

Study on the Characteristics of Dance Art of Minorities in West Hunan

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ABSTRACT. *There are various forms of folk dances in China. Originated from the folk, China's minority dance has experienced the development and innovation of numerous folk artists', form its typical artistic characteristics and vividly show the spiritual outlook and aesthetic taste of ethnic minority areas. The minority dance in Xiangxi, Hunan province has distinct features and unique artistic charm. Originated from life, the minority dance in Xiangxi takes the millions of laboring people working on the vast land as the main body. Influenced by the multi-ethnic culture of Western Hunan, it has a close relationship with surrounding cultures. It promotes the simple people's pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty. The primitive religious consciousness and the complicated natural geographical environment formed the rich ritual culture of Miao nationality. The minority dance in Western Hunan is characterized by life and ritual. The minority relic dance is influenced by subjective and objective factors to form unique artistic characteristics. It is of great significance for the inheritance and development of minority dance culture to study the characteristics of minority dance in Xiangxi. Based on the extensive reference to relevant literature, this article will summarize the formation and development of the folk dance art of Xiangxi, analyze and elaborate the characteristics of the folk dance art of Xiangxi, and summarize the reasons for the formation of the minority dance art in West Hunan from multiple perspectives, to provide more theoretical references for the research on the inheritance and development of the folk dance art in Xiangxi.*

KEYWORDS: *West Hunan, Minority dance, Artistic characteristics*

1. Introduction

A large number of ethnic minorities are gathered at the junction of Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan and Guizhou in the west of Hunan. Xiangxi is the northwest gateway of Hunan. Xiangxi ethnic minority areas create rich dance art and make Xiangxi gain the reputation of singing and dancing hometown. Relic dance is a part of traditional dance, and is a dance with profound historical and cultural connotations that has not died out in social changes. The ritual dance is an ancient cultural phenomenon. People express their respect and reverence for the divine through certain rituals, express their admiration and awe for the rhythm of life in nature, and form different

belief mindsets. Various ethnic rituals and dances are combined to form dance ritual traditions.

Xiangxi ethnic dance style is influenced by the regional environment and religious belief. This article summarizes the artistic characteristics of Xiangxi ethnic relic dance imitation and comprehensiveness from the aspects of expression content and dance vocabulary through the investigation of the types and distribution of Xiangxi ethnic dance, and make Xiangxi minority dance covered with a mysterious veil. Its artistic features are nourished by the land on which ethnic minorities live, and are born from various factors such as social environment and aesthetic emotion.

2. Types of minority dance in Xiangxi

Xiangxi is a gathering place for ethnic minorities, and most of the ethnic dances reflect the theme of sacrifice. The flourishing of ritual dance in Xiangxi originated from frequent migration. For thousands of years, from the central Plains to the mountains of southwest China, the war has left a deep imprint on the minorities in Xiangxi. The song of Ancient Miao *Song of Migration* tells the history of ethnic migration over mountains and rivers. Its dance starts from the cock crow, and the ancestors bid farewell to their hometown and move to a new environment. They express the history and culture of the Miao people with the Ritual dance such as the ancient drum dance and Nuo Yuan dance. The types of folk dances in Xiangxi are affected by ethnic migration.

The folk dance art is influenced by the cultural environment, the different cultural environment creates different national dance characteristics, the minority nationalities in Xiangxi area gather, and many ethnic minorities create a dance with rich artistic characteristics [1]. Tujia nationality is the most populous ethnic group in Western Hunan, and their most famous relic dance is the Bai Shou Dance. Bai Shou has the meaning of offering sacrifices and praying in the Tujia language. There are two forms of Bai Shou dance. The priest shall take charge of the Bai Shou dance from the beginning to the end. Miao nationality is an ancient ethnic group with the longest history in Xiangxi. It has a variety of dances, among which Cai Gu dance is the representative dance. It shows respect for ancestors by killing water buffalo and offering sacrifices to them. The characteristics of people's singing and dancing in Huayuan County of Miao nationality in Xiangxi reflect the Xiangxi dance style full of wild flavor, which makes people fully feel the true, good and beautiful of the Xiangxi dance art. The representative of the folk dance of the Bai nationality in western Hunan is Zhang Gu dance. The Bai nationality believes in their God. When dancing rod and drum, the Bai nationality carries the god they believe in, and they sing and dance, also change the dance movements constantly, and pray to God to bless the harvest and prosperity of their people.

Miao dances in West Hunan include the drum dance and Jie Long dance [2]. The Miao people are known for their love of drums, and their dance forms of expression have unique characteristics. As long as the drumbeat in their life, people will sing and dance. There are different styles of performances in different places, including

Hua Gu dance in Jishou city and Monkey Drum dance in Huayuan County. The drum dance has been handed down for thousands of years. The ancestors fought with foreign forces in the clan tribe and shook the enemy with the sound of drums in the struggle. In the traditional Miao drum, the Miao dance imitates life and labor, which making many daily agricultural activities imitate to inspire the movement. Miao nationality has no written language, but folk songs and dances have become the carrier of recording history. The drum dance meets the spiritual needs of the Miao people in their ancient worship of entertaining gods and entertaining themselves. The Miao people believed that human disasters and good fortune were dominated by ghosts and gods. The ancient people believed that witches and gods communicated with each other instead of expressing their fear. Miao people's Huan Nan Yuan sacrificial ceremony is deeply influenced by Chu Wu culture. Hua Yuan County people worship the wizard has become a tradition handed down from generation to generation. Huan Nan Yuan was introduced to Hua Yuan county and replaced by a wizard. The worship of Huan Nan Yuan direct influenced on Nan Yuan dance.

Lusheng dance is an art form in which Miao people hold Lusheng to sing and dance. Legend of the Miao ancestors by hunting for a living, a clever young man in the forest to see the trees for Lusheng imitation birds and animals singing, Lusheng dance has become a necessary skill from generation to generation. Miao ancestors on their way across the Yellow River, the first river blowing Lusheng bonfire to gather people [3]. People dance Lusheng dance with Lusheng melody, and Lusheng dance in sacrifice is solemn; music caisson is soft; Lusheng dance is diverse. Also, mass Lusheng dance is accompanied by a huge Lusheng team, Lusheng dance is not limited to the number of participants. Dance movements change with Lusheng playing music. As the Miao girl mobilized her accessories to make a sound. Performing Lusheng dance is a man's competitive dance. The custom Lusheng dance is a way for young men and women to express their love. The girl tied the flower belt to the young male Lusheng and danced with it.

Yang Opera originated from Xiangxi folk in the 19th century., Yang Opera art is a kind of folk local small drama because of the localization of language, popular singing, strong interest and popular popularity, which forms the same source as Chinese opera. Yang Opera has a strong regional character such as language style has a direct relationship with folk small drama. Yang Opera Dance is to assist the development of drama content to insert dance, absorb the local folk dance performance form, dance style brimming with rich local flavor [4]. The Tujia ethnic groups gathered in Xiangxi state can sing and dance well and provide abundant materials for the creation of Yang Opera.

3. Features of Xiangxi National Dance

Xiangxi minority relic dance has a wide mass base and determines its rich entertainment. For celebrating the each national festival, Children and old people meet and dance together, and all ethnic groups have professional demonstration performances. Tujia dance professional conductor for Tima. Dance under the

command of professionals to make Xiangxi ethnic dance mass and professional, become a distinctive artistic characteristic of national dance. If national dance wants to spread for a long time, it should rely on the participation of a wide range of people, also need special personnel to organize and inherit. In Xiangxi minority dance, professional hot people, such as Lao Si, play an important role in protecting and inheriting national art.

When Tujia Bai Shou dance activities began, the Shanzhai atmosphere becomes warm, and Tujia people dressed in gorgeous brocade, holding dragon and Phoenix flag, gathered in the eight great temples. Lead dancer Tima holding an eyebrow stick, followed by the people holding a sword to follow the rhythm of gongs and drums, many people around the dance. *Thousands of Red Light and People* depicts a wide range of hand dance mass participation characteristics. Miao people step on the performance of local cattle activities, with a wide range of collective. At the beginning of the grand event, Lao Si led the crowd into a circle to sing and dance, encouraging more people to participate. Step on inspiration in the night performance, grand dance activities all night long. The day will dawn with three rows of Lusheng as the name, Miao Lao Si command people quickly reverse circle, singing and dancing mood turned to excitement until dawn stop. People who perform Xiangxi Bai staff and drum dance are encouraged under the leadership of teacher San Yuan and create a circle. With the atmosphere becomes warm and high, the number of participants in the dance continues to increase, people with drums to join the dance. The unity of mass and professionalism makes Xiangxi folk dance popular with the masses and strengthens the internal relations of the nation. The participation of professionals makes the folk dance mysterious.

Compared with the main body of practice, Yang Opera dance is the dance of farmers, which means the main body of practice is hundreds of millions of working people, the dance of working people has no foresight and follows the working habits of local working people. Yang Opera dance non-professional people refined dance, developed into a rural folk artist to organize small-scale amateur performances, express the people's emotional aspirations, rooted in people's life, deeply welcomed by the working people. Yang Opera dance originated in Xiangxi. Xiangxi has many ethnic minorities such as Yao, Miao and so on. Yang Opera dance has unique artistic charm which influenced by the culture of local minorities. For example, the fusion of Miao and Tujia dance is embodied in Yang Opera dance, and has been spread to the present by the aesthetic identity of all nationalities. The folk culture of all nationalities in Xiangxi has a great influence on the development of local minority culture and reflects the aesthetic taste of Xiangxi people.

Art comes from life. Xiangxi folk dance comes from life, which shows the life of the working people in Xiangxi, and embodies the life of performance content. Xiangxi national dance performances simple and natural combine with a realistic life. The local flavor is strong, manifests the farmer's simple true characteristic. For example, the actors of *Bai Luo Qun* to compile the making needlework action, is the life of the embroidery of flowers imitation [5]. *Lei Jiao Chui* actress taught the elder male cousin as a woman to crying marriage, and *Nan Shan Geng Tian* left-handed whip, did not add artistic elements, is completely plowing the field shooting action

reproduction. Most of the image of the Xiangxi dance task comes from the real task of life, such as He Long in *General He Long's Footprint* is a person who glorifies history. And Caifeng in *Caifeng* or Guo Shuren in *Iron Minister* can be seen in the life prototype. Xiangxi national dance is a portrayal of the working people and life. It is closely related to the working people's life, love of men and women such as *Green Mountain*, *Heart Voice* and so on. The performance content of folk dance in Xiangxi is the life familiar to local people, mainly reflected in the form of dance closely related to the daily life of the people in Xiangxi; closely connected with the daily life of the people, food, clothing, shelter, travel, festival customs and so on; and is often the scene of local life.

Xiangxi national dance synthesis is a special form of music, which has accompaniment team, with a comprehensive overall presentation in front of the audience. Xiangxi folk dance music to sing mainly, percussion music as a play to render the atmosphere. Xiangxi folk dance takes rhythmic action as the main art form, and the plate eye in Xiangxi folk dance music forms the dance characteristics of cadence. The second stream of the palace melts the narrative lyric expression form, which has the ups and downs, and is good at expressing the emotion characteristic. The third stream of the palace has the board without the eye, which is used to perform the exciting emotion fragment. The rhythm of the Yue tune alternates, the tune is smooth and lively, and the dance movements are light and simple. There is a supplementary word singing method in minor singing, which can supplement and highlight the meaning of the lyrics, to make the dance more emotional; the long clause is given to the lyrics, make the dance relaxed and happy; and the short clause is mostly used for the weak position of the music beat.

4. Reasons for the Formation of the Art Style of Folk Dance in Xiangxi

The geographical location of Xiangxi is located in the connecting section of the Wuling Mountain area in northwest Hunan Province, which is the important place of the throat of Hunan, Hubei, Chongqing and Guizhou. Xiangxi has a unique natural environment, gestates the mountains and rivers of Jingxiu, and the smoke-filled scene appears in Xiangxi Prefecture. Its national music culture retains a more primitive nature, which can render the atmosphere of joy and peace, promote the exchange of the nation, and make the national dance of Xiangxi state participate in the group. The closed natural geographical environment combines the leisure life, labor of ethnic minorities and embodies the reproducibility of Xiangxi ethnic dance. The formation of minority dance art characteristics in Xiangxi is mainly influenced by social environment and national aesthetic psychology.

Xiangxi ethnic minorities used to be in poor areas affected by the economic development environment of Xiangxi region, due to its backward production mode, natural environment and Xiangxi region economic poverty. The production model of the combination of farming, fishing and hunting, and all these are the direct source of folk dance creation material. Xiangxi ethnic minorities are suppressed in their contacts with the Han nationality such as the Eastern Han Dynasty ruling group tends to corrupt, and local officials wantonly squeeze the bottom people. Xiangxi

ethnic minority people live in great hardship, and ethnic minorities in the historical development to enhance national cohesion, Large-scale ethnic activities all out, its dance has a broad mass base. The masses like to dance around the circle reflecting the close friendship of the minority people. Xiangxi ethnic minorities lived in the Wuling Mountain area for generations, which restricted local economic and social development due to transportation inconvenience. Ethnic minorities live in a closed environment of Xiangxi for a long time and seldom communicate with the outside world. The prevalence of witchcraft culture has a great influence on national culture. Tima is the carrier of Tujia witchcraft culture. The ancestors formed the primitive thinking concept based on the description of natural personality. The animistic concept of all things formed a deep foundation in the Tujia people, and the ideology and culture permeated into the creation of national dance, which enriches the connotation of dance culture.

Xiangxi area scenery magnificent mysterious, with the magnificent mountains, boundless primitive forest and other type of views, which constitute a magnificent landscape scroll. Ethnic minorities multiply in the beautiful mountains and rivers, and impromptu dance was appeared at the first. With the development of dance activities to form a nationally recognized form of dance, people in the long-term life pregnant with common aesthetic principles. The ethnic minorities imitate the form language of the ancestors and the scene of the local labor life, which shows the happy mood of people after obtaining the means of life. Xiangxi minority dance mystery, imitation and other artistic characteristics are the portrayals of the aesthetic psychology of ethnic minorities. Dance is a powerful tool for minority ancestors to inspire the military heart, and beat the enemy psychology, which is the intelligent minority grasp people's aesthetic heart performance.

The Miao ancestors believed in Chiyou, who formed a Jiuli tribal alliance headed by Chiyou five thousand years ago. The tribal group headed by Huangdi Xuanyuan was defeated by Chiyou and defeated by Huangdi. Chiyou died to become the origin of Miao Han rise and fall, Jiuli Group after the defeat to the south exile. In the period of Yao, Shun and Yu that Jiuli formed a new tribal group between Jianghuai and Dongting. With the large-scale expedition, the Sanmiao Group disintegrated and weakened. During the Spring and Autumn period, Chu and Miao lived together for a long time, and the Miao culture was influenced by Chu culture. After Tang and Song dynasties, the Miao nationality moved southwest, and 800000 Miao nationality in Yunnan was mainly distributed in Wenshan Autonomous Prefecture, mostly from Hunan after Ming Dynasty. The rulers of the Qing Dynasty brutally suppressed the Miao people's uprising. Some Miao people in Guizhou entered Yunnan, cross Dongchuan and other places to the Red River, and are now distributed in Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Myanmar and other countries, which about 2 million Miao people. The historical frequent population flow makes the Miao nationality live scattered, forming many branches. The history of Miao nationality is a complicated migration history. The artistic characteristics of minority dance movements are influenced by the life of the ancestors in the historical evolution.

5. Conclusion

Xiangxi minority dance has national individuality and regional commonality, minority relic dance exerts the characteristics of national sacrificial ancestors to the extreme, and national dance has extensive mass participation, which makes its artistic form pass on in a good artistic atmosphere. The foundation of national dance is the traditional dance culture of the Chinese nation, which must form a unique art form in the world, cross the blockade line of dance professional concepts; search for information in social evolution; and create artistic charm in line with national personality and cultural style. It requires creators to have an in-depth understanding of local culture. Various ethnic groups have ritual dances with different forms and contents of traditional culture. The abundant relic dance is a valuable source of folk dance creation.

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