

INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL MEANING OF “*Si Liu Ju*” IN XIPING FOLK SONGS

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ABSTRACT

"*Si Liu Ju*" is a frequently used professional term in the music culture of Xiping Folk Songs. However, neither folk artists nor music professionals have been able to provide a clear interpretation of the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs. Faced with this research gap, I used methods such as literature review, case analysis, interviews, and observation to conduct in-depth research on 22 Xiping Folk Songs works that used the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*". Research has found that "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs first refers to a musical structure. This musical structure is based on the two sentence structure of the upper and lower senses as the melody. The melody of the upper and lower senses changes once to four lines, and changes twice to six lines, known as "*Si Liu Ju*". In addition, in Xiping Folk Songs, "*Si Liu Ju*" specifically refers to a type of melody, which is the folk songs from the same source. The entire melody belongs to Six tone Zhi mode with "Biagong" added in terms of mode analysis. The melody of "*Si Liu Ju*" serves as the introduction and ending in the Xiping Folk Songs of the middle and long sections. The introduction part often starts with the bass. The ending part uses the technique of "Qingjue sound changes to Gong sound" to elevate the entire melody to a pure fourth interval. Thus, the melody of "*Si Liu Ju*" ends at the mid to high notes. The research results not only fill the gap in theoretical research on "*Si Liu Ju*", but also provide people with a clearer understanding of the conceptual meaning of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs.

Key words: Xiping folk song; *Si Liu Ju*; Intangible cultural heritage; Chinese Ethnic and Folk Music

Introduction

Xiping Folk Songs refer to a folk song created by the local people in Xiping Town and surrounding areas of Xixia County, Henan Province, China, and passed down from generation to generation. On June 7, 2008, "Xiping Folk Songs" was included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage list by the State Council of China (Guo, 2023). Xiping Folk Songs has over thirty themed tones, including *Xiao Dui Hua*, *Da Dui Hua*, *Si Liu Ju*, *Liu Lang Diao*, *Xiu He Bao*, *Cai Cha Diao*, and more (China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network, 2024). Xiping Folk Songs sang long stories in the form of "*Si Liu Ju*" and "Duo Zi" (Xixia County Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Press and Publication, 2016). What does "*Si Liu Ju*" refer to here? From the above description, it can be seen that "*Si Liu Ju*" should be a melody of Xiping Folk Songs. However, in the actual process of collecting folk songs, folk artists sing different melodies of "*Si Liu Ju*" works, and they each have their own opinions. So what exactly is the melody of "*Si Liu Ju*"? There is no clear answer. In addition, some folk artists have another explanation for "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs. For example, folk artist Yao Shucheng believes that "*Si Liu Ju*" refers to a song that sings four or six sentences. Some works include Duo Zi, while others do not. Sometimes, "*Si Liu Ju*" can also sing eight or more sentences (S. C. Yao, personal communication, August 16, 2023). From their interpretation, "*Si Liu Ju*" is a musical sentence structure, but this structure may vary in different works. "*Si Liu Ju*" originally meant four sentences and six sentences in Chinese, so from its name, their explanation also has a certain degree of truth. So, what exactly is "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping folk songs? Is it really a melody? Or is it a musical sentence structure? If it is a melody, which theme melody does "*Si Liu Ju*" refer to in Xiping Folk Songs? If it is a musical sentence structure, how does it exist and change in use in Xiping Folk Songs? What does the common phrase "*Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi*" in Xiping Folk Songs mean? With these questions in mind, I searched for database resources such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Du Xiu, and found that the interpretation of the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" in other art forms is also different. The theoretical research related to Xiping Folk Songs is still in its early stages (Lin, 2023). It is obvious that the theoretical research on "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs is still a theoretical blank. As a researcher on Xiping Folk Songs, whether from the perspective of filling the theoretical research gap or from the perspective of social and cultural communication of Xiping Folk Songs, this research result is of practical significance. I have decided to explore the practical meaning of this cultural concept with the theme of "*Si Liu Ju*" by Xiping Folk Songs. On the one hand, the research findings can fill the research gap on the theory of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs. On the other hand, the research findings can be applied to the social dissemination of Xiping Folk Songs culture, allowing people to have a more professional, in-depth, and comprehensive understanding of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs. In addition, "*Si Liu Ju*" is a common musical cultural phenomenon in Xiping Folk Songs, and in-depth research on it can also provide some reference for modern music creation.

Figure 1: Photos of the Xiping folk song performance site.

Photography: Chai Zhanhong.

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Literature review

In the super large database "Du Xiu" composed of massive data and basic information, search and discover "*Si Liu Ju*" as the keyword. The application and interpretation of "*Si Liu Ju*" can be mainly divided into two parts, one is from a literary perspective, and the other is from a folk music perspective.

From the perspective of literary research, "*Si Liu Ju*" in ancient China refers to the syntax of Pian Wen, also known as Pian Si Li Lliu. Four or six characters are used to form a sentence, with four characters in the first sentence and six characters in the last sentence. The front and back sentences are strictly opposed (Yin, 2020). In addition, "*Si Liu Ju*" seeks changes in continuous expression, which may be four to four, six to six, or four six to four six, six four to six four. The function words in poetry are not included and are commonly used in the writing of content such as *Biao*, *Zhang*, *Zou*, *Ji*, etc. For example, in the poem "*Teng Wang Ge Xu*," there is a line: "*Tian*

Gao Di Jiung, Jue Yu Zhou Zhi Wu Qiang; Xing Jin Bei Lai, Shi Ying Xu Zhi You Shu. Guan Shan Nan Yue, Shui Bei Shi Lu Zhi Ren; Ping Shui Xiang Feng, Jin Shi Ta Xiang Zhi Ke.". This poem has a standard four six to four six structure (Zhang, 2021). It is obvious that from a literary perspective, "*Si Liu Ju*" is interpreted from the perspective of the number of words in each line of poetry, and is it a structural concept of poetry. Is "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs related to it? Further research is needed.

From the perspective of music research, it mainly focuses on two art forms.

The first type is the interpretation of the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" in "*Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu*". Guo Dehua and Liu Shirong believe that "*Si Liu Ju*" is the basic singing style of Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu, and it is a variant of the "The tone of land boat" in the Lantern Song of southwestern Henan. It develops into four musical phrases from a melody with a structure of upper and lower sentences. After repeating the third and fourth phrases, the entire music becomes six phrases, hence the name "*Si Liu Ju*". "*Si Liu Ju*" is not only a musical structure, but also serves as a fundamental tone of Qupai (Guo & Liu, 2014). It is obvious that these two scholars interpreted the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" by "*Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu*" from the perspective of musical sentence structure, and pointed out that "*Si Liu Ju*" also refers to a tone. However, the specific tone referred to here is not explicitly stated. The Xiping Town spread by the Xiping Folk Songs is also located in the southwestern region of Henan. The exchange and integration of Chinese ethnic and folk music is a common phenomenon (Jiang & Wang, 2020). So, is the "*Si Liu Ju*" in the Xiping Folk Songs the same as the "*Si Liu Ju*" in the "*Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu*"? Is the interpretation of the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" sentence structure by two scholars suitable for the cultural phenomenon of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs? What tone are they talking about? What are the characteristics? These all require further research.

Another art form related to "*Si Liu Ju*" is "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*", which is a traditional folk art form in the northwest of Hubei Province. "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" is developed on the basis of Lantern Song, with outstanding narrative and lyrical qualities (Wang, 2016). "Yunyang" is a place name, and "*Si Liu Ju*" refers to a musical melody in which four or six sentences form a segment; In terms of lyrics, four and six sentences represent a complete piece of content (Jiang & Li, 2010). After singing four or six sentences, the music switches to "*Duo Zi*". "*Si Liu Ju*" consists of three bars in each phrase. In the singing style of "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*", Qiqiang and Shaqiang are basically the same, with intermediate variations (Li & Chen, 2002). This interpretation is similar to Guo Dehua and Liu Shirong's interpretation, where "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" refers to both a musical sentence structure and a melodic theme. At the same time, two scholars also mentioned that this melody developed from "Lantern Song". So what does Lantern Song refer to here? Is it a song or a type of song? What is the middle variation of the Qiqiang (The melody of the introduction) and Shaqiang (The ending melody) mentioned here? Xiping Town and Yunyang County are geographically adjacent, and it is inevitable for their folk cultures to exchange with each other. What is the relationship between "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" and Xiping Folk Songs "*Si Liu Ju*"? Is it a different term for an art form in different regions? The regions where Xiping "*Si Liu*

Ju", *"Yunyang Si Liu Ju"*, and *"Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu"* spread are adjacent. So, what is the relationship between them? These issues are currently research gaps and require further research.

Research methodology

This study belongs to qualitative research, mainly using literature research and case study methods to study the works of Xiping Folk Songs using the theme melody of *"Si Liu Ju"*, and explore the cultural connotation of the concept of *"Si Liu Ju"* in Xiping Folk Songs. During the case study process, observation and interview methods were mainly used (Busetto & Gumbinger, 2020). Firstly, through the method of literature research (Abdumutalibovich, 2020), understand the interpretation of the definition and concept of *"Si Liu Ju"* in other art forms by other researchers, as the basic knowledge and important reference in the research process of this study, and conduct triangulation and mutual verification of my research results. Secondly, through observation, this study aims to sort out and study the lyrics, scores, and usage scenarios of the Xiping Folk Songs works that use *"Si Liu Ju"*. From the perspectives of musical sentence structure and theme, a deep cultural interpretation of the concept of *"Si Liu Ju"* in Xiping Folk Songs will be conducted (Li, 2023). In the research process, the knowledge of musicology will be mainly used to compare research methods, analyze the phrases, pitch, rhythm, musical structure, lyrics, and other aspects of different works, and interpret the definitions using induction method. This is the main research part of this paper (Yao @ Yu, 2023). Thirdly, through the interview method (Liu & Daoruang, 2024), special interviews were conducted with folk artists in Xiping Town in the early stage of the research to obtain the basic concept of *"Si Liu Ju"*, and to formulate initial research questions and directions. And in the interview, collect more first-hand information about the Xiping Folk Songs works of *"Si Liu Ju"*. After the research results are released, special interviews will be conducted with music professionals and Xiping Town folk artists to triangulate the research results and prove their effectiveness and reliability (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

"Si Liu Ju" is a cultural phenomenon in the works of Xiping Folk Songs. To gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, it is necessary to collect as many Xiping Folk Songs music works that use *"Si Liu Ju"* as possible, and conduct research and analysis on this basis to expand the effectiveness of the research results. Therefore, this study will adopt a purposive sampling method in non probability sampling (Pace, 2021), with a sampling range of *"Si Liu Ju"* works of Xiping folk song from historical literature and *"Si Liu Ju"* works of Xiping folk song collected by the author himself in social research. From the currently collected music works, there are a total of 22 such works, mainly including the following three categories: first, the book *"Xiping Folk Songs"* published by the Cultural, Radio, Television, News and Publishing Bureau of Xixia County in 2016. This book includes 7 works related to *Si Liu Ju*, recorded by Cao Ganglin, Fu Huagao, and Qiao Siru. The work includes lyrics and music scores, making it an important research object (Xixia County Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Press and Publication, 2016). Secondly, the book *"A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs"* compiled by Zhao

Jun in 2013 includes six Xiping Folk Songs works using "*Si Liu Ju*". These works have complete lyrics and music scores and are important research subjects (Zhao, 2013). Thirdly, the author collected 9 Xiping Folk Songs works using the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*" during the interview process. Please refer to Table 1 for details.

Table 1: Xiping Folk Songs using the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*"

Work serial number	Song title	Source of works
1	<i>Si Liu Ju (1)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p39
2	<i>Si Liu Ju (2)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p40
3	<i>Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi (1)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p41
4	<i>Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi (2)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p43
5	<i>Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi (3)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p44
6	<i>Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi (4)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p45
7	<i>Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi (5)</i>	《Xiping Folk Songs》 p46
8	<i>Gao Gao Shan Shang Yi Zhi Mei</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p59
9	<i>Da Dui Hua</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p68
10	<i>Huo Lang Dan</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p110
11	<i>Qiu Zi</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p113
12	<i>Shang Shan Xia Shan</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p115
13	<i>Niao Chuang Dai</i>	《 A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs》 p126
14	<i>Yi Zhi Deng Long Hong Diu Diu</i>	
15	<i>Yi Cong Hun Dun Kai Tian Di</i>	
16	<i>Cai Ya Mi</i>	
17	<i>Gao Gao Shan Shang Yi Se Huai</i>	C.-Z. Tian, personal communication, February 1, 2019
18	<i>Shi Ge Gui Nv Zhao Po Jia</i>	
19	<i>Shi Zi Ge</i>	
20	<i>Zhi Zi Kai Hua Ye Ye Huang</i>	
21	<i>Lao Ren Shi Wu Li Yi Ba Suo</i>	X.-L. Li, personal communication, December31, 2018

Results

Using musicological analysis method to study and analyze the lyrics and melody of Xiping folk songs using the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*", it was found that the concept of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping folk songs has the following meaning.

Firstly, in Xiping Folk Songs, "*Si Liu Ju*" specifically refers to a thematic melody and its variations

These 22 Xiping Folk Songs works, which use the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*", have different lyrical content but similar melodies. They are called "Folk songs from the same source" (Ma, 2020). So, "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs is equivalent to the name of this theme melody, equivalent to a *Qupai* in opera or *Quyì*. The "*Si Liu Ju*" music in Xiping Folk Songs has a beat of 2/4. The theme melody is derived from the theme phrases of the upper and lower sentence structures through continuous variation. The theme music of two sentences changes into four phrases once, and six phrases twice. But whether it's four phrases or six phrases, the first sentence of these 22 "*Si Liu Ju*" theme melodies is similar. The ending of the third and fifth phrases is similar, with most melodies ending on *Gong* sound or *Yu* sound. The endings of the second, fourth, and sixth phrases are similar, with most ending on the *Zhi* sound. The entire melody belongs to Six tone *Zhi* mode with "*Biangong*" added in terms of mode analysis.

Figure 2: The melody of Tian Chengzhou's concert version of "*Yi Zhi Deng Long Hong Diu Diu*"



Taking Tian Chengzhou's performance of "Yi Zhi Deng Long Hong Diu Diu" as an example (see Figure 2 for details), it can be seen that the first phrase starts with the bass *Zhi* sound, the melody line starts from low and rises, and finally falls back to the Gong sound. The first bar of the melody first lingers in the low notes, with many words but few notes, and a narrow vocal range, as if speaking rather than singing, giving a feeling of being at home when we first meet, and speaking slowly. Immediately, this melody uses a six degree leap interval to make the first sentence's musical mood suddenly high and eye-catching. Folk artist Ma Jianfu mentioned that this melody is often used as the first song at the beginning of folk art activities, equivalent to an opening song. So the bass part in front has a feeling of speaking and communication, which can be considered as an introduction. Then the melody suddenly jumped to the high notes and caught the attention of the live audience. This melody design aims to remind the audience: everyone, listen carefully, I am ready to sing (T.-F. Ma, personal communication, January 11, 2024). This viewpoint can also be supported by the lyrics of the above works. For example, in the first two sentences of work 14, the lyrics "Xiao Xiao Deng Long Hong Diu Diu, Yi Zhi Hong la Cha Li Tou" describe a person playing with a colorful boat walking to a house and seeing a red lantern

during the Chinese New Year; The first two sentences of work 16 sing "*Shuang Shan Men Lai Dan Shan Kai, Da Yi Ge Ya Mi Shi Lai Cai?*" The lyrics describe a scene during the Spring Festival when people guess lantern riddles; The first two sentences of work 21 sing "*Ren Feng Jia Jie Bei Si Qin, Guo Nian Yao Xiao Jing Lao Ren*", describing the blessings and wishes of the performing artist to the elderly head of the household during the New Year holiday. "*Si Liu Ju*" is the main tone of Lantern Song, and people playing with colorful boats often sing "*Si Liu Ju*" as they approach every household's doorstep (Xu & Xu, 2021). The second phrase starts with the mid-range sounds of *Zhi* sound and *Yu* sound, and goes down to the lower octaves of *Jue* sound and *Zhi* sound. The downward melody, combined with the ending note of the melody falling on the tonic *Zhi* sound, has a terminating effect. The second and first sentences together form a complete musical phrase. The subsequent variations were also derived from this foundation. So, fundamentally speaking, the melody core of "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs is a two sentence structure of the upper and lower sentences. The so-called four and six sentences are all superimposed on this basis. Sometimes, even in the works of "*Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi*," after singing only two phrases, *Duo Zi* is added. For example, the 16th Xiping Folk Songs work "*Cai Ya Mi*" and the 19th "*Shi Zi Ge*" in Table 1. The third sentence of the melody starts from the midrange, and the backbone of the melody's progression is the same as the first sentence. The last bar in particular has a similar ending melody to the first sentence, ending with *Gong* sound, which is clearly a variation on the first sentence. But in the second bar of the third phrase, there is a change in the rhythm of cross bar and continuous bar segmentation. This leads to a new change in the melody of the third sentence, which is similar to the first sentence, and promotes the development of musical emotions. The fourth sentence starts with the bass *Yu* sound, moves towards the treble, then falls back to the bass *Zhi*, and then returns to the tonic. The fourth sentence is similar to the second and third bars in the second sentence, and there is an obvious melody variation. At this point, the first variation of the theme melody has ended, forming four sentences. Later, some folk songs began to incorporate *Duo Zi*, with changes in the melody and rhythm of the music, a decrease in singing and an increase in narrative. After singing *Duo Zi*, the last two sentences are the second variation of the theme melody, and here, the entire work is about to end. In order to better express the singer's ultimate intention, the singer uses the "Qingjue sound changes to *Gong* sound" modulation method to increase the overall melody by a pure fourth interval, and ends the entire song in the high notes after melody variation and pitch modulation. From the above 22 works, it can be seen that the Xiping Folk Songs works that use the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*" are themselves a melody segment, but this melody segment can become a middle or long segment after adding *Duo Zi*. The theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*" serves as an introduction and ending in this medium to long folk song work. This also better explains the viewpoint described in the monograph "Xiping Folk Songs": "*Si Liu Ju* and *Duo Zi* can sing long story plots" (Xixia County Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Press and Publication, 2016).

Secondly, "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs is a sentence structure

The Chinese meaning of "Si Liu Ju" is "Four and six senses", where "four" refers to four musical phrases, and the first and second musical phrases are the relationship between the upper and lower sentences. The third and fourth phrases are variations on the first and second phrases. This is the most basic musical sentence structure of "Four Sentences" in Xiping Folk Songs "Si Liu Ju": A (2)+A' (2). For example, the Xiping Folk Songs works listed in the first line of Table 2. In the Xiping Folk Songs with *Duo Zi* added, two more phrases will be added as the ending after singing *Duo Zi*. The additional two sentences are repetitions or variations of the original third and fourth phrases. In this way, the last two phrases combine with the first four phrases to form six sentences, forming a musical sentence structure of A (2)+A' (2)+B (*Duo Zi*)+A" (2), such as the Xiping Folk Songs work listed in the second line of Table 2. These two situations are the most commonly used musical sentence structures for "Si Liu Ju" in Xiping Folk Songs, and the name "Si Liu Ju" is derived from them.

Of course, in practical application, the musical sentence structure of "Si Liu Ju" will also be adjusted appropriately according to needs. For example, in "Si Liu Ju" works with *Duo Zi* added, some works will directly transfer the music melody to *Duo Zi*'s melody in the fourth sentence, thereby changing the phrase of "Si Liu Ju" from four sentences to three sentences. However, in this change, the lyrics of the fourth sentence still maintain a structure of upper and lower sentences, forming four sentences. This should be a special case of the "Si Liu Ju" music sentence structure, but it is also highly utilized. The musical sentence structure is A (2)+A' (1)+B (*Duo Zi*)+A" (2), such as the Xiping Folk Songs work listed in the third line of Table 2. For example, in Tian Chengzhou's performance of "Cai Ya Mi," *Duo Zi* is interspersed between the third and fourth sentences of "Si Liu Ju.". The entire melody adopts a musical sentence structure of A (2)+B (*Duo Zi*)+A' (2), as shown in the works listed in line 4 of Table 2. In another Xiping Folk Songs song performed by Tian Chengzhou, "Yi Cong Hun Dun Kai Tian Di," the work first makes three variations on the musical theme of the upper and lower sentences, then adds *Duo Zi*, and finally ends with one phrase, forming a musical sentence structure of A (2)+A' (2)+A" (2)+B (*Duo Zi*)+A" (1). For example, the works listed in line 5 of Table 2. It can be seen that these are all flexible adjustments made by folk artists according to the actual expression needs of music. But no matter how they change, most of these works are variations of the upper and lower sentences as a unit. Whether two sentences become four, six, or eight sentences, it is a variation and application of the original "Si Liu Ju" music sentence structure. The sentence structure statistics of these 22 Xiping Folk Songs using the theme melody of "Si Liu Ju" are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Statistical analysis of the musical sentence structure of "Si Liu Ju" in Xiping Folk Songs

Serial Number	Sentence Name	Serial number of Xiping folk song works	Music sentence structure
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1	Four sentences	1、2、6、8、9、11、17、	$A(2)+A'(2)$
2	Six sentences	3、12、13、14、18、20、21、22	$A(2)+A'(2)+B(Duo\ Zi)+A''(2)$
3	Five sentences	4、5、7、10	$A(2)+A'(1)+B(Duo\ Zi)+A''(2)$
4	Four sentences	16、19	$A(2)+B(Duo\ Zi)+A'(2)$
5	Seven sentences	15	$A(2)+A'(2)+A''(2)+B(Duo\ Zi)+A'''(1)$

Note:

1. Refer to Table 1 for the serial number of the work.
2. A represents the first two sentences in Xiping Fold Songs, with a structure of upper and lower sentences. A ' is the first variation of A, A' ' is the second variation of A, and A' ' ' is the third variation of A.
3. (1) represents one phrase, and (2) represents two phrases.

Discussions and conclusion

The "Si Liu Ju" in Xiping Folk Songs represents both a thematic melody and its variations, as well as a musical sentence structure. This is not the same concept as Pian Si Li Lliu's "Si Liu Ju" from a literary perspective. This is consistent with Guo Dehua and Liu Shirong's interpretation of "Si Liu Ju" in "Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu", and basically consistent with Li Defu and Chen Jinan's interpretation of "Yunyang Si Liu Ju". This viewpoint was also recognized by two folk artists, Wei Xiuju and Yu Xinghua, during my follow-up visits to Xiping folk songs. Especially the research results on the theme melody of "Si Liu Ju" are highly recognized. For the musical sentence structure of "Si Liu Ju", they stated that they are not familiar with these music theories, but only know how to use them in folk song singing practice (Xiping Folk Song Folk Artist Group Interview, January 10, 2024).

In terms of using "Si Liu Ju" as the theme melody, this article provides a thematic interpretation of this concept in the form of melody scores and text, making the theme melody more clear and visible, and also making people clearer about the concept of Xiping "Si Liu Ju". This is the first innovation of this paper. The collection and display of 22 Xiping Folk Songs works using the theme melody of "Si Liu Ju" is the first summary of the cultural phenomenon of "Si Liu Ju" in

Xiping Folk Songs. The "*Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs belongs to the Six tone *Zhi* mode with *Bian Gong* added. In the fifth and sixth sentences, it uses the tone transfer technique of "*Qingjue* sound changes to *Gong* sound", ending the entire song by raising a pure fourth interval. This conclusion is a new theory proposed in this article after a comprehensive analysis of 22 works by Xiping Folk Songs. This theory has also been recognized by Dr. Li Jianwei, a researcher in ethnic music (J.W. Li, personal communication, January 1, 2024), and is another innovative point of this paper. There are 22 Xiping folk songs that use the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*", which fully demonstrates that this melody is used more frequently in Xiping Town and has a good mass foundation. But folk songs, as a form of folk oral literature, have the characteristic of variability in transmission. During the improvisation process, the singer will randomly make changes in the melody, speed, intensity, and other aspects of the music based on their own understanding, memory, and hobbies. This change can lead to different variations in the melody (Zhu, 2014). The same goes for Xiping folk songs. According to music score analysis, the 22 Xiping folk songs not only have the characteristics of folk songs from the same source, but also have certain differences. Even every folk singer singing the same song at different times has differences in melody. This study focuses more on the commonalities of these works being referred to as "*Si Liu Ju*", in order to explore the conceptual meaning of "*Si Liu Ju*". From a melodic perspective, the Xiping folk song "*Si Liu Ju*" refers to a theme melody with certain musical characteristics.

In terms of musical sentence structure, this article uses sentence analysis to analyze 22 Xiping Folk Songs works that use the theme melody of "*Si Liu Ju*". The research findings suggest that the two sentence structures of the upper and lower sentences are the core of the variation of "*Si Liu Ju*" music structure. The paper comprehensively demonstrates the different structural forms of "*Si Liu Ju*" in practical applications, which makes people's understanding of *Si Liu Ju* clearer. However, according to the statistics in Table 2, the music structure of the last three lines of the work clearly does not match the original Chinese meaning of "*Si Liu Ju*". The Chinese meaning of "*Si Liu Ju*" refers to four or six phrases, but these works have 5, 6, or 7 phrases. From this perspective, "*Si Liu Ju*" is a general term for this sentence structure in Xiping folk songs, and it is not as precise.

The relationship between Xiping Folk Songs "*Si Liu Ju*" and "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" and Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu "*Si Liu Ju*". I have reviewed the works of Yunyang Folk Songs published by Meng Changcheng and Gong Wangchun in 2012. Research has found that the thirteen "Yun Yang Si Liu Ju" folk songs recorded in the Lantern Song section and the theme melody of Xiping Folk Songs "*Si Liu Ju*" belong to the Folk songs from the same source. Both are basically similar in terms of music structure and theme melody, and even have the same lyrics. For example, Yunyang's folk songs "*Cong Ci Wo Zai Bu Du Bo*" and Xiping Folk Songs "*Si Liu Ju Dai Duo Zi* (5)". Meng Changcheng and Gong Wangchun also believe that "*Si Liu Ju*" is the main tone of "Lantern Song" (Meng&Gong, 2012). Therefore, I can believe that "*Si Liu Ju*" and "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" in Xiping Folk Songs refer to the same thing. It's just that "*Yunyang Si Liu Ju*" has further developed and evolved into a medium to long form of Quyi based on the Qupai "*Si Liu*

"Ju", but its music itself is still the theme melody of the folk song "Si Liu Ju". In addition, Xiping Town is under the jurisdiction of Xichuan County in Nanyang Prefecture. Xiping Folk Songs are commonly known as "Luo Gu Qu" or "Hua Gi Zi Ddiao" among the people. Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu includes Xiping Folk Songs (Lin, 2023). Therefore, "Si Liu Ju" in Zhong Zhou Luo Gu Qu and "Si Liu Ju" in Xiping Folk Songs are the same thing.

Of course, during the research process, it was found that some folk artists did not have a clear understanding of "Si Liu Ju". This has led to some researchers making labeling errors when recording folk style. For example, the work "Shi Hen" by p131 in "A Preliminary Exploration of Xiping Folk Songs" is not a "Si Liu Ju" work in Xiping Folk Songs. I hope my research findings can provide some reference for folk artists, folk song enthusiasts, and researchers.

The personal interviews with folk artists and cultural scholars involved in this paper were conducted with the consent of the interviewees before the interviews. The interview content is only for scientific research, and the disclosure of the interview content was only carried out with their consent. In addition, I am a local of Xixia County and Xiping Town is under the jurisdiction of Xixia County. During the interview process, I did not encounter any language communication barriers. When translating into English, I received help from English professionals, made revisions, and proofread. This is to clarify.

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