

# A STUDY OF THE STYLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BASIC MUSIC THEORY TEXTBOOKS IN CHINA IN THE PAST 100 YEARS

*Feng Yu*<sup>1</sup>

*Qiming Zhang*<sup>2</sup>

*Pham Minh Thuy*<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** Due to various historical and realistic reasons, the development of basic music theory in China lags behind in the teaching system, teaching content and other aspects. It is an important task for Chinese music workers to revise or supplement the current basic music theory and related textbooks and then build a discipline system of basic music theory in China. This paper synthesizes the theories of music education and music history, music culture, music morphology and other related disciplines. It uses scientific, objective and rational values and holistic and comprehensive concepts. It takes the development of the basic music theory education of China as the research object and takes history as a mirror to further consider and prospect the construction of the basic music theory discipline system of China. The basic theory of Chinese Music can be roughly divided into three stages: (1) The basic music theory from the early 20th century to the founding of the People's Republic of China; (2) From the founding of the People's Republic of China to the period of reform and opening up; (3) Basic music theory compiled and published since the reform and opening up. It can be seen, from the development of the basic theory education of Chinese Music and its teaching materials, that the development of western music theory in China, before the founding of the People's Republic of China, was a process from passive acceptance to active absorption. The scope of spreading western music theory was from the palace to the church, then to the school, and, finally, to the society, which made the music theory teaching in China gradually develop into a major and minor system as the leading mode. The basic theory of Chinese Music gradually deviated from its own track. With

<sup>1</sup> PH.D. School of Music, Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou, 221000 - China.  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8646-1040>. Email: [yxyyufeng@163.com](mailto:yxyyufeng@163.com).

<sup>2</sup> PH.D. School of Music, nanjing Special Education Normal College, Nanjing, 210000 - China.  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6273-016X>. Corresponding Author Email: [3119262244@qq.com](mailto:3119262244@qq.com).

<sup>3</sup> PH.D. College of Education, Viet Nam Thai Nguyen University, Ho Chi Minh City, 800010 - Vietnam.  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3174-286X>. Email: [phamminhthuy78@gmail.com](mailto:phamminhthuy78@gmail.com).

<https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-3173.2023.v46esp.p117>



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the deepening of music research after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the discipline development of basic music theory has witnessed a prosperous situation, and the construction of basic music theory is moving towards the direction of diversification and deepening. Many musicologists and music educators have made contributions to the construction of basic music theory in China from different disciplines and research perspectives. Based on the principle of "combining history with the theory" and combing the development of basic music theory in China, the ideal model of Chinese music theory discipline construction is conceived to promote the integration between traditional music theory and modern music theory from a diachronic perspective. What is relevant to strengthen the unity of the nation and the world in basic music theory from a synchronic perspective, and to pay attention to the connotation of technology and culture in music theory teaching. But also to strengthen the scientific and logical concept in music theory textbooks.

**Keywords:** Basic music theory. Textbooks in China. Styles and characteristics. Development context.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Mr Fei Xiaotong, a famous scholar of anthropology and sociology in China, "cultural self-awareness means that people living in a certain culture have 'self-awareness' of their culture, and self-awareness is to strengthen the autonomous ability of cultural transformation and obtain the autonomous position of deciding to adapt to the new environment and cultural choices of the new era (GE, 2004, p. 53). The philosophical idea of music education has a significant leading and guiding function in the development of basic music theory textbooks, according to the history of basic music theory textbook composition in China.

In order to understand the style and traits of creating fundamental music theory textbooks in China over a century, it is crucial to outline the change and evolution of the notion of Chinese music education as well as how Chinese music education philosophy is constructed. By integrating the writing style and traits of Chinese basic music theory textbooks throughout the past century, this research attempts to increase our understanding of the internal law regulating the development of these books. This essay will achieve this by thoroughly integrating the traits of the philosophical ideas behind music education over numerous historical eras. Throughout recent years, the domestic research on basic music theory textbooks mainly focuses on the following aspects:

Firstly, the review of basic music theory textbooks. Secondly, the research on writing Chinese folk music basic music theory textbooks. Thirdly, the discussion on the ways and problems of writing basic music theory textbooks; and fourthly, the research on the history of writing basic music

theory textbooks. Scholars have emerged with many results from comparing Chinese and western music theory and the appeal and practice of writing basic music theory textbooks for Chinese folk music. In terms of exploring the ways and problems of writing basic music theory textbooks, scholars have raised many questions about the logical relationships, uniformity of presentation, rigor and interdisciplinary knowledge that need attention to write basic music theory textbooks. They pointed out the problems in writing basic music theory textbooks from different levels and promoted the scientific and systematic nature of writing basic music theory textbooks.

Because of various historical and realistic reasons, the basic music theory is called “pediatrics” in China. Ordinary teachers of basic music theory usually do not have comprehensive and in-depth research ability, while “everyone” in the music field disdains to explore the existing problems, which causes the development of basic music theory textbooks and teaching content to lag behind. Nowadays, a group of ethnomusicologists and music educationists is struggling to find out how to improve Chinese traditional music theory and how to build a Chinese music theory system.

Through the specific textual research on the introduction of European music theory into China, from the introduction of European music theory in the Qing Dynasty to the influence of Japanese music theory in the school song period and the involvement of the Soviet Union’s music theory system after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, this paper aims to explore the history, current situation and development of the construction of basic music theory textbooks. And it aims to explain more convincingly how European music theory affects modern music theory. It is of great significance for the research of music education in the new century to explain how the basic music theory can be improved and changed with the development of the times. On the basis of previous studies, this paper seeks to further broaden the train of thought and make a modest contribution to the construction of the Chinese music theory system from the perspective of the relationship between Chinese traditional music theory, European music theory, modern music theory and multiculturalism.

## **I THE BASIC MUSIC THEORY TEXTBOOKS FROM THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

From the literature on modern education (including music education) in China, it can be seen that, in terms of philosophical ideas of music education, it mainly borrowed from Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece in Europe, as well as Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic education ideas in modern Germany (JIN, 2002, p. 334). This active learning and borrowing were based on reflecting on the traditional Chinese education system and ideas, a process of cultural selection based on comparing Chinese and foreign cultures. This essay contends that while the model and curriculum of contemporary Chinese music education are based on the western musicological system, western aesthetic, psychological and pedagogical ideas have been used to influence the values of music education. The implications of ancient Chinese music education concepts have also been combined, adopted, inherited and expanded at the same time. The "borrowing" is manifested in the western aesthetic education theories to seek aesthetics for the implementing of education values. "Inheritance" manifests itself in the continuation of traditional music education values such as "moral edification," "changing customs" and "cultivating temperament. Continuity. The "expansion" of music education, as an important part of the cultivation of "perfect personality", reflects the "humanistic" value of music education.

In modern times, western science and technology, education and culture were introduced to China during the opening of church schools and the process of Chinese students staying in America, Europe and Japan. The Chinese followed the example of Europe, America and Japan in establishing education and schools. Modern Chinese music education began to sprout during this period. Initially, music classes were offered in church schools, and music textbooks were mainly compiled by westerners, such as Di Jiu Lie's "Enlightenment in Music." Still, basic music theory textbooks, compiled by the Chinese, had not yet appeared. It is widely believed that the first textbook of basic music theory compiled by the Chinese was the *Textbook of Music Dictionary*, translated and supplemented by Zeng Zhifan in 1904. This textbook was written by (English) Ai Baier and translated by (Japanese) Suzuki Mijiro and Zeng Zhifan. It was translated and supplemented according to the original and the translation (LI, 2006, p. 58).

The textbook is divided into five chapters: musical notation, notes, rests, scales, intervals, tones, meters and abbreviations. In the preface of this

book, Zeng Zhifan (2008, p. 26) analyzes the characteristics of “singing lessons” in Chinese music education from the perspective of comparing Chinese and western musics and puts forward his views on “[...] the theory of musical improvement”, uniting Chinese modern music education. He argues that Chinese music education in modern times has “[...] little knowledge of the importance of singing” and “[...] little knowledge of the importance of music,” and that who truly understands music must first be knowledgeable in basic music theory (ZENG, 2008, p. 29).

In *A Century of Chinese Music History 1900-2000*, Ju Qihong (2014, p. 435) argues that the Textbook of Music “[...] contains many of the translation terms created and still in use today.” As to the use of this book for translation, Sun Ji’nan in *A Chronicle of Modern Chinese Music Education 1840-2000*, describes the “*Textbook of Music* for use in Chinese teacher training colleges, middle schools and girls’ schools at that time.” The evidence to be mentioned for this music theory translation was precisely textbook for a precise time. Liu Xiaojing (2016, p. 32), in “Music Appreciation,” argues that the term “new music” was “[...] first found in the preface to the Textbook of Music in 1904, which was compiled and published by Zeng Zhifan, a representative of school music songs.” The above scholars’ evaluation shows that the *Textbook of Music* was recognized as the first national compilation of basic music theory. The first appearance of the term “new music” in it. Then it contains the idea of “the parallelism of the four educations.” It shows the importance and value of this textbook for modern Chinese music. The importance and value of this textbook for modern Chinese music are evident.

According to the *Bibliography of Modern Chinese Music (1840-1949)*, other basic music theory textbooks of this period include *Questions and Answers on Music Theory*, edited by Wu Da, and *Introduction to Music Theory*, edited by Shen Pengnian in 1908, *Music Theory*, compiled by Li Yiyi in 1909, *Textbook of Middle School Music Theory*, edited by Zhong Zitong in 1910 and *Middle School Music Theory* by Tiger Tamura and translated by Xu Chuanlin and Sun Ix in 1908. Ix translated the *Textbook of Middle School Music Theory, aesthetics specialist* etc. The representative textbooks of basic music theory before the 1920s are shown in Appendix I (WANG, 2006, p. 410).

In the 1920s and 1930s, basic music theory textbooks were translated and written by scholars such as Xiao Youmei, Feng Zikai, Miao Tianrui, Zhu Shudian, Wu Bochao, Ke Zhenghe, Wu Mengfei, Liu Quping, Chen Hong and Ying Shangneng. They appeared one after another. For example, Miao

Tianrui edited *The Simple Method of Reading*, Xu Baoren edited *The New School System Primary School Curriculum* (Textbook of Music), Xiao Youmei edited *The New School System Textbook of Music Theory*, General Musicology, Feng Zikai and Qiu Mengcheng's *Kaiming Music Teaching Book - Music Theory Ed.*

This book is divided into ten chapters, including sound names, music scores, theoretical overviews, tune overviews, tune body overviews, vocal music, instrumental music and musical development overviews. Chapter 1: Tone names, including stem, semitone, branch, standard and yellow bell; Chapter 2: Music score, including notation, types of the music score, notes, rests, beats, intensity terms, speed terms, expression terms, ornamental notation, miscellaneous notation, etc.; Chapters 3 and 4: Intervals and scales; Chapter 5: Introduction to theory, what the study of harmonics is, what the study of advanced music theory is; Chapter 6: Introduction to tunes; Chapter 7: Introduction to Music Styles, which introduces the forms of instrumental and vocal music styles; Chapters 8 and 9: Introduction to the composition and classification of vocal and instrumental music; Chapter 10: Overview of music development, which introduces the music of ancient, medieval, modern and new times by historical periods.

In Chapter 10, Xiao Youmei (1988, p. 31) argues that “[...] the first most thing about music history is which elements are included in music history.” He believes that the elements should include

[...] the organization of scales, the range and construction of musical instruments, the organization of notation and music scores, the organization of music and songs, the changes in music theory, music education institutions and music teaching methods, and the biographies of musicians. (XU, 2002, p. 96).

The *Kaiming Music Textbook*. Music Theory Editorial is edited by Feng Zikai and Qiu Mengchen (1935, p. 23). The book is divided into four parts based on the 1932 Music Curriculum Standards for Junior High Schools. The first part is about reading music, including the organization of musical notes and scales; the second part is about general knowledge of music, including the meaning of music, the development of music, the classification of music, human voice and vocal music, etc.; the third part is about preliminary harmonics, including intervals, triads and their inversions, seventh harmonics and the application of harmonics; the fourth part is about composing small songs.

In *Modern Chinese School Music Education 1840-1949*, Wu Yongyi (1999, p. 53) describes the distribution of the content textbook content during the academic year, stating that “[...] the general music theory lessons take up 1/4 or 1/3 of the weekly class time.” In this textbook, Feng Zikai (1935, p. 16) explains his understanding of Music in *Music and Life* and affirms the benefits of good and noble music for the body and mind from functional music, saying that “[...] music is a spiritual food, and its power to influence life is certainly great. ...noble music can submerge the heart and develop a sound personality...” In his book *The Development of New Music in Modern China and the Famous People of Zhejiang*, Liu Jiandong (2014, p. 162) argues that “[...] the book concentrates on Qiu Mengchen’s conception of musicology” and corroborates this view in the context of Qiu’s (1999, p. 100) musical philosophy. The representative basic music theory textbooks of this period are shown in Appendix II (LOU, 2008, p. 102).

The development of music theory in China, before the founding of the People’s Republic of China, was a process from passive acceptance to active absorption, with the spread of western music theory from missionaries to foreign students, from foreigners to Chinese, and from the court to churches, schools and society. The Chinese music theory gradually deviated from its own track. At the same time, a few musicians have realized the lack of basic Chinese music theory and consciously compared and fused Chinese and western music theory in their writings. But this did not prevent Western music theory from becoming the main or even the core content of the basic Chinese music theory textbooks, which is strongly evidenced by the numerous music theory textbooks after the founding of the PRC. As the study of Chinese music has intensified since the founding of the PRC, Chinese musicians have become increasingly aware of the urgency of writing and constructing basic Chinese music theory textbooks and disciplines (XIAO, 1928, p. 33).

## **2 THE BASIC MUSIC THEORY TEXTBOOKS WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BETWEEN THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE REFORM AND OPENING UP**

At the beginning of the founding of New China, China established the development policy of “taking Russia as a teacher” in education, economy, science and technology. China put forward the slogan of “learning wholeheartedly from the Soviet Union,” thus beginning to learn from the

Soviet Union in terms of educational ideas and concepts, educational models, teaching methods, etc. (SUN, 1951, p. 93). Experience with music education in the Soviet Union. The widespread adoption of “communist pedagogical ideas” and “Marxist aesthetic theory” in music education led to the alienation of its core principles and a gradual departure from the path of aesthetic education. Therefore, many translations appeared during this period, especially the Soviet translation example Qizhang’s *Basic Theory of Music*, by S. Sposobin, Cao Yundi’s *Fundamentals of Music Theory*, Fan Jianqin’s *Self-Study Guide to Music Theory*, etc. (HUANG, 2014, p. 81). These translations played an important role in modern music education in China after the founding of the PRC.

Additionally, China was subjected to a harsh economic and cultural embargo by western capitalist nations during that period of history. The political line of China, shaped by the class struggle, caused China to reflect more of a political character in terms of literature and education (SUN, 2001, p. 9). For example, the 1955 *Beijing Reference Materials for Teaching Music in Junior High Schools* stipulate that music lessons in secondary schools

[...] should provide students with education in patriotism, internationalism, labour, collectivism, and self-discipline through musical works (mainly songs) of distinctive ideological and artistic character; in other students’ dialectical materialist worldview and to cultivate their socialist moral character. Cultivating students’ socialist moral qualities and making them fully developed members of socialist society.” (ZHANG, 1998, p. 162).

It can be seen that music education at that time was prominent in its political and ideological nature, and the emphasis was on cultivating students with a communist ideological and moral consciousness through music education.

Because of the excessive emphasis on the political instrumental value of the music, music education in this period completely lost its function of aesthetic education and was completely reduced to a political appendage (ZHANG, 2004, p. 91). For example, the criticism of the ancient music education thought in China at that time was a reflection of the conflict between “proletarian thought” and “non-proletarian thought” in the field of the political ideology of China, in the field of music education and in the field of music culture. It was a mechanical copy of the one-sidedness of the theory in the exaggeration of the class and political functions of the ancient

music education thought and the denial of the “pleasure of body and mind”, “cultivation of emotion and sex” and “teaching peace through music.” The value of aesthetic education, such as “teaching harmony through music”, has turned music education into a tool for political struggle (LIU, 2006, p. 57).

In contrast to the translated foreign basic music theory textbooks, the Chinese wrote their own basic music theory textbooks during this period, which became mainstream. It can be said that such music theory textbooks were created by the times, but there was no shortage of classics.

The most representative basic music theory textbook of this period is *Fundamentals of Music Theory*, written by Li Chongguang (1962, p. 23) and published by People’s Music Publishing House in 1962, which was later reprinted in many editions. The book is structured into 15 chapters, with multiple sections in each chapter covering topics like tones and pitches, metre, notation, general theory of modes, different modes based on the pentatonic scale, intervals, chords, rhythm and metre, tempo and intensity, transposition, alternate modes, etc. An introduction to simple and ruled scores as well as a glossary of musical vocabulary are included in the appendices. This textbook caused great repercussions in academic circles once published. Yang Tongba (2003, p. 56), in his article, “Choice in Practice, Innovation in Practice: The Development of Chinese New Music Theory and its Ideological Inspiration”, considered this textbook “[...] the most representative and successful one among the music theory textbooks written and published by China itself.” The reason why this textbook has attracted so much attention, apart from the characteristics of the textbook itself, is that this was “the period when basic music theory was most popular and influential, so much so that people consciously and unconsciously made the study of basic music theory an essential initial stage of music learning.” In this musical atmosphere, the textbook had a great impact on society.

In the executive summary of this textbook, Li Chongguang (1984, p. 326) states that “[...] this book is a trial textbook of basic music theory for secondary music schools [...] suitable for a wide range of professional and amateur musicians.” Li Chongguang attaches great importance to the study of basic music theory. In “To Strengthen the Study and Research of Basic Music Theory,” he argues that

[...] the depth and breadth of influence on basic music theory are comparable to any other music theory course. (LI, 1984, p. 329). Therefore, the quality of teaching basic music theory is not only a problem for a few professional musicians and amateur music lovers, but it is also a big problem directly related to the music culture education of one billion people.

It can be seen that Li Chong Guang closely related the study and teaching of basic music theory to music culture education. In terms of the means and methods of learning music theory, he argues, in the afterword of the textbook *Fundamentals of Music Theory* that “[...] learning music theory must be combined with vivid and concrete musical works, and there is little point in reciting many definitions in the abstract apart from vivid and concrete Music. In addition, theory must be combined with aural training...” (LI, 1984, p. 330). In a way, these assertions provide a scientific path for us to learn basic music theory. Representative basic music theory textbooks of this period are shown in Appendix III (JU, 2014, p. 33).

In the more than forty years since its publication, *Fundamentals of Music Theory* has given full play to its important role in the construction of the discipline of music theory, influencing the musical concepts of several generations of Chinese people and “being a foundational music theory textbook for several generations of Chinese people to enter the hall of music.” It should be said that it is the most representative and successful of the music theory textbooks written and published by ourselves in China, and “[...] has been used for the longest time, reprinted the most times, and has had the greatest influence.” However, due to the long years of its publication and the fact that it has not been fundamentally changed when it has been reprinted repeatedly since then, *Fundamentals of Music Theory* fails to incorporate the results of the research on traditional Chinese music theory and modern music theory by scholars at home and abroad in the past 40 years, making it appear too outdated and unable to meet fully the current requirements of music theory teaching.

### **3 THE BASIC MUSIC THEORY TEXTBOOKS WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED SINCE THE REFORM AND OPENING UP**

Since the reform and opening up, the call for building the basic music theory of Chinese folk music has become stronger and stronger, and the

main feature of the basic music theory textbooks written and published is the tendency of nationalization, discipline and specialization. Scholars' call for constructing the basic music theory of Chinese folk music carries a strong sense of urgency and mission.

The appeals and efforts of numerous literary and artistic figures, including musicians, were largely responsible for the restoration and establishment of the status of aesthetic education in schooling. Another significant factor was the publication of articles and speeches on the significance of aesthetic education (including music education) in a number of journals and conferences. In order to bring aesthetic education, including music education, to the attention of the state and society, the pioneers in the music industry of China, on the one hand, sought evidence from the history of educational development in ancient and modern China and abroad. It also sought theoretical support from modern Chinese, western aesthetic education theories and ancient Chinese music education ideas. On the other hand, they took the initiative to absorb the latest research results on foreign education, psychology and music aesthetics. They gradually formed. Further, we took the initiative to absorb the latest research results on foreign education, psychology and music aesthetics. We gradually formed a philosophical theory of music aesthetic education, adapted to social and economic development needs. In the Third Symposium on Music Aesthetics held in 1985, Mr. Yao Siyuan (1998, p. 63) presented a paper entitled "Music Aesthetic Education Should Be the Core of Music Education in China's Schools." We also focus on the misconceptions of the Chinese education sector at that time about the value of aesthetic education, such as "moral support," "education" and "entertainment" (MA, 2001, p. 41). The students' essential and core task of music education is to guide students to perceive, understand, experience, evaluate, discriminate and create through the beauty of music. The most essential and core task of music education is to guide students to perceive, understand, experience, evaluate, discriminate, and create music beauty and enhance their aesthetic ability and literacy.

After the publication of Mr. Yao Siyuan (1998, p. 65)'s series of papers, the view that music education should be "centered on musical aesthetics" has gradually been recognized by the music education community in China. Some scholars have tried to build a philosophical and theoretical framework of music education as "musical aesthetic education."

The publication of Jiahua Liao's monograph, *Aesthetic Music Education* (1993), is a further interpretation and expansion of the theory of "[...]

music education with musical aesthetics at its core.” In this monograph, the author was guided by the theory of Marx’s materialist epistemology that “[...] man is also built according to the laws of beauty,” based on music aesthetics and modern aesthetic education theories while absorbing contemporary research results in music psychology and pedagogy, “tasks,” “characteristics,” “principles” and “psychological structure” (LIU, 2016, p. 116). Like music education, Liu (2016, p. 125) pointed out that “[...] music aesthetic education is a kind of educational practice with music as the medium and aesthetics as the core.” The task of music education is to cultivate students’ correct aesthetic beauty, improve their aesthetic ability in music and promote their all-around development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor. The monograph and the author’s 1992 paper, entitled “Philosophical Reflections on Music Education”, are important works in the philosophical study of music education in China during this period (SUN, 2011, p. 22).

Under this call and effort to establish the basic music theory of Chinese folk music, many teaching materials on or among the basic music theory of Chinese folk music have appeared. For example, *Basic Music Theory Course*, edited by Yan Cheng Nephew, Tong Zhongliang, and Zhong Juncheng (DU, 2005, p. 213); *Basic Music Theory of Chinese Folk Music* edited by Du Yaxiong (1995, p. 361), *Chinese Music Theory* etc. These basic music theory textbooks have done preliminary work to explore the basic music theory of Chinese folk music. They have introduced and discussed the basic knowledge of Chinese folk music, such as the eye of the board, the working scale, the rhythm, the event, the house, the tune and the notation (DEREK, 1984, p. 89).

The pentatonic scale, the 12 rhythms and rhythms of Chinese folk music, the eye of the board, board style, work-shape score, the half-character score of Yan music, the score of the zither, the character score of the rhythms and rhythms, the curve score, the character score of the gongs and drums and the general knowledge of mythology are all covered in the eight chapters that make up this textbook. In the preface of the textbook, Du Yaxiong (2005, p. 98) reviewed basic music theory textbooks since modern times, saying that

[...] after the Opium War, Western learning was gradually introduced to the East, and we generally adopted Western European music theory in music education. In modern times, Western basic music theory has occupied the whole Chinese music education system, and some attempts to improve the basic music theory textbooks are not helpful, so it is urgent to write basic music theory for Chinese people. (WANG, 2004, p. 198).

Given that, Wang Zhenya (2004, p. 198) felt that “[...] the practice of replacing Chinese music theory with Western European music theory over the past hundred years should be reviewed.” This book, which supports the *Music Theory of Chinese Nationalities*, was released. In recent years, this basic music theory textbook has been mixed reviews. Still, one of the more pertinent ones is Guan Jianhua’s statement in *Music Curriculum and Teaching Research 1979-2009*. Since the 1980s, some scholars in China have been determined to create a basic music theory of Chinese traditional music and gradually construct their music system (MING, 2010, p. 71). A welcome step was taken with the release of Mr. Du Yaxiong’s *Basic Music Theory of Chinese Nationalities* (China Literature and Literature Publishing Company, 1995). Representative basic music theory textbooks of this period are shown in Appendix IV (ZHOU, 2004, p. 89).

From the late 1990s to the beginning of the 21st century, with the advent of global integration and the era of information, the exchanges of the world economy, culture, education and ideas have become increasingly frequent. The turnover of educational philosophy, philosophical thinking and aesthetic theory of music can be described as rapidly changing. In terms of the research field of music education philosophical thought, the music education philosophical research of China focuses on two aspects: first, the translation and introduction of foreign music education philosophical thought; second, the selection and construction of contemporary Chinese music education philosophy (TONG, 2003, p. 32).

In terms of foreign philosophical research on music education, the ones that have a significant influence on the music education of China include the “[...] aesthetic philosophy of music education,” “[...] multicultural music education thought” and “[...] philosophy of music education practice.” (LIU, 2006, p. 57).

The introduction of the philosophy and development of multicultural music education in the world has promoted the recognition of multicultural music education among Chinese educators and promoted the process of practicing multicultural music education in Chinese education (DAI; HUANG, 1993, p. 49). As an educational concept, “multicultural music education” believes that the meaning, value and function of music are different in different cultural contexts and that the student’s understanding and evaluation can only be obtained by linking music to the corresponding social and cultural contexts. The music of all ethnic groups in the world has

its unique value and should be respected and passed on (ZHANG, 2004, p. 103). Through multicultural music education, we can not only achieve the universality of the music culture of the world but also help to promote mutual understanding and recognition among people from different countries and ethnic groups.

The importance of incorporating multicultural ideals into music education can be seen as having two positive effects on the growth of music education in China. At the theoretical level, it is mainly a reflection on the philosophy and practice of music education in Chinese schools since the modern era. At the Sixth National Seminar on Music Education Reform held in 1996, in response to the fact that the school music education of China has long focused on the European music theory system and neglected the construction of the Chinese national music theory system, it was concluded that there is a tendency to “[...] emphasize the West over the Chinese” in the value orientation of music education, or even to “[...] use the West to negate the Chinese.” (ZHANG, 1987, p. 143). The school music education of China has been in a state of shock. Some scholars in China have proposed the construction of “[...] a music education system with Chinese culture as the mother tongue” (LIU, 2016, p. 231). Actually, the idea and practices of multicultural music education have been progressively included in the teaching of music in schools. In the field of professional music education in China, many music colleges and universities across the country have been offering courses such as “World Music” and “Music Anthropology” to introduce the music of different cultures in the world through professional music education and establish the value of multicultural music education (ZHOU, 2004, p. 68). In the field of basic education, China’s Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards, promulgated in 2001, have clearly put forward the curriculum concept of “understanding multiculturalism”. The 2011 edition of the Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards has further elaborated the humanistic nature of the music curriculum from the perspective of multiculturalism (DA, 1983, p. 29).

Under the background of diversity, basic music theory textbooks specialized in twentieth-century music. A series of disciplinary basic music theory textbooks for teacher education and preschool education have appeared, such as Tong Zhongliang’s *Modern Music Theory Course*, You Jingbo’s *Basic Music Theory for Popular Music*, Xia Zhigang’s *Basic Music Theory Course for Early Childhood Teachers*, Wang Lixin and Ma Fangming’s *Music Theory and*

*Sight Singing for Preschool Education* (XU, 2002, p. 32). These basic music theory textbooks provide ideas for the in-depth and extended research of basic music theory. It can be seen that the development of basic music theory textbooks in this period was in the direction of diversification (MING, 2010, p. 16).

The paper is divided into eight chapters about the basic music theory of twentieth-century music, covering the new tonal scales, modern beat and bar liberation, modern chords and harmonies, modern tonality and critical relationships, and music theory about modern compositional techniques. The appendices include a table of MIDI timbres and percussion keys, a table of jazz chord markings, a synthesizer and computer music glossary. While some chapters of the Basic Music Theory Course, written by Tong Zhongliang et al. in 1990 and 2001, dealt with modern music theory, this Modern Music Theory Course goes a step further and deals specifically with basic music theory of the twentieth century. In *One of the Complementary Achievements of Music Theory: A Review of Professor Tong Zhongliang's Modern Music Theory Course*, Zhang Jing (2004, p. 29) praised the textbook for

[...] making a common and systematic theoretical summary of the highly individualized new Music of the twentieth century, which makes its contribution more significant because of its difficulty; and then transforming these extensive and specific theoretical issues into a basic course that can directly meet the needs of teaching. This is a breakthrough from scratch.

In *Music Theory and Culture*, Shi Yong considers the modern music theory textbooks, written by Tong Zhongliang (2003, p. 9) and others, to be “[...] a new requirement for music theory teaching in the era of development” and calls for “[...] the responsibility and obligation of music education in the 21st century to enable every student to learn and grasp contemporary music development with a modern consciousness based on the inheritance of both Chinese and Western traditions.” (YANG, 2003, p. 52). Every student must be able to learn and understand the most recent advances in current music in the twenty-first century, building on the legacy of both Chinese and western traditions and with a modern understanding. Appendix V (DU, 2005, p. 215) lists the representative introductory music theory texts published during this time.

After the reform and opening up, the development of the discipline of basic music theory in China has seen unprecedented flourishing, and many musicologists and music educators have added to the construction of basic music theory in China from different disciplinary perspectives and research horizons. Whether it is traditional music theory, modern music theory, or basic music theory from a cultural perspective, they are all important parts of the disciplinary system of music theory with Chinese characteristics. They all occupy an irreplaceable position. How to integrate them into a whole and build a system is an important question that Chinese music theorists and music educators need to think about at present.

## CONCLUSION

Since the birth of Zeng Zhifan's translation and supplementation of the *Textbook of the Music Canon* in 1904, Chinese music scholars have been happy preparing basic music theory textbooks, and many results have been released. These basic music theory textbooks have several characteristics in general:

(1) This paper roughly divides Chinese music philosophical thought into three stages, and the preparation of basic music theory textbooks in each historical stage has its specific historical development characteristics.

(2) The translation of overseas basic music theory textbooks. From the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, translations of basic music theory textbooks have appeared at each stage, and a large number of scholars such as Zeng Zhifan, Miao Tianrui and Feng Zikai have devoted themselves to compiling basic music theory textbooks.

(3) The trend of nationalization of basic music theory textbooks. In the past hundred years, the contents of basic music theory courses and basic music theory textbooks are mainly based on western music theory. The construction of basic music theory of Chinese traditional music became an important issue at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

(4) In recent years, there have been several disciplinary basic music theory textbooks for different majors and levels, such as basic music theory for preschool education, basic music theory for early childhood education, basic music theory for popular music, etc.

(5) The emergence of these nationalized, specialized basic music theory textbooks have greatly contributed to the reconstruction of the basic music theory knowledge system.

From the standpoint of pure music philosophy, this paper contends that traditional music education concept, the origin of Chinese educational philosophy, permeated feudal society at all times and was eventually assimilated with modern western aesthetic education idea. After the establishment of New China, it was, however, diminished and even condemned; nonetheless, after reform and opening up, its cultural values and traditional educational philosophy can be inherited and acknowledged in the present. The main reason is that the idea of music education contains the eternal theme of “humanistic edification” as the value and function of education, which can make education and social development organically integrated, highlight the social function of music education, and thus adapt to the needs of different social development. The historical experience of Chinese music education shows that the construction of philosophical theories of music education should take into account the needs of different socio-economic and cultural development as well as the law of development of music education itself. And blindly copying political or cultural theories instead of music education philosophy will have a great negative impact on the development of music education. In treating Chinese and foreign music education philosophy, reasonable inheritance and borrowing are the only way to develop and innovate music education philosophy. Total rejection of existing theoretical systems or sticking to the old ways will not help the development of music education philosophy.

YU, F.; ZHANG, Q.; THUY, P. M. Investigación sobre el estilo y las características de los libros de texto de la teoría musical básica en china en los últimos cien años. **Trans/Form/Ação**, Marília, v. 46, p. 117-144, 2023. Edição Especial.

**Resumen:** Debido a varias razones históricas y realistas, el desarrollo de la teoría musical en China se queda atrás cuanto al sistema de enseñanza, el contenido de la enseñanza y otros aspectos. Es una tarea importante para los trabajadores chinos de la música revisar o complementar la teoría musical actual y los libros de texto relacionados, y luego construir un sistema de disciplina de la teoría musical en China. Este artículo sintetiza las teorías educativas de la historia de la música, la cultura musical, la morfología, las otras disciplinas relacionadas, utiliza valores científicos, objetivos y racionales y conceptos holísticos y comprensivos, toma el desarrollo de



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## APPENDIX I

Table1 List of representative basic music theory textbooks I (WANG, 2006, p. 410)

Names	Authors	Publishers	Publication time	Main content
<i>Music Textbook</i>	Written by (Britain) Abel and translated by (Japanese) Suzuki Yonejiro translated and supplemented by Zeng Zhimin	Shanghai Guangzhi	July 15, 1904	The book was arranged into five chapters, including music scores, notes, rests, junctures, staves, intervals, scales, tones (i.e., int, donation), beats, marks, abbreviations, etc.
<i>Middle School Music Theory Textbook</i>	Compiled by Zhong Zitong	Shanghai Music Research Institute	In 1910	The book was divided into 32 lessons, including staves, notations, syllable marks, musical alphabets, and notes.

<i>Middle School Music Classics Textbook</i>	written by Tamura Toraichi (Japanese) and translated by Xu Chuanlin and Sun Shan et al.	The Commercial	April 1907	The book was arranged into 18 chapters, including staff notations, clefs, musical alphabets, notes, rests, repeats, beats, and ranges.
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## APPENDIX II

Table II List of representative elementary music theory teaching materials (II) (LOU, 2008, p. 102)

<b>Names</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Publishers</b>	<b>Publication time</b>	<b>Main content</b>
<i>Music Theory Textbook under New Academic System</i>	Written by Xiao Youmei	The Commercial	March 1924	This book is divided into six volumes, every witten10 lessons, such as Volume 1, <i>Music Theory Textbook for Junior Middle Schools</i> , which is arranged according to 1-10 lessons, lesson 1: musical alphabets and major scales, lesson 2: sound recognition, including stave, notes and rests, notation, dotted notes, beats, musical terms, and lessons 7-10: major G and major F respectively.
<i>General Musicology</i>	Written by Xiao Youmei	The Commercial	May 1928	This book was arranged into ten chapters, including the musical alphabet, music score, theoretical overview, melody introduction, music form introduction, vocal music, instrumental music, the outline of music development, etc.

<p><i>Preliminary Music</i></p>	<p>Written by Feng Zikai</p>	<p>Beixin</p>	<p>May 1931</p>	<p>This book consists of 20 chapters, including tone and range, scales and melody, notes and rests, beats, musical marks, chromatic scales, harmonic intervals, melody intervals, tempo and other slogans, transposition, grace notes, vocal music, musical instruments, etc.</p>
<p><i>Enlightened Music Textbook, Theory of Music</i></p>	<p>Written by Feng Zikai and Qiu Menghen</p>	<p>Kaiming</p>	<p>July 1935</p>	<p>This book was arranged into four chapters, compiled according to the <i>Junior Middle School Music Curriculum Standard</i> in 1932, divided into reading music, general knowledge of music, preliminary harmonics and small songs, and the teaching contents were specified according to the academic year.</p>
<p><i>An Outline of Music Studies</i></p>	<p>Written by Ying Shangneng</p>	<p>The Commercial</p>	<p>December 1935</p>	<p>This book was arranged into 13 chapters, including notation, music score, key signature, grace note, scale, interval, beat, rhythm, dynamics, melody and musical form, vocal music nouns, chords and closing methods, and word interpretation, with exercises.</p>
<p><i>Teaching Books Of Music Theory in Junior High Schools Method of Reading Music</i></p>	<p>Written by Qiu Menghen</p>	<p>Chunfeng Music Education Bureau</p>	<p>January 1938</p>	<p>This book was divided into 20 lessons, including musical notation, alphabets, notes, rests, beats, dynamics, scales, tone marks, transposition, tempo, and emoticons.</p>

## APPENDIX III

Table III List of representative elementary music theory teaching materials (III) (JU, 2014, p. 33)

Names	Authors	Publishers	Publication time	Main content
<i>Concise Tutorial of Music Theory</i>	Written by Sun Congyin	New Music	November 1951	The whole book was arranged into ten chapters, including musical notation, musical alphabets, notes, rests, beats, semitones, accidentals, key signatures, scales, intervals, various marks, grace notes, vocabulary of music, and so on
<i>Fundamentals of Music Principle</i>	Li Chongguang	People's Music	October 1962	This book was arranged into 15 chapters; each chapter was divided into several sections, including tone and pitch, temperament, notation, general theory of modes, various modes based on the pentatonic scale, intervals, chords, rhythm and beat, tempo and dynamics, transposition and alternating modes, etc. The appendix briefly introduces numbered musical notation and ganache tablature, the common music vocabulary.
<i>Basic Theory of Music</i>	Written by Sposobin (USSR), translated by Wang Qizhang	People's Music	August 1958	This book was arranged into 15 chapters, including some knowledge about sound and pitch, rhythm, beat, tempo, interval, chord, mode, transposition, grace note, phrase, and ellipsis in notation.

## APPENDIX IV

Table IV List of representative elementary music theory teaching materials (IV) (ZHOU, 2004, p. 89)

Names	Authors	Publishers	Publication time	Main content
<i>Elementary Music Theory Tutorial</i>	Edited by Yan Chengquan, Tong Zhongliang, and Zhong Juncheng	People's Music	October 1990	This book was arranged into 14 chapters, which cover the basic western music theory knowledge and the basic music theory knowledge of Chinese folk music, such as the circle-of-fifths system, twelve toning rules, eighty-four tones, the model of “Zhi” and “Wei,” the common sense of ganache tablature, and so on.
<i>Basic Tutorial of Chinese Traditional Music Theory</i>	Edited by Tong Zhongliang	People's Music	January 2004	This book consists of 9 chapters, including the name of bamboo pitch-pipes used in ancient China, five-tone scale and seven-tone scale, three-tone equal temperament and eight tones, change of keys and eighty-four tones, rhythm and beat, ganache tablature, abbreviated character notation and other tablatures, circle-of-fifths system, and its toning system, bell temperament, temperament for plucked instruments and new temperament (a set of precise proportional numbers to specify the length of each pitch pipe of the twelve-tone equal temperament), etc.

<i>Basic Music Theory of the Chinese Nation</i>	Edited by Du Yaxiong	China Federation of Literary and Art Circles	October 1995	It was arranged into ten chapters, including pentatonic scale, twelve-tuning system, banyan, banish (a form of the beat), ganache tablature, a half-character score of Yan music (music score for lute, wind instrument, etc.), scores for plucked instruments, rhythm score, curve score, gongs, and drums score, the common sense of temperament, etc.
<i>Common Sense of Chinese Music Theory</i>	Edited by Du Yaxiong	Beiyue Literature & Art	August 1999	This book was arranged into nine chapters, involving sound, tone, rhythm, beat, banyan, ganache tablature, knowledge of temperament, jun, gong, key and relations of key, melody, polyphonic Music, traditional notation, aesthetic features of Chinese traditional Music, the relationship between scores, singing, and performance, etc.
<i>Chinese Music Theory</i>	Edited by Du Yaxiong, Qin Dexiang	Shanghai Conservatory of Music	January 2007	This book was arranged into six chapters involving the music system, material system, temperament system, tune system, structure system, and sign system.

## APPENDIX V

Table V List of representative elementary music theory teaching materials (V) (DU, 2005, p. 215)

Names	Authors	Publishers	Publication time	Main content
<i>Tutorial of Modern Music Theory</i>	Written by Tong Zhongliang	Hunan Literature and Art	In 2003	This book was arranged into five chapters, covering the elementary music theory of music in the 20th Century, including the new mode scale, the liberation of modern beat and bar, modern chord and accord, modern tonality and key relationship, and music theory related to modern composition techniques, etc. The appendix includes MIDI timbre and percussion key table, jazz music chord symbolization table, synthesizer and computer music vocabulary, etc.
<i>Basic Music Theory Tutorial for Preschool Teachers</i>	Written by Xia Zhigang	Hunan Literature and Art	May 2013	This book, arranged in ten chapters, was introduced in the preface as an elementary music theory textbook for preschool education and preschool teachers' college students, covering knowledge of sounds and musical alphabets, staff notation, numbered musical notation, rhythm, and beat, common musical signs, intervals, chords, modes, Chinese national modes, melodies, musical forms, etc. According to the characteristics of schools for kindergarten teachers, the structure analysis of common musical forms of children's songs was added.

<p><i>Elementary Music Theory of Popular Music</i></p>	<p>Edited by You Jingbo</p>	<p>Anhui Literature and Art</p>	<p>July 2016</p>	<p>This book was arranged into 12 chapters. According to r characteristics of popular music, besides the music theory knowledge of sound, rhythm and beat, interval and mode, it also included chapters on blues mode and its musical characteristics.</p>
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Received: 27/07/2022

Approved: 10/11/2022

