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A Study of The Cenre Glassifiction of Khorchin Folk Songs

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Abstract

This article explores the genre classification/typology of Khorchin folk songs, which represent a distinctive branch of Mongolian folk music and are widely performed in regions such as Hohhot, Hinggan, and Tongliao in Inner Mongolia. The study examines the thematic content, linguistic structure, musical characteristics, and vocal style of Khorchin songs. Based on these features, the songs are classified into six main types: lyrical songs, work songs, ceremonial songs, humorous songs, epic/historical ballads, and children's songs. Each category reflects the lifestyle, worldview, traditions, history, and culture of the Khorchin people. The study reveals that Khorchin folk songs are typically short in form, melodically simple, linguistically accessible, and emotionally expressive. This classification provides a foundation for further research in the fields of ethnomusicology, linguistics, and cultural studies, contributing to a deeper understanding of Mongolian oral heritage.

Keywords

Khorchin folk song; genre classification; typology; linguistic style; musical form

1. Introduction

Khorchin folk songs are a unique branch of Mongolian folk songs. They are widespread in regions such as Hohhot, Tongliao, and Hinggan of Inner Mongolia. It is an important form of oral tradition, expressing the culture, mindset, and historical memories of the people. Systematically studying the typology, content, and characteristics of Khorchin songs is vital not only for preserving cultural heritage but also for conducting research in linguistics, music, and social science. [1]

2. Research Methodology

This study was conducted by employing a multi-faceted methodological approach. The research included a thorough document analysis, reviewing historical books, academic publications, and prior studies related to Khorchin songs. [2] Subsequently, a qualitative content analysis was performed to examine the thematic essence and lyrical narratives of the song corpus. From a musicological perspective,

the study examined the formal structures of the melodies and rhythms, with particular attention to the distinguishing characteristics of the long and short song forms. Finally, a sample music analysis was undertaken, wherein various representative songs were selected, analyzed in detail, and categorized by their specific genres to substantiate the findings. [3]

3. Research Results

Khorchin folk songs are classified into the following genres based on content, finish, musical style, and intent.

The classifications by researchers Ulaalj (Ulaalj, 2006)[12], B. Sainbayar (B. Sainbayar, 2009),[9] B. Tuya (B. Tuya, 2022),[11] Togtokh (Togtokh, 2009),[10] and Ulziisan (Ulziisan, 2015)[7] were based on the characteristics of the content and musical form of the songs. The classifications are:

3.1. Lyrical Songs

The most prevalent genre of Khorchin folk songs is the lyrical song. This type of song features melodious tones and simple language, [4] and emphasizes the expression of a single idea or feeling. Themes of love, memory, regret, parents, and homeland are prominent. For example, songs such as "Eejiidee ochij yavaa zamdaa [On the Way to My Mother]" and "Saikhan Khorchin nutag [Beautiful Khorchin Land]" exemplify this genre. These songs typically consist of two or three phrases and are relatively brief in form, which underscores the clarity and precision of the song's expression. [5]

3.2. Work Songs

Work songs are closely aligned with the rhythms of work and express the moods and mindsets associated with performing labor. [6] This genre is composed to foster mutual encouragement, alleviate boredom, and provide motivation. It can be categorized into livestock songs (for example, songs for tying foals, camel calves, and milking cows) and agricultural songs (songs performed during planting, harvesting, and watering crops). Expressions of praise and blessing are common, and vocabulary related to horses, livestock, and the natural environment predominates. For instance, songs such as "Botgo zelluuldeg duu [Song for Tying a Camel Calf]" and "Segserch suuna daa" are rhythmic, repetitive, and evoke the atmosphere of labor. [8]

3.3. Ceremonial Songs

Ceremonial songs are performed during rites and rituals such as migration, weddings, childbirth, and death. This type of song constitutes a meaningful expressive form that encompasses traditional mindsets, symbols, and customs. "Khurimiin Duu [Wedding Song]," and "Tavan erdene magtakh duu [Song of Praise

for the Five Treasures]" belong to this category, and these works convey the significance of the ceremony through symbolic representation, blessings, and praises.

3.4. Humorous Songs

Humorous songs portray, satirize, and joke about amusing or unusual phenomena in everyday life. This genre is characterized by a light rhythmic pattern, a simple melodic structure, soft sounds, and a form that approximates everyday oral speech. Songs such as "Gariin alga shig gergii mini [My Wife, Like the Palm of My Hand]" and "Ereen malgait emee [Grandma with the Checkered Hat]" incorporate elements of satire, imitation, and humor. In certain cases, humorous songs serve as an artistic vehicle for critiquing of social conditions. [13]

3.5. Epics/Historical Ballads

Songs with mythological and historical themes, often referred to as Epics or historical ballads, portray the history, heroic figures, and legendary narratives of the Khorchin region. This type of song has multiple parts, characterized by extended phrases and a flexible form that incorporates spoken and musical elements. "Khorchin noyonii tukhai duu [The Song of the Khorchin Lord]" and "Sharav dardiin domog[The Legend of Chief Sharav]" preserve historical figures and events of the region through music. These songs play a central role in sustaining the historical memory of the people.

3.6. Children's Songs

Children's songs are composed with the purpose of putting children to sleep, coddling, or amusing them. The language and composition are very simple, repetitive, and rhythmic. "Alag botgo untuulakh duu [A Song for Putting a Spotted Camel Calf to Bed]" exemplifies this type, featuring rich sounds, imagery, and melodies that capture children's attention.

Khorchin folk songs can often be referred to as "Khorchin melody" due to their distinctive singing style. They exhibit the following characteristics:

- Closer to regular speech, with short intonation
- Relatively low pitch variation
- Brief in length, with simple sentence structures
- Rhythmically stable and even
- Language strongly emphasizes nature, people, animals, and the land.

In terms of musical form, Khorchin folk songs are classified into long and short forms. Long-songs include:

- Besreg or Short long songs
- Suman or Medium long songs
- Aizam or Grand long songs. However, lyrical songs, humorous songs, and

epic/historical ballads fall into the category of "short-length long songs" with the short length of the melody determining the form of the song.

4. Conclusion

Khorchin folk songs are diverse in genres and forms and constitute a valuable cultural heritage that reflects the life, culture, mentality, and history of the region.

Khorchin folk songs are expressed in a variety of forms, ranging from lyrical short songs to work songs, ceremonial songs, humorous songs, epics or historical ballads, and children's songs. These genres are closely intertwined with the lives, customs, mindsets, and historical memories of the people, and constitute a significant focus of research in musicology and linguistics.

The study revealed that these songs are not only valuable works of art but also play a crucial role in the study, preservation, and dissemination of oral folk traditions. Through a systematic research of the genre classification of Khorchin songs, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of both the shared and distinctive features of Mongolian folk culture.

A systematic study of the genres of Khorchin songs represents an important contribution not only to understanding the culture of a specific ethnic group but also to gaining structured insight into the oral folk traditions of the Mongolian people as a whole.

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