

# Research and Protection of Folk Songs in the Upper Reaches of Dadu River

**Wang Bo**

*Sichuan Minzu College, Kangding Sichuan, 626001, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *Folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River have a long history and various forms, which contain rich humanistic history and artistic aesthetic value. This paper takes folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River as the research object, and combs the research results in recent years. This paper investigates the current situation of folk songs and puts forward relevant countermeasures for their inheritance and development.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Folk songs; Intangible cultural heritage; Upper reaches of Dadu River basin; Protection Countermeasures*

## 1. Introduction

Dadu River originated in the southern foot of Guoluo Mountain in Yushu Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province. Since ancient times, there have been many appellations such as Beijiang, Moshui, Mengshui, Lushui, Tonghe and Yutonghe. Dadu River is located in the central and western part of Sichuan Province. It is the main source of Minjiang River, a tributary of the Yangtze River. It is a very important river in southwest China and an important national cultural corridor. Dadu River flows from north to south through Danba County, Kangding City and Luding County in Ganzi Prefecture, from west to East through Asbestos County, Hanyuan County, Ganluo County and Jinkou River District of Ya'an City as the middle reaches, and downstream through Jinkou River District of Leshan City, with a total length of 1062 kilometers and a basin area of 91,000 square kilometers. The upper reaches of the Dadu River has a long history. In the late 1980s, a number of Neolithic cultural relics were unearthed in Zhonglu Township, Danba County, Ganzi Prefecture, proving that the aborigines lived and multiplied in the Neolithic Age. There are earthen pottery tiles left by the ancestors of the Han Dynasty unearthed at the northern site of Garbei Village, about 300 meters southwest of Lan'an Township Government in Luding County, Ganzi Prefecture. A large number of pottery from the Han Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty unearthed at the Sixiaba site in Angzhou Village, Lan'an Township. These unearthed cultural relics prove that Lan'an has been inhabited by ethnic groups since the Han and Tang Dynasties. The upper reaches of the Dadu River are located in the central area of the Tibetan-Yi Corridor, where the ethnic history and culture are rich and the pattern of coexistence of multi-cultures is

very obvious, reflecting the strong primitiveness, regionalism and ethnicity. The Han, Tibetan, Qiang and Yi ethnic groups living in the upper reaches of the Dadu River have created various forms of cultural life with rich connotations in the course of their long historical development and blending with other ethnic groups. The folk music retained here is the most artistic form that can express the local people's humanistic spirit in many cultures. This paper takes folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River as the research object, investigates their survival status and puts forward relevant countermeasures for inheritance and development.

## **2. Research status of folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River**

Since ancient times, the upper reaches of Dadu River has been regarded as a mysterious place by the outside world. In history, many people of insight from home and abroad came here to overcome various difficulties and explore the local mysterious culture. Compared with the folk song culture in the upper reaches of Dadu River, for thousands of years, most of the rich and colorful folk songs have been inherited through oral transmission from generation to generation by ancestors. There are neither detailed written records nor relevant image data. After the founding of New China, great importance was attached to the collation and protection of folk music culture of ethnic minorities. The government mobilized a large number of musicians and jointly conducted extensive, in-depth and comprehensive investigations into the music and operas of all ethnic groups in the country, with fruitful results. In 1960, Luding County Culture Museum of Ganzi Prefecture collected and arranged Luding folk songs and compiled Luding Folk Songs Collection. In 1962, Kangding Cultural Museum organized folk song enthusiasts to set up a folk song singing team to sing folk songs such as "slippery tunes", "Liu Yazhi", "Lang Langze" in Yala Township, so as to promote the exchange and development of folk songs.[1] In the 1980s, the collection of the five major integrations of Chinese folk music was a huge project in the history of music culture protection, which led to the attention of local departments at all levels in the upper reaches of the Dadu River to the national folk music culture. In 1984, the Ganzi Cultural Bureau organized the establishment of an integrated office of music and dance. 110 people familiar with the work of folk music and culture went deep into the villages and pastoral areas of Ganzi Prefecture, collecting more than 500 songs such as folk songs, Tibetan folk dance, strings, labor chants, Gu gugua and wine songs. After sorting out, recording, translating and proofreading by the staff of Ganzi Integration Office, they published the Folk Songs Collection of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Volume I) in 1986. From 1985 to 1987, the Danba County Cultural Museum in Ganzi Prefecture sent musicians and artists to the countryside to collect folk music. They traveled through 16 townships, 29 temples, interviewed 315 folk artists and collected 113 Danba Jiarong Tibetan folk songs with more than 30,000 words. Thirty original Danba Jiarong Tibetan songs and dances were recorded live, which is the first video recording of the original Danba Jiarong Tibetan music culture. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in 2010, the Propaganda Department of Danba County Committee and the Cultural and Tourism Bureau gathered creative

songs singing new life. Meanwhile, they collected and sorted out the lost folk songs, Tibetan folk dance and folk labor ballads, compiled into "Danba Jiarong Rhyme", which contains more than 50 melodies of ethnic folk songs. In 1982, Luding County Cultural Museum held a county-wide folk song performance, with 11 communes and some units and schools participating in the performance. Later, propaganda teams were organized and toured to various villages and towns. Lan'an Township also participated in folk songs performances of Ganzi Prefecture, such as "Oh Luoluo", "Songnadale", "Ahoyi". In 1984, Luding County Cultural Museum organized folk song collectors to conduct in-depth interviews in eight townships such as Lan'an, Xinxing and Moses. A total of 120 folk songs with lyrics and songs were collected and compiled into a book. In 1986, Luding County Cultural Museum went deep into the folk again and collected three volumes of "Luding Folk Songs Integration", including one of Lan'an Township Folk Songs, one of Yi Nationality Folk Songs and one of other Township Folk Songs[2]. At present, the historical records of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Danba County Annals, Kangding County Annals, Luding County Annals, and Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage have made folk songs record in the upper reaches of Dadu River from the historical and cultural level. These data provide some clues for us to study folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River, but there is no in-depth and systematic research results.

### **3. Survival Status of Folk Songs in the Upper Reaches of Dadu River**

#### ***3.1 Folk songs in the upper reaches of the Dadu River are of various forms and still exist in the daily production and life of the local people.***

In recent years, I has participated in the Tibetan rural customs of Danbajiarong in Ganzi Prefecture for many times. During this period, through exchanges with the local people, I learned that Danbajiarong folk music culture exists in the daily life of local farmers and herdsman. Taking folk songs as an example, in the production activities of the Tibetan people in Danbajiarong, the people in rural areas sing different content of labor songs according to different situations, such as: Pudding Song, Beifei Song, Weeding Song, Harvesting Song, Damai Song and so on. Pastoral area people sing folk songs when cutting salaries and grazing, such as: firewood songs, milking songs, sheep songs, horse songs and so on. In the life of the Tibetan people in Danbajiarong, there are songs of blessings, love songs between young men and women, wedding songs when marrying, drinking songs when friends and relatives gather, admonishing young people to be kind and diligent in farming, admonishing songs and so on. It can be said that they sing all the time and sing all the things. In the field investigation of Zhonglu Township, Suopo Township, Gezong Township, Geshiza Township and Donggu Township in Danba County, I also realized that from old women to children, they can sing several folk songs when they open their mouths and dance several Tibetan folk dance when they hold hands, which can be said that everyone is good at singing and dancing. It's no exaggeration

to use the proverb "If you can talk, you can sing, if you can walk, you can dance" to evaluate the musical talent of the Tibetan people in Danba Jiarong. It is also because the lives of many farmers and herdsmen, who are the inheritors of folk music, are closely related to music and art that the folk music culture here can be so diverse[3]. At present, folk songs still circulate among the people in the upper reaches of the Dadu River in various forms. The main forms of folk songs are wine songs, labor songs, Tibetan folk, string, Lala tune, wedding songs, welcoming songs, farewell songs, hypnotic songs and so on.

### ***3.2 The folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River are facing the crisis of survival and development.***

Although the folk music in the upper reaches of Dadu River is rich in content and diverse in form. However, in my field investigation, it is found that folk song art, which records abundant local human information, is facing the crisis of inheritance and development.

3.2.1 Folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River are impacted by the current pop music culture.

With the development of economy and the change of social living environment, the living environment of folk song culture in the upper reaches of Dadu River is changing. With the popularization of film and television media, people's amateur cultural life is becoming more and more abundant, and the aesthetic concept of local residents begins to change, which makes the inheritance and development of folk music culture be affected. This situation is particularly evident among teenagers, who mostly sing some popular songs, but are not interested in traditional folk songs.

3.2.2 Folk songs have no successors

Taking Kangding's slippery tunes, which are listed as provincial intangible cultural heritage, as an example, there are many traditional pieces of slippery tunes, but most of the people who are skilled in slipping are over seventy years old. The younger generation either did not know much about the culture because of their schooling and work, or lost their interest in traditional culture because of the influence of other cultures. Few people were willing to take part in the slippery singing. Kang Ding's slippery tune has no written records, no music records, no audio and video records, and the way of inheritance is that teachers and apprentices inherit from one another and impart them orally and heartfelt. If we do not do a good job of inheritance, when the older generation of artists die, Kangding will slip away.

## **4. Protection of Folk Songs in the Upper Reaches of Dadu River**

Folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River have distinct regional and ethnic characteristics. They are the spiritual wealth created and inherited by the working people who were born, grew up and loved in Dadu River for thousands of years. They contain rich historical, cultural and artistic values. They are a clear spring for

the development of Chinese folk songs. At present, it is a difficult and complicated cultural project to study and protect folk music in the upper reaches of Dadu River. Specific measures for research and protection are proposed as follows.

***4.1 Strengthen the propaganda of protecting folk songs, help more people understand the value of local folk songs, and cultivate the awareness of protecting the cultural heritage of national folk music.***

The working people are the creators and inheritors of folk songs. They are the real masters of folk music cultural heritage. The protection and inheritance of excellent folk songs must depend on the broad masses of people growing on this land. It is necessary to publicize the historical value of national culture among the local people, promote the formation of their cultural consciousness, respect and cherish the precious heritage inherited by their ancestors, and consciously inherit and carry forward the excellent folk song culture. The excellent folk songs in the upper reaches of the Dadu River convey the common thoughts and feelings of human beings. They have rich aesthetic value. They are the art shared by the whole world and the art of the world that has not been popularized. We should strengthen external propaganda through various channels. To help more people understand the charm of folk music culture in the upper reaches of Dadu River. As we all know, the "original ecology" folk singing method promoted to the youth singer contest of CCTV shows the artistic charm of the original ecology music culture to the people of the whole country through television, helps the marginalized original ecology music enter the ranks of the mainstream culture, and arouses the attention of the whole society to the original ecology music cultural heritage. As an important folk festival in Jiarong area, the Danba Jiarong Custom Festival started in 2001 in Danba County of Ganzi Prefecture has become an important window for the outside world to understand the rich connotation of Danba Jiarong Culture, and successfully propagated the excellent culture of Danba Jiarong Tibetan to the outside world. This is a successful example of external propaganda of Jiarong Tibetan culture. At present, we should make more use of modern and convenient film and television network to further publicize local excellent folk songs.

***4.2 Establish the ecological protection area of folk music culture.***

For any culture, its creation and inheritance are closely related to the specific environment. It all comes from the environment and changes with the environment. In the theory of intangible cultural heritage, this kind of environmental factor is called locality, that is, its local environment. Local environment refers to the natural climate and geographical conditions for the existence of specific cultural heritage, and the humanistic conditions for the emergence and existence of specific intangible cultural heritage. Establishing of cultural and ecological protection zones in the upper reaches of Dadu River. Crowd-populated villages which folk music culture is relatively intact and representative in terms of production, life style and ideology are selected and given special attention in order to make the traditional music cultural

heritage in this particular area can be effectively protected and healthy inheritance.

#### ***4.3 Digital protection of folk songs in the upper reaches of Dadu River.***

The digital protection of folk songs is proposed with the development of modern science and technology, especially the development of digital audio and video software. Folk songs are the art of hearing and have abstraction. Their own abstraction determines the diversity of their forms of protection. At present, digital information technology such as digital photography, two-dimensional and three-dimensional scanning, digital recording and video recording should be used to conduct a comprehensive survey of folk songs in the upper reaches of the Dadu River and establish a network database. Classifying, producing and storing various styles of folk songs and then establish text, image, audio, video, animation and other databases, while equipped with convenient search engines to promote, so that music research and enthusiasts can enjoy real-time through the network, to achieve digital reproduction[4].

#### ***4.4 Inherit the excellent folk songs of the upper reaches of Dadu River through various ways***

For folk songs, the best way to protect them is to inherit and develop them. To achieve this, we must protect the interests of the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage of folk songs, so that they can devote more energy to the work of inheriting folk songs. Guiding the inheritors of folk songs to enter the local community, schools and cultural space of various etiquettes and festivals regularly to carry on the vivid inheritance. Ganzi government departments at all levels should give appropriate honors or financial subsidies. In addition, more cultural subjects and relevant professionals should be attracted to participate in the research and innovation of folk songs in the upper reaches of the Dadu River.

### **5. Final words**

In the field study of folk music culture in the upper reaches of Dadu River, the author personally experienced the charm of the original ecological folk songs well preserved in the area, and was surprised by the fact that the area has such a pluralistic music culture. At the same time, the author also feels that the tide of economic globalization is impacting the original quiet land. Faced with the change of living environment and lifestyle, it is our contemporary duty to inherit and develop the local colorful folk songs.

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