

OPINION

By **Prof Vessela Ivanova Geleva, PhD** – professor in Choral Conducting at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, the Faculty of Music Pedagogy of Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof Asen Diamandiev” Plovdiv.

for **Dai Liping** (PRC) – candidate for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences; professional field 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in...; doctoral program: Methodology of Music Teaching, at the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting, AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”.

Dai Liping /PRC/ was born in 1976. She receives Master's degree in Music at Harbin Normal University. She is currently a lecturer at the College of Music and Dance of Daqing Normal University in Heilongjiang Province, China, a member of the Music Education Committee, the Association of and the Daqing Musicians Association. She teaches the following disciplines: musical form and analysis, piano, fundamentals of music theory, introduction to the art, singing and solfege training, history of Western music, etc. She is often gives different lectures and has led five provincial and municipal research projects, twice won first prize in College Teaching Competitions, twice won Outstanding College Teaching Award, and has received excellent marks for her academic work. She has published two books, one textbook and quite a few scientific works. Dai Liping has been awarded the title of Distinguished Teacher many times.

The dissertation entitled *Analysis of the Music Education in the Chinese Schools from the Point of View of the Ethnic Minorities* is total 173 pages and includes: introduction, five chapters, conclusion, contributions and bibliography. The bibliography includes 121 titles, of which 22 are Bulgarian and 99 are Chinese. The thesis and the abstract meet the legal requirements for structure, volume and content. The research is relevant and deals with unexplored area of pedagogical school practice, namely the musical education of the ethnic minorities.

In the introduction, the doctoral candidate presents the reasons for choosing this topic, namely: personal pedagogical experience and the proven need for scientific research on the topic, for active and innovative thinking in this area, for a careful search of effective solutions and teaching strategies that will bring to a new level the quality of music education in China. The object of the study is indicated by broad parameters and covers the system of music education in primary and secondary schools, universities and conservatories. The objective of the dissertation is to analyze and summarize the state of music education in China, to identify problematic areas and to find solutions to overcome them. With this in mind, the author reconsiders the traditions and the introduction of a stable and updated theoretical basis that will create new standards for music curricula, improve the systems and methods of music education, explore new concepts, new rules and new goals in modern music

education. To achieve this objective the author uses literary method, survey method, statistical and analytical method, interview, etc.

The **first chapter** examines the traditional methods of the Chinese music education and its reformation. The candidate presents the importance of music as an art and a means of influence since ancient times in China. The social, religious, aesthetic, educational and ethical functions of music are indicated, as well as its role in the political evolution of the state. The author emphasizes the unique Confucian concept of *ritual spirit and music*, which views art as a vehicle and instrument of ritual spirit teaching. The chapter presents in detail the main historical stages of education development in China with the brightest representatives and reformers in the field of music pedagogy: Confucius, Kang Youwei, Xiao Youmei, etc. Dai Liping highlights the role of the political conflicts in China's history as a catalyst for educational changes and concepts, as well as the emerging pro-European trends and multicultural models of recent decades. According to her, the balance of aesthetics, religion, politics, ethics, and educational content varies from era to era and is subject to the dynamism of the respective historical periods in China.

The subject of the **second chapter** is the current state and problems of the Chinese music education system in the higher schools. The exposition is extremely interesting and, in addition to being overview, it also has an analytical-critical character. Among the identified problems in the music conservatories are the ineffective teaching management mechanism, inadequate curricula, the lack of a realistic and innovative teaching approach, the non-updated teaching content, underestimation of the individual approach to the student, etc. Dai Liping points to the urgent need for qualified and prepared teachers to meet the requirements and modern trends in education. According to her, the role of the ethnic minority music in the colleges is underestimated and strategies should be found to integrate it by building a new educational vision and curriculum system. This will lead to the preservation of the Chinese cultural identity, the affirmation of cultural self-awareness and the rethinking of spirituality in tradition and modernity.

The **third chapter** presents the system of primary and secondary music education in China. The doctoral candidate focuses on the modern concept of music education adopted in 2001, which emphasizes cultivating students' interests and hobbies related to the art of music. Special attention is paid to the innovative significance of the introduction of the Chinese opera in the schools in 2017, the regulation of attendance of performances, the creation of school productions, the training of teachers in the genre, etc. According to Dai Liping, this successful educational strategy leads to an increase in the students' sense of national identity and cultural self-esteem, it helps build correct life views and values, and forms the harmonious development of personality. Particularly valuable in this chapter is the author's critical attitude, based on detailed analyses, an impressive volume of literary sources on the subject, personal pedagogical experience and, last but not least, emotional empathy for the problems.

The fourth chapter *Folklore music in school education* contains a significant part of the contributions of the dissertation work. It emphasizes the aesthetic, moral, social and educational role of the folklore, as well as its significance in national and world aspect. Dai Liping points out the negative changes that are also current on a global scale: the underestimation of music education in school, the entry of pop culture and entertainment genres that are "easily digestible" but do not have an artistic-educational role, the lack of emotional perception of the music works studied in school, etc. According to the candidate, a change in the status quo is possible and it will be realized if folk music in its diversity and indisputable value is permanently advocated in the curricula. In this regard, she proposes building a scientific system for folklore music education in universities, which requires the inclusion of diverse teaching concepts, revision of curricula, introduction of new disciplines, etc.

The final **fifth chapter** of the work focuses on the Chinese music education in the context of multiculturalism. It points out some of the problems of the Chinese education system: the teaching methods are ineffective, uninteresting and do not evoke emotional response towards art; teaching with few exceptions is subject to outdated norms and understandings, based more on theory than on live music; lack of resources – material and human, prepared for specialized training in arts, etc. In this regard, Dai Liping suggests structuring a curriculum based on the local music education and supplemented with examples from the world music education. According to her, besides this, it is essential to cultivate the students' good performance skills, the ability to empathize with music and an innovative approach to perception. Modern technologies should assist as much as possible and optimize the process through the development and use of computer textbooks, online sources of musical works and literature, audio-visual lessons, sound recordings for illustrative purposes and many others. Dai Liping believes that the universities should provide high-quality music education and popularize the ethnic music culture so that China can be understood and recognized by more people by popularizing this timeless cultural value.

The contributions of the dissertation that should be mentioned include:

- A comprehensive study of the school music education in China, could lay the foundation for defining new educational concepts from the perspective of the ethnic minorities.

- The results of the researches reveal trends and present new ideas and perspectives for the improvement of the general educational principles.

- The dissertation discusses the need of a reformed rational and effective scientific basis for the development of education, including school management model, teaching model, education model, reconsidering the teacher-student relationships, etc., as well as external environment, objects, content and other elements. The new conceptuality must be based on the in-depth analysis of the present and include a vision of the future and its latest aspects.

- The work offers ways to improve the educational practice: effective solving of motivational and technical problems in the implementation of the school curriculum, which will improve the practical knowledge and skills of teachers and students, technical issues such as school processing of

learning materials, school curriculum integration, comprehensive implementation of teaching methods, personalized processing and differentiated instruction, student assessment and other issues.

- Studying the Chinese folk music education and solving national music education problems are of great importance to the inheritance and development of the Chinese folk music. The goal is to strengthen the ethnic music education, to promote the ethnic music culture and to cultivate cultural identity and awareness by stimulating the students' feelings and interest in learning traditional music and to elevate the traditional music education from learning skills and music theory to a higher cultural level.

The dissertation fully achieves the goals and objectives of the research set out in the introduction. It can be used by school teachers, academics, students, pupils, professional musicians, etc., making it suitable for publication as a book. Considering the above, I propose to the respected scientific jury to award Dai Liping the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences; professional direction 1.3 Teaching Pedagogy in...; doctoral program Methodology of Music Education in the Department of Music Pedagogy and Conducting at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev".

15.02.2024

Prof Vesela Geleva, PhD