

Tajik Wedding Customs and Wedding Music in China

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Abstract: China's Tajik nation, also known as the "plateau Tajik", is a nation with a long history, in the long years of change, gradually formed its own culture, wedding music is one of the representative culture of the Chinese Tajik nation. For the Tajiks, the wedding ceremony of a particular couple has become an important occasion for collective celebration and entertainment for the Tajiks of the region, as well as a very important way of communicating with each other. In 2008 the Tajik wedding customs have been listed as the second batch of China's intangible cultural heritage, this article is exactly the author in July 2023 to Taxkurgan Tajik Autonomous County after picking up the wind, combined with the country's a number of existing articles of information, summed up. The article consists of three main parts, the first part is mainly about Tajik marriage customs. The second part of the article is about the types of Tajik dances, such as Chapsuz, Dolazi, Mailis and so on. The third part is mainly about the music of Tajik wedding ceremonies, which includes folk music and religious music. Folk music includes folk songs, dance music and instrumental music. The author hopes that the music in the unique wedding ceremony of the Tajik nation will be known and understood by everyone, and that it will be appreciated more and further studied to promote its inheritance and development.

Keywords: Tajik, marriage customs, wedding ceremony music, dance

1. Introduction

China is a country of fifty-six ethnic groups, each of which has a fixed area of residence and a separate cultural heritage. One such ethnic group is the Tajiks, an ancient people who live on the Pamir Plateau in southern Xinjiang. The Tajiks have a very small population, and are the only ethnic group of the European race in China, as well as the oldest inhabited ethnic group in Central Asia, with a population of about 40,000 according to current statistics. The ethnic group's area of residence is the Taxkurgan County, with Shache County and Yetao County to the east, Moustagh Peak and Aktau County to the north, and bordering Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to the southwest, and is situated on the Pamir Plateau where East meets West. Unique geographical location and historical origin, creating its unique culture, this paper analyses and interprets the music of the wedding of the Tajik nation, so as to further understand the culture of the Tajik people.

Monogamy has been practised by the Tajiks since ancient times and is a customary practice. In the past, however, there were some wealthy or pastoralist owners who broke with this tradition and tended to be polygamous. In the past, it was the parents' sacred duty to marry their children, and marriages

were not free, but were based on the parents' wishes. The age of marriage was generally 15-16 for men and 13-14 for women.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, young people began to base their marriages on free love and equality between men and women. The phenomenon of arranged marriages has declined, and has now largely disappeared. Divorce, repudiation and leaving one's husband are regarded as shameful in Tajik society, and leaving a child orphaned is one of the most unforgivable offences.

Tajiks practise intermarriage and do not normally marry people of other nationalities. If this happens, not only the person concerned, but also his or her entire family will be shamed, so Tajiks basically do not marry people of other nationalities, especially women, and never have done so. In the olden days, intermarriage was permitted except between brothers and sisters, so that when a marriage was contracted, first consideration was given to cousins, aunts, uncles and aunts, and only when there were no suitable candidates from among the close relatives was the marriage contracted with another family. Marriages are not restricted by seniority or age differences. There are also marriages involving family members, mainly in cases where the woman has no heir, and it has become a customary practice to marry close relatives.

“Baider Khan is the Tajik word for “father of the marriage”. He is a witness, proposed by the woman and agreed upon by the man and the woman. Every bride and groom have their own Baidur Khan. Each couple has their own “Baider Khan”, whom the bride and groom will honour throughout their lives, as if he or she were their own biological father. During the wedding ceremony, when religious figures bless the bride and groom, the woman's parents must be excluded, but the Baider Khan must be present to witness the union of the couple. After the wedding, he is also called upon to mediate between the spouses in case of disagreement. The Baider Khan plays an important role in Tajik marriages.

2. Marriage Customs

Each ethnic minority region has its own unique marriage customs. Tajik marriage customs are even more ethnically distinctive and run from the time a young man or woman falls in love to the time of the wedding music. The Tajik marriage process is as follows.

2.1. Songs and Dances to Convey Love

The ways in which young men and women of the Tajik people express their love are very distinctive, such as the transmission of love through song. Men and women in love often use song to convey their love, and this is mainly done by singing the Zorbayi, and the transmission of love through dance. The girls will also put the red scarf in their hands on the left shoulder of their favourite young man to show their love.

2.2. Spreading Love by Holding Sheep in the Grill

On the lambing field, a fierce competition is held with the passionate music of the lambing song, in which the winning young man presses the lamb into his crotch and circles around the field amidst the enthusiastic cheers and applause of the onlookers, then throws his winning lamb in front of one of the onlookers as a sign of his love for the young man. If the girl accepts the young man's offer, she immediately asks an older woman to tie an embroidered handkerchief to the head of the suitor's horse on her behalf. At this point, the love between the two becomes an open “secret”.

2.3. Passing on Love in a Purse

When a young man asks for the love of a girl he adores, most of the girls just smile in front of him and don't answer. If they are willing to accept a young man's love, they will quietly send their own carefully embroidered purse to the young man and sew a burnt matchstick inside the purse to say, "Young man, you are the man of my dreams. For you, the fire of love has burnt my heart to a crisp". When the boy receives the purse, he immediately gives the girl a small yellow cloth bag containing almonds, meaning "I give you my whole heart". Or it may contain a few grains of stone and a few grains of salt, meaning "I love you with a heart as hard as a stone. You are as salt to me and I can't live without you."

2.4. Engagement by Song

The Tajik engagement ceremony is divided into two parts: the proposal of marriage and the betrothal. Nowadays, it is usually based on the consent of the parents and young people of both sides, and the man's friends and relatives and a few elders from the neighbourhood will go to the woman's home to propose marriage, carrying gifts of clothes, jewellery and a sheep. The woman will gather the elders of her family to receive the bridegroom. As soon as the man enters the house, he asks the woman for her hand in marriage. Firstly, the woman asks, "Where have you come from and where are you going?" and then one of the respected elders of the man's family begins to sing, "We have a joyous occasion and want to be married to you. "We have a joyous occasion to marry you. I wonder if you'd agree to this, if we could reach a consensus."

Generally, it takes three to four times for the woman to politely agree to the marriage. After agreeing, the man kisses the hand of the woman's representative to express his gratitude, and then the betrothal ceremony takes place. One of the man's main female relatives enters the girl's room and puts on the earrings, rings and red head scarf that she has brought with her. The parties then agree on the exact amount of the bride price and the date of the wedding. When everything is agreed upon, the bride price and the date of marriage are agreed upon. The woman's side will slaughter the sheep brought by the man's side and wait for the guests. The engagement ceremony is conducted openly in front of everyone and cannot be hidden. There is no hiding.

3. Types of Dance at Weddings

The Tajiks have a strong liking for music and dance, and they are good at both singing and dancing, whether they are young men and women or aged elders. Folklore festivals and daily gatherings of relatives are celebrated in a variety of different forms and scopes. It is absolutely impossible to hold a wedding without dancing, and Tajik folk music and dance are almost exclusively found in wedding celebrations. Dance is a real state of life for them.

Tajik dance type to rhythm to distinguish, wedding Tajik people to dance Chapsuz mainly, Chapsuz word, Tajik language for "fast" and "skilled" meaning, is the Tajik people in the folk song and dance in a unique type of beat type, all All folk songs and dances performed to this type of beat are called Chapsuz. The music of Chapsuz is in 7/8 meter, with each bar consisting of 3/8 single beats and 4/8 double beats. The repetition and continuation of the rhythmic patterns form the characteristic steps and body movements of the Chapsuz dance. Chapsuz In Tajik folklore, Chapsuz is also known as "the dance of the eagle", due to the distinctive feature of the dance, which is that it The various postures of the eagle are summarised in the most basic dance postures, which are used to map the lives, feelings and ambitions of the Tajik people. and aspirations of the Tajik people. At Tajik weddings, men's dances are performed in the eagle dance to the unique rhythm of the Chapsuz, and women also perform the eagle dance. Women also dance the eagle dance, but less often, and they generally dance with the rhythm of the chapsuz while their hand movements are freer. [1]

Their feet are usually in rhythm with the rhythm of Chapsuz and their hands are more free, and it is usually the men who perform the Eagle Dance in rhythm with the rhythm of Chapsuz.

There is also a wedding dance, the Tajiks call it “Doraqi”, that is, the stage manager to manage the order of the dance and dance, this is unique to Tajik weddings, in other occasions can not be seen, only in Tajik weddings you can see “Doraqi” The stage manager will dance while flinging the red silk in his hand to invite a person to dance with him, and this form of inviting a person to dance is called “Doraqi”. The invited person then chooses another person among the onlookers and performs the ritual of inviting them to dance, and this invited person dances with him or her, and the invited person can be his or her spouse, relatives, or friends. At Tajik weddings people are invited to dance, and in this way the stage manager invites an onlooker, a relative or a guest, to come on to the dance floor and dance with him, and then the invited person invites another person.

The invited person then invites another person to dance with him or her, which always keeps the dance floor in a warm and celebratory dance scene, and does not leave the dance floor in a cold form. When someone dances off the stage, the stage manager invites someone to come on the stage, and friends and relatives will go on the stage to dance in order to celebrate the wedding of the newlyweds.

There is also a kind of dance at Tajik weddings that women love, and at weddings they like to form a circle and dance clockwise or counterclockwise in a circle formation, and dance with a unique rhythm (5/8 beat rhythm, 3/8 + 2/8 beat composite), called “Mailis”. where in accordance with this rhythm of folk dance, are called “Mailis”, “Mailis” has a “party”, “reunion The meaning is “party” and “get-together”.

In Tajik weddings, the most common form of dance is the double-pair dance, generally danced by the Chapsuz, but also by the mailis, which is the main dance at weddings of the Tajik people. At weddings, people dance in a circle, dancing in a circle formation, and this type of dance is mostly for women’s Mailis. Mailis tends to be danced by men and women in separate groups, and men dance, still with the Chapsuz steps, in the Eagle Dance dance. Whether everyone dances the Chapsuz or the Mailis, there is always the Doraqi, a form of invitation to dance with a partner. Chapsuz at weddings is a dance that the people perform for their own enjoyment, and there are no restrictions on where the dance can be performed. Whether it is in a wide square, in the yard of the house or in the house, it can be danced as long as people’s excitement is high. The form of performance is free, one person, two persons, or many people can. Usually, the main mode of the dance is a pair, a pair of two people, or two, three or more groups of people dancing together, mostly performed by the men of the tribe. Nowadays, male-female dances and female-female dances are also more common. Chapsuz is usually performed with the cooperation of Nayi and Dap, and the Dap is played in a unique form, with two women striking one side of the Dap at the same time, producing different tones, a tacit and harmonious sound. The two women usually play one dafu at the same time, striking different tones and harmonising their voices.

Bailis also belongs to the mass self-indulgence dance, and the performance form is relatively free, which can be danced alone, in pairs or by many people. It can be performed solo, in pairs or by many people. In Tajik wedding dances, the buyris is in the minority, and most of the relatives and guests still dance the Chapsuz, while a few women dance the chapsuzi. The majority of relatives and guests still dance the Chapsuz, and a few women dance in a circle.

The men and women dance in groups, while the women mostly perform indoors or in courtyards. During the dance, a woman is invited to the stage by the stage manager, the woman bows to the crowd and then dances along the dance floor in a clockwise or counterclockwise circular route, with the intention of inviting the crowd to come down to the dance floor to dance together, followed by another woman on the dance floor to dance with her, and then there are pairs of women to join in and dance in a circle formation, dancing in the circle in a circle formation on the number of women are an even number of women, after the dance in the circle After the circle dance, each woman dances with her

partner. When dancing in pairs, the two move in a coordinated manner and work well together. Although the dance movements are free, there are agreed rules, such as two people doing the same or similar movements, taking symmetrical or relative routes, and so on. [2]

Wedding people on the dance like to dance with their partners after the dance, in which the women will dance while dancing in a circle formation unified clockwise or counterclockwise dance; the rest of the men dance with each other to the dance of the eagle dance Chapsuz; or the crowd of women dancing in a circle around the dance to their respective dance with their partners; or two people dance, two people dance, two people dance form of dance with two men dance, two women dance and men and women dance, in which the dance of two men dance with two women dance, and two women dance more, and men dance with two women dance. Male and female dance is relatively not as much as same-sex dance, in which men and women dance with each other, they will be of similar age, and will maintain a certain posture and distance. Wedding dance when the two dance action or the same or similar, the same pace of the feet, the feet of the dance route of the two to take the relative route and symmetrical route, such as the two face to face before and after the in and out; the two face to face to turn to the back to the back to the shoulder as the axis of the circle and dance; two face to face to the shoulder as the axis of the circle and dance; the two people to swap positions and dance around the circle. In the process of the pair dance, the two usually have more eye contact, no matter what route, the two always use their eyes to suggest each other, and always keep the body rhythms and dance movements to maintain harmony and relative consistency. In the process of circling around the two will also use eye contact, tell each other to swap positions, and jointly change the movement and posture, at any time, eye contact implies that.

The steps of the feet are consistent. There is almost no collision between the two in the process of the dance, always keep the consistency of their body movement, through the body to convey information, through the eyes to communicate emotions. The significance of the Eagle Dance focuses on communication rather than the showmanship of the dance body itself.

The Tajik wedding ceremony has a strong sense of ritual, and when the dance is in progress, the dancers can come on or go off the stage at any time, but no matter whether they come on or go off the stage, they have to bow to each other. A dancer invites another dancer to dance with him or her and the dancers have to perform the invitation salute, and the dancers have to perform the salute when they leave the stage after the dance. When a dancer invites his partner to dance on the dance floor, he usually bows with his left hand behind his waist and his right hand spread out with the palm of the hand facing upwards, and the invited dancer follows him onto the dance floor and dances against him, and when the dance is over, the two of them perform the exit salute, or cross their hands in front of their chests to perform the bowing salute, or with one hand behind their backs and one hand pressed against their chests to perform the bowing salute, and then retire from the dance floor. Dancers will be sent during the dance on the dancer's right shoulder or neck, expressed on the dancer's good wishes, sometimes friends and relatives will also send coins in the dancer's head round a few times to the stage manager or stage manager instead of the bridegroom or the bride's family handed over the coins placed on the top of the head of the dancers around 2 to 3 times in order to express the blessing on the dancers. This form of giving blessings can only be seen at weddings, and there are such forms of giving blessings to the dancers in towns and villages in the countryside. When the stage manager sees that there are fewer people on the dance floor, he invites people to dance by flinging the red silk in his hand while dancing, and manages the order of the dance floor in the form of Doraqi, which is a form of inviting one dancer to dance.

4. Ceremonial Music of Tajik Weddings

The music for Tajik wedding ceremonies consists of both folk music and religious music. Folk music includes folk songs, dance music and instrumental music.

The music of Tajik marriages has certain peculiarities, which lie in the fixed and non-fixed nature of the repertoire. That is to say, some of the repertoire is fixed, while some of it changes according to the region or the time period. This fluidity allows Tajik weddings to maintain their original appearance, while at the same time responding to the specific requirements of each region in different eras and bringing the music of the wedding closer to people's lives. Tajik wedding music is classified according to fixed and non-fixed repertoire. The fixed repertoire includes the customary song "The King is Coming", four songs for goats, and the wedding scripture recited during the ceremony. The non-fixed repertoire consists of all the dance music - the Chapsuz and love songs - which are interspersed with the fixed repertoire, i.e., the rituals, and which serve to set the mood. At the same time, it should be noted that some of these non-fixed songs are the so-called "classic songs" which have been sung for a long time and have been loved by the general public and are still used in weddings nowadays. At the same time, there are also improvisations or young Tajik music enthusiasts who create "neo-tajik music" for weddings.

The tambourine is played by a woman and the eagle flute is played by a man. The tambourine starts the rhythm and then the eagle flute begins to play.

The end of each song is determined by the dancers.

Since the rhythm of the tambourine and the melody of the hawk flute are relatively simple, it is not necessary for the dancers to play the tambourine or the hawk flute as long as their family and friends are present.

The rhythm of the tambourine and the melody of the hawk flute are relatively simple, so the women who can play the tambourine take turns to play among the family members and friends present at the dance. The eagle flute is also performed by men. [3]

The performers of the eagle flute also take turns to play among the men who can play the flute. This keeps the music going.

4.1. Folk Songs

There is a wide variety of folk songs in Tajik wedding music, which, according to their subject matter, can be divided into love songs, customary songs, narrative songs, and so on. Of these, love songs account for the largest proportion. With the exception of the zorbay, which is sung by a male-female duet, all songs are sung with a leader and two tambourines, one for treble and one for bass, as backing instruments. The leader, chorus, and instrumental accompaniment are all male. Although the occasions and contents of the songs are not the same, the forms are more or less the same: the tambourine starts the rhythm, the leader sings the first line, the crowd repeats the same melody and lyrics, and the leader repeats the melody of the first line, but the crowd only repeats the first line.

4.2. Dance Music

"Chapsuz" Dance music is one of the most numerous types of wedding music. It is short and often consists of an infinite number of repetitions of a single musical motif with variations, or multiple repetitions of a single phrase. There is no separate name for each tune, but it is uniformly called "Chapsuz" or "Daphnay". Dance music for weddings has a relatively simple rhythmic pattern of 7/8 beats. There is an unwritten tradition in Tajik weddings that after the preparation of the wedding, when the relatives and friends who have been unfortunate during the year are invited to the bride's house and permission is given by beating the tambourine, the dance music is played until the end of the wedding, and it sets the mood and links the various parts of the ceremony. The continuous playing of dance music is an expression of good wishes for the newlyweds and wishes that the joyful atmosphere will be with the newlyweds for the rest of their lives.

Dance music is usually performed in the open space in the courtyard of the bride's house, with the dancers in the centre of the space and the performers on one side of the space. Generally, two tambourines and two eagle flutes are played together, the tambourine player is a woman and the eagle flute player is a man, the tambourine starts with the rhythm and then the eagle flute starts to play, and the end time of each song is decided according to the dancers' conditions.

Dance music is played at the discretion of the dancers, and since the rhythm of the tambourine and the melody of the hawk flute are relatively simple, women who can play the tambourine take turns to play among the family members and friends present at the dance. The eagle flute is also played by male eagle flute players in turn. This keeps the music going.

4.3. Gripper Song

Another component of dance music is the griot song, which is a collective term for the music used in griot competitions. There are four griot songs, each with a different name and function.

The first is the "braboumik" which is played during the pre-competition work of the gripper.

The second one is "Wara Wara Hek" - played at the beginning of the competition.

The third type of music is "Tobaksuz" - it is played when the riders of the gripper are competing with each other on the back of the horse.

The fourth type, "Jungi Shedo" - is played to create an atmosphere of excitement and encouragement for the competitors. [4]

The musicians stand on one side of the field and play a different piece depending on the stage of the competition. It is also played with two eagle flutes and two tambourines, the eagle flute is played by a man and the tambourine is played by a woman. However, unlike the Chabusuzi, the Griots' music is more difficult and requires a higher level of performance, so it is usually performed by folk artists who specialise in music. The music has both harmony and rhythm, but the rhythmic patterns change frequently within the same piece, and the structure is complex and rich in tunes. [5]

5. Conclusion

The music and dance at weddings have accumulated the primitive and natural characteristics of mankind and have stored the imprint of human evolution; the ancestors of the Tajiks, as the creators and embodiment of the dance at weddings, will embody and preserve their own creations in the dance, and the friends and relatives of the people, as the viewers of the music and the dance, will inscribe their own aesthetic requirements and consciousness in the dance. In this way, music and dance in Tajik weddings come from life, are rooted in the people, and retain more of their original form, enabling us to observe human history and culture more directly.

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