

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN CHINA AND KOREA ON FIELD RESEARCH, INSTRUMENT RESTORATION, AND COMPOSITIONAL PRACTICE IN RELATION TO PORCELAIN HOURGLASS DRUMS

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Double-faced hourglass drums are central to research on musics of the Silk Road; however, this has so far focused on arguments about the drums' origin, with little work to date on their material construction, subtypes, performance practice, context, and paths of migration, or on the dissemination of similar drums elsewhere.

In 2015, Korean *jangu* drummer Jo Jonghun became interested in the origin of double-faced porcelain hourglass drums after seeing one from the Goryeo period in the National Museum of Korea. With the support of the scholars Xiao Mei (Shanghai Conservatory of Music) and Wu Ninghua (Guangxi Arts University), a bi-lateral team between Korea and China was established to undertake collaborative research, instrument restoration, and musical composition. To date, the team has conducted fieldwork on the restoration of excavated kilns, kiln-heating techniques, instrument construction, performance skills, and ritual contexts among the Zhuang (壮), Yao (瑶), Maonan (毛南), Miao (苗) and Han (汉) ethnic groups in China. With funds from the Arts Council of Korea and Shanghai conservatory, the project's outcomes include the restoration of dozens of porcelain hourglass drums and five themed concerts and lectures held in Shanghai, Seoul, and Nanning. Focused on the organological story of drums of this type, a mutual understanding among international cultural bearers and their involvement in the exploration of intangible cultural heritage practices within contemporary societies are enhanced by the "new voice" of these drums.

INTRODUCTION

Double-faced hourglass drums make an important topic in the musicological research on the musics of the Silk Road. The research mainly focuses on the origin of these hourglass drums or the debate of its "roots", while there are not many studies of historical discoveries and their relationship to similar musical drums still existing in various regions and among some peoples, especially concerning its material construction, producing methods, and their subdivision of forms in relationship to music-making and its context.

In 2015, Korean *jangu* musician Jo Jonghun¹ was inspired by a porcelain double-faced hourglass drum from the Goryeo period salvaged from the sea in an exhibition of the National Museum of Korea, and developed a keen interest in exploring the origin of this type of instruments. As he got in touch with me through Cui Min, I soon connected him with Wu Ninghua from Guangxi Arts University to co-found an international research team between the HANA ART Ensemble of Korea, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Guangxi Arts University.

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The main content of our collaboration includes:

1. Investigation and research on excavated relics, historical iconography of hourglass drums, and their current existence among peoples;
2. Fieldwork on existing double-faced hourglass drums;
3. Restoration of porcelain double-faced hourglass drums;
4. Double-faced hourglass drum themed experimental concerts with new compositions.

SYSTEMATIZATION AND FIELDWORK ON EXISTING HOURGLASS DRUMS IN CHINA AND KOREA — EXCAVATED RELICS, HISTORICAL ICONOGRAPHY OF HOURGLASS DRUMS AND THEIR CURRENT EXISTENCE AMONG PEOPLES IN CHINA

This part is mainly completed by Xiao Mei and her students in Shanghai Conservatory of Music. We found that although double-faced hourglass drums possessed much significance in the music history of China, especially during the times from 25 B.C. to 1127 A.D., there is not much research related to it. To begin with, we summarized more than 50 papers available so far, among which over 20 are primarily an introduction to the instruments, while some others emphasize historical origins and some include brief description of their forms and shapes, yet most of them have obscure sources. There are about a dozen papers investigating its nomenclature, shape, and origin. For instance, Li Chengyu conducted a detailed investigation on the nomenclature of musical instruments depicted in the bas-relief carved around the sarcophagus of Wang Jian and mentioned the nomenclature of these instruments in various writings². The author analyzed different nomenclature in previous papers while referring to historical documents, and proposed a more consistent nomenclature for various hourglass drums. Gao Min investigated the shapes of several excavated tile drums divided into two categories with long waist or short waist, and argued that the latter is on the edge of extinction while the former still thrives among the people³. Other papers traced the origin based on historical documents, including “Documents Concerning Colored Clay Hourglass Drum in the Neolithic Era” (有关新石器时代的彩陶细腰鼓资料) by Niu Longfei⁴, who believes the clay drums “excavated in 1981 in the early tombs of Machang (马厂) Civilization in Yangshan subgroup, Xiachuankou group, Xinmin community, Minghe County, Qinghai Province” are the earliest known clay (pottery) drums⁵. He argues that the tradition of “using clay as the frame” is native to drums in China, and that the idea that “hourglass drums originated in the Western Regions” by previous scholars should be reconsidered.

There are not many comprehensive papers, though, among which there are mainly reports based on fieldwork and investigation focusing on historical documents. For example, “Research on Long Drums – with Regard to the Origin of Hourglass Drums” (长鼓研究——兼论细腰鼓之起源)⁶ by Wu Guodong is based on the fieldwork on the Long Drum of the Yao people which not only gave specific descriptions of various types of Long Drums of Yao people, but also

² Li Chengyu, 1992 “Bas-Relief in the Grave of Wang Jian – Research of Musical Instruments” (王建墓浮雕——乐器研究). *Explorations in Music* (音乐探索), 4: 25-28.

³ Gao Min, 2008 ‘Tile Drum’ and Folklore in Guangxi (广西的‘瓦鼓’与民俗). *Chinese Music* (中国音乐), 3: 83-87.

⁴ Niu Longfei, 1987. *Music Research* (音乐研究), 1: 107-109.

⁵ Niu Longfei, 1987. *Music Research* (音乐研究), 1: 108.

⁶ Wu Guodong, 1987, in *Musicology in China* (中国音乐学), 4: 27-41.

categorized the drums of different Yao subgroups into three types: “a pillow-shaped long tube with thin waist and fixed faces, a pillow-shaped long tube with thin waist and rope-tied faces, and a shape like two conjoined cups”⁷. This paper is especially detailed in the discussions on the origin of hourglass drums, with evidence found in excavated drum cavities made of porcelain with black enamel and blue dots and pottery from the Tang Dynasty. Another example is provided by Zhao Weimin that focused on comprehensive investigation on historical documents concerning the word “杖鼓 (Zhanggu, lit. ‘stick drum’)”, and discussed its usage in Tang and Song Dynasties by the difference of their shapes and how they were sounded⁸. Therefore, existing studies have the following problems in general:

- 1) Imbalance in the research outcomes on different subdivisions of such musical drums. For example, there are many studies on the long drum of Yao (瑶) people, the bee drum of Zhuang (壮) people, as well as the Korean *janggu*, while there is almost no individual study on *langzhang* (狼杖) drum in Fujian Province.
- 2) Two ideas of the origins of hourglass drums or double-faced hourglass drums are developed during the investigations: 1- coming from the Regions west of China or 2 – appearing inside China. But many papers on the historical origins covering the nomenclature, shapes, or sources either refer to repetitive and speculative sources due to the lack of historical documents, or fail to provide sufficient evidence from mere excerpts of historical literature. For example, *Zhouli* (《周礼》), an ancient literature discovered in Han Dynasty, as well as *Liji* (《礼记》), compiled by Dai Sheng in West Han Dynasty allegedly according to the 72 pupils of Confucius, both mentioned "clay drums". Zheng Xuan, an academician in East Han Dynasty, made footnotes that such drums used "tile as the frame, leather on both faces", yet without mentioning whether they are hourglass-shaped or symmetrical or not. Therefore, it would be overly simplistic to regard these "clay drums" in ancient literature as hourglass clay drums in archaeological findings. Moreover, sheer juxtaposition of historical documents can hardly become convincing investigations into the origins of any instrument.
- 3) Although it is an essential approach to put the hourglass drums still in use among the peoples in mutual reference to their ancient historical sources, it's difficult to find precise evidence for the intermediate procedures of the historical processes involved.

Therefore, if a relatively complete general survey on double-faced hourglass drums in China is not done, we cannot have a clear grasp of “what is out there”, including the distribution and types of hourglass drums in China and the relationship between them. Thus, in reference to the taxonomy of musical instruments, a general survey with systematization, summarizing, and description of excavated relics, historical iconography of hourglass drums, and their current existence among peoples in China has been done from the aspect of their shapes and forms. Based on a more precise classification, the traits in chronological and geological distribution of different hourglass drums have been described in order to reveal the macroscopic features of the types and the distribution of double-faced hourglass drums in China.

By sub-dividing the instruments with regard to their shapes, materials, and playing methods, as well as systematizing them by criteria including the appearance of ropes, symmetry or asymmetry of the drum body, with long or short waist, and various types of long waists, the traits of its chronological and regional distribution could be observed. Yet based on the

⁷ Wu Guodong, 1987, in *Musicology in China* (中国音乐学), 4: 29.

⁸ Zhao Weimin, 1991, “Stick Drums of the Song Dynasty” (宋代的杖鼓). *China Music*, 1: 1.

synchronic and diachronic comparison and systematization, it is also clear that the question of hourglass drums' historical origins differs from the clues argued with before. For instance, the symmetry or asymmetry of the drum was regarded as an important factor in examining its origins (symmetric hourglass drums are mostly involved in the idea of Western origination, while scholars holding the idea of local origination usually cite asymmetric drums as their examples). Hence, the indistinct term “hourglass drum” should be avoided when discussing items with originally different shapes and forms.

With rope	With symmetric drum cavity	With long waist	Pillow-shaped	“Male” of the Yellow Mud Drums, Ao Yao people in Jinxiu, Guangxi Province		
			Tube-shaped	n/a		
		With short waist	“Female” of the Yellow Mud Drums, Yao people in Jinxiuao, Guangxi Province			
	With asymmetric drum cavity	With long waist	Pillow-shaped	Wall painting of drum music in the Yangshan 3 rd Grave, Aohan Banner, Inner Mongolia		
				Tube-shaped	Double-faced	Langzhang drum, Fujian Province
			Single-faced		Clay drums	
With short waist		Korean <i>jangu</i>				

Without rope	With symmetric drum cavity	With long waist	Pillow-shaped	Long drum, Pan Yao people, Guangxi Province	
			Tube-shaped	“Hunta hourglass drum” in the wall painting of musicians in Dai County, Shanxi Province	
		With short waist	Wall painting of “music by flying apsaras” in Grotto No.130 of Mogao Caves, Gansu Province		
	With asymmetric drum cavity	n/a			

FIGURE 1: Overview about different types and places of excavations.

Based on the systematization of the distribution of hourglass drums, we made a plan for long-term collaboration including fieldwork sessions, the restoration of the porcelain drum bodies, research on its compositions, and experimental concerts.

FIELDWORK SESSIONS

The fieldwork sessions in the collaboration project are conducted as planned.

The fieldwork in three consecutive years from 2015 to 2017 consisted of several sessions covering ethnic groups of Zhuang (壮), Yao (瑶), Maonan (毛南), Miao (苗), and Han (汉) people in Southern China provinces of Guangxi (广西), Hainan (海南), and Fujian (福建), in addition to studies of excavated porcelain hourglass drums in Korea conducted by the Korean party, focusing on the hourglass drums extant among different peoples in various materials and their physical construct and playing techniques in ritual performance context, as well as excavation sites of porcelain kilns and kiln-heating technology.

After two collaborative fieldwork sessions in China in 2016, I asked Jo Jonghun, the research initiating Korean drummer, about the significance of the investigation of double-faced hourglass drums currently extant in China in terms of his research and artistic creation, and he answered: “Through the investigations done in China, I have seen with my own eyes the occasions applying to the porcelain *janggu* and its inheritance among the peoples hitherto, which inspire my inference of the use of a porcelain *janggu* in the Goryeo period and my reflections on what shape the Goryeo porcelain *janggu* would possess if it had been continuously inherited up to now. The fieldwork provided me with a broader horizon towards the history of exchange of musics and instruments in East Asia. Indeed, its necessity should be further considered with regard to its uses, its organological significance thus being deeply recognized from the exchange history of instruments, and the necessity and significance of extensive research that has been realized.”

Time	Site	Ethnicity	Type of Drum	Material	Uses
2015	Huanjiang, Guangxi	Maonan	Xiang Drum	clay	ritual
	Hezhou, Guangxi	Yao	Long Drum	wood	ritual
	Guilin, Guangxi	Han	Waist Drum (Yin Drum)	tile	ritual
	Hechi,, Guangxi	Zhuang	Bee Drum	clay	ritual
2016	Wuming, Guangxi	Zhuang	Yue Drum (Flat Drum)	tile	ritual
	Lingshan, Guangxi	Zhuang	Elephant Drum	tile	ritual
	Nanning, Guangxi	Pinghua Han	Yue Drum	tile	ritual
	Wuzhi Mountain, Hainan	Miao (Yao)	Jing skin Drum	wood/tile	ritual
	Fuzhou/Minhou/ Lianjiang/Jinjiang, Fujian	Han	Langzhang Drum	wood	ritual
2017	Wuchuan, Guangdong	Han	Clay Drum	clay	ritual
	Guangxi Institute for Archeology	tba	tba	tba	tba

FIGURE 2: Fieldwork sessions in 2015-2017.



FIGURE 3: Investigation on the (pottery) Bee Drum (蜂鼓) of Zhuang People in Jinchangjiang, Hechi, Guangxi. July 2015, photo by Wu Ninghua.

FIGURE 4: Fieldwork on the Long Drum of Yao People in Hezhou, Guangxi, July 2015 photo by Jo Jonghun.



FIGURE 5: Fieldwork on the (tile) Waist Drum of Han People in Shangyao Village, Guilin, Guangxi. July 2015, photo by Wu Ninghua.

FIGURE 6: Fieldwork on (tile) Yue Drums and Tiaolingtou ritual of Zhuang and Han Peoples in Lingshan County, Guangxi. July 2016, photo by Jo Jonghun



FIGURE 7: Fieldwork on (wooden) Langzhang in Minhou County, Fujian. August 2016, photo by Cui Min.

FIGURE 8: Investigation on ceramic hourglass drums with painted body excavated in Yongfu County by Guangxi Institute of Relics and Archaeology. November 2017, photo by Cui Min.

SINO-KOREA DIALOGUES AND EXPERIMENTAL CONCERTS

By the end of 2015, such a question was raised based on the first fieldwork session: It is indeed important to link the excavated items to the musical drums existing in current reality with investigations into the “roots”, however, it might be of higher importance to find out which cultural contexts or institutions could lead to the prosperity or decadence of such items? What are the relationships between different traits of hourglass drums and their users? The narratives of these instruments could be the investigations into the “routes” which in turn call for more substantiating background material on social cultures, their institutions, and their reflections in various belief systems.

On the other hand, hourglass drums extant among the peoples essentially serve spiritual rituals. Due to this particular reason, we conceived and hosted a workshop and an experimental concert on “East Asian Beaten Drum Ritual” entitled “Heaven Earth Human Deity” that aim to demonstrate extant hourglass drums in their co-existing ritual spaces in a “shared/dialogic” way. Nayang *Shigong* (师公, functionally comparable to taoism practitioners) Troupe was invited from Dongjiang Town, Jinchengjiang District, Hechi Municipality, Guangxi Province, and the *Huang Nie Gu* Dance for the Panwang Festival of Ao Yao (坳瑶) people from Dayao Mountain, Jinxiu Autonomous County, Guangxi Province, as well as Donghaean Byeolsingut (Farewell to Deity Ritual from the East Coast) of Korea, in the hope of recreating the special moment when humans and deities intermingle to herald the spiritual minds that see them and send them off. Most impressively, when the *Huang Nie Gu* Dance of Yao people encored at last, the Donghaean Byeolsingut group followed with their *jangu*, forming a new session of communication and conjecture between different cultures in mutual agreement and harmony. It was the day when the news of an ISIS massacre on a concert in Paris reached us while experiencing the blending in the drumming sounds of different cultures into a global experience that channels between heaven and earth.

However, in this Beaten Drum Ritual, Lan Qingyi, a drummer of the Nayang *Shigong* group(师公) was extremely afraid that the drum he brought with him could be broken. During the travel from his home to Shanghai, he hugged tightly and told us, “This is our only drum, if it is broken, nowhere may it be bought again, and our rituals will fail.” His words led to my thoughts that why the Bee Drum is not fired anymore? In comparison, the Korean musicians spare no effort to search for the historical remains of the origin of hourglass drums thousands of kilometers away from them in China, while some Chinese scholars never thought of the need for Bee Drums used by *Shigong*.

Driven by the same idea, Wu Ninghua as an ethnomusicologist who has long been working on the research of Panwang Ge (“Song of King Pan”) of the Yao people before was joining the team of double-faced hourglass porcelain drums. Since then, she took the position as a guide during fieldwork sessions in Guangxi and Hainan, and broadens the academic viewpoint from these drums of Yao people to those of Zhuang and Han people. My aforementioned thoughts also triggered her sympathy. So, she started to generally investigate in hourglass drums of various peoples of Guangxi Province, and a restoration project was planned.

In 2016, the project “Past & Present Porcelain Hourglass Drums in China and Korea” co-applied by the Research Center for Ritual Music in China of Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the HONA ensemble of Korea was granted consecutive funds from the Arts Council Korea, resulting in five themed concerts combining traditional pieces and new compositions in Shanghai and Nanjing, China, and Seoul, Korea, in which restored porcelain drums were used, and hourglass drums in the rituals of various peoples in Guangxi Province were displayed at the same time.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE RESTORATION AND STUDY OF PORCELAIN DRUMS

In the beginning of the first fieldwork session in 2015, collecting the parameters such as the shape, construct, and material for the restoration of the drum body made of porcelain has been our focus. Jo Jonghun as a Korean musician started the restoration of the drum body made of porcelain in collaboration with Shin Cheol Soon from Korea, with their resulting products being used in two concerts held in Seoul and Shanghai in 2016. In the Shanghai concert, Jo Jonghun donated 6 drum bodies that they manufactured with porcelain of different shapes. During this process, he faced the greatest challenge of “good sound” or “good timbre”, which directly concerns the criteria for the restoration of the resonance body, in addition to finding the most suitable membrane for the drums, which has not been satisfactory yet.



FIGURE 9: Restoration (by the Korean side), photo by Jo Jonghun.

Meanwhile, the restoration of clay drums by Wu Ninghua aims to keep to the model of the porcelain hourglass drum with ornamented bodies excavated in Yongfu County, Guangxi Province. In collaboration with the Nixing Clay Studio, the biggest difficulty came from the control of temperature during firing to prevent deformation of the asymmetric body of the drum with one end round and another end bell-shaped. Nearly as difficult is the thickness of the wall, which may render the product useless if too thick and must be followed strictly the necessary temperature control. Moreover, the mapping accuracy of the excavated drum bodies is also an important factor.

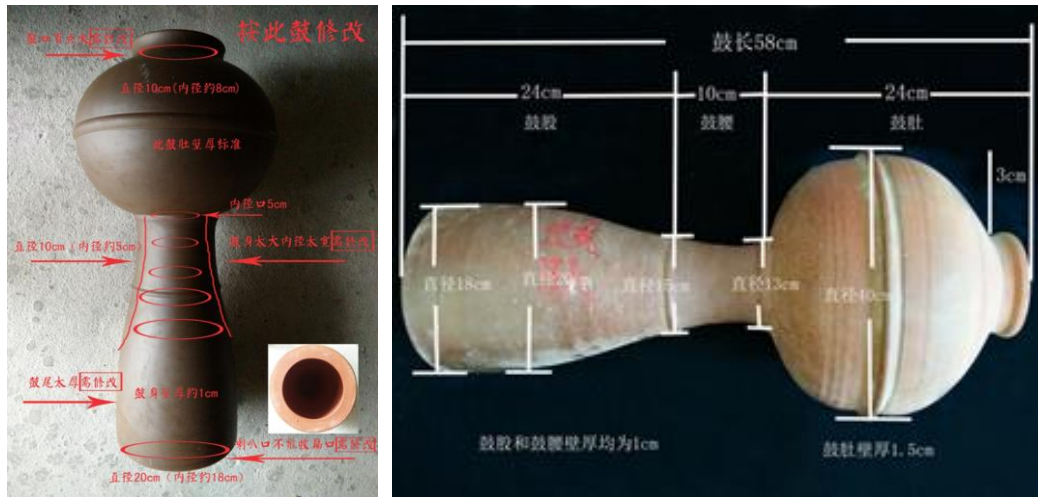


FIGURE 10: Restoration (by the Chinese side) photo by Wu Ninghua, 2016.

So to speak, the collaboration project on hourglass drums in China and Korea has broadened the scope of the research and directly promoted 1) organological research on the types, distribution, and use of hourglass drums and their dissemination and comparison in East Asia and the Silk Road; 2) regional studies on hourglass drums in Southern China (monographs on hourglass drums in Guangxi); 3) research on hourglass drums and music genres (*Langzhang* and *Shifan* Drums in Fujian); 4) research on the restoration and production of instruments; 5) musical composition.

In a manner of speaking, the objective of our collaboration is not the pursuit of where the instrument originated; instead, unlike the historians, we hope to discuss again the possibilities to transform ancient hourglass drums into a contemporary musical resource through cultural investigations on this musical instrument. From the Korean musicians' viewpoint, sounds of "the past" are sought for the development of Korean music today; from a Chinese musicologists' viewpoint, the holistic research on double-faced hourglass drums within Chinese territory is enhanced. All this is focused on the instrument's narratives about musical drums. Also, the reasons why double-faced hourglass drums prospered and then waned in the long historical flow have to be rethought. Also, during fieldwork sessions with the possessors of extant porcelain hourglass drums, attempts are made to restore rare and precious items of instruments for the cultural bearers. These practical activities focusing on the instrument add up to the constant actions of the Research Center for Ritual Music in China of Shanghai Conservatory of Music aiming at the "re-interpretation of local musical resources from a global view". Scholars, performers, and cultural bearers are kept in continuous dialogues and mutual stimulations that are intended to carry on the spirit of exchange along the Silk Road as well as thinking about significant questions for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage and practicing contemporary interpretations of traditions in the multilateral co-ordination of ethnomusicology, music history, music performance, and material anthropology.

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