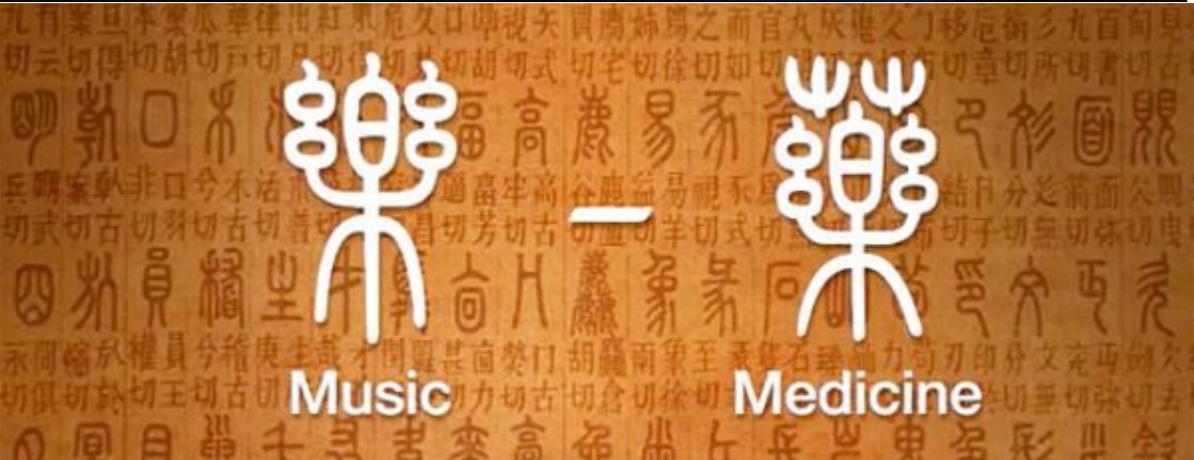


MUSIC 音樂



Music is the making of sounds in a structured manner for the purpose of creating a pleasing effect. The two fundamental characteristics of music were and remain mood and rhythm and the elements within it were the notes, the scales, the tones and the pauses. During the Buddha's time, refined music was played by orchestras of five instruments. The Buddha commented that such lutes in the hands of skilled musicians could produce music that was 'captivating, melodious and enchanting'. He had a knowledge of and appreciation for fine music, probably as a result of his upper-class upbringing. He mentioned that a lute had to be tuned to the high pitch, the middle pitch and

finally with slack strings. When the Buddha heard Paṅcasikha sing to the accompaniment of his lute he commented that 'the sound of your strings blends well with the sound of your voice and the sound of your voice blends well with the sound of your strings'. However, the Buddha also knew that a transformed mind could offer far more joy than any song or symphony. The Buddhists say: 'Music from a five-piece orchestra cannot arouse as much delight as having a one-pointed mind with perfect insight into things'.

One of the eight Precepts is to avoid playing or listening to music, no doubt because it distracts from mental stillness and peace. The music of trumpets, drums and cymbals is an essential part of most Tibetan Buddhist events while gongs and bells are used in Chinese Buddhism.

In Pure Land Buddhism, though, Buddhist paradises are represented as profoundly musical places in which Buddhist law takes the form of gorgeous melodies. A remarkable variety of musical practices has developed for use in Buddhist ritual and practice by both lay and monastic adherents. Most Buddhist practices involve chant in some form, and some also make use of instrumental music, and even dance. Music can act as an offering to the Buddha, as a means of memorizing Buddhist texts, and as a form of personal cultivation or meditation. The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen an upsurge in the quantity and quality of international research on these musical practices. The diversity of global Buddhist music and the multitude of scholarly approaches and languages used in writings about it make this a particularly rewarding and challenging field of study.

While it is difficult to generalize about the role of music in Buddhist practice through history and around the world, these sources provide basic introductions to music as it is used in some of the better-known Buddhist traditions of the world.

Music gives us the capacity to express the deepest feelings of the human soul. Whether through holy hymns or sincere chants of praise, it is capable of lifting our minds to an almost sublime state, and, as such, is regarded as having an important role in the promotion of religious teachings. In the world's religions, music has a very important function and a wide range of applications. The teachings of the Buddha mention music on many occasions. In Buddhism, it is written that heavenly singing and chanting is heard all day and night as mandara flowers softly rain down from the heavens. All kinds of birds produce beautiful and harmonious music throughout the day and night. Upon the blowing of a gentle breeze, the movements of jewel trees bring about a kind of wondrous music, as if thousands of gentle tunes are being played together in harmony. Upon hearing these melodious sounds, those present naturally become mindful of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha. In accordance, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are very skilled in utilizing music to spread the Dharma and guide sentient beings to enlightenment.

In Buddhism, Buddhists sung as hymns and other songs praising the virtues of the Buddhas have attracted and helped purify the hearts of countless disciples. One of the Buddha's teachings says, "In order to build a Pureland, the Buddhists make use of beautiful music to soften people's hearts. With their hearts softened, people's minds are more receptive, and thus easier to educate and transform through the teachings. For this reason, music has been established as one type of ceremonial offering to be made to the Buddha." In addition to propagating the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), there is a long history of adapting Buddhist songs for use in various ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, etc. In this capacity, Buddhist Music plays an integral role in common cultural practices.

The Buddhists said, “Music gives the people of a society a means by which they can better communicate their moods and feelings with each other. For society to achieve some degree of integration, it is essential to be able to communicate and understand each other’s moods and feelings and as a result establish a sense of unity. This is one of the important functions of music.” The capacity of music to capture people’s attention, touch them deeply, and tug at their heartstrings makes it one of the most beautiful forms of human expression.

Chinese Buddhist Music utilizes a rich variety of musical instruments during chants and hymns. Because these instruments are used in the propagation of Buddhist teachings, they are collectively named Dharma instruments. Other than the inverted bell, which originated in India, the instruments used in traditional Chinese Buddhist Music are native to China. Instruments such as the gong, large bell (ch. qing), large drum, wooden fish, small cymbals, large cymbals and Chinese tambourine punctuate both Chinese folk and Buddhist Music. In modern practice, Chinese Buddhist Music is frequently accompanied by a variety of Chinese orchestral instruments, piano, or traditional European symphony orchestras. From its humble beginnings, Buddhist Music has developed to such an extent that it is currently performed in temples and concert halls throughout the world and can now rival the beauty of western philharmonic orchestras.

In India during the time of the Maurya Dynasty (317-180 B.C.E.), powerful King Asoka spared no effort to preserve Buddhism and spread its teachings. This time period witnessed many developments in the field of Buddhist Music such as the inclusion of copper gongs, drums, flutes, conch horns, and harps in Buddhist ceremonial music. As Buddhism spread to Tibet, the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism encouraged the use of song and dance in certain ceremonies. There is, in fact, a section of the sangha that specializes in the performance of

music and dance, referred to as Leva Musicians, meaning “Gods of Fragrance and Music.” The teachings of the Buddha say, “In all acts of singing there is truth; every dance portrays reality.” In accordance with this, the development of Tibetan Buddhist Music has been allowed to blossom freely, which in turn has helped foster its many distinctive characteristics. In Tibetan Buddhism’s larger ceremonies, Lamas can be seen utilizing all kinds of unique and exotic ceremonial instruments such as specialized types of drums, windpipes, spiral conchs, and trumpets. The design and artistry of these instruments is widely regarded as being of intricate beauty.

When Buddhism was first introduced into China (from India), focus was placed primarily on the translation of scriptures, and the teaching of Sanskrit Buddhist hymns was discontinued because of the large differences between these two languages. As Venerable Master Huijiao of the Southern Dynasty period (420-589 C.E.) stated, “Sanskrit words have many syllables, whereas Chinese words are monosyllabic. If you pronounce Sanskrit words but write them in Chinese characters, the text will contain too many syllables and the pace of the music will sound rushed. But, if you sing in Chinese and keep the text in Sanskrit, then you will have to rush through a very long section of text while pronouncing only a few syllables. For this reason, we have made translations of the scriptures, but do not continue to use or teach spoken Sanskrit.” In the absence of traditional hymns, monastics later recomposed and adapted classical folk songs along with some music commonly played to royalty and officials in the Imperial Court, which gave rise to the unique flavor and tradition of Chinese Buddhist Music. The earliest collection of Chinese Buddhist hymns date back as far as the Wei Dynasty period. Cao Zhi (the son of the emperor) was renowned for his singing and compositions. According to legend, he was passing through the town of Yushan, in the Shandong province,

when he heard a song in Sanskrit apparently emanating from the sky. Touched by the song's beauty, he committed it to memory and later wrote it into a melody entitled "The Yushan Fanbei," the first Buddhist hymn constructed in a Chinese style. This song served as the foundation for the development of Chinese Buddhist Music.

Recently, there has been an upsurge in the popularity of Buddhist Music resulting from the broad use of hymns and fanbei as a means to promote the Dharma. Given the little encouragement of previous years this is a most welcome sign. Buddhist music has contributed a unique style to the world of music. Characterized by a relaxed and easy pace, soft tones, and a dignified, solemn manner, Buddhist fanbei gives elegant expression to the five virtuous qualities of sincerity, elegance, clarity, depth, and equanimity. According to the Vinaya in Ten Recitations, regularly listening to Buddhist music can give the following five benefits: a reduction in bodily fatigue, less confusion and forgetfulness, a reduction in mental weariness, a more elegant voice, and greater ease in both personal expression and communication. Regarding the regular practice of chanting or singing fanbei, A Record of the Buddhist Religions as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago makes mention of six kinds of merits that can be obtained: knowledge of the depth and extent of the Buddha's virtue, an intuitive realization of the truths of the Dharma, a reduction in negative or harmful habits of speech, a clearer and healthier respiratory system, a mind more free from fear and anxiety, and longevity and improved health.

The contributions of Buddhist music upon the world can be exemplified in a legend involving a famous Buddhist musician. During Buddha's time on earth (500 B.C.E.) there was a bhiksu named Pathaka whose voice was so beautiful that when he chanted Buddhist fanbei even animals

that overheard him were touched. One day, King Kausala was leading a large army to invade Anga (a small state in ancient India) and on the way they encountered the Jetavana Monastery while Pathaka was in the middle of a chanting service. As soon as the horses heard the sound of Pathaka's chanting, they became so absorbed in the sound that they came to a full stop and refused to advance any further. When the sound reached King Kausala, he was so moved by the beauty of the music that he could not bring himself to shed blood in battle and immediately decided to abandon his campaign and return home. Buddhist melodies are characterized as being strong, but not fierce; soft, but not weak; pure, but not dry; still, but not sluggish, and able to help purify the hearts of listeners. Through using music to perform the task of spreading the Dharma and saving sentient beings, we can reach the most remote places and overcome the limitations of time and distance, as well as differences in cultural backgrounds and nationalities. Music can help us achieve the task of widely propagating the Dharma and spreading the wisdom and compassionate vows of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas across every corner of the globe.

Modernized Buddhist Music is focused on bringing harmony into people's everyday lives, purifying people's minds, and performing the function of educating and transforming listeners so as to bring their emotions in line with the teachings of the Dharma. With modern media and information equipment constantly improving, we need to make full use of technology to find more efficient means to give Buddhist Music public coverage, such as through the use of electronic broadcasting media including television and radio stations. We need to use music to break through the barriers of differences in cultural backgrounds, social customs, and languages. By using all sorts of equipment such as classical instruments, laser disks, electronic organs, the piano, and many other kinds of musical implements we can create and distribute

music that can suit the tastes and meet the needs of people from around the world.