

The Development of Vocal Music of the Zhuang Ethnic Group in Hongshui River Basin, Guangxi Province, China

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Abstract

This article investigates the Zhuang vocal music of the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi as the research object, focusing on the different views of its origin. From the aspects of singing function, deductive mode, transmission path and vocal text characteristics, this article proposes to deeply analyzes the ancient and modern development and changes of Zhuang vocal music in the Guangxi Hongshui River Basin, and summarizes the development trend of different stages of Hongshui River Basin vocal music.

Key words: Guangxi, Hongshui River Basin, Zhuang vocal music, development

Introduction

The Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi has numerous mountains, rapid water flow, and the natural conditions are relatively hardy. The Hongshui River breeds the character of the people here who are hardworking, brave, honest, kind, enthusiastic, optimistic and good at singing and dancing. Zhuang ethnic group vocal music carries the collective memory of the Zhuang ethnic group of people in the Hongshui River Basin. It is the norm of life to convey love with songs, which have become an important carrier of Zhuang ethnic group traditional culture. The development of Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River is the same as the origin of Zhuang vocal music in other places. For thousands of years, Zhuang ethnic group vocal music has exuded poetic thinking in the scenes of labor, sacrifice and love in social life, which has enhanced the expression of Zhuang ethnic people's emotion. Although the singing field and singing form of contemporary Zhuang ethnic group vocal music have changed, the emotional gene of vocal music culture still continues.

Objectives

1 To study the origin of Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of Hongshui River Basin.

2 To study the development and change of Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River.

Method

The researcher employed the qualitative research methodology of ethnomusicology, while focusing mainly on the data from field studies and literature collection. The study was conducted according to the following procedure:

1. The researchers selected Donglan County, Bama Yao Autonomous County, Du'an Yao Autonomous County, Dahua Yao Autonomous County and Mashan County in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi as the research areas to collect the literature on the vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group and in chronological order.

2. The researchers have classified and analyzed the data from field work and literature research according to the objectives of the study, and then have checked the data and analysis by relevant personnel and experts working in the field.

3. The researchers have also revised the data according to the advice of experts and prepared the data for presentation.

Findings

Origin theory

The origin of Zhuang ethnic group vocal music is closely related to Zhuang cultural themes and events such as labor, sacrificial worship, love, and the Gexu singing festivals. There are many records about the singing of Zhuang ethnic group vocal music in Gexu, sacrifice, marriage, courtship between men and women and other occasions in ancient literature.

Among the eight ethnic minorities of "King Wu of Zhou who conquered Zhou and joined forces to herd wild animals," there is the Pu nationality also known as Bafang, that is, the ancestors of Zhuang ethnic group. King Wu of Zhou who conquered Zhou benefit from armed forces from two ancient states in modern Sichuan. According history books, the army in Sichuan was very brave, and used song and dance to push back the attacking Yin people." The Bafang nationality refers to the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group. It can be seen that Zhuang ethnic group ballads have a long history (Huang Yongsha, as cited in pre-Qin scholars, 1983).

The origin of Zhuang ethnic group vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River in Guangxi has always been an issue of concern to the academic community. Scholars have their own opinions. There are mainly four types: labor theory, sacrifice theory, love theory, and Gexu theory.

1.1 Labor theory

From the vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group in the middle reaches of the Hong shui River Basin, one can infer that it is labor-related vocal music similar to other ethnic groups. Language arts originated in the labor processes of primitive people, which is recognized and confirmed by many scholars and experts. There are several explanations for singing while working. First of all, the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group have been engaged in farming for a long time, the labor is heavy, the mountains are deserted, and the singing can help people drive away the fatigue of labor, boost the morale of labor, and improve the efficiency of labor. Secondly, they vent their emotions through singing when they are engaged in manual labor, relieve the pressure of labor, and eliminate

the depression in their hearts. It was a simple shout at first, but gradually used singing instead of language to express feelings further, and gradually formed a four-sentence song structure. Once again, when Zhuang ethnic people worked in the mountains, they felt gloomy there. In order to get rid of the fear, they relied on singing to boost their courage. They often sang in pairs across the mountain, conveying their emotions with voice, so as to comfort each other.

1.2 Sacrifice theory

The Zhuang ethnic people in the Hongshui River Basin worship multiple gods. The ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group, dominated by the concept of animism, faced a harsh living environment. On the one hand, they placed their hopes on divine power to pray for survival and development, and formed a primitive religious culture represented by chicken bone divination and the Mo religion; On the other hand, a vocal music culture represented by cave songs and frog songs was formed in the living space surrounded by mountains and rivers. They thought that the various phenomena in nature was amazing but couldn't explain it, so they felt that everything was dominated by the gods. They had a sacred sense of reverence for nature, so they will paid homage to these gods in various forms. Some Taoist priests and witches in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River sang the vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group on some important funeral occasions. Therefore, some people think that Zhuang ethnic group vocal music were produced in religious activities such as in animal sacrifices, and have a very important impact on people's lives.

1.3 Love Theory

Some people also think that the Zhuang ethnic group vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin originated from love. Zhuang ethnic people express their feelings by songs and choose a mate by songs. It has a long history in ancient times. The Hechi County Chronicles, the eighth edition of the Republic of China, recorded: "in February and July of each year, young men and women travel in groups on the outskirts of the nearby city, using singing as a good medium." (Huang Zuyu, & Li Dexuan, 1919).

It was recorded by the novelist Liu Xiang from Han period that Zixi, the King of Chu, once heard of a song by a Yue boatman when Zixi traveled on a lake. The content of the song is translated as follows:

What a moment to drive my vessel in the midst of the flow,
 What a day for me to accompany the boat you row,
 How lucky I am to receive your fondness despite that I am so vulgar,
 How bewildered my heart is when getting to know you as the ruler,
 The mountain has trees, and trees have their branches,
 Whereas I have my deepest favour in you, of which you are not conscious. (Lu Qinli, 1910).

This is the earliest translated works in China and one of the artistic sources of Chu ci. This song of the spring and autumn seasons expressed the love in the hearts of the Zhuang ethnic group people who could not be restrained, followed impromptu singing styles, composed songs of lingering affection, moved prince, and expressed the love across the classes.

1.4 Gexu theory

Although the Zhuang ethnic group vocal music has a long history, few Zhuang ethnic group vocal music works have been recorded because of the undeveloped nature of ancient Zhuang culture, and it was not favored by the rulers of previous dynasties. It is only in the records of the gexu and some customs where one can see the grand occasions of the vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group.

Gexu is a traditional singing festival held by the Zhuang ethnic peoples at a specific time and place. Since ancient times, the custom of gexu has been popular in the Hongshui River Basin. The Zhuang ethnic people in the Hongshui River area is called the Gexu "Wei Peng". Because this kind of activity includes mutual reward singing as the main content, "each gathering is no less than a thousand people", "singing on each competition day", it is like a singing fair, and later people called it "Gexu".

2 Changes in the stage of development

2.1 Changes in function

With the development of the times, the survival context of vocal music has also changed. Since the time that vocal music was sung, these people's their initial functions of resisting foreign enemies, offering sacrifices to gods, and relying on songs to choose mates have gradually disappeared, and the lyric spaces of Zhuang ethnic group vocal music has changed.

2.1.1 Stage of entertaining gods

The Zhuang ethnic people in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin worshiped the gods. In the past, rituals to entertain the gods, exorcise demons, pray for blessings and dispel disasters were very common. According to the relevant records and legends, this paper analyzes the relationship between the custom of singing together of the Zhuang ethnic group and the gods of music, ancestor worship, memory of ancestors, labor, entertainment and mate selection. It holds that the saying of the god of self-entertainment is "in line with the thoughts of the ancient people" and that "the ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group gathered to sing. The purpose was to entertain the gods." (Deng Rujin, 1984, p.161-181).

In the worship ceremony to all kinds of gods, they spoke with songs and sang at sacrifices. There are also historical records about the Maguai Festival (Wa Po Festival) in the Hongshui River Basin. The Chronicles of Hechi County, published in 1919, recorded: "it is the month (the first month), the villagers of each whistle buried the cochlea, the drum sent it, and the graves were filled with color flags, until New Year's Eve found that the bone color of the cochlea was divined to be auspicious." (Li Dexuan, 1919).

4.2.1.2 The stage of entertaining people

The so-called "entertaining people" idea means to meet people's aesthetic needs through means and forms of self-entertainment or performance.

In the entertainment stage of the development of Zhuang ethnic group vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin, men and women sang love songs as the main content. Zhu Fu's "Ximan Cong Xiao" recorded: "during the vernacular festival for several days, men and women in the wild were divided into two groups of friends, each with five-colored beans and

millet, which was called Feilun."The so-called Feilun means throwing hydrangea. During the singing period, young women with hydrangeas gathered in the selected singing venue to sing songs with young men. The woman threw a ball of hydrangeas to the man she likes. After the man caught the ball, they exchanged gifts to conclude a "white-headed" alliance.(Guangxi Zhuang ethnic group Autonomous Region Folk Literature Research Association,1980).

When the vocal music became the link between men and women, the other functions of the vocal music were weakened, and the love song became the most colorful part of the whole vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin.

2.1.3 Diverse expressions of emotion

The diversified emotional expression of vocal music is of far-reaching significance for strengthening the collective memory and cultural identity of the Zhuang ethnic group people. It mainly shows the meaning of new vocal music, new fields and new culture.

First of all, the new vocal music forms are common with modern people. With the development of the economy and the changes in social life, and the function of vocal music has changed. Young men and women of the Zhuang ethnic group no longer need to express their feelings by songs and choose partners by songs. Every year, the government hosts the "Earth Flying Song" International Vocal Music Festival, which adapts and innovates traditional vocal music and presents them to the audience in new singing forms, new arrangements and new accompaniment forms, giving people a refreshed feeling.

Secondly, the new field provides a broader entertainment space. In the rural areas in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin, many places still retain the tradition of sacrifice. In the process of sacrifice, vocal music are still the bridge between man and the gods. Folk activities involve the fertile soil to nourish vocal music and the carrier for the survival and development of vocal music. In the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin, many elderly people still retain the tradition of endorsing songs, going to places such as squares, parks or open spaces to sing and listen to songs on weekends or holidays.

Thirdly, the new vocal music culture contains many elements such as life, education, and emotion. Zhuang ethnic group vocal music is sung from daily life and expresses the spiritual world of the subject. Due to the change of survival context, the new vocal music culture arises spontaneously. By analyzing the internal relationship between emotional experience and the transmission of vocal music, one can draw out the new functions of vocal music in finding traits such as cultural roots, satisfaction of fantasies, life education, and emotional interaction.

4.2.2 changes in the mode of transmission

4.2.2.1 "word-to-mouth transmission" and text transmission

From the emergence of vocal music to modern times, Zhuang folk songs are mainly transmitted by word of mouth. Parents teach their children and masters teach their apprentices, which are passing the songs on from generation to generation. The spread of vocal music mainly depends on the Gexu, festival activities and daily songs. The other part is the transmission of words. Singers have their own song books. The ancestors of the Zhuang ethnic group created "square Zhuang characters", folk

artists have used it to record, write and organize folk songs. These songbooks play a very important role in the spread of vocal music.

4.2.2.2 the mode of communication of new media

The traditional mode of transmission has strong limitations such as limited regionality, so it is difficult to spread outside the Hongshui River Basin. With the development of the times and the progress of science and technology, television, radio, internet and other new media, all these have become important channels for the spread of Zhuang vocal music in the Hongshui River Basin. For example, the three-episode music documentary "Folk Song is like Spring River", jointly produced by Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Radio and Television Bureau and Guangxi Radio and Television Station, has been broadcast on Guangxi Satellite TV at the same time every day from 21:20 since October 11, 2011. From October 12, the film was broadcast in the form of one episode a week on the "Chinese Nation" section of CCTV's comprehensive channel. The documentary presented the history and current situation of the development of Guangxi vocal music, and showed the unique ethnic customs and the long history of folk song culture in Guangxi. This mode of communication has the advantages of quick effect, wide audience area and high coverage. Further, people can appreciate and feel the charm of Guangxi Zhuang vocal music without leaving their homes.

Audio-visual materials are also an important medium of communication. The Guangxi Ethnic Audiovisual Publishing House and Guangxi Cultural Audiovisual Publishing House have for many years, have published many excellent audio-visual products in culture and art to uncover, sort out and popularize excellent national folk culture and inspire national spirit.

In modern society, almost everyone has a mobile phone. In the self-media era, people can upload the singing videos of vocal music online to share with the public. WeChat groups have also been set up in many places, where singers can sing in the groups, and share news and interesting stories about Zhuang vocal music, all of which strongly promote the spread of Zhuang vocal music.

4.2.3 Changes in the content of vocal text

4.2.3.1 The vocal text of traditional vocal music mostly reflects life.

The vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group in the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi come from the life of the people of Zhuang Township are rooted in the life of the people of Zhuang Township, and in the lives of ordinary people who embody their lives in song every day. The vocal text are rich and colorful, including ancient songs, narrative songs, life songs, labor songs, ritual songs, love songs, nursery rhymes and so on. The traditional Zhuang vocal music in the Hongshui River Valley of Guangxi reflect the joys and sorrows of life, annotate the ups and downs of life, are full of rich flavor of life, and include sincere and simple emotion. Vivid metaphors and humorous language make the vocal text catchy and easy to sing. For example: the vocal text of "Sunflower Road Open" include:

When the sunflower road opens, the bees fly,
The flowers bloom for the elder brother,
And the bees come to gather.

When sunflowers bloom along the road, bees gather honey,
Flowers blossom to the sun, bees make honey.

4.2.3.2 Most of the vocal text of modern vocal music reflect the current politics.

In modern times, the Zhuang vocal music in the Hongshui River Basin of Guangxi are closely intertwined with the times. Wei Baqun, a revolutionary pioneer in Donglan County, Guangxi, used vocal music to publicize the revolutionary truths, such as in "There is Only One Way for the Poor":

When we overthrow the local tyrants and evil gentry,
We all work hard with one heart and one mind;
If we cannot remove the mountains above our heads,
We will never be able to turn around forever.

No one is born with a bitter fate, and the exploitation of the gentry is too ruthless,
The revolution can only be seen in one way for the poor,
If the mountains cannot be removed,

They will never be able to turn around forever!

With the development of society, the Zhuang people in the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi use vocal music to publicize the current politics and sing about the new changes of the times.

The villagers transform their good days into folk songs and sing the beautiful chapter of life. The 2021 Guangxi-Guizhou-Yunnan-Hunan Folk Song Competition sponsored by The Guangxi Folk artists' Association stipulates that the themes of singing must be: 1. Vocal music that eulogize the grace of The Party; 2. The spirit of the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee; 3. National unity; 4. Safe Guangxi; 5. Legal system construction; 6. Guided by the CPC; 7. Rural revitalization; 8. Great achievements in poverty alleviation and 9. Praising Zhuang ethnic group. The content is required to be ideological, political, healthy, progressive, and close to the life of the masses. Compared with the traditional Zhuang vocal music works, the current Zhuang vocal musics compositions in the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi are more political.

4.2.4 changes in the way of deduction.

4.2.4.1 traditional original ecological deduction

The traditional vocal music works of the Zhuang ethnic group in the Hongshui River Valley of Guangxi are created by laborers, who use the wisdom of life to write and sing for themselves, and are the main body of vocal music. Singers can make up and sing approachable songs, and their creation is rooted in the land of their lives, with the strong customs and flavor of their life experiences. Zhuang people of all ages in Hongshui River Basin of Guangxi are actors. They sing impromptu songs without professional training, and they can sing as much as desired. In life, people often use songs to fall in love, to express their feelings, to spread their scriptures, to relate history, and to transmit culture. Their stage is everywhere: in the fields, at home, in the outdoors, and in villages and lanes. They are not only actors but also the audiences, creators and performers.

4.2.4.2 Modern fashion deduction

In the past, Zhuang vocal music in the Hongshui River Basin basically took the form of villagers entertaining themselves. With the development of the times, many of these music lovers and

musicians expanded the genre through on-the-spot research, collecting styles, and making bold innovations in music speed, strength, rhythm, orchestration and performance style. They have created a large number of excellent vocal music works that are in line with the development of the times, loved by the people and full of the flavor of the times.

Traditional Zhuang vocal music in the Hongshui River Valley of Guangxi is sung in the Zhuang language. Now, on many occasions, they are sung in both Zhuang and Putonghua, which allows Zhuang vocal music to gain a wider audience. Nowadays, in addition to ordinary people, many Zhuang vocal music are performed by professional singers. In addition to the innovation in composing and singing, the stage of Zhuang vocal music has shifted from the field to the professional stage. The design and packaging of stage art visually creates an immersive atmosphere for the audience. The modern stage uses electronic, digital, and intelligent scientific and technological means, coupled with the mobile stage: and it adopts the combination of real and virtual scenes to organically coordinate the stage technical facets such as dance beauty, lighting, and sound. That is done to make people place themselves within the performance and move their hearts through audio-visual effects.

Discussion

Scholars have done significant research on Zhuang vocal music, but from the perspective of the basin, and focusing on the five counties in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River, there is little research on the origin and development of the local vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group, leaving room for the study of this paper.

Under the impact of economic globalization and multiculturalism, the Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin show the phenomenon of aging. Through literature collection and field investigation of five counties, this paper analyzes the origin and development of Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin in Guangxi. It will encourage more music lovers to have a strong interest in the vocal music of the Zhuang ethnic group in the Hongshui River Basin, learn and sing it through various ways, and help its transmission and development, so as to promote cultural prosperity and promote the revitalization of rural populations. Therefore, more theoretical researchers can focus on this geographic area, carry out more theoretical research, and excavate the more brilliant and rich history and the connotations behind it. It will allow more people to understand the rich national culture of the Zhuang ethnic group in Guangxi, and actively integrate into the development strategy of the national "Belt and Road Initiative", so that its songs can go beyond China and into the world.

Conclusion

There are many theories about the origin of Zhuang vocal music in the middle reaches of Hongshui River in Guangxi, including labor theory, sacrificial worship, love theory and Gexu festival theory.

With the development of the times, the function, communication mode, vocal text content and

deduction of Zhuang vocal music have changed. This extends from entertaining gods and people to a variety of emotional expressions. The traditional "March 3" Gexu in the five counties in the middle reaches of the Hongshui River Basin has changed, and the Gexu activities organized spontaneously by the villages have gradually changed into large-scale literary and artistic activities led by the government.

The government actively encourages policy to promote tourism and culture together, so as to give full play to the social function of vocal music.

The communication mode of vocal music has changed from "word-to-mouth transmission" and text communication to new media communication, and the content of vocal text has also changed. In the past, the content of vocal music was rich in the flavor of life, but now vocal music mostly reflects the current politics. The main body of vocal music has gradually changed from ordinary people to professional singers. In addition, the composition, stage and singing of vocal music have increased in its technicality and artistry, which are more contemporary and more in line with the aesthetics of modern people.

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