A Study of Folk Songs in Kangding City, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

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Abstract. Kangding city, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, located in the transition and intersection of Tibetan and Han nationalities, is an important town of tea-horse road with a long history and rich folk music culture. In this paper, the folk songs in the national folk music culture of Kangding city are taken as the research object to explore the current situation of the folk songs in Kangding city, study their artistic characteristics, and put forward the measures for their inheritance and development.

1. The Current Situation of Kangding Folk Songs

Folk songs, a kind of art form created and taught orally by the working people to express their thoughts, feelings, wills, demands and wishes, is an important part of folk music culture. Kangding city of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has a long history and profound accumulation, there are rich and colorful folk songs with distinctive characteristics, which contain rich human history and artistic aesthetic value.

There is a saying that “to be able to speak means to be able to sing and to walk means to be able to dance”, which is not only the praise of the working people who are good at singing and dancing in Kangding, but also a true portrayal of their spare time life. Kangding folk song is a kind of art form for local people to express their inner thoughts and feelings in their work and daily life. The hardworking Kangding people often feel the scenery and sing songs in their work of cutting firewood, mowing grass, picking, grazing, hunting to relieve depression and entertain themselves, and express their blessings through singing wedding songs, blessing songs, wine songs, welcome songs, farewell songs, etc. during marriage celebration, new house completion, folk festivals and family and friends gathering. There are different styles of folk songs in different regions and ethnic groups within the jurisdiction of Kangding, among which Tibetan folk songs in the west of Kangding, Liuliu tune in the middle of Kangding and Yutong folk songs in Dadu River Basin in the east of Kangding are representative. The folk song of Tibetan folk songs in the west of Kangding is listed as national intangible cultural heritage and Kangding Liuliu tune is listed as provincial intangible cultural heritage.

1.1 Tibetan folk songs in the west of Kangding

The Tibetan folk songs in the west of Kangding refer to the folk songs spread in the Tibetan inhabited areas west of Zheduo mountain in Kangding city. There are vast pastures and fertile land in the area to the west of Zheduo Mountain, so the residents who live here for generations mostly live on grazing or semi-farming and semi-grazing, deriving different styles of folk songs in the agricultural and grazing areas. The folk songs in the semi-agricultural and semi-grazing areas in the west of Kangding are resounding, resonant, sweet, agreeable and wide range, which can reach more than two octaves. Folk songs in grazing areas stretch and melodious, with more decorative sounds in the melody, mostly using the traditional Tibetan “angdi” singing method to sing, that is, using the breath to sing together the dense fluctuations of decorative sounds. Moreover, the melody of these songs fluctuate greatly, generally climbing from the bass to the treble, and sometimes suddenly from the treble to the next. The bass part has dense notes, while the treble part has a long drawl. The singing starts from near to far, then from far to near, with ups and downs and infinite charm. And most of the content is the praise of nature, hometown, production and labor, family, love, friendship,
etc. Generally speaking, the Tibetan folk songs in the west of Kangding have a wide range and free rhythm, showing the forthright and rustic national character of the local people [1].

1.2 Kangding Liuliu tune

Kangding Liuliu tune, a unique folk song form formed by the integration of various ethnic cultures in Kangding over the years, is widely spread in Lucheng town in the middle of Kangding city to the east of Zheduo Mountain and the Han Tibetan ethnic group settlement area around Yala Township, and is named for the word “Liuliu” in the lyrics. The love song of Kangding adapted from the “horse running Liuliu mountain” in Kangding Liuliu tune has become a world-famous classic folk song.

Kangding Liuliu tune is an oral creation of the working people. Its lyrics are not rigid and simple, with ingenious techniques and profound implications. Its melody combines the unrestrained and free folk songs and the gentle and bright of ditty. Most of its modes are national five tone feather tunes. And its structure is composed of two sentence patterns, four sentence patterns, six sentence patterns, eight sentence patterns, even as many as ten sentence patterns. When Kang ding Liuliu tune is sung, some are a lyric with more than one tune, that is, a song can be sung in any “Liuliu tune”; some are special lyrics and tunes, that is, some songs have relatively fixed lyrics and tunes; others are a song with more than one word, that is, a tune can match multiple lyrics. The lining word of “Liuliu” is repeated in the lyrics, almost covering every lyric. According to the content of singing, Kangding Liuliu tune can be divided into “love song”, “new year's greeting song”, “labor song”, “bitter song” and “exhortation song”, and its singing methods include solo, duet, chorus, etc. Kangding Liuliu tune was recognized as a provincial intangible cultural heritage project in 2006, and Mao Yungang, Jiang Guiying, Song Xingfeng and others were recognized as the inheritors of Kangding Liuliu tune [2].

1.3 Yutong folk songs

Yutong folk songs are mainly spread in the Han Tibetan inhabited area in the upper reaches of Dadu River in the east of Kangding city, and Yutong people in this area call themselves “Geqiang”, which has similar housing, food, clothing and language culture with Jiarong Tibetan around the Moerduo Mountain in Danba. The forms of Yutong folk songs are various, such as folk songs, wine songs, wedding songs, labor songs, game songs, etc., with beautiful melody and small interval, which is more euphemistic and pleasant than the folk songs in the west of Kangding. Yutong folk song, a representative one of Yutong folk songs, is a way for local young men and women to tell each other their hearts and express their love when they talk about love. Yutong alternative folk song, one of the most representative Yutong folk songs, is a way for local young men and women to talk with each other and express their love when they are concerned with love and romance. The melody of Yutong alternative folk song is universal. Both sides of the duet improvise lyrics on the basis of similar tone and exchange feelings through songs [3].

2. Characteristics of Kangding Folk Songs

2.1 Improvisation in the composition and performance of folk songs

The improvisation of composition and performance is the prominent feature of Kangding folk songs, that is, folk singers improvise composition and performance according to the scene of performance. The rhetoric of metaphor and exaggeration is usually used in the lyrics of such folk songs. Metaphor, commonly known as analogy, is divided into three categories: simile, metaphor and metonymy. Among them, metaphor is the most common rhetorical way in Kangding folk songs, that is, “a is b”, for example, elder brother is flying snow in the sky; elder sister is the tender mulberry leaf at the river dam. Snowflakes fall on mulberry leaves and they separate after sun exposure. Elder brother is the violet star in the sky, and elder sister is a tree growing on the half cliff. Both of them play in the void and should be careful when they come and go. Exaggeration refers to the rhetorical method that the creator exaggerates the image of the characters or the characteristics
of the things moderately through the rich imagination, for example, your folk songs are not many, but my folk songs are as many as cattle's hair. It took three years and six months to sing only one cow ear. Folk singers often add some interlinkages according to their hobbies when singing Kangding Liuliu tune, such as liuliu, yala, you, ai, etc, whose singing form is relatively free. It can not only sing colorful effect through elongated sound, but also quickly appear in the form of back and forth leaning sound, or sing in the form of passage between sentences. Moreover, singers often improvise the pitch and rhythm of folk songs in the process of singing, so that the melody of the songs sounds ups and downs, fascinating. In addition, many folk singers use the performance form of Tibetan Guozhuang, Xianzi and Han dance for reference to sing together to enhance the performance of Kangding folk songs [4].

2.2 The forms of Kangding folk songs are varied and have diversified artistic characteristics

Kangding city is the capital of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which has a long history, profound accumulation and is the main body of Kangba Tibetan area and the birthplace of Kangba culture. The data of archaeological excavation after the founding of the people's Republic of China proves that there have been ethnic groups living and multiplying on this beautiful plateau in the paleolithic age about 50000 years ago. Kangding city, Ganzi Prefecture, embraces all kinds of rivers and embraces all kinds of things, which was influenced by ancient Di, Qiang, Xiangxiong and Tibetan cultures and absorbed the cultural connotations of Han, Mongol, Naxi, Hui and Manchu, forming Kangba culture with Tibetan culture as the main body, multiple coexistence, harmonious unity of human and nature, harmonious coexistence of human, and harmonious coexistence of different cultures [5]. Since modern times, Kangding city, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has been divided into Muya cultural circle, Jiarong cultural circle, nomadic cultural circle and Han Tibetan multi-cultural circle by sociologists and cultural anthropologists according to the similarities and differences of regions, nationalities and economic types.

Because Kangding city is located in the intersection of Jiarong culture circle, Muya culture circle and Han Tibetan multi-cultural circle, different cultures exist and communicate with each other within the jurisdiction, and most members of different ethnic groups maintain their own inherent lifestyle and habits, do not interfere with each other and respect each other, which makes Kangding city has the characteristics of cultural inclusiveness and multi coexistence, deeply affecting the music culture of Kangding city. The multi-cultural characteristics of Kangding folk songs are the result of the influence and nourishment of various cultures.

The Muya folk songs in the west and northwest of Gongga Mountain under the jurisdiction of Kangding city have the typical characteristics of traditional Tibetan folk songs, with wide range, free rhythm and large fluctuation, resounding and fluent tone, and rich plateau characteristics. The characteristics of the combination of Tibetan and Han are obviously reflected in Kangding folk songs and Kangding Liuliu tune in the Tibetan and Han inhabited areas from Lucheng district of Kangding city to Wasi township of Yutong district, with the content mostly expressing secular life. Kangding folk songs and Kangding Liuliu tunes have stable and smooth melody and simple, regular and vivid rhythm, which have integrated the natural and simple artistic characteristics of Han folk song. The Yutong folk songs around Dadu River in Kangding city are characterized by men and women’s duet, which are mostly about love songs, with big melody style ups and downs and varied rhythms, integrating the characteristics of Jiarong Tibetan folk songs.

2.3 The content of folk songs is rich and colorful, among which the songs about love are the most popular

The author found that Kangding folk songs are so rich in content in literature and field investigation which cover all aspects of local people's production and life.

In recent years, the author has participated in many investigation activities about folk songs in Kangding city, Ganzi Prefecture, and learned that folk songs in Kangding city generally exist in the daily life of local farmers and herdsmen by communicating with the local people. In the production activities of the Tibetan people in Kangding city, the people in the rural areas sing different content
of labor songs according to different situations when they work in the fields, such as ploughing
songs, carrying fertilizer songs, weeding songs, harvesting songs, beating wheat songs, etc.; the
people in the grazing areas sing folk songs when they cut and graze, such as cut firewood and graze,
such as cutting firewood songs, milking songs, sheep songs, horse songs, etc. In the life of the
working people in Kangding city, they sing the blessing song when building houses, the love song
when young men and women love each other, the wedding song when they marry, the wine song
when relatives and friends get together, the admonition song when they admonish young people to
be kind and diligent in farming and so on. It can be said that they sing all the time.
Kangding folk songs not only mainly sing the love between men and women, but also classify the
songs with the theme of love carefully. For example, in the *Selection of Kangding traditional love
songs*, the editor divides Kangding folk love songs into 12 categories according to the different
themes of expression, namely, love songs of entertainment, love songs of amusing, love songs of
thinking, love songs of swearing, love songs of trying, love songs, love songs of promising, love
songs of rejection, love songs of meeting, love songs of sending, love songs of sadness and love
songs of resentment [4]. The traditional songs of Tibetan folk songs, Kangding Liuliu tune and
Yutong folk songs in the west of Kangding are mostly related to love. It can be seen that Kangding
folk song's praise of pure love is universal and popular among the people, so Kangding city is well
deserved to be known as the “hometown of love songs”.

3. The Inheritance and Development of Kangding Folk Songs

In the field survey, the author found that Kangding folk songs, which recorded the rich historical
and cultural information of Kangding people and used to be one of the main entertainment ways of
Kangding people, are not optimistic about their survival status, and are facing the crisis of
inheritance and development.
Kangding folk song is a precious intangible cultural heritage, carries the life code of the culture
of ethnic groups living in the region for thousands of years, and is the vivid embodiment of ethnic
wisdom and national spirit. The following suggestions are put forward for the inheritance and
development of rich and colorful Kangding folk songs:

3.1 The excavation and arrangement of kangding folk songs should be done well

In view of that Kangding folk songs have different styles in different regions and different ethnic
groups, the collection and arrangement should be done well in different categories. All kinds of folk
songs should be collected with the focus on the folk songs of the Muya ethnic group living in the
west of Zheduo Mountain, the Liuliu tune around Lucheng town in Kangding city and the Yutong
folk songs in the Dadu River basin in the east of Kangding city. Because the inheritance of folk
songs in Kangding city is mostly the way of oral instruction between teachers and apprentices,
which is easy to be lost, so it is necessary to record and sort out the oral materials of the inheritors
of folk singers, including classifying, producing and storing folk songs in Kangding by using new
media information technology and establishing databases of words, images, audio, video, animation,
etc.

3.2 The protection mechanism of Kangding folk song inheritance should be established

Under the background of vigorously promoting intangible cultural heritage, it is necessary to
make planning measures for the development of Kangding folk songs by using various government
support policies, attach importance to the protection of intangible cultural inheritors, establish
inheritance institutions, and improve the representative directory and management mechanism of
representative inheritors of folk songs at the county, state, province and national levels [6]. Secondly,
it is necessary to establish Kangding folk song cultural protection zone, fully tap the
artistic function of folk songs, and develop rich and colorful folk culture and festival culture in
combination with Kangding folk dance music, national instrumental music, local opera and other
cultural resources, so as to promote the integration and development of Kangding local culture. In
addition, the government should take the lead in carrying out external publicity, building a platform
for exchange and mutual learning, so as to attract folk singers around Kangding city to exchange and learn from Kangding and improve the cultural attraction, influence and competitiveness of Kangding folk songs.

3.3 The market operation mode of Kangding folk songs should be explored

As far as Kangding folk song is concerned, marketization is not only a challenge but also an opportunity for its further development. Nowadays, the government of Ganzi Prefecture has formulated the supporting policies for the cultural industry and the tourism and cultural industry of Kangding city has sprung up. In this context, Kangding city should learn from the market operation mode to build a multi-channel development approach, such as absorbing the elements of modern popular songs to create works of art that meet the aesthetic needs of the times by virtue of the needs of the current tourism market in Kangding city, and displaying them to the masses with a new look, so as to explore a new path for the development of Kangding excellent folk culture.

4. Conclusion

During the field investigation of Kangding folk songs, the author collected all kinds of folk songs with rich content and various forms, and experienced the artistic charm of Tibetan and Han nationalities’ folk song culture, Jiarong folk song culture and Muya folk song culture in the jurisdiction of Kangding city. Through the in-depth contact with the working people in Kangding for a long time, the author deeply experienced the inseparable emotional dependence of folk songs on the working masses. To a large extent, Kangding folk song is a special language to express emotion. To be more accurate, it is a kind of ceremonial language. Therefore, the working people in Kangding have less exaggeration of artistic performance but more sincerity of emotional expression. In recent years, with the accelerated pace of economic construction in Kangding, various ethnic groups in Kangding communicate frequently with each other, and there is a trend of gradual integration of folk song culture.

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