

# Producing Worlds in Southern China: Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology

This article explores the production of worlds in southern China, focusing on the ways in which music, ritual, and other cultural practices create and shape the social and physical environment. The article draws on fieldwork conducted in a rural village in Guangdong Province, and examines the ways in which local people use music and ritual to create a sense of place, belonging, and identity. The article also explores the ways in which these practices are shaped by the larger political and economic forces that are transforming southern China.



## Sonic Mobilities: Producing Worlds in Southern China (Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology) by Adam Kielman

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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## Music and Place

Music is a powerful force in the creation of place. It can evoke memories, create a sense of belonging, and shape our understanding of the world

around us. In southern China, music is closely tied to the land and the people who live on it. The songs and dances of the region are often about the local landscape, the history of the people, and the challenges they face. For example, the Hakka people of Guangdong Province have a rich tradition of folk songs that tell stories of their migration from northern China centuries ago. These songs help to create a sense of identity and belonging for the Hakka people, and they also serve as a way to pass on their history and culture to future generations.

In addition to folk songs, southern China is also home to a variety of other musical genres, including opera, Cantonese pop, and Western classical music. These genres are all popular in different ways, and they all reflect the diverse cultural influences that have shaped the region over time. For example, Cantonese opera is a popular form of theater that combines music, singing, and dance. Cantonese opera is often performed in temples and other public spaces, and it is a popular way for people to celebrate festivals and other special occasions.

## **Ritual and Identity**

Rituals are another important way in which people in southern China create and shape their world. Rituals are often used to mark important life events, such as birth, marriage, and death. They can also be used to celebrate festivals, commemorate historical events, and pray for good fortune. Rituals are often complex and elaborate, and they can involve music, dance, food, and other offerings. For example, the Dragon Boat Festival is a popular festival in southern China that is celebrated with dragon boat races, music, and food. The festival is said to commemorate the death of the poet Qu Yuan, who drowned himself in a river in protest against the corruption of the

government. The Dragon Boat Festival is a time for people to come together and celebrate their culture and heritage.

In addition to major festivals, there are also many smaller rituals that are performed on a regular basis in southern China. For example, many people in the region burn incense and pray to their ancestors every day. This ritual is a way to show respect for the dead and to ask for their protection. Other rituals are performed to protect against evil spirits or to bring good luck. For example, the Hakka people of Guangdong Province have a ritual called the "ghost marriage" that is performed to pacify the spirits of unmarried people who have died. The ritual involves marrying the spirits of the deceased to each other, and it is believed to bring peace and happiness to their souls.

## **Politics and Economics**

The production of worlds in southern China is not only shaped by cultural practices, but also by the larger political and economic forces that are transforming the region. In recent decades, southern China has experienced rapid economic growth, and this has led to a number of changes in the social and cultural landscape of the region. For example, many people have migrated from rural areas to cities in search of work, and this has led to a decline in the population of many rural villages. The growth of the economy has also led to an increase in the demand for consumer goods, and this has led to the development of new industries and businesses in the region. These changes have had a significant impact on the ways in which people in southern China produce their world.

For example, the growth of the economy has led to an increase in the popularity of Western music and culture. This is especially true in urban areas, where young people are increasingly exposed to Western music

through the media. As a result, Western music is now a popular choice for weddings, parties, and other social events. The growth of the economy has also led to an increase in the demand for traditional Chinese music and culture. This is especially true in rural areas, where people are looking for ways to preserve their cultural heritage. As a result, there has been a revival of interest in traditional Chinese music and culture in recent years.

The production of worlds in southern China is a complex and dynamic process that is shaped by a variety of factors, including cultural practices, political forces, and economic forces. The article has explored some of the ways in which music, ritual, and other cultural practices are used to create and shape the social and physical environment in southern China. The article has also examined the ways in which these practices are shaped by the larger political and economic forces that are transforming the region. The article concludes that the production of worlds in southern China is a continuing process that is constantly being shaped by the interplay of cultural, political, and economic forces.



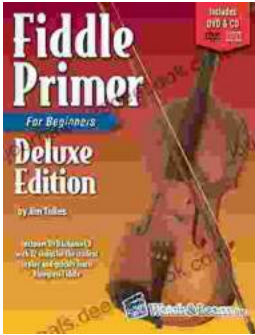
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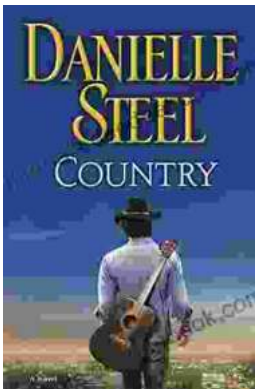
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