

Research on Khorchin Zasagt Wedding Songs

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Abstract: The nomadic Mongolians have a rich tradition of songs and music, which has retained its distinct characteristics and forms over a long historical period. The traditional culture and art of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China are undoubtedly a core component of nomadic culture. Therefore, in this study, we have focused on the traditional songs of the nomadic descendants of the Khorchin Right Wing Front Banner in the present-day Hinggan League. Specifically, we have examined the inheritance and transmission of these songs, their classification, and the social impact and trends associated with them.

Keywords: Zasagt Banner; Wedding; Wedding Song.

1. Introduction

Zasagt Banner is located on the leeward side of the Soyoljin Mountain, a branch of the Greater Khingan Range [currently bordering the Manchu ethnic township in Horqin Right Wing Front Banner and East Ujimqin Banner of Xilin Gol League]. The people here have traditionally lived a pastoral lifestyle along the flow of the Tuur, Güler, and Zorig rivers. In the upper volume of Zhang Mao's "Records of the Mongolian Banners and Territories," on page 41, it is written: "Soyoljin is a vast mountain range extending over several hundred miles[1]. Its western side adjoins the desert, while the northeastern side is close to the city of Qiqihar." He further describes it: "Soyoljin Mountain is high and extensive, with rugged and challenging terrain. To the northwest, a series of azure mountains stretches continuously, while in the middle, gentle hills are interspersed with sandy deserts. To the southeast, the region includes present-day Baicheng and Taonan of Jilin Province, extending to Tongyu County. It is a vast, picturesque area, with crisscrossing rivers, shimmering lakes, and fertile soil—a truly beautiful land."

Zasagt Banner has a history of developing and preserving the finest cultural heritage of various ethnic groups, including Mongolian, Han, Manchu, Daur, and Evenki.** The outstanding intangible cultural heritage of these groups is essential not only for the region but also for the protection of the cultural heritage of all nationalities. The vast and fertile Ulaanmod steppe, the picturesque Manchu land, the sacred Bayanzurkh Mountain revered by ancestors, the legendary Soyoljin Bogd Mountain, and the ever-flowing Tuur and Güler rivers provide a rich cultural soil that nurtures and fosters the continuous development of our ethnic culture.

For example, within the realm of ritual practices, it is a tradition to sing Khorchin songs during ceremonies such as the Zasagt wedding, Bayanzurkh Mountain worship, Manchu wedding, and Ovoo worship.** When examined in detail, these practices reveal[2].

2. Content of Zasagt Wedding

The Zasagt wedding consists of the following 24 elements: They include the following aspects. Proposing marriage or making a formal inquiry[3]. Presenting a ceremonial khadag

(a traditional silk scarf). Sending gifts. Setting the wedding date and delivering the official letter. Sending ceremonial meat (as per customs). The groom's departure. The bride's wedding ceremony. Collecting the ceremonial arrows. Expressing gratitude for the mother's milk. Dressing the groom. Introducing the new groom to the family. Asking for the names and birth years. The Shaant wedding ceremony. Sending off the bride. Returning the ceremonial arrows. The welcoming party on the steppe and at home. The discussions at the entrance. The main wedding ceremony. The ritual of parting the bride's hair and making her bow to the fire. Introducing the new bride to the household. Presenting the bride. The tightening of stirrups and the Molor cup ceremony before departure. The toasts and strengthening of pillows and bedding. The bride's return visit.

3. Ritual Practices of Zasagt Wedding

On the third day after the main wedding ceremony, the close relatives of the bride bring lamb meat and traditional pastries as a return visit to the groom's family to see the bride. Such customs of the Zasagt wedding are still fully preserved and practiced in areas densely populated by Mongolians[4], such as Tokhom Sum and Manjutunashan (Tsen Lin & Oyungerel, 2021, pp. 160-175).

During specific wedding rituals such as proposing marriage, presenting a ceremonial khadag, sending gifts, setting the wedding date and delivering the official letter, sending ceremonial meat, the groom's departure, the bride's wedding ceremony, the Shaant wedding ceremony, sending off the bride, the main wedding ceremony, presenting the bride, the Molor cup ceremony, and the bride's return visit, it is customary to sing Khorchin songs. For instance, during the groom's departure, the song "Khüslent Kheer" is sung; during the main wedding ceremony, "Tenger Met," "Tengeriin Salkhi," "Baruun Goliin Us Lai," "Üglee Shaazgai," and "Jiguur Zandan Mod" are performed; for presenting the bride, songs such as "Alag Shaazgai" and "Chunmei" are sung; and during the tightening of the stirrups, "Döröni Ayagyn Duu" is sung. For the bride's return visit, traditional songs like "Nuun Zayaa," "Dörvön Dalai," "Bayanuun Tsagaan Altan Delkhii," and "Khun Galuu" are performed, following established customs[5].



Figure 1. Ritual Practices of the Zasagt Wedding



Figure 2. “Хүслэнт хээр” дууны эгшиг тэмдэглээ. (Үзмээгийн буулгаснаар)



Figure 3. Baruun Tai Khanga (Festive Song) (Wang Wansheng, 2008, p. 591)



Figure 4. Диаграмм 1. Wedding Songs 14%

4. Conclusion

The Zasagt wedding consists of a total of 24 distinct stages, which have been systematically outlined in the first chapter of this research. The primary purpose of the wedding songs is not only to convey good wishes and blessings for the newlyweds but also, more importantly, to embody values of wisdom, respect, and moral instruction, making them a crucial part of the ceremony.

One particularly fascinating song within the wedding and festive repertoire is “Ulgiin Öndör.” This piece artistically

portrays the beauty of one’s native land, the bonds of love, and the cherished connections between families.

Among the songs of the Zasagt wedding, one particularly captivating and noteworthy piece is “Khüslent Kheer.” This song is performed for the guests who accompany the bride, traditionally referred to as “noyon urag” in our customs. “Khüslent Kheer” poignantly expresses the emotional difficulty of leaving one’s beloved child in a foreign place, capturing this sentiment through artistic and evocative lyrics.

References

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