
Research on the Aesthetic Education Function of Hainan Li and Miao Music Culture

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Abstract: As a vital component of China's traditional culture, Hainan's Li and Miao music culture embodies the historical memories, life wisdom, and spiritual beliefs of these ethnic groups, possessing unique aesthetic value and profound cultural significance. This paper examines the core dimensions of aesthetic education to analyze the functions of Hainan's Li and Miao music culture in cultivating aesthetic perception, shaping aesthetic tastes, and nurturing aesthetic character. Addressing current challenges in aesthetic education practices, including fragmented inheritance and monotonous teaching methods, this study proposes optimization strategies such as exploring aesthetic education resources, innovating educational formats, and establishing collaborative mechanisms. The aim is to fully unleash the aesthetic potential of Li and Miao music culture, infusing new vitality into regional ethnic cultural education in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Hainan Li and Miao music; Aesthetic education function; Aesthetic perception; Aesthetic personality; Cultural inheritance

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1. Introduction

Aesthetic education cultivates individuals' capacity to perceive, experience, create, and disseminate beauty, serving as a vital pathway to enhance national competence and foster well-rounded personalities. The "Guidelines on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era" explicitly advocates tapping into the aesthetic value of China's outstanding traditional culture and integrating ethnic folk traditions into aesthetic education. As China's sole tropical island province, Hainan is home to multiple ethnic minorities including the Li and Miao peoples. Its musical heritage, preserved for millennia, has evolved into a distinctive artistic form^[1].

The Li ethnic group's folk songs encompass diverse genres, including labor songs, love songs, and custom songs, featuring melodious tunes and lyrics that reflect reverence for nature and love for life. The Miao people's flying songs are characterized by their high-pitched and resonant tones, while the Lusheng dance showcases their lively and enthusiastic spirit. The bamboo and wooden instruments of the Li and Miao ethnic groups, such as the nasal flute, mouth bow, and dingdong wood, convey a rustic aesthetic through their simple tones. These musical traditions serve not only as cultural symbols of the Li and Miao ethnic groups but also as valuable resources for aesthetic education. Currently, academic

research on Li and Miao music culture primarily focuses on heritage preservation and industrial development, with limited systematic exploration of its aesthetic educational value. Therefore, delving into the aesthetic educational significance of Hainan's Li and Miao music culture and exploring practical approaches to its aesthetic education holds both theoretical and practical importance ^[2].

2. The core aesthetic education function of Hainan Li and Miao music culture

2.1. Cultivate aesthetic perception, awaken the beauty of nature and life

Aesthetic perception forms the foundation of aesthetic education, serving as the prerequisite for individuals to perceive and capture beauty. The Li and Miao musical culture of Hainan, rooted in nature and deeply embedded in daily life, effectively awakens people's ability to appreciate the beauty of both nature and human existence. For generations, the Li and Miao ethnic groups have lived between tropical rainforests and hilly mountains in Hainan, with their musical creations closely intertwined with the natural world. Li folk songs like "Mountain-Cutting Song" and "Rice-Pounding Song" draw inspiration from labor scenes, with lyrics such as "Carving firewood with axe on hillside, chopping wood to light roaring fires" and "Rice pounding songs echoing through the air, grains of white rice filling bamboo baskets" vividly depicting agricultural labor. Miao flying songs often use imagery of mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, insects, and fish, with melodies that undulate with the terrain, conveying the harmony between humans and nature ^[3]. Listening to these musical works guides audiences to experience the beauty of Hainan's tropical landscapes and the simplicity of rural life through melodies and lyrics, enhancing their sensitivity to the beauty of nature and daily existence.

Meanwhile, the timbre of Li and Miao traditional instruments embodies an authentic aesthetic quality. The nasal flute's ethereal resonance, the mouth bow's crisp clarity, and the tinkling wooden instrument's rich simplicity stand in striking contrast to the ornate tones of modern instruments. This diverse sonic experience enriches aesthetic perception and cultivates the ability to embrace and appreciate different artistic styles.

2.2. Shaping aesthetic taste and inheriting the soul of national culture

Aesthetic taste is the preference and orientation of an individual in aesthetic activities, which is one of the important goals of aesthetic education. Hainan Li and Miao music culture contains a unique national aesthetic orientation, which can help the audience to shape elegant aesthetic taste and inherit the soul of national culture.

The aesthetic essence of Li and Miao musical cultures is characterized by dual traits: "plain simplicity" and "passionate exuberance". Li folk songs predominantly employ single-voice melodies with simple structures yet profound resonance, performed naturally without artificial embellishment, embodying the aesthetic ideal of "lotus emerging from clear water: natural and unadorned". The Miao Lusheng dance features brisk rhythms and stirring melodies, often accompanied by collective performances that showcase the people's spirited and unrestrained national character. This aesthetic distinctiveness contrasts with the complex harmonies and formulaic structures of Western music, as well as the refined subtlety of traditional Central Plains music. It offers audiences diverse aesthetic experiences, breaks conventional perceptions, and enriches aesthetic tastes ^[4].

Furthermore, the ethnic customs and spiritual beliefs embedded in Li and Miao music culture enhance the audience's aesthetic appreciation. The duet performances during the Li people's "March 3rd" festival serve not only as musical showcases but also as vital platforms for young couples to express love and preserve their cultural heritage. Similarly, the Lusheng (reed pipe) performances during the Miao people's "Miao New Year" embody wishes for warding off evil, seeking blessings, and celebrating harvests. By engaging in these musical activities, audiences gain deeper insights into the cultural traditions of the Li and Miao ethnic groups, experiencing the profound depth of their heritage and cultivating an aesthetic sensibility that blends ethnic identity with cultural inclusiveness.

2.3. Cultivate aesthetic personality and foster a virtuous and benevolent heart

The aesthetic personality is the sound personality traits formed in the aesthetic activities of individuals, which is the ultimate goal of aesthetic education. The Hainan Li and Miao music culture contains rich moral connotation and humanistic spirit, which can cultivate the aesthetic personality of the audience and foster the heart of virtue and goodness.

The musical traditions of the Li and Miao ethnic groups embody the national ethos of unity, cooperation, diligence, and bravery. The Li people's collective labor anthem, "The Unity Song," features lyrics that proclaim: "When many join in, the fire burns bright; With one heart, we work hard." Its powerful melody inspires a sense of collective pride and teamwork. Similarly, the Miao people's "Song of Resistance" chronicles their ancestors' defense against invaders, with its stirring and heroic tune conveying the spirit of fearlessness and resilience. These musical works guide audiences to appreciate the essence of national spirit through aesthetic experiences, fostering the development of sound values.

Meanwhile, Li and Miao music culture promotes the moral values of harmonious coexistence with nature and mutual support among neighbors. The Li folk song "Persuasion Song" conveys ecological awareness through its lyrics: "Do not cut ancient trees or hunt birds; cherish the mountains and forests for lasting blessings." The Miao "Wine Offering Song" features a cheerful melody and warm lyrics, showcasing the ethnic tradition of courteous hospitality. These cultural elements subtly shape behavioral norms, fostering moral qualities like respect for nature and a spirit of mutual aid, ultimately cultivating well-rounded personalities with both aesthetic sensibility and ethical refinement ^[5].

3. The realistic dilemma of aesthetic education practice of Hainan Li and Miao music culture

3.1. Fragmented inheritance and inadequate exploration of aesthetic education resources

The fragmented preservation of Hainan's Li and Miao musical heritage currently hinders its potential for aesthetic education. Primarily transmitted through oral and mental instruction, this cultural legacy faces critical preservation challenges as senior inheritors pass away, leaving many precious compositions and performance techniques at risk of extinction. Furthermore, research on these musical resources remains superficial, with most studies and practices limited to repertoire collection and technical demonstrations. This approach fails to fully explore the cultural significance and aesthetic value embedded in the music, ultimately impeding the development of a comprehensive aesthetic education framework.

3.2. Single communication channels and limited coverage of aesthetic education

The limited channels for disseminating Li-Miao music culture result in restricted aesthetic education coverage. Traditional dissemination primarily relies on festival performances and village singing, catering mainly to local residents and failing to reach broader audiences. Modern communication methods remain underutilized, while some regions attempt to promote Li-Miao music through short video platforms, the content often consists of fragmented performance clips lacking in-depth cultural interpretation or aesthetic guidance, making it difficult to engage younger audiences. In school education, Li-Miao music content is predominantly offered as elective courses or lectures, with minimal class hours allocated, thus failing to integrate into the regular aesthetic education system.

3.3. The rigidification of practical forms and the lack of aesthetic education experience

The aesthetic education practices of Li and Miao music culture remain rigidly structured, failing to meet the audience's diverse aesthetic needs. Current activities predominantly feature stage performances and concerts, leaving audiences in a passive reception state without immersive or participatory experiences. Some educational programs are superficial, lacking engagement with Li and Miao villages and thus failing to allow participants to truly experience the music's original cultural context. Moreover, there is insufficient innovation in blending Li and Miao music with modern art, as adaptations and creations fail to align with contemporary audiences' aesthetic preferences, resulting in a gradual decline in its appeal and emotional resonance.

4. Optimization path of aesthetic education function of Hainan Li and Miao music culture

4.1. Deepen resource exploration and build a systematic aesthetic education content system

Systematic excavation and organization of Li and Miao musical culture form the foundation for unlocking its aesthetic education potential. The government should lead the formation of specialized research teams comprising cultural scholars, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and aesthetic education experts. These teams should conduct field research to comprehensively collect musical scores, lyrics, and performance techniques, establishing a digital repository for permanent preservation and sharing of aesthetic education resources. By exploring the cultural significance and aesthetic value embedded in Li and Miao music, and aligning with aesthetic education objectives, the “Hainan Li and Miao Music Aesthetic Education Manual” should be developed. This manual will integrate music appreciation, skill acquisition, and cultural interpretation into teaching materials, creating a tripartite aesthetic education framework of “theory-practice-perception.” Emphasis should also be placed on integrating Li and Miao music with regional culture, uncovering contemporary elements such as the Hainan Free Trade Port initiative and rural revitalization within the music, thereby enhancing the practical relevance of aesthetic education content.

4.2. Innovate communication channels to expand the coverage of aesthetic education

Innovative communication channels are pivotal to expanding the reach of Li and Miao music in aesthetic education. On one hand, traditional dissemination methods should be diversified by integrating Li and Miao music into rural revitalization initiatives and scenic area development projects. This includes establishing music culture experience centers in Li and Miao villages and creating immersive music performances in tourist attractions, allowing visitors to experience the charm of Li and Miao music during sightseeing. On the other hand, digital dissemination should be strengthened through new media platforms like short video platforms, live streaming, and audio podcasts. Content series such as “Li and Miao Music Classes” and “Stories Behind the Music” should be launched, featuring online teaching and cultural interpretations by intangible cultural heritage inheritors to engage younger audiences. Additionally, efforts should be made to introduce Li and Miao music into schools by incorporating it into primary and secondary school music curricula and university aesthetic education courses. School-based courses on Li and Miao instrument performance and folk song singing should be established to institutionalize aesthetic education.

4.3. Enriching practice forms to enhance immersive aesthetic education experiences

Enriching experiential formats and enhancing aesthetic education engagement form the core of activating the educational value of Li-Miao music culture. By organizing participatory art programs, audiences can immerse themselves in Li-Miao villages through activities like folk song duets, reed pipe performances, and traditional instrument crafting, experiencing the cultural charm firsthand. The initiative promotes innovative fusion between Li-Miao music and modern art, encouraging artists to integrate ethnic elements into pop music, musicals, and dance performances, creating works that blend cultural heritage with contemporary appeal. Cultural festivals and innovation competitions provide platforms for artistic expression and exchange, stimulating creative potential. Furthermore, strengthening school-community collaboration through establishing Li-Miao music education bases enables students to participate in field research and intangible cultural heritage preservation practices, significantly enhancing the practical effectiveness of aesthetic education.

4.4. Building a collaborative mechanism to strengthen the aesthetic education support system

Establishing a multi-stakeholder collaborative safeguard mechanism serves as a crucial foundation for advancing the sustainable development of Li and Miao music cultural aesthetic education. A collaborative education framework integrating “government, universities, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and cultural tourism enterprises” has been implemented. The government provides policy guidance and financial support, while universities offer talent cultivation and theoretical frameworks. Inheritors are responsible for skill transmission and cultural interpretation, and cultural tourism

enterprises handle industrial transformation and market promotion, forming a coordinated multi-party working pattern. A dedicated Li and Miao music cultural aesthetic education fund has been established to support resource exploration, textbook compilation, and event organization. An evaluation mechanism incorporating audience aesthetic perception and cultural identification has been developed, utilizing methods like questionnaire surveys and practical outcome demonstrations to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of aesthetic education and promptly optimize strategies.

5. Conclusion

As a cultural treasure of regional ethnic heritage, Hainan's Li and Miao music culture serves multiple aesthetic education functions: cultivating aesthetic perception, shaping aesthetic tastes, and nurturing aesthetic personality. It represents a valuable resource for aesthetic education in the new era. Currently, the practice of Li and Miao music culture in aesthetic education faces challenges such as fragmented inheritance, limited dissemination channels, and rigid practice formats. To fully unleash its aesthetic education potential, it is essential to deepen resource exploration, innovate communication channels, diversify practice formats, and establish collaborative mechanisms. In the future, as aesthetic education initiatives for Li and Miao music culture continue to advance, they will not only enhance the audience's aesthetic literacy and cultural confidence, but also inject vitality into the cultural development of Hainan Free Trade Port, promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of China's outstanding traditional culture. From an aesthetic education perspective, Li and Miao music culture will play a vital role in preserving ethnic heritage and fostering well-rounded personalities with renewed vibrancy.

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