

Study on Dege Tibetan Opera of intangible cultural heritage

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ABSTRACT: *Dege Tibetan Opera is a kind of drama with unique local characteristics in Kangba Tibetan area, which has distinct regional characteristics, strong religious color, rich historical culture and artistic aesthetic value. It was listed as the national intangible cultural heritage in 2008. This paper explores the historical development of Dege Tibetan Opera, analyzes its artistic characteristics, and puts forward some measures for its inheritance and protection.*

KEYWORDS: *Dege Tibetan Opera; Intangible cultural heritage; Dege chieftain*

The area under the jurisdiction of Dege County in Ganzi Prefecture is one of the areas that developed earlier in Kangzang Plateau. With a long history and diversified culture, it is an important birthplace of Kangba Culture and is known as "the ancient cultural city under the Snow Mountain". The Tibetan opera remains in Dege County has a long history. It originated from the primitive religious totem sacrificial ceremony at first, and then rose depending on the development of the Dege chieftain's family power. It is a unique drama produced under the mutual influence of Dege chieftain's politics and religious culture.

1. The historical origin of Dege Tibetan Opera

In the 15th century, dege chieftain Bodong zhaxisenge and Tang dongjiebu, the founder of Tibetan opera, established the Dege Gengqing Temple. After the completion of the temple, learning from the performance experience of white mask Tibetan Opera in Weizang area, combined with the performing form of dancing deity "Qiangmu" in Dege local temple, the monks compiled and performed the Tibetan Opera "Zhi Mei Genden" and "Prince Norsang" for the first time, which marked the initial formation of Dege Tibetan opera. In the mid-17th century, the seventh generation of Dege chieftain, Lacheng Xiangba Puntsok, who was honored as the first King degfa of Dege, established Gengqing Temple as a family temple,

formulated "ten sets of religious laws" and "Sixteen political laws" , and made Gengqing Temple subject to the management of chieftain in terms of political and religious affairs. According to the regulations of the Dege chieftain family, there was no living Buddha in Gengqing temple, and the management right of the temple is inherited by the chieftain family. The chieftain's eldest son was appointed as the head of Gengqing Temple, who was in charge of religious power. The second son inherited the position of chieftain and holds political power. If the chieftain was the only son, he inherited the position of chieftain and concurrently served as the head of Gengqing Temple, so as to control Gengqing Temple and achieve the purpose of controlling the local management power of dege.

The chieftain, Lacheng Xiangba Puntsok also publicized Buddhism through performing Tibetan opera, so as to achieve the goal of developing family power. He stipulated that the monks of Gengqing Temple would select 40 people to rehearse the Tibetan Opera "hareba" and "Prince Nosang" during the 45 days of reciting the "YangLe Sutra" every year. On June 30 of Tibetan calendar, "YangLe Festival" Buddhist activities ended. On the morning of July 1, the monks of Gengqing Temple gathered in Liulinzi, north suburb of Dege City, chanting scriptures and praying for blessings. After that, they performed Tibetan Opera "Prince Nosang" and "Jiaqiang" rehearsed during the "YangLe Sutra". "Lion Hareba" would be performed on July 2. Since then, the Tibetan opera performance of the Annual Yangle Festival has become a custom, which has lasted for more than 300 years.

During the reign of Dege chieftain, there were many religious schools in dege's jurisdiction. In order to use religion to safeguard his ruling interests, Dege chieftains adopted a "compatible" attitude towards various sects within his jurisdiction and actively supported them to build temples. There were more than 100 temples within his jurisdiction, among which Tibetan Buddhism Ningma sect, Kagyu Sect, Sakya Sect, Gelug Sect and local Bon sect all had their own temples. Among these temples, The Yatuo Temple of the Ningma school, the Xieqing Temple, the Zhuqing Temple, the Baiyu Temple, and the Bagang Temple of the Kagyu School were all family temples of Dege chieftain. These 5 temples are temples with a long history, large scale and great influence in Kang District. In order to expand their influence and attract believers, these large-scale temples, based on the sacrificial music and dance in temples, draw lessons from the traditional drama knowledge of the "Small Five Ming" of Tibetan Buddhism, and absorb the materials of traditional folk songs and dances to arrange and perform Tibetan opera. After a long history of accumulation, the temple troupes in Dege county have gradually formed and have been handed down to this day.

2. Research status of Dege Tibetan Opera

As a regional drama, Dege Tibetan opera was not known to the outside world for a long time due to its remote geographical location and its heritage in temples.

Since the founding of New China, governments at all levels have attached great importance to the research and protection of folk opera art. Especially since the 1980s, the Ganzi Prefecture government put forward the eight-character policy of revitalizing Tibetan opera "rescue, inheritance, development and innovation", in

order to promote the research and development of Tibetan opera in Sichuan. The cultural administration department of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has organized a large number of opera workers to make a comprehensive investigation and research on the opera art in all counties and districts of Ganzi Prefecture. After 10 years of efforts, the History of Tibetan Opera in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture was compiled and completed, which is the most comprehensive and systematic research result of Tibetan opera in the history of Tibetan areas in western Sichuan, and has accumulated valuable basic materials for the inheritance and development of Tibetan opera art. The first concept of Dege Tibetan opera was put forward in the History of Tibetan Opera in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture published in 1988, which was recognized by the academic circle.

Since the concept of Dege Tibetan opera was established, it has been recognized as an independent drama in the academic circle. For example, in the related Tibetan opera types and schools in the book "Chinese Tibetan Opera Art", Tibetan opera can be divided into seven types: white mask Tibetan opera, blue mask Tibetan opera, Kangba Tibetan opera, Anduo Tibetan opera, Changdu Tibetan opera, Jiarong Tibetan Opera and dege Tibetan opera. According to the classification of Tibetan opera, Chinese Tibetan Opera is divided into 1 general system, 3 major categories and 11 operas. Under a general system of Tibetan opera, according to the three traditional Tibetan dialect regions of Weizang, Kangba and Anduo, Tibetan Opera in Weizang dialect, Tibetan Opera in Kangba dialect and Tibetan Opera in Amdo dialect are divided into three systems: Tibetan Opera in Weizang dialect, Tibetan Opera in Kangba dialect, Tibetan Opera in Amdo dialect; Tibetan Opera in Weizang dialect area includes Baimian Tibetan opera, blue mask Tibetan Opera and Menba opera; Tibetan Opera in Kang dialect area includes Changdu opera, Kangba Tibetan opera, Daofu Tibetan Opera and dege Tibetan opera; Tibetan Opera in Amdo dialect includes Labrang Tibetan opera, Huangnan Tibetan opera, Huarui Tibetan Opera and so on.

At present, with the implementation of the western development strategy, the transportation and communication of Dege county are becoming more and more convenient, and the tourism development is becoming more and more perfect. More and more experts and scholars begin to pay attention to the traditional culture of Dege county. In this context, the study of Dege Tibetan Opera is booming. In 2008, Dege Tibetan opera was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage to be protected. With "Dege Tibetan Opera" as the key word, the author retrieved 31 academic research articles in CNKI. There are also books and materials such as Chinese Tibetan opera art, Tibetan Opera and Tibetan customs, Tibetan opera records of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, cultural and artistic records of Sichuan Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Dege county annals, list of intangible cultural heritage of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tibetan culture and art, etc. from different perspectives, in-depth research on Dege Tibetan opera has been made.

3. Artistic features of Dege Tibetan Opera

In history, through the performances of Tibetan opera troupes in various

temples, Dege chieftain praised the merits and virtues of the chieftain family, publicized the rationality of the Dege chieftain system and religious culture, and actively safeguarded the political interests of the chieftain family, and became a powerful tool for the Dege Chieftain to paralyze the people and maintain the rule. It is on this level that Dege Tibetan opera shows strong religious color and utilitarianism of valuing ceremony and neglecting drama.

3.1 Strong religious color

Over the years, the rise and development of primitive Bon religion and Tibetan Buddhism not only had a direct impact on the spiritual life, material life, national consciousness, national character, customs and rituals, religious beliefs of the people in Dege, but also had a far-reaching impact on the political, economic, cultural and educational development of Dege society. The popularity of Tibetan Buddhism in Dege's long-term religious belief determines that it must occupy an extremely important and special position in the local national culture. Under its direct influence and function, Dege Tibetan Opera is gradually pushed to the development track of religious, which makes Dege Tibetan opera with strong religious color.

The establishment and development of Tibetan opera troupes in various temples in Dege are closely related to religion. The temple troupes in Dege were initially founded by clergy in order to promote the development of the temple, promote the doctrines and Buddhism, and expand the influence of the temple. The Tibetan Opera in Dege temple is developed on the basis of the traditional temple music and dance of their respective religious sects. The literary scripts of Tibetan opera are mostly based on the scripts of Tibetan traditional Tibetan opera. The contents of the scripts are mostly based on myths and legends, classic Buddhist stories and historical stories that have been deified. The theme of the scripts is to admonish people to abandon the evil and promote the good, to believe in Buddhism, and to advocate the rationality of the unity of politics and religion.

3.2 Utilitarian nature of valuing ceremony and neglecting drama

Take the Tibetan opera performance in Gengqing Temple of the chieftain Temple of Dege as an example. Since laqing xiangbapengcuo, the chieftain of Dege, only two plays, Hareba and Prince Nosang, are allowed to perform in Gengqing temple. Moreover, the king and ministers in the characters must wear the clothes of the chieftain's head. In addition, some chieftain Dege personally appeared on the stage to play the main role of Prince Nosang, The leader plays the role of minister and guides the people to obey his rule by using the metaphor of "I am the Buddha" through opera performance.

During the field investigation, the author watched the Tibetan Opera "the lion king Hareba" in Gengqing temple, the main temple of Sakya sect of Tibetan Buddhism, and the Tibetan Opera "King Gesar" of Zhuqing temple, one of the six inheriting temples of Ningma School of Tibetan Buddhism. After watching it, I felt not only watching the opera, but also participating in a solemn religious ceremony.

The two Tibetan operas are classic operas reserved by different religious sects and temple troupes. The performances are grand and warm. The whole process is accompanied by the mulberry burning ceremony and Lama chanting. The entrance and appearance are strict and orderly, the story line is natural, the actors' costumes and props are rich and colorful, and the form is beautiful and atmospheric. The direct feeling of "Yiqingxi", especially the performance part of "King Gesar", draws lessons from the dance ritual style of "King Kong Dance" in Ningma School of Zhuqing temple to a great extent. The actors wearing various masks are like a primitive Nuo dance drama.

Temples in Dege lead the director, arrangement and performance of Tibetan opera. The performance mode greatly retains the form of primitive ritual witch dance. The unique masks worn by actors in the performance are mostly animal models simulating primitive totems. The performances of these animal like models are the remains of primitive witchcraft and totem sacrifice. The selection of Tibetan opera actors and the rehearsal and performance of the script are all controlled by the temple lamas. The performance time is fixed in religious and folk festivals. The audience is mainly Temple monks and religious believers. It can be said that the performance of traditional Dege Tibetan Opera is to publicize the rationality of chieftain's political and religious control. In artistic performance, it emphasizes "worshipping gods" but neglects "entertaining people", emphasizes the religious education function of opera and weakens the artistic function of aesthetics, which is obviously utilitarian.

At all times and in all over the world, the emergence and development of all kinds of operas are from worshipping gods to entertaining gods, from entertaining gods to sharing between human beings and gods, and finally evolving into purely entertaining arts. In this respect, the religious color and utilitarian nature of Dege Tibetan opera are the characteristics of the early stage of drama development. The relatively closed plateau geographical environment of Dege county and the long-term humanistic ecological environment of the integration of politics and religion determine the particularity of social culture and artistic thinking, and contribute to the existence of ancient human religious sacrifice culture and closely related ancient opera art in this region, which will become valuable materials for further exploring the origin and development of Chinese Tibetan opera.

4 Value of sidege Tibetan Opera

With the occurrence, development and evolution of the historical process, Dege Tibetan opera contains the precious spiritual wealth accumulated by the indigenous ethnic groups for thousands of years. It is a rich treasure in the folk music culture of Kangba Tibetan area, and a witness of Dege history. It has profound humanistic and historical value, valuable academic research value and original material value of artistic creation.

4.1 Value of human history

Dege Tibetan Opera reflects the production and life, historical events, folk customs, ethics and values of various ethnic groups in Dege history, which is of great reference value to the research of history and Ethnology in the current humanities and social sciences. It is a good reference for compiling ethnography and local chronicle. For example, the story of King Gesar in Zhuqing Temple of Ningma school provides a good clue for the study of social system, ethnic integration, religious communication and other fields in Kangba Tibetan area since Tang and Song dynasties.

4.2 Value of academic research.

Dege Tibetan Opera is a unique kind of drama. The occurrence, development, evolution and laws of Tibetan opera performing groups with various styles, music concepts and artistic characteristics are all the research objects of music theory. Summing up the experience and rules is conducive to the establishment of such as Kangba drama theory, Kangba music sociology, Kangba music folklore, Kangba music morphology and Kangba nationality Musicology and other theoretical systems.

4.3 Material value of artistic creation

Dege Tibetan Opera is a comprehensive art with Tibetan literary scripts, myths and legends, and historical stories as the performance theme, with national vocal music, instrumental music, dance, performance, acrobatics, and dance beauty as the performance means. Through the study of Dege Tibetan opera, literary and art workers can draw useful materials from it and create artistic works with the characteristics of the new era, so as to make the past serve the present. From the perspective of ethnomusicology and music sociology, the opera music in Dege Tibetan Opera originates from the ancient folk songs, rap, song and dance, instrumental music, religious sacrifice music and so on. These ancient musical art forms can not only enrich the historical knowledge of Kangba ancient music, but also provide a variety of materials for the current song creation, quyi creation, dance creation, instrumental music performance, folk and religious music research and creation.

5 Inheritance and protection of wudege Tibetan Opera

As a national intangible cultural heritage, Dege Tibetan Opera carries the life code of ethnic groups living in the region for thousands of years, and is a vivid embodiment of ethnic wisdom and national spirit. In order to inherit and develop this ancient form of national drama, the following suggestions are put forward:

5.1 Do a good job in digging and sorting out

Dege Tibetan opera has different styles in different sects and temples, so we should do a good job in sorting out different categories. Gengqing Temple of Sakya sect, Zhuqing Temple of Ningma school, babang Temple of Kagyu sect, gengsha Temple of Gelu sect and Dingqing Temple of Benbo religion are currently large-scale temples with complete Tibetan opera troupes. Focusing on these Temple orchestras, we should formulate protection and utilization planning measures, establish inheritance institutions, exhibition halls and databases, and improve the management mechanism of county, state, provincial and national level representative list of Tibetan Opera and representative inheritors. By using the new media information technology, the classic plays of each Tibetan opera troupe are classified, produced and stored, and the database of text, image, audio, video and animation is established.

5.2 Explore the mode of market operation

Marketization is not only a challenge for ;Dege Tibetan opera, but also an opportunity for further development. Under the background of Ganzi Prefecture Government's supporting policies for cultural industry and the rise of tourism and cultural industry in Dege County, Dege Tibetan Opera Troupe should learn from the market-oriented operation mode and build a multi-channel development path. For example, with the help of the current needs of the tourism market in Dege County, absorb modern drama elements, create art works that meet the aesthetic needs of the times, and show them to the masses with a new look, so as to realize the historical transformation from the altar to the earth, from the temple to the folk, and from the "field" to the stage. Under the promotion of marketization, the artistic expression has changed from pursuing the goodness of drama content to paying attention to the beauty of artistic expression, and finally achieving the unity of the true, the good and the beautiful in artistic connotation, and exploring a new path for the development of dege's excellent drama culture.

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