

Research on the Spread and Changes of Haizhou wuda gongdiao from the Perspective of the Grand Canal

Ying Liang¹, Xiaoyu Chen²

¹Hubei Business College, Music education, Wuhan Hubei 430060, China;

²Zhejiang Normal University, Music education, Jinhua Zhejiang 321000, China

ABSTRACT

As a regional art form of literati's music singing, Haizhou wuda gongdiao have added cultural charm and vitality to the cultural development of the Grand Canal basin. Meanwhile, the prosperity of the canal economy has also provided a certain material foundation and cultural environment for the inheritance of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. From the perspective of the canal economy, Haizhou wuda gongdiao have the characteristics and laws of spreading relying on water. During the process of change, the "consumers" of Haizhou wuda gongdiao have formed a development pattern from wealthy salt merchants, literati and poets during the prosperous period of the Lianghuai salt industries to masters and amateur music lovers when the inland waterways in the Haizhou area were gradually replaced by land transportation and the economy became increasingly depressed. The essence of the spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao is to achieve diffusion through the transportation, commerce and personnel flow of the canal. Taking the canal as the communication channel, the port and wharf as the communication nodes, the economic prosperity as the driving force for circulation, the cultural integration as the information booster, and the music gathering in the music hall and other ways for passing on from generation to generation.

KEYWORDS

Haizhou wuda gongdiao; Canal Economy; History; Dissemination

As a major ancient water conservancy project in China, the Grand Canal is an important transportation line and economic belt connecting the north and the south, as well as a traditional Chinese cultural belt, stretching across eight provinces and municipalities including Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Along the banks of this more than 3,200-kilometer-long millennium canal and its surrounding vast areas, there are numerous excellent traditional music cultures. The biggest difference between these traditional music cultures and other local music is that they have formed their unique basin characteristics under the influence of the transportation and economy of the Grand Canal, and Haizhou wuda gongdiao is one of them. Haizhou wuda gongdiao is a unique folk traditional music form in Haizhou District, Lianyungang City, Jiangsu Province. It is a precious remnant of the ancient "Various Gongdiao" and a continuation of the "music singing" of Yuan Sanqu. Its formation can be traced back to the Jiajing and Longqing years of the Ming Dynasty, and it is of great value for studying Chinese traditional music and popular tunes in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. As one of the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage, Haizhou wuda gongdiao has a simple and elegant music style, delicate and euphemistic, consisting of five representative major tune names such as [Ruanping], [Dieluo], [Lidiao], [Nandiao] and [Boyang], so it is called "wuda gongdiao". So far, the earlier literature on Haizhou wuda gongdiao

includes *"Unofficial Records of the Wanli Reign"* by Shen Defu in the Ming Dynasty, *"Flowers in the Mirror"* by Li Ruzhen in the Qing Dynasty and *"Chinese Ballads"* by Zhu Ziqing. In the 1990s, the first literature related to Haizhou wuda gongdiao was the paper *"A Preliminary Study of the Haizhou Gongdiao Brand Tunes"* by Mr. Zhu Qiuhua published in *"Hundred Schools in Arts"* in 1992¹. This paper introduced the origin, style characteristics and the situation of music gathering in the small music hall of Haizhou wuda gongdiao, and also analyzed the word pattern of individual single tune names and the structure of divertimento. In addition, the academic research on Haizhou wuda gongdiao mainly includes: the compilation of the tune names, repetition and divertimento of Haizhou wuda gongdiao in *"The Collection of Chinese Quyi Music-Jiangsu Volume"*² (The Editorial Office of the Quyi Music Collection of the Lianyungang City Cultural Bureau, 1987); the study on the singing art of Haizhou wuda gongdiao³ (Li Qin, 2007); the study on the musical form characteristics of Haizhou wuda gongdiao⁴ (Liu Min, 2008); the study on the musical noumenon of Haizhou wuda gongdiao⁵ (Wang Haifeng, 2008); the historical development and spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao⁶ (Ban Junrong, 2012); the research status and methods of Haizhou wuda gongdiao⁷ (Ban Junrong, Yang Yan, 2013); Haizhou wuda gongdiao and new media technologies⁸ (Zhao Shanshan, 2016); the protection and inheritance of Haizhou wuda gongdiao⁹ (Gong Xiaojiao, 2017); the development and practical research of the music school-based curriculum of "Haizhou wuda gongdiao"¹⁰ (Wan Yuxuan, 2022), etc. As a representative of the remnants of the Jianghuai brand tunes in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, although scholars have conducted more research on literature since the Ming and Qing Dynasties at present, the research on music and quyi such as Haizhou wuda gongdiao since the Ming and Qing Dynasties is relatively less. Haizhou wuda gongdiao originated from the Grand Canal basin, and its spread and changes are closely related to the local salt industry economy and canal culture under the influence of social and cultural ecology such as transportation and economy. During the prosperous period of the Lianghuai salt industries, the salt transportation on the Grand Canal promoted the flow of personnel and the interaction of cultures, which further enabled Haizhou wuda gongdiao to widely absorb the folk small tunes in the Jianghuai area and continuously develop and mature. This paper aims to discuss the characteristics and laws of the

1 Zhu Qiuhua. A Preliminary Study of Haizhou Gongdiao Brand Tunes[J]. *Hundred Schools in Arts*. 1992(10).

2 The Editorial Office of the Quyi Music Collection of the Lianyungang City Cultural Bureau. *The Collection of Chinese Quyi Music-Jiangsu Volume*. Lianyungang Branch Volume. Printed in 1987.

3 Li Qin. The Natural Characteristics of the Singing Art of Haizhou wuda gongdiao[J]. *Journal of Lianyungang Normal College*. 2007(03). p49-50 + 55.

4 Liu Min. An Analysis of the Musical Form Characteristics of Haizhou wuda gongdiao[J]. *The New Voice of Yue-Fu* (*Journal of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music*). 2008(01). p116-118.

5 Wang Haifeng. The Ideas and Strategies for the Study of the Musical Noumenon of Haizhou wuda gongdiao[J]. *People's Music*. 2008(10).

6 Ban Junrong. Haizhou wuda gongdiao from the Perspective of Multi-Dimensional Network of Ethnomusicology[D]. Nanjing University of the Arts. 2012.

7 Ban Junrong, Yang Yan. A Preliminary Exploration of the Research Status and Methods of Haizhou wuda gongdiao[J]. *Journal of Nanjing Xiaozhuang University*. 2013(01).

8 Zhao Shanshan. An Analysis of the Problems of New Media Application in the Archiving and Protection of Local "Intangible Cultural Heritage" - Taking Haizhou wuda gongdiao, Lianyungang as an Example[J]. *Journal of Jiangsu Ocean University (Humanities & Social Sciences Edition)*. 2016(12). p69-72.

9 Gong Xiaojiao. An Investigation and Research on the Protection and Inheritance of Haizhou wuda gongdiao[D]. Yangzhou University, 2017. p8.

10 Wan Yuxuan. The Development and Practical Research of the Music School-Based Curriculum of "Haizhou wuda gongdiao" - Taking Banpu Middle School in Lianyungang as an Example[D]. Yangzhou University. 2012.

spread and diffusion of Haizhou wuda gongdiao from the perspective of the canal economy.

1 Causes of Formation

Historically, the names of Haizhou wuda gongdiao were not completely consistent. People in different places and with different identities carried out a naming game based on elements such as the style and type characteristics of the tunes. It was not until 2006 when the local cultural department applied for the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage list that the name "Haizhou wuda gongdiao" was selected. Thus, this official name was determined, and subsequent research, publicity and protection work were gradually carried out under this name.

1.1 Salt Transportation Promotes Cultural Exchange

Transportation Links Promote Spread. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Grand Canal was not only a water transport channel related to the lifeline of the country, but also an important channel for merchants to transport goods and conduct cultural exchanges from south to north. In the commercial practice in Chinese history, many different business models such as sea merchants, general merchants and brokers have evolved. Especially during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, powerful merchant groups such as Shanxi merchants and Anhui merchants emerged in large numbers, thus forming a unique business landscape of being both literati and merchants.¹¹ Liu Shilin described the history, culture and their relationship with the canal of twenty-one cities related to the canal in *"Six-thousand-li Grand Canal and Twenty-One Cities"*¹², including the cultural celebrities, landscapes and scenic spots of these cities. Through the description of these cities, the important role of the Grand Canal in promoting the economic and cultural development of the cities along the line and the close relationship between the cities and the canal were shown. The development of the Lianghuai salt industries on the Grand Canal reached its peak, promoting cultural prosperity. Haizhou wuda gongdiao spread from Yangzhou to Haizhou, and its development was closely associated with the rise and fall of the salt industry economy, occupying an important position in the salt industry economy. Most of the salt transported on the Grand Canal throughout history was produced by the Lianghuai salt fields centered on Yancheng and Lianyungang. The Salt River, as an important waterway connecting Lianyungang and the Grand Canal in Huai'an, is famous for transporting Huai salt for thousands of years. With the help of the Salt River and the salt transportation system of the Grand Canal, personnel exchanges were frequent, providing important transportation conditions for the spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. In other words, the places where Lianghuai salt merchants lived and the river basins where salt transport ships traveled regularly were all the areas where Haizhou wuda gongdiao were spread and distributed. Salt merchants, boatmen and others traveling from south to north brought Haizhou wuda gongdiao to various places, continuously expanding its spread range.

Artistic Integration Helps Development. The salt transportation on the Grand Canal brought personnel and cultural exchanges from different regions. Haizhou is located at the intersection of northern and southern cultures. In this environment, Haizhou wuda gongdiao widely absorbed the essence of the Jianghuai folk small tunes. Amateur music lovers carried out localized innovations on

11 Liu Lanyu, Zhou Li'an, Wu Qi. The Long-Term Economic Impact of Traditional Commercial Culture - An Empirical Study Based on the Merchant Groups in the Ming and Qing Dynasties[J]. Journal of Management World. 2021(11) p106-120 + 8.

12 Liu Shilin. Six-thousand-li Grand Canal and Twenty-One Cities[M]. Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press.2022.

them, making these tunes gradually show the characteristics of the Haizhou dialect while maintaining the original style, continuously enriching and perfecting their own musical elements and forms of expression, and thus becoming more abundant.

1.2 Salt Merchants Promote Artistic Improvement

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Lianghuai salt industries reached their peak. The salt merchants in the Qing Dynasty, especially the descendants of Anhui merchants and Shanxi merchants living in Yangzhou, Haizhou, Huai'an and along the canal, were characterized by the combination of merchants and literati, having the dual identities of merchants and cultural people. The Lianghuai salt merchants sponsored and supported local opera cultures. The "Refined Music" Kunqu Opera, which had been in a long-term orthodox position during the reigns of Emperor Qianlong and Emperor Jiaqing, was increasingly declining, and various local operas had been booming nationwide.¹³ Most salt merchants, especially Anhui merchants, advocated banquet singing, kept artists and prostitutes at home to decorate their appearance and show their identity, and often had a scene of singing and dancing. The Lianghuai salt merchants associated and funded literati. Although their motives were mostly to pretend to be cultured and decorate their appearance, they objectively promoted the improvement of the economic situation of literati and scholars and the prosperity of cultural undertakings. They provided economic support and performance opportunities for its development, and often invited famous masters of Kunqu Opera and Kunqu Opera in Yangzhou and Suzhou, as well as literati and poets closely related to salt merchants to guide, chant, create and other operations on Haizhou wuda gongdiao, further enhancing its artistic level and cultural connotation. During long-term banquets, artists continuously communicated and exchanged skills, promoting the integrated development of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. At the same time, in the in-depth study of the tunes by local literati and poets, it was continuously refined, thus creating its unique and elegant style. Haizhou wuda gongdiao was brought to Haizhou (Lianyungang) by the merchants in the Lianghuai regions under such circumstances. For example, scholars and music theorists such as Ling Tingkan and Li Ruzhen of the Qianjia School in the Qing Dynasty promoted the widespread spread of Haizhou gongdiao Brand Tunes in the folk through writing books and establishing theories.

1.3 Business Prosperity Provides Development Environment

In the production, sales and management system of the Lianghuai salt industries, the river transportation of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal plays a crucial role. The superior geographical location and convenient transportation provide convenience for the transportation and sales of Huai salt, and also provide a place for the convergence of information. The main activity areas of salt merchants are concentrated in Haizhou, Yangzhou and the surrounding areas of the Jiangsu section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. For this reason, the spread and distribution of Haizhou wuda gongdiao are also mainly focused on these places, thus forming a "two-point-one-line" spread structure. In the Qing Dynasty, Haizhou was the main production area of sea salt in the Lianghuai regions and the central area of the third-level salt administration. The prosperity of the canal economy led to the development of commerce in the Lianyungang area, making it an important port city for trade and a key node city on the Maritime Silk Road. The prosperity of commerce attracted a large number of people to gather, providing a broad market and audience group for the

13 Wang Weikang. Lianghuai Salt Merchants and Yangzhou Culture[J]. Journal of Yangzhou University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition).2001(02).p76-80.

development of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. While people's material life was rich, their demand for cultural entertainment was also increasing. Haizhou wuda gongdiao, as an art form with local characteristics, was loved and pursued by the local people.

The high economic development promoted cultural prosperity. Yangzhou was also the cultural core area of the Lianghuai regions. The Lianghuai salt merchants composed of Anhui merchants, Shanxi merchants and merchants from Shaanxi, Jiangxi and other places gathered in Yangzhou. These merchants lived an extremely luxurious and dissipated life. The poem "*Meng Xianyou*" by Tan Rongfang described: "Yangzhou is wonderful, salt pods are the best in the world. Golden caves and copper mountains boast of being as powerful as a country, and wealthy merchants and big traders gather. There is no such luxury in the world."¹⁴ Salt merchants associated with literati and funded them, and their cultural consumption also tended to the preferences of literati and refined people, having a very high taste. wuda gongdiao, which had a deep origin with opera, spread outward centered on Yangzhou and the Lianghuai regions in the Qing Dynasty with the strong financial support of salt merchants.

Haizhou wuda gongdiao, as a traditional folk music in the Lianyungang area, its diffusion is closely related to the canal economy. During the prosperous period of the canal economy, the frequent flow of personnel and materials provided an opportunity for the spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. The development of the canal economy provided important material foundation, transportation conditions and cultural environment for the formation, spread and development of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. The two promoted each other and complemented each other, jointly creating the unique charm and historical value of Haizhou wuda gongdiao.

2 Spread Characteristics

In a broad sense, communication means the movement and change of information in time and space; human communication activities are the process of realizing information sharing between communicators and receivers.¹⁵ The way of music communication is closely related to the communication medium. When society is underdeveloped and can only rely on oral medium for communication, the "group memory" formed by this "oral communication"¹⁶ has the characteristics of small range, regionality and unstable information preservation due to the influence of regional dialects and so on. The spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao is affected by multiple factors such as policy background, social background, economic level, cultural integration, audience population and communication medium. Its channels mainly include forms such as being driven by salt transportation, the geographical characteristics of the north and south, artistic integration, inheritance in music halls, and folk social interactions.

The development of salt transportation along the Grand Canal has made this place an important hub for north-south commerce and trade, with frequent exchanges of people. Salt merchants, literati, and other people gathered here, providing an opportunity for the spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. Wherever the salt transport river reached, wuda gongdiao spread accordingly, and the salt transport route became an important path for its dissemination. Commercial activities not only promoted economic development but also facilitated cultural exchanges and integrations. Haizhou wuda gongdiao were able to spread to different regions through commercial activities. For example,

14 Liu Wenzhong. *Yangzhou Poems of All Dynasties (IV)* [M]. Beijing: People's Literature Press, 1998. p450.

15 Dai Yuanguang, Jin Guanjin. *General Theory of Communication*[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press, 2000. p3.

16 Zhao Zhian. On the Inheritance and Communication of Traditional Music Culture[J]. *Modern Music*. 2016(05). p7-13.

with the prosperity of the Lianghuai salt industries, wuda gongdiao spread from central areas such as Haizhou and Banpu to surrounding areas like Huai'an, Yancheng, and Ganyu, continuously expanding their distribution areas.

The opening of the Grand Canal has made north-south transportation more convenient, with a large number of merchants, literati, and artists flowing along the canal. Haizhou is located at the junction of Jiangsu and Shandong provinces, it is the intersection of Jianghuai dialect and northern dialects, and also an important area for cultural exchanges between the north and the south. This unique geographical location has enabled various ditties and tunes from the north and the south to take root here. In the process of exchanging and integrating with the music cultures of other regions, Haizhou wuda gongdiao have continuously absorbed new elements, enriched their artistic forms, and expanded their influence.

In the local cultural environment of Haizhou, wuda gongdiao and other art forms learn from and influence each other. For example, in some folk art activities, wuda gongdiao are combined with art forms such as Quyi and traditional opera for joint performances, increasing their comprehensiveness and obtaining a wider spread through the communication channels of other art forms. Haizhou wuda gongdiao experienced prosperity in the relatively stable social environment in the middle of the Qing Dynasty; it gradually declined when the social environment became unstable in the middle and late Qing Dynasty and at the end of the Qing Dynasty; it deteriorated further in the more turbulent Republican period; after the founding of the People's Republic of China, as the society gradually stabilized, the practice of playing tunes was restored; it was almost interrupted during the Cultural Revolution; it reached a new climax of development after the reform and opening up; it faced a crisis of decline in the era of economic development; and it regained attention under the protection of the United Nations Intangible Cultural Heritage... Among the people, singers who call themselves "playmates" often gather in music halls to teach tunes, communicate and discuss skills through oral instruction, musical notation media, electronic media, etc. enabling wuda gongdiao to be inherited among the people. The music hall has become an important place for enthusiasts of wuda gongdiao to communicate and study, as well as an important node for its dissemination. As a precious remnant of the art of singing tunes, wuda gongdiao were jointly created by literati and Confucian merchants and are mainly an elegant singing art form inherited within this group. Especially for the major tunes, their characteristics of being highbrow and appealing to a limited audience determine their dissemination mode and characteristics.¹⁷ The highly literary lyrics make their audience mostly artists with a relatively high educational level. However, their delicate and elegant emotional connotations and melodious and moving tunes deeply attract people from all walks of life. wuda gongdiao often appear in folk social activities such as festival celebrations, weddings, and funerals. Their frequent appearance in daily life enables more people to come into contact with them, thus expanding their dissemination range. In the past, some folk artists would also go from street to street singing various stories with the brand tunes to make a living. In the process of repeatedly singing the lyrics stored in their minds, they formed a performance effect with richer musical expressions, which also promoted the spread of wuda gongdiao to a certain extent.

3 Laws of Change

The dissemination laws of Haizhou wuda gongdiao are reflected in the laws of internal value-

17 Ban Junrong. Haizhou wuda gongdiao from the Perspective of Multi-Dimensional Network of Ethnomusicology[D]. Nanjing University of the Arts, 2012. p86.

driven, the influence of dissemination media, the laws of role identity, the laws of cultural exchange and integration, the laws of market demand, etc.

3.1 Laws of Internal Value-Driven

Haizhou wuda gongdiao are composed of two basic forms of combining lyrics and music: "transmitting lyrics with sound" and "creating music with culture". Literati arrange the rhyme and create lyrics, determine the tune and nature, and then artists combine the arrangements of the literati with their own understanding of the works to display the vocal music. The same tune may have multiple lyrics for singing, achieving the result of "transmitting lyrics with sound". Both the lyrics and the vocal music have high artistic value, aesthetic value, and cultural connotations, and are more likely to be noticed and spread by the upper-class society in the early stage and among the people. The artistic tastes pursued by literati, courtesans, playmates, and Confucian merchants in the Qing Dynasty are the best examples. Meanwhile, cultural arts that are in line with the cultural background and values of the audience, and can trigger cultural identification and resonance, will spread faster and wider. People are more inclined to accept and spread those cultural art works that can reflect their own national cultural characteristics, express their inner feelings and life experiences. Excellent cultural art works can touch people's emotions, arouse empathy, and trigger thinking, thus inspiring people to actively understand, appreciate, and spread them.

3.2 Laws of the Influence of Dissemination

Media With the continuous development of dissemination technologies, the ways and ranges of cultural art dissemination are constantly changing. From oral dissemination and notation dissemination in ancient times, to printing dissemination and electronic dissemination in modern times, and then to network dissemination and digital dissemination in modern times, each innovation of dissemination technology has brought new opportunities for the dissemination of cultural art.

For example, the emergence of movies and television has enabled art forms such as drama and music to be more widely disseminated; the popularization of the Internet has enabled various cultural art works to be rapidly disseminated on a global scale. Different cultural art forms need to select suitable dissemination media to achieve the best dissemination effects. Under the coordinated action of individuals, small music halls, and administrative departments, Haizhou wuda gongdiao has built a diversified inheritance mechanism, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of this musical genre.

3.3 Laws of Role Identity

In the process of the localization and further prosperity of Haizhou wuda gongdiao, the merchant-official class provided strong support in various aspects. The preferences, recommendations, and evaluations of these relatively influential roles in different eras can play an important role in promoting the dissemination of cultural art. The artists of Haizhou wuda gongdiao often perform with merchant fleets, demonstrating their artistic charm in commercial activities. Meanwhile, merchants will also promote Haizhou wuda gongdiao as a cultural commodity, facilitating its dissemination in different regions. Farmers and salt workers in the citizen class also like the Five Grand Palace Tunes and often come to listen, learn by themselves, and "playmates" gather in music halls to teach tunes, exchange skills, and communicate and share artistic experiences in social activities, thus promoting the dissemination of cultural art.

3.4 Laws of Cultural Exchange and Integration

In the process of cross-cultural and cross-regional dissemination of cultural art works, they will be affected by local cultures, customs, geographical environments, etc., collide and integrate with other cultural elements, and thus form cultural art forms with regional characteristics. Haizhou wuda gongdiao have produced some new performance forms and artistic styles by integrating the characteristics of Haizhou dialect, local folk tunes, and operas.

3.5 Laws of Market Demand

In areas where the canal economy is prosperous, the economic development level is relatively high, and people's demand for cultural art is also relatively large. Cultural art works and activities need to be created and planned according to the needs of the audience to attract more audience attention and participation. Haizhou wuda gongdiao were gradually developed on the basis of the "fashionable ditties" in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Their tunes and contents reflect the cultural appreciation habits and value orientations of literati and poets in that era. When they were passed on and practiced, they were mostly used in court gatherings, banquets in restaurants, and exchanges and discussions among literati in high-walled courtyards. Obviously, such opportunities no longer exist today. The flow of court music into the common people's alleys is itself a development and evolution. It then became the object of preference for cultural people and the research topic of musicians, and further transformed into a way of life entertainment and leisure consumption for ordinary people, experiencing a development process of hundreds of years.¹⁸

4 Conclusion

The canal economy has played an important role in promoting the spread of Haizhou wuda gongdiao. Under the influence of the canal economy, Haizhou wuda gongdiao present characteristics such as spreading relying on water, spreading along canal cities, closely combining with commercial activities, and integrating different regional cultural characteristics. They follow the laws that the economic development level determines the dissemination range, the degree of cultural exchange affects the dissemination depth, and the diversification of dissemination methods promotes continuous dissemination. In today's society, we should fully recognize the historical connection between the canal economy and Haizhou wuda gongdiao, actively utilize modern scientific and technological means and the opportunities of cultural industry development, and promote the inheritance and innovation of Haizhou wuda gongdiao, so that it can continue to shine in the new era.

18 Zhao Ming, Cheng Zhijuan, Ni Aide, Xu Hongrao. Digital Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Construction of Ecological Museums - Taking the Protection of Haizhou wuda gongdiao as an Example[J]. Journal of Jiangsu Ocean University (Humanities & Social Sciences Edition), 2014(7). p73