

Research on the Development of Tibetan Fusion Culture Represented by the Epic "Gesar"

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the epic "Gesar", trying to extract the inherent attributes of cultural traditions from the national historical and cultural traditions. Chinese culture is the backbone, the cultures of various ethnic groups are branches, and together, they form the magnificent Chinese culture. The grand pattern of the cross-ethnic, cross-regional and cross-cultural communication of the epic "Gesar" demonstrates the shared value pursuit and humanistic spirit of Chinese cultural identity. Historical identity and cultural identity are the prerequisites for the construction of Tibetan fusion culture, and intermarriage and trade are the guarantees for the construction of Tibetan fusion culture. The core values expressed in the deep culture of "Gesar" are the same as the core values of socialism, which are the ideological basis for the construction of Tibetan fusion culture.

Keywords: *Gesar, Tibetan fusion culture, Chinese cultural community.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a Tibetan folk culture, "Gesar" was jointly created, developed and prospered by the Tibetan people, which gradually emerged, developed and matured with the practice of the Tibetan people. This paper studies the epic "Gesar", trying to extract the inherent attributes of cultural traditions from the national historical and cultural traditions, extract the "small traditions" in the "big traditions", and extract the branch cultures in the overall culture, among which the Chinese culture is the backbone, the cultures of various ethnic groups are branches, and together, they form the magnificent Chinese culture as well as a Chinese cultural community. Since the 19th century, the epic "Gesar" has attracted the concern and attention of Western academic circles, and has been translated into English, German, Japanese, Russian, Indian, Mongolian and Latin versions. In 1984, with the approval of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, the "National Leading Group for 'Gesar'" was established to collect and disseminate the "Gesar" circulating in Tibet, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia and other places.[1] The research on "Gesar" has gradually shifted from a simple historical study to a study of cultural

inheritance, national contacts, exchanges and ethnic unity.

2. THE EPIC "GESAR" IS A REFLECTION OF THE FUSION DEVELOPMENT OF TIBETAN CULTURE

2.1 *The Epic "Gesar" Reveals the Characteristics of the Culture of the Tubo Tribal Era*

"Gesar" begins the narrative from the founding of the Tubo Dynasty to the separation and disintegration of the dynasty, describing the most turbulent and great historical period of the Tubo Dynasty. Professor Jampe Gyatso pointed out: "Gesar" describes the Ling Kingdom, an ideal kingdom, a place full of happiness and tranquility, which is a model of the ideal world that Tibetans and other ethnic groups yearn for. The Ling Kingdom described in "Gesar" is the center of the world, the inter-ethnic contacts and inter-ethnic exchanges of all ethnic groups take place there, and all ethnic groups there show a common pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty. In 1989, Wu Jun, a famous Tibetan scholar, presented his paper "On the Epic 'King Gesar' as a Reflection of the Fusion

Development of Tibetan Culture" at the First International Academic Symposium of "The Epic 'Ling Gesar'", believing that the epic "Gesar" reflects the history of Tibetan culture, including the process of blending with Han culture. In 1994, in the monograph "'Gesar' and Tibetan Culture" by Professor Jampe Gyatso, a researcher at the Institute of Ethnic Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, he believes that the epic "Gesar" belongs to the works that are mapped from the Tibetan folk culture and refutes the view of the French scholar Rolf Alfred Stein that "Gesar" belongs to the combination of indigenous and foreign cultures. Professor Jampe Gyatso believes that the social, historical and institutional culture shown in "Gesar" is most influenced by Han culture. At the 4th International "Gesar" Symposium in 1996, Huang Wenhuan, an expert on "Gesar" research, believed that the epic "Gesar" revealed the characteristics of the culture of the Tubo tribal era, including diplomatic relations (especially friendly exchanges with the Han people), the marriage system, and the history of the Tubo war.[2]

The dissemination forms of "Gesar" include excavated editions, manuscripts, woodcut editions, etc.; its epic parts include "Tianling Bulong" (《天岭卜笼》), "The Birth of a Hero" (《英雄诞生》), "Battle of Huoling" (《霍岭大战》) and "Battle of Jiangling" (《姜岭大战》) and so on; the parts of its contact, communication and blending with Han culture include "Handi Fawangzong" (《汉地法王宗》), "Handi Chazong" (《汉地茶宗》), "Handi Baozangzong" (《汉地宝藏宗》), "Battle of Jialing" (《嘉岭之战》), "Zhu Gubingqizong" (《祝古兵器宗》), "Suobomazong" (《索波马宗》), "Xiangxiong Zhenzhuzong" (《象雄珍珠宗》), "Songba Pianniuzong" (《松巴骗牛宗》), "Kaqiyuzong" (《卡契玉宗》), "Nierong Hongbaoshizong" (《聂绒红宝石宗》), "Muyajingzong" (《木雅经宗》), "Muyachouzong" (《木雅绸宗》), "Dashicaizong" (《大食财宗》) and so on.[3]

2.2 The Epic "Gesar" and the Fusion Culture

In the research results of "Gesar", ethnologists, anthropologists, and historians have come to the conclusion that as a person born and raised in Tibetan, King Gesar's behaviors, moral standards, and concepts of right and wrong are all imprinted with the personality characteristics of the Tibetan group. Therefore, Gesar is a typical model of Tibetan personality. From the point of view of the commonality of human morality, King Gesar, with

the ideal model of personality, has the characteristics of super-nationality.[4] Therefore, the personality charm of King Gesar is the spiritual model of the national hero in Chinese culture and reflects the unity of Chinese culture.

The book "Gesar" describes nearly a hundred wars, big and small. The process of war is also the process of historical formation and the formation of Chinese culture. Huang Wenhuan's "Reexploration of the Historical Connotation of 'Gesar'" discusses the contribution of the Tubo era to the jointly building of the state of Huaxia and the promoting of the development of world civilization. Therefore, scholars generally reach a consensus that the epic "Gesar" has witnessed the gradual formation of the Chinese cultural community and belongs to the fusion culture.

3. THE EPIC "GESAR" WITNESSES THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TIBETAN FUSION CULTURE

3.1 "Gesar" Witnesses That Chinese Culture Is Rooted in the Fertile Soil of Multi-ethnic Cultures of "Harmony in Diversity"

In the general preface of "Oriental Culture" edited by three professors Ji Xianlin, Zhou Yiliang, and Pang Pu, they stated that cultural exchanges have promoted the development of human culture, and no matter how long the nations have existed in human history, they have all made their own contributions.[5] In the oriental cultural system, Han culture was a collection of cultures, which successively adopted the Qilu culture, the Wuyue culture, the Yanzhao culture, the Jingchu culture, the Bashu culture, etc.,[6] and finally formed today's Chinese culture. Later, the Han culture assimilated the culture of the Western regions, the Liaojin culture, the Western Xia culture, the Tibetan culture, the Manchu and Mongolia culture, and the Yunnan and Guizhou culture. Therefore, the cultures of ethnic minorities such as Tibetan, Dai, Miao, Yao, and Zhuang are all related to the Han culture.[7] These civilizations protect the Chinese civilization and make it the only continuous civilization in the world. The Chinese civilization is formed by the common fusion of the cultures of various ethnic groups.

3.2 The Epic "Gesar" Is an Important Part of the Multi-ethnic Cultural Circle in the Himalayas and a Continuation of the Historical Context of Chinese Civilization

Ancient Xiangxiang and Tubo cultures are the main components of Tibetan culture. In addition, Tibetan culture also integrates Han, Qiang, Mongolian, Manchu and Indian cultures. The epic "Gesar" reflects the fusion of many cultures. In the long history, "Gesar" has been passed down from generation to generation among Tibetan, Mongolian, Tu, Yugur, Dongxiang, Sala, Naxi, Qiang, Menba, Lhoba, Pumi, Bai, Dulong, Lisu and other ethnic groups, forming a cross-regional, cross-ethnic, cross-border and cross-cultural communication mode. Historically, during the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties, after the formation of the hinterland of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau with the Yangtze River, Yellow River and the headwater catchment area of the Lancang River as the core, "Gesar" has spread far and wide and has become an important part of the multi-ethnic cultural circle in the Himalayas, with wide spread and far-reaching influence. Today, "Gesar" has become a continuation of the historical context of Chinese civilization.

4. THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCTION OF TIBETAN FUSION CULTURE WITH THE EPIC "GESAR" AS AN EXAMPLE

4.1 Historical Identity and Cultural Identity Are the Prerequisites for Building a Fusion Culture

4.1.1 Historical Identity

According to research by historians, both the Tibetan people and the Huaxia people originated from the Qiang tribe in Western China. The ancestors of the Huaxia people, Yellow Emperor and Yan Emperor, came from a branch of the Qiang tribe, and the Tibetan character in the Tibetan people is the sound-shift of the character "Qiang".[8] This historical fact is recorded in historical classics such as the "Historical Records" and "Book of the Later Han". The Han and Tibetan ethnic groups, which are descended from the Qiang tribe, share commonalities in cultural concepts, which are reflected in the epic "Gesar". The epic "Gesar"

continues the historical context of Chinese civilization.

"Gesar · The Legend of Jialing" records many stories of the friendship between Han and Tibet. For example, King Gesar traveled from Lingdi to the Central Plains to help the emperor of the Central Plains slay demons and eliminate demons. Through this story, the friendship between Han and Tibet can be seen. "Gesar · The Legend of Jialing" also sings lyrics praising the friendship between Han and Tibet. The milkmaid, Weimuwan, sang when her dream came true:

On the top of Minister Xiang Wan's tent, a piece of Han silk was floating.

The white silk of the Han appeared in Tibet, symbolizing the friendship between the Han and Tibetan nations.[9]

In 1989, Professor Xu Guoqiong published the paper "On the Tibetan-Chinese Friendship in the Epic 'Gesar'", believing that: The epic describes the power of blood between Han and Tibet, from the relationship between nephews and uncles, trade relations, and relations by marriage, all of which demonstrate the friendship between Han and Tibet,[10] and the "Legend of Jialing" (《加岭传奇之部》) circulated in the Deqin area of Yunnan also praises the friendship between Han and Tibet. "Jia" means "Han".[11]

During the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, successive central dynasties exercised administrative jurisdiction over Tibet, and a relationship of dependence was formed between Tibet and the Central Plains. Such administrative affiliation strengthened the contact, communication and blending of Han and Tibetan cultures.[12] In the history of the Han-Tibetan envoys, the records stated: In the 8th year of Zhenguan, Srongtsen Gampo began to send envoys to pay tribute. According to historical statistics, the Tubo Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty exchanged envoys more than 100 times. The envoys of the two promoted cultural communication and were also witnesses to historical identity.

4.1.2 Cultural Identity

"Gesar" is not only an encyclopedia of Tibetan culture, but also an expression of Chinese culture. As a sub-culture of Chinese culture, Tibetan culture is naturally born with the genes of Han culture, forming the commonality of Han and Tibetan cultures, which are reflected in the commonality of

etiquette culture, family culture, marriage culture, folk culture, festival culture and other aspects of Han and Tibetan cultures. Taking Confucian culture as an example, historical records have verified that Princess Wencheng brought a variety of Confucian classics when she entered Tibet, and the patriarchal concepts of the hierarchy of superiors and inferiors and the order of superiors and inferiors also entered Tibet together, regulating and restricting Tibetan families and social patriarchal clan system rule, which was also described in "Gesar". Therefore, the identity of Confucian culture and the identity of patriarchal clan system culture are both manifestations of cultural identity.

4.2 Intermarriage and Trade Are the Guarantees for the Construction of a Fusion Culture

4.2.1 The History of Han-Tibetan Intermarriage Depicted in "Gesar"

According to historical records, the Tubo Dynasty sent envoys to the Tang Dynasty to ask for marriage more than ten times, and Princess Wencheng and Princess Jincheng married Zanpu of Tubo successively. The interethnic intermarriage between Han and Tibet was based on the objective conditions that the two ethnic groups could communicate with each other in language, have no hindrance in daily social interactions, recognize each other's values, and have no prejudice against each other.[13] The history of frequent intermarriage between the two ethnic groups also showed that the two ethnic groups had reached a high level of fusion, shared the same values, and had intimate exchanges, and the cultures of the two ethnic groups were interdependent and there were economic exchanges.

The Ladakh part in "Gesar" has a special chapter to describe the history of intermarriage between the Gesar Dynasty and the Central Plains Dynasty. For example, the emperor of the Central Plains married the Tibetan Princess Yugun Qiaomao as his concubine, and the Ling tribe, Huoer tribe, and Jiang tribe of the Gesar Dynasty in Tibet went to the Central Plains to marry the royal princesses. Among them, the Prince of the Ling tribe, Jiaca, the Prince of the Huoer tribe, Bula, and the Prince of the Jiang tribe, Niechiyunerqing, were the nephews of the Emperor of the Central Plains. Therefore, Han-Tibetan intermarriage is the basis for the formation of the Chinese cultural community.

4.2.2 The History of Han-Tibetan Intermarriage and Trade Described in "Gesar"

The ancient Tea Horse Road in history includes Sichuan-Tibet trade and Yunnan-Tibet trade. In the 3rd year of Yifeng during the Tang Dynasty, the Tubo regime established the Shenchuan Governor Mansion in Yunnan, after which the trade between Yunnan and Tibet flourished. Judging from the number of transactions, the development of Yunnan-Tibet trade at that time began to take shape. Lijiang, as the main transportation route of Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet, was not only a gathering place for multi-ethnic merchants, but also a commodity distribution center. In the Yunnan-Tibet trade, Horse Caravans transported goods from Simao (a part of Pu'er City, Yunnan Province) to Lhasa, and on the way, they must pass through the living areas of the Dai, Hani, Yi, Bai, Naxi and Tibetan nationalities. The Horse Caravans running along the Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet trade and transportation lines for many years communicated with people of all ethnic groups and communicated with each other. They also learned advanced culture from Han, Bai and other ethnic groups, and absorbed religious culture and temple architectural art from Tibetans, and learned from each other's strengths. During the Horse Caravans' trade process, they not only integrated multi-ethnic cultures, but also spread the cultures of various nationalities. From the epic "Gesar", the process of commercial exchanges between the Tibetan people, the Han people and other peoples can be seen.

The lyrics of "Danma" and "Horse Racing" in the epic "Gesar" are:

The upper merchant carries gold box, going to the Han to sell silks and satins, hoping that silks and satins can be transported to the snowy area, the economy will be prosperous and the plateau will be affluent.[14]

The commercial trade depicted in the epic "Gesar" is a testament to the history of multi-ethnic exchanges in Chinese history, and reflects the interactive relationship between various ethnic groups in China and the formation of Chinese culture, which is marked by cultural integration, and finally the cultures of various ethnic groups are interpreted as a Chinese cultural community.

4.3 The Core Values Expressed in the Deep Culture of "Gesar" Are the Same as the Socialist Core Values

The epic "Gesar" is an encyclopedia reflecting the social history of the ancient Tibetan people, recording the real life scenes of the ancient Tibetan people, including the real life of the ancient Tibetan people in the fields of economic life, production and labor, ideology, ideals, morals, religious beliefs, customs and habits and so on. Professor Jampe Gyatso believes that "Gesar", as a representative of the outstanding Tibetan culture, is their spiritual sustenance and psychological comfort. Tibetan people will chant epics whether it is praying for blessings, walking or bowing around mountains, celebrating festivals, or worshipping Buddha. Even in history, Horse Caravans had to recite "Gesar" when they went out to do business, calling "Caiyang". Therefore, "Gesar" is the embodiment of the cultural cohesion of the Tibetan people, a literacy textbook, a historical record, a moral orientation, and a criterion for judging right and wrong.[15] In a long period of time, due to the nurture of various cultural factors and the genius creation of artists, the core values of "Gesar" have been formed, such as feelings of family and country, way of doing good to the world, equality, freedom, justice, and the national spirit of patriotism and the maintenance of national reunification. The core values expressed in the deep culture of "Gesar" are the same as the core values of Chinese socialism, and are the ideological basis for constructing the fusion culture.

To sum up, the Central Plains region, as the political, economic and cultural center of the central dynasties of all dynasties, had advantages in geography, population and economy. The Central Plains continued to export Han culture through wars, envoys, marriages, intermarriage, trade, etc.; the surrounding ethnic groups integrated the Han culture to form the culture of the Western regions, the Liaojin culture, the Western Xia culture, the Tibetan culture, and the Manchu and Mongolia culture, forming a unique "Chinese cultural concentric force". The Chinese civilization has lasted for more than 5,000 years and is a huge system formed through continuous exchanges with other civilizations, which is everlasting in being inclusive.

5. CONCLUSION

The formation process of Tibetan fusion culture has not only the role of history, geography, culture and other factors, but also the baptism and aid of Han culture. As a sub-culture of Chinese culture, Han and Tibetan cultures belong to the same cultural ecological environment, and Tibetan culture is a subsystem of Chinese culture and a unique branch of national culture in Chinese culture. The narrative epic of "Gesar" fully reflects the important position of the core concept of "unity in diversity" in the community of the Chinese nation, and embodies the process of large-scale exchanges and integration between the Tibetan people and various ethnic groups in the mainland in political, economic, cultural, artistic and other aspects. All ethnic groups are brothers and sisters of solidarity and mutual assistance to the big family of the Chinese nation. Efforts should be made to explore the origin and development of Chinese culture from the cultures of various ethnic groups. Cultural identity is the root and soul of ethnic unity.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Jing An.

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