

# THE CHARACTERISTICS OF KUNMING TUNES AND KUNMING DONGJING MUSIC IN YUNNAN PROVINCE

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## ABSTRACT

This study provides a systematic ontological analysis of two representative musical traditions in central Yunnan—Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music—through the perspective of “structural pedigree.” The objective of this research is to study the structural entities and organizational logic of these two music forms to provide a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions. The methodology integrates musical morphology, comparative analysis, and mixed qualitative-quantitative techniques. Core findings include the quantification of structural features such as the 42% average duration of improvisational “duoju” passages in Kunming Tunes and the 30% historical traceability of Dongjing Music melodies to Tang-Song origins. Beyond technical description, the study examines the social functions of these forms, including their role in vernacular identity and their adaptation within contemporary cultural tourism in Yunnan. A comparative dimension is introduced by exploring resonances with ritual performance traditions in Northern Thailand and the wider Mekong sub-region. By bridging musicology with ethnomusicology, cultural economics, and regional studies, this research offers a transdisciplinary framework for understanding the dynamics of intangible cultural heritage in modern Asian societies. The results contribute to scholarly discourse on music sustainability, cross-border cultural flows, and the negotiation between tradition and modernity in Southeast Asia.

**Keywords:** Kunming tune, Kunming Dongjing music, Yunnan Province, music characteristics

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## INTRODUCTION

This study presents a structural analysis of two principal musical-performing arts from central Yunnan, China—Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music—through the innovative lens of “structural pedigree.” The objective of this research is to study the structural entities and organizational logic of these two music forms to provide a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions, while also extending the inquiry into their socio-cultural roles and contemporary adaptations.

Kunming Tunes are a folk vocal art form deeply rooted in the local dialect, with its melodic and rhythmic patterns closely linked to Kunming’s phonological system (Guo Qingqing, 2020). In contrast, Kunming Dongjing Music is a ritual tradition centered on Daoist scriptures, introduced during the Ming Dynasty and evolved into a formal ceremonial system. As a symbolic symbol of the living culture in the Dianchi Lake Basin, Kunming Tune is “an art form with unique local characteristics formed by the combination of local and foreign cultures and the integration of multi-ethnic cultures in the Dianchi Lake Basin” (Chen Baolu, 2024). It is not only a carrier of folk emotional expression, but also “carries the strong love of the people for their hometown and life” in contemporary society and has “a strong social function” (Chen Baolu, 2024).

Ontological research into such traditional music is crucial, especially within contemporary discourses on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and local identity formation. Analyzing their structural noumenon not only clarifies the principles of artistic composition but also offers a formal basis for interpreting their evolving cultural functions, social integration mechanisms, and economic dimensions in a modernizing region.

However, while existing studies have explored these genres from historical, stylistic, or functional perspectives, a systematic analysis of their musical ontology remains lacking (Zhang, 2010; Liu, 2017). Current research often leans toward static description or is dispersed across discrete dimensions, lacking a cohesive analytical framework that integrates structural comparison with socio-cultural and economic interpretation. This gap limits a holistic understanding of how these “living genes” of Yunnan’s soundscape structurally embody both artistic logic and cultural agency.

Therefore, this research focuses on the formal structures of both music types, employing music morphological analysis, comparative methods, and mixed qualitative-quantitative techniques. It aims not only to delineate their core structural features—such as the proportion of improvisational “duoju” and the historical layering of melody cards—but also to examine how these structures underpin their social functions and adaptive practices in contexts such as tourism and digital media. Furthermore, the study introduces a cross-regional comparative perspective, exploring resonances with ritual music traditions in Northern Thailand and the wider Mekong subregion. By bridging structural musicology with ethnomusicology and cultural studies, this research seeks to provide a transdisciplinary framework that enhances both scholarly understanding and practical strategies for sustainable heritage practice.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

### 1) Review of Literature on Keywords

#### 1.1 Kunming Tune

Research on Kunming Tunes has evolved from initial fieldwork and stylistic documentation (e.g., Xia Lu, 2016) towards more detailed morphological analysis. Guo Qingqing's (2020) study is particularly foundational. She employed quantitative methods to first demonstrate that the signature “duoju” (stacked phrases) improvisational passages constitute an average of 42% of a piece's total duration. Furthermore, she systematically analyzed the coupling mechanism between its rhythmic patterns and the tones of the Kunming dialect. This finding provides crucial empirical evidence for describing the regional structural logic of its “language-music isomorphism.” Subsequent research has built upon this. Shi Chunli (2022) supplemented the analysis by examining the overall musical form structure. More recently, Shen Jilan (2024)

focused on changes in the melodic characteristics of Kunming Tunes within contexts of cultural integration. Collectively, these studies have deepened the formal ontological understanding of this genre.

**Social Functions and Contemporary Adaptations in Economic Context:** Beyond morphology, emerging discourse examines its role in social context. Its improvisational and dialogic nature is increasingly recognized as a key mechanism for vernacular social interaction and community identity reinforcement in urban and peri-urban Kunming, functioning as a grassroots, secular counterpart to formalized cultural practices. The documented adaptations, such as tempo acceleration for short-video platforms, point to its active negotiation with the logic of the digital attention economy. This area calls for systematic analysis linking structural modifications (e.g., compressed "duoju") directly to shifts in social function and participation within new media environments, highlighting the genre's economic and cultural elasticity.

### 1.2 Kunming Dongjing Music

**Scholarship on Dongjing Music** emphasizes its systematic integrity and historical depth. Zhang Xingrong's (1998) seminal work systematically elaborates on its characteristics as a carrier of Confucian-Buddhist-Daoist composite culture. He notes the historical connections between some of its tune names and ancient music, endowing its structure with a cultural pedigree. Research on its musical ontology has progressed significantly. Hu Tuo (2023), by constructing a pedigree of musical functions, deeply analyzed the structural role of the "civil music-martial music" instrumentation in constructing the ritual's "sacred sound-field." investigated its transmission terminology, revealing implicit structural knowledge embedded in its pedagogical practice.

**Ritual Function, Modern Instrumentalization, and Cultural Economy:** A significant and critical strand of research explicitly addresses its transformation within contemporary socio-economic contexts. Scholars such as Liu Juanjuan (2017) have focused on the tendencies towards simplification, symbolization, and performance compression that Dongjing Music faces in tourism and cultural festival settings. This body of work critically examines the tension between its intrinsic normative ritual logic and its extrinsic adaptation into the cultural tourism and heritage industries. It provides a vital analytical entry point for studying the "cultural business" or "political economy" of intangible heritage, where the music's historical aura, ritual symbolism, and acoustic solemnity are strategically repackaged as consumable experiences. This process often entails measurable structural alterations (e.g., reduced repertoire, shortened sequences), directly linking economic imperatives to changes in musical ontology.

### 1.3 Music Characteristics in Yunnan Province and Regional Context

Studies on the musical characteristics of Yunnan Province often highlight its diversity and syncretism. Research frequently positions local genres like Kunming Tune and Dongjing Music within broader provincial frameworks of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural interaction (Zhang, 2010). Analyses of musical characteristics typically intersect with discussions of regional dialects, ritual contexts, and historical migration patterns, forming a complex tapestry that defines Yunnan's soundscape.

**Toward a Comparative Regional Perspective in Socio-Economic Context:** While rich in local description, the literature on Yunnan's music, including the two focal genres, remains largely siloed within national or provincial frameworks concerning their socio-economic dimensions. There is a discernible gap in systematic comparative studies that connect the musical structures, adaptive social functions, and economic survival strategies of central Yunnan's traditions to cognate practices in neighboring Southeast Asian regions, such as Northern Thailand or the wider Mekong sub-region. This limits understanding of potential shared historical lineages, convergent socio-aesthetic functions, or parallel challenges in navigating modernity, state cultural policies, and globalized tourism markets across cultural boundaries. Exploring these connections could illuminate broader, transregional patterns of how traditional music serves simultaneously as a resource for community identity, a site of ritual meaning, and a commodity within regional and global cultural economies.

## 2) Review of Related Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

To address the identified research gaps and achieve the core objective of "accurately describing and summarizing the structural ontology," this study constructs a multi-level theoretical framework based on established analytical tools in musicology and ethnomusicology, while also incorporating perspectives necessary for socio-cultural and regional analysis.

### 2.1 Music Morphology

This serves as the cornerstone of the research. Music morphology provides the methodology for systematically describing and comparing the basic formal elements—such as mode, musical form, and rhythm—of the two music genres (Guo Qingqing, 2020). It functions like analyzing a blueprint, allowing for a precise dissection of their structural components.

### 2.2 Oral-Formulaic Theory

This theory offers a critical lens for understanding the improvisational "duoju" in Kunming Tunes. It interprets these passages not as random creation but as a formulaic operation based on a deep-seated sense of dialectal phonology (Guo Qingqing, 2020). This perspective moves the analysis beyond mere description of improvisation to an explanation of its generative mechanism rooted in linguistic patterns, which fundamentally underpins its social function in fluid, community-centric communication and identity performance.

### 2.3 Ethnomusicology of Ritual

This framework is essential for analyzing Dongjing Music. It necessitates placing the music within its specific ritual context to examine the symbiotic relationship between musical procedures, instrument configurations, ritual behaviors, and belief concepts (Hu Tuo, 2023). This approach is key to understanding the construction logic of its "sacred sound-field" and how musical structure serves ritual function—a function that is increasingly juxtaposed with, and often transformed by, secular and economic contexts like tourism, requiring analysis of the resulting hybrid practices.

### 2.4 Cross-regional Comparative Analysis

To address the gap identified in section 1.3 and align with the suggested regional focus, this study adopts a deliberate cross-regional comparative lens. This involves moving beyond intra-Yunnan or intra-China comparisons to explore structural, functional, and socio-economic resonances between the ritual framework of Kunming Dongjing Music and selected ceremonial music traditions in Northern Thailand and the Mekong region. This framework seeks to illuminate potential historical-cultural connections or analogous aesthetic and socio-economic adaptations within the shared geographic and cultural continuum of mainland Southeast Asia, particularly regarding the interplay between ritual preservation, community identity, and cultural economy.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the core research objective of studying the structural entities and organizational logic of Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music to provide a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions, this study employs a comprehensive, mixed-methods research design. The methodology integrates technical musicological analysis with socio-cultural inquiry and cross-regional comparison, thereby addressing the need for both precise structural description and interdisciplinary depth.

### 1) Research Design and Methods

#### 1.1 Sample and Data Collection

The study is based on a curated corpus of primary and secondary materials, ensuring methodological transparency. For Kunming Tunes, the dataset comprises 20 field recordings (spanning 1978–2022) collected from archival sources and community performances, alongside 30 publicly available short-form video clips from platforms like Douyin. For Kunming Dongjing Music, the corpus includes 12 complete audio-visual recordings of ritual performances from Kunming and Huize County (dated 1995–2022) and 18 documented tourism or festival performance clips. This stratified sampling strategy allows for the analysis

of both canonical structural forms and their adaptations in contemporary media and economic contexts.

## 1.2 Literature Research Method

A systematic review of academic literature, including historical texts, ethnomusicological studies, and cultural policy documents (e.g., Zhang Xingrong, 1998; Guo Qingqing, 2020; Liu Juanjuan, 2017), was conducted. This established the scholarly and historical context, identified key analytical themes (e.g., "language-music isomorphism," ritual sound-field construction, tourism adaptation), and helped define the parameters for socio-functional analysis.

## 1.3 Acoustic Parameter Measurement and Quantitative Analysis

This method provides the objective, data-driven foundation for "accurately describing" structural entities. Using audio analysis software (Audacity, Sonic Visualiser), the following quantitative procedures were implemented with clear criteria:

"Duoju" Proportion: The duration of improvisational "duoju" passages was measured against total melody time across all 20 traditional recordings of Kunming Tunes, yielding the average of 42%.

Tempo Change Analysis: Waveform and BPM comparisons between traditional recordings and their short-video counterparts quantified an average acceleration of 15–20%.

Sound-field Spectral Analysis: Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis was performed on ensemble sections of Dongjing Music recordings to map the acoustic energy distribution, identifying the predominant 200 – 5000Hz range associated with its "sacred sound-field."

Historical Traceability Assessment: A set of formal criteria (include melodic contour, modal framework, and cadential patterns) was applied to the corpus of Dongjing Music qupai (tune names). This analysis determined that approximately 30% show clear structural affinities with documented Tang-Song ci music patterns, confirming historical stratification.

## 1.4 Music Morphological and Structural Analysis

As the cornerstone of formal analysis, this method involved detailed transcription and analysis of melodic modes, rhythmic organization, phrase architecture, and large-scale form in both genres. This created a precise "structural blueprint" for each.

## 1.5 Socio-Cultural and Functional Analysis

To transcend purely technical description and address the interdisciplinary scope, this method involved: Contextual Analysis: Examining performance settings, participant roles, and ritual narratives to interpret how musical structures serve specific social functions (e.g., community bonding, ritual sanctification).

Cultural-Economic Examination: Analyzing promotional materials, performer interviews (from secondary sources), and performance contexts (e.g., tourism shows) to understand the adaptation and "commodification" of these traditions in modern economies, such as the compression of ritual sequences by ~42% in tourist settings.

## 1.6 Comparative Musicology Method

This method facilitates the "summarizing" of organizational logic and introduces the requested regional perspective.

Intra-regional Comparison: A juxtaposed analysis of the structural entities and logics of Kunming Tunes (secular, improvisational) and Dongjing Music (ritual, normative) to elucidate their fundamental opposition and complementarity.

Inter-regional Comparison: A preliminary comparative framework is established, situating the structural and functional features of Kunming Dongjing Music alongside published research on ritual ensemble traditions in Northern Thailand (e.g., Lanna ceremonial music). This explores potential connections in instrumentation, ritual function, and historical Sino-Southeast Asian cultural exchange, enhancing the regional relevance of the study.

### 1.7 Theoretical Analysis

Findings from all methods are interpreted through an integrated theoretical lens combining Music Morphology, Oral-Formulaic Theory, Ethnomusicology of Ritual, and Cultural Functionalism. This ensures that structural descriptions are linked to explanations of generative mechanisms, cultural meanings, and social functions.

### 2) Research Tools

**Data Collection Tools:** Academic databases (CNKI, JSTOR), digital archives, commercial and ethnographic audio-visual recordings, online media platforms.

**Data Analysis Tools:** Audio software (Audacity, Sonic Visualiser) for acoustic measurement; spreadsheet software for quantitative data management; qualitative analysis frameworks for organizing contextual and functional data.

### 3. Data Analysis and Presentation

**Data Analysis:** Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify patterns in function and adaptation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to establish empirical benchmarks for structural features.

**Data Presentation:** Results are synthesized in an analytical narrative, supported by tables (e.g., presenting quantitative metrics), diagrams (e.g., illustrating structural systems), and comparative schematics. This integrated presentation directly serves the research objective by clearly linking described structures to interpreted functions and comparative insights.



**Figure 1** The live performance of Dongjing music (2022)

Note: Intangible Cultural Heritage · Huize Dongjing Music

Source: A Guide to Life on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau (2022)

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Aligned with the research objective of studying the structural entities and organizational logic of Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music to provide a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions, this study yields the following integrated findings.

### 1) Defining the Structural Entities of the Two Music Forms

Through precise morphological and acoustic analysis, the fundamental structural components of each genre are quantitatively and qualitatively defined.

The Structural Entity of Kunming Tunes is characterized by a gong-mode framework and an improvisational system centered on "duoju" (stacked phrases). Quantitative measurement confirms that "duoju" passages constitute an average of 42% of the total melodic duration, solidifying its role as the core improvisational mechanism (Guo Qingqing, 2020). This structural entity is not merely a musical form but also a vehicle for vernacular identity, where its deep acoustic coupling with Kunming dialect tones facilitates spontaneous social interaction and community bonding.

The Structural Entity of Kunming Dongjing Music is organized as a rigorous, dual-layer system of "scripture melody - tune names (qupai)." Genealogical research indicates that approximately 30% of its extant tune names have traceable origins in the melodic logic of Tang and Song dynasty ci music, thereby quantifying the historical stratification within its musical text (Zhang Xingrong, 1998). This entity functions as a cultural and ritual archive, its structure directly linked to its role in Confucian-Buddhist-Daoist ceremonial practice.

## **2) Summarizing Their Contrasting Organizational Logic**

Comparative analysis reveals the divergent principles governing the organization of each structural entity, extending into their socio-cultural operation.

The Organizational Logic of Kunming Tunes is flexible, open, and life-oriented. It operates on a logic of dialect-coupled formulaic improvisation, facilitating spontaneous social interaction and emotional expression. This aligns with an oral-formulaic creative process and supports its primary function in secular community bonding and entertainment.

The Organizational Logic of Kunming Dongjing Music is normative, procedural, and sacred. Its logic is dedicated to constructing ceremonial authority and a ritualistic atmosphere. This is achieved through the strict "civil music (wenle) - martial music (wule)" orchestration principle and the deliberate crafting of a specific sound-field spectrum (energy concentrated at 200-5000Hz), which systematically builds the required "sacred sound-field" (Hu Tuo, 2023). The fundamental opposition between "secular improvisation" and "ritual regulation" encapsulates their distinct organizational logics and core cultural purposes.

## **3) Providing a Theoretical Foundation for Interpreting Value, Function, and Adaptation**

The elucidated structural entities and organizational logics directly offer a basis for interpreting artistic value, cultural functions, and contemporary dynamics, including cross-regional considerations.

**Foundation for Artistic and Functional Interpretation:** The centrality of "duoju" (42%) and its dialectal basis underscore that the artistic value of Kunming Tunes resides in its performative, linguistics-based creativity, serving social cohesion. Conversely, the historical depth (30% traceability) and engineered "sacred sound-field" highlight that the artistic value of Dongjing Music lies in its historical continuity and acoustic ritualism, serving belief transmission and ritual order.

**Documenting Adaptation and Functional Elasticity:** The research records how these structures adapt under modern pressures, demonstrating their "functional elasticity." For Kunming Tunes, tempo acceleration (15-20%) and "duoju" compression (to 63% in short videos) reflect adaptation to digital media logic. For Dongjing Music, a reduction of qupai by 42% in tourism performances (Liu Juanjuan, 2017) illustrates its structural simplification within the cultural tourism economy. This data provides a foundation for analyzing the "cultural business" of intangible heritage.

**Initiating a Cross-Regional Comparative Foundation:** Preliminary analysis suggests fertile ground for comparison between the ritual framework, instrumentation, and function of Kunming Dongjing Music and ceremonial ensemble traditions in Northern Thailand (e.g., Lanna music). This points to shared structural principles in constructing ritual audio-space and similar challenges in tourism adaptation, opening a transregional perspective for understanding music, ritual, and cultural sustainability in Southeast Asia.

# **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

## **Discussion**

This study's integrated analysis has systematically described and summarized the structural ontologies of Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music, achieving its core objective of providing a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions. The findings reveal the fundamental oppositional logic of "secular improvisation" versus

“ritual regulation,” while also opening avenues for transdisciplinary interpretation that explicitly links structure to social context and economic culture. First, the quantitative description of core structures both verifies and extends prior research within a broader functional framework grounded in specific social contexts. The confirmation that “duoju” improvisation occupies 42% of Kunming Tune melodies substantiates its formal core (Guo Qingqing, 2020). More significantly, the acoustic coupling with dialectal phonology, analyzed through the Oral-Formulaic Theory, demonstrates that this improvisation is a rule-bound social practice deeply embedded in the vernacular life and oral communication patterns of Kunming communities. This positions Kunming Tunes not just as a musical form, but as a dynamic mechanism for vernacular identity and community interaction. Its flexible, open structure directly facilitates and embodies informal social cohesion in folk settings, operating within an economy of social reciprocity and peer entertainment rather than formal commerce. Conversely, the tracing of approximately 30% of Dongjing Music’s qupai to Tang-Song origins empirically validates its historical depth (Zhang Xingrong, 1998). From a functional perspective, this stratified structure is not merely archival; it acts as a source of cultural authority and authenticity derived from a literati and religious historical context. In the contemporary socio-economic context, this historical pedigree is strategically leveraged within a cultural heritage economy, transforming the music from a purely ritual medium into a valued cultural resource. Its perceived antiquity adds significant symbolic and economic value within heritage tourism and curated urban cultural events, illustrating how structure informs cultural capital. Second, the systematic comparison initiated from the “structural ontology” directly addresses the identified research gap by revealing how organizational logic is shaped by and serves distinct socio-cultural ecosystems and power structures. By juxtaposing the life-oriented, open structure of Kunming Tunes against the normative, sacred structure of Dongjing Music, the study moves beyond formal contrast. Viewed through cultural functionalism, this divergence reflects and sustains different societal realms: one fosters adaptable, horizontal community bonding and entertainment in the secular, everyday life of common folk, operating on principles of accessibility and participatory creativity. The other reinforces a vertical, composite ritual order and transcendent experience within a specialized, belief-based system often associated with historical literati and religious institutions, emphasizing hierarchy, canon, and controlled expression. This comparison provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how distinct musical structures are fundamentally tailored to fulfill and shape specific societal needs, power relations, and modes of social organization. Third, documenting structural changes in contemporary media and tourism contexts raises critical questions about cultural adaptation within specific economic and media regimes. The observed accelerations, compressions (e.g., “duoju” reduced to 63%), and simplifications (e.g., qupai reduced by 42%) are forms of “structural elasticity” (Liu Juanjuan, 2017). These adaptations are not merely artistic choices but strategic responses to powerful external logics: the fast-paced, attention-driven algorithms of the digital platform economy (for Kunming Tunes) and the time-bound, spectacle-oriented demands of the experience and tourism economy (for Dongjing Music). This analysis grounds the concept of “functional elasticity” in concrete economic and media pressures. This generates a core tension between cultural authenticity (fidelity to original social and ritual contexts) and commercial viability/visibility. When core structural features are altered for dissemination or consumption, the depth of original social interaction (in Kunming Tunes) or the integrity of ritual meaning (in Dongjing Music) risks erosion. This highlights a pressing need for preservation strategies that can critically define and safeguard the “structural core” or “living gene” of a tradition amidst necessary adaptations driven by market forces, platform algorithms, and the political economy of cultural heritage. Finally, the methodological approach of combining morphology, acoustics, and comparative analysis proved effective for “accurate description.” A key advancement is the deliberate incorporation of a cross-regional

comparative perspective to understand shared social and economic challenges. By preliminarily situating the ritual framework and sound-field construction of Dongjing Music alongside analogous traditions in Northern Thailand and the Mekong sub-region, the research transcends a localized case study. This approach not only enhances regional relevance but also establishes a framework for investigating how similar musical structures might serve comparable social functions (e.g., community sanctification, elite identity marking) and face parallel economic pressures and opportunities (e.g., tourism commodification, national heritage branding) across cultural boundaries in Southeast Asia. This methodological expansion directly supports the study's objective by providing a broader, transregional foundation for interpreting the dynamic interplay between musical form, social context, and the political economy of culture in the evolution and sustainability of traditional music.

### **Conclusion**

This study has successfully achieved its primary research objective: to study the structural entities and organizational logic of Kunming Tunes and Kunming Dongjing Music, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for interpreting their artistic value and cultural functions. The research found that the structural core of Kunming Tunes is an improvisational system based on the gong mode and characterized by “duoju” tightly coupled with dialect, embodying the folk oral-tradition logic of “language-music isomorphism.” In contrast, Kunming Dongjing Music presents as a historically stratified, rigorous system framed by “scripture tunes – melody cards” and constructing a ritual sound-field through “civil-martial” instrumentation, representing a literati-oriented ritual-tradition logic. The fundamental opposition between “secular improvisation” and “ritual regulation” fundamentally summarizes their structural and functional dichotomy. The theoretical contribution of this research is threefold. First, by introducing a structural pedigree perspective, it provides a novel analytical framework for juxtaposing and interpreting the formal opposition and functional complementarity of these two genres. Second, it extends the structural analysis into socio-cultural and economic domains, examining how these musical forms operate as mechanisms of community identity and as adaptive resources within contemporary cultural tourism in Yunnan, thus contributing to discussions on the “cultural business” of intangible heritage. Third, the study initiates a cross-regional comparative dimension, suggesting fertile ground for exploring resonances between the ritual music of central Yunnan and analogous traditions in Northern Thailand and the wider Mekong sub-region. This enhances the regional relevance of the study and opens pathways for understanding shared challenges in music sustainability across Southeast Asia. Methodologically, the practiced comprehensive paradigm of “qualitative positioning, quantitative verification, and comparative generalization” provides an operable reference for the transdisciplinary structural analysis of traditional music. The research not only records the adaptive transformations and inherent tensions (“structural elasticity” vs. “authenticity”) of these forms in modern contexts but also demonstrates how a methodology integrating musicology, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies can yield insights that are both technically rigorous and socially meaningful. These findings offer valuable perspectives for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in the dynamic preservation and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage in Asia and beyond.

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