

Study on Protection and Inheritance of Expressive Arts of the Oroqen Nationality

A Case of Music School of Heihe University

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Abstract—The Oroqen nationality is one of 6 small national minorities of China and inhabits in Heilong River Valley of northeast China region. Although without a writing system except language, the Oroqen nationality has a long history and splendid culture. In the beginning, life of the Oroqen nationality was mainly based on nomadic hunting and such way of life has created national expressive arts with distinctive characteristics. Having been through changes of a long history, the Oroqen nationality has greatly changed in the living environment and as a result, the original music forms are ignored, destroyed and lost. As a carrier of the national spirit and ideology of the Oroqen nationality, its expressive art is an important piece of Chinese traditional culture, and its protection and inheritance is also a critical part of inheriting art education of colleges and universities. Located in Heihe, Heilongjiang, known as “the Jewel of the North”, Heihe University is the first common institute of higher learning of China on the Sino-Russian board line of over 4300 kilometers. Over the past decade, relying on the regional advantages and local high-quality educational resources, the music school of Heihe University has made it its mission to carry forward traditional national culture, strengthen cultural confidence of students and cultivate talents with both political integrity and professional competence to serve the development of the border area. The music school carries out and implements the advice on improvement of art education work of colleges and universities and adapts to the developing trend of higher education of China to make teaching practice, reform and innovation, based on meeting local cultural demands. Especially, the application of expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality in the teaching practice shows the characteristics of our school and forms an particular education brand.

Keywords—the Oroqen nationality; expressive arts; protection; inheritance

I. INTRODUCTION

“Mosukun” and “Gulunmuta” of the Oroqen nationality were listed in the first national nonmaterial cultural heritage

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list in May 2006; “Zandaren”, “Lurigeren” and “Saman” dances were listed in the first Heilongjiang nonmaterial cultural heritage list in March 2007; mouth organ, Douxiong dance and Saman ritual were listed in the second Heilongjiang nonmaterial cultural heritage list in June 2009. Such facts show that it has historical value and practical significance to study on the protection and inheritance of the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality.

II. BASIC SITUATION OF THE OROQEN NATIONALITY

The Oroqen nationality only had a population of a little bit more than 1,000 during the early period of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, but under care and support of the Party and the government in recent several decades, its population has made a rapid increase, and according to the data of the 6th national population census in 2010, the population of the Oroqen nationality has increased to 8659. In addition, belonging to the Altaic phylum, Oroqen language has language but no writing system and Oroqen people now mainly use Chinese characters.

Before the mid-17th century, the Oroqen nationality mainly lived in east of Baikal, north of Heilongjiang and to areas of Sakhalin. In the 1740s, tsarist Russia invaded Heilong River Valley and the Oroqen nationality southward migrated to mountain forest areas in the greater and lesser Khingan Mountains to the north of Heilongjiang, mainly in Humaer river valley, Xunhe river valley, Zhanhe river valley, Wuyun river valley, Mengyinhe river valley, Alihe river valley, Duobukuer river valley and Tuohe river valley. The Oroqen nationality lives mainly based on nomadic hunting and has created various national art forms over their long hunting years, mainly presented in music, dance and talking-singing art. These art forms reveal basic characteristics of the Oroqen nationality based on nomadic hunting.

III. ORIGIN OF PROTECTION AND INHERITANCE OF THE OROQEN NATIONALITY

As a special nationality of China that directly entered into socialist society from the first phase of human, the primitive society, the Oroqen nationality has national culture and art with distinct peculiarity. In 1953, responding to the call of the Party and the country, Oroqen people left their “Xianrenzhu” (a coniform tent for living of the Oroqen

people) and went out from the birch forest to start a new settled life based on both farming and hunting. In 1996, China gave orders to ban hunting and Oroqen people started the farming life style. As a result, the change of living environment and life style lead the original art forms to be ignored, damaged and lost. Influenced and restricted by multiple causes, the inheritance of expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality is facing unprecedented difficulties, as memories of many old artists about old art works gradually fade away with age, and there is few young people who can speak good Oroqen language completely.

IV. MAIN APPROACHES TO PROTECT AND INHERIT EXPRESSIVE ARTS OF THE OROQEN NATIONALITY IN LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Colleges and universities are equipped with high-quality scientific researching team in each subject, and the protection and inheritance of expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality require not only the knowledge of subjects of art, but also other related subjects' support, so local colleges and universities have responsibilities and obligations to take the social mission of protecting and inheriting national art. Since June 15, 2009, our school has established an art practice teaching base in Xinsheng town, Heihe, and has taken advantage of educational resources to provide necessary talents, places and relevant support for the protection and inheritance of expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality. We shall protect and inherit the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality under the premise of conformity with the natural law of development to keep the authenticity and integrality of such living heritage. To do this, the following approaches are recommended:

A. Teaching

As the only university of Heihe city, Heihe University has great geographic advantages and inserting the expressive arts into the daily teaching of the university can not only enrich the content of the teaching but also show the academic attitude and sense of social responsibility of the university.

1) *Faculty training*: Our school organized the teachers to investigate and collect Oroqen music in Xinsheng Town, Heihe. Led by the teaching and research office, teachers focused on the collection and classification of the essence of national art. For example, teachers of dance teaching and research office learned Oroqen dance from local folk artists; those of vocal music teaching and research office learned Oroqen songs and talking-singing arts "Mosukun" from local old artists; those in instrumental music teaching and research office learned mouth organ performance; those in theory teaching and research office visited Lingshangren Museum and Xinsheng Oroqen township school to track the history of the Oroqen nationality and study the cultural environment that nourishes the Oroqen culture and art.

According to teaching arrangement, teachers of different subjects made several trips in spare time to the habitation of the Oroqen nationality for field research. Through such field research, their ability in teaching has also been improved and

the abundant research materials they collected enrich the content of courses related to the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality.

In addition, we also invited some inheritors and research experts in different art forms of the Oroqen nationality to give seminars, including Mo Guiru and Meng Shuzhen, et.al. Due to the geographical advantage and convenient traffic of Heihe, such activities were successfully conducted and satisfying results were obtained.

2) *Courses*: Since 2008, Oroqen Music, as an elective course, has been set in our school and students who had learned the course are able to independently and entirely sing more than 4 Oroqen songs. Now, the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality has been integrated into the traditional teaching activities in accordance with the major orientations, such as vocal music class, dance class, instrumental music class and appreciation class. In the class of Bibliographic Retrieval and Thesis Writing of Music, the teacher guides and encourages students to write papers related to the Oroqen nationality to protect and inherit national art, share and appreciate the charming of Oroqen town to make contribution to the protection, inheritance and development of national art.

For the next step, we plan to amend our talents cultivating program and write the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality into the teaching programme. For example, except Oroqen songs (already set in 2008), courses of Oroqen dance and Oroqen musical instruments are planned to be separately open. The expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality will maintain its position in the classes of traditional vocal music, dance and instrument performance. Moreover, the Oroqen talking-singing arts "Mosukun" can be inherited by inviting Oroqen folk artists to give subjective reports. Further improving assessment system and clarify the teaching goal. For example, through practical teaching, students major in dance and music performance in vocal music direction are required to expertly sing more than 2 Oroqen songs, dance 1 representative Oroqen dance and perform a section of "Mosukun"; students major in music performance in dance direction shall master the characteristics of Oroqen dance and be able to dance at least 3 classic Oroqen dances. For students in other majors, they are only required to know of relevant knowledge of expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality. In this way, vision of art of students in related majors can not only be widened, it also provides a strong guarantee for the employment of the students. More importantly, if these students become teachers throughout the country after graduation, they are expected to deliver the expressive arts to more kids. In this way, the expressive arts can be known by more people.

3) *Educational practice*: According to the professional characteristics, the interest of students, students with good comprehensive quality will be selected to the habitation of the Oroqen nationality to carry out educational practice activities for a period of six months, and learn the folk songs, dance, rap, the musical instrument from the local inheritors. During the internship, the students will take part in all

preparation of the traditional festival and activities related the rehearsal. Such as: the Oroqen nationality's "Gulunmuta" festival and "Lag Ba-Omer" festival. Through a field study for half a year, students feel that Xinganling lush forests and continuous landscape create a simple kind, brave and tough Oroqen people, and brew the Oroqen expressive art with distinctive regional features. The practice realizes the complementary of college teaching and regional culture, which is better for inheriting the Oroqen expressive art. In addition, in June of each year, the college will organize students to go to the Oroqen habitation for "the Oroqen Folk Music Collection" activity more than 2 days, which can deepen the students' understanding of the Oroqen nationality culture.

4) *The practice group*: The art practice group in our college group has rehearsed the song dances such as Happy Gulunmuta, Da Kai Jiang, a quartette of High Xinganling, a dance of Dancing with A Bear, Lv Ri Ge Le and so on. These programs has participated in "Chinese and Russian Cultural Collections", "Share the sunshine with youth", the opening and closing ceremony of the International Youth Congress, Heihe's New Year Party, Heihe University's celebration for the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China 1921, Mid Autumn Festival and New Year Party and other celebrations. And it shows a new breakthrough in our college's modern heritage of expressive art. Our future will be based on our school's existing art practice group to set up a separate practice of performing groups for the rehearsal of classic works of the Oroqen nationality's expressive art, which will cultivate the practical talents for the Oroqen nationality's expressive art.

B. Scientific Research

We have the spirit of "taking teaching as the foundation and promoting teaching with research" principle, and actively carry out the research, which has made a series of achievements, highlighting the Oroqen nationality's unique expressive art and the artistic and historical importance.

1) *Research items*: 6 school-level projects, and 12 provincial projects. (See Appendix 1)

2) *Academic paper*: 36 academic papers were published in national core journals, national general periodicals and provincial journals.

3) *Treatises*: the *Oroqen Nationality's Music Research*, ISBN: 978-7-206-08562-8; Type of work: compiling, and the total number of words (thousand):190.00

C. Application of Advanced Science and Technology

The Oroqen people take the main responsibility of protection and inheritance of the Oroqen nationality's expressive art. Especially the older artists, take the initiative to break the single mode of inheritance from master to apprentice but teach Oroqen young people or other nationalities the skill. The local government also organizes various cultural art competitions appropriately, and as a

starting point, to support the people or groups who need help. Such as: the Baiyinna County Oroqen Folk Art Troupe, the new Harbin art troupes, its support has been slowly recognized and supported by all walks of life.

1) *Building a platform*: In the platform, the local government and the relevant functional departments shall provide the necessary support to the Oroqen nationality cultural's protection and heritage from multiple perspectives. The Oroqen traditional festival as an opportunity shows the Oroqen's expressive art centrally and objectively. For example, the Xinsheng county of Aihui District of Heihe city organizes the "Gulunmuta" festival, which is a good method to introduce to people the Oroqen's expressive art, showing the fruitful achievements of aesthetic education in colleges and universities.

2) *Audio and video products*: The Oroqen expressive art is in jeopardy, but we can not blindly inherit, with rational thinking to take effective measures and do the basic survey and certification work. In the current situation of fully grasping the Oroqen expressive art's physical and information resources, the work record shall be carried out according to the actual situation. The finished products of Oroqen expressive art shall be in visual preservation through the scientific record of multimedia after being dug, collected and sorted. The Oroqen expressive art performed by the related inheritor and Oroqen people shall be retained the memory image, as real as possible to maintain the original appearance and reflect the artistic authenticity and integrity. Such as: the Oroqen folk songs like Zan Da ren, Sa Man Diao and Lv Ri Ge Ren; dance like ritual dance, entertainment dance and religious dance; Raps like "Mosukun" are made into CDs, using modern communication, to show the Oroqen expressive art to the world and expand the audience for more people to understand the expressive art.

3) *Learning and absorbing*: The expressive arts at home and abroad not only have the unique characteristics, but also have the common characteristics. For the protection and inheritance of expressive art, the perspective should not be limited in China. As 1000 kilometers north from Blagoveshchensk, the Russian city bordered by China in the Heilongjiang River, we enter the Russian Yakutia Republic in the hinterland of the Stanovoy Range, and there is a small village—Ingla (transliteration) is one of the most important habitation of Evenk. Russian Evenk and Chinese Oroqen people are similar in many places. We can get inspiration from the Russian Evenkia expressive art, and absorb the suitable part in the comparative study for China's inheritance strategy and rich new ways of expressive art".

4) *Data archiving*: The establishment of the Oroqen nationality's museum, studio or database, expressive art is just a part of it, which provides abundant materials and information support for other experts and scholars to study the Oroqen culture, and provides references for decision-making of the Oroqen culture's protection and management.

V. CONCLUSION

Expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality is a valuable living history book and also the national art treasure, part and parcel of repository of Chinese arts. By protecting and inheriting of the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality, including music art, dancing art and talking-singing arts, we explore the deep connotation of them, aiming to lift the expressive arts to a higher level involving both theory and practice to lay a solid foundation for the protection and inheritance of it. For the protection and inheritance of the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality, it still has a long way to go. We hope more experts and scholars will pay attention to and develop the expressive arts! Adhering to the development path of national characteristics, the music school of Heihe University will inherit and carry forward the fine traditions and abide by art education laws to make contribution to the protection and inheritance of the expressive arts of the Oroqen nationality.

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