

SINO-MONGOLIAN TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL RELATIONS REGARDING MUSIC  
AND SONGS

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Historically, despite some twists and turns in their relations over the past years, neighborliness and friendship have always remained the mainstream of Sino-Mongolian relations; therefore, their cultural relations have involved various forms and broad aspects of culture.

When the historic review of Mongolian-Chinese relations is undertaken, it appears that research has mainly been focused on political and economic relations, particularly, on trade relations between the two countries, leaving out cultural relations. That is why the present paper aims to touch upon, however briefly, the traditional relevance in music and songs of the two countries, which are one of the components of cultural relations of our countries during the period from the establishment of the first Mongolian Empire to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the end of the Chin Empire.

The topic should be studied extensively and probably, can become a basis for further research work in this field.

The folk songs and music are invaluable cultural heritage passed to us by our Mongolian and Chinese ancestors: it can be compared to treasure or a pearl that is impossible to be ever found. The contents of folk songs are full of melodious tunes that reflect the social life of a particular time: struggle, dreams, real events that left everlasting effects in history, homesickness for motherland, parents and family, tuneful happy descriptions of their livelihood as well as metaphoric expressions of love.

In fact, the masterpieces of an unknown writer, poet or musician are turned into a folk song and it passes from generation to generation over time. From the historical point of view, folk songs serve as considerable and rare materials for the cultural, political and religious studies of a particular country. There have been times when it was predominantly considered that nomadic culture of Mongolians has been strongly affected by the sedentary culture of Chinese. From my point of view, the facts which demonstrate that the cultures of the two countries have been mutually affecting each other are not deniable as cultural relations of any nations have always had two sides.

This time we studied the ways how the ancient Mongolian musical culture was introduced in China as well as some Chinese and Tibetan words that have been used in Mongolian folk songs of the later period. A research was carried out on works of J. Dorjdagva, a state honoured famous singer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, art researchers J. Badraa and U. Zagdsuren as well as the lyrics of 522 Mongolian folk songs compiled by U. Naranbat and D. Rinchen and published in two volumes of 1858 pages in 1979 for the first time by the People's Printing House of Inner Mongolia.

a. Historical clue of the links between Mongolian and Chinese songs and music

Links between Mongolian and Chinese songs and music are examined starting from the ancient

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Huns (Xiongnu) era. It is said that Huns, who were Mongolian first state rulers, used to sing long (drawling) songs. A resource mentions that in the 121 BC, when Xoingnus' lost their territory - Qilian-shan mountains and Yanchji mountains range - to the western Han dynasty (202BC-220AD), they grieved and sang a long drawling song. The song consisted of sad lyrics, such as "after we lost Qilian mountains, our six kinds of livestock stopped growing, after we lost Yanchji mountains, our ladies were unable to use their rouge". The Huns used to entertain themselves playing the pipe, flute, horse fiddle, a tongue musical organ and singing songs during the evening. A Chinese courier, who was seized by the Huns around 80 BC, wrote down: "When I lived among the Huns, it was unable to sleep during the night because of their pipe music sounds together with their horses neighing and cows mooing". (History of Mongolian State, 2003, first volume, p.240)

When links between Mongolian and Chinese songs and music are examined starting from the ancient Huns era, there are some facts stating that Chinese noblemen liked the Huns songs and music. In the first century BC, the Huns emperor Modu Shanyu sent a captured Chinese military leader Li Ling to the former Chinese envoy Sun Ug who was exiled to the territory near the lake Baikal and organized a feast for him with music and songs. There is evidence that the Lindy king of the Eastern Han state /168-190/ liked the Huns' clothes, their traditional dwelling-ger, tambourine, flute and dances. /Fan Ye. The history of the Eastern Han State. Shanhai, 1894. Volume 23, p. 108. G. Sukhbaatar. 'Ancient ancestors of Mongols' Pp.131-132/.

The above mentioned facts may clearly demonstrate that the music sounds of the Huns attracted Chinese people's interest. In addition, some sources indicate that a Chinese writer even wrote lyrics for the music of the Huns. In 96 AD, southern Xiongnu captured poetess Cai Wenji when they invaded China. 'Eighteen verses of tunes of Nomad's flute', the lyrics she wrote and tuned into the musical melody of the Huns made her very popular among public. (I.S. Lisevich. 'Ancient Chinese poetry and folk songs' Moscow 1969, Pp. 115-118)

Such as this, the Huns folksongs and music have influenced China and many other countries. The folksongs and music were also highly regarded by the states such as Xian bei, Muyun and Toba, which existed on the territory of Mongolia after Hunnu (Xiongnu). The lyrics of the two songs sung by them reached the present time in ancient Chinese translation. The lyric of a song sung by nomad herdsmen translated from Chinese into Mongolian is as follows:

'On the foot of Yin Mountain,  
In the basin of Qi lian river  
There are yurts of the Nomads  
Covering the infinite prairie  
The sky looks blue as spring grass  
Boundless steppe outspread horizon less  
Grass twirls in the blowing wind  
Cattle and sheep are grazing'

The other song is connected with the names of the brothers Muyun Gun khan and Tugukhuni prince. The song describes how the elderly brother Tugukhuni prince left his younger brother, took his clans to Huhnuur and lived there, because they had a disagreement over their horse fighting. Although Muyun Gun sought apologies and asked his brother to return, his brother refused to come back; consequently, feeling sad Muyun Gun composed a song called "Brothers". The lyric translated from Chinese into Mongolian is as follows:

Brother left me, but didn't return  
It is easy to separate a soul from life  
But difficult to join them again  
Horses grapple, but men don't

People can be antagonistic to each other  
Horses, too can be hostile to one another  
You left me for Baigal Mountain (belongs to the Kun lun mountain ranges)  
You separated from me for long distance  
Lun Mountain is high (the outflow of Bei River between Shaanxi and Gansu province)  
Yinshan Mountain is cold  
Here I miss my brother  
With a broken heart.

These facts demonstrate that ancient Mongolian songs and music did have notable impacts on Chinese culture. However, I will not go so far to exaggerate that only Mongolian music played a dominant role in the Sino- Mongolian cultural relations.

The noblemen of the Uigur Kingdom, who dominated in Mongolian steppes in the VIII-IX centuries, had the musical instruments for palace ceremonies brought from China /N. Ya. Bichurin. 'Collection of information about people that resided in Middle Asia in ancient times' Volume 1, p. 223/.

During the Khitan Empire resided in the territory of modern Mongolia in the IX-XII centuries, musical education developed greatly; there appeared Masters of the tambourine and the pipes along with groups of dancers and singers in the King's palace and some Chinese musical works were played by them. / The history of MPR. Ulaanbaatar, 1966. Volume 1, p. 162/. According to some sources, the King's palace had an orchestra with 80 different kinds of musical instruments. The Khitans adopted special regulations for songs and music to be played during the events such as army mobilization, hunting as well as different palace ceremonies.

During the Great Mongolian Empire, songs and music were regarded highly in the first place during the ceremonies, tunes of songs and music of clans were developed into the new stages and the rules for playing music were improved: A source states that there was an orchestra in Kings' Palace, which involved 350 musicians in it.

According to a journalist S.Badarch and doctor S.Dulam "When Chingis khan returned in the palace after he completed the entire morning ceremony and greeted Oulen mother on the first day of white month of 1207, he was welcomed with respect by his hundred noblemen, who bowed to him three times in his palace where there was played ceremonial music and burnt ten incenses emitting fragrance".

Then Chingis Khan said: "These gestures, ceremonies and music altogether belong to the culture of Jin Dynasty. It may be applied everywhere, but we have to consider some negative effects of it, because it seems to raise arrogance and haughtiness which is considered a kind of sins. These rules and rhythm of the ceremonial music tend to be threatening and shocking; therefore, it is not appropriate on our land." All ministers and noblemen agreed with him and declared: "The Decree shall be a message for a thousand generations."

This highlights how Chingis Khan greatly valued songs and music. Besides, as he stated, music should not copy the melodies of other nations; it should reflect the features of Mongolian culture and tradition. The significance of his teaching is still valid these days. During the Great Empire of Mongols, Chingis Khan's Decree on Music had been effective; as a result, the distinctions between long drawling and popular songs were clearly defined and the songs were richened with various genres during this period.

As G.Rinchinsambuu, an art researcher defined "....."Ancient (Charm) Excellence" (Ertnii saihan), Khalha Mongolian drawling song served as the national anthem of the Great Mongolian Empire." The translation of a verse is as follows:

"With ancient excellent blessings

On this Mongolian land  
Lord Chingis Khan arrived  
Predestined to worship heaven (eternal blue sky)  
With equal five kinds of wisdom..." The song symbolized Chingis Khan as the great state icon.

In the humid climate environment of southern land of Yuan Dynasty, which was part of Great Mongolian Empire occupied with sword of great Mongolians, the strings and leather part of a horse fiddle would become loose and lost its tone and rhythms. Then Mongolian kings and noblemen had to choose musical instruments suitable in the climate of the country in order to play the state ceremonial music. A source states that in the 1260s Khublai Khan established "Ministry of Great Music" and founded the Great Orchestra with 550 musicians. (U.Zagdsuren, A short survey of Mongolian folk songs, UB, 1975. p.4)

Many noblemen, state persons, princes, bureaucrats and intellectuals from lower social classes composed their songs in Chinese language because majority of citizens of Yuan Dynasty were Chinese. According to a survey conducted by Inner Mongolian researchers, there were around 230 Mongolians who would write their works in Chinese and of them, hundreds works were found. (Mongolica an international annual of mongol studies; vol (42) 2008.59). However, there are few songs left which were studied.

Having regard to the time periods, Chinese words adopted in Mongolian folk songs are related to the periods from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the Ming and Chin dynasties, i.e. up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The following section will review the Chinese words preserved in some Mongolian folksongs, which are considered an anthology of folklore.

## 6. Folk songs consisted of Chinese words

Mongolians were attracted and influenced by cultural achievements of the countries they invaded; for instance, they were interested in some Chinese vocabulary and adopted them in their lyrics, thus, expanding their repertory of lyrics. I can mention here the lyrics of "Full moon on the 15<sup>th</sup>", the most popular folksong among Mongolians.

- "The full moon on the 15<sup>th</sup>  
Looks like deng-lu on the sky  
15 year- old shao nu is  
Deng lu for her parents". "Deng lu" is used in its original form in these lyrics, but "shao nu" was transliterated into Mongolian with a bit of diverted pronunciation.

You can encounter a number of girl nicknames with a Chinese word 'Huar', such as "Yalin huar", "Ulen Huar" and "Heyen huar", which Mongolians preferred to choose for their beautiful growing daughters instead of the Mongolian version 'tsetseg' (flower). For example, the lyrics of "Ulen Huar", the Barga folksong states:

Climbed on the west hill  
The younger Ulen huar  
The Younger Ulen huar looks

The most beautiful girl among others. Once a foreign word, adopted and preserved in the second language, even becomes part of a person's name, it indicates that the word must have been used over a long period of time by the nation.

Let's examine the lyrics of "Qing Hai", another folksong:

The salt of Qing Hai Lake is

Like Sha tang and fine sugar  
Beautifully born Qin Sai hua looks

Like the moon and the sun. In this way, some Chinese words were adapted and adjusted to a new land and were gradually transformed into Mongolian words. For example: He huar (compound word)

“Fine sandalwood table” is one of the songs with mixed Mongolian and Chinese words the lyrics of which express a deep meaning with rhymed melodious and metaphoric verses; yet, it includes few words which makes the song easy to memorize. It describes the Mongolian life style very skillfully:

There are ocean white yurts  
There is Xian cai preserved in the salt  
Double cored Bai cais are  
Growing one after one

A folksong about wine states:  
Frog, frog has a mouth,  
Four legs and two eyes  
It might jump into a zun zi  
Who will drink wine in zun zi, then?

An Inner Mongolian humorous song describes a physician monk's (maam) visit to a beautiful lady:

Dear beloved Ban lin  
I (maam) have set off to visit you  
I have carried thirty two  
Shao bing and mahua  
Passing through the forest  
I've lost sixteen of it.

There are over 50 folksongs that contain Chinese words indicating mountains, rivers, plants, urban establishments, commodities, foodstuff, people's names, work positions, official ranks as well as weapons. (the names of some folksongs are attached)

A number of Mongolian folksongs consisted of Chinese words are not included in the collection of the five hundred Inner Mongolian songs.

Of them, the following two songs are examined:

The fly on the chuang hu (window)  
Appears to be loathing  
As it is frightened and flies away

The Chinese word “chuang hu” in the lyrics describes a window in a house through which sunlight enters. Besides, the word has some figurative meaning in Mongolian which means the period when classes get cancelled in schools and universities. Thus, the meaning of some Chinese words used in the lyrics has been changed creating figurative meaning in the Mongolian language.

The next song is called ‘Steel iron’:

Gang (steel) is not that hard  
It becomes soft in a fire  
Sick at heart is not that painful  
It listens to comforting words

The Chinese word “gang” mentioned in the song means very hard iron in Mongolian. “stali”

in Russian and "steel" in English. This is evidence of how the imported words from Chinese have become a common use in Mongolian language.

Mongolian folksongs contain far more Chinese words than Russian words even though Mongolia has had closer relations with Russia for the last hundred years (during the XX century) in economic, cultural and political spheres. However, direct contact and interaction with sedentary China go back to ancient times and this explains why Mongolian folksongs include so many Chinese words.

Once some Mongolian intellectuals suggested to russianize Chinese words, which were commonly used in Mongolian language. For example, they suggested replacing the Chinese word 'Deng lu' by Russian word 'Pinar'. Then B. Rinchin, the outstanding scholar of Mongolian language and literature refuted that suggestion and asked: 'How does it sound if we sing like:

The full moon on the 15<sup>th</sup>  
Looks like (deng lu) 'pinar' in the sky?

The dominance of Chinese words in Mongolian folksongs compared to Russian words can undeniably be connected with their abundant historical relations through many centuries, even though the two countries waged many wars.

Culture of every country is inevitably connected with the history and development of that nation and folklore and music is inseparable part of that culture. Folksongs represent culture, common sense, mentality as well as ethics of the society and reflect values and morals of that nation. They represent different attitudes to a phenomenon such as respect, honor, sarcasm and humiliation etc.

### CONCLUSION

The historical tradition of cultural relations between Mongolian and Chinese people is viewed on the ground of below mentioned reasons:

-Since the ancient times the geographical position of Mongolia and China implied a common border, so trade, economic, cultural relations developed a long time ago;

-In over two hundred years of oppression by the Chin empire the Mongolian and Chinese people developed friendly ties and shared their joys and sorrows;

-A fact that groups of Chinese people resided in a sparsely-populated Mongolia, marrying Mongolian, living for their entire lives in the country, having children created conditions for introduction of Chinese words into Mongolian folk songs;

-Mongols went with caravans to China to engage in trade;

-The frame of mutual relations has expanded even further at present;

-Existence of Chinese words in Mongolian folk songs is not related to poor vocabulary or lack of words for common use, but rather indicates that Mongolian were intellectually capable of enriching their vocabulary with foreign words. I hope that the issue of Mongolian Chinese relations in the field of culture and music, raised in this paper, will contribute, even if in a small measure, to further harmonization of cultural relations of our countries. If researchers pay attention to further careful study of the links between Mongolian and Chinese folk songs from theoretical and historical point of view, enriching it with new facts and evidence, developing and determining its future, the tradition of Mongolian-Chinese cultural relations will become even more comprehensible.

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## ТОВЧ АГУУЛГА

Түүхэн урт үеийн турш хөрш зэргэлдээ оршдогийн хувьд аль нэгэн үед хэн нэгийгээ хялайн үздэг удаа гардаг байсан ч өөр нэгэн үед бие биедээ тусалж, хамтран ажиллах зэргээр хүн төрөлхтөнд байдаг жам жишгээр хөгжиж ирсэн Монгол, Хятадын соёлын харилцааны түүх нь олон талтай, өргөн хүрээний асуудлыг хамаатгадаг.

Улс гүрнүүдийн хооронд харилцан ойлголцох, хэлэлцэн тохиролцох зарчмаар дайн, энхийн асуудал нааштай шийдвэрлэгдэж, худалдаа, эдийн засаг, соёлын харилцаа даяаршил өргөжин тэлж байгаа эрэн үед бид аж төрж байна.

Соёл урлаг бол улс орнуудын нөхөрлөл, итгэлцлийг бэхжүүлэх чухал хүчин зүйлийн нэг юм.

Монгол, Хятадын ард түмэн эрт дээр үеэс урлаг соёлоор харилцан уялдаатай явж ирсэн түүхэн уламжлалыг дор дурдсан үндэслэлтэй холбон үзэж байна. Үүнд:

- Монгол, Хятад орон газар зүйн байрлалаараа олон зууны тэртээгээс хил залгаа оршин сууж, өнө эртнээс худалдаа эдийн засаг, соёлын харилцаатай болсон:
- Чин гүрний дарлалд Монгол, Хятад иргэд хоёр зуу гаруй жил ноёрхуулах хугацаанд өөр хоорондоо харилцан нөхөрлөж, жаргал, зовлонгоо хуваалцаж байсан:
- Цөөн хүн амтай монгол оронд хятад иргэд хэсэг бүлгээр оршин сууж, монголчуудтай гэр бүл болж, насан турш амьдарч үр удмаа үлдээсэн зэрэг нөхцлүүд нь хятад үг Монгол ардын дуунд орох боломжийг бүрдүүлсэн:
- Монголчууд, хятад газар аян жин тээж, худалдаа арилжаа хийж ирсэн;
- Одоо талуудын хоорондын харилцааны хүрээ өргөжин тэлсэн;
- Монгол ардын дуунд хятад үг олон байгаа нь монгол хэлний үгийн сан ядмаг, хэрэглээний үг дутагдсандаа бус, харин ч монголчууд оюунлаг, үгсийн сангаа ямар ч цаг үед оньч мэргэнээр баяжуулах чадамжтай болохыг харуулсанд оршино.

Монгол, Хятадын дуу хөгжмийн уламжлалт харилцааг энэ удаа хөндсөн нь тус хоёр орны соёл урлагийн харилцааны түүхийг цаашид төгөлдөржүүлэхэд бага боловч тус дэм болно хэмээн үзэж байна. Монгол, Хятадын ардын дууны харилцан шүтэлцээг цаашид онол, түүхийн үүднээс ултай шинжилж, шинэ шинэ баримт хэрэглэгдэхүүнээр баяжуулах, сэргээх, хөгжүүлэх, ирээдүйг нь зөв тодорхойлоход эрдэмтэд анхаарлаа хандуулвал Монгол, Хятадын урлагийн харилцааны уламжлал улам тод болно.