

Study on the Artistic Characteristics of Tibetan Folk Songs*

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Abstract—There are many minority nationalities in China and their music resources are very rich, but at present, the study of minority music is far from in-depth. Among the minority nationalities in China, Tibetan music is very representative. Caidan Zhuoma, as an outstanding Tibetan musician, has promoted Tibetan music throughout the country. This paper mainly aims to introduce Tibetan folk songs, and analyze their artistic characteristics as well as development trend.

Keywords—Tibetan folk songs; artistic characteristics; development trend

I. INTRODUCTION

Tibetan people like singing and dancing. Against this context, folk songs have become a part of the Tibetan people's lives. Tibetan folk songs are characterized by obvious folk culture, strong religious flavor, simple and gorgeous overall style. Tibetan folk songs can not only reflect the way of life of the Tibetan people, but also reflect the unique regional culture of them. The study of its artistic characteristics is conducive to further tapping Tibetan culture and promoting the development of Tibetan folk songs.

II. FORMATION OF TIBETAN FOLK SONGS

China is one of the four ancient civilizations with 56 nationalities jointly creating history and culture. Each nation has formed its own unique regional culture and created rich and colorful national music in a long history. Their national music is the wisdom achievement of the people of all nationalities in a long period of time, reflecting the life characteristics of each nation in different historical periods, and enjoying a strong historical and artistic character. People of all nationalities extract material from their daily life followed by creating it as a musical art, leaving valuable wealth for future generations, which is of great research value.

Tibetans are people living on the snowy plateau with unique way of life and character influenced by their unique region. In the long course of history, the Tibetan people have created a splendid national culture, which integrated the Tibetan people's culture, art and religion. In turn, it promoted

the prosperity and development of Tibetan culture. When Princess Wencheng entered Tibet, she brought a new mode of production for the Tibetan people. Then, Tibetan culture began to merge with Han culture. On this basis, Tibetan folk songs got further development. With the emergence of folk songs with the nature of praise, the variety of Tibetan folk songs has become more and more abundant.

By exploring Tibetan folk songs, it can be seen that the Tibetan people embrace the strong vitality. What's more, it is helpful for people to get a better understanding of Tibetan splendid national culture. It is also conducive to the people of other ethnic groups to understand Tibetan folk songs, learn Tibetan folk songs and carry forward Tibetan folk songs, so that Tibetan culture can be inherited and developed, prospering our national cultural undertakings.

III. CONTENTS OF TIBETAN FOLK SONGS

Tibetan people are skilled at sing and dance. Music and dance are their symbols. Due to dispersed living and inconvenient transportation, each Tibetan folk song presents different characteristics, but the same is that each Tibetan folk song can reflect a strong plateau characteristics. Tibetan folk songs are loved and sung all over the country because of their unique characteristics. Their development process also means the process of social evolution in Tibet.

Some Tibetan folk songs contain elements of resistance. Historically, serfdom existed in Tibet for a long time, which resulted in exploitation and oppression of the Tibetan people. Therefore, some Tibetan folk songs contain a certain degree of criticism and resistance to serf rule. In addition, religion is also a factor that oppresses the Tibetan people. The ruling class of religion persecutes the life and thought of the Tibetan people. Under these circumstances, the people express their dissatisfaction with the ruling class by means of music, and use lyrics to reflect the harm of religious rule to people. Resistance-based Tibetan folk song is a small part of Tibetan folk song, but its significance contributes well to the development of Tibetan. The emotions and ideological content expressed reflect the courage and sincerity of the Tibetan people, holding special characteristics of the times and historical research value.

Love songs are an important part of Tibetan folk songs, which occupy a large proportion. Love songs are mainly about affection among young people, rich in content and

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varied in variety. The feudal serfdom system also restricted the marriage of Tibetan people, so that young men and women could not realize the freedom and autonomy of love and marriage. And they could only express their yearning for free love and hope for a better marriage through music. Apparently, love songs are the product of the characteristics of the times, reflecting the Tibetan people's fighting spirit against oppression, and also have high research value.

Liquor songs are also a part of Tibetan folk songs, which arise from the scene of Tibetan people drinking together. When people drink and toast, they sing alcohol songs to express their rich emotions. The method greatly adds a lively atmosphere of gathering. Liquor songs are the folk songs that can best reflect the straightforward temperament of Tibetan men. At the time of singing, occasionally accompanied by some dance movements, the happy mood of Tibetan people will be revealed unreservedly when they get together. When Tibetan people are having festivals and gatherings, young women usually serve wine to the men at the table in the order of age. On such occasions, the toasters and drinkers will respect each other by singing songs to express good wishes and thanks.

IV. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF TIBETAN FOLK SONGS

In the process of historical development, society tends to progress. Yet, culture and art have been being gradually neglected in the process of economic development. The time has been seeing that people are more pursuing the improvement of quality of life, busy with work, so that they have no time to enjoy and study national music. In modern society, people tend to love pop music and forget national music, so that national music can not be inherited and developed by the younger generation. With the departure of national artists, the inheritance of national music is even more difficult. Such a social situation has led to the lack of excavation of Tibetan music history and culture. What's worse, it even threatened to disappear, making it difficult for Tibetan folk songs to develop.

V. THE ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TIBETAN FOLK SONGS

A. Strong Religious Complex

Tibetan people have a strong religious complex. Before Buddhism was introduced into Tibet, the religion they believed in was primitive Ben religion, and then Tibetan Buddhism began to form. When Tibetan people create folk songs, they integrate their strong religious complex into them, which reflects the daily life of Tibetan people. For example, Batang Mountain Song "Auspicious Sutra and Banner" is a gift of Tibetan Buddhism to the Tibetan people, the description of which represents auspiciousness and plays an important role in the life of the Tibetan people. Tsangyang Gyatso is a famous Tibetan song artist. His love song "Flying to the Lover's Embrace" mentions meditation, which is an important thing in the Tibetan people's life. It integrates the love song, expresses the contradiction between practice and love, and also conveys the inner contradiction of the creator. For example, Ngawa narrative poem "Tears of

Asigawa" tells a tragic love story. The protagonist leaves his beloved woman at the command of his father, but when he returns, he finds that his lover has died and that it is his parents who killed his lover. The reason why the hero left in the story is that his father ordered him to go to the Buddha in the Western Dynasty. Even if he would lose his or her love, the heroes and heroines still compromised to the Buddha. They believed that the Buddha's affairs were more important than love, because they could be protected and blessed by the Buddha, enjoying health and safety. Thus, religious belief is a feature of Tibetan folk songs, which expresses Tibetan people's feelings and reflects religious content.

However, not all Tibetan folk songs express belief and respect for religion. Some of them will express ideas contrary to religion. For example, in a folk song of Tsangyang Gyatso, there is a sentence: "The venerable face of the imagined Lama is never shown." It shows the idea contrary to religion, but it also reflects the significance of religion in Tibetan people's lives. Tsangyang Gyatso is a Buddhist monk himself. In his literary works, one can see his religious attitude and emotional life. By folk songs, he expresses his religious life and expands his life significance.

B. Profound Folklore Culture

The customs and habits formed by the Tibetan people in the process of development are the unique folk culture of them, which can be inherited in the generations of the Tibetan people. Tibetan folk song is a typical representative of Tibetan folk culture, embodying various folk customs of Tibetan people. For example, religious folklore is embodied in the folk song Buddha Lamp does not Extinguish Buddha's Joy. The verse of "The spiritual pagoda is sculpted on the top of towering mount, and incense keeps the Buddha rejoicing" reflects the Tibetan people's belief in Buddhism and the custom of offering incense to Buddha. For example, in the marriage custom, drinking is an indispensable link. Shannan wine Song Bride and Groom's Accompaniment sings that the sun is a beautiful groom and the moon is a lovely bride; the bride and groom's companionship is performed by me like a morning star", which compares the bride and groom to the sun and the moon respectively, and describes themselves as the starlet. The wine song perfectly shows the excitement of the wedding scene, and also expresses the good wishes for the new couple. There are also costume folklores that can not be neglected. In the folk song My Heart is Stitched on the Braid, the line "your red satin leather jacket embroidered with gold lace is woven by Lhasa people", "your long braid decorated with 18 silver bowls made by Xining" describe the dress characteristics of Tibetan girls. The red leather jacket embroidered lace and the braid wrapped with silver bowl are typical Tibetan woman's dresses. Finally, there is a dance custom, Tibetan people will sing and dance at every traditional festival. With the help of folk songs, the festival atmosphere will be further added to express people's inner joy. With usually bold and unconstrained style, the dance tends to show heavy Tibetan characteristics.

C. Simple and Gorgeous Coexistence of Creative Style

Tibetan folk songs have different forms, among which “homophonic part”, “Lu type” and “free type” are several common forms, showing different styles of simplicity and magnificence. Homophonic folk song and free folk song are more colloquial and tend to use Odenwald method to create, which tends to be simple style, while Lu-style folk song mostly uses beautiful language to create and the style is longer than the other two, showing a gorgeous style tendency. For example, in the homophonic folk song *Days without Love* compares the days without love to the milk tea without fire pit, expressing the cold of love in an image and the inner feelings of the creator in a simple way. In a love song by Tsangyang Gyatso, the change of the girl's feelings is compared to the withering of peach blossoms, which shows the rapid change of the girl's feelings, expresses the indignation of the author's heart caused by the loss of love, and reflects the simple personality of the Tibetan people. The gorgeous style is embodied in the folk songs of Lu style. The *Auspicious Omen of Harmony and Happiness* and *Come Back One Day to Chat* are the representatives of Lu-style folk songs. They are mostly arranged with metaphors and beautiful words. Another example is *Ode to Kashi Zhai*, which is depicted as a beautiful ideal world where people live in harmony with nature. Imagination and exaggeration constitute the basic creative techniques of this folk song. By this way, the song expresses the Tibetan people's yearning for a better life in a gorgeous style.

Simplicity and gorgeousness are two aesthetic orientations of Tibetan people. They depict life with simplicity and look forward to the future with gorgeousness. Both styles express the Tibetan people's inner love for life and pursuit and yearning for the ideal world.

VI. DEVELOPMENT TREND OF TIBETAN FOLK SONGS

Tibetan folk songs have been popular all over the country for nearly 30 years. In these 30 years, Tibetan folk songs have changed some of the past singing styles, showing more and more diversified styles. Tibetan folk song singing has the unique style of the Tibetan people, which has been recognized by increasing people in the process of development, and has also obtained more abundant development. The advancement of culture is inseparable from the integration and collision with other cultures and arts. Only by absorbing the advantages of other cultures and arts, can Tibetan folk songs get a more long-term progress. Tibetan folk songs show a trend of popularity in the development of the times, which not only includes the traditional Tibetan folk songs style, but also integrates fashionable music elements, getting more love and spread.

In Tibetan folk songs, the characteristics of the national folk songs have a wide range of imitative melodies and rhythms, including the local customs of the Tibetan people. The difference between traditional Tibetan folk songs and contemporary Tibetan folk songs is that there are Chinese lyrics in contemporary Tibetan folk songs, which can make more people understand Tibetan folk songs and feel the characteristics of them. At the same time, the popularity of

Tibetan folk songs has also attracted more and more foreign music creators join in the creation of Tibetan folk songs. Tibetan folk songs not only contain the characteristics of their own nation, but also gradually absorb the music elements of other nationalities and foreign countries, forming unique musical characteristics. The singer's singing and deduction also further promoted the Tibetan folk songs and expanded the audience of Tibetan folk songs, making the modernization of Tibetan folk songs higher and higher. The joint efforts of many musicians have also advanced the excavation of Tibetan culture, uncovered the spiritual outlook and living habits of the Tibetan people, resulting in that Tibetan culture will be further inherited and protected.

VII. CONCLUSION

Music helps to reflect civilization. Tibetan people concentrates a long period of traditional culture into music, and unique artistic charm makes Tibetan folk songs have been inherited and developed well. It is a kind of protection for Tibetan folk songs to correctly treat the trend of its popularity. Only by grasping the integration of traditional characteristics and modern elements can the manifestations of Tibetan folk songs be innovated and can it be developed worldwide.

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