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**12 GIRLS BAND AND KODO:  
COMPARING OF INVENTED TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN CHINA AND  
JAPAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

When traditions have been changed to suit the needs of the day, they are actually no longer ancient, immemorial or unalterable. This kind of traditions is defined as ‘invented tradition’ by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger. If the definition is applied to the traditions of East Asia, traditional Chinese music by 12 Girls Band and traditional Japanese music by Kodo are representative illustrations. Both the two musical groups perform fusions of traditional elements with non-traditional ones, which are categorized as world music by genre. Based on the two examples, this research explores how traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music are ‘invented’ in contemporary society, and what influence the development of traditional musical culture in China and Japan. By studying biographies and discographies of 12 Girls Band and Kodo, data of the research are presented as stories of them comprising several aspects of their performing careers. The analysis is conducted along with their initial international success back to domestic influences, which leads to a discussion on the different ways of utilizing ‘invented’ traditional music to present national identities of China and Japan, respectively. Through discussion, two different ways of expressing national identities are revealed which influenced different development of traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music. The research finds that traditional Chinese music is invented as for promoting national identity domestically in China, while traditional Japanese music is invented for promoting a national identity toward the world.

**Key words:** traditional Chinese music, traditional Japanese music, invented tradition, world music, 12 Girls Band, Kodo, national identity, *taiko*, Japanese market

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART I: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH.....	1
2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC.....	1
3. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	3
3.1 <i>Research aim</i> .....	3
3.2 <i>Research Questions</i> .....	3
3.3 <i>Theoretical perspective and research method</i> .....	3
4. DISPOSITION.....	5
<b>PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1. THE INVENTION OF TRADITION.....	6
2. CONCEPTUALIZING TRADITIONAL MUSIC.....	6
2.1 <i>Traditional music and folk Music</i> .....	7
2.2 <i>Traditional music and world music</i> .....	7
2.3 <i>Minyue: A Chinese Perspective on Traditional Music</i> .....	8
2.4 <i>Hogaku: A Japanese Perspective on Traditional Music</i> .....	8
<b>PART III: 12 GIRLS BAND AND KODO</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1. 12 GIRLS BAND.....	10
1.1 <i>The founding of 12 Girls Band: A meaningful beginning</i> .....	10
1.2 <i>Members: Talents cultivated by profound traditional Chinese culture</i> .....	12
1.3 <i>Music Style: Three Constituents</i> .....	17
1.4 <i>Development: Rise and fall</i> .....	18
2. KODO.....	22
2.1 <i>Founding of Kodo: Children of drum with heartbeat</i> .....	22
2.2 <i>Members: An extended family and ascetic lifestyle</i> .....	24
2.3 <i>Music Style: Three principal elements and various taikos</i> .....	26
2.4. <i>Development: One big organization</i> .....	28
<b>PART IV: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>31</b>
1. ANALYSIS: INITIAL SUCCESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.....	31
1.1 <i>12 Girls Band and Japanese market</i> .....	31
1.2 <i>Kodo and the professionalization of taiko performance</i> .....	34
2. DISCUSSION.....	35
2.1 <i>The Days of Dreariness: Before Entering the International Market</i> .....	35
2.2 <i>Return of the Heroes: Domestic Reactions to the International Influences</i> .....	36
2.3 <i>From International back to Local: Presenting of National Identities</i> .....	37
<b>PART V: CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>45</b>

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background of the Research**

In 2004, a sensation of traditional Chinese music was aroused by a musical group called 12 Girls Band. Overthrowing the image of traditional Chinese music as old and exclusive, 12 Girls Band's fashionable reinterpretation of traditional Chinese music widely attracted Chinese audience and challenged the depressed traditional music market in China. When Chinese audience were dazzled by the music and performance of these beautiful Chinese girls, one fact was nearly neglected that this 'Chinese' band was actually 'made in Japan'. As a matter of fact, 12 Girls Band belonged to a Japanese company whose mainly targeted market is in Japan in spite of their Chinese background. Because of the same geographical affinities, it would not be so surprising to audience to see a Chinese musical group succeeded in Japan. However, the 12 Girls Band's sensation had already expanded from Japan and Southeast Asia to invade North America before the Chinese audience were aware of it. Therefore, the distinct experience of 12 Girls Band and their music provoke a lot of considerations with relate to traditional Chinese music.

In search of the development of traditional music in Japan, a coincident case in twenty-year ago could be found which is somehow similar to the experience of 12 Girls Band. It was in the beginning of 1980s that a Japanese *taiko* drumming troupe, Kodo, brought their traditional performances appearing at the Berlin Festival. Following the international debut, Kodo has been giving thousands of performances all over the world. However, it is hard for audience to relate Kodo's international profile to their ascetic lifestyle and training on an isolated island of Japan, Sado Island. Kodo's way of living and studying music on Sado Island has been kept by Kodo so far as their tradition. Being a internationally popularized drumming troupe, Kodo and its reinterpretation of traditional Japanese music are equally thought-provoking to the traditional Chinese music made by 12 Girls Band.

### **2. Significance of the Topic**

Confucius once said that 'music is born of emotion'. This kind of emotion may even exist earlier

than human languages. As a 'language' without boundaries, music has always been reflections of culture, history and religion in the context of social development. Listening to the music is apparently the most applicable and common way to get to know music. However, verbal communication out of music is valuable. Nicholas Cook (1998; pp 270) argues that words are indispensable for people in the process of creating the meaning of their own to the music they listen to. Hence, studying traditional music by language and writing is essential to further understand the corresponding culture, history and religion.

Not only is the study of traditional music of great significance, but also cultural exchanging relation of China and Japan is meaningful to the research topic. The Japanese historian, Naito Konan once used the making of tofu to describe cultural relation of China and Japan<sup>1</sup>. He argued that the formulation of Japanese culture is the process of making tofu. Without the Chinese culture functioning as coagulants, today's Japanese culture would not be formed though Japan possessed a cultural feature like soy milk<sup>2</sup>. Study of musical history between China and Japan also shows that traditional Japanese music was greatly influenced by traditional Chinese music. Most of the Chinese scholars studying comparison of traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music regard origin of the two are similar musical cultural paradigms within Eastern Asian area. The similarity can be found in both ancient music and traditional musical instruments. Such as Zhang Xiaomei (2005) studies the process that Japan absorbed Chinese *yanyue*<sup>3</sup> to adapt into own localized Japanese *gagaku*<sup>4</sup>. Besides, Xu Yuanyong (2007; pp 121-128) discusses the Japanese traditional musical instrument, *shakuhachi*<sup>5</sup>, and its Chinese origin. Therefore, studying Chinese traditional music and Japanese traditional music from a comparative perspective is significant to a specific understanding of connection between China and Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> See Naito, Konan (1997), Naito Konan ZenShuu 9 (Completed Collection of Naito Konan, Vol. 9) Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo

<sup>2</sup> Tofu is a soft white food originated in China, and popularized in East and Southeast Asian which is made by coagulating soy milk. Tofu is also regarded as representative culture of Japan.

<sup>3</sup> *Yanyue* (in Chinese character: 燕乐) is a form of traditional Chinese court music.

<sup>4</sup> *Gagaku* (in Japanese Kanji: 雅楽) is the traditional Japanese court music.

<sup>5</sup> *Shakuhachi* (in Japanese Kanji: 尺八) is a traditional Japanese end-blown flute.

### **3. Research Design**

#### 3.1 Research aim

This research aims to explore how traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music have been ‘invented’ in contemporary society through a comparative perspective. It also explains how and why the two cases are similar and distinct from each other. This research intends to contribute to the promotion of Chinese and Japanese traditional music culture. It is further expected that comparison of traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music could illuminate understanding of East Asian cultural and identities.

#### 3.2 Research Questions

Focusing on traditional music culture, this research compares development of traditional music in China and Japan in terms of world music. The comparison is based on two examples of traditional musical groups, 12 Girls Band and Kodo, from China and Japan, respectively. It studies how traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music were revived through fusion of different musical elements in the international music market. The research questions of the study are as following:

- a. How traditional Chinese music by 12 Girls Band and traditional Japanese music by Kodo are ‘invented’ in contemporary society?
- b. Based on the two examples, 12 Girls Band and Kodo, what influence development of traditional music culture in China and Japan?

#### 3.3 Theoretical perspective and research method

##### 3.3.1 Theoretical perspective

In order to find appropriate research methods to approach the research questions, it is crucial to identify the research discipline. Musicology and its branch studies can help to narrow down research scope and formulate feasible research approaches. Musicology is often understood as the scientific discipline concerned with the task of gathering verifiable historical facts about music and the analysis of musical configurations. This understanding presupposes ‘a more or less objective

mind of the researcher' and 'an inert object of study of music' (Piza, 1991). However, the emergence of ethnomusicology made up for the shortage of 'inert object of study'. Ethnomusicological studies are interdisciplinary that often apply theories and methods from cultural anthropology, cultural studies and sociology as well as other disciplines in social sciences and humanities. In popular music studies, classical popular music studies describe the forces that influence production of music, such as corporate structures, marketing strategies, economic pressures, and technological developments. As a branch of musicology, ethnomusicology focuses on the study of social and cultural aspects of music in local and global contexts.

### 3.3.2 Research method

Based on this theoretical perspective, the author chooses 12 Girls Band and Kodo as two examples to study in order to get an insight of traditional music in contemporary China and Japan. Both the two performing groups are representative in fusion of traditional and non-traditional music. It is crucial to discover the stories of these two groups, their music, their music production, marketing strategies and career experience. Therefore, the data mainly consist of four types of sources that are biographies, discographies, monographs of other scholars and television interview. First of all, I collect detailed informative biographies of 12 Girls Band and Kodo from their official websites. Secondly, I prepare full discographies including CD albums and DVD music videos released by 12 Girls Band (twelve Japanese albums) and Kodo (twenty-two albums). Thirdly, I choose three monographs focusing on 12 Girls Band (Mastunaga, 2010), the development of Japanese *taiko* art (Bensen, 2006), and Kodo's predecessor 'Sado no Kuni Odenkoza' (Lim, 2009). Last but not least, an interview of television talk show with the key producer of 12 Girls Band is also an important source of data. All of these data are interpreted as detailed introduction of 12 Girls Band and Kodo in founding, member, music style and development.

### 3.3.3 Pros and Cons of the research method

The research method selected is able to find out the market strategies, corporation structure and economic pressure etc. in terms of a classic popular music studies. However, studying meaning of the traditional music by 12 Girls Band and Kodo can not be engaged in the research. If meaning of the music by the two musical groups need to be revealed, a semiotic concept of music as symbolic



communication argued by George H. Lewis (1982) is most suitable. Nevertheless, due to the limited professional background of the author, this research does not employ this method to do discourses of pure music. On the other hand, data of the research selected from three main sources may reflect multiple aspects of the two musical groups. However, except for biographies and discographies, this research relies on secondary material but lacks of primary resources. The reliability of material is not guaranteed as the secondary data are collected and processed by other researchers and scholars. Besides, the research can not engage in making observations and developing concepts due to the type of secondary materials and their sources.

#### **4. Disposition**

In order to get an insight of the research topic, firstly I start with literature review on tradition and traditional music as a starting point. In the first part of the literature review, I adopt Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger's innovative viewpoint on tradition. Based on this viewpoint, in the second part of literature review, previous works are collected to formulate the concept of traditional music in China and Japan for this research. Following the literature review, the data presentation is described by detailed introduction of 12 Girls Band and Kodo including their music, members and development. Then an analysis and a discussion are integrated focusing on the initial success in the international market of 12 Girls Band and Kodo and bringing international popularities back to the domestic arenas. A conclusion is drawn in different ways of presenting national identities by China and Japan that influence the development of traditional music in contemporary society.

## **PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. The Invention of Tradition**

Traditional music of a country or nation is well linked to its tradition which appears ancient, immemorial and unalterable. However, a book edited by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, overthrows stereotypical presumption of tradition by people, which inspires readers to rethink various traditions nowadays. Examples of ‘invented’ tradition in the book are surprising and interesting contrasts to what is taken for granted. Such as the Scottish highland tradition, kilt, was invented by an Englishman in 1730. The ‘clan tartans’ on kilts is an invention of a nineteenth century. Invented tradition had also expanded to colonies by British imperialism and colonialism such as the creation of new forms of authority in India. Even some of these traditions created by colonial authorities were utilized again by ethnic and nationalist movements in Africa.

Eric and Terence argue that some traditions were deliberately invented for one reason or another. Those ‘invention’ were often to highlight or enhance the priority of certain institutions. Traditions are also supposed to be changed to suit the needs of the day. The changed tradition can become accepted as a part of the ancient tradition as well. ‘Invented tradition’ is thus used to describe both ‘traditions actually invented constructed and formally instituted’ and ‘traditions emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period’. ‘Invented tradition’ functions as ‘a set of practices that is normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature’. It seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition and implies continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983; pp. 1-14).

### **2. Conceptualizing Traditional Music**

Inspired by the viewpoint of invented tradition, traditional music then needs to be conceptualized with related to a certain kind of ‘invention’. Therefore, it is found that folk music and world music are essential to conceptualization of traditional music. ‘Folk music’ has evolved from a term of European based meaning to a global usage. The adaptation of ‘traditional music’ enriched ‘folk

music' in a broad sense, while the creation of 'world music' was close connected to the development of traditional music fuses with western popular music style. Therefore, this research employs the concept of traditional music which concludes both folk music and folk elements within world music.

## 2.1 Traditional music and folk Music

Folk music is a term related to musical folklore which was originated in the nineteenth century in Europe. The English antiquarian, William Thomas, firstly coined the term 'folklore' to describe 'the tradition, customs and superstitions of the uncultured classes' in 1846 (Scholes & Ward, 1977). The term was further used to describe traditional music and dance. Gradually, 'folklore' became a vocabulary of culture and societies in European countries and nations. With the development of study on folk music and the globalization of musical culture, meaning of folk extended from regional to global. After the Second World War, folk revival in America and Britain brought a new meaning to the word. 'Folk' was seen as a music style that was contrast with commercial popular one. Generally speaking, folk music is defined with characters as being transmitted by word of mouth, coming from lower classes, and being credited to unknown composers. 'Traditional music' as a term was generated from the term 'folk music' that is used in the terminology of Grammy Awards. The popularity of contemporary folk recordings caused the appearance of the category 'folk' in the Grammy Awards of 1959. In 1970 the awards related to 'folk music' was transformed into 'Best Ethnic or Traditional Recording'. Change of using the term did not involve in academic circles, as the phrase 'folk music' is still used in various realms broadly. Nevertheless, the evolvement of the term 'folk' gradually made the term rejects of rigid boundaries, but prefers a universal conception. 'Folk', in this way, is simply of varying practice within one field in terms of music (Middleton, 1990).

## 2.2 Traditional music and world music

Ethnomusicologist Robert E. Brown created the term 'world music' in the 1960s. He enhanced the term to an academic discipline by developing undergraduate through doctoral programs. Richard Nidel (2004) views world music most often referring to traditional, folk or roots music with three characters. Firstly, world music is created and played by indigenous musicians. Secondly, world

music naturally incorporates other musical forms. Finally, world music is part of virtually every culture and society in the world that includes many forms of music informed or guided by indigenous regional origin. To understand world music in a broad sense, the world of world music has no boundaries. It can be any genres of music that can be Western or non-Western. The term is closely related to the phenomenon of globalization (Bohman, 2002). In addition, world music is also regarded as a categorization of music. In this sense, world music refers to fusions of western popular music styles with other genres of non-Western music which were previously described as folk music or traditional music.

### 2.3 *Minyue*: A Chinese Perspective on Traditional Music

*Minyue*<sup>6</sup> literally stands for ethnic music in Chinese that is not exclusive in mainland China but also prevailing among ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore and Malaysia. These non-mainland areas use ‘national music (*guoyue*)’ and ‘Chinese music (*zhongyue*)’ as terms of traditional Chinese music. *Minyue* is the contemporary concept of Chinese traditional music that was established in the beginning of twentieth century. This concept usually depends on traditional Chinese musical instrument and traditional Chinese orchestra to identify traditional Chinese music in terms of musical morphology. Therefore *minyue* has its limitation in understanding of traditional Chinese music. It is because that religious music, ballad music, traditional opera music and ancient music are less discussed in the realm of *minyue*. So far, the most recognized theoretical understanding of traditional Chinese music is from Chinese scholars, Wang Yaohua and Du Yaxiong. They define traditional Chinese music is a general term which includes folk music, literati music, religious music and court music (Wang & Du, 2004). It is the popularity of *minyue* after the World War II that influenced the Chinese audience to understand it as traditional Chinese music.

### 2.4 *Hogaku*: A Japanese Perspective on Traditional Music

Kitagawa Junko’s (2009) article, ‘Music Culture’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, introduces different genre of music and their development in Japan. The article presents an understanding of music from a Japanese view, of which traditional Japanese music is

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<sup>6</sup> *Minyue* in Chinese character: 民乐

particularly introduced and further discussed. According to Junko's interpretation, a Japanese understanding of music can be framed into two divisions and three domains. The two main divisions are *hogaku* and *yogaku*, while the three domains refer to art music, folk music and popular music. *Hogaku*<sup>7</sup> stands for Japanese music that is opposite to *yogaku*<sup>8</sup> meaning Western music. This framework helps to distinguish whether certain music is Japanese or non-Japanese in terms of composers, musical styles, performers, languages, instruments and classification. According to this framework, traditional Japanese music is equivalent to folk music of *Hogaku*. *Hogaku* was once regarded as the meaning of backward and vulgar compared with Western music in Meiji times. However, Japan started to revival traditional music in the 1950s. Policies of reappraising Japanese traditional music are focused on traditional musical education in schools.

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<sup>7</sup> *Hogaku* in Japanese Kanji: 邦楽

<sup>8</sup> *Yogaku* in Japanese Kanji: 洋楽

## PART III: 12 GIRLS BAND AND KODO

The research explains how traditional Chinese and Japanese music culture has been developed in contemporary society by taking Kodo and 12 Girls Band as two examples. In the part, two examples, 12 Girls Band and Kodo, are specifically introduced in terms of multiple aspects including musical production, music market and musical education. Discographies, biographies and secondary interviews conducted by others are main data for analysis.

### 1. 12 Girls Band



Figure 1. Picture of 12 Grils Band extracted from their latest album, 'Perfect Best'

#### 1.1 The founding of 12 Girls Band: A meaningful beginning

Founded in Beijing, 12 Girls Band was made by a famous music manager, **Wang Xiaojing**, in June of 2001. The band consists of twelve to fourteen female players of traditional Chinese musical instruments who are specialized in *Guzheng*, *Yangqin*, *Pipa*, *Erhu*, *Dizi*<sup>9</sup>, *Xiao*<sup>10</sup>, *Hulusi*<sup>11</sup> and *Duxuanqin*<sup>12</sup>. All the members were selected by an audition with over 4,000 contestants and came from various established conservatories across China. 12 Girls Band plays not only

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<sup>9</sup> See 1.2.2 in the part, introductions of these traditional Chinese musical instruments is elaborated.

<sup>10</sup> *Xiao* (in Chinese: 箫) is a traditional Chinese vertical end-blown flute.

<sup>11</sup> *Hulusi* (in Chinese: 葫芦丝) means a cucurbit flute which is a Chinese free reed wind instrument.

<sup>12</sup> *Duxuanqin* (in Chinese: 独弦琴) is a traditional East-Asian monochord musical instrument which can be found in China, Vietnam in and Japan.

traditional Chinese music, but also fusion of both classic and popular music (Wei, 2007). Though having been hold two concerts in Beijing, 12 Girls Band did not put their career up to an international level until their company, Beijing Century Stardisc Culture Spread Co. Ltd, cooperated with Platia Entertainment Inc. of Japan to explore the Japanese market. Under a joint management of the two companies, their first Japanese album was released. On the first releasing day more than 10,000 copies were sold and over millions of copies were sold in the following two months. It is hard for nationally famous Chinese artists to enter the Japanese market, not to new artists like 12 Girls Band. Compared with other Chinese artists, 12 Girls Band's first Japanese album symbolized their unique starting point of their career in the world music market.

### 1.1.1 Name and origin of the band

*Nǚzǐ shí'èr Yùefāng*, the Chinese name of 12 Girls Band, literally contains historical and musical meaning within the Chinese words. The word *yuefang*<sup>13</sup> came from the term *jiaofang*<sup>14</sup> which was an administrative institute that serves as an academy of music, dance and theater for the ancient royal family. The establishment of *jiaofang* can be traced back to the Tang Dyasty during A.D. 618 – A.D. 626. With the evolvement of term *jiaofang*, brothels with musical and dancing performances are also regarded as *jiaofang* after the Tang Dynasty. Since performers in *jiaofang* are usually female, the word *yuefang* presents feminine images. Furthermore, the word reflects the most flourishing and splendid period of Chinese society along with the history (Yang, 1981; pp. 233). With regard to its number, **Wang Xiaojing** perceives that the number 'twelve' was embedded meanings of perfection and pleroma in terms of Chinese numerology and philosophy. The number twelve is a basic number used in Chinese 'yinyang'<sup>15</sup> and 'five elements'<sup>16</sup> that represents Chinese cyclic character numeral system. The number is also related to the twelve female characters, Jinling's Twelve Beauties, in China's Four Great Classical Novels, 'Dream of the red Chamber'.

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<sup>13</sup> Yuefang in Chinese character is '乐坊'.

<sup>14</sup> Jiaofang in Chinese character is '教坊'.

<sup>15</sup> Yinyang (in Chinese: 阴阳) is a central principle of traditional Chinese science and philosophy that describes how polar or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, and how they are interactive to each other in turn.

<sup>16</sup> Five elements (in Chinese: 五行) is a traditional Chinese system of mnemonic device.

### 1.1.2 Father of 12 Girls Band: **Wang Xiaojing**

Idea of creating 12 Girls Band was from Chinese famous musical artist manager, **Wang Xiaojing**, who is in charge of Beijing Century Stardisc Culture Spread Co. Ltd. (Chinese management company of 12 Girls Band). Wang secured his position in Chinese popular music industry through an early corporation with Cui Jian, the ‘father of Chinese rock’ during the late 1980s. Before the middle of 1990s, Wang had been applying himself to Chinese popular music particularly Chinese rock (Mastunaga, 2010). Before his cooperation with Cui, Wang had been doing automobile business without professional artist management background. Because of Wang’s sociality, he owned a wide personal network with people in different areas. By using his network, Cui successfully accomplished his first solo live concert. Following the later cooperation with Cui, Wang gave up his business to devote himself totally to professional musical artist management. Apart from Cui, Wang successively has been producer for a few famous Chinese popular singers and bands in the 1990s such as Cheng Lin and Compass. As a businessman, Wang experienced the emergence and transition of Chinese popular music industry during the 1980s to 1990s. Because the Chinese recording industry was not established enough that time, those superstars made by Wang gradually left him to go to Hong Kong or Taiwanese entertainment companies. However, Wang did not limit his abilities only to popular music. Wang listens to a large musical collection of different genres. He found that a lot of folk music has been fused into world music in a popular way such as Indian and Latin music. In this sense, Chinese traditional music might be the last one to be exploited the potential. Therefore, it was in 1997 that Wang plan to revival traditional Chinese music culture through reconstruction of traditional Chinese folk music. With a few years of consideration and planning, **Wang Xiaojing** gradually brought his idea into realization that is 12 Girls Band (Ye & Wang, 2006).<sup>17</sup>

## 1.2 Members: Talents cultivated by profound traditional Chinese culture

### 1.2.1 Recruitment

As soon as **Wang Xiaojing** announced that he was going to select female plays of traditional Chinese musical instrument, he received more than 200 applications immediately (Wald, 2007).

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Wang Xiaojing from ‘Fortune Time (in Chinese: Cai Fu Ren Sheng)’, a TV talk show on the financial channel, CBN (China Business Network) of SMG (Shanghai Media Group) broadcasted on of April, 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006



On the spot of audition on June 10, 2001, contestants who came from various arts colleges and conservatories across China got together to show their attainments of traditional Chinese music. Wang assumed that elegant appearance was a crucial factor of selection, apart from professional musical skills. After a few days' process on selection and decision, the band was finally formed by twelve women. Most of the members are graduates or students of Central Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music, Minzu University of China that are musical educational institutions for professional musical players<sup>18</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Musical Instruments and Performance Style

The original 12 Girls Band was formed by twelve members. Each one of them is specialized in one Chinese traditional musical instrument. Due to the requirements of different performances, certain members need to be in charge of more than two musical instruments. There are five musical instruments that mainly function for performances, *erhu*, *pipa*, *dizi*, *yangqin*, and *guzheng*. These five musical instruments are also central among various ones in traditional Chinese music. The following is a brief description of each musical instrument according to its history, construction and performing techniques.

- *Erhu*



*Figure 2. Picture of erhu*

*Extracted from product catalog of Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factory*

*(Product model: 01A)*

Erhu (see *Figure 2*) is a traditional Chinese bowed string instrument which emerged during the Tang dynasty. In Chinese, the word *er* means two which refers the feature of *erhu* as two strings. The word *hu* is the title for ethnic minorities from northern and western. *Erhu* consists of a long

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<sup>18</sup> About the Band, Retrived from: 12 Girls Band Official Chinese Website (english) <http://www.12girls.org/english/gwym-yfji.asp>

vertical stick-like neck, at the top of which are two large tuning pegs, and at the bottom is a small resonator body covered with python skin. The principle how *erhu* works resembles western bowed string instrument, violin. Since the tone of *erhu* is regarded as similar to people's voice, it is used to cover the theme melody in an orchestra (Zhang, 1989).

- *Pipa*



*Figure 3. Picture of pipa*

*Extracted from product catalog of Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factory*

*(Product model: 543KK)*

*Pipa* (see *Figure 3*) founded early in Qin dynasty (B.C. 221- 206) and started to be prosperous during Tang dynasty. It belongs to plucked category of instrument which has four strings with a number of frets constructing the scale of range. The playing techniques of *pipa* can be roughly understood by its Chinese meaning that two most common ways of playing this instrument are *pi* and *pa*. ‘*Pi*’ is to push the fingers of nails of the right hand from right to left, thus more than one finger can be used at a time striking multiple notes, and ‘*pa*’ is to pull the thumb of the right hand from left to right, in the opposite direction. Since one of the playing techniques of *pipa* can produce continuous pitch of sound by quickly repetition of plucking, *pipa* was not restricted to accompaniment as other plucked instrument but solo theme melody sometimes (Min, 1995).

- *Dizi*



*Figure 4. Picture of Dizi*

*Extracted from product catalog of Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factory*

*(Product model: 816)*

*Dizi* (See *Figure 4*) is the general terms of Chinese flute that belongs to the category of wind musical instrument. Most of which are made of bamboo. *Dizi* can be divided in two kinds as transverse playing and vertical playing. There are different arguments on the origin of *dizi*. However, it is sure that *gudi* (bone flute) was founded at Jiahu civilization (B.C. 7000 - 5800) in China. *Dizi* is used by various techniques, such as circular breathing, slides, popped notes, harmonics, flying finger trills, multiphonics, fluttertonguing, and double-tonguing. Most professional players have a set of seven *dizi*, each in a different key and size (Lau, 1991).

- *Yangqin*



*Figure 5. Picture of yangqin*

*Extracted from product catalog of Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factory*

*(Product model: 717)*

*Yangqin* (See *Figure 5*) is a traditional Chinese percussion instrument. There are several theories explaining the origin of *Yangqin*. In China, *yangqin* firstly appeared in Min dynasty that was spread from western foreign countries. *Yangqin* is constructed by strings, bridges, hammers and cylindrical nuts. The function of it is similar to piano (Hong & Guo, 1998).

- *Guzheng*



*Figure 6. Picture of guzheng in left part*

*Extracted from product catalog of Shanghai No.1 National Musical Instruments Factory*

(Product model: 695X)

*Guzheng* (See Figure 6) belongs to the category of plucked musical instrument. It has been existed since the Warring States Period (B.C. 475-221). Along the history of *guzheng*'s evolvement, the number of strings has always fluctuated. The contemporary *guzheng* has 21 strings.

Apart from the five main musical instruments above, *duxuanqin*<sup>19</sup>, *hulusi*<sup>20</sup> and *xiao*<sup>21</sup> are also used for certain songs. It is the traditional musical instruments that endow music of 12 Girls Band with an exotic traditional Chinese style. However, their fusion of traditional Chinese elements and popular music account is mostly benefited from the help of electronic music. Besides, fusions of traditional Chinese and modern elements are not only audio but also visual. Players of the band give up the traditional way of sitting down playing.

### 1.2.3 Change of Members

12 Girls Band has kept changing not only in size but also members. The latest crew is the second generation of 12 Girls Band that all the original members had been replaced by the new ones. Though originally the band was designed to use twelve members as its symbol, it developed to stably contain thirteen players when giving performances. As **Wang Xiaojing** said, thirteen members were proved to present with the most satisfied audio-visual effect for audience. In this set of thirteen casts, there are five of *erhu*, three of *pipa*, two of *yangqin*, one of *guzheng*, and two *dizi*. There were 14 members who had been participated concerts and shows of the band, which includes six *erhu* players, four *pipa* players, one *dizi* player, one *yangqin* player and one *guzheng* player. In the second generation of 12 Girls Band, there are six *erhu* players, two *pipa* player, three *dizi* players, three *yangqin* players and one *guzheng* player. Because some members are undergraduates, the band does not have the same casts for each concert or show in practice. **Wang Xiaojing** explained that 12 Girls Band is not a team with settled artists, but a 'brand' that embraces new power every now and then, which could maintain style of the band as fresh as possible.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid 10

<sup>20</sup> Ibid 12

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 11

### 1.3 Music Style: Three Constituents

According to 12 Girls Band's discography<sup>22</sup>, music of 12 Girls Band consists of three different styles of musical elements in order to suit musical composition, musical theme and marketing strategies. Music of the first element are mainly originally created featured with albums including 'Meili Concert', 'Joshi Juni Gakubou - Beautiful Energy', 'Kikou - Shining Energy', 'Eastern Energy', 'Tonkou - Romantic Energy', 'Romantic Energy', and 'Shanghai'. Music of another element is cover works based on Japanese popular music of the 1970s to 1990s, featured with albums including 'The Best of Covers'. The last element is cover works based on Western classic and popular music featured with albums including 'Merry Christmas to You', 'White Christmas', and 'Twelve Girls of Christmas'. Not only are music of 12 Girls Band produced according to the above three musical styles, they release their albums distinctively with different versions and track list for corresponding markets, depending on the marketing strategies of band.

#### 1.3.1 Chinese folk songs and ancient songs

One of the elements for 12 Girls Band's work is traditional Chinese music. The traditional Chinese music refers mainly to folk music of Chinese ethnic minorities. For example, 'Flowers and Juveniles'<sup>23</sup> is a famous traditional song of Hui muslim ethnic minority in China. Another song, 'Liu San Jie'<sup>24</sup> is a widely spread folk song of Zhuang ethnic minority. Besides, 'Kang Ding Qing Ge'<sup>25</sup> and 'Ao Bao Xiang Hui'<sup>26</sup> are Tibet and Mongolian folk songs that were used by the band. 12 Girls Band's basically employed the original composition of these folk music to reinterpret them.

#### 1.3.2 Japanese pop, and Western classic, jazz and pop

A number of Japanese popular songs of 1979s to 1990s were covered by 12 Girls Band. Those works are most favorable popular songs that have been covered by different singer and musical instrument. For example, the band covered one of the most popular songs in the late of 1980s

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to Appendix, 'Discography of 12 Girls Band'

<sup>23</sup> In Chinese: 花儿与少年

<sup>24</sup> In Chinese: 刘三姐

<sup>25</sup> In Chinese: 康定情歌

<sup>26</sup> In Chinese: 敖包相会

‘*Kawa no Nagare no Yo ni*’ by the legendary Japanese enka singer **Misora Hibari**<sup>27</sup>. In addition, the most popular theme song of the TV series ‘*Tokyo Love Story*’ in the beginning of 1990s, ‘*Rabu Sutori wa Totsusen ni*’<sup>28</sup> was covered by the band. Except for cover piece of Japanese popular songs, 12 Girls Band also recreated Western classic by Bach, 1960s’ jazz piece ‘*Take Five*’ by Paul Desmond and popular rock by Coldplay.

### 1.3.3 Original creation

Works of 12 Girls Band that belong to original composition take up a relative smaller part compared with Japanese popular cover pieces, Western Classic cover ones and traditional Chinese music. In the first two of the albums, original creation works are took a considerable part. However, original creation gradually decreased with releasing of more albums focusing on the former two musical styles to enter the Japanese market and North American market.

## 1.4 Development: Rise and fall

### 1.4.1 Early Development in China

From 2001 to the beginning of 2003 was a period for 12 Girls Band’s early development in China. As recorded by the Chinese official website of the band, there were three events was organized during these two years<sup>29</sup>. Compared with the later development in Japanese market, the events were much less. The first event was 12 Girls Band’s debut showcase concert, *Meili*, which was held on October 5, 2002 in Beijing Century Theatre through four months preparation after their foundation. Another following event of 12 Girls Band was to attend the 2002 China Central Television New Year’s Gala which is an influential national annual TV program. On January 7, 2003, the band held their second showcase concert, *Qiji* in the theatre of Beijing Exhibition Center (Mastunaga, 2010).

Early development of 12 Girls Band in China was not smooth in terms of popularity. The band’s influence only remained in Beijing where their company locates. All the members were recruited from conservatories and art colleges in Beijing such as Central Conservatory, China Conservatory

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<sup>27</sup> The song (in Japanese: 川の流れの世に) was the last song of **Misora Hibari** (美空ひばり) and spitting image of her life.

<sup>28</sup> In Japanese: アブ ストーリーは突然に

<sup>29</sup> Refer to Appendix, ‘Biography of 12 Girls Band’

and Minzu University of China. The founder **Wang Xiaojing** is also a Beijing-based musical producer. The first three main events of 12 Girls Band in mainland are all hold in Beijing. Though the capital of China provided potential market for the band, they were not able to be successful as in Japan later. Particularly, the band was not able to seize the opportunity and became famous over night by attending CCTV's annual TV program, the New Years Gala<sup>30</sup> which brings out new popular stars every year.

#### 1.4.2 Japan and North America

In March, 2003, the 12 Girls Band's company, Beijing Stardisc Culture Spread Co. Ltd signed a corporation contract with Platia Entertainment Inc. Platia was not only in charge of promotional activities for the band, but also manager office of the band that was responsible for recording release and concerts in the region of Japan. On July 24, 2003, 12 Girls Band first Japanese album, '*12 Girls Band – Beautiful Energy*' was released with 2 million copies. The band won the best foreign artists of the 18<sup>th</sup> Japan Gold Disc Award in the same year. They also attended the 54th Kohaku Uta Gassen which is annual music show produced by Nippon Hoso Kyokai. On January 2, 2004, the 12 Girls Band had the first showcase concert in a famous arena of central Tokyo, Nippon Budokan. Through this series of activities, the 12 Girls Band was completely accepted and favored by the Japanese audience. Following the sensation in Japan, the band started an Asian tour in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia in June of 2004. For the next one year, the band continued to perform well in the Japanese market, and won the best foreign artists of 19th Japan Gold Disc Award. With the following release of new albums, the band achieves good result of selling according to Oricon record charts<sup>31</sup> (Mastunaga, 2010).

On August 17, 2004, the band released their first North American album, *Eastern Energy*. The album hit the record of Chinese artists' selling on Billboard chart, which was listed on the 62nd of Billboard Album Top 200 in the first week of release. Between October and November of 2005, 12 Girls Band hold a North American tour in cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco, etc.

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<sup>30</sup> CCTV New Years Gala (in Chinese: 中国中央电视台春节联欢晚会) is a premier mainland Chinese TV annual event broadcasting on the eve of Chinese New Year started in 1982.

<sup>31</sup> Oricon record charts was founded by Oricon Inc. which is a Japanese corporate group supplies statistics and information on music and music industry in Japan. Oricon record charts is regarded as the most credible record chart in Japan.

### 1.4.3 Japanese Producer: **Toumoto Kazuma**

- Market Strategy

As the president of a Japanese manager company of 12 Girls Band, **Toumoto Kazuma** is another important founder of 12 Girls Band in Japan. Before he noticed existence of the band, Toumoto was in charge of marketing for Warner Music Japan. He got a chance to have an old video cassette of 12 Girls Band's performance from China and. As recalled by **Wang Xiaojing**, the video tape was rather blurred due to converting<sup>32</sup>. However, Toumoto was touched by music of 12 Girls Band and decided to import 12 Girls Band to Japan. Warner Music did not totally applaud his suggestion to produce Chinese artists in Japanese market. In addition, Toumoto was not satisfied with the small investment budget provided by Warner Music Japan. He valued 12 Girls Band as something that Japan needed a new, energetic sound to jolt it out of its funk. Toumoto had a lot of faith that 12 Girls Band is going to be huge in Japan. Therefore, he quit Warner Music Japan with his team, and started his own music label, Platia Entertainment Inc (Ye & Wang, 2006). Toumoto spend two billion Japanese Yen in promotion of 12 Girls Band in Japan to enhance their popularity. Before the band released their debut Japanese album, Japanese media had frequently reported them. Retail price of the debut album, '*Twelve Girls Band - Beautiful Energy*', was ¥2980 Japanese Yen. The price was unprecedented lower than regular price of similar product in Japan, as it included one CD and one DVD. Besides, Toumoto promoted the band by using a localized concept, 'Chinese Morning Musume'. Morning Musume is a Japanese popular singing girl group that is known for its fluctuating line-up. According to the market strategy of Toumoto, 12 Girls Band is similar to Morning Musume in size and line-up. He expected that the album could have a sale volume of 200,000 copies. However, the result was an unexpected success that reached two million copies (Nikkei Entertainment, 2003).

- Bankruptcy

While the big sale of 12 Girls Bands records tended to be a smooth development, unexpected problems were breeding under the surface. In fact, the there was a deficit in promotional expense

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid 17



of the debut album. Toumoto expected to be made it up by the second album with a sale volume of five million copies. However, the second album did not increase so much to meet the expectation. Beside, the low price of 12 Girls Band's concert and freely adding budget to tour promotion made the deficit become a even bigger problem. In September of 2005, the deficit Platia Entertainment Inc. changed its name to Muture Communications Inc. As Platia Entertainment Inc. was the music department of a health food company, by changing the company's name Toumoto's Muture Communications Inc. could go to completely financially independent. However, independency of Platia Entertainment did not save Toumoto's business. The huge debt was no longer affordable for him. On July 19, 2007, president Toumoto filed for bankrupt due to over promotional budget with a debt of 340 billion Japanese Yen (ZAKZAK, 2007). As a result, 12 Girls Band transferred their recording contract with EMI Music Japan Inc. and management contract with Kainichi Entertainment. Development of the band was effected by bankrupt of Toumoto's company.

#### 1.4.4 Controversies

While 12 Girls Band used their success at Japanese market to find access back to Chinese market, their fusion of traditional Chinese element and popular performing style were not totally accepted by traditional Chinese music academism. The academism regarded traditional Chinese music as high art for its long history and institutional education system, whose position is opposite to popular music. It is understandable that 12 Girls Band's popular way of presenting traditional high art would arouse controversies in China.

Chinese famous *erhu* performer and former vice president of Chinese Musicians Association, **Min Huifen**, pointed that music of 12 Girls Band was not traditional Chinese music but popular music. Min further stated that 12 Girls Band lost the essence of traditional musical. She thought the 12 Girls Band merely used traditional Chinese musical instrument as 'tools' which could be replaced by any other ones (Xie, 2006). Not only did Min comment the band in a negative tone, but 'Queen of *pipa*', **Zhang Hongyan** also interrogated 12 Girls Band's live shows. As associate professor of Central Conservatory of Music and famous *pipa* performer, Zhang suspected that the band might 'lip synch' by the help of pre-recorded sounds in their live shows. She further criticized 12 Girls Band that they disrespected for traditional Chinese musical art. This speech even caused a lawsuit

by **Wang Xiaojing** (Diao, 2007). Opinion of another famous *erhu* performer, **Ma Xiaohui** was not as harsh as the former two traditional musicians. Ma pointed out that innovation of 12 Girls Band's music is limited in form and production, and the band was lack of being driven artistically (Chen, 2005).

## 2. Kodo



Figure 7. Picture of Kodo performing at the Royal Festival, London on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Copyright by Andy Sheppard, extracted from [www.lowlightphoto.co.uk](http://www.lowlightphoto.co.uk)

### 2.1 Founding of Kodo: Children of drum with heartbeat

Formed in 1981, Kodo is a drumming troupe performing traditional Japanese drum, *taiko*. The troupe has not only been making efforts in preserving traditional Japanese performing arts, but also explores the limitless possibilities of *taiko* through revitalization. The predecessor of Kodo was closely connected to a former drumming group called 'Sado Kuni no Ondekoza' based on Sado Island, Japan. Besides Japanese drums, Kodo adds other traditional Japanese musical instruments, dance and vocal into their performance. With decades of years' development, Kodo has been experienced from Sado Island based drumming troupe to globally influential performing group. Since Kodo's debut at the Berlin Festival in 1981, they have given over 3,100 performances on five continents<sup>33</sup>. The activities of the troupe are equally divided to three parts. They spend one

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<sup>33</sup> Refer to Appendix, 'Biography of Kodo'

third of their time for overseas tour performance, another one third for tour performance in Japan and the rest of one third for preparing and adjusting in Sado Island.

### 2.1.1 Meaning of Name

Name of the troupe, Kodo, contains two meanings according to two different Japanese kanji<sup>34</sup> in the same pronunciation. One of the Japanese kanji means heartbeat, which represents the primal source of all rhythm. Kodo values that the sound of the great *taiko* is resemble a mother's heartbeat as felt in the womb, and it is regarded that babies are often lulled asleep by its thunderous vibrations. Another Japanese kanji, means children of the drum, which is a reflection of Kodo's desire to simply play their drums with the heart of a child.

### 2.1.2 Historical background

As one of the most famous *taiko* drumming troupes, Kodo was not formed overnight. Before the founding of Kodo, there had been a calling to preservation of traditional Japanese art by the leader of former group Sado no Kuni Odenkoza, **Den Tagayasu**, under the background of radical social movements in the 1950s and 1960s. It was Den who paved the way for later development of Kodo. He set up Sado Island as the base to establish a commune for traditional arts practice. The commune firstly had functioned as a conservatory, where students learned both folk performance and modern musicology. As gradually focusing on *taiko* drumming, the commune formed a professional group, Sado no Kuni Odenkoza, particularly for *taiko* drumming in 1969. Under the leading of Den, Sado no Kuni Odenkoza achieved both domestic and overseas influence unprecedentedly (Lim, 2009).

With the grandness of Sado no Kuni Odenkoza, divergence of idea merged inside the group. Part of the members were not satisfied with the harsh restrictions upon them imposed by Den. According to Den's original idea, life of students and members in the isolated Sado Island could help them to purify their minds by staying away from mortal life in modern society. For example, those harsh restrictions of life in Sado Island include daily marathons, and banning of drinking, smoking and girlfriends. He insisted that the commune was able to obtain the goal only by his

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<sup>34</sup> The two Japanese kanji of *kodo* are '鼓動' and '鼓童'.

leadership. Tension between Den and part of the members finally led to dissolution of Sado no Kuni Ondenkoza between 1979 and 1980 (Lim, 2009). The turning point of Sado no Kuni Ondekoza gave birth to the most influential taiko troupe, Kodo.

## 2.2 Members: An extended family and ascetic lifestyle

As Kodo is a group having twenty-nine years, it has experienced several generations of members' changing. Age of male and female members is from twenty-three to fifty-eight. Kodo has its own system to recruit and promote new members, which keeps the spirit of Kodo carrying on. Valuing training and team working, life of members is out of the modern society on Sado Island.

### 2.2.1 Members and apprentice

Members of Kodo are divided into two kinds performing members and staff members, according different responsibilities. Number of members is fluctuating that currently are 55 members including twenty-four performing members, twenty-eight staff members and three junior members<sup>35</sup>. Besides performing members and staff members, apprentices also take up for an important part of Kodo and its organization. The total number of Kodo extended family, including apprentices and part-time workers, is about eighty people. Among all the currently performing members and staff members, some of them are past apprentices. The system of apprenticeship existed for a long time. It became a formal two-year program after Kodo cultural foundation was established. Kodo Apprentice Center started to provide a two-year apprenticeship program since in 1997. There have been eighty-three past apprentices who finished the program from 1997 to 2008<sup>36</sup>.

Performing members of Kodo are in a seniority-based system. The most senior members are core of the troupe, who devote not only to performing but also educating apprentices. Since Kodo is a *taiko* drumming troupe embracing other traditional Japanese arts, the most senior performing members of Kodo take respective responsibilities according to their own traditional art talents. Apart from the most of taiko performing members such as the principle *O-taiko* player as well as the most senior one, **Fujimoto Yoshizaku**, there are other senior performing members featuring

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<sup>35</sup> Kodo Members. Retrieved from: Official Website of Kodo, [http://www.kodo.or.jp/member/index\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/member/index_en.html)

<sup>36</sup> Kodo Apprentice Center. Retrieved from: Official Website of Kodo, [http://www.kodo.or.jp/apprentice/index\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/apprentice/index_en.html)

with different traditional performing talents. Fujimoto's wife, **Fujitomo Yoko** is the principle vocalist, koto player and dancer of Kodo. Specializing in Japanese folk dancing, **Kojima Chieko** is noted for the original style of her dancing in Kodo's *taiko* based performances. **Yamaguchi Motofumi** performs *fue*, *kokyō*, koto and *shamisen* on stage with Kodo who is also in charge of group's stage work and musical composition as Kodo's artistic director<sup>37</sup>.

### 2.2.2 Life of members and Kodo village

Unlike other professional musical group, Kodo, as an extended family including members and apprentices, influences its members of the family with every aspect of life. Based on the original social philosophy of 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza', Kodo developed their way of *taiko* drumming and life style. The ultimate goal of Kodo and former 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza' is to set up a university for the study of traditional Japanese arts and crafts. In the past, members succeeded the tradition of former 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza' that lived communally as a whole on Sado Island. Kodo believe that Sado Island has been their home and platform from which they reach out to the world early since 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza' period in 1971. The ultimate goal of Kodo finally turned out to be the foundation of Kodo village in Sado Island in 1988. Sado Island is located in the central region of Japan which is less urbanized. Natural environment and traditional arts atmosphere of Sado Island provides Kodo with inspiration to guide them<sup>38</sup>.

The lifestyle of Kodo is summarized as a three-word slogan, living, learning and creating<sup>39</sup>. Besides domestic and overseas tour performances, Kodo spend one third of their time on living back to Kodo Village on Sado Island, especially for those younger members and apprentices. Kodo requires members to obtain traditional cultural capabilities through emphasizing on physical related training. Farming, gardening and cooking are important constituents of members' life. The high demanding for development of members' bodies is applied to the performance of taiko playing and dancing. Members are experiencing different life on Sado Island not only physically but also mentally, compared with the life outside there of modern society. Drinking alcohol, smoking, part-time working and mobile phones are banned during the apprenticeship (Bensen,

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<sup>37</sup> Kodo Members and Solo/Small-Group Projects Catalogue. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/member/yoshikazu\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/member/yoshikazu_en.html)

<sup>38</sup> FAQs. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/faq\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/faq_en.html)

<sup>39</sup> Mission Statement. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/mission\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/mission_en.html)

2006). Members are living under a collective and humanistic environment as a whole. Though the senior members live outside the village in nearby communities, they commute to the village everyday<sup>40</sup>.

## 2.3 Music Style: Three principal elements and various *taikos*

### 2.3.1 Construction of Kodo's music style

Kodo describe that their performance consisting of 'three principal elements' which are basis to categorize their music. The first one element is based up on traditional folk arts of local people throughout Japan<sup>41</sup>. Those traditional folk arts are not be simply replicated but reinterpreted by Kodo's style. Kodo highly values the traditional treasure of arts embedded in Japan so as to refine on those folk arts to capture the universal spirit and energy. Such as '*Otaiko*', and '*Yatai bayasi*', are typical works influenced by traditional folk arts of Japan. Those pieces colored with strongly folk style of various traditional performances. '*Otaiko*' tells the story of a baby who heard the thunderous sound of the *O-daiko* and dropped off into a peaceful slumber. The arrangement of drums is simple. *O-daiko* emanates a powerful sound with a deep tranquility. Part of the drummer beat out a basic rhythm while the main player improvises freely. When the different parts become united with each other, the rhythm, the drummers and the listeners find themselves wrapped within the embrace of the *O-daiko*. For the piece '*Yataibayasi*', *Yatai* in the occasion of musical performance means a temporary stage, while *bayasi* means accompaniment or background music. *Yatai bayasi* originally was used as a Japanese folk performing art in different traditional celebration, temple fair and events. Highlight of Kodo's '*Yataibayashi*' is adding of *fue*. The contrast of strong rhythmic drumbeats and melodious *fue* enriches the musical texture that brings the audience imagination of a lively traditional Japanese festival. Through Kodo's recomposition and reinterpretation, those folk performing arts elements are transferred into independent pieces of work fused with Kodo's values in it.

The second element of Kodo's performance is inspiration from composers **Ishii Maki** and **Ikebe Shinichiro**, Kabuki orchestra musicians **Tosha Roetsu** and **Senba Kiyohiko**, and jazz pianist

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid 37

<sup>41</sup> Performances. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/performance\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/performance_en.html)

**Yamashita Yousuke.** Those musicians are regarded as friends and mentors by Kodo<sup>42</sup>. Among works created by this element, ‘*Cholima*’ by Tosha and ‘*Monochrome*’ by Ishii are the most two influential ones. ‘*Cholima*’ features four drummers playing *okedo-daiko* and *shime-daiko*, and one drummer on a larger *miya-daiko*. The players pass the sounds from one to another, playing at a frenetic speed, mixing traditional Japanese rhythms with more modern tempos, combining tense excitement with subtle humor. ‘*Chonlima*’ means one thousand league horse whose image was expressed through dynamics changing and dramatically several times’ cutting back to a very soft volume. Another piece of work ‘*Monochrome*’ starts in constant rhythmic patterns together with highly irregular ones. It gradually develops spirally to a climax. The ambitious pace expands greatly the range and power of expression of the roped *shime-daiko*. As a companion piece of ‘*Monochrome*’, the twin piece ‘*Monoprism*’ was written for performance with full orchestra. In brief, pieces of works inspired by element from other musicians show the charm of *taiko* derived from traditional essence and modern musical inspiration.

The last element is original compositions by members of Kodo. ‘*Zoku*’ is one of the typical creations. The word, *zoku*, can mean tribe, clan or family in Japanese. Applying the word *zoku* on Kodo’s performance, the piece of music unites players as one disciplinary team through a conversation-like drumbeat between the leading player and other players. Original compositions by Kodo cross various realm of styles that displays Kodo’s universal musical essence. They try to express the internal energy of *taiko* drumming based on their acceptance of other lifestyle and culture.

### 2.3.2 Musical instruments

Kodo mainly use *miya-daiko* and *shime-daiko* as well as *oke-daiko*. These three types of *taiko* depend on different techniques to construct its body. Beside, using of different material is another distinction. The cowhide head of the *oke-daiko* and *shime-daiko* are fastened on with ropes that stretch along the sides of the drum body. The heads of *miya-daiko* are fixed in place by metal tacks. The shell of the large *o-daiko* is made from the trunk of a large, African Bubinga tree. The heads of *o-daiko* are made from the hide of one large cow that each head measuring over one meter in

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid 40

diameter. The weight of the drum including the pedestal<sup>43</sup> on which it rests is 400 kilograms. There are about thirty to fifty of these drums currently in performance use in Japan by Kodo<sup>44</sup>.

- *Miya-daiko*

Depending on the size and shape of the shell, *miya-daiko* can be separated to *o-daiko*<sup>45</sup>, *chu-daiko*<sup>46</sup>, and *hirado-daiko*<sup>47</sup>.

- *Shime daiko*

*Shime daiko* is kind of drum whose shell consists of one solid piece of hollowed-out wood.

- *Oke-daiko*

*Oke-daiko* is kind of drum whose shell is constructed out of a number of separate wood planks.

## 2.4. Development: One big organization

### 2.4.1 Construction of Kodo as an organization

In a broader sense, the scale of Kodo, as an organization, is more than that of a *taiko* drumming troupe. Besides *taiko* performance, Kodo is also responsible for their apprenticeship, theme festival and overseas cultural exchange. In line with these three tasks, Kodo Apprentice Center, Kodo Cultural Foundation and Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) are corresponding branches assisting their events. Kodo Apprentice Center is a converted schoolhouse in Iwakubi on Sado Island where young apprentices are trained<sup>48</sup>. Kodo Cultural Foundation is functioned as to carry out non-profit activities focused on social education and the concerning on the local community. Activities of the foundation include holding workshops, planning the annual Earth Celebration,

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<sup>43</sup> The pedestal in Japanese is called *yatai*.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid 38

<sup>45</sup> *O-daiko* (in Japanese kanji: ‘大太鼓’) means a large drum.

<sup>46</sup> *Chu-daiko* (in Japanese kanji: ‘中太鼓’) means a middle-sized drum.

<sup>47</sup> *Hirado-daiko* (in Japanese kanji: ‘平胴太鼓’) means a flat-barrel drum.

<sup>48</sup> About the Kodo Apprentice Center. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/apprentice/index\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/apprentice/index_en.html)



creating a research library, managing the Kodo Apprentice Centre and research of performing arts<sup>49</sup>. KASA is a nonprofit organization established in 2002 by Kodo and American *taiko* representatives based in California. Mission of KASA is to facilitate intercultural exchanges and communication between Japanese and American *taiko* players and communities<sup>50</sup>.

All different activities in which Kodo is involved are handled by three separate organizations. The first is Kitamaesen, Co., Ltd who manages everything related to the group's performance activities. Another is Otodaiku, co., Ltd. who manages group copyrights and the development and sale of musical instruments used in Kodo's performance. The last is the group's non-profit activities are organized under the Kodo Cultural Foundation. Kodo's 'Earth Celebration' international arts festival that held every summer on Sado Island is sponsored by Kodo and local governments. It is managed cooperatively by Sado City and the Kodo Cultural Foundation.

#### 2.4.2 One Earth Tour and school workshop performance

Since 1984, Kodo has been holding a six-month world tour each year continually. This series of activities is under the banner 'One Earth Tour'. This theme embodies Kodo's desire to transcend language and cultural boundaries and remind people of the common bond we all share as human beings. Through the 'One Earth Tour,' Kodo continues to bring the sound of the Japanese drum to the audience all over the world. With the unique ability of *taiko*, Kodo is able to transcend the barriers of language and custom. The meaning of the series tour reminds listener and Kodo's members of the world as a large community. The One Earth Tour has been brought to the five continents including around 45 countries.

Another important part that constitutes Kodo's performance is school workshops. The school workshop provides a situation where participants can experience the *taiko* culture brought by Kodo individuality through music. Since 1999, in addition to Kodo's regular tours and shows, Kodo has held a number of School workshop performances taking place mainly at junior high schools. Kodo's intention is to let students directly experience the appeal of the *taiko* in students' familiar surroundings in schools. By providing this experience, Kodo introduces young Japanese people to

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<sup>49</sup> Kodo Culture Foundation. Retrived from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/foundation/index\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/foundation/index_en.html)

<sup>50</sup> Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA). Retrived from: Kodo Official Website: <http://www.kodo.or.jp/kasa/frame.html>

their own Japanese traditional culture and contribute in to their own self-discovery.

#### 2.4.3 Earth Celebration

Kodo not only devotes to bring the sound of the taiko to the audience of the world for, but also create an environment where people could bring the sounds of the world back to Sado Island. When establishing the Kodo Village in 1988, Kodo held their first annual Earth Celebration. The theme of Earth Celebration is *tataku* (to beat a rhythm) which was regarded as one of most fundamental ‘human acts’ by Kodo. They gathered other artists, scholars and festival celebrants all over the world to exchange their different music senses. The Earth Celebration takes place in the form of concerts, lectures, workshops, and ‘fringe events’ where regular festival performers can attend and perform<sup>51</sup>.

#### 2.4.4 Cooperation with Chinese Film

In 2002, Kodo participated in recording and producing of soundtrack of Chinese film ‘Hero’. This was the first as well as the only time that Kodo cooperated with Chinese musicians and filmmaker. The film ‘Hero’ tells a 2300-year-ago story of assassinating the first Chinese Emperor who later unit the divided land. Soundtrack of the film is by Tan Dun who won the best music, original score of 2001 Oscar with his work for the film ‘Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon’. Music of ‘Hero’ needs to express the majestic central China in ancient time. Tan did not choose to use Chinese *Dagu*<sup>52</sup> as part of the musical instruments in his orchestra. Instead, he sent an invitation to Kodo and cooperates with Japanese *taiko*. Tan Dun went all the way to Sado Island and lived with Kodo for a few days. As he described Kodo had the vegetable cultivated by them, which was an every daily routine of Kodo. He was amazed by Kodo that they can remember the rhythm without notation. Only depended on Tan’s first time reading of the notation, Kodo remembered every detail of the music. They finished the entire seventy-minute recording merely in one day, which was described as a miracle by Tan (Lu, 2003).

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<sup>51</sup> Earth Celebration. Retrieved from: Kodo Official Website [http://www.kodo.or.jp/ec/home/index\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/ec/home/index_en.html)

<sup>52</sup> *Dagu* (in Chinese character: ‘大鼓’) is a kind of big drum.

## PART IV: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Analysis: Initial Success at the International Market

Oriented from China and Japan respectively, both 12 Girls Band and Kodo are musical groups that enjoy global popularity. They share similarities in their initial success. Though performance of the two groups are characterized and identified with traditional music, they raised their international profiles at the international market as a start.

#### 1.1 12 Girls Band and Japanese market

12 Girls Band did not cause a national awareness in the China for the first two years after their form. However, their popularity extended internationally after signing with Toumoto's Japanese management office in 2003. 12 Girls Band went on their way to success globally through their debut album '*12 Girls Band - Beautiful Energy*' releasing in Japan. Following the debut album, their second album '*12 Girls Band - Shinning Energy*' was best sellers on first releasing day and in the first week in Japan. In addition to their outstanding performance in recording sales, the band also arranged compact Japanese tour shows. 12 Girls Band successfully expand to Japanese mainstream musical industry, which extended their popularity and fixed audience group in Japan. Japanese market provided the band with spaces for development that fully accounts for their international success.

##### 1.1.1 Nostalgia and feminine: strategies of the legendary producer

Appealing to the international market especially Japanese market, 12 Girls Band uses traditional Chinese music to fill up the demand of Japanese nostalgia. As producer **Toumoto Kazuma** intended, the band originally was geared to elderly audience and not expected to be popular among all age groups. Therefore, reinterpretation of 1970s to 1990s Japanese popular songs takes a large part of 12 Girls Band. Popular songs of that period were normally influenced by *enka*<sup>53</sup> that are filled with feelings of nostalgia. However, nostalgic theme, as the mainstream style of creating

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<sup>53</sup> *Enka* is a Japanese popular music genre but considered to resemble traditional Japanese music stylistically.

popular music in 1970s to 1990s, gradually decreased with after the 1990s (Yano, 2002). Compared with other Japanese popular music nowadays, these golden melodies reinterpreted by traditional Chinese musical instruments are exotic and antique. The nostalgic feelings embedded in strange yet familiar traditional Chinese music renders the past unforgettable decades for the Japanese listeners. Featuring a nostalgic feeling, music 12 Girls Band was described by the Japanese media as ‘healing music’<sup>54</sup> that comforts listeners being away from life stress of contemporary society.

Though appearance and music of 12 Girls Band is exotic, the big size girls’ group style is familiar with the Japanese audience. Having thirteen years’ history, Morning Musume is one of the most popular and successful girls groups in Japan. Members of Morning Musume are from auditions that are held every year. Having experienced several generations of line-up, the group is still popular. As part of Toumoto’s strategies, he imitated the pattern of Morning Musume to present 12 Girls Band. Being given the title of ‘Chinese Moring Musume ’, Chinese feminine images of 12 Girls Band was reproduced in a Japanese way by the producer (Mastunaga, 2010).

### 1.1.2 Chinese traditional musical culture in Japan

Traditional Chinese music and musical instruments have relatively wide acceptance outside China particularly in Japan. Before 12 Girls Band enter the Japanese market, *erhu* has already been supported by its enthusiasts in terms of performance and learning. The most influential *erhu* performer in Japan is **Jia Pengfang** who was originally from China. In order to pursue a breakthrough and preserve traditional Chinese music, Jia chose to go to Japan for larger space of development. He went to Japan in the late 1980s and joined the composer **Hattori Katsuhisa**’s record album production performing *erhu* solo. He also often performed in Hattori’s concerts as a guest performer. Jia’s work ranges over various areas including CD production, soundtrack of TV shows and films, commercial theme music, and game music. Besides, Jia devoted himself to popularization of *erhu* culture in terms of teaching<sup>55</sup>. His *erhu* music and music school have been contributed to the spread of Chinese traditional music across the whole country. Based on effort made by musician as Jia, 12 Girls Band could easily accepted by Japanese market with Chinese

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<sup>54</sup> In Japanese: 癒やし系音楽

<sup>55</sup> Profile of Jia Pengfang, from Jia Pengfang’s Official Website <http://www.jia-pengfang.com/english/index.html>

cultural base in Japan.

In fact, traditional Japanese musical instrument such as *shamisen* was innovated to fuse with popular music. However, the lack of bowed musical instrument such as Chinese erhu limits the musical expression in a wider sense. Traditional Chinese music made up for the insufficiency of musical instruments composition. In addition, characteristic of traditional Japanese music such as a Japanese pentatonic scale provided convenience for traditional Chinese musical instruments' adaptation. It is because that a pentatonic scale is widely used in East Asian ethnic and folk music. For most of the 1970s to 1990s Japanese popular music are influenced by *enka* which also emphasizes on Japanese pentatonic scale. Texture and timbre of traditional musical instruments are more suitable to interpret this kind of music.

### 1.1.3 Environment of Japanese musical industry

Japanese musical industry is well established in terms of distinct musical styles and management. Under the environment of Japanese market, 12 Girls Band fully realized their potential by their fusion of traditional Chinese music and popular music. Japanese music as an industry contains a wide array of performers in various genres from traditional Japanese music to Western music. Even J-pop (Japanese pop) can be loosely defined as an independent musical genre. As Japanese musical industry shows its inclusiveness, 12 Girls Band were not the first Chinese artists that expanded development at Japanese market. During the 1970s to 1980s, Taiwanese singers such as **Feng Feifei**, **Teresa Deng** are widely known and successfully enter the Japanese market. Therefore, Chinese artists such as 12 Girls Band definitely have their commercial value at Japanese musical industry.

While the well-established Japanese musical industry provided 12 Girls Band with opportunities of development in Japan, the industry also led the band to the North American market to enter the world market. Their Japanese management office bridges the gap for the band from China to the world. Releasing of 12 Girls Band's albums in North America was conducted by Toumoto's Platia Entertainment USA Inc (Nikkei Entertainment, 2003). It is hard for Chinese producers or management offices to emulate Toumoto's business style. As integration of Japanese music

industrial development into the global market, 12 Girls Band could have access to go into the North America market.

## 1.2 Kodo and the professionalization of *taiko* performance

Kodo firstly appeared at Berlin Festival for their debut in 1981, the same year of their form. Following the debut, a series of European tour was done in Italy, San Marino and West Germany<sup>56</sup>. Even Kodo's first performance in Japan was given after the European tour had been finished. The form of Kodo was then symbolized by their debut in Berlin. However, it also related to the dissolution of 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza'. Reuniting the team to start their new *taiko* performing career outside Japan helped Kodo to get rid of influence from their former group. Kodo's international success strengthened their independent position among other traditional Japanese art performance groups.

### 1.2.1 Forerunner: **Oguchi Daihachi**

Kodo's international success is closely related to the professionalization of *taiko* as a performance art. The professionalization of *taiko* performance can be traced back to the effort made by **Oguchi Daihachi** early in the 1950s and 1960s. Oguchi was a Jazz musician specialized in Jazz drumming. His trail led to the invention of contemporary *taiko*, as *taiko*'s existence in rituals was not referred before 1951. He introduced the techniques of western drumming to traditional Japanese *taiko*, such as multi-drum and multi-player. Contemporary *taiko* was established among the international audience through performance of his *taiko* group, Osuwa Daiko, at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics Games. This success brought fame for Osuwa Daiko that proved the value of Oguchi's innovations. It has also set the standards for all other following *taiko* groups and enabled *taiko* to become a professionalized performance art. Kodo's international success definitely was benefited from Oguchi's contribution (Bensen, 2006).

### 1.2.2 Geographical-cultural advantages

After the establishment of *taiko* as an independent performing art, it spread quickly among Japanese Americans as a way to display ethnic pride. This kind of pride has extended to a sense of

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<sup>56</sup> Refer to Appendix, 'Biography of Kodo'

belongingness for Asian American pan-ethnicity. Those Asian ethnicities promote the recognition of *taiko* culture outside Japan, as they are widely grounded. It also booms quite a few professional taiko drumming groups overseas. This approach to *taiko* in North America as a Pan-Asian art form has grown prevalent as the music has extended further beyond the boundaries of the Japanese American community, and histories of *taiko* (Benson, 2006).

## 2. Discussion

Based on the description and analysis of 12 Girls Band of Kodo, it is found that the two examples are similar in the way of becoming successful in spite of their different backgrounds. Music of 12 Girls Band and Kodo are identified as traditional Chinese music and traditional Japanese music respectively. However, they both crossed from their own countries to start with initial successes out at the international arenas. In order to find what factors lead to their similar starting points, it is necessary to discuss their domestic influences before and after they obtaining international popularities.

### 2.1 The Days of Dreariness: Before Entering the International Market

#### 2.1.1 12 Girls Band: Like ‘an abandoned old cassette’

As described in the previous part, 12 Girls Band did not cause a national awareness in China for the first two years after they formed. Not only did the band being neglected by the Chinese audience, but they were not considered to be potential by some of the recording companies either. It was early in the winter of 2001 that **Wang Xiaojing**'s deputy went about selling 12 Girls Band among several Japanese recording companies. But there was no result after a several-month trail. The demo of 12 Girls Band was a blurred video cassette that had passed through many times by many sound recording investors. It finally appeared by chance in front of **Toumoto Kazuma**'s desk in Warner Music Japan. However, Warner Music Hong Kong clearly stated that the Hong Kong affiliate maintained span of control in mainland Chinese market to the case of 12 Girls Band, and demurred at Toumoto's decision, (Chen, 2005). That time, the band neither had popularity among Chinese audience, nor being appealing to big Chinese recording companies. Just like their blurred video cassette, 12 Girls Band was on the verge of being abandoned by the Chinese market.

Nevertheless, this blurred video cassette was turned out to be the ‘wheel of fortune’ for Toumoto (Ye & Wang, 2006)<sup>57</sup> after 12 Girls Band succeeded in Japan.

### 2.1.2 Kodo: ‘Left-wing crazies, nationalist fanatics, and a religious cult’

Before the foundation of Kodo and their debut in Europe, they were not active yet domestically. Therefore, it was hard for domestic audience to be aware of Kodo as a newly formed troupe. However, it is still traceable how performing group like Kodo was accepted by Japanese because Kodo was split from their predecessor group, Sado no Kuni Ondekoza. Kodo succeeded much of the social philosophy created by Sado no Kuni Ondekoza, and kept so far. The founder of Sado no Kuni Ondekoza, **Den Tagayasu**, was a member of the radical social movement in the 1950s-60s. *Taiko* was once unconcerned that time in Japan which was only served as incidental music for traditional ceremonies and rituals (Lim, 2009). When he firstly came to Sado Island to establish a commune of traditional arts, the residents on the island regarded the commune ‘either left-wing crazies, nationalist fanatics or religious cult’ (Bensen, 2006). On one hand Sado no Kuni Ondekoza was deliberately isolated from the public on Sado Island, on the other hand image of the commune was associated with Den’s radical political conviction. These two disadvantages prevented domestic audience from accepting them as an art musical performing group.

## 2.2 Return of the Heroes: Domestic Reactions to the International Influences

### 2.2.1 12 Girls Band: Controversies between the Chinese market and the academism

Following the 12 Girls Band’s sensation in Japan expanding to South-east Asia and North America, the Chinese market was also affected by their international success. Unlike being limited in Beijing in the first two years, 12 Girls Band extended their performance and tours to all over the place in China.<sup>58</sup> The band kept being listed on Forbes China celebrity list within top three by income for three years from 2005 to 2007. Their music and performance aroused a national pride on traditional Chinese music. However, based on previous description of controversies stirred by **Min Huifeng**, **Zhang Hongyan** and **Ma Xiaohui**, the band’s acceptance by the Chinese market appeared a contrast to the criticism. The controversies are neither between the 12 Girls Band and

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid 18

<sup>58</sup> Ibid 29



the three famous traditional musical performers, nor supporters from two sides. It actually can be regarded as the conflict between the market and the traditional music academism. By using international influence, what 12 Girls Band won is only the domestic market, but not wide acceptance.

### 2.2.2 Kodo: Professionalizing taiko as traditional performance art

Following Kodo as a successful example, new professional *taiko* drumming groups rapidly emerged in Japan<sup>59</sup>. Kodo led *taiko* drumming gradually evolving into a more professional performing cultural industry. Kodo's recognition by overseas audience caused Japan's pride in *taiko*. It was also an impetus for people to reconsider the invaluableness of this performing art. The international success rebuilt the image of Kodo, compared with the former Sado no Kuni Odenkoza as a strange commune living on the Sado Island. Based on description in the previous part of Kodo's organizational development, they extended their influence in establishing traditional art education in terms of apprenticeship program and school workshop. It can be found that Kodo does not only aim to cultivate talented members for performance, but also provides access to participation for anyone interested in traditional art culture. More than winning the domestic market, Kodo attained a higher goal in promoting traditional Japanese art in terms of acceptance.

### 2.3 From International back to Local: Presenting of National Identities

Through discussion of domestic influences in two different periods, it is found that both Chinese market and Japanese market experienced a changeover to accept 12 Girls Band and Kodo because of their international popularities. Besides, the international success of traditional music aroused a feeling of pride among audience of the two countries. However, 12 Girls Band and Kodo encountered different domestic reactions after their international success. 12 Girls Band's winning the market and popularity does not necessarily lead to a total acceptance by the Chinese society. The linkage between the band's international influence and local acceptance is weak. Contrarily, Kodo's international success outside Japan led to wide acceptance by both market and society. These two different domestic reactions generate a further discussion on presenting of national

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<sup>59</sup> One of the famous groups is Tao which is a Japanese drum and dance performing group formed in 1993. The group mainly uses *taiko* as percussion instruments and combines music and dance of Japanese tradition.

identities.

### 2.3.1 12 Girls Band: Presenting a different national identity

Chinese domestic reaction to 12 Girls Band revealed that the Chinese music market and Chinese traditional music academism are segregated. The academism pays little attention to the commercialization of traditional music in the market. From the perspective of academism, traditional Chinese music is high art due to its profound history and culture, which is opposite to popular music. This was also the argument of academism to criticize music of 12 Girls Band for being commercialized and popularized. To some extent, the attitude hold by academism prevents traditional music market from development, which is also was reflected by 12 Girls Band's difficulty of development in the early period. Nevertheless, by looking into members of 12 Girls Band, it can be found that all the players are selected from distinguished conservatories. Academicism traditional musical education is prestigious which provides traditional musical talents of high qualities.

Therefore, on one hand, traditional music academicism is conservative to the invented traditional Chinese music by 12 Girls Band. On the other hand, the academia provides exclusive traditional music education entitling traditional music to integrate into the world music. This seeming contradicted situation of traditional music academism indicates that the academia would be able to influence the reform of traditional Chinese music. Nevertheless, as controlled by the state, traditional music academia is supposed to concentrate on the development of traditional music domestically. In this sense, traditional Chinese music should be used to arouse a national identity such as to unit people of the country. However, the international success of 12 Girls Band's traditional Chinese music promoted a cultural identity rather than national identity outside China that can be extended to all ethnic Chinese. These two identities are two different discourses. 12 Girls Band's traditional music presents an identity on how the world consider about Chinese, while traditional music in China is used domestically to create an identity on 'who we are'.

### 2.3.2 Kodo: Beyond National Identity

Kodo's international popularity is strongly linked to Japanese domestic reaction. Traditional music

made by Kodo was market-driven to be categorized into world music and accepted by the Japanese audience. Unlike the complicity of 12 Girls Band, there is a consistency between Kodo's international market and local acceptance. The international success is important enough to influence Japanese domestic society, which implies that the domestic audience is identified with how traditional Japanese music is appreciated by international audience. Kodo uses traditional Japanese music to present a national identity which is not limited to Japanese people. It is considered by Japanese in terms of national identity that how the world thinks about them and their society. The identity created by Kodo can be discoursed as something beyond borders and ethnics that is based on the understanding of traditional art and Kodo's ascetic attitude toward life. Traditional music of Kodo more likely presents an identity on the Kodo's belief in traditional art, which could be regarded as quasi-religious.

## PART V: CONCLUSION

The analysis and discussion on 12 Girls Band and Kodo reveal similarities and distinctions of the ways that traditional Chinese and Japanese musical culture have been invented respectively in the contemporary society. 12 Girls and Kodo Band rediscovered new identities of traditional art, and embedded it into their own performances. Both of them raised international profiles outside their domestic stages as start, and were reconsidered by the local markets later. Through comparing the invention of traditional music by 12 Girls Band and Kodo, two different ways of expressing national identities by China and Japan are revealed. Traditional music is invented as a tool for promoting national identity domestically in China. However, 12 Girls Band is an exception because it is a commercial-driven group designed outside China. On the other side, traditional Japanese music is invented as a tool for promoting a national identity toward the world. Kodo, as a traditional art performing group, is in accordance with establishing this national identity. These two different ways of presenting national identities influence the development of traditional music in contemporary Chinese and Japanese societies.

12 Girls Band and Kodo made traditional Chinese and Japan music no longer distant from the audience out there by coexisting with the world music. However, discussion on differences of 12 Girls Band and Kodo shows that the deep meaning beneath the traditional musical art is far more crucial than the format of musical performance. It is Kodo's unremitting attitude toward *taiko* and traditional Japanese arts that enable Kodo to stand on the world stage for nearly 30 years. Comparatively, 12 Girls Band as a musical group operated commercially is prevented from concentrating on refining their music. Even though the band was found enough marketable value by Toumoto's strategies, they could not be successful as Kodo at the same level in terms of artistry. To some extent, musical instruments and techniques are merely manifestation or tools to present inner features of culture. No matter how talented all the members of 12 Girls Band are in performing techniques, they still need to make effort to explore the spiritual essences inside traditional Chinese art. In this sense, Tan Dun's using of Kodo's Japanese *taiko* to portray the 2000-year-ago Chinese *dagu* was an appropriate illustration. Therefore, the way of traditional musical culture has been invented in contemporary society is a process of rediscovering and

reconstructing identities through traditional culture.

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## APPENDIX

### 1. Discography of 12 Girls Band and Kodo

12 Girls Band: CD albums released in Japan

<b>Release Year</b>	<b>Album</b>	<b>Lable</b>
2003.07.24	<i>Beautiful Energy</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2003.11.06	<i>Miracle</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2004. 03.03	<i>Shining Energy</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2004.10.12	<i>FREEDOM: Best Selection</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2005.01.26	<i>Romantic Energy</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2005.07.27	<i>THE BEST OF COVERS</i>	Platia Entertainment Inc
2005.11.02	<i>Merry Christmas To You</i>	Muture Communications Inc.
2006.04.12	<i>12 Girls Band: Best</i>	Muture Communications Inc.
2006.06.21	<i>Sekai Meikyoku Gekijo - Jokyoku</i>	Muture Communications Inc.
2006.11.22	<i>Sekai Meikyoku Gekijo – Dai 1 Ma</i> <i>Chugoku Minyo Shu</i>	Muture Communications Inc.
2007.08.22	<i>Shanghai</i>	EMI Music Japan
2010.08.22	<i>Perfect Best</i>	Independent Label Council Japan

Kodo: CD albums released in Japan

<b>Release Year</b>	<b>Album</b>	<b>Lable</b>
1988.08.26	<i>Ubu-Suna</i>	Sony Music Japan
1989.11.22	<i>Blessing of the Earth</i>	Sony Music Japan
1990.10.21	<i>Irodori</i>	Sony Music Japan
1991	<i>Gathering</i>	Sony Music Japan

1991.10.25	<i>Mono-Prism</i>	Sony Music Japan
1992.10.21	<i>Kaiki</i>	Sony Music Japan
1993.09.22	<i>Best of Kodo</i>	Sony Music Japan
1994.12.01	<i>Nasca Fantasy</i>	Sony Music Japan
1995.09.01	<i>Kodo Live at the Acropolis</i>	Sony Music Japan
1995.11.22	<i>The Hunted</i>	Sony Music Japan
1996.12.21	<i>Ibuki</i>	Sony Music Japan
1998.10.06	<i>Against</i>	Roadrunner Records
1999.02.20	<i>Sai So: Ibuki Remix</i>	Sony Music Japan
1999.10.20	<i>Warabe</i>	Sony Music Japan
1999.12.31	<i>Tsutsumi</i> (single album)	Sony Music Japan
2000.11.22	<i>Tataku: The Best of Kodo II (1994–1999)</i>	Sony Music Japan
2001.10.11	<i>Mondo Head</i>	Sony Music Japan
2002.04.24	<i>FIFA 2002 World Cup Official Anthem</i>	Kioon Records
2004.08.24	<i>Hero</i>	Sony Music
2004.03.24	<i>Sado e Kodo: One Earth Tour Special</i>	Sony Music Japan
2005.07.20	<i>Prism rhythm</i>	Sony Music Japan
2006.11.22	<i>Heartbeat: Best of KODO 25 Anniversary</i>	Sony Music Japan

### 3. Biography of Kodo

2007; Tour- USA, Canada, Japan. Earth Celebration 20th Anniversary. The "Amaterasu" project with Tamasaburo Bando performed at the historical "Kabuki-Za" theater in Tokyo. "Horaiikitan" collaboration with Kyogen performers. Kodo Cultural Foundation entrusted with the management of the Sado Island Taiko Centre.

2006; Tour - Belgium, UK, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Japan. "Amaterasu"-collaborative performance series with Tamasaburo Bando in Tokyo and Kyoto (including

first appearance at Kyoto Minamiza Kabuki Theater). Performance at Fuji Rock Festival in Niigata, Japan.

Release of Kodo 25th Anniversary CD "Heartbeat" on Sony Records.

2005 ; Tour - USA, Canada, Japan (including first appearance at National Theatre Okinawa with Ryukyuan classical dancer Takako Sato). Release of CD "Prism Rhythm" on Sony Records.

2004 ; Tour - UK, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Italy (including first appearance at Teatro San Carlo de Napoli), Switzerland (first appearance at Kultur Kongresszentrum in Luzern and sold out 5 day concert) and Japan. Release of CD and DVD "One Earth Tour Special" on Sony Records.

2003 ; Tours - USA, Japan First workshop tour presented by Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) in North America. Kodo Cultural Foundation sponsors "Earth Furniture", a project designed to use regional materials in a self-sustaining local industry.

First book by "Kodo Books", "The Tub Boats of Sado Island, A Japanese Craftsman's Methods" published.

"The Kodo One Earth Tour Special", directed by Tamasaburo Bando makes a 25-show run in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Niigata and Sado.

2002 ; Tours - USA, Japan Establishment of "Kodo Arts Sphere America" (KASA) in North America. Appearance in FIFA World Cup (TM) Korea/Japan live events (First-match cultural event, official concert, championship game festivities).

Participation in Chinese motion picture "HERO" soundtrack (Music composed by Tan Dun).

Release of CD- FIFA 2002 World Cup™ Official Anthem

2001; Tour - USA, UK, Germany, Austria, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Japan

Nobel Peace Prize 100th Anniversary Concert (Dec. 11)

2000; Tour - USA, Canada, Korea, China, UK, Netherland, Belgium, Germany (Berlin Philharmonie Hall), Switzerland, Italy, Japan

1999; Tour - USA, Japan

First Koryu Gakko Koen Tour

1998; Tour - Switzerland, France (sold-out 5-day concert at Theatre de la Ville in Paris), Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Britain (1st Royal Festival Hall appearance sold-out 5-day concert), Japan.

1997; Tour - America and Canada incl. 2-day concert at Carnegie Hall, Japan. Release of CD

"Ibuki." Establishment of Kodo Cultural Foundation. Earth Celebration 10th Anniversary.

1996; Tour - Belgium, Holland, France, Germany, Britain (incl. two weeks sold-out Sadler's Wells Theatre, London), Israel (sold-out performances in Tel Aviv, Emek, Jerusalem), Japan.

1995; Tour - America incl. sold-out 1st Carnegie Hall appearance, Belgium, France (1st Theatre de la Ville appearance - sold out 5-day concert), Switzerland, Italy, Greece (The Odeon of Herodes Attikus at Acropolis - sold out 2-day concert with 9000 audience), Japan.

1994; Tour - America, Japan. "Kodo" receives the MIDEM Music Video (Long Form) Award at the 3rd International Visual Music Festival in Cannes. Japanese Foreign Ministry award for contribution to exports through Earth Celebration and overseas tours.

1993; Tour - America, Canada, Portugal (Mitsui sponsored "Close-up of Japan" festival), Britain (incl. two weeks sold-out Sadler's Wells, London), Taiwan, Japan.

1992; Tour - America, Canada, Germany (Mitsui sponsored "Close-up of Japan" festival), Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Japan.

1991; Tour - America, Canada, Japan. Special small group "Kodo San'nin Gurui" performs in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal. Kodo Juku drum workshops held in Northern Ireland as part of UK "Japan Festival". 1st annual "Gathering" 3-day concert series Orchard Hall, Shibuya, Tokyo.

1990; Tour - America (incl. one week sold-out New York City Center), France, Britain (incl. two weeks sold-out Sadler's Wells, London), Japan. CD "Irodori" receives Gold Disc Award for Japanese classical music.

1989; Tour - America, Canada, West Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Japan. First "Kodo Juku" drum workshop.

1988; Tour - America (incl. one week sold-out New York City Center), Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, Brazil (80th anniversary of Japanese immigration), Colombia, Japan, Australia (200th anniversary celebrations). Opening of Kodo Village. 1st annual "Earth Celebration" international arts festival on Sado Island.

1987; Tour - America, Canada, Britain (incl. two weeks sold-out Sadler's Wells, London), France, West Germany, East Germany (Berlin 750th anniversary at Berlin Philharmony Hall), Holland, Japan.

1986; Tour - Taiwan, Hong Kong, Turkey, ("Japan Week" festival), Indonesia (Bali Arts Festival), Malaysia, Japan.

1985; Tour - America (incl. Kennedy Center etc.), Canada, Britain (incl. Edinburgh Festival),

Holland, Italy, Switzerland, France, Japan.

1984; Tour - Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Italy, France, Switzerland, Britain, Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, Holland, America. Sold-out performances at Los Angeles Olympics Arts Festival.

1983; Tour - Japan.

1982; Tour - America (incl. Lincoln center etc.), Canada, Mexico, Japan.

1981; Formation of "Kodo". Debut at '81 Berlin Festival. Tour - Italy, San Marino, West Germany, Japan.

1971 to 1981; Kodo's antecedant group 'Sado no Kuni Ondekoza' active on Sado Island.

Sources: Kodo Official Website. Retrieved from: [http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/history\\_en.html](http://www.kodo.or.jp/general/history_en.html)

#### **4. Biography of 12 Girls Band**

2001.06; Founded in Beijing

2008.11; Coca Cola Promotion in Shanghai

2001.10; Chinese Debut concert in Beijing New Century Theater

2002.02; Participated the Chinese New Year Gala by CCTV

2003.01; Concert in Beijing Exhibiton Hall Theater

2003.06; Beijing Centry Starsic Culture Spread Co. Ltd cooperated with Platia Entertainment Inc. of Japan to develop the Japanese market. The debut album 'Beautiful Energy', were sold 10,000 copies on the first releasing day. One million copies were sold in the following two months.

2003.12; Performing in Shezhen, Taiuan, Xi'an, Wuhan and other cities in China under sponsorship of Huatai Automobile Company.

2004.01; Concert in Nippon Bodokan, Japan.

Concerts in Hong Kong Red Hall with additional two more concerts added.

Being nominated for six awards of Chinese Insititute of Light Music; and wining five of them.

2004.02; Two concerts in Shanghai sponsored by Japanese JTB

Being Tour Image Ambassador of Hangzhou city in Zhejiang province, China.

2004.03; The second album, 'Shinning Energy' was released in Japan. It was the best seller on the first releasing day and top one in the following week.

2004.10; Won the 'Outstanding Artist of the Year 2003 Award' and Japan Gold Disc Award.

2004.03; Two concerts of tribute to Wang Luobin, 'In That Remote Place'

2004.04-05; 32 concerts in 20 cities of Japan in the "Tour Japan" activities. The tickets were sold out within 10 minutes.

2004.06; Six theme concerts, "Shining Energy - Miracle Live", in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Taiwan Area in the "Tour South-East Asia" activities.

2004.08-09; Concerts in different US cities including Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta, New York and Hawaii in Tour US promotion activities, and they started a popular trend of Chinese folk music in these cities.

The Eastern Energy Album (specially re-organized for North America market) was released in United States; the top 62 on the Billboard and according to Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the Eastern Energy Album kept as the top one best seller within the continuous 11 weeks; nominated of the 47th Grammy Award for the Best New Artist and Best Traditional World Music Album.

2004.10-12; Concerts in Shanghai, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and etc in China

2005.01 Two concerts in Beijing Exhibition Hall Theater

The top 6 of Oricon record charts in Japan.

2005.03-04; 20 concerts in ten cities of Japan during the Tour Japan activities

Both the second album 'Shining Energy' and the live album 'Miracle' won the Instrumental Album of the Year (2004) of the Japan Gold Disc Award.

Covering theme song of Japanese classic animation Doraemon

2005.06; Performing in pageant- 'Emotional in Hong Kong's River, Appointment in South-East' Tour in South-East Asia, including cities as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur of Malaysia and etc

2005.08; Releasing '12 Girls Band 3th Anniversary Album'

2005.09; As the Culture Ambassador, 12 Girls Band attended the flag ceremony of World's Exhibition Fair held by Nagoya in Japan.

2005.10-11; Tour North America including Toronto, Montreal, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles and etc

Releasing '12 Girls Band Christmas Album'

The second Japanese tour in the year

2005.12; Top 10 on the Billboard

China-Japan media sodality

2006.03; Special concert in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

2006.04; 42<sup>nd</sup> Hundreds of Thinking Art Award Ceremony in Korea.

2006.05-06 China Forum in Chicago and Chinese Stars Culture Festival of USA's Asian Month in 2006

Performing in Top 500 Enterprises world Conference in Beijing

10 concerts in Korean tour

2 concerts for 12 Girls Band 5th anniversary celebration in Beijing Exhibition Hall Theater

Releasing the 'Romantic Energy- Classic Treasure Series of Album' with different versions

2006.06-08; 20 concerts of Japanese tour

Concerts in Taipei and Tainan, Taiwan

2006.10; BOCOG's closing ceremony evening

2006.11; Shows at The Oriental Pearl Radio and TV Tower in Shanghai cooperated with PBS of the United States.

12 Girls Band performed in CCTV's International Beauty Contest.

2006.12; Performing in Shenzhen, Taiyuan, Xi'an, Wuhan, Jinan and etc. sponsored by Huatai Automobile Company

2007.01; Concert in Beijing Poly Theater

Performances in Okinawa, Japan

2007.02; Live Concert in Zhengzhou, China

2007.03; Live Concert in Erduosi, China.

CCTV program of 'Finance Grand Ceremony' .

2007.04; Participating in the TV program of Changsha, China.

The Band performed in the TV program of 'Qing Guo Qing Cheng' in Beijing Diaoyutai State Hotel.

2007.05; Program of CCTV Music Channel

2007.06-07; Japanese Fan meeting in Beijing, China

Press Conference for releasing DVD of 'Live in Shanghai' in Beijing, China

Program of Phoenix Satellite Television in Chongqing, China

Shanghai Film Festival.

Live Concert in Guangzhou, Haikou, Chengdu, China.

Charity concert in Shanghai Oriental Pearl Tower

2007.08-09; Concerts in Japan

2007.10-11; Live Concerts in USA and Canada

The Band participated in the Closing Ceremony of annual conference of Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchanges

2007.12; Mascot Announcement Ceremony of Shanghai World Expo 2010

CCTV New Years Gala

2008.01; Concert in Guiyang, China.

Live Concert in Forbidden City Concert Hall, China

Concert in Shenzhen Grand Theater, China

Concert in Guiyang Grand Theater, China

Spring Festival Gala Evening in Hubei TV, China

The Band participated in the Spring Festival Gala Evening in Shijiazhuang, China

The Band participated in the Spring Festival Gala Evening in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

2008.02; Concert in Jakarta, Indonesia

2008.04; Performances in Japan

Forbes China Celebrity Charity Gala 2008, and Forbes Celebrity Award of the year.

Evening Gala of The Third Central China Investment Trade Expo in Wuhan, China

2008.06 Japanese fan meeting in Beijing, China

Concert in Wulumuqi, Xinjiang, China

The Charity Performance for the Earthquake in Chengdu, China

Promotional video for Shanghai World Expo recorded in Osaka, Japan.

Twelve Girls Band participated in the Children's Charity Fund Ceremony in Beijing.

2008.09; An Enterprise Celebration in Changsha, China

2008.10; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cooperation between Qian'an and Capital Steel Factory, China

2008.11; CCTV program

2008.12; Japanese fans meeting in Beijing, China

Sources: 12 Girls Band Official Website. Retrieved from: <http://www.12girls.org/english/yfsj.asp>