

Historic Context and Heritage Protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in East Sichuan

Xiaomei Zeng

College of Elementary Education, China West Normal University, Nanchong, 637009, China

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Abstract: Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality as the wisdom crystal formed in Tujia people's production and life has long historical origin and profound humanity emotions as a kind of folk art form with the closest relation with life and labor. As the most representative art essence to represent the regional culture and spiritual custom in Tujia nationality in east Sichuan has become an important component of China's intangible cultural heritage. We have never stopped studying, inheriting and protecting its historic context with great carefulness. This article has elaborated from the formation background of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan, and then analyzed its historic context, and at last emphasized the heritage and protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality.

1. Introduction

Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan as a traditional folk art was originally spread in Dazhou and improved gradually by Tujia people to form the current artistic essence integrating vocal music and instrumental music with distinctive Tujia national features. The ancient document "Annals of Xunhan Cuntiy" clearly recorded that as summer approached mountainous farmers had the custom of playing Haocao gong and drum with loud folk songs and drum sounds echoed in the whole valley. The custom continued until now to become a custom inherited and obeyed by generations of Tujia people. We can feel the unique historical culture, social customs and people's spiritual outlook of Tujia people in east Sichuan from the historical development of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan. The art has been displayed in front of us through the performance of Haocao gong and drum. The valuable historical value and cultural significance has get Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan listed in "The first batch of Sichuan intangible cultural heritage protection directory" and "The first batch of national level intangible cultural heritage extension project directory". Thus heritage and protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan has become a major responsibility and mission

2. Formation background of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan

Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan as a folk art form in Xuanhan county of Dazhou city has a history of more than 1900 years since the establishment of Xuanhan County. With complicated landform, dense forests and mountains, broad land in this area, people at that time could always see wild animals and birds in their field trampling crops. So they fired guns or set mountain fire, played drum or sang to dispel animals. The method was also used when celebrating festivals in local area.

East Sichuan was called Baqu in earlier time which was a barbarian land with few people and wild weeds. People lived a simple life without advanced production technology but worked by hand. Weeds overgrew in the field and influenced crop growth. To have good harvests, local people had to eliminate all weeds within short time. So Haocao became a necessary work. At the time of spring and

summer, people created the way of beating drum and singing while working to cool the summer heat and improve working efficiency. So people conducted farm work in such a happy atmosphere.

"Arm-agriculture unified" Tusi system was carried out in Tujia nationality at that time. To raise morale of troops and improve combat efficiency, soldiers had the custom of beating drum and singing, and then fighting. Such a custom also exist in people's life and production. Every spring and summer when watering corn and rice, fertilizing and weeding, people in the field would beat drum and sing to relieve fatigue. For a long time, the form of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan continued and became a unique art form and folk custom in Tujia nationality in east Sichuan.

3. Historical context of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan

3.1 Folktale

There are different opinions on the historical origin of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan but the most widely among people is folktale. As primitive religion was deep-rooted in Baqu people's mind, a lot of people believe there exist ghosts and spirits. Thus there is a folktale about Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan. According to legend, due to the overwhelming weed spirits and weed god, people suffered a lot. Then under the guidance of the very high lord, people could not kill weed spirits by setting fire but they could oust or pull to feed livestock. So people beat drums and gongs, and sang to eliminate wild weeds and plant crops. In addition, there is another widely spreading folktale from the inheritor of Haocao Drum and Gong, Yuan Shi'an who described in this way. After Pangu epoch, Shennong led people to plant wheat and grains but soon found a lot of crops bite by worms. So he came up with a solution to find a man skilled at singing and dancing to keep singing for successive three days and nights in the field. Then it turned out to eliminate all worms. So labor people of Tujia nationality in east Sichuan would sing songs promptly in field work and pray for good harvest in the next year. Above two sayings with no scientific ground and credibility reflect people's simplest and purest concept.

3.2 Saying of the Western Zhou dynasty

Regarding the historic origin of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan, Saying of Western Zhou dynasty must be noted. Researcher Chen Zhengping speculates on the basis of records in "Rites of Zhou, Chun Guan, Yuezhang" "Beat drum to make field work happy", the historic origin of Haocao gong and drum can be traced back to the time of Western Zhou. Apart from this, Zhang Liangjuan agrees with Chen Zhengping through study and investigation, thinking Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality may originate from the time of Ba people before 3000 years ago. People lived on fishing and then lived on agriculture. When attacked by wild animals, Ba people would worship mountain god and dispel wild animals by beating drum and gong. With the change of times, this method developed into mountain songs sang during labor work spreading up to now.

3.3 Saying of Han dynasty

The saying of Han dynasty was proposed on the basis of a set of rice paddy model earthed in a tomb of East Han dynasty in Mianyang city of Sichuan in 1953 by Sun Hua and Zheng Dingli. They believe Haocao dong and drum has appeared early in Han dynasty or even earlier. It can be seen from the earthed ceramic rice paddy model that the rice field is in the left side where four or five people stand in the middle, one dressed in long robe with hands before his chest. He might be the supervisor for supervising farm work. The rest are labor workers dressed in short brown clothes in bare feet. Another two people carried things, one holding weeding hoe and the other tying drum in the waist with hands showing drum-beating gesture. Thus, based on above analysis, Sun Hua and Zheng Dingli speculate that Haocao gong and drum appeared in Han Dynasty.

3.4 Historic origin

For the historic origin of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality, different people have

different opinions. We should know that those legends of ghost and spirit with no scientific ground are not credible. But the above-mentioned saying in the Western Zhou Dynasty and Han Dynasty are well-founded. Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan is an entertaining method for people's field work must be directly related to labor. So the materials and information involving people's field work in east Sichuan are reasonable. There is a saying in the document "Rites of Zhou, Chun Guan", Beat local drum to make field work happy". It shows the essential property of Haocao gong and drum. In Tang and Song dynasty, agricultural industry developed rapidly especially the rising of rice planting has made Haocao gong and drum appear again in front of people. "Records in poetry of the Tang Dynasty" mentioned "farmers are everywhere outside the temple doing farm work under sun and they beat drum to get rid of fatigue." The sentence has vividly described the scene of field work and drum beating and dancing. As time changes, Haocao gong and drum has been transmitted by generations and improved constantly. It integrated with folk art perfectly, absorbed the essence and innovate, and developed to its peak in Ming and Qing Dynasty. As described in "San Cai Hui Tu", "There are drums and gongs when weeding which sound clear and magnificent with rise and fall".

3.5 Gradual declining

As the times keep forward constantly, social production mode and people's life habits would change. The long-spreading Haocao gong and drum started fading away without the original specific historic environment and humanity condition. The folk art form mainly for displaying people's field work and simple life scene is in danger of getting lost due to the change of current social life style and people's working environment. Especially, with the development of modern scientific technology, and modernization of agricultural planning, weeds and insects in fields have been eradicated by pesticide sprayed by machines with no need of manual weeding. In addition to a large amount of rural migration to cities, plenty of rural lands are left unused and labor volume decreases sharply. In this case, the scene of large-scale Haocao drum-beating can hardly be seen again and ignored gradually by people.

4. Heritage and protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan

Due to the unique art form and profound humanity custom of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality, which represents the long-standing historic culture and social custom, it has been listed in the directory of China's intangible cultural heritage. Also, Sichuan Provincial Government attaches great importance to Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality. Dazhou city and Xuanhan County have taken a series of saving measures so as to guarantee these valuable folk art form can be preserved for good.

4.1 Help and support existing Haocao Gong and Drum of artist

As the most representative art essence to represent the regional culture and spiritual custom in Tujia nationality in east Sichuan, it has long history and profound cultural foundation. With the development of the times, information science technology has replaced a lot of hand-made crafts and even a lot of folk crafts are no longer extant. For existing craftsmen, the government should provide financial support and professional guidance so that they have no fears from behind and focus on organizing and creating, performing appropriately and consciously instruct the unique art form to later generations so that it can be inherited for good. So young people loving Haocao Gong and Drum art can be selected for in-depth learning and guidance so as to solve the survival and inheritor issue of Haocao Gong and Drum art.

4.2 Energetically promote the performance of Haocao Gong and Drum and increase its popularity

To get more people to know Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan, local government should create various performance chances and get Haocao gong and drum to show up in

front of people to improve its popularity. For example, in festival celebration, art performance, and tourist theme publicity activities, Haocao gong and drum can be performed at stage for promotion to expand the scope of its audience. As the government pays more attention to the heritage and protection of Haocao gong and drum, Dazhou municipal government has started to promote Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan in various public performance occasions and cultural activities. In 2010, the program "Rural World" organized by CCTV led people to step into Xuanhan and get Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan performed in front of audience before TV. The flexible movements and humorous language of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan were highly praised by audience.

4.3 Strengthen research and study on Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan

We need to publicize and promote Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan, and should know the deep meaning and historic background of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan. The government should organize relevant professional staffs to further study and investigate. Some mature study results about Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan include Wang Rui's "Investigation and protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan" from Sichuan Arts and Science University", and "Studies of the current context and cultural value of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan" by Zhao Ying, He Yuanping and Wang Rui". The key content of research is to take in-depth research on the musical mode structure and signing content, performance of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan. In addition, research experts should take systematic investigation from perspective of cultural background and social customs. Organizing professional personnel to study the heritage and protection of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan is of great significance and value. Based on these research results, we can have a comprehensive understanding of the unique art form, meanwhile it can provide theoretical basis for experts' scientific development and creation.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the author has led readers to get familiar with the historical context and formation background of Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan, and obtained in-depth knowledge of the folk art culture of Tujia nationality in east Sichuan. It is undoubtedly that Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan is not only the inherited culture within Tujia ethnic area in east Sichuan but also an important component of China's excellent traditional culture. With constant progress of the society and time change, we need to effectively and completely inherit and protect those folk art treasures which has long history and profound humanity feelings, actively keep forward, keep up with the times and keep innovation so that Haocao Gong and Drum of Tujia Nationality in east Sichuan can be known and appreciated by more people.

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