



# COMMENT ON “EMBODIMENT AND INSPIRATION OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE IN TRADITIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION”


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**Commented article:** HU, J. Embodiment and inspiration of Chinese philosophy of life in traditional music education. *Trans/Form/Ação*: revista de filosofia da Unesp, v. 47, n. 5, “Eastern thought 2”, e02400152, 2024. Available at: <https://revistas.marilia.unesp.br/index.php/transformacao/article/view/15092>.

Received: 10/08/2024 | Approved: 13/08/2024 | Published: 30/09/2024

 <https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-3173.2024.v47.n5.e02400269>



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## COMMENT ON “EMBODIMENT AND INSPIRATION OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE IN TRADITIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION”

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There is no doubt that music is a basic communication tool and method in every age. Each civilization and cultural basin keep its characteristics such as geography, historical-philosophical background and philosophy of life alive in its own music. At the same time, with the development of popular culture, globalization, and technology in our age, nations and different civilizations are influenced by each other. Music education is carried out by taking into account consciously chosen methods that should be considered in this context. Different civilizations may also change their priorities and bases on music education. Many philosophers in the Western world and elsewhere have made connections between justice and musical rhythm.

One of the examples where philosophy of life comes to the fore in the context of historical accumulation shows itself in the relationship between Chinese philosophy and music education (Hu, 2024). Ancient Chinese philosophy is based on the harmony between nature and human life. Confucius addressed this situation as Cosmic Harmony. In fact, Confucius believed that rituals and music were sacred. Likewise, music is considered a necessary element for social harmony. Because, according to Confucius, music is seen as the link between heaven and earth (Kirkendall, 2017).

The most important issue in Confucian thought, which can also be associated with music education from the Chinese philosophical perspective, is personal development and

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social harmony. A connection is established between human existence and survival in the world and the political order. In this regard, people are expected to fulfill their appropriate social roles and duties. Self-improvement and social harmony are two concepts of Confucius that have made valuable contributions to human civilization and development in the world. The balance of the relationship between body and soul is complementary, that is, they confirm and complete each other, like melodies in music. In Confucianism, a person can only be called a human being if he can establish good relationships with other people. This means that human existence depends on the extent to which a person humanizes others, respects others, preserves human dignity (Rozi, 2020, p. 129).

As a critical approach to musical education and philosophical of life, gender should be discussed. Actually, all kinds of education include gender roles to some extent, embedded or openly. This situation is no exception when it comes to music education. In this regard, the differences between historical and modern understanding of gender roles, as well as Chinese philosophical and other philosophical sources, should be taken into account. If gender and gender roles are ignored, any analysis runs the risk of falling short. From this context, it is possible to actually see gender roles in the yin-yang doctrine. The Yin-Yang doctrine can undoubtedly be considered one of the cornerstones of ancient Chinese philosophy. Although Yin-Yang was not based on gender discrimination in its original form, it later developed to include women when it was processed with Confucian thought. In a broad sense, the balance and harmony between men and women also indicates the harmony between heaven and earth (Craddock; Preston, 2020, p. 198). What are the mothers' roles about education? Historical or modern, almost every civilization accepts as women are the first teacher. Therefore, women's roles in musical education should be demonstrated.

Until modern times, women were generally treated as a secondary element, regardless of the discipline. This situation for China is no exception. According to Lullo (2019, p. 414),

Women's circumstances changed with the overthrow of the Shang and establishment of the Zhou dynasty. Zhou leaders organized, governed, and maintained their expanded territory as a network of fiefdoms overseen by blood relations of the ruling house. Within this system, women were useful for regional marriage alliances.

In this context, ancient Chinese emperors controlled the Turks and other nomads in the north, especially with the policy of giving *brides and bribes*. Girls or princesses raised in the palace were given to nomadic lords as brides. Even poems or music describing the lives and specialties of the brides and princesses were also effective in the development of the understanding of love and music. The historical development of folk music is valuable in this sense. Where do historical narratives stand in music education? Therefore, issues such

as which type of music education is discussed under the title of music education should be competed. Thus, we can obtain comprehensive and detailed analyses.

Likewise, is music education addressed specifically for children or adults? Or is a holistic approach taken without distinguishing between child education or adult education? This situation should also be clarified. In this context, does the oral tradition continue? Or is the modern western style of literature, notation and written style dominant? The musical heritage in China is considered to be alive and well (Waters, 2014, p. 25). Is it possible to determine the ratio of Chinese traditions and Western influence in modern Chinese music?

Music is also a medium through which social values are expressed. Therefore, music education also provides education of modern values. The values are often determined by the ruling elites, of which China is an important example. Relationships are established between mature people, citizens whom the state wants to raise, and the Chinese philosophy of life. Symbols and modern rituals, in a way, bring about the reinterpretation of ancient sources (Ho; Law, 2004, p. 149).

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