

China's Cultural Policies and Countermeasures for the Protection and Development of Ethnic Music Education in Yunnan

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Abstracts

In recent years, China has continuously strengthened its protection of ethnic music, providing strong support in all aspects, especially regarding policies. Policies are the basis and orientation of cultural development, and the development of ethnic culture and art is closely linked to policies. The numerous ethnic culture policies promulgated by China have promoted the vigorous development of folk music in Yunnan and finally formed the current glorious situation of folk music in Yunnan. However, the protection and development of folk music in Yunnan is a long-term, complex and huge project, and China's protection policies have been changing in real life. Therefore, the development of folk music in Yunnan needs to be further observed. This paper summarizes China's policy experience and makes reasonable improvements based on the shortcomings in the actual practice in Yunnan, aiming to promote better development of ethnic music art in Yunnan.

Keywords: China's Cultural Policies; Countermeasures for the Protection and Development; Ethnic Music Education in Yunnan

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China's policies for the protection of ethnic music

In the long history of the feudal society, political exclusion and discrimination against ethnic groups had caused imbalances in economic and cultural development, preventing ethnic music from entering the mainstream society and culture. After 1949, folk music in China gained new development, from naive to mature.



Figure1.1, Yunnan Province on China Map

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the rise of ethnology and folklore belonging to anthropology in the new Chinese culture, the research on traditional ethnic music in China became an academic field. The representative works were *Research on Eastern and Western Music Systems* and *Music of Eastern Nations* by Mr. Wang Guangqi. Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, scholars from the Ethnology Research Group of the Academia Sinica and the National Sun Yat-Sen University carried out a series of ethnological investigations. They concluded that in terms of academic concepts and practical operations, these early research achievements adopted the theories and methodology of Western anthropology and had pioneering significance in research on traditional ethnic music in China (Yao, 2010 : 64).

In the "seventeen years" after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the brand-new political power structure and social relations model eliminated the unequal ethnic relations in the feudal society. In addition, with the implementation of relevant ethnic policies and the gradual formation of the multi-ethnic music culture environment, China's research on ethnic music began to draw attention, and ethnic music theories and investigations began to be carried out (Wu, 2016 : 94).

From the late 1960s to the late 1970s, the research on folk music in China was forced to stop due to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. Since 1978, with the deepening of China's reform and opening up, some achievements have been made in the investigation and research of traditional ethnic music, with many valuable academic works, investigation reports, papers, and translations being produced. For example, in 1979, in 30 years, thanks to the organization and leadership of the Ministry of Culture, the Chinese Musicians Association, and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, four works compiled by the China National Folk Music Editing

Office were completed one after another. They are *Collection of Chinese Folk Songs*, *Collection of Chinese Opera Music*, *Collection of Chinese National Folk Instrumental Music*, and *Collection of Chinese Folk Music*. In addition, between 1980 and 1989, the relevant departments in China edited and published the *Encyclopedia of China: Volume of Music and Dance*; In 1986, *Records of Chinese Ethnic Music* were compiled by the Institute of Literature and Art of the Central University for Nationalities was published. It was China's first record book on ethnic music (Yao & Li 2019 : 65).

The research achievements since the 1980s are mainly in such aspects as talent cultivation, discipline construction, academic publications, and the organization of societies. This is manifested in the fact that the number of researchers has increased. The professional quality of researchers has gradually improved during research on ethnic music. In addition, theories, methods, and publications on the research of ethnic music began to emerge frequently. Theories and methods of research on traditional ethnic music began to mature (Ke, 2014 : 4).



Figure 2, Map of Yunnan Province



Figure 3, Ethnic distribution map of Yunnan

Historical experience has shown that the traditional ethnic music culture is in a dynamic development process. It will maintain a state of change and development in the future. In this regard, the Chinese government and relevant local departments have always maintained a positive attitude towards ethnic regions and promulgated policies to protect ethnic music culture.

On August 20, 1980, the National Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Ministry of Culture jointly issued the *Opinions on Doing Well in the Current Ethnic Culture Work*, clearly calling for the active exploration and development of the traditional art and culture of various ethnic groups and encouraging the arts of various ethnic groups to communicate with and learn from one another actively.

On January 16, 1981, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education issued the *Opinions on Several Issues Concerning Current Art Education*, emphasizing that local art schools were the key to developing ethnic music education. Art schools in ethnic areas should provide support in ensuring teachers, equipment, accommodation, etc., according to the actual local conditions. On December 25 of the same year, the Ministry of Culture, the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Ministry of Education issued the *Opinions on Strengthening the Ethnic Art Education*, which made special provisions for the development of ethnic music education and the cultivation of ethnic music talents.

In 1986, the China Ethnic Music Society was formally established. It is a non-profit academic group formed spontaneously and voluntarily by musicians from various ethnic groups in China. The Society aims to communicate and study the music of various ethnic

groups, takes the inheritance, protection, research, and development of ethnic music culture as its responsibility, and provides a platform for gathering and exchanging music researchers of various ethnic groups.

On September 21, 2006, the State Council Information Office (Central government portal, 2006 : online) held a press conference and introduced the protection and development of ethnic culture in China. And the following seven measures to promote the protection and development of China's minority culture:

(1) Attaching importance to constructing cultural institutions and facilities for ethnic minorities. From the central committee to ethnic autonomous areas, the state has helped establish cultural institutions of ethnic minorities, including cultural centers (stations), libraries, newspapers and periodicals, publishing houses, museums, art performance groups, and radio and television stations, to provide public cultural services to ethnic minority people from different angles.

(2) Vigorously rescue and protect the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. The state has collected and published over one million ancient books about ethnic minorities. Publishing a series of books on all aspects of ethnic minorities. To study and sort out a large number of ethnic literatures. Publishing many historical classics, compiling and publishing books on literature, music, and dance. Rescue a large number of endangered ethnic, cultural, and artistic heritage. Many ethnic minority sports and traditional medicine projects have been excavated and sorted. Many cultural relics and historical sites of ethnic minorities have been maintained with huge investments.

(3) Attach importance to the training of cultural talents of ethnic minorities. Secondary art schools have been set up in provinces and autonomous regions where ethnic minorities live in compact communities, and art colleges and universities have been set up in some ethnic minority areas to train the artistic talents of ethnic minorities. In addition, art colleges and secondary schools throughout the country often hold special classes for ethnic minorities to train talents for ethnic minority areas.

(4) Encourage and support the artistic creation of ethnic minorities. Based on inheriting traditional literature and art, literary and art workers have created many fine works of ethnic minority literature and art with strong ethnic characteristics and flavor of The Times.

(5) Respect and protect the rights of ethnic minorities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. The spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities are widely used in books, newspapers, radio, film, and television.

(6) Fully respect the customs and habits of ethnic minorities. The state respects the customs and habits of ethnic minorities in terms of dress, diet, residence, marriage, etiquette, and funeral. It protects their right to maintain or reform their customs and habits.

(7) Cultural activities of various forms and contents have been organized to vigorously promote the internal and external exchanges of ethnic minority cultures. Ethnic minority areas hold a variety of ethnic and cultural activities yearly, and the state also holds national and ethnic cultural activities regularly or irregularly.

Manifestation in the policies in Yunnan

Before the implementation of protection policies, there was a shortage of professionals to protect ethnic music in Yunnan. Although local government departments had steadily promoted the development of ethnic music culture education, there was still a mismatch between talent cultivation and employment. In addition, due to the constraints of inconvenient transportation and information blockage in the ethnic residential areas in Yunnan, many young and middle-aged people in these areas chose to leave their hometowns and go to the cities to make a living (Mei, 2000 : 6). Therefore, most of those protecting local folk music for a long time were elderly. Secondly, with the rapid development of society and economy, the ethnic music culture in Yunnan was impacted by other music cultures, resulting in difficulties in its development. Thirdly, there was a lack of meticulous methods to protect folk music in Yunnan. Due to the large number of music, some protectors did not carefully analyze the process of protecting ethnic music but used general protection methods as practical guidance, ultimately leading to bad outcomes (Chen & Liu 2019 : 64).



Figure 4, Bamboo Kouhuang (Jew's harp) of Lisu

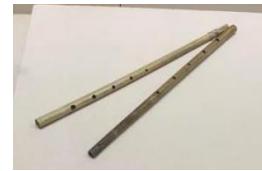


Figure 5, Bawu (pronounced as Lilu) of Hani



Figure 6, Sheep-hand four-string of Pumi

Figure 7, Dragon-head Big three-string of Bai



Figure 8, Drum for Dongba priests of Naxi



Figure 9, Cigarette cases of Yi people



Figure 10, Paimang of Dai people

After protection policies were carried out in Yunnan (General Office of Yunnan Provincial People's Government, 2018 : online), different protection methods emerged for different types of folk music. This article discusses the policies in Yunnan for protecting ethnic music in the following aspects.

First, digging, sorting, and adapting folk music. So far, the Yunnan government has taken priority rescue measures for endangered representative ethnic music projects suitable for protection, excavated, sorted, and preserved relevant materials, and gradually guided the restoration of ethnic music production in Yunnan. However, music culture and art emphasize keeping pace with The Times, more live elements, and social, entertaining people, entertaining god, and other diversified purposes. In this regard, the Yunnan government, based on clarifying the principles of ethnic minority music's highly concentrated, prominent personality and market formation, pays attention to the transplantation and innovation of ethnic music and advances with The Times to enrich ethnic minority performing skills and repertoire. In addition, Yunnan has established an online information-sharing platform to classify ethnic music projects in digitized and informationalized forms, provide information on the development of ethnic music culture, and promptly detect and correct problems in the protection process, which has improved the efficiency of local music information management (Wang, 2014 : 43).

Secondly, protecting ethnic music through base construction. Large-scale venues such as ethnic instrumental music exhibition halls, music cultural and creative industry parks, cultural and art expo halls, and cultural industry parks have been built and established in Yunnan, which has promoted the protection of ethnic music in Yunnan. In addition, Yunnan government departments have constructed art protection bases, built regional venues for the cultural reproduction of folk music, and encouraged the formation of creative performance teams for commercial performances. For example, from December 11 to 16, 2016, the 10th Ethnic Song, Dance, and Music Exhibition was held in Yuxi city, Yunnan Province, and from January 15 to 18, 2018, the first Traditional Opera and Music Performance was held in Kunming City, Yunnan Province.

Thirdly, innovating in music content. The development of the times requires the ethnic groups in Yunnan to transplant and update influential and representative local outstanding music projects according to the characteristics of the local music culture itself, to integrate modern elements into the traditional music cultural works in an orderly manner, to use a variety of forms for overall performances, and to inherit and innovate the content of works. For example, in 1962, Yunnan Province witnessed the performance of ethnic minority dramas, which presented a batch of traditional and refined plays, adaptations, and new plays to the audience for the first time, officially bringing the frontier ethnic minority dramas (operas) into

the public area. In addition, many places in Yunnan carry out the mode of "School-Enterprise Alliance," mainly through the establishment of cooperative relations between schools and enterprises, government departments, industry associations, and social organizations to assist schools in training protectors to serve the development of enterprises jointly

Lastly, the industry operates to protect ethnic music. Many enterprises, according to their development characteristics in the area of minority music protection process, and thus formed the basic project planning, brand building, teaching and training, culture, literature, and joint art performance, derivative product development, brand marketing, and other relatively complete systems of the music industry, music industry chain and the cultural features of industrial cluster. Under the standardization and guidance of the national serial industrial policies, the music industry in Yunnan has been continuously optimized in its industrial structure and service system, which has become an inexhaustible driving force to promote the transformation and upgrading of the national music industry and the innovation of its business model. At the same time, with the improvement of the Yunnan minority music management system, its protection has achieved certain development results (Yang, 2017 : 56).

The influence of the school policies in Yunnan

School education has built an important platform for the protection of ethnic music. As is known to all, China is a multi-ethnic country with a long history. Many ancient books and historical documents contain records of ethnic culture, music, geography, customs, religion, etc. Therefore, the music education curriculum of primary schools in Yunnan can completely organize and utilize the rich reserves and resources of historical materials. On this basis, they can select and integrate according to historical literature and current social needs to give students a good understanding and deep impression of the ethnic music they have learned (Wang, 2021 : 8).

Folk music courses are more vivid, practical, and creative than other courses. In terms of content, China's current music courses teach students cultural knowledge of various ethnic groups and guide them to practice. Each ethnic group has its unique history, folk songs, music, costumes, and so on. When students learn ethnic songs or instrumental music, music teachers will explain the ethnic groups, ethnic songs, and the background of the music pieces. Therefore, students can experience and feel ethnic music and ethnic culture during their studies, which other courses can not give.

In addition, music courses attach importance to students' practice. When students practice ethnic musical instruments, students can have a good personal experience of ethnic musical instruments. While experiencing, they can recreate or adapt the music according to their understanding of the ethnic music they have learned and the cultural background of the ethnic groups, thus enhancing their creativity. While guiding students to experience by themselves, music courses positively affect the cultivation of students' attention, imagination, memory, etc. At the same time, students learn cultural knowledge while having fun and have hands-on experience based on learning, which enables them to develop benignly in terms of interest, character, emotion, and belief. Personal practice in ethnic music courses can also enhance students' national awareness and cultivate their national self-confidence.

The most important thing is social interaction. In music activities, teachers and students keep interacting with each other, and there is also interaction between students. This can improve the fit between students and teachers, and cultivate students' team awareness, cooperative spirit, and creative ability, thus helping students develop healthy social skills. In the meantime, students must frequently go out of school and actively participate in cultural exchange activities with people from all walks of life. At the same time, other groups in the society can recognize and understand ethnic music and culture in Yunnan, which plays a positive role in promoting cultural protection.



Figure 11, Shuguang Primary School in Guandu District, Kunming, Yunnan



Figure 12, Music Room in Shuguang Primary School

Discussion

Many primary schools attach great importance to the cultivation of courses such as Chinese and mathematics because they are related to enrolment rate and meet most parents' requirements. Music courses are often undervalued because they are not related to further education (Fang, 2016 : 6). This phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of the long-term examination-oriented education system in China. Since ethnic music courses have not received the attention of school leaders and the support of the parents, the development of ethnic music education has become very difficult (Li, 2013 : 54).

And it is with a good intention to include the appreciation and learning of classic repertoire in primary school music classes. But the receptivity of the students has been ignored. Practical teaching should pay attention to the teaching content not being old and consider that the teaching content should be close to life (Liu, 2021 : 42). Moreover, folk music is diverse and rich in content, but not all of them are suitable for introduction into the classroom. They need to be selected, and this work is generally related to the professional level of the teachers. Overly old lyrics lack the sense of the times, so it is difficult for them to attract teenagers because they are all interested in new things (Li, 2016 : 77).

In addition, the shortage of music teachers is a fact. At the same time, most primary schools are not equipped with complete music equipment, so large-scale music activities cannot be held for students to let them feel the charm of ethnic music. Currently, China's new curriculum standards do not have clear regulations on the number of music courses in primary schools. Therefore, most primary and secondary schools offer one or two music classes per week, and the class hours are much lower than those of other courses. Because music classes are sometimes occupied, students have even less time to contact ethnic music (Fang, 2016 :6).

So far, many ways to protect Chinese folk music, but not many of them work. The most important way is school education. Special ethnic music courses should be offered to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning traditional ethnic music and help them understand China's ethnic music culture. In the early days after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the development level of China's economy was relatively low, ethnic music education received little attention, and ethnic music was mainly spread unconsciously (Chai, 2015 : 7). With the rapid development of China's economy, more and more schools have offered ethnic music courses, more and more families have begun to arrange interest classes for their children to learn traditional musical instruments, and more and more students are getting to know and correctly understand ethnic music in China. The ethnic music culture in China is being paid more and more attention, and China is even making great efforts to show China's ethnic music culture to the world and show China's soft power in culture. School music education is the primary way to protect contemporary ethnic music culture. When it comes to whether the musical culture of a nation has successors, school education is the primary measure.

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