1978). At the same time, the Manchu rulers also regulated and organized shamanism to a certain extent, combining it with the rule of the regime, which also created conditions for the integration of shamanism and Taoism to a certain extent. In the field of culture and art, the exchanges between the Manchu and Han nationalities are also very active. Manchu folk arts such as paper-cutting, embroidery, singing and dancing have unique national styles, and Han literature, painting, opera and other art forms also have profound cultural heritage. The Manchu and Han ethnic groups have borrowed from each other and absorbed each other in terms of culture and art, enriching each other's cultural connotations. In terms of music, Manchu shamanic music and Han music influenced each other in the process of communication, and the rhythm, melody and singing style in shamanic music were integrated with the characteristics of Han music to form a new musical style. This fusion of musical styles is also reflected in religious music, where Manchu shamanic music and Taoist music borrow from each other in terms of melody, rhythm, and musical instruments, providing a musical basis for the fusion of the two. For example, the sacred drum, which is commonly used in shamanic music, adds new vitality to Taoist music in the process of merging with Taoist music; Some of the instruments and performance techniques in Taoist music were also introduced into Manchu shamanic music, enriching the expressiveness of shamanic music (Po-Tuan & Liu, 1986). The changes in the social environment and people's psychological needs are important internal driving forces for the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China. In different historical periods, changes in the social environment have had a profound impact on people's lives and thoughts, and people often seek religious solace and support when faced with various life difficulties and spiritual needs. Northeast Manchu shamanism and

Taoism have their own characteristics in meeting people's social needs and psychological identity, and the integration of the two is to better meet the needs of social development and meet people's diverse spiritual needs. In the long-term cultural exchanges and social life, the Manchu and Han people gradually developed a sense of identity and belonging to each other's cultures (Shen, 2023). This psychological identity makes it easier for them to accept each other's religious beliefs and cultural traditions, providing a psychological basis for the integration of the two religions. For example, in their interactions with the Han people, the Manchu people gradually understood and appreciated the cultural connotation and art forms of Taoism, and became interested in and identified with the gods and rituals of Taoism. The Han people also have a certain understanding and respect for the mystery and unique culture of Manchu shamanism, and are willing to accept the beliefs and customs of shamanism to a certain extent. This mutual psychological identity enables Manchu shamanism and Taoism to absorb and learn from each other more smoothly in the process of integration, forming a new form of religious culture. In addition, the active promotion of religious propagators also played an important role in the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China. As the propagators of the two religions, Taoist priests and shamans not only teach religious doctrines and rituals in their contact with the people, but also make appropriate adjustments and integration of religious content according to the needs and psychological characteristics of the people. For example, when some Taoist priests preached in Northeast China, they would combine the cultural traditions and living customs of the Manchu people to localize the interpretation and dissemination of Taoist teachings and rituals, so that they would be more easily accepted by the Manchu people. Some shamans also absorb some elements of Taoism and enrich their own rituals and spells to meet the increasingly diverse spiritual needs of the population. The active promotion of this religion propagator promoted the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China, so that the two religions continued to develop and evolve in mutual influence (Xiong & Ju, 2023).

#### 4. ELEMENTS OF MUSIC CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION

##### 4.1 Elements of Manchu Shamanic Music in Northeast China

Northeast Manchu shamanic music, with its unique instrument shape,

melody style and lyric connotation, constitutes an important cultural gene of the fusion system. The core instruments include imchin (grasping drums), sisha (waist bells), bangbei (shaking bells) and clappers (clappers). As a soul instrument, Imchin forms a unique sound effect through the combination of wooden drum rings and animal skin drum surfaces, with metal grab rings and leather rope decorations. When playing, the left hand holds the grasping ring, and the right hand holds the bamboo grate drumstick to strike, and the sound of the drum ring shaking is intertwined with the rhythm of the drum, creating a strong primitive rhythm in the sacrificial ceremony. The sand is made of small metal bells strung together and tied around the shaman's waist, which produces a crisp sound through movements such as swinging and shaking, forming a polyphonic relationship with the rhythm of Imchin. As a symbol of the gods, the sound of the metal beads hitting the bell wall when it shakes is seen as a sign of the arrival of the gods (Xintong, 2019). The clicker enhances the rhythm by slapping against each other, and the difference in the number of plates used by different sects reflects the diversity of the music. The tunes of shamanic music have distinct rhythmic characteristics, and they are often danced with fast drum beats to create a tense and dynamic atmosphere. The melodic lines are predominantly progressive, with rich variations through free improvisation, such as the melody structure that follows a specific sequence in a night ritual. The lyrics cover Manchu historical memories, folk traditions, and religious beliefs, from vivid depictions of fishing and hunting life to awe-inspiring praise of the gods of nature. For example, the narrative of the god Abu Kaheh and the earth god Banamheh in the sacred song not only records the creation myth of the Manchu people, but also conveys the primitive belief in animism. This musical expression that integrates history, culture and belief has made shamanic music a living carrier of Manchu culture.

#### 4.2 Elements of Taoist Music

Taoist music is based on ritual instruments such as bells, chimes and drums, combined with orchestral instruments and vocal forms, to build a unique religious music system. The grandeur and depth of the bell, the crisp and melodious chime, and the calm and powerful drum form the sound framework of the ceremony. Among the orchestral instruments, the brightness of the flute, the grievance of the flute, the mellowness of the erhu and the magnificence of the pipa play an important role in different ritual links. Vocal forms include chanting, mantras, and chanting, with

chanting focusing on the subdued expression of the meaning of the scriptures, chanting mantras to communicate with the gods in a fast and mysterious tone, and chanting to praise the gods with beautiful melodies. The music card system of Taoist music is rich and diverse, and classic music cards such as "Clarification Rhyme" and "Step Void Rhyme" are combined through the structure of the couplet to form a complete ritual music suite. The melody is based on the pentatonic scale, focusing on the use of ornamentation and portamento, such as "Step Void Rhyme", which imitates the ethereal feeling of an immortal walking in the air. The lyrics incorporate Taoist philosophical thoughts, such as the cosmogenesis theory of "Tao is born one, life is two", the moral concept of "goodness is like water", and the fairy story of the eight immortals. Through concise language and vivid metaphors, these lyrics transform abstract teachings into perceptible musical images, such as the imagery expression of "the Tao is like a lamp shining on the dark night", which not only deepens the religious experience of the believers, but also enhances the literary nature of the music (Li, 1993). The choice of key in Taoist music has symbolic significance: the solemnity of the palace tone is used to praise the gods, the brightness of the sign tone expresses the festive atmosphere, and the softness of the feather tone expresses distant emotions. The use of special performance techniques such as vibrato and syncopation further enhances the expressiveness of the music. This kind of music system, which integrates philosophical speculation, artistic aesthetics and religious functions, provides a mature cultural paradigm for the integration of Manchu and Han music.

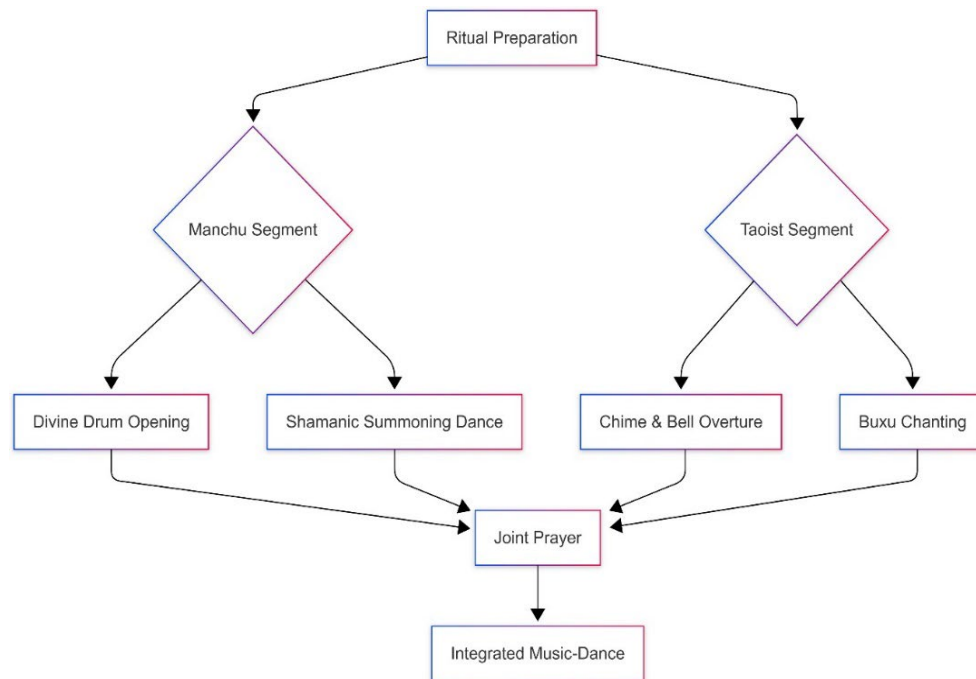
## 5. THE SPECIFIC EXPRESSION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSIC CULTURE

### 5.1 Syncretive Features in Ritual Music

#### 5.1.1 Ritual Music

The ritual music of the Manchu shamans usually uses musical instruments such as drums and waist bells as the main accompaniment, and the rhythm is strong and dynamic. During the invitation session, the shaman will beat the drum, the rhythm is rapid and powerful, as if to summon the arrival of the gods, while the mouth is chanting words and chanting mysterious incantations, the melody is simple and simple, full of primitive power. During the sacrifice, the waist bell makes a crisp sound with the shaman's dance movements, which works with the rhythm of the

sacred drum to create a warm and solemn atmosphere (Dissanayake, 1997). This is shown in Figure 1. For example, in the Manchu ancestor worship ceremony, shamans dance rapidly around the sacrificial site, and the sacred drum in their hands and the waist bell around their waist make a strong sound to express their reverence and remembrance of their ancestors.



**Figure 1:** Fusion in Music-Dance

The Taoist ritual music uses musical instruments such as bells, chimes, and drums as the core, and creates a quiet and solemn atmosphere through melodious and soothing melodies. At the beginning of the ceremony, the crisp sound of the bell chime is like a signal of respect to the gods, and then the Taoist priests chant and praise to the accompaniment of bells and drums, and their elegant melodies and solemn rituals together build a sacred space (Hirabayashi, 2009). For example, in the Sanqing sacrifice, a Taoist priest dressed in a Taoist robe recites the "Sanqing Treasure Message" with a ritual instrument in his hand, and his voice is solemn and full of reverence. The fused sacrificial ritual is based on retaining the traditional links of Manchu shamanism such as asking for gods and sacrifices, and integrating Taoist chanting elements. The strong rhythm of the shaman drum and the melodious melody of the Taoist chanting form a polyphonic interweaving, with the interspersing of shaman dance and Taoist ritual movements, forming a unique ritual style. At the musical level, the original rhythm of the waist bell of the divine drum complements the quiet timbre of the bell and the flute, and the acceleration of the drum beat at the climax echoes the sublimation of the melody, which not only retains

the emotional impact of shamanic music, but also adds the elegant temperament of Taoist music. In terms of singing, the simplicity of the sacred song and the solemnity of the singing are blended to form an expression with both national characteristics and religious connotations (Joncas & Joncas, 1997). In the prayer ceremony, the sound of Taoist bells and drums is the first to break the silence, the sound of the bell is loud like a signal to the gods, and the sound of the drum calmly guides the participants into a state of piety. Taoist priests chant scriptures such as the "Blessing Mantra" to convey prayers for happiness and well-being with melodious melodies. At the same time, the shaman dances with a sacred drum, the bright rhythm echoes the original call of the sacred song, and the crisp sound of the waist bell adds layers to the music. During the ceremony, the Taoist orchestra and shamanic instruments played in tandem, and the chanting and divine singing were intertwined into a unique harmony, which not only enhanced the religious atmosphere of the ceremony, but also enriched the musical expression. This kind of fusion music is not only a medium for communicating with the gods, but also a carrier for emotional expression and cultural inheritance, and realizes the unity of religious function and artistic value through the transmission of prayer wishes and the interactive participation of the audience.

## 5.2 Fusion of Musical Structure and Form

Before the fusion, Manchu shamanic music was dominated by a single-part form, creating a mysterious atmosphere through the repetition of musical passages. Taoist music, on the other hand, adopts a couplet structure, expressing complex religious connotations through the combination of multiple songs. After fusion, a new type of song structure is formed, which often opens with shamanic songs to attract attention, and then gradually introduces Taoist songs such as "Clarification Rhyme" and "Step Void Rhyme" to achieve the organic combination of primitive simplicity and elegance and delicacy. The combination of musical phrases breaks through the traditional mode, with short and bright shamanic phrases alternating with long and tactful Taoist phrases, and the transition of musical passages achieves natural cohesion through melodic variations and rhythmic transitions, enhancing the overall coherence of the music. The performance forms are diverse: traditional shamanic solo dances and Taoist collective rituals coexist, and a collaborative performance mode of shamans and Taoist priests has developed. For example, in the prayer ceremony, the shaman beats the drum and dances to create a warm atmosphere, and the Taoist priest recites sutras and praises to form a sound

effect. The addition of folk artists further enriches the musical performance, and musical instruments such as erhu and pipa collide with the timbre of the drums and chimes to create a unique listening experience. The introduction of interactive performances has broken the one-way transmission mode of traditional religious music, and the audience's participation in singing and dancing enhances the immersion of the ritual and makes religious music closer to secular life (Aslanova et al., 2018).

### 5.3 The Integration of Aesthetic Concepts

Fusion music through the combination of musical instruments and sound design, to build a mysterious and solemn composite aesthetic space. The steady rhythm of the drum and the crisp sound of the waist bell symbolize the shamanic reverence for the gods of nature, while the long timbre of the bell chime and the elegant melody of Taoist music reflect the Taoist pursuit of the sacred realm. The combination of the two forms a unique sound landscape: the rapid drum beat is accompanied by the crescendo of chanting, as if the gods have descended from ancient time and space; The soothing melody rings softly in the waist bell, just like a secret dialogue between man and the gods (Chapman, 2007). This acoustic design not only satisfies the functional needs of religious ceremonies, but also creates an aesthetic experience that transcends the practical level. Music becomes a vehicle for multiple emotions: the reverence for the gods is conveyed through solemn melodies and ritualized performances, the remembrance of ancestors is continued in the narratives of sacred songs and scriptural speeches, and the yearning for a better life permeates the melodies and lyrics of blessing music. This kind of emotional expression not only satisfies the spiritual needs of individuals, but also constructs a medium for collective memory. At the level of spiritual sustenance, fusion music provides listeners with a spiritual shelter beyond reality through the creation of a sacred atmosphere. Whether it is the solace of the prayer melody for those in distress, or the peace of mind of ordinary people through ritual music, it embodies the spiritual adjustment function of religious music in modern society. The concept of harmony and symbiosis contained in it is more guided

## 6. THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSICAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

### 6.1 Cultural Values

The music culture of the Northeast Manchu shamanism and Taoism is

like a rich cultural treasure house, carrying the profound historical and cultural heritage of the Manchu and Han people, and has become an important carrier of national cultural inheritance and embodiment. This fusion music culture also reflects the unique cultural style formed in the process of exchange and integration of Manchu and Han ethnic cultures. In the long-term historical development, the Manchu and Han ethnic groups interacted with each other and influenced each other in Northeast China, and the two cultures gradually merged. Fusion music culture is a vivid embodiment of this cultural fusion, which not only retains the primitive, simple and mysterious Manchu shamanic music, but also integrates the elegance, solemnity and profundity of Taoist music, forming a cultural form that is both national and inclusive. This cultural form not only enriches the cultural connotation of the Manchu and Han nationalities, but also contributes to the diversity of the Chinese culture. Through the research and inheritance of integrated music culture, we can gain an in-depth understanding of the historical process of cultural exchange and integration between the Manchu and Han ethnic groups, enhance mutual understanding and unity between ethnic groups, and promote the prosperity and development of Chinese national culture (Tekman et al., 2012). The musical culture under the fusion of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China vividly shows the fusion of the two religious cultures, and provides unique and precious materials for the study of religious culture, which has important value that cannot be ignored. From the perspective of ritual music, this fusion of musical culture provides a vivid case for studying the evolution and development of religious rituals. In the process of integration, the sacrificial ritual music of Manchu shamanism and the ritual music of Taoism have borrowed from each other and influenced each other, forming a new form of ritual music. In some of the fused sacrificial ceremonies, the traditional links such as Manchu shamanism and worship of gods and sacrifices are retained, and elements of Taoist chanting and chanting are also integrated. This integration makes the procedures and links of religious ritual music richer and more diverse, reflecting the adaptability and innovation of religious ceremonies in different cultural contexts. Through the study of these fused ritual music, we can gain an in-depth understanding of the evolution of religious rituals in the process of historical development, as well as the interaction and influence between different religious cultures. In terms of religious doctrines and beliefs, the integration of musical culture also provides important clues for research. The animistic concept and



polytheistic belief of Manchu shamanism and the Taoist concept of "Tao" and the idea of cultivating immortals are blended with each other in music, reflecting the collision and integration of the two religious beliefs. The lyrics of the fusion music contain not only the reverence and prayer for the gods of nature and ancestors, but also the comprehension and pursuit of the "Tao" (Danielsen, 2006). This integration reflects the diverse needs of believers in terms of religious beliefs and the interpenetration of different religious beliefs. Through the analysis of the lyrics of fusion music, we can deeply explore the spread and acceptance of religious doctrines and beliefs among the people, as well as their impact on people's spiritual world. In addition, the fusion of musical culture also provides rich materials for the study of the relationship between religious culture and social life. Religious culture is an important part of social culture, and it is closely related to all aspects of social life. The musical culture of the Northeast Manchu shamanism and Taoism not only plays a role in religious ceremonies, but also penetrates into the daily life of the people. In some traditional festivals and celebrations in Northeast China, you can often see performances of fusion music, which has become an important way for people to express their emotions, inherit culture, and enhance social cohesion. Through the study of the spread and application of fusion music culture in the folk, we can understand the influence of religious culture on social life and the role of social life in shaping religious culture.

## 6.2 Artistic Value

The musical culture of the Northeast Manchu shamanism and Taoism has brought novel timbre and expression techniques to music creation with its unique musical instruments. The Imqin (divine drum) of the Manchu shamanism, with its powerful timbre and varied rhythmic changes, can produce a strong sense of rhythm and unique rhythm when struck, adding a primitive and mysterious atmosphere to the music. In modern music creation, composers can borrow the rhythmic characteristics of Imchin and integrate them into their works to create dynamic and energetic musical rhythms. Combining Imchin's fast drum beats with the rhythms of modern electronic music creates a tense and exciting atmosphere that makes the music more impactful. Taoist bells, chimes and other musical instruments have crisp and melodious tones, with ethereal and solemn characteristics, which can add a sense of tranquility and sacredness to music. In the creation, the use of the sound of the bell and chime as the background sound effect can create an otherworldly musical conception, making the

audience feel as if they are in a fairyland. The combination of the sound of the bell chime with the strings creates a serene and profound musical atmosphere that allows people to feel the peace and relaxation of the mind while listening (Walker, 2007). In terms of melody and rhythm, the fusion of music culture shows a unique charm and provides rich inspiration for music creation. The melodies of Manchu shamanic music are simple and simple, but full of vitality and emotional expression, and its rhythms are strong and dynamic, which can arouse people's emotional resonance. The melody of Taoist music is melodious and elegant, focusing on the change of pitch and the smoothness of the lines, and the rhythm is relatively soothing, giving people a sense of tranquility and peace. Combining the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of these two types of music allows for the creation of a unique musical style (Danielsen, 2006). In a fusion musical work, you can start with the strong rhythm and simple melody of Manchu shamanic music to attract the attention of the audience and create a warm atmosphere; Then, the melodious melody of Taoist music is gradually introduced, which makes the emotional expression of the music more delicate and richer, realizes the emotional transition from passion to tranquility, and enhances the appeal and expressiveness of the music. Lyric content is also an important source of inspiration for music creation. The lyrics in the fusion of music culture contain rich religious beliefs, myths and legends, and national emotions, which provide profound cultural connotations for music creation. The lyrics of Manchu shamanic songs contain praise and prayers to the gods of nature, ancestors, and the inheritance of Manchu history and culture. Taoist lyrics express the comprehension and pursuit of "Tao", as well as the advocacy of morality and ethics. Composers can draw inspiration from these lyrics to create musical works with profound ideological connotations and cultural heritage. According to the lyrics of the Manchu shamanic god song about nature worship, compose a musical work that praises nature, and express the awe and love for nature through music; Or take the content of Taoist lyrics about self-cultivation as inspiration, create a musical work that guides people to pursue inner peace and spiritual sublimation, so that music not only has artistic value, but also has certain educational significance. The musical culture under the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China has had a profound impact on the form and technique of music performance art, which has greatly enriched and developed music performance art, making it more diverse and splendid (Rehfeldt et al., 2021).

### 6.3 Social Value

The musical culture of the Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China is like an invisible bridge, which plays an irreplaceable and important role in promoting ethnic exchanges and unity, becoming a link between the Manchus, the Han and other ethnic groups, and promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among various ethnic groups, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cultural Values of Integrated Music

Value Dimension	Description	Example Application
Cultural Preservation	Maintained Ancient Musical Forms while Adapting to Modern Contexts	Shamanic Drum Rhythms Combined With Taoist Pentatonic Scales in Contemporary Performances
Artistic Innovation	Fusion of Sacred and Secular Musical Elements	Creation of New Instruments Like the "Yin-Yang Bell" Blending Shamanic and Taoist Designs
Social Cohesion	Bridged Ethnic Divides Through Shared Musical Experiences	Annual "Heaven-Earth Festival" Featuring Integrated Music Performances by Both Communities

The fusion of musical cultures also promotes harmonious coexistence and cooperation between ethnic groups at the social level. In the Northeast, the Manchu and Han ethnic groups and other ethnic groups live together, and the fusion of music and culture becomes a part of their daily lives. In community activities, cultural festivals and other occasions, the performance of integrated music can attract the participation of people of all ethnic groups and promote the exchange and interaction between ethnic groups. In terms of spiritual sustenance, the integration of music culture provides the public with a spiritual pursuit that transcends reality. In the fast-paced nature of modern society, people face various pressures and challenges, and they need a kind of support and comfort spiritually. The music of the Northeast Manchu shamanism and Taoism, with its unique religious and cultural connotation, provides people with a harbor of spiritual sustenance (Walker, 2007). In the process of listening to and participating in musical activities, people can temporarily forget the troubles of real life, immerse themselves in the sacred atmosphere of religion, feel the presence and power of the gods, and thus gain inner peace and tranquility. From the perspective of aesthetic needs, the fusion of music culture has a unique artistic charm and can meet the people's pursuit of beauty. It combines the primitive simplicity of Manchu shamanic music and the elegance and melodiousness of Taoist music, forming a musical

style that is both primitive and elegant. The melody, rhythm, harmony and lyrics in the music are integrated with each other to create a rich and diverse musical image and artistic conception, giving people a beautiful enjoyment. In terms of melody, there are both simple and dynamic melodies in Manchu shamanic music and beautiful and graceful melodies in Taoist music, which are intertwined with each other, making the music both dynamic and full of emotion. In addition, the fusion of music culture also meets the spiritual and cultural needs of the people in terms of cultural inheritance and education. It carries the historical and cultural memory of the Manchu and Han ethnic groups, and is an important carrier of national cultural inheritance.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This study deeply explores the characteristics of musical culture under the integration of Manchu shamanism and Taoism in Northeast China, and reveals the unique phenomenon of the integration of the two in the process of historical development. From the perspective of historical origin, the Manchu shamanism in Northeast China originated from the primitive society, and after a long period of development and evolution, it is closely connected with the social life of the Manchus. Taoism was introduced to Northeast China through various channels in different historical periods, and gradually took root in the local area. The integration of the two has a deep historical background, cultural exchanges and ethnic integration have promoted the mutual contact and influence of different religious cultures, and social needs and psychological identity have become the internal driving force of integration. In the context of integration, the elements of music culture present rich and diverse characteristics. The formation of this fusion of musical cultural characteristics is influenced by many factors such as regional environment, social culture and historical development. In terms of cultural value, it inherits and embodies the national culture of the Manchu and Han people, and shows the blending of religion and culture; In terms of artistic value, it provides a source of inspiration for music creation and enriches and develops the art of music performance; In terms of social values, it has promoted ethnic exchanges and unity, and met the spiritual and cultural needs of the people.

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