Chapter 13
Transmission and Education of *Hakka* Folk Songs in Hong Kong: Distinctiveness and Commonality in Local, National, and Global Contexts

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13.1 Prologue

> Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. (UNESCO, World Heritage Centre 2008, p. 5)

The accelerated development of globalization ignited an interest in the unique traditional culture of individual regions and communities. *Hakkaology*, a globalized culture-awareness trend in the study of the Hakka community, has also exerted its influence in Hong Kong. *Hakkaology* affects the preservation, transmission and inheritance, and further development of the Hakka community's unique culture. This chapter begins with a general overview of the Hakka community in Greater China and outside the region. The non-material cultural heritage in music, specifically, the Hakka folk song genre, including its characteristics, educational value, and transmission is then deliberated.

13.2 The Hakka Community In and Outside Greater China

The Hakka community has long been known as a large population distributed mainly over southern China and to different parts of the world. The Hakkas are among the larger Han Chinese communities that speak their own dialect. As reported in the 12th World Hakka Reunion Assembly in Meizhou [梅州], the number of

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Hakkas in 1995 reached about 55 million in China; 5.95 million in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan; 4.54 million in other countries (Mo 2005). According to the Census and Statistics Department, about 4.7 % of Hong Kong citizens aged five and above in 2006 could speak the Hakka dialect (cited in Yip 2012). The Federation of Hakka Associations [澳門客屬社團聯合總會] (2006) reported that more than 100,000 Hakka people constituted a quarter of the total Macau population (Associação Geral dos Naturais de Hakka de Macau 2011). In Taiwan, the Hakka community is estimated at 4.2 million (approximately 18 % of the total population) (Taiwan Hakka Affairs Council 2012a). The Hakka population worldwide is estimated at 80 million (Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2012a, b).

Hakka [客家] literally means "guest families" in Chinese, which suggests that the Hakkas came from outside the region where they currently live and thus, are non-natives. The Hakkas are known to originate from central China, south of the Yellow River [河南] and represent a branch of the Han people [漢族], which is the largest ethnic group in China (Liu 1994; Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2012a, b). According to Encyclopædia Britannica Online (2012a, b) "In a series of migrations, the Hakka moved, settled in their present locations in southern China, and then often migrated overseas to various countries throughout the world". The Hakkas are sometimes referred to as "nomadic gypsies" (Sascha Matuszak 2011) or "the Jews of Asia" (Chan n.d.). Many Hakkas live in Malaysia (including Sabah and Sarawak), Singapore, Thailand, and even Jamaica (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012).

In recent years, the Hakkas have become more conscious of themselves as a large clan and organized various world conferences in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Toronto. The conferences addressed issues related to Hakka history, social economy, settlements, religion, ethnic relations, language, and music (Hsu 2001a, b, c; College of Hakka Studies 2006; CUHK 2007). The Toronto Hakka Conference was first held in December 2000. The recent 2012 conference carried the theme "Many Places, One People" (Toronto Hakka Conference 2012). A "new learning movement" for the Hakkas has recently emerged (College of Hakka Studies 2006).

13.3 Distinct Hakka Heritage in Hong Kong and Neighboring Regions

The unique cultural heritage of the Hakkas in Hong Kong includes walled villages [圍村], *feng shui* woodlands [風水林], and Hakka cuisine [客家菜]. Walled villages were built to improve protection and security. The best known villages include Sam Tung Uk Village [三棟屋] in Tsuen Wan, which has been developed into a museum (Hong Kong Heritage Museum 2011), and Tsang Tai Uk in Sha Tin [沙田曾大屋].

Sam Tung Uk [三棟屋] in Tsuen Wan

(Antiquities and Monuments Office 2004)

Tsang Tai Uk in Sha Tin [沙田曾大屋]

(Wikipedia user – Chong 2008)

In the neighboring Fujian Province, constructions similar to the walled villages have been added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site list. The villages are called the Fujian tulous [福建土樓], which are estimated to have been built during the Song and Yuan dynasties from the eleventh century to the thirteenth century (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992a, b). These structures are massive multi-story earthen defensive buildings that can house up to 800 people each. The tulous reflect unique communal living and spiritual needs. They are "properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value" (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 1992a, World Heritage List section). The tulous are situated in mountainous regions, where a major type of Hakka folk songs originated, the Hakka mountain songs [客家山歌, Hakka shange].

Fujian Tulou

(Photos taken by the author in Fujian, August 2011)

The unique shape of the Hakka tulou has a related story. During the Cold War in the '60s, spy satellites from the United States photographed countless pictures of many Hakka tulous (around 1,500). The US did not understand what they found and believed them to be nuclear facilities or bomb silos. After 20 years of research at the end of 1985, the CIA sent a couple disguised as tourists to Fujian to investigate further. The "silos" were confirmed as authentic historic tulous for residents and not nuclear facilities, much to the relief of the US authorities (Sohu Travel 2010).

Thus, the cultures of different countries and regions have to be learned to avoid confusion or a misunderstanding that could lead to war and other conflicts.

Hakka villages are often found near *feng shui* growth [風水林], woodlands planted naturally or artificially by villagers and believed to bring good fortune. These woodlands "commanded great significance both religiously and pragmatically, and therefore called for preservation" (Hong Kong Herbarium 2003). Feng shui growth helps moderate temperature, provide shade and clean air, as well as prevent landslides. The folk wisdom behind maintaining feng shui growth reflects the scientific orientation of the Hakkas.

Hakka cuisine [客家菜] is another tangible cultural heritage well-known to the Hong Kong Chinese. Hakka cuisine is also known as the cuisine of the East River [東江菜] (Zhong and Liu 2007), and Hakka restaurants [醉瓊樓] are familiar to many. The most famous Hakka dishes include salt-baked chicken [鹽焗雞], pickled pork with preserved cabbage [梅菜扣肉], and *poon choi* [盆菜]. The latter has become a recent favorite among locals. This tasty dish has different kinds of foods layers laminated in a big bowl [*poon choi* 盆菜 in Chinese]. It is usually served for as many as 12 people in festive occasions. Another feature of Hakka cuisine is the famous Hakka wine [客家娘酒], a tasty, glutinous rice wine served with *poon choi*. Hakka music, particularly folk songs, are currently brought forth only during feasts and other festive occasions for entertainment. The intangible Hakka culture, especially the oral/aural music tradition, is not as readily accessible as it used to be.

13.4 Hakka Musical Heritage

The musical heritage of the Hakka, especially Hakka Han music [客家漢樂], Hakka opera [客家漢劇], and folk songs, is more prominent in the Chinese music world. Hakka folk songs include the better known Hakka mountain songs [客家山歌] because Hakkas used to live and work in mountainous regions. This musical heritage, however, is much overshadowed by the westernized music tradition in Hong Kong and not usually heard even in the music world locally.

Hakka Han music, instrumental music in nature, is also known as the Hakka Eight Sonorities [客家八音]. The music is found to have a close relationship with Hakka seasonal and life rituals. In the course of migration, Hakka music from the Central Plains has continued to absorb other folk music, coupled with the original Hakka style, and gradually evolved into a distinctive Hakka style. Music has been an important feature of Hakka ceremonies and banquets (Hakka Affairs Council 客家委員會 2005).

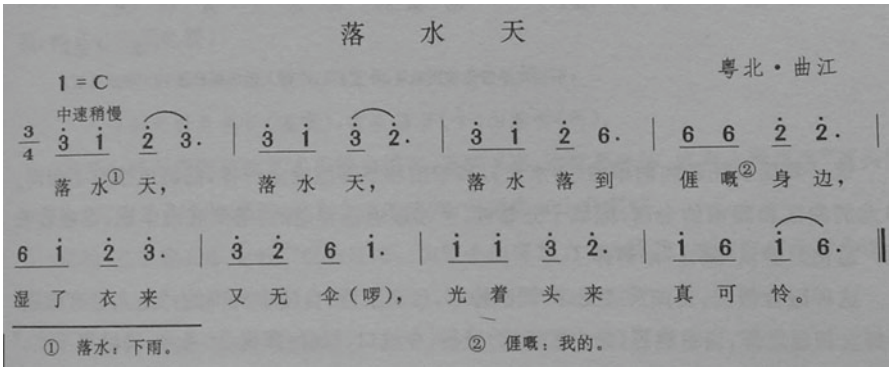
Hakka opera comes in two types: the big Hakka opera [客家大戲] and the three-role tea-picking opera [三腳採茶戲]. Hakka opera is based on Hakka folk songs [客家山歌] and popular music [小調]. The tea-picking opera is smaller in scale, with two to three people playing the main roles, namely, the male, female, and clown roles [生, 旦, 丑角] with singing, dancing, and dialogues involved. Casual clothes

instead of dramatic costumes are commonly used, along with simple props or decorations. The smaller in scale makes it easier to be performed on spot in the field. The actors may also play the instrumental accompaniments. The big Hakka opera involves a sufficient number of actors playing a variety of characters. The big Hakka opera is a mature performance art form with plots complex enough to reflect different social attitudes (Taiwan Hakka Affairs Council 2012b). Picking tea leaves has been a common livelihood in the past; thus, leading to the Hakka folk songs being further categorized into tea-picking songs [採茶歌], and an opera genre called tea-picking opera [採茶戲] (Taiwan Hakka Affairs Council 2012b).

13.5 Hakka Folk Songs

A glimpse of the characteristics of Hakka folk songs may be revealed from a relatively simple folk song "Rainy Day" [落水天] (see score below) (Mo 2005; Chinese Music Score Web 2009) found in the school music repertoire. It has not been taught clearly as a style of Hakka songs but just another folk song sung in the Guangdong region. With *Hakkaology* emerging and the song carefully analyzed, the stylistic features of Hakka folk songs stand out conspicuously. The skeletal notes [骨幹音] used are la,-do-re-mi. The melody features mi (3) as the starting note, revolves around the three notes do- re-mi (1-2-3), descends at most to la (6), and ends on la (denoting the Yu mode [羽調式] in Chinese music) with the do-la,-do-la, notes pattern. These are found to typify the melodies of many Hakka folk songs under research in local Hong Kong context. The verse of the folk song is obviously identified as Hakka dialect. The word 佢 is a typical Hakka way of saying "I/me" since in Chinese, the word is written differently as 我. Whereas, 落水天 [for "rainy day"] is also in Hakka dialect which is written as 下雨天 in proper Chinese or as 落雨天 in colloquial Cantonese. These characteristics are not readily conveyed to a non-Chinese singer or even a Chinese reader who does not know or speak the dialect. Investigation into the field reveals a vast pool of styles and types of Hakka folk songs.

Hakka folk song: "Rainy Day" (Mo 2005, p. 289)



The pool of Hakka folk songs may be classified in a relatively new way by referring to the language tone color [語言色彩區] (Huang 2012; China Web 2003). From the late twentieth century to the early twenty-first century, in a nationwide large-scale project involving the compilation and documentation of folk songs in Mainland China, the folk songs of the Hakkas collected were included in the Guangdong volume of Chinese folk songs (Chinese Folk Songs Series. Guangdong Volume Editorial Committee 2005). The folk songs in this region were categorized according to three main dialects: Cantonese, Hakka, and Min-nan [廣東話, 客家話, 及閩南話]. Further research into the Hakka folk song genre revealed that the genre is classified into more refined styles of singing according to the intonations of the Hakka dialect in different regions. In Guangdong, there are the styles of Meixian, Xìng-níng, Wǔ-huá, and Zǐ-jīn [梅縣, 興寧, 五華, 紫金]. The styles of singing may vary from one location to another.

Similarities in verse structure are recognized in the different styles of Hakka folk songs. Usually, the verses consist of stanzas of four phrases, each with seven words (in Hakka, a stanza is 一 條, 七言四句為 一 條]. Phrases one, two, and four rhyme, following a set of rhyming system. Many folk songs are performed in responsorial (antiphonal) [對歌] style, so that the stanzas are mostly set in even numbers, from 2 to 12. The verses may be improvised on the spot (Yip 1989, 2012; Cheung 2004; Liu 2007; Lai 1993) if the singers know the rhyming system well and response fast. The antiphonal singing may be extended depending on the wit and expertise of the singers.

Another method of classifying Hakka folk songs is by dividing them according to verse content or the occasions for which they are sung. Apart from the abovementioned tea-picking type, songs written may be about sisters, the six different links, ancient people, word riddles, and sighing [姊妹歌, 六連歌, 唱古人, 唱字眼, 嘆情] (Lai 1985 cited in Yip 1989). The bridal lament [哭嫁歌] and the funeral lament [哭喪歌] are two special types of Hakka folk songs classified according to occasion. Both types used to be sung by Hakka women (Yip 1989, 2012; Cheung 2004; Liu 2007) but are not much heard now in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the singing of these two song categories are still a practice during weddings and funerals in other Chinese ethnic groups such as the *Tujia* minority group [土家族] (Yu 2002).

13.6 Transmission and Education of Hakka Folk Songs in Hong Kong

Information regarding the transmission and education of Hakka folk songs are rarely found but in the Tai Po Community Centre. Some Hakka *shange* gatherings [客家山歌聚唱, singing gatherings of Hakka folk songs] organized by the Salvation Army of Hong Kong are held at the Centre. The deliberation below refers to information collected by the author from June 2010 to November 2011 based on those

Hakka folk song singing gatherings and public performance observed at the Hong Kong Railway Museum. The performance was entitled *Guangdong Music under the Tree (Hakka Mountain Songs)*. The singers were also interviewed to obtain more information about their musical background and their singing. Witnessing the event revealed characteristics of the shange gathering, the singers, their singing, and their songs.

Hakka folk song singing gathering

The public performance

(Pictures are taken by the author)

The gatherings were held on Monday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the town hall of the Community Centre, which accommodates more than 100 people, including the singers. The gatherings were at times moved to a smaller room because of booking difficulties and that led to fewer participants. I was able to meet 20 singers (Table 13.1): 12 from Tai Po and its vicinity, 7 from Sai Kung and its vicinity, and 1 from Canton (the last had heard about the gathering and was eager to participate). One singer revealed she had immigrated to England and recently returned to Hong Kong to join the function. She said that there were similar singing gatherings in England organized by the Hakka immigrants. The popularity of the singing gathering has spread beyond Hong Kong among Hakka communities.

The folk song gathering attracted mainly the older generation of the Hakka community, folks in the New Territories. All singers, except the one from Canton, were elderlies. Although the gatherings were initiated by the Salvation Army for the elderly, the participants sang enthusiastically, considering that at least half of them were around 80 and one was 90. (The others did not want to disclose their age but according to the organizer, the target elderly participants were 60 years old and above.) A woman on a wheelchair attended the gathering, accompanied by her retired son. An "ingrained passion" (Cheung 2004, p. 76) to Hakka folk singing was evident.

The 20 Hakka folk singers consisted of 12 females and 8 males. Of the 20 singers, 11 were involved in the 2011 public performance (Table 13.1), and 10 had joined the gathering since 2003 or even earlier. Cheung (2004), who conducted a study on folk songs in the urban setting, named these ten participants his informants (Table 13.1). Of these ten participants, eight were indigenous according to Cheung, who also inferred that their singing might be more authentic. Regardless, their

Table 13.1 Hakka folk singers and the regions where they live

	Folk singers		Gender	Residence	
1	陳 明[a]	Chan Ming	M	汀角村	Ting Kok Village
2	張仕娣[a, b]	Cheung Shu Tai	F	運頭塘村	Wan Tau Tong Village
3	徐觀勝	Chui Koon Sing	M	大埔	Tai Po
4	何愛娣[b]	Ho Oi Tai	F	將軍澳寶林邨	Junk Bay Po Lam Estate
5	劉福嬌[a, b]	Lau Fook Kiu	F	西貢	Sai Kung
6	劉書田[b]	Lau Shu Tin	M	清水灣	Clear Water Bay
7	劉添蓮[a, b]	Lau Tim Lin	M	章樹灘	Cheung Shue Tan
8	李 群[a, b]	Lee Kwan	F	大埔蕉畔	Tai Po
9	李馬嬌[a]	Lee Ma Kiu	F	大埔大元邨	Tai Po Tai Yuen Estate
10	李新長[b]	Lee Sun Cheung	F	西貢南山波羅斜	Sai Kung Shan Po Lo Che
11	李帶娣[a]	Lee Tai Tai	F	大埔鳳園	Tai Po Fung Yuen
12	蘇來興	So Loi Hing	M	大元邨	Tai Yuen Estate
13	宋紀娣	Sung Kei Tai	F	大網仔	Tai Mong Tsai
14	曾觀有[a]	Tsang Koon Yau	M	廣福邨	Kwong Fuk
15	溫玉琳	Wenyu Lin	F	廣州羅崗	Canton
16	黃春嬌	Wong Chun Kiu	F	大埔鳳園	Tai Po Fung Yuen
17	黃仁妹[b]	Wong Yan Mui	F	西貢黃竹灣村	Sai Kung
18	邱麗珍[b]	Yau Lai Chun	F	清水灣孟公屋	Clear Water Bay
19	葉房有[a, b]	Yip Fong Yau	M	大埔汀角路	Tai Po Ting Kok Road
20	俞有才[a, b]	Yue Yau Choi	M	汀角村	Ting Kok Village

[a]These singers also participated in the study by Cheung (2004)
[b]These singers were also involved in the public performance in 2011

persistence in participating in the folk song gathering might be able to educate newer members to singing Hakka folk songs and transmitting the heritage unwittingly. The characteristics of the observed gathering and singing are as follows:

1. As the name of the activity suggests, the performers sang using the Hakka dialect. The audience also knew the dialect, which allowed them to respond to the songs. Many of the singers could speak fluent Cantonese.
2. A number of performers were eager to sing. The participants and the sequence of performance were determined by asking the participants to draw lots.
3. All selected participants sang a cappella and used a microphone. (A cappella singing is a custom when they sang in the open field but the use of microphone is a more contemporary practice.)
4. Some participants sang from memory, whereas others used a song book/sheet.
5. The singers enjoyed their number but performed casually before the audience. (A singer who forgot a few lines checked the song book on the front table. One or two singers paused in the middle of their singing to drink water.)

6. Aside from singing solo, the singers at times paired up to sing antiphonally.
7. Either solo or antiphonally, each (pair) could sing for only 5–10 min because the 2-h gathering could only accommodate about 15 singers.
8. Once in a while, an expert singer improvised and challenged the audience for a response. This part of the program is usually the most entertaining/interesting, allowing singers to demonstrate their expertise and humor.

A range of learning paths was reflected by the singers during the interviews. Although many of them had joined the folk song gathering for quite some time, not all were long-time singers. Five participants claimed that they had been singing for only a few years, and one participant had joined only a few months. The following are interview excerpts:

> *I have sung for several years only. I learnt through listening to cassette tapes. I have bought more than 10 cassette tapes and memorized the verses…I have learnt to sing love songs and songs for different festive seasons [應節歌].* (Lee Kwan)

> *I sang for only three to four years. I learnt from cassette tapes and VCDs made by Laam Chun…I took computer lessons from the Centre and learnt to type the verses. There are many different verses that I have typed into the computer. So I remember the verses and share it with others.* (Cheung Shu Tai)

> *I have sung for just a few months. The others are singing so happily so I wanted to try. I am really happy that I can sing before so many people…My blood pressure has lowered since I started singing.* (Yau Lai Chun)

> *I have been listening to Hakka folk songs for years. I also learnt through books.* (Yip Fong Yau)

> *I have learnt to sing for around two years. I am illiterate. I was originally from the Sai Kung Elderly Center, which had a similar folk song gathering. I moved to Junk Bay and came to join this gathering.* (Ho Oi Tai)

The fresh singers acquired their skills mainly by rote learning and listening to peers' singing and recordings (cassette tapes and video compact discs). Long-term association with the singing gathering is a substantial factor, and peer influence is evident in the sharing of enthusiasm among friends, as well as from singer to audiences. Many self-initiated practices have been envisaged. The geographic distance has not discouraged people from joining the gathering. A loyal participant, Laam Chun, from whom the singers purchased the cassette tapes and VCDs, served as their middleman. Laam initially collected the folk songs and recorded the singing on cassettes and videos privately. The verses were transcribed into booklets. Together with the cassettes and VCDs, these booklets were sold to the audience, including the singers. Laam was later on authorized by the Salvation Army to help with documenting the singing through audio/video recordings. According to Laam, he loved listening to Hakka folk music, although he did not sing. He might have simply created a little business for himself, but this business has facilitated the

preservation of the singing tradition. Laam has also generously shared with the author his recordings and verse booklets to demonstrate his support for the preservation of the musical culture.

Many singers who have reached a certain level of expertise have sung for over 20 years. Some started singing in their childhood years and learned the songs from their peers. They paired up at times to sing antiphonally or challenged other singers or the audience to respond to their singing [對歌]. Among these pairs were Lau Fook Kiu and Lau Shu Tin, Chan Ming and Wen Yu Lin, Lee Kwan and Yip Fai, as well as Lau Tim Lin and Cheung Shu Tai, Lau Fook Kiu and Sung Kei Tai. They have sought to continue the tradition of antiphonal singing (usually male against female). Some of them have also created their own verses and have sung or been invited to sing at other venues on various occasions. Two of these expert singers, labeled as "the king and queen of Hakka singing" [客家歌王，西貢劉三姐], are briefly profiled below for their role in the transmission and education of Hakka folk songs.

Ms. Lau Fook Kiu is from Sai Kung and is also known as Sai Kung Lau Sam Je [西貢劉三姐]. 劉三姐 is a legendary figure famous for her folk song singing talent (Mo 2005). Ms. Lau has been invited to sing at the 2010 Chinese New Year Parade in Tsim Sha Tsui and during the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Geological Park. Her singing was recorded on a TV documentary of Hong Kong folk songs (RTHK 2004). She was 83 in 2010 but started singing when she was very young. Despite regrets about not having obtained sufficient education, she eagerly writes her own verses and passes her songs and the Hakka singing tradition on to others. She is highly familiar with the rhyme scheme of Hakka folk songs and can improvise on the spot during responsorial singing. She and her two friends, Lee Sun Cheung and Sung Kei Tai, also great folk singers, are being honored as "the three sisters of Sai Kung".

The three sisters of Sai Kung [西貢三姊妹]

(Picture provided by singers)

Song verses (From Lau)

Mr. Yue Yau Choi is from Tai Po and was 83 years old when he was interviewed in 2010. He has long been known for his expertise in singing Hakka folk songs.

Recognized as the king of Hakka singers, he has been invited to sing on various occasions. During the interview, he talked about his winning Hakka folk song contests [對歌] when he participated for the second time in Meixian [梅縣], a famous Hakka county in northeast Guangdong. He writes his own verses and has been devoted to recording Hakka folk song verses with his nice calligraphy. He continued learning by joining Hakka folk song contests and by studying through a number of Hakka folk recordings. His opinion of the style and skills of the other singers at gatherings reveals his concern about the authenticity of the genre.

Page of a Hakka folk song book (handwritten by Yue)

Yue singing at home

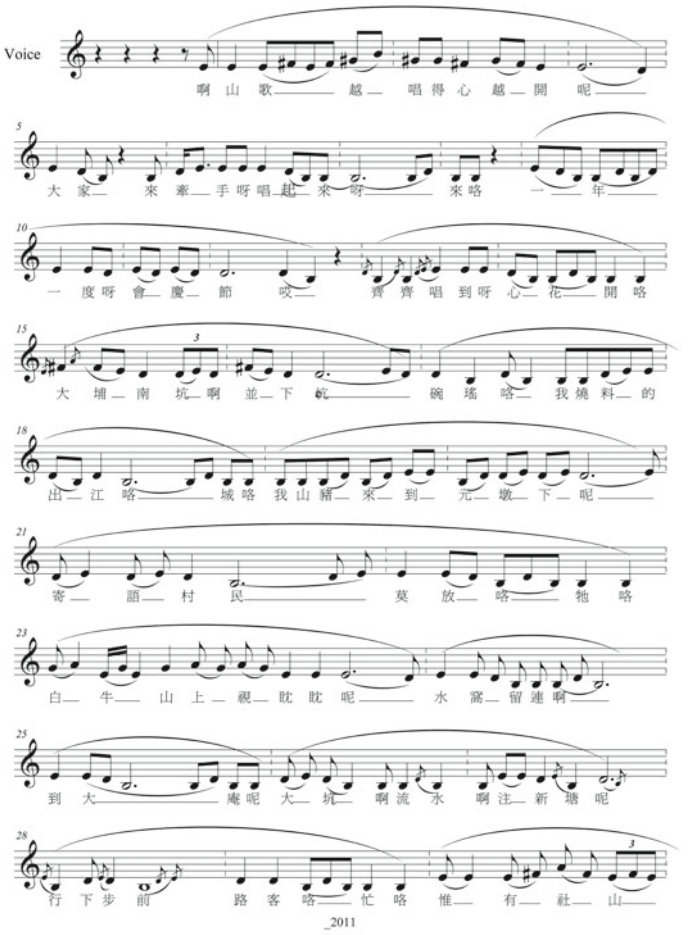
The transmission and education of Hakka folk songs as reflected by the expert singers are rather similar to those reflected by the new singers in that learning by rote persists. The singers' commitment toward self-learning by listening to peers' singing and listening to recordings reflects the informal learning characteristics common to the general folk songs. Some singers learn from books; however, the song books/sheets simply show the verses and do not include any music notation or the numeric scores [簡譜]. With consideration of the sophistication required by singing, articulating, phrasing, enunciation, and dynamics, as well as the kind of emotion induced by the interaction among the singers in the responsorial style, no method matches learning by rote in the transmission and education of Hakka folk songs, or any other kind of folk songs, for that matter.

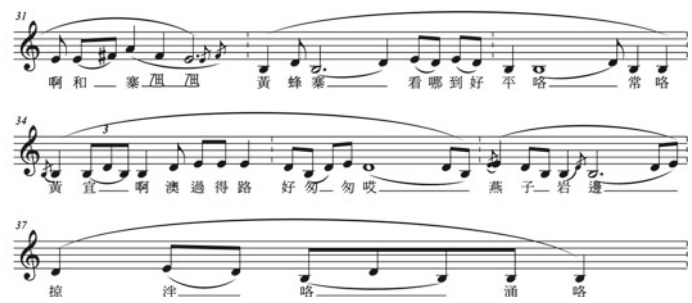
13.7 Distinctiveness of Hakka Folk Songs in Local Context

The following is a distinct Hakka folk song in local context, which can be used to show the general stylistic traits of the folk songs heard at Hakka folk song gatherings in Tai Po. The stave notation was transcribed from a sound recording of one of the singers at the gathering. As mentioned in the last paragraph, the notation cannot authentically reflect a full picture of the singing, especially in terms of tone color and flexibility in phrase articulation. The notation merely provides a general visualization when the sound recording cannot be enclosed in the text.

Tai Po Village Hakka folk song

大埔 村落客家山歌竹枝 詞





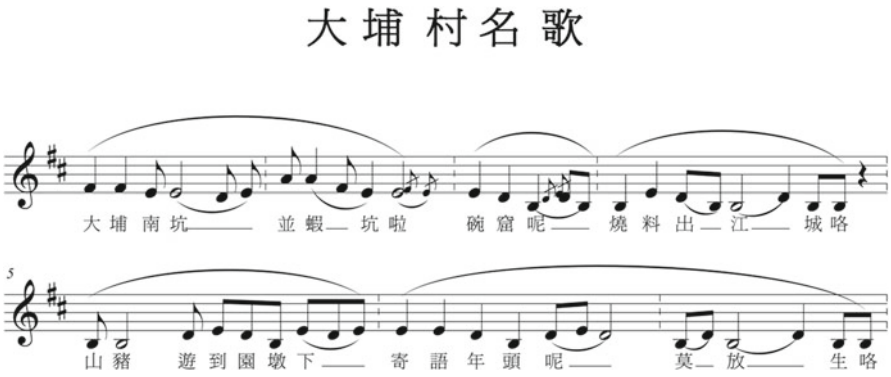
Similar to many other Hakka folk songs, the song is not syllabic. Abundant in melisma, the song also includes numerous ornamental notes and nonsensical words, thus masking the seven-word line structure. This poetic language structure common in Hakka folk songs reveals a link to a scholarly origin. The song sample above represents a variation of a historic work [新界九約竹枝詞] created around 1889 by two scholars from Sha Tin. The verses describe village views in the New Territories of Hong Kong and feature the characteristics of different regions in the countryside (Liu 2007). A melodic formula was determined when the phrases were analyzed. The varied and non-varied elements (Yip 2012) in local Hakka folk songs are further discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

The non-varied elements include: the melody hovering much around the skeletal tones la,-do-re and at times going up the mi note, rarely touching the fa note but may go as high as the upper la note, keeping the melody within an octave register; while the ending of the song on the la note indicating the Yu mode [羽調式]. (In Chinese music, the equivalents of do, re, mi, so, and la are *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu* [宮, 商, 角, 徵, 羽], respectively. The last note of the song denotes the mode of the song.) In addition to these is the prominent feature of ending many phrases with a la,-do-la,-la, note pattern. These non-varied elements highly distinguish this particular style of Hong Kong Hakka folk song. The varied elements include numerous ornaments hovering around la,-do-re and then ascend to mi-so in the melody. The non-varied and varied elements contributed to the color and style of the Hakka folk songs.

The song also exhibits a collage of new materials added to an existing verse. When read carefully, the first three lines (bars 1–14) do not blend well with the title of the song. The verses of these three lines are about singing songs happily for an annual celebration. The verses after these three lines are about the different villages in Tai Po. The three lines were added for a special occasion. The subtle switch of tonal center from the first line to the second line and the rest of the song more or less supports the view that re-creation of melody is involved.

Expert Hakka singers can freely create their own variation of the songs. The following excerpt deliberated is presented as another example. This song was created by Mr. Yue. The tune and verses are similar to those of the above song. The similarities of this excerpt with lines 4–6 or bars 15–22 of the score above are significant. The melody carries the usual Yu mode with la-do-re-mi as skeletal notes, and the note pattern ending the phrases follows the la-do-la-la style formula.

Another version of the Tai Po Village song



The above characteristics constitute the style of singing commonly heard in Hakka folk song gatherings. Cheung (2004) considers this style called Jiulongdiao [Kowloon mode, 九龍調] the most authentic of all local Hong Kong Hakka folk songs, with a standard of four 7-word lines in a stanza [四句板]. Another style of singing with a five-line stanza [五句板] is at times accompanied by a pair of bamboo clappers [竹板] with sawtooth-like edges playing some quick rhythms as introduction or interludes in between the stanzas (Yip 1989, 2012; Cheung 2004). Cheung (2004) named it as Lishediao [Lishe mode, 立舌調]. This style used to be sung by beggars in the olden days and is quite entertaining with its more rhythmic melodies. As the sound of the bamboo clappers can reach far, the style attracts the attention and interest of children, especially in the past. However, this style was rarely heard at the gatherings. At times, other styles were performed, including the Xingningdiao [Xing-ning mode, 興寧調], which is named after the place of origin of the style and the 5.5-line stanza verse [五句半板], an extended version of the standard five 7-word lines [五句板].

Other styles are mostly reflected as differences in mode, such as the Zi-jin mode [紫金調] originated from the Zi-jin dialect [紫金話] (Cheung 2004; Liu et al. 2007; Yip 2012), and the Xìng-níng mode [興寧調], as well as the Wǔ-huá mode [五華調] are connected to the originating regions. The Taiwan Hakkas refer to their styles of folk song singing as "9 styles and 18 modes" [九腔十八調] (Lai 1993). The Hakkas themselves realized that different Hakka dialects exist and that intonations vary. This variation could account for the emergence of more different styles of Hakka folk songs. Local Hakkas stated that they could not completely understand the language of the Hakkas from other regions, but some traits could be identified in their music. The flourishing styles in Hakka folk song singing (Wen 2007) have been justified by the different accents of the Hakkas, as well as their widespread population in Greater China and beyond. Despite the above, Hakka of Meixian [梅縣] in Guangdong is the most popular Hakka dialect (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012, Other Sinitic languages or dialects section) and Meixian Hakka folk song style is also one of the most widely recognized styles.

13.8 Educational Value and Related Concerns on the Inheritance of Hakka Folk Songs

The innate creative genes embedded in the Hakka folk song genre are undoubtedly clear, as shown above. The singers can be a performer, a composer, and a listener simultaneously. The melodic formula and rhyme scheme provide a framework as well as flexibility for the variation of melody contributing to the forming of a style of Hakka folk songs, while the creation of new verses incorporates and reflects the singer's mood and perspectives. Thus, creativity can be applied to the melodic line, verses, and tone production. This allowance of creating or keeping personal touch is invaluable to music education and education as a whole. Given the varied and

non-varied elements in music creation, the spirit should be transmitted to the younger generation.

Variation techniques that typify the melody and verse constructions of Hakka folk songs also indirectly shed light on Chinese traditional music, which significantly manifests individuality and personal styles. Numerous genres of Chinese music, whether instrumental or vocal, have different schools of performance. For example, in the playing of pipa (i.e., the Chinese lute), distinction is made between Pudong School and Pinhu School [琵琶派別: 浦東派, 平湖派等]. Cantonese opera singing may be in the *ma*, *nui*, or *fang* style [粵劇唱腔派別: 馬腔, 女腔, 芳腔等]. Likewise, this acceptance of individual style may be the impetus toward enthusiasm and love of singing, which sustains the singing culture of the Hakka community. Personal identity coincides well with the concept of democracy in the contemporary world, which is in transmission in the educational context as student-centered learning and inclusive education, both of which embrace diversity.

However, concerns have been expressed regarding the smoothness of the inheritance of the Hakka folk singing culture. Reasons include the demolition of the place that nourished the culture and the vanishing of the Hakka dialect as the younger generations are not speaking them. With the quick pace of modernization and urbanization, the living and working environments change drastically. The working conditions that the agrarian open fields used to prove for the Hakkas, which favored the development of folk songs, have become limited. The re-establishment of a singing environment, the Hakka *shange* gatherings at the Tai Po Community Centre, is far from comparable to the natural habitat. Nevertheless, the transformation is inevitable. The enthusiasm of these senior Hakkas for continuing the folk singing culture in the urban setting has been extended to the less senior Hakkas and could be extended to the younger Hakka generations as well as to the non-Hakka communities in Hong Kong. Regarding the dialect crucial to the singing of Hakka folk songs, the singing gathering is restricted to the elderly who can speak the Hakka dialect and sometimes to their friends from the bigger Hakka communities in Greater China and beyond. The younger Hakka generation mostly cannot speak or even comprehend the dialect. With the integration into Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong, a metropolitan city where English is also predominant, the difficulty of maintaining the Hakka language is compounded. However, the dialect still needs to be conserved for the following reasons:

> Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and the planet…It is thus urgent to take action to encourage broad and international commitment to promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity, including the safeguarding of endangered languages. (UNESCO 2012)

The oral tradition of both Hakka folk songs and the folk songs of other ethnic communities around the globe may be facing the common issue of preserving and transmitting this culture. Despite the recording ability enabled by technology, greater awareness among music scholars of the meaning of contributing time is necessary to accomplish the urgent recording work. Moreover, the relatively fewer staff

notations compared with the song verse documentation pose problems for visual learners. The essence of the singing requires a longer time for a more comprehensive documentation by any notation system, owing to the sophistication required in articulating the melodies. This issue awaits resolution to enhance the chance for inclusion of chiefly oral traditional music in the school context and for wider transmission.

13.9 Concluding Remarks

The renaissance of hakkaology has drawn increased attention on the conservation, inheritance, and development of Hakka folk songs. This attention carries with it the role of music education in the school or community context. Reconstruction of the original performing ground is rarely feasible or possible. Sustaining the artistry of Hakka folk music depends on the effort to raise awareness of the importance of folk music culture and the appreciation for diversity. Of equal importance is the preservation of the language/dialect for a holistic understanding of the music, which is inseparable from language, whether in Hakka folk songs or in any type of ethnic folk song in Greater China and beyond. The senior Hakka community has demonstrated an enthusiasm in continuation of the folk song singing tradition and has been committed to the transmission of this culture. Local music teaching professionals do need to take initiatives to shoulder the responsibility in providing time and directing their students and the non-music communities in and outside the region to realize/treasure the value embedded in their intangible cultural heritage, possibly for further development and revitalization.

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