

## **The Sound and the Fury: An Historical Analysis of Sound and Music in Traditional Chinese Medical Culture**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the traditional Chinese view of the relationship between sound, music, health, and spirituality. Traditional Chinese medical culture was based on an understanding of a substrative medium, known as qi, which was considered responsive to sound as well as generative of sound. Chinese medicine charted the sound emanations of healthy organic structures and used them as parameters of diagnosis, as well as venues of treatment and health maintenance. This medical understanding effused Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism leading to unique theories of sound and health, which formed a platform for distinctive music intended to affect the organic structures of the listener and lead to spiritual development. The paper examines the traditional categories and associations of sound, the musical systems which arose in the three aforementioned religions, and the potential platform for future clinical examination of the relevance of this historical model.