

Analysis of the Cultural Connotation and Inheritance of the Gutiao Songs of Mulao Folk Songs*

Wei Wei

Music and Dance College
Hechi University
Hechi, China

Abstract—The Mulao nation have a long history, and the Mulao folk songs add a unique color to this ancient nation. The Ancient songs in the folk songs, as a model of the development of the people's history, sing the songs from generation to generation, reflecting the unique thoughts and wisdom of the Mulao people, and have a profound significance for the education and inheritance of the national culture. The song culture of the last millennium history has gradually declined in modern society, leading to the lack of national cultural diversity. Therefore, it is imperative to protect and clarify the resources of the Gutiao songs. This paper analyzes the cultural connotation and inheritance of the Gutiao songs, and puts forward some thoughts on the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords—Gutiao songs; cultural connotation; inheritance

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mulao people are an ancient nation. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, there was a record calling it a branch of Baiyue. According to many historical records, the Mulao people evolved from the ancient "Liao people". Until August 30, 1953, the Mulao people had a unified title and became a member of the Chinese nation. Guangxi Luocheng Mulao Autonomous County has a population of 80% of the Mulao nationality. And it is the largest settlement of the Mulao people.

The Mulao people have national languages but no written words. Therefore, they can only sing, inherit and record their national culture and national spirit through songs. Life and songs go on their way hand in hand. Songs not only record a beautiful life, but also record the ancient and long folk culture. The folk songs of the Mulao people are the national cultural connotations and texts created and transmitted by the Mulao people in the long history.

The Gutiao songs, as a carrier for implementing traditional education and cultivating the cognition of ethnic groups, embody the essence of the traditional ethnic culture of the Mulao people. The "古" (Gu) can be referred to as "故", which can be understood as "ancient history" and "myths and

legends", while the "条" (tiao) is a quantitative word, indicating that each piece of story is very long. The Gutiao song is a long narrative song of historical mythology. Because the Mulao people do not have ethnic scripts, the history or mythological stories of the Mulao people can only be recorded by songs that are passed on by word of oral or recorded by Chinese characters. The Gutiao songs were born precisely because they meet the social needs of the people. They record the history of the monks and the ancient myths and legends. They are of great significance to the education and inheritance of the national culture. The Gutiao songs are the carriers of the large historical genre of the Mulao people. Each song has a long length, and the lyrics cannot be made up, so the singer must memorize the lyrics. In addition, the Gutiao songs have another function, such as on the singing altar, both men and women will follow the lyrics in the form of "solitaire" in the order of the lyrics until the end of the song after the altar ceremony. During the period, the memory of both parties will be tested. If a party can't pick up a certain section, then they will lose a game and wait for the next song to continue to compete. For this reason, the Gutiao songs have also become the carrier and tool for conveying the feelings and spreading the history and culture.

II. GUTIAO SONGS AS CULTURAL MODELS

A. Seeing Cultural Roots from Historical Myths

Since the lyrics of the Gutiao songs usually carry the myths and historical events of the nation, and they are sung in the form of long narratives. It can be seen the heroic deeds of the historical figures of the Mulao people, some folk stories and myths and legends. Therefore, it can be often heard that the Mulao people praise their ancient songs, which is the living fossil of the Mulao nationality history. For example, in the Gutiao songs, the most well-preserved long historical song "Ancient and Modern Singing" contains the history of the entire Chinese nation, from Pangu to the modern revolution of the 1911, which also responds to the old saying "historical myth, mystifying history". This traditional culture also means that the national history in the ancient songs can be familiarized and articulated by more people, from which to implement traditional education, cultivate and form ethnic identity [5].

*Fund: Guangxi University Young and Middle-aged Teachers' Basic Competence Enhancement Project "Investigation and Research on the Multicultural Form of the Mulao Folk Songs in Northwest Guangxi" (Number: 2018KY0487); Hechi University Master's Degree Awarding Unit Project Construction (Project Number: 2018YS007).

From some traditional works, it can also learn about the cultural connections and interactions between the Mulao people and other ethnic groups from the ancient songs. For example, the protagonist of "Water Flooding Tianmen Song" is the image of Fuxi and Nuwa in line with the Han mythology. The song describes Fuxi as the ancestor of human beings in ancient myths and legends. The "mother of the earth" Nvwa is the younger sister of Fuxi. There is a legend saying that Fuxi and his younger sister Nvwa are married to each other and have children. The "Water Flooding Tianmen Song" has adapted these stories, adding the unique thoughts and unique perspectives of the monks, as sung in the song: "The big brother is born with a single eye, the second brother has a single foot, and Fuxi is coming. It is the third brother, the youngest is a woman. Four brothers and sisters have great magic power, and the oldest brother and second brother are strong in temper. Only Fuxi and his sister are born with a soft heart. "The two lyrics tell the story of the brothers and sisters of Fuxi, and there are two brothers of Fuxi. Fuxi and Nvwa are ranked third and fourth. It can be seen that the image of Fuxi and Nuwa in the hearts of the monks is still a brother and sister, but the difference is that they are ordinary people's children. The image of Fuxi brothers and sisters is more life-oriented, closer to the image of the people. In the song: "It had been a long time that there was no rain. Everyone was worried even the ghost was worried. All the fogs in the field were too dry to die, and the apes and monkeys sat on the rock crying. People don't know when will rain? People don't know when can plant? The big brothers felt so angry that they picked up the bamboo pole fight Lei Kung and beat him." 馮 is the name for minorities in Guangxi to call fogs. The fogs were too dry to die and the apes and monkeys sat on the rock crying. It vividly describes the miseries the drought brought to the laboring people. The brother and sister kept Lei Kung in the granary. The kind-hearted Fuxi and Nvwa couldn't bear Lei Kung to suffer from hunger and thirst, secretly fed Lei Kung with sand and mud, but accidentally let Lei Kung regain his power to escape. Lei Kung repaid Fuxi and Nvwa with his teeth to let them plant in the earth. When the elder brothers came home, they found that Lei Kung escaped and drove the Fuxi and Nvwa out of the house. Later, the water flooded Tianmen and people of the whole world were dead. Because of the help, Lei Kung helped Fuxi and Nvwa to survive. Fuxi and Nvwa got married and gave birth to a meat fetus, and then cut it into three hundred and sixty pieces of meat into people. "There are two hundred and forty men and one hundred and twenty women. So there were more men than women have more than a man and a woman which makes that there are still single persons in the world." This reflects the needs of the Mulao people's own desires, as well as the needs of the reproduction of future generations. It also describes the traditional thoughts of the ancient Mulao people's patriarchal traditional thinking. It can be seen from the whole lyrics that in the eyes of the Mulao people, the original high "God" image of Fuxi and Nvwa have greatly reduced. They integrate their own culture and thoughts, and create a kind and brave brother and sister.

"Water Flooding Tianmen Song" is a mythical legendary song. The image of Fuxi and Nvwa also proves that there are

many connections between the folk songs and the symbols and images of other national cultures, but the stories in the songs still retain ways of thinking and wisdom of the uniqueness of the people.

B. Emotional Exit

"Ambition" and "love" are the main body of poetry. "The poet is the place where the ambition is. In the heart it is ambition, when speak out it is poetry."¹ Explaining emotions and ambitions in songs emphasizes that poetry is the product of emotion and the most vivid expression of human emotion. The Mulao people sent their love to the songs and passed them by oral words. At the same time, they incorporated the natural concepts and worship to the gods of the Mulao people into them and sang them through Gutiao songs.

In the "Chinese Songs Integration" section, two songs of "The Locust Song" are included, all of which are large-scale narrative songs of the Mulao people, which vividly reproduce the thinking and emotional changes of the Mulao people's ancestors and the situation in the face of natural disasters through vivid depiction. One of them was recorded in the Siba Town of Luocheng Mulao Autonomous County, and the other one was recorded in the county. The first record of the disaster was Kangxi Period, and the second was during the Daoguang Period. Although the time is different, they both describe the suffering caused by huge natural disasters. The first reaction to the disaster relief is to ask the gods for help. It is conceivable that the Mulao people were not productive at that time so the first spiritual sustenance of the people when they encounter difficulties is the gods of heaven and earth. This further confirms the rich ritual music of the Mulao people since ancient times. It has been accompanied by the ancestors of the Mulao people for the awe of the land and heaven and centralized the spiritual sustenance of the Mulao people.

"The Locust Song" (1), at the beginning of the first paragraph: "The twenty-first year of Kangxi being in the position, the locust flied all over the sky in Luocheng and the plants and grain seeding in the field was destroyed. The people have no rice but pain", explains clearly about the time, place, and accidents. "When the night came, people gathered in the village for the meeting. Everyone made a lot of suggestions. Some people shouted to beat the locust with sticks, and some people advocated asking help for the gods. / Burning incense and candles to worship to the gods, killing pigs and killing cattle and asking help for gods, God is not coming and there is no respond from heaven. There are more and more locusts and the people are more and more shocked!" Some people have offered to fight locusts with sticks, and some people are eager to use the power of the gods to solve the locust disaster. Here it can be seen that the Mulao people have low levels of productivity, people are blind and ignorant, and it can also be seen that the Mulao people's worship and demands of the gods.

¹ According to the Ruan Yuan's engraving of the "Explanations of Thirteen Classics", "Explanations of Mao and Zheng (Vol. 1)"

The first paragraph of "The Locust Song" (2) "When the Daoguang Emperor was in the position, people did not know who was to blame from the disaster. The people suddenly fell into disasters, and the locusts flew to eat young crops" explains the time and the dictatorship of imperialism from the side. "People invited the witch for the divination, and ask the Daogong to come to the village. The heavenly Jade Emperor does not take care of it, and the locusts still come to harm people." It can be seen the urgency of the Mulao people that can only hope for the blessing of the gods. In the song, the last "Daoguang sitting in the hall with his restless heart, cannot sleep the whole night until dawn. He is also afraid of the war and chaos, as well as the rebellions. Daoguang convenes his administrators and military commanders, talking about the big events in Tianmen. Administrators and military commanders have no idea, but to drink and enjoy their life befuddledly." These sentences describe the incompetence of administrators and military commanders in the face of natural disasters. The emperor does not know the suffering of the people. It incisively explains the inaction of the emperor, and expressed the unwillingness and helplessness of the ancestors of the Mulao people.

C. Character Statue

The "Gutiao" song records the history of the monks and the ancient myths and legends, which are of great significance to the education and inheritance of the national culture. For the education of deaf people, the "Gutiao" song is a living "textbook". The singers spread ancient history, myths and legends in the music world, and spread knowledge and emotions to the people and even more people to make them know the wisdom and talents of the ancestors of the Mulao people.

It is difficult to verify the story of Liu Sanjie originated from which ethnic group and which region, but there is no doubt that "Liu Sanjie" is the most famous folk song of Guangxi folk songs. She is not only an image, but also a microcosm of Bagui nations who loves to sing folk songs. Among them, the most familiar ones are the Fairy Singer Liu Sanjie of Zhuang nation, and the Mulao people also have their "Liu Sanjie".

Xie Yunyuan mentioned in the "Liu Sanjie" recorded in Dongmen town, Luocheng County in 1986 that "Sanjie lived in Luocheng County, lived in Luocheng Landian village, and the three sisters of Sanjie were born to be not married. Twelve-or-thirteen-year-old Liu Sanjie was smart and clever. She goes uphill to sing every day, singing uphill and she never stops." These explain the image of Liu Sanjie in the eyes of Mulao people. Liu Sanjie is about twelve or thirteen years old who loves the folk songs and never stop singing, and she even "goes uphill to sing every day, just wanting to sing and not wanting to go home. Her father exhorted her but she won't listen so that her father just wanted to kill her with a stick". Of course, this is also a kind of humorous expression method. Liu Sanjie is so obsessed with folk songs that she won't listen to her father. It also vividly illustrates Liu Sanjie's love for the folk songs. The parents had no choice but to let Sanjie go to chop firewood. Who knows that

Sanjie took the lyrics all the way and sang all the way, singing from the Xiajian River to Liuzhou City. When Sanjie went into the city, she was provoked by the rounder Xie Lanmeng. Sanjie was not afraid, and took the initiative to ask by the song, "Where are you coming from?" Who built the slate bridge? Who planted the riverside willow?" Xie Lanmeng helplessly "couldn't say a word with all his knowledge, then he pinched his nose and turned back." Here people can't help but applaud. These sentences vividly portray the wisdom and courage of Liu Sanjie in the hearts of the Mulao people."

D. A Comparative Study of Cultural Functions Among Four Works

The Gutiao songs are almost all large-scale narrative songs, which cover the myths and legends, historical events and the shaping of national cultural images, and combine the character, thoughts and spirits of the Mulao people in the ancient songs. These characteristics are shown in the four works listed one by one.

"Water Flooding Tianmen Song" is a mythical legendary song. The image of Fuxi and Nvwa also proves that there are many connections between the folk songs and the symbols and images of other national cultures, but the stories in the songs still retain ways of thinking and wisdom of the uniqueness of the people. "The Locust Song" (1) and (2) are both disastrous historical events. They not only clearly explain the time and place of the incident, but also satirize the imperial incompetence of the emperor through the song satirical, reflecting the humorous taste of the monks. And more importantly, their courage and wisdom and values are reflected in the songs. "Liu Sanjie" pays more attention to the cultural image of a nation, which is also a unique Mulao folk song. Through the image of Liu Sanjie, it fully reflects the spirit of Mulao people's favor for singing. In the end, no matter Liu Sanjie is a Zhuang singer, or a 12-year-old little sister of the Mulao nationality, it is no longer important. What is important is that she can convey people's love and needs, and make national cohesion and centripetal force more tenacious. All four works are highly integrated into the life and culture of the deaf. Through the songs of faith, humor, wisdom and courage, they reveal the important position of the ancient songs in the cultural life of the monks.

III. INHERITANCE — PROPAGATION

A. Singing Hall

The singing hall is also called the singing alter. It is usually opened on the evening of the end of the work of the people. It will also be held on the festive occasions such as weddings and birthdays or on the evenings of the holidays. Usually, after singing, and picking up, they will start singing Gutiao songs. Both men and women in the form of "solitaire" to sing the songs in the lyrics order to sing in the game to play, both sides must remember the lyrics content, singing one by one. If a party cannot pick up, then the party temporarily loses a game. And then they continue to the next song competition. Although this tradition has continued to

this day, the frequency of opening the music scene has become lower and lower with the times.

In the fast-developing 21st century, the widespread spread of electronic technology and the popularity of the online world, electronic products have also become the main medium for the dissemination of music, leading to the gradual disappearance of many traditional folk songs, such as "Gutiao songs", "ceremony songs", "life songs" and so on. According to Huang Minzhen's "The Inheritance and Evolution of the Song Culture of the Mulao People in Luocheng — Taking the Investigation of Dawu Village in Luocheng as an Example", only the "slope" custom is still prosperous in Luocheng urban and rural areas. There are very few people's activities in other forms of ethnic activities, customs and rituals are simple, and the singing hall is rarely opened. The inheritance of Gutiao songs is not optimistic.

B. Singers

The Gutiao songs are usually passed on to the younger generations by oral words. In modern society, with the rise of young people working in cities in remote areas, the traditional culture of these areas is facing a state of no inheritance, and the singers of Gutiao songs have entered an aging situation. According to the author's survey statistics, among the intangible cultural heritage lists of the autonomous regions and countries currently in the country, the majority of the inheritors of the Mulao folk songs account for the over 55 years old. While some young inheritors have leisure time, they would like to go out to work in the provincial capital or the city. The actual uploading of the inheritor is not a "professional" inheritor. Only some old people will gather together to sing when they are idle. Most of the middle-aged people in their 40s and 50s have said that they have heard the folk songs. They can only sing a few words or even can't sing a word. The younger ones just listened to a few paragraphs, they can sing no words about the songs, and they are not interested. Therefore, it must be paid attention to the issue of singers' "aging".

First of all, from the last 90s of the last world, the development of folk songs has entered a state of stagnation. People are attracted by new things, the society is undergoing rapid transformation, people no longer pay attention to traditional religious activities and various folk rituals, and the influence of Mulao folk songs on the people is also declining. However, the folk songs have lost the spread of folklore and religious activities, and development has become more difficult. Secondly, the singing methods and melody of folk songs are too singular, which has caused many young people to lose their interest in inheritance or creation. Even many people think that Mulao songs are outdated and people are unwilling to accept it. It also greatly weakened the enthusiasm of the inheritance and interpretation of the folk songs. Finally, the rapid development of mass media and electronic products has become a resistance to the survival and development of folk songs. Young people no longer speak the words of dialects. They love street dance, pop music, and do not want to stay in their hometown. In the long run, the national culture that

lives in the song gradually disappears into people's vision because of no inheritance.

C. Works Ontology

First of all, it is necessary to be clear that the Mulao people do not have written texts, the songs are mainly based on oral transmission, and the written records are mainly Chinese characters. China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Law promulgated in 2011 clearly states: "The competent cultural authorities should fully understand the relevant situation of intangible cultural heritage and establish intangible cultural heritage archives and related databases." The works on the folk songs of the Mulao people are also collected, organized and kept, providing the most comprehensive historical materials for the protection and inheritance of folk songs.

For example, the publication of "The Ancient Songs of the Mulao Nationality", "History of the Mulao People's Literature", "Integration of Chinese Folk Songs", "Luocheng Songs Collection", "Chinese Songs Integration", etc., allows the songs and tune of the folk songs to be recorded and preserved, as well as the collection of Mulao audio data by Long Dianbao, Bao Yutang, Xie Shengyu, etc., make the multimedia database more comprehensive. Not only the field work continues, but also the collection of Mulao folk songs is more comprehensive. The perfection of multimedia database enables more people to feel the Mulao folk songs more intuitively through audio-visual materials.

IV. CONCLUSION

The author visited the Luocheng Mulao Autonomous County and was fortunate to have met non-genetic inheritors including the Mulao folk songs such as Long Youli and Luo Zhoulan. Through interviews, it is found out that the national culture including the ancient songs of the Mulao nationality did not. It also lacks the concern of local young people. Among the inheritors, most of them are over 50 years old. The middle-aged inheritors receive the annual inheritor's allowance, but they have to go out to work because of their embarrassment, barely participating in any activities related to national heritage. There are few young people on the street. The national culture cultivated in the traditional soil is being paid attention and spread by the "outsiders". The author believes that this is a long-established cultural heritage. It should not be just a form of "specimen", displayed in major museums. Its vitality comes from the people and comes from the people living on this soil. The singer is the most crucial part of this triangular relationship. The traditional singer is like a sloping, folk festival, open altar and other folk forms. It can also be done at any time and place. Therefore, some people have the right the people are the core of the Mulao folk songs to continue to play their role and charm. The author believes that this is not just a dilemma faced by the Mulao folk songs, but how the traditional culture of the entire nation is passed down, how to maintain sustainable vitality, and the problems that need to be solved together.

REFERENCES

- [1] Institute of Minority Literature and Art, Minzu University of China: Chinese Folk Literature (Vol. 2) [M]. Beijing: China Minzu University Press, 1987. (in Chinese)
- [2] Long Dianbao, Huang Guiqiu, Wu Daiqun, Ancient Songs of Mulao Nationality (Catalog) [M]. Nanning: Guangxi Nationalities Publishing House, 2007. (in Chinese)
- [3] Teng Zhiming, Liu Kai'e, Mo Qiu, The Types, Functions and Significances of MuLao's Folk Song [J]. Nanning, Study of Ethnics in Guangxi, 2011. (in Chinese)
- [4] Chinese Folk Literature Integration National Editorial Board / China Songs Integration Guangxi Volume Editorial Committee: China Songs Integration · Guangxi Volume [M]. Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1992. (in Chinese)
- [5] Long Diaobao, Huang Guiqiu, Wu Daiqun, Ancient Songs of Mulao Nationality [M]. Nanning: Guangxi Nationalities Publishing House, 2007. (in Chinese)