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DUANGONG OPERA AND LINEAGE IDENTITY AT WEISHAN LAKE: GENEALOGY-RENEWAL RITUALS IN FISHING COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: Genealogy-renewal rituals among the fishing communities of Weishan Lake combine ancestor worship, kinship exchanges, and Duangong opera. These events provide a setting for examining the relationship between ritual music and lineage life. Drawing on existing literature, fieldwork conducted over several years, and transcribed musical examples, this article examines ritual space, repertoire, musical form, and social relations. Its principal materials concern a genealogy-renewal ritual hosted by the Du lineage and the transmission practices of Yang-family performers. The ritual pavilion, sacred images, and dou vessels give dispersed kinship relations a visible form. Duangong opera connects the stages of the ritual through ancestral invitations, mythological narratives, folk stories, and chants for particular rites. The passages analyzed generally use Qiziyun, a paired-phrase structure, and the pentatonic gong mode. Drumming, supporting voices, ornamentation, and dialect lyrics provide a shared musical language with scope for variation; Kaiguang uses a different tune and modal arrangement. Music participates in the transmission of lineage memory and ethical expression, while also making distinctions of seniority, gendered participation, and changing conditions of transmission apparent. Lineage events create occasions for performance, and musical practice repeatedly brings kinship relations and shared memories into public expression.
Keywords: Weishan Lake fishing communities; Genealogy renewal; Duangong opera; Ritual music; Lineage identity

1 INTRODUCTION

Lineage relations persist through written genealogies, kinship exchanges, and recurring collective activities such as sacrifice and gatherings. Patrilineal descent and ideas about ancestors provide basic points of reference for understanding lineages [1]. Case studies of southeastern Chinese lineages have emphasized organizational structures and their social functions [2-3], while later research has situated lineages within specific social and historical relations [4]. Studies of northern China have identified forms of affiliation and ritual practice that operate beyond permanent ancestral halls [5-6]. Research on the Shandong rite of inviting ancestors home examines lineage relations through particular ceremonial practices [7-8]. Work on ritual reconstruction further considers the relationship between lineage practices and authority in contemporary villages [9]. These approaches treat the lineage as a social practice that must be organized through collective activities, alongside its genealogical structure.

For inland fishing households that have long lived aboard boats, mobility in residence and production limits their reliance on permanent buildings to maintain kinship ties. Their ritual life raises a specific question: how are ancestral memory and membership maintained through dispersal and reunion? Case studies of Weishan Lake fishing communities have already examined kinship in relation to local religious practices [10-11]. Understanding how music participates in welcoming ancestors, collective spectatorship, and ethical expression requires closer attention to particular ritual sequences.

Duangong opera at Weishan Lake is also known as Duangongqiang and Duanguqiang, and locally as da duangu, or playing the duangu drum [12]. Studies of its origins relate it to forms such as xianghuo ritual theatre in neighboring regions, considering migration and regional circulation [13-14]. Research on genre identifies chanting, narrative singing, and dramatic role-playing within this tradition [14-15]. Its ritual origins and their continuing relevance provide a basis for understanding the use of particular passages [15]. Classification by stage form alone offers little explanation of what a passage does within a particular rite. Studies of lion dancing in Lingnan ancestral halls have considered the relationship between performance, sacred space, and lineage order [16]; research on Hongze Lake fishing-drum traditions has also examined the cultural functions of music in waterside ritual life [17]. This article places Weishan Lake Duangong opera within genealogy renewal to examine how music accompanies sacrificial actions and how dramatic narratives connect with lineage relations.

The analysis follows an approach in the anthropology of music that relates sound to behavior and concepts [18]. Ritual-music research emphasizes the connections between music, religious belief, and collective activity [19-20]. The concept of lineage-based musical sacrifice further directs attention to the worshipping group, its organizers, and its protective deities [20]. Research on social memory, particularly ceremonial enactment and bodily practice, helps explain how ancestral memories are transmitted through repeated kneeling, walking, chanting, and spectatorship as well as written records [21]. By reading musical materials alongside the ritual sequence, the article examines how fishing communities express a shared history and kinship order in temporarily assembled spaces.

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The study combines documentary research, fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and analysis of musical form. The field materials include foundational investigations of Duangong music in 2012 and 2013, followed by supplementary observations and interviews concerning genealogy renewal in 2025. The earlier work documented living conditions, traditional melodies, and performance practices. Observation of a Du-lineage event in March 2025, together with later interviews that year with Yang Chengxing and others, added material on ritual procedures, repertoire, and transmission. Musical examples transcribed from field recordings are examined in terms of named tunes, mode, phrase structure, rhythm, and relations between singers. The Du lineage hosted the genealogy-renewal event; the Yang family represents a group of tradition bearers responsible for ritual performance. These groups undertook event organization and performance, respectively. The analysis centers on one lineage event and related transmission practices, tracing the relationships between music and ritual life visible in these materials.

2 LIFE ON THE WATER AND RITUAL SPACE

2.1 Kinship under Conditions of Mobility

The formation of the Weishan Lake area is associated with changes in the Yellow River, canal development, and regional water management. Changes in the waterscape repeatedly affected livelihoods and settlement patterns [22]. Fishing households used residential boats as both workplaces and homes, moving with fishing conditions and sometimes relocating to other lakes during floods or droughts. Boat dwelling and migration made household dispersal and reunion recurrent experiences [10, 22]. Space aboard boats was limited, relatives could not always remain together, and ancestor worship could not be organized entirely as it was in settled villages. Portable objects and temporarily assembled ritual settings therefore had practical uses. Cooperation on the water, neighborhood relations after settlement ashore, and lineage ties together provided the social basis for collective ritual.

Settlement ashore gradually changed places of residence and occupations, with some families moving from capture fishing to aquaculture, transport, and other livelihoods. Permanent homes provided places to display sacred images and hold gatherings, while kinship networks continued through blood relations, marriage, and fictive kinship. Research on Aihu Village notes that early settlement arrangements were linked to production teams rather than organized entirely by surname. Later genealogy compilation, ancestor worship, and accounts of surname origins gave certain kinship connections a more public expression [10]. Lineage identity thus required continuing affirmation through everyday interaction and collective rites. Genealogy renewal brought dispersed members together for such affirmation.

Family ancestors, water deities, and other local gods belong to connected fields of belief among these fishing communities. Historical research on worship of the Golden Dragon Fourth King in the Shandong canal region during the Ming and Qing dynasties provides a point of reference for local water-deity traditions [23]. In the genealogy-renewal materials examined here, ancestors are expected to protect descendants, secure household well-being, and ensure the continuity of the family, while water deities are associated with navigation, weather, and catches. Sacred images have different emphases but enter the same domestic observances and collective sacrifices. Greater attention to ancestor worship after settlement ashore did not remove the religious traces of life on the water. Ritual flags, chants, and dramatic characters continued to invoke water deities and experiences of navigation. Treating this process as the complete replacement of deity worship by ancestor worship would obscure their coexistence within the ritual.

2.2 The Ritual Pavilion and Ancestral Presence

Genealogy renewal involves adding names to a written record, preparing a venue, welcoming ancestors, offering worship and gifts, sharing meals, and staging performances. Earlier events could be held on several wooden boats joined together, with planks laid across them and a shelter erected above. Nearby boats provided viewing positions. After settlement ashore, some events moved into lakeside warehouses or factory buildings. Although the physical venues changed, participants continued to construct temporary spaces for sacrifice. Offering tables, sacred images, curtains, and seating turned places ordinarily used for dwelling, production, or storage into sites of collective ancestor worship.

The pavilion is divided by function into an inner altar for ancestors and deities, an area for ritual work, changing clothes, and resting, and spaces for performance and spectators. Sacred images hang on the inner walls, incense burners and offerings stand on tables, and paper ingots, cut-paper decorations, and flags surround them. A signal flag outside announces the event and, in local belief, invites deities to attend. Flag inscriptions and details of arrangement differ between families and performer groups, but the objects have comparable spatial uses. They mark out the ritual setting and help participants recognize their positions and the actions expected of them.

Ancestral images connect genealogical records with worship. The mingtang ancestral scroll arranges ancestral names as a lineage genealogy and is also an object of sacrifice [10-11]. It places ancestors and their spouses' surnames by generation, leaving space below for later descendants. Rolled up between observances and displayed during worship, it suits the limited space and portability required by boat dwelling [11]. Through offerings, bows, and chanting, these names become points of recognition between ancestors and descendants. A genealogy that can be read becomes an object collectively faced and honored, bringing the renewal of the record into the same setting as ancestor worship.

The dou ritual vessel provides a symbolic seat for an ancestor represented in the images. It contains grain, coins, colored flags, a balance, a mirror, and other objects, interpreted in terms of abundance, good fortune, the weighing of

human intentions, or protection from harmful forces. Who provides a vessel and where it stands express lineage relations more directly. Branches provide their own vessels, arranged according to generation, seniority, and relational distance, with the senior branch usually occupying a prominent position. The source materials also record that placements other than that of the senior branch can be negotiated [10]. Ritual order emerges from inherited rules and present arrangements, rather than presenting an entirely fixed lineage structure.

2.3 Hosts, Ritual Leaders, and Performers

The hosting lineage and invited performers jointly carry out the ritual. Organizers or a committee determine timing, raise funds, prepare supplies, coordinate relatives, and discuss the event's scale and procedures with the performers. The tantou, or ritual leader, directs the rites and arranges sacred images, offerings, and chants. Other duangong performers sing, provide vocal responses, play drums, and take dramatic roles. Their authority rests chiefly on inherited knowledge, experience, and command of ritual procedures. This differs from the organizers' authority, which depends on seniority, reputation, and administrative ability.

Research on northern Chinese lineages treats the basic organizational unit as both a practical unit and a cultural unit of ritual, suggesting that cooperation and ceremonial expression should be considered together [24]. Studies of ritual process and changing identities provide a further point of reference for the relationship between everyday and ceremonial roles [25]. Hosts provide funding, organize lineage members, and specify their requirements; performers turn these requirements into chants and sequences of action. Lineage affairs and ritual knowledge meet through this division of work. Sacred images and genealogies do not maintain order by themselves. Organizers and performers must also coordinate branches, manage time, and know the procedures. Music operates within this cooperation. Sacrificial aims and the venue shape its use, and its sounds cue different participants to enter the collective sequence. This organizational work is part of the social role of Duangong opera.

3 RITUAL SEQUENCE AND REPERTOIRE

Existing research distinguishes Duangong repertoire by subject, length, and number of performers. Subjects include sacrificial chants, mythological stories, folk stories, and narratives of customary life. Length ranges from extended sacred-book dramas to medium-length legend plays and short folk pieces. Performance forms include solo chanting, paired singing, and dramas with several roles [26]. These categories distinguish pieces, but their placement in genealogy renewal depends on the particular rites.

3.1 Opening the Altar and Inviting Ancestors

A fuller genealogy-renewal sequence has four main stages: inviting the ancestors, the small altar opening, the entry of sacred images into the pavilion, and the grand altar opening. Duration and scale depend on the hosts' circumstances. Duangong opera helps organize the event from its opening. Kaitanzhangu, or Drumming to Open the Altar, announces the start with concentrated drumming. The drumhead and metal rings on the handle produce interwoven sounds that draw people inside and outside the venue into a shared sequence and prepare the rhythmic setting for chanting.

Inviting the ancestors is the central act through which deceased forebears are welcomed. Lamps stand at the four corners and center of the pavilion. Performers carry drums, walk around the lamps, and chant in a practice known as zoudeng, or walking the lamps. The text successively describes the ancestors entering, drinking wine, and taking their seats. In local understanding, these words enact an invitation in the present. The Sanjie Zhifu, a messenger of the three realms, carries the invitation, and the dou vessels provide symbolic seats. Lamps, movement, words, and objects present dispersed and unseen ancestral relations as a collective arrival.

After the invitation, lineage members kneel and bow, then cast divination blocks to ask whether the ancestors have arrived. Within local belief, this gives the invitation a response and turns individual wishes into an occasion for collective waiting and recognition. The chant also includes admonitions concerning aging, descendants, and family affection, connecting the welcome offered to ancestors with the responsibilities of the living. Participants encounter questions about the treatment of elders and generational continuity along with ancestral names. Sacrificial music and everyday ethics meet within the same passage.

3.2 Narratives in Xubiao and Wubiao

The small altar opening draws mainly on stories from Xubiao and Wubiao, the two named narrative cycles. Xubiao includes The Little White Dragon Brings Rain, Wei Zheng Beheads the Dragon, and The Tang Emperor Makes a Vow. Rainfall, calamity, judgment, complaint, and vows describe exchanges between humans and deities. The stories relate to local accounts of the origin of Duangong opera and to experiences of storms, floods, and prayers for safety. Figures such as the Tang emperor and Wei Zheng give vows and their fulfillment recognizable narrative forms, connecting religious relationships with the experiences of dramatic characters.

Wubiao places greater emphasis on admonition, filial duty, and inviting deities, as in Wei Jiuguan Admonishes the Tang Emperor Three Times and Wei Jiulang Invites the Deities in His Father's Place. Burning paper boats and horses can enter the plot as actual ritual acts, interweaving spectatorship and worship. Audiences follow the characters' actions and, at particular moments, turn toward incense tables, sacred images, and offerings. Performers alternate between

narration, dramatic roles, and ritual work. A single passage can recount a character's experience and advance the ceremony, connecting storytelling with ritual practice.

Mythological stories give narrative form to judgments about good and evil, loyalty, righteousness, and filial duty. Water-deity beliefs, entertaining episodes, and characters' emotions also contribute to the attraction of the performance. Some values receive emphasis through dramatic conflict; other passages sustain attention through humor, dialogue, or emotional changes. Sacrificial purposes and artistic expression coexist, helping sustain a long collective event and allowing ethical ideas to be conveyed through more than direct instruction.

3.3 Sacred Images Enter the Pavilion

During the entry of sacred images, lineage members escort the images from their usual domestic locations to the collective altar in an established order. Carrying the dou vessels, holding umbrellas, stepping across fire, and hanging images put branch affiliations and seniority into action. Branches arrive with their own images and vessels, which are then placed within a common space. This arrangement connects particular branch memberships with ideas of shared ancestry. The lineage becomes visible in who proceeds first, who escorts an image, and where each object is placed.

Liu Wenlong Travels to the Examinations, performed at this stage, brings study, warfare, separation, broken trust, and reunion into an extended story. Actions such as posting an imperial proclamation are incorporated into the performance. In the passage of marital parting, familiar flowers and plants express expectations of family responsibility and marital fidelity. Such language is close to everyday life, but it also carries conventional constraints on women's conduct. Expectations of domestic harmony and gender hierarchy coexist within the narrative. Duangong opera thus brings the duties, rights, and evaluative standards of particular social relations into the sacrificial setting.

Folk stories extend the narrative scope of Duangong opera without automatically separating it from ritual. Characters receive divine titles, plots turn into acts of worship, and actors guide lineage members in paying respects. These arrangements connect storytelling with ceremonial work. Artistic expression and sacrifice intersect in particular actions, shaping why a piece appears at a given moment and how participants understand it.

3.4 The Grand Altar Opening and Gift Exchanges

The grand altar opening combines sacrifice, congratulations from relatives and friends, and collective spectatorship. Visitors and married daughters bring gifts. Gifts, red cloth, and donors' names are entered in a jinxinzhang, a register of devotional contributions, which performers read aloud. Presenting these offerings to the ancestors also makes kinship exchanges public. Red cloth is hung during the rite and can later be used to wrap sacred images. Gifts therefore have economic, emotional, and religious significance. Their amounts and public acknowledgment also concern reputation and face, displaying differences between participants and the networks through which they interact.

During Zhang Xiurong Goes to Huai'an, the dramatic act of worshipping the Great King can become an actual act of worship. Shunxing, or Honoring the Stars, accompanies the star rite: performers chant and ring handbells as lineage members bow. Zhang Lang Repudiates His Wife and the subsequent sweeping of the dou vessels and closing of the altar gradually bring the event to an end. Each household finally returns its images to their usual place of worship, and the collective gathering disperses into domestic life. Musical openings, continuations, and endings accompany the ancestors' invitation, shared reception of offerings, and return, giving this movement a perceptible temporal order.

Considered by function, sacrificial chants invite, petition, and send off; mythological stories recount vows and relations with deities; folk stories place domestic ethics within dramatic conflicts; and customary narratives return scenes of labor and everyday life to the ritual. These functions overlap, and a piece can have several uses at different moments. Classification identifies differences of emphasis, but the meaning of a passage depends on its connections with objects, actions, and participants in the particular setting.

4 MUSICAL FORM AND RITUAL EXPRESSION

4.1 Named Tunes and Paired Phrases

Regional music sources record the use of common qupai, or named tunes, including Qiziyun (Seven-Character Tune) and Shiziyun (Ten-Character Tune), alongside chants associated with particular ritual purposes. These include Qingshendiao (Inviting the Deities), Faxiangdiao (Offering Incense), and Nianfodiao (Chanting the Buddha's Name). Duangong opera also incorporates folk melodies [27]. Qiziyun occurs frequently in the central genealogy-renewal passages analyzed here. Its seven-character basis accommodates added syllables, vocables, and varied repetition, allowing it to carry brief petitions and extended narratives alike. Reusing a tune provides a common basis for transitions between subjects.

Qiziyun generally develops through recurring paired phrases. In the selected materials, the first phrase often ends on mi and the second on do, distinguishing continuation from relative closure. Phrase length can expand or contract with the text and delivery, without requiring strict symmetry. Inviting the Ancestors, The Little White Dragon Brings Rain, and The Tang Emperor Makes a Vow retain recognizable connections within this framework. Liu Wenlong Travels to the Examinations uses phrases of unequal length to express a character's accusations. A shared structure helps listeners recognize the vocal idiom, while adjustments in words and rhythm accommodate narrative development and immediate expression.

Varied repetition suits a prolonged ritual. Ancestral invocations, dialogue, and narrative exposition can enter an established phrase structure, so performers need not introduce a new musical form for every change of content. Intervening drum patterns distinguish passages and allow a narrative to continue without losing organization. Different phrase endings, elastic lengths, and changing words together shape musical development. Their ritual meanings emerge in their connection with invitations, exchanges, or admonitions; a scale degree or cadential pattern alone cannot explain a social relationship.

4.2 Mode and Selected Passages

Most genealogy-renewal passages analyzed here use the pentatonic gong mode and develop around do, mi, sol, and la, although their structural tones and melodic emphases differ. Inviting the Ancestors proceeds mainly by step, with occasional leaps of a fourth or fifth and downward slides. Its paired phrases reach closure after repeated calls. The transcription indicates a tempo slightly slower than moderate. The broad melodic movement accompanies walking around the lamps and repeated petitions. Its significance also depends on the ancestors named in the text, the positions marked by the lamps, and the performers' movement. Sound and action jointly carry out the invitation (Figure 1-2).

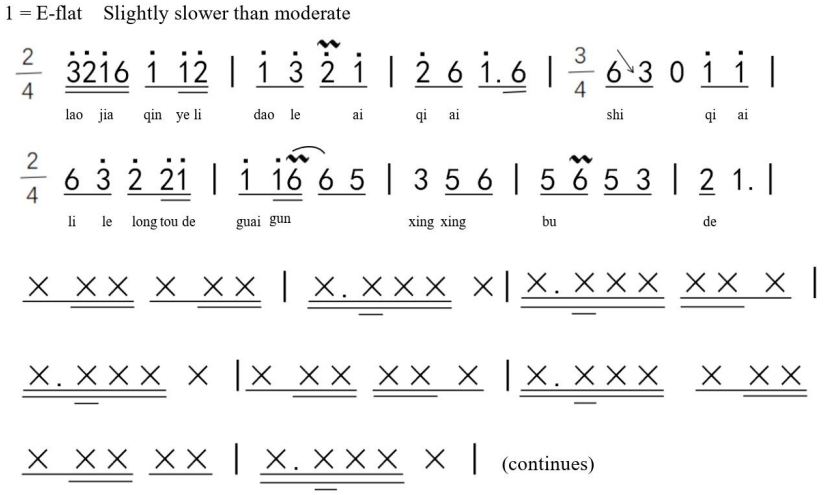

Figure 1 Musical Example 1: Inviting the Ancestors (Excerpt)

Source: Example 12 in the original doctoral dissertation, PDF p. 103. Performed by the Yang-family Duangong troupe; transcribed by Pang Xuan.

Text in translation: At seventy-seven, the family elder cannot walk without a dragon-headed walking stick. The sung line includes vocables and repeated words, retained in the romanization.

Lyrics are romanized in their original positions; the English prose translation is not a singable text aligned to the notes.

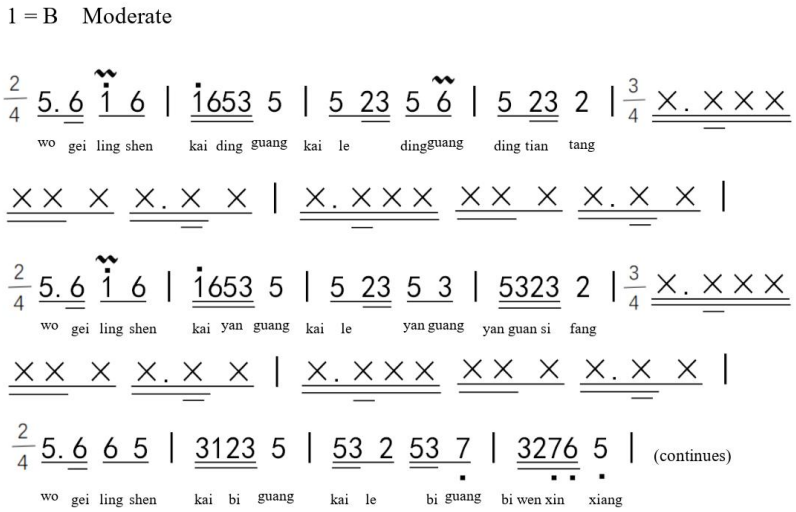

Figure 2 Musical Example 2: Kaiguang (Consecration, Excerpt)

Source: Example 19 in the original doctoral dissertation, PDF p. 113. Performed by the Yang-family Duangong troupe; transcribed by Pang Xuan.

Text in translation: I consecrate the spirit's head; I have consecrated the head, which reaches Heaven. I consecrate the spirit's eyes; I have consecrated the eyes, which see in all directions. I consecrate the spirit's nose; I have consecrated the nose, which smells devotional incense.

Lyrics are romanized in their original positions; the English prose translation is not a singable text aligned to the notes.

The Little White Dragon Brings Rain places leaps and dotted rhythms within relatively regular phrase pairs. Wei Zheng Beheads the Dragon advances the narrative through phrases of unequal length, repeated notes, and ornaments. The Tang Emperor Makes a Vow retains Qiziyun's basic cadential pattern while adjusting delivery through local rhythmic changes. These passages share musical material but carry narration, argument, and vows. Their common vocal framework accommodates different emotions and stories, sustaining an audible connection across the ritual.

Kaiguang, the consecration rite, illustrates the difference between a specialized ritual chant and general narrative passages. The source analysis classifies the transcribed example under Tangongdiao and the pentatonic zhi mode. Its words successively bless the head, eyes, nose, and other bodily parts. Similar musical material returns in varied phrases, with drum patterns between them. Repeated chanting accompanies designated actions, contrasting with the Qiziyun narrative passages. Differences in tune and mode mark particular rites within the larger musical sequence.

Shunxing brings sunset, returning birds, fishing people carrying nets, and needlework by lamplight into the star rite. In the transcription, the earlier phrases mostly end on sol and the final phrase on do. Continuous sixteenth notes, repeated notes, and local ornaments keep the narration moving. Everyday labor remains audible in the sacred setting as scenes of work appear alongside petitions. Ritual music addresses deities while bringing details of shared life back into collective hearing.

4.3 Rhythm, Drumming, and Supporting Voices

The duangu is the central accompanying instrument. The drumhead and metal rings on its handle combine to produce its distinctive timbre [28]. Regional narrative-arts sources preserve sets of drum patterns named after birds or animal movements [29]. In the present materials, Drumming to Open the Altar uses dense sixteenth notes, dotted rhythms, and alternation between 2/4 and 3/4. Changes in speed and rhythmic density create the opening's concentrated force. Singing can slow for ancestral invitations and petitions, while narrative passages adjust to a character's delivery. Rhythm gives opening, waiting, narration, and closure different temporal qualities rather than remaining uniformly solemn.

Singing and drumming have distinct responsibilities. The voice carries words, inflection, and changes of character; drum patterns provide continuity or contrast between phrases and passages. Alternation between steadier vocal phrases and denser interludes leaves room for transitions among storytelling, movement, and ritual acts. The selected passages use 2/4 as well as mixed or alternating 2/4 and 3/4, according to the particular vocal and drum sequences. In Shunxing, handbells also accompany chanting and the lineage members' star worship, contributing to the sound of that rite.

Earlier research identifies a lead singer with collective vocal responses as a characteristic of Duangong opera [26]. In the present materials, the ritual leader or the actor playing a role leads, while other performers briefly support, connect, or answer the vocal line at phrase endings. This alternation can produce simple overlapping textures. Research on multipart forms in Shandong folk music provides a comparative point of reference [30]. Supporting voices are supplied chiefly by performers. Other participants enter the ritual by listening, watching, kneeling, escorting images, and presenting gifts. These different forms of participation connect through the songs and procedures, combining a division of responsibilities with shared auditory and bodily experiences.

4.4 Melody and Local Speech

The selected passages commonly use stepwise motion, movement by thirds, descending closure, and occasional leaps. Grace notes, mordent-like ornaments, and downward slides create variation in the melodic detail. Rising, falling, and turning figures give the line continuity, while local speech shapes its finer treatment. Lyrics use everyday dialect words such as an, a first-person pronoun, and sha, meaning what. Added syllables, sustained vocal extensions, and changes of intonation keep narration close to familiar speech within the sacrificial setting.

Earlier research examines the relationship between local word tones and melodic treatment through examples such as a grace-note figure on jie, meaning street, and a downward slide on wen in a personal name [26]. Analysis of Zhang Xiurong Goes to Huai'an records a local pronunciation of ke, meaning guest, and the use of er instead of liang for two. Slides and ornaments also follow the direction of speech tones. Wei Jiulang Invites the Deities in His Father's Place alternates singing and spoken dialogue, bringing the character's speaking voice into musical structure. Local character thus arises from vocabulary, articulation, syntax, ornament, and delivery together, rather than from one distinctive interval. Listeners familiar with these forms can follow characters through a long performance and relate the stories to their own lives.

5 LINEAGE MEMORY AND TRANSMISSION

5.1 Remembering Ancestors through Collective Practice

Cultural symbolism offers one perspective on lineage continuity [31]. In this genealogy-renewal event, the written work places names within a pedigree, while ritual brings those names into present relations. Ancestral scrolls are unrolled, branch vessels are carried into the common space, ancestors are invited in sequence, and members escort and worship them according to generational rank. Memory acquires a place in present activity through collective enactment, in keeping with social-memory research on ritual transmission [21]. Music participates alongside other actions. Objects

display descent, kinship exchanges put relations into practice, and chanting gives the ancestors' invitation and departure a temporal sequence.

Duangong opera turns abstract relationships into sequences that participants can experience. Ancestors receive positions within the sequence of invitation, seating, offerings, and departure, alongside their presence as names in a genealogy. Loyalty, filial duty, and trustworthiness become questions encountered through characters' fortunes and family separations as well as explicit admonitions. Previous work treats Duanguqiang as ritual music carrying local culture [28, 32]. This case traces that cultural work through the connections among particular passages, objects, and kinship actions. Familiar singing provides a basis for spectatorship across ages and branches. Further interviews are needed to understand how different participants receive these expressions.

Identity also involves continuing social interaction. Barth's research on ethnicity emphasizes the maintenance of group distinctions through social practices [33], while work on music and identity considers how sound participates in the expression and reproduction of belonging [34]. At Weishan Lake, lineage membership refers specifically to descent and branches. A broader cultural identity among fishing communities finds expression through dialect lyrics, lake-region stories, and shared experiences of performance. These forms of belonging intersect in genealogy renewal. Blood relations alone do not explain all participants' connections, and listening together does not imply agreement with every ethical idea expressed.

5.2 Hierarchy and Exchange within the Community

Research on Min-lineage ancestor worship examines the presentation of lineage authority through ritual [35]. Reunion at Weishan Lake likewise makes status differences visible. The placement of vessels, order of escorting images, duties of organizers and the ritual leader, and public reading of the contribution register display seniority, branch affiliation, economic contributions, and relational distance. Collective ancestor worship provides a setting in which these relations are presented and negotiated. It does not suspend them in an equal gathering. Inherited rankings can be reaffirmed or adjusted in practice, allowing continuity and negotiation within lineage order.

Gender differences also appear in positions of participation. Earlier research records the convention of men playing female roles in Duangong opera [26]. The present ritual materials record a rule excluding women from the inner altar, while married daughters participate through gifts, red cloth, and worship at the outer altar. Women's offerings and expressions of filial duty enter the public ceremony, while men retain primary control of central sacrificial spaces and performance. Reunion therefore involves different rights and responsibilities. Discussion of the feasibility of introducing female performers into Duanguqiang has reconsidered this convention in relation to contemporary transmission [36]. Gender rules are consequently part of the conditions of participation to be examined, alongside the artistic forms being transmitted.

Genealogy renewal also reaches beyond men of the same surname. Affines, friends, and neighboring villages take part in exchanges, and invited performers bring skills and ritual knowledge across family lines. Sharing costs, preparing supplies, and providing meals depend on continuing cooperation. Musical performance brings these people to the same place and time, creating opportunities for interaction. Gift exchanges and collective spectatorship around a common host connect worship within the lineage to exchanges across families. Lineage identity intersects here with broader cultural connections among fishing communities.

5.3 Ritual Demand and Conditions of Transmission

Performance settings have changed from temporary platforms on residential boats to warehouses and factory buildings ashore. Early costumes could be borrowed from spectators; purpose-made outfits were acquired later. Interviews also describe interactions once enacted by performers that can now involve lineage members and the distribution of celebratory sweets. Changes in venues, materials, and audience relations do not necessarily mean that the ritual's central purposes have been replaced. Continuity includes practical adjustments. Assessing what remains and what changes requires separate comparisons of music, procedures, and organization. Research on Dongping Lake Duangong opera discusses cultural regeneration through a shift from entertaining deities to entertaining people [37]. In the Weishan Lake event, storytelling remains interspersed with ancestral invitations, worship, and sending-off rites. Its greater entertainment content must be understood alongside continuing ancestor worship, rather than inferred from the move ashore or increased interaction alone.

Transmission also depends on conditions for learning. Research centered on script preservation notes that performers' livelihoods can reduce the time and energy available for preservation and teaching [38]. Yang Chengxing's interviews emphasize that younger people are not uniformly unwilling to learn; school schedules are difficult to reconcile with extended oral training. Duangong knowledge includes melodies and words, when to begin singing, how to change roles, how to continue a ritual sequence, and how to respond to circumstances during performance. A score alone cannot fully convey these abilities. Preservation focused only on representative melodies can miss the procedural knowledge and settings that give music its use. The accounts of performers and learning time indicate that skills, livelihoods, and opportunities to participate need to be considered together.

Lineage events provide occasions on which Duangong opera is invited and used, while performance repeatedly brings sacrificial procedures, shared memories, and local speech into these events. Research on local temple fairs likewise notes the support lineage groups provide for the continuation of ritual [39]. In this case, that support depends on hosts'

ability to cover costs, performers' availability, and younger people's time for learning. Increasing public access and expanding channels of circulation are shared recommendations in Duanguqiang preservation research [40-41]. Alongside these proposals, a study at X School in W County, Shandong, reports a dedicated Duangong music-teaching activity in a secondary-school classroom [42]. Classroom introduction and sustained oral training have different tasks. How the former connects with performers' instruction and ritual practice requires continued observation. Materials prepared for wider circulation should also preserve the relationship between songs and ritual procedures. Recording original sound, notation, lyrics, and complete sequences together can retain musical form and use, rather than leave only stage excerpts detached from their occasions.

6 CONCLUSION

Genealogy renewal among Weishan Lake fishing communities combines written pedigrees, ancestral images, branch vessels, kinship exchanges, and Duangong opera. Through altar openings, ancestral invitations, mythological and folk narratives, specialized chants, and closing passages, music organizes ritual time and gives ancestral memories and ethical ideas audible and visible forms. Qiziyun and the pentatonic gong mode predominate in the selected passages. Paired phrases, drum interludes, performers' supporting voices, and dialect treatment connect different contents, while specialized tunes and modal differences distinguish particular rites.

The lineage identity apparent in this case takes shape in collective activity and includes branch rankings, gender differences, and practical negotiation. Duangong opera continues through social demand and transmission practices, and its cultural role must be understood within those conditions. The study draws chiefly on one genealogy-renewal event and materials from related performers, without comparisons across lineages or repeated events and without long-term audience tracking. Accounts of earlier musical changes are also constrained by oral recollection and surviving documentation. Comparisons of different families' rituals, continuous audiovisual records, and documentation of material objects would help distinguish stable musical features from local variation and change.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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