

Cultural Security and Adaptation of Cross-border Ethnic Intangible Cultural Heritage

--- The Case Study of Bulang Nationality's Singing and Instrument Playing in Xishuangbanna

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Abstract—In the horizon of nontraditional security cultural safety nowadays is one of important and difficult problems facing the world. It will greatly influence national continuity, national sovereignty and social system. Yunnan, a border province with the most cross-border ethnic groups in China, has generally complicated and sensitive social and cultural problems, which has strategic significance in the aspect of cultural safety. Taking the Bulang nationality in Xishuangbanna in Yunnan as a case, the paper focuses on the study of the survival and continuity status of the state-level intangible cultural heritage, Bulang Nationality's Singing and Instrument Playing. The research study discovers some challenges in its related cultural security including weak culture survival and continuity because of lack of the traditional culture identity, unsustainable development ability due to insufficient funds, a dwindling breed of inheritors causing inheritance chain unsustainable and a noticeable impact on the national identity by cross-border exchanges. As a consequence, this study suggests in the view of cultural security vision that the protection and adaptation of the traditional ethnic culture should deal with inside-outside relations, old and new relations and the relations between differences and similarities.

Keywords—*cultural Security; cultural adaptation; cross-border ethnic group; intangible cultural heritage; Bulang nationality*

I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural security is deep-level national security, which is the spiritual pillar to inherit national essence and the important foundation to maintain state power and establish social system. To defend the cultural security is a particularly urgent task for developing countries. The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government repeatedly stress the importance of cultural security, clearly indicating that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the realization of the Chinese dream should not be directed by double economic indicators only, but should be also based on cultural revival. A country without a strong national culture can rarely have deep sense of national pride and self-confidence, much less fully gain the respect of other nations. A country which loses its own national culture will not probably get proper security and respect. If a country loses its cultural security, it will lose its spiritual pillar and appeal to maintain national security. Our field experiences witnessed that the cross-border ethnic culture resource security

in China is facing a crisis. The most concentrated problems are the severe challenges of independence, continuity and ownership. If the security problems of cultural resources are not taken seriously, or the problems are not appropriately dealt with in time, China's modernization will accordingly be fractured in terms of national culture, which will finally in turn endanger China's national security. Therefore, cultural security is essentially significant for a country's security in politics, economy and military affairs. Based on the thinking above, the paper will take the Bulang ethnic group of Xishuangbanna in Yunnan as a case to explore in the aspect of cultural security the protection and inheritance of Bulang nationality's traditional singing and instrument playing.

II. THE CONNOTATION OF CULTURAL SECURITY AND ITS ANALYSIS DIMENSIONS

As early as the 15th century both historians and anthropologist in the west gave great attention to the cultural security. After the second world war, some western scholars have introduced the culture research into the national security system (such as Alexander Ferguson, Glenn Jordan, Alexander Wendt). Also, other scholars studying global culture in international security system put forward that culture would be the main cause of conflicts and human separation (such as Fukuyama , Rosenau , Huntington in 1993). In China the study of cultural security starts comparatively late. As a proper noun, the term of culture security began to appear in 1999 in the book of *On the Chinese National Culture Safety* (Hu Huilin, 2005), which based on the theory of national culture security put forward the viewpoint that cultural power should be taken as a national strategy. More complete discussions about the term of culture security can be found in the book of *Cultural Security* (Pan Yihe, 2007), in which the author pointed out that the intangible cultural heritage in China was facing a potential safety hazard. For the connotation of culture security, in the academic circle there is not any unified definition at present. However, one representative description by Pan Yihe puts that cultural security mainly refers to the sense of security with which basic values and cultural characteristics of a nation will not disappear or degrade under globalization trend . Generally there are four aspects for what cultural security should be included. They are the security in

politics, culture and social administrative systems, the security in traditional culture and typical value systems, the security in the transmission of ethnic languages and information, and the security in national educational system and national quality. In short, it basically means that the survival and development of ideological culture in one nation, such as the national spirit, political value concept and belief pursuit, will not be objectively endangered.

Cultural security contains three dimensions of theory analysis: the inside-outside relation dimension, the dimension between old and new relations, the dimension between differences and similarities relations. All of the three dimensions work together to construct three different solutions to national and ethnic cultural security problems. For inside-outside relationship dimension, it analyzes the internal and external aspects of cultural security from internal and external cultural conflict and collision as well as the independence and the maintenance of cultural sovereignty. The dimension between old and new relations discusses the country - nation culture security from cultural inheritance and innovation. While the relations between difference and similarities dissect the country - nation culture security from the nationality of culture and internationalization of culture, which regards the country - nation culture security as the conflict between the nationality of culture and internationalization of culture.

Economic globalization followed by cultural globalization wave has currently led to the highlighted cultural security issues worldwide. Every country- nation basic values and cultural characteristics are subject to threats and challenges, making intangible cultural heritage impedingly endangered because of its unique intangibility. China's minister of Ministry of Culture Sun Jiazheng once pointed out four severe challenges for Chinese protection in intangible cultural heritage. Firstly, intangible cultural heritage in China is facing the problems of dramatic ecological environment changes for cultural survival, serious condition in resource loss, inheritors in short and some traditional skills facing imminent extinction. Secondly, the construction of laws and regulations needs speeding up to effectively protect intangible cultural heritage. Thirdly, the protection consciousness of cultural heritage remains to be strengthened a lot. Finally, the protection mechanism must be urgently improved. Because of its particularity cross-border ethnic groups have primarily important impact on national security (An Jian , 2011). For cross-border ethnic groups in Yunnan, some scholars believe that the cultural security problem is particularly complicated and sensitive and has a major impact on national security (Luo Binsen, 2013). Other scholars think that under the new situation of Yunnan it is increasingly more difficult to deal with cross-border ethnic culture exchanges and safety management (Pu Lichun, 2013). Based on the thinking above, the paper will from the view of cultural security explore the protection and inheritance of Bulang nationality's singing and instrument playing in Xishuangbanna.

III. THE EVOLUTION AND CULTURAL CONNOTATION OF BULANG NATIONALITY'S SINGING AND INSTRUMENT PLAYING

A. *The Bulang Nationality*

The Bulang nationality is mainly distributed in Menghai county of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan province. Besides, there are also some areas of mixed habitation in the counties of Jinghong, Lingcang and Simao Regions. The Bulang nationality, an ethnic group with a small population, speaks Bulang language which belongs to Wabenglong language branch of Meng Khmer language family of south Asian languages, including Bulang and Aerwa dialects. Some Bulang people can speak Dai language, Wa language or Chinese language. Bulang nationality does not have its own text words.

B. *The Sweet Bulang Nationality's Singing and Instrument Playing*

In Yunnan Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, the folk songs of Bulang nationality in Langshan county, Xiding county, Mengman county and Daluo county are generally called Bulang tunes. Basically there are five kinds of tunes including "suo", "shen", "zhuai", "zai" and "tuanman", among which "suo" (called "ensong" in Bulang language) is the most colorfully tuned. It has five tunes with some cheerful, some slow and deep. The tune of "suo" uses homemade four string instrument to play and is therefore called "Bulang Singing and Playing". The "suo" tune usually sings passionate love to express young Bulang people's yearning for love and future. The tune of "suokelikeluo" in Bulang singing and playing is exactly the tune of love. In the past, it was often hard to find a mate if a young Bulang could not play and sing love songs. That's why Bulang people usually view traditional songs as matchmakers. For folk ballads and love songs, they enjoy smooth melody and pure and fresh lyrics. The head and tail of many songs embody a rich variety of lining words and tunes with particularly lively humor and beautiful sounds. The traditional Bulang sing and instrument playing is a kind of popular ethnic culture, which is often manifested and shown in major festivals or marriage festival occasions. There are many methods for song singing such as solo, duet and chorus. They are mainly accompanied by traditional four- string plucking instrument. The playing sound will bring people into a beautiful world full of flowers, birds and gurgling springs, while the sweet and furious songs will always make lifetime impression.

Bulang's sing and playing is traditionally characterized by unique tone rhythm and beautifully gentle singing. It embodies rich and extensive contents, involving legends, etiquettes, migration history, productive knowledge and worship songs. Moreover, folk songs, love songs and nursery rhymes are also involved. Since there are no native text words, the Bulang singing and playing has become an important way of passing on Bulang ethnic culture. In order to rescue, protect and carry forward traditional excellent folk culture, since 1997 Menghai county of Xishuangbanna has vigorously strengthened the declaration of intangible cultural heritage protection. After years of careful preparation and unremitting efforts, in May

2006 the Bulang's traditional singing and playing was listed in Yunnan province as the first batch of intangible cultural heritage protection. And in June 2008 it was listed as China's intangible cultural heritage protection.

Because there are no native words, for thousands of years the inheritance of Bulang's ethnical singing and playing has long been thought by dictation and heart memory. It is the important and indispensable part in Bulang people's life to sing and play musical instrument, especially in major festivals, marriage ceremonies and funerals. The singer who sings well usually gets invitation to show his or her performance in different places, which at the same time enhance Bulang nationality's cohesion, improve the harmonious relationship living together with other ethnic groups and the feelings with ethnic people in Laos, Burma, Thailand and other southeast Asian countries, consequently becoming an important link to promote the national unity and stable frontier.

IV. THE MEASURES OF INHERITANCE AND POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR BULANG NATIONALITY'S SINGING AND PLAYING

With the successful declaration of intangible heritage, the inheritance of Bulang nationality's traditional musical performances has been increasingly valued, shifting gradually from consciously civilian inheritance to oriented inheritance advocated by the government. The followings are some measures that local government has taken to protect and inherit Bulang nationality's singing and playing.

A. The Measures Taken by Local Government

1) *Developing policies and setting up relevant institutions:*

After Bulang nationality's traditional musical performance was listed as state-level intangible cultural heritage, Menghai county government has accordingly attached great importance to its protection. In 2009 the local government took a series of measures for the protection, including setting up *State-level Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection List Scheme*, forming a special protection group with a deputy county chief as the main director and a deputy of Culture and Sports Bureau as vice director, clearly defining project director unit and the unit in charge. The scheme explicitly puts forward five general goals for the protection of Bulang nationality's traditional musical performance.

2) *Compiling an inheritor directory:*

After the successful declaration of intangible heritage, the local authorities set about selecting appropriate inheritors. At present, there are all together 15 Bulang people in Menghai county who have been named the state-level intangible cultural heritage inheritors, among which 10 people are named as national folk musical inheritors, 2 people as national folk etiquette inheritors, another 2 people as national traditional inheritors, and one person as national folk dance inheritor. In June 2007 and August 2008 two Bulang people in Menghai county were named as provincial intangible culture heritage inheritors. Typically, Aiwalao, a Bulang people, is the first and only person so far who has been named as state-level inheritor.

3) *Establishing the training institute for Bulang nationality's singing and playing:*

In order to carry out a long-term cultural inheritance, Menghai county in May 2010 in DaLuo town founded the first training institute for Bulang nationality's singing and playing. The institute was responsible by Aiwalao, the state-level intangible cultural heritage inheritor who was in charge of recruiting apprentice for inheriting the Bulang nationality culture. The establishment of training institute provides an important place and platform for the protection and inheritance of the Bulang nationality intangible cultural heritage. Aiwalao said: "Since 2007 when I was named as provincial inheritance successor, I have recruited 46 disciple with 20 men and 26 women in my village. Besides, I have enrolled 10 people (8 men and 2 women) in Manshan village and 5 in Manyong village (2men and 3 women)."

4) *Conducting training classes for Bulang nationality's singing and playing:*

In order to develop young generation of Blang nationality music artists, the government offered 50,000 to 60,000 yuan for each training class in order to effectively cultivate the inheritors of Bulang nationality cultural heritage. In December 2010 in Daluo town Menghai county Culture and Sports Bureau started the first training class for Bulang nationality's singing and playing. About 70 young men and women of Bulang people from Daluo town, Bulangshan county and Xiding county took part in the class. Some leaders concerned from prefectural bureaus gave lectures on Bulang historic culture and traditional music. More importantly, Aiwalao, the state-level cultural heritage inheritor, Yunankan, the provincial inheritor and Aisangong and Yupashuai, the prefectural inheritor, all personally taught and demonstrated some skills and methods of Bulang folk songs and performance. So far there are 5 terms of training classes from 2010 to 2014 with all together 339 people trained.

5) *Launching a variety of national activities*

To protect the national intangible cultural heritage the prefecture government of Xishuangbanna has gradually explored a positive and effective model through national song and dance performance in major national festivals. Menghai county, meanwhile, is also constantly exploring new ways of protection and inheritance of national culture. As early as April 2006 and April 2007 in Daluo town, Menghai County Culture and Sports Bureau held the first and the second sessions of the invitational tournament of Bulang nationality musical performance. In April 2010 the same invitational tournament was held in Dingxi county. Today, regularly every April Menghai county government will organize Bulang nationality invitational tournament in the towns with large Bulang nationality communities. Moreover, the local government encourages every village to take turns to undertake the Bulang nationality traditional festival "Mulberry Kan" in order to provide platform for Bulang cultural performance. The fact shows that regular activities have enriched the cultural life of the Bulang people, cultivated and mined a large number of folk artists with traditional Bulang musical skills and improved the sense of Bulang people's national pride and cultural consciousness. In addition, the cultural activities held regularly in towns and villages have

explored a new effective way for the protection and inheritance of the Bulang nationality traditional culture.

B. Potential Security Problems for Blang Nationality's Singing and Instrument Playing

In recent years although Xishuangbanna government vigorously promote the national culture protection and inheritance, Bulang nationality traditional singing and playing still faces many security challenges.

Challenge 1: The cultural survival and continuity is apparently weak because of lack of traditional cultural identity. The field visits found that Bulang traditional culture is facing security challenge of weak survival and continuity. In most cases many training students took part in the classes only after they were persuaded by village cadres. The followings are some facts and reasons recorded. "It was the fourth time for me to take part in the training class, but every time it was the cultural center that called me by telephone to attend. Many young people I know would not like to go for it." "Young people in the village can rarely sing the Bulang traditional songs. Only my father's generation who are more than 60 years old and the generation over 50 years can perform it. However, their children are seldom interested in it. In fact, young people nowadays are so absorbed in fiddling cell phone that they have little about their own ethnic culture." "In the past the singing and playing with passionate love used to make mate-seeking. Today in the modern and advanced society cell phone is so popular that almost no young people would like to learn sing traditional love songs, which is comparatively time-consuming and outdated."

Challenge 2: Insufficient funds will affect sustainable development of Bulang traditional ethnic music. Field work found that although the local government has invested a lot of money in the protection and development of traditional culture, insufficient funds still remains a bottleneck restricting the development of benign ethnic traditional culture. In order to effectively cultivate Bulang nationality cultural heritage inheritors the government annually paid one or two terms of training classes for training folk singers and artists. However due to shortage of training funds from Menhai county government the classes sometimes could not start as planned, which would directly result in lower class attendance rate and effectiveness because folk singers would not be possible to attend training in farming season in order to avoid ineffective farmland production. Moreover, the lack of funds also greatly influenced the participants' enthusiasm and passion. By taking Manya village in Daluo village as an example, every year more than 10 cultural heritage protection inheritance successors will spend a lot of time to transmit the Bulang nationality's traditional music and undertake some performances arranged by higher authorities, which greatly influence their own farming benefits. However, only Aiwaluo, the state-level inheritor, and Yunankan, the province-level inheritor can annually get some allowance from government. Unfortunately, the prefecture-level and county-level successors do not have any financial help from the local government, which to some extent weakens the inheritors' enthusiasm.

Challenge 3: The dwindling breed of inheritors has caused inheritance chain unsustainable. Another field survey found that although the government carried out the inheritance system, the inheritance chain was suffering the drought of new Bulang traditional culture learners. Here are what the local villagers think about the fact. "Today, there are only a few folk artists in the village who can traditionally sing and play. Some skillful and demanding performance enjoyed by some senior villagers meets no person to share. Teachers of training class completely have no idea about it." "It is advisable that only those who love singing and dancing be chosen as folk artist candidates. Besides, the candidates should be patient and keen on Bulang traditional culture too." "Most of young trainer learn Bulang's singing and playing only after graduating from school. What they can teach is so limited and superficial."

Challenge 4: Cross-border exchanges have made a noticeable impact on the national identity. Xishuangbanna, bordered with Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, has multiple port channels connecting with South Asian and south-east Asian countries. The national cross-border exchanges here are conducted frequently. Every year Xishuangbanna government will hold or attend art festivals hosted by China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Excellent national programs and performers often go abroad to take part in competition. The survey found that some of Bulang families lead a cross-country life. One Bulang said: "When I was very young, my elder brother together with my dad went to work in Myanmar, leaving my mom and I staying at home only. Sometimes we went to visit them, sometimes they came back." This is what Bulang nationality is facing in terms of Blang nationality cultural security challenge.

V. CONCLUSION

Under the globalization situation every culture group of diverse and multicultural nation will inevitably face cultural adaptation and development problem in the process of mutual exchanges and fusion. Ethnic minorities or disadvantaged groups under the background of mainstream culture have witnessed particularly prominent problems in cultural adaptation and development. How to effectively protect and inherit traditional culture of ethnic minorities and make it onto the safe road of the sustainable development is significantly worth thinking nowadays.

A. Theoretically Keeping Development in Adjustment

In theory cultural adaptation is a two-way process, which means that the cultural patterns of the two connecting groups will generally have some changes. Practically in the cultural adaptation of ethnic minority, it is nonmainstream culture that would adapt itself to the mainstream party, consequently more changes tending to occur in vulnerable groups. In this situation, strategies selected by ethnic minorities and the attitude taken by social subject will be particularly significant. The famous American anthropologist Benedict had concisely described the process of cultural integration. He said: "Every culture has its own special purpose which is different from other culture. In order to achieve this goal, people select something that might be used from what is around and give up what is not available.

Also, people recast other traits to make them meet their own needs.” Therefore, cultural adaptation is a kind of cultural learning from each other and the process of developing good and discarding the bad. It is also the process of establishing new culture and culture model. In the integration process culture holders constantly adjust their own cultural factors, keeping the traditional essence to adapt to the mainstream culture and obtain long-term development. Only by preserving the essence of national culture can national self-confidence completely be set up. With confidence, self-reliance can be elementally established. With self-reliance, cultural development will be conducted in turn.

B. Practically Dealing with Several Relations in Right Direction

As is discussed above, cultural security analysis dimension contains inside-outside relations, old and new relations and the relations between differences and similarities. In the vision of cultural security the protection and development of the national traditional culture should deal with these relationships appropriately.

The inside-outside relations mean that the protection and inheritance of Bulang nationality traditional culture should take account of the relations inside and outside of the Bulang nationality. Under the trend of globalization, the internal Bulang nationality culture unavoidably meet collision and cultural exchanges with foreign culture. In the process of internal and external cultural exchanges, the protection problem of national cultural sovereignty appears. Foreign culture as a kind of the other culture has its own traditions, religious values, ways of thinking and value ideas, the introduction of which will make some changes in Bulang nationality’s mental ideas and affect its independence and integrity. Therefore, in the face of the other culture invasion Bulang nationality as the cultural main body should take active measures to prevent the other culture from deconstructing Bulang national culture foundation .

The old and new relations refers to the sustainable development of the national culture security from the aspect of the cultural heritage and innovation of Bulang nationality. When facing a new cultural environment, if the mainstream culture is completely resisted, the Bulang nationality will be inevitably alienated from society, unfavorably affecting the development of native culture. If the mainstream culture is passively and completely accepted, the original culture and its basic foundation will be entirely possible to disappear. When facing the impact of the mainstream culture, if negative impact brought by the culture shock fails to be timely adjusted with total loss of confidence in national culture and declination of foreign culture identification, the national identity will gradually shift between the two cultures and go astray finally in the marginalization, which will seriously affect the nation’s long-term development. Therefore, to adapt to the mainstream culture the innovative development of the national culture has become the best way for the Bulang nationality to maintain the original culture and integrate with the mainstream society.

Relations of difference and similarities discuss the sustainable development of national cultural security in terms

of the nationality of culture and internationalization of culture. The nationality of the Bulang nationality culture has particularly unique features that cannot be replaced by other culture. However, in the era of globalization, with the strongly unprecedented integration of human culture, the situation of Bulang nationality traditional culture appears apparently insecure. With the situation involved, one core idea should be kept that only the national is international, only with the national culture identity fully developed and characteristically demonstrated can the nation itself have a place among nations in the world.

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