

Research on the Development Models for Dunhuang Music and Dance in Chinese College Education Management

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Abstract: As an important component of ancient Chinese music and dance, Dunhuang music and dance art carries rich historical and cultural connotations. Integrating it into education not only helps preserve and promote this art form but also significantly enriches educational content. This paper posits that the inseparable trinity of poetry, music, and dance is the fundamental positioning for the development of Dunhuang music and dance art. Drawing nourishment from traditional culture is essential for Dunhuang music and dance to embark on a path of harmonious and unified development. The study analyzes the current research status of Dunhuang music and dance murals and their artistic development, concluding that the successful performance of Silk Road Flower Rain has propelled the research of Dunhuang music and dance in China to a new height. Finally, the paper explores the development model of Dunhuang music and dance art in Chinese education, focusing on the construction of an educational management system for Dunhuang music and dance, exchange and cooperation, promotion, policy and funding support, expanding the effects of Silk Road Flower Rain, and the application of new AI technologies. The conclusions and recommendations provided can serve as references for researchers in Dunhuang music and dance as well as in Dunhuang studies.

Keywords: Traditional culture; Dunhuang music and dance; educational management; trinity of poetry, music and dance; Silk Road Flower Rain; Development Models

1. Introduction

Dunhuang music and dance art is one of China's outstanding traditional cultural heritages. Originating in the Northern Wei dynasty and flourishing during the Tang dynasty, it has been passed down and developed for over a thousand years, forming a unique artistic style. Dunhuang music and dance art not only holds an important position in Chinese traditional culture but also has significant value for studying the history and development of ancient Chinese music and dance. In recent years, with the nation's increased emphasis on traditional culture, Dunhuang music and dance art has gradually entered the public eye, and its integration into education management has received growing attention.

Since the performance and dissemination of Silk Road Flower Rain in 1979, Dunhuang music and dance art has achieved remarkable success globally. This work has not only enjoyed enduring popularity domestically but has also gained high acclaim internationally. Since its premiere, it has toured over 40 countries and regions, with nearly 4,000 performances, becoming a "legend" in the history of global performances and a classic piece of cultural exchange between China and other nations. Consequently, the Chinese Dunhuang Dance School was formed, hailed as a "model of Chinese national dance drama" and a "20th-century classic." Silk Road Flower Rain has ushered in a new era of inheriting and innovating Chinese art, serving as the best practice for preserving and promoting China's traditional culture and playing an irreplaceable role in enhancing the nation's cultural soft power and cultural confidence.

After the success of Silk Road Flower Rain in 1979, it can be considered a historically significant event, sparking a research boom among domestic and international scholars on Dunhuang music and dance and yielding numerous research results^[1-17]. Artists and scholars in China's educational circles keenly realized that a unique dance school was about to form in Gansu Province. A dance school not only requires repertoire but also its own teaching system, dance textbooks, talent cultivation, and stage productions—all of which are indispensable^[11,15]. Research on Dunhuang cave music and dance involves

various fields such as music, dance, costumes, iconography, and painting. It requires in-depth and comprehensive studies of Dunhuang murals, musical scores in scriptures, and other aspects from perspectives like cave archaeology, historical documents, and musical archaeology. This interdisciplinary approach aims to cultivate comprehensive talents who can fully showcase the origins, evolution, and historical trajectory of Chinese national art through Dunhuang murals and musical scriptures, presenting Chinese art history to the world from a new and complete dimension.

2. Research Hypotheses and Methods

2.1 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The development of Dunhuang music and dance truly embodies the trinity of poetry, music, and dance.

In the developmental history of Dunhuang music and dance, the organic combination of poetry, music, and dance not only reflects the multidimensionality of the art but also the profound traditional heritage of Chinese culture. As a comprehensive art form, Dunhuang music and dance uses poetry to enrich the expressiveness of dance through rhythm and imagery, while music provides rhythm and emotional support for the poetry and dance. In this process, dance movements often resonate with the poetic imagery, allowing the audience to experience both visual beauty and the profound cultural connotations. This trinity of artistic forms is not only a culmination of Dunhuang regional culture but also a vivid expression of the Chinese national spirit.

Hypothesis 2: The translation and interpretation of ancient mural musical scores significantly impact the cultural value of the cultural heritage in "Silk Road Flower Rain."

Ancient Dunhuang murals contain rich musical scores and symbols, and their translation provides essential historical evidence and creative inspiration for the cultural heritage of "Silk Road Flower Rain." These murals not only visually record the music styles, types of instruments, and performance methods of the time but also reflect the living conditions and aesthetic preferences of the people. By studying these ancient scores, modern artists can more accurately recreate the musical and dance characteristics of Dunhuang music and dance, thereby inheriting and promoting this valuable cultural heritage. The translation of these ancient mural scores injects new vitality into the creation of "Silk Road Flower Rain," enabling it to better reflect the charm of Dunhuang's musical culture and enhancing its cultural value.

Hypothesis 3: Silk Road Flower Rain is a significant practice in the art and cultural heritage of Dunhuang music and dance.

As an important artistic work, Silk Road Flower Rain fully showcases the unique charm of Dunhuang music and dance art and the importance of cultural heritage. It is not merely a dance performance but a profound excavation and recreation of the essence of Dunhuang culture. During its creation, artists conducted in-depth research into the diversity of Dunhuang art and, by integrating various artistic methods, created a work that is both visually striking and rich in cultural connotations. Silk Road Flower Rain not only provides aesthetic enjoyment for the audience but also serves as an important medium for cultural exchange, promoting the dissemination and development of Dunhuang culture. Therefore, it is both an artistic work and a practical exploration of cultural heritage, offering significant insights for future artistic creation and academic research.

Hypothesis 4: Exploring the promotion and development of Dunhuang music and dance cultural heritage through the Chinese education management system is fundamental.

In the Chinese education management system, exploring educational development models related to Dunhuang music and dance culture is the fundamental approach to promoting and developing this traditional culture. By introducing relevant courses and practices of Dunhuang music and dance, students can not only appreciate the charm of traditional arts but also subconsciously enhance their cultural confidence and national identity. Educational institutions can integrate Dunhuang music and dance elements into teaching by combining disciplines such as music, dance, and fine arts, allowing students to experience profound culture through participation in practical activities. Simultaneously, encouraging innovation and creation based on this foundation is essential. Additionally, strengthening the professional training of relevant teachers and optimizing the allocation of educational resources can more effectively promote the inheritance and development of Dunhuang music and dance culture. This development model not only helps in disseminating traditional culture but also contributes to cultivating cultural inheritors with an international perspective, thereby promoting overall societal cultural prosperity.

2.2 Research Methods

For Hypotheses 1 and 2, a literature analysis method is employed to collect and analyze historical documents related to Dunhuang music and dance, exploring the specific manifestations of the trinity of poetry, music, and dance. This includes the collection, organization, and analysis of historical archives of Dunhuang murals and musical scores. The ancient scores are subjected to musical analysis, including the study of instruments, pitch, and rhythm structures, to investigate their influence on Silk Road Flower Rain. Conversely, the performance of Silk Road Flower Rain also reflects the artistic effect of the trinity of poetry, music, and dance.

For Hypothesis 3, a combination of creative retrospection and audience feedback methods is used to organize experimental performances. The creation process of Silk Road Flower Rain is reviewed, and understands their sources of inspiration and artistic practices. The integration of translated scores with the dance in Silk Road Flower Rain is analyzed in conjunction with audience reactions and cultural acceptance to assess its impact on cultural heritage and artistic appreciation.

For Hypothesis 4, a policy analysis method is used to study national and local cultural education policies related to Dunhuang music and dance, analyzing their status and support within the education system. Relevant courses are designed, combining theory and practice, to promote the teaching of Dunhuang music and dance, and field investigations are conducted on course implementation. Enhancing the professional knowledge and teaching abilities of higher education institution teachers in Dunhuang music and dance is also emphasized.

A qualitative analysis research approach is applied, incorporating literature data from the 1920s to the present, to verify the correctness of the four hypotheses.

3. Research and Analysis

3.1 Ancient Traditional Music and Dance to Dunhuang Music and Dance Embodying the Unity of Poetry, Music, and Dance

In ancient times, humans often struggled against floods for survival. After overcoming floods, their joy was expressed through celebrations. Consequently, they created the music and dance "Da Xia," which praises heroes who excelled in battling floods, notably celebrating Da Yu's successful flood control. This music and dance is divided into nine sections, primarily accompanied by primitive wind instruments. Later, during the Zhou dynasty, performers of this dance wore leather headpieces, resembling modern hats, and donned white skirts, with their upper body's exposed—typical attire of ancient laborers^[18].

In this comprehensive art form, ancient people showcased the knowledge, thoughts, and emotions gained from their labor practices. Later generations summarized this as the trinity of poetry, music, and dance. This concept has long been interpreted from an aesthetic perspective. For example, "*Music Records*" states: "Poetry expresses one's aspirations; songs chant one's voice; dances move one's form. All three originate from the heart." Poetry conveys thoughts; singing expresses one's voice; dance performs one's posture and movements—all emanate from the inner self. In *Mozi-Gong Meng*, it is stated: "Three hundred string poems, three hundred song poems, three hundred dance poems," indicating the close relationship among music, poetry, and dance in ancient times. Liu Xiang in *The Garden of Stories: On Cultivating Scholarship* remarks: "Music is the flower of virtue, with metal, stone, silk, and bamboo as musical instruments. Poetry expresses one's aspirations, songs chant one's voice, and dances move one's form." The *Mao Shi Xu* (refers to the Preface to the Mao Edition of the *Book of Songs*) vividly explains the relationship between poetry, music, dance, and emotions: *Emotions move within and manifest in words; words are insufficient, hence sighs; sighs are insufficient, hence eternal songs; eternal songs are insufficient, not knowing the dance of hands or the leaps of feet.* This means that artistic creation originates from inner emotions; only when one is passionate can one *manifest in words, sing eternally, dance, and leap*, thus creating outstanding literary and artistic works. Fu Yi in *Preface of Dance Rhapsody* (poetic exposition) believes: *Songs chant words; dances express intentions. Therefore, discussing poetry is not as good as listening to its sound, and listening to its sound is not as good as observing its form.* This poetry, sound, and form essentially represent the trinity of poetry, music, and dance.

In ancient times, poetry, music, and dance were closely integrated. From another perspective, every song in the Dunhuang dance scores is named after Tang melodies, which fully illustrates the inseparable

relationship among poetry, music, and dance, such as *Xia fang Yuan*, *Nan ge Zi*, *Nan xiang Zi*, *Huanxisha*, and *Feng Guiyun* are all recorded in *Jiao fang Ji* [4,19]. Tang dynasty poet Bai Juyi wrote: *Hu Xuan girl, Hu Xuan girl, heart responds to strings, hands respond to drums. Strings and drums—voices lift the sleeves, snowflakes flutter and dance like tumbleweeds, left and right rotations without knowing fatigue, thousands of rounds without end.* These lines are poetry, music, and dance, fully embodying the inseparable and realistic characteristics of the trinity of poetry, music, and dance. Therefore, drawing nourishment from the traditional culture corresponding to the era of Dunhuang mural art, all outstanding traditional cultural works of China are epic in nature. In the development of Dunhuang music and dance, the true embodiment of the trinity of poetry, music, and dance has fundamentally led Dunhuang music and dance art to a path of harmonious and unified development.

Dunhuang cave murals preserve abundant imagery of ancient music and dance, including depictions of orchestras, musical instruments, and dancers, reflecting the living conditions and artistic styles of the time. The music and dance in the murals can be categorized into Buddhist music and dance and secular music and dance. Buddhist music and dance depict heavenly palace music, flying celestial music, etc., where the "self-playing" celestial music embodies Buddhist theory. For example, Cave 321 of Mogao Grottoes depicts "Heavenly Music" with various instruments self-playing in the air, while Cave 112's *Watching the Changes of the Infinite Life Sutra* showcases scenes of refined performances like the reverse pipa dance (playing the pipa behind the back). Secular music and dance include travel music and dance, banquet music and dance, wedding music and dance, etc., portraying the authentic folk life. Performances by musicians include offerings music and dance, travel music and dance, banquet music and dance, and wedding music and dance, reflecting the zenith of Tang dynasty music and dance art. The scene in Cave 23 of Mogao Grottoes depicts farmers dancing spontaneously in the fields during their rest, with one dancer and onlookers, seemingly dancing and enjoying themselves. Cave 156's *Song State Lady Outing* shows a scene of spontaneous performance with musical accompaniment and costume performances, forming the early prototype of operatic drama^[20]. In summary, the imagery of music and dance in Dunhuang cave murals holds unparalleled value in the history of world murals.

3.2 Significant Value for the Translation and Interpretation of Dunhuang Ancient Musical and Dance Scores

For over a century, many scholars and artists have conducted research from two aspects: Dunhuang literature and mural scenes. They have excavated and interpreted Dunhuang musical scores through various materials, documents, and information. In Dunhuang art, the unique music and dance art occupies a very important position. Whether in murals or manuscripts, there is a wealth of music and dance materials. For example, the murals depict a myriad of dances and a wide variety of musical instruments; the manuscripts contain precious materials such as Dunhuang musical scores and dance scores, which are valuable historical resources for studying Dunhuang music and dance art. Excavating and studying them not only has significant historical, cultural, and artistic value but also has practical significance for inheriting and developing China's outstanding traditional literature.

3.2.1 Literature Research of Dunhuang Music and Dance Scores

In the field of literature research on Dunhuang performing arts, on June 22, 1900 (the 25th day of the fifth lunar month), the accidental discovery of Dunhuang Cangjing Cave shocked the world. Over 50,000 manuscripts from the Six Dynasties, Sui, and Tang periods emerged, astonishing the academic community. Between 1907 and 1914, British Orientalist Dr. Aurel Stein (M.A. Stein, 1862-1943) removed a total of 34 boxes containing over 10,000 Dunhuang cultural relics and documents. In 1908, French Academy Professor Paul Pelliot (P. Pelliot, 1878-1945) took away more than 5,000 items. In 1910, Dunhuang stolen manuscripts, including over 8,000 fragmented scrolls, were transported to the Beijing Imperial Library, causing severe damage to mural paintings and destroying a complete Yuan Dynasty princess corpse in Cave 368. In 1911, Japanese scholars Kikkawa Koichiro and Tachibana Mizuharu took away nearly 600 items. Among them, the Dunhuang sutra manuscripts taken by Stein and Pelliot are now housed in the British Museum and the Oriental Department of the National Library of France, respectively, containing numerous ancient Dunhuang dance and music documents^[21-23]. The historical value of Dunhuang performing arts is extremely precious; to date, the Dunhuang musical scores named by Stein and Pelliot include S.785, S.5613, S.7111, S.5643; Pelliot's Dunhuang musical scores include P.3128, P.3137, P.3719, P.3808, P.3821, and P.3501. Among them, S.5643 and P.3501 are the most comprehensive.

These gongche notation manuscript copies from the fourth year of Changxing in the Later Tang Dynasty (933 AD), including the three scores P.3808 (P.3808 refers to the numbering assigned by the

French Pelliot to the musical scores stolen from Dunhuang Cangjing Cave), comprehensively record the Tang and Five Dynasties Dunhuang musical scores. However, due to the difficulty in recognizing the characters, they are often referred to as *Heavenly Scripts*. These ancient scores are known as *Dunhuang Musical Scores*, *Dunhuang Music Scores*, *Dunhuang Dance Scores*, "Tang and Five Dynasties Dunhuang Pipa Scores", etc. The originals are currently housed in the National Library of France, Paris^[21].

In Stein's S.6208, within the upper volume of *New Commercial Strategies: A Concise Presentation of Historical and Contemporary Words Characters with Contemporary Interpretations* (Volume 1 and Volume 2), the term music section still appears, alongside instruments such as Pipa, Qin, Se, Konghou, Fangxiang, Tongbo, Paiban, and Jizhu. These instruments are identical to those depicted in the mural musical performances, providing references for studying Dunhuang performing arts. Therefore, by searching for the lost musical scores of the performing arts murals in the literature and finding corresponding dances for the musical pieces in the murals, we can overcome the challenges of interpreting ancient mural musical scores.

By the mid-1920s, significant progress was made in the literature research of Dunhuang performing arts^[23-25].

In 1925, Liu Bannong published *Dunhuang Trivial* in the *Beijing University National Studies Monthly*. This work was the first to transcribe documents related to Dunhuang dance from Cangjing Cave under the title *Dunhuang Dance Scores* gradually bringing Dunhuang dance scores into public awareness.

In 1934, Wang Chongmin and Xiang Da transcribed Dunhuang sutra manuscripts from England and France, photographing over 30,000 microfilms, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent compilation of *Dunhuang Manuscript Catalog Index*.

In 1938, Hayashi Kensō, who is Japanese scholar, discovered that on the back of the Dunhuang manuscript P.3038 housed in France, there were twenty-five musical scores. By combining this with Tang Dynasty pipa ancient scores observed at Japan's Shōsōin, he concluded that these scores were pipa notation. He attempted to decode the scores, writing *A Study on Ancient Pipa Scores*, where he determined the scores to be pipa notation, summarized twenty musical characters, compared the scores with Japanese gagaku (Ya Music), identified the instruments as four-stringed, four-corridor pipa, and established the tuning. He is considered one of the earliest interpreters of Dunhuang musical scores today.

Chinese scholars first engaged with Dunhuang manuscripts in 1940, when Xiang Da brought back microfilms of manuscript P.3038 from France, initiating domestic research on Dunhuang musical scores.

In 1951, Yin Falu published *On Tang Dynasty Music and Dance from Dunhuang Murals*^[26] and Lan Yuyu published *Summary of Dunhuang Mural Music Data* via the China National Institute of Ethnic Studies' mimeograph, marking the beginning of this research field.

In 1954, Ren Erbei published *Preliminary Exploration of Dunhuang Music*, which studied the ancient scores P.3038 from aspects such as rhythm, musical form, and duration, and slightly touched upon Dunhuang dance scores. In *Preliminary Exploration of Dunhuang Music*, he pointed out that the Dunhuang musical scores contain Board-eye (usually refers to the combination of the beat, the "board" in the rhythm, and the "eye". The "board" usually refers to the stressed part of the beat, while the eye refers to the details and changes in the rhythm. Together, they become the basic unit of performance) markers, corresponding to the *Board-eye Theory* and *Not One Character One Sound Theory*. In the same year, Wang Chongmin compiled *Dunhuang Musical Lyrics Collection*, which included discussions on Dunhuang ancient scores, suggesting the scores were gongche score. Xiang Da referred to these scores brought back from France as *Tang People's Large Musical Scores*.

In 1955, Hayashi Kensō published *Interpretation and Research on Chinese Dunhuang Ancient Pipa Scores and Their Twenty-Five Decoded Scores*, determining the pitch of 25 Dunhuang pipa scores and publishing all five-line notation translations. In 1964, he further published *New Examination of Pipa Scores — On the Changes in Pipa Notation and Playing Methods*, cross-referencing twenty musical characters in P.3539 with P.3038. This series of studies did not gain widespread attention domestically at the time and was only introduced during the late 1980s when a surge of Dunhuang musical research emerged in China.

In 1957, Hayashi Kensō published *Interpretation and Research on Dunhuang Pipa Scores*, whose translated version was published domestically. This work significantly influenced Dunhuang musicology

research in China from the 1950s onward.

In 1959, Zhao Yuanren's daughter, Zhao Rulan, a Ph.D. from Japan, publicly displayed photographs of Zhao Yuanren's *Pipa Twenty Musical Characters* taken at the National Library of France, further verifying the correctness of interpreting Dunhuang musical scores as pipa notation.

In 1962, Yang Yinliu also discussed P.3038 in his book *A Draft History of Chinese Music*^[18] referred to these scores as *Dunhuang Tang Music Scores*, belonging to the gongche scores system, known in the Song Dynasty as *Yan Music Half-Character Scores*, which were commonly used notation symbols in teaching music halls at that time. In the same period, Rao Zongyi wrote *Reading Notes on Dunhuang Pipa Scores*, pointing out that the Dunhuang ancient scores were pipa notation rather than gongche scores and conducted examinations of the melodies.

Hayashi Kensō's disciple Mizuhara Iekawa had already achieved some results in his 1976 doctoral thesis. From 1979 to 1985, over 30 related research papers were published, culminating in the publication of *Research on the Interpretation of Dunhuang Dance Scores*.

In the late 1970s, the global success of *Rain of Flowers on the Silk Road* sparked a wave of enthusiasm for "Dunhuang Studies." Scholars began writing and publishing influential monographs.

In 1979 and 1982, Dong Xijiu's paper *Thoughts on the Music and Dance Art of Dunhuang Murals*^[1] and *Dunhuang Murals and Tang Dynasty Dance*^[27] pointed out that Dunhuang, a key stop along the Silk Road, was a crucible of Chinese musical and dance culture, suggesting that Central Plains music and dance culture spread to the Western Regions, reaching as far as Iran, India, and Rome, and that Western music and dance culture made its way back to the Central Plains through Dunhuang.

Ye Dong (1982) published *Research on Dunhuang Musical Scores*^[2], identifying the names of 25 Dunhuang musical pieces with titles like *Pin Nong*, *Qingbei Le*, *Jiquzi*, *Changsha Nü Yin*, *Sajinsha*, *Yizhou*, *Shuiguzi* etc., describing them as a series of different sub-pieces forming a *Tang Grand Musical Suite* and the entire suite consists of three scales — *Yan Music Scale*, *Qing Music Scale*, and *Ancient Music Scale* (also known as *Ya Music Scale*). According to his research, these 25 Dunhuang musical scores embody the integrated characteristics of lyrics and melodies closely relating the scores to vocal music. Ye Dong's successful decoding of Dunhuang musical scores resurrected Tang music that had been silent for a thousand years with all interpretations recorded and produced for playback, receiving widespread acclaim both domestically and internationally.

Chen Yingshi's (1982) *Unlocking the First Key to Interpreting Dunhuang Musical Scores — Introduction to the 'Twenty Notation Characters of the Pipa'*^[28]. In 1988, Chen Yingshi's newly interpreted scores were successfully performed by the Shanghai Ancient Music Ensemble.

Zhuang Zhuang (1984) published the monograph *Music of the Dunhuang Caves*^[5]. Although its title suggests a focus on "music," the content is actually a study of the harmonious unity of both "music" and "dance."

Wang Kefen's (1985) *Exploration of Dunhuang Dance Score Fragments*^[6] proposed the origins of dance scores during the prosperous Tang Dynasty, determining that they were created during the prosperous Tang period and exploring the correspondence of musical characters like *Ling*, *An*, *Zhai*, *Yao*, *Wu*, *Ju*, *Song*, and *Qi* (beat symbol) to dance postures and movements.

Chai Jianhong's (1987, 1988) *Arrangement and Analysis of the Remaining Dunhuang Dance Score <Nangezhi>* and *Arrangement and Analysis of Dunhuang Dance Scores*^[29-30] proposed that Dunhuang dance scores consist of three parts: musical titles, prefaces, and character groups. They reorganized irregular character groups into standardized forms, attempting to explore rhythmic combinations.

Xi Zhenguan's (1987) *Analysis and Discussion on the Textual Reading and Semantic Interpretation of the Preface of the Tang Dynasty Music and Dance 'ultimate book (Jueshu)' — A Cross-Examination of Dunhuang Dance Scores (Part One)*^[31] provided a review of previous studies, examined the text reading of *Xiafang Yuan*, and explored the definitions of *Pai Changling*, *Da*, *Xianpai*, *Zhunqian*, *Xu*, *Bense*, *Duansong* (terms such as beat and state in ancient Chinese musical performance) to understand their corresponding dance postures and meanings.

Peng Song's (1989) paper *Cracking Dunhuang Dance Score Fragments*^[31] argued that Dunhuang dance scores were arrangements for drinking games, studying the corresponding dance postures of thirteen musical characters and examining the role of prefaces in each dance piece.

Niu Longfei's (1991) monograph *A Comprehensive Catalog and Study of Historical Materials on*

Music in Dunhuang Murals^[8] systematically analyzed and categorized the musical instruments and orchestra formats depicted in the murals by dynasty, making the work more logically structured and practical as a reference guide.

In the 1980s, the study of Dunhuang sheet music has gradually become popular, and many scholars significant works from this period include He Changlin's *Comprehensive Study on Three Dunhuang Musical Score Materials*, Lin Youren et al.'s *Verification of <Dunhuang Musical Scores> as Tang Pipa Scores*, Rao Zongyi's *Research on the Remaining Scores of Dunhuang Pipa Score <Huanxisha>*. Additionally, scholars such as Guan Yewei, Ying Yinqin, Zhao Xiaosheng, Mao Zengji, Tang Puolin, Li Chunguang, Hao Yi, Wu Shizhong, Zhuang Yongping and Jin Jianmin also made significant contributions. During this period, researchers focused on aspects such as the transcription period, instruments, pitch, rhythm, tuning, and musical forms of Dunhuang scores. Through arduous work, they essentially resolved the pitch issues of the musical characters.

Li Zhengyu's (1992) *Three Records of Dunhuang Songs and Dances*^[33] conducted comprehensive research by integrating dance, music, and lyrics. The academic community remains undecided on whether dance scores are arrangement scores, large musical scores, or religious scores, and opinions vary on accurately decoding musical characters and restoring dance movements, with no universally accepted accurate translations.

In 1992, Xi Zhenguan published the monographs *Research on Ancient Silk Road Music and Dunhuang Dance Scores*^[4] and *Dunhuang Ancient Music — New Interpretation of Dunhuang Musical Scores* (including a cassette tape)^[34], which proposed a series of perspectives on decoding Dunhuang ancient scores, garnering attention from both the Dunhuang and musicology academic communities. In 1992, a video tape featuring Tang Dynasty lyrics was completed and released domestically and internationally, directly demonstrating that Tang songs were elegant and diverse in style with unique melodies. For example:

Song 6 "Jiquzi" and Song 9 "Jiquzi" are martial pieces filled with masculine energy.

Song 12 "Qingbei Le" is tender and sentimental.

Song 15 "Manquzi Xinshi Zi" is gentle and emotional.

Song 16 "Youmanquzi Yizhou" is sorrowful and prolonged.

Song 18 "Shuiguizi" arranged for female chorus is solemn and majestic.

These 25 Dunhuang ancient musical pieces are available for listening on platforms at Bilibili Website^[35]. Xi Zhenguan's years of exploration successfully decoded this enigmatic "Heavenly Script," reviving the famous "Tang Music," which has been celebrated through domestic and international performances^[36]. He was also a member of the creative team for *Rain of Flowers on the Silk Road*, a performing arts drama inspired by his research. His research findings and performing arts philosophy are partially reflected in this production.

In 1997, Zheng Ruzhong published an article titled *The Formation Stages and Patterns of Dunhuang Music and Dance Murals*, which explored the historical reasons and processes behind the formation of various forms of music and dance (including Dunhuang music and dance murals). He insightfully pointed out the relationship between the people of feudal society, religion—particularly Buddhism—and the symbolic characteristics of the Dunhuang murals, noting the standardized patterns in the compositions.

Entering the 21st century, based on the research achievements of previous scholars, musicologists and experts continue to have differing views on the interpretation of Dunhuang musical scores, texts, and the people and objects depicted in mural scenes. However, these musical works are already over a thousand years old, and deciphering the notations in the texts and the now-lost music from the murals remains a significant challenge for those interested in Dunhuang music and dance.

Since the beginning of this century, Scholars' research on Dunhuang musical scores and dance scores is almost stagnant; more scholars have continued to put extensively on the In the form of dance. Significant works include Zheng Ruzhong's *Research on Dunhuang Music and Dance Murals*^[10], Gao Jinrong's *The Music and Dance Art of the Dunhuang Caves*^[11], Wang Kefen and Chai Jianhong's co-authored *Flute and Rainbow Raiment(Xiaoguan Nishang)—Dunhuang Music and Dance*^[13], and Gao Dexiang's *Dunhuang Ancient Music and Dance*^[14]. These works, based on different resources and perspectives, have carried out research on Dunhuang mural music and dance.

Currently, Professors He Yanyun and Shi Min from Beijing Dance Academy, who were dancers in the early version of *Silk Road Flower Rain*, focus their later research on the performance forms and expressions of *Dunhuang Dance* due to the limitations of their careers. Works like *Dunhuang Dance Tutorial* by Gao Jinrong^[12], *Dunhuang Dance Training and Performance Tutorial*^[15] by He Yanyun, and *Dunhuang Dance Tutorial: Presentation of Music and Dance Images of Heavenly Music*^[37] by Shi Min all focus on the training techniques and movement expressions of Dunhuang dance, with little involvement in Dunhuang Music. However, Shi Min's new work in 2023, *Dunhuang Dance Tutorial: Presentation of Male Music and Dance Images of Heavenly Music*^[18], only mentions Dunhuang Music and Dance, without delving into Dunhuang Musical Sounds themselves, merely providing some introductions about *Jialingpinjia* in *Wonderful Sounds of Jialingpinjia* in Section 2 of Chapter 3: Basic Training for Dynamic Presentation of Music and Dance. The word *Jialingpinjia* is found in Buddhist scriptures, which is a transliteration of Sanskrit Kalavinka, it is the image of the human head and bird body, which is very numerous in Dunhuang murals. The image is lively and vivid, and the shape is novel and unique. There are translations as Jialing Immortal Bird, Jialing and Jialing Bird, etc., which are also called "Beautiful voice Bird" because of their beautiful and melodious voices) beautiful and melodious voices.

3.2.2 Practical and Development of Dunhuang Music and Dance Art

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, after extensive study and accumulation, one of the choreographers of the 1979 version of *Silk Road Flower Rain*, Yan Jianzhong, and his mentor, artist Zhao Zhixun, created the chronological work *Dunhuang Music* in 1978. Through three chapters—upper, middle, and lower—they narrated the development process of Dunhuang Mogao Caves over more than 1,000 years from its establishment to its rebirth. When creating the third chapter, Yan Jianzhong said, *Dunhuang Music* had a diagrammatic structural form, making it impossible to integrate characters and stories; there was no way forward, and thoughts were stagnant. At this time, there was a call to create a complete dance drama. After several twists and turns, *Silk Road Flower Rain* began its initial gestation based on the upper chapter 'Establishing the Caves' of *Dunhuang Music*^[16]. The creators gradually realized that Dunhuang Mogao Caves are a treasure trove on the cultural corridor between China and foreign countries, formed along the Silk Road. They decided to place the repertoire within a larger historical context to explore themes, conceive stories, and set up characters. Thus, they formed a story framework with a higher thematic realm, presenting to people the friendship and cultural exchanges among various nations along the Silk Road.

The entire play of *Silk Road Flower Rain* takes the joys and sorrows of the Dunhuang painter Master Zhang and his daughter Yingniang as the main thread, telling the touching story of the father and daughter helping each other in life and death with the Persian merchant Yinuosi, forming an international friendship story that has been passed down for thousands of years. It vividly reproduces the profundity of Dunhuang culture and the splendid prosperity of the ancient Silk Road, promoting the excellent tradition of "friendly trade and mutual benefit" between China and foreign countries along the Silk Road. Many storylines can be found in historical events depicted in murals. For example, the experiences of Master Zhang and his daughter Yingniang easily remind people of the "Contract of Sculptor Zhao Sengzi and Dian'er" preserved in the Library Cave of Mogao Caves (now in the National Library of France in Paris). The plot where the Persian merchant Yinuosi encounters robbers can be seen in the scenes of "Hu Merchants Encountering Robbers" in Cave 402 and Cave 45^[38]. The touching scenes of merchants from various ethnic groups fearlessly carrying silk in the face of evil forces, standing together through life and death, are still intact and clear to this day. Inserting the scene of heavenly maidens scattering flowers from Buddhist scriptures into the plot adds a mysterious legendary color to the ancient Silk Road, reflecting people's yearning for a better life, thus moving the audience emotionally. From its successful premiere in Lanzhou on May 23, 1979, to its 40th anniversary in 2019, the play has been performed more than 2,880 times, toured over 40 countries and regions, and attracted more than 4.5 million audience members, being hailed as a "20th-century classic of Chinese dance."

On August 12, 2023, *Silk Road Flower Rain* was successfully performed at the Shandong Grand Theatre, with the venue packed. As the curtain slowly opened, the audience's eyes were drawn to the magnificent stage and graceful dance movements... After the performance, the audience burst into prolonged applause, and the performers took three curtain calls. Wang Juan, a citizen of Jinan, said after watching the performance: "I am a teacher. After watching *Silk Road Flower Rain*, I've decided to tell my students more about the history of the Silk Road in future classes. I hope my students remember that in the northwest of our motherland, there's a beautiful place called Dunhuang."

As of 2024, the play has been performed nearly 4,000 times, with more than 5 million live audience members. Besides live audiences, we can also evaluate the online influence and participation of the dance

drama through data such as views, likes, and comments on online platforms. It has created one miracle after another, writing a significant chapter in the history of Chinese dance dramas, becoming a successful example of "more performances and more outputs" in 21st-century Chinese stage art, and has earned the reputation of *the first brand of Western art*. Once again, it has brought high-quality music and dance masterpieces themed on Dunhuang art to the world^[39].

Dunhuang music and dance dramas represented by *Silk Road Flower Rain* have become treasures in China's music and dance drama field. Using China's five-thousand-year history as the timeline and focusing on the music and dance content, imagery, and dance forms of Dunhuang murals, these works have outlined the context of Chinese civilization over millennia. They continue to develop and innovate, awakening the passion of more music and dance art creators, and transforming their admiration for Dunhuang's excellent traditional culture into conscious actions in stage art. These works are continuously performed on stages domestically and internationally, not only bringing artistic enjoyment to audiences worldwide but also promoting the inheritance and development of Chinese culture.

4. Development Model of Dunhuang Music and Dance in China's Education Management

Dunhuang music and dance culture is an important part of China's traditional music and dance art. Focusing on the modern inheritance of Dunhuang music and dance culture involves exploring how to promote and develop it in modern society. This requires combining modern people's aesthetic concepts and needs to innovatively develop Dunhuang music and dance, making it both inherit traditional culture and meet modern aesthetics. Recreating the past glory of *Silk Road Flower Rain* and creating new Dunhuang music and dance works allow tradition and modernity to blend, showcasing the new charm of Dunhuang music and dance. We must start from China's education management and explore new models for developing and inheriting Dunhuang music and dance in aspects such as the construction of education management systems, exchange and cooperation, policy and funding support, expanding the effect of *Silk Road Flower Rain*, and the application of new AI technologies. Through new development models, we can protect and inherit the valuable cultural heritage of Dunhuang music and dance, rejuvenate ancient art with new vitality, and generate significant social value.

4.1 Creating a Dunhuang Music and Dance Education Management System

Inheriting and developing Dunhuang music and dance culture effectively: it is essential to integrate it into teaching practices and establish a specialized curriculum system. This approach will cultivate students' artistic literacy and innovative abilities, ensuring the continued inheritance and evolution of Dunhuang music and dance within education.

For instance, teaching materials such as Gao Jinrong's works *Teaching Outline for Basic Training in Dunhuang Dance*, *Dunhuang Dance Tutorial*, He Yanyun's monograph *Dunhuang Dance Training and Performance Tutorial* from the Beijing Dance Academy, and Shi Min's monograph *Dunhuang Dance Tutorial: Presentation of Music and Dance Images of Heavenly Music* have greatly supported dance education. These resources not only assist in the training of dance majors but also foster the development of high-level talents in Dunhuang dance, establishing a practical foundation for the Dunhuang dance discipline.

Integrating Dunhuang Music and Dance into Professional Courses: Incorporate the teaching of Dunhuang music and dance into relevant courses, such as music and dance programs. By studying the history, performance styles, and movements, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the fundamentals of Dunhuang music and dance. For instance, offer specialized courses in Dunhuang dance that cover basic movements, choreography, and the creation of dance dramas.

Offering Elective Courses for Hands-On Participation: Provide students with the opportunity to actively engage and practice through elective courses. They can learn basic movements while participating in the creation and performance of pieces, thereby enhancing their practical skills. Additionally, organize visits to Dunhuang murals and performances, offering a deeper appreciation and understanding of this rich cultural heritage.

Organizing Performances as Part of Course Practice: Allow students to experience the allure of Dunhuang music and dance firsthand. Invite both domestic and international performance teams to participate, fostering artistic exchange and collaboration through competitions and workshops. Additionally, record these performances and share them online, offering broader exposure to a wider audience.

Enhancing Collaborative Innovation: Foster the creation of cultural and creative products to embody the characteristics of Dunhuang music and dance between teachers and students, such as artworks, publications and costumes. This initiative aims to meet market demand and expand social influence. These products can serve as derivatives, allowing a wider audience to experience the charm of Dunhuang culture through various formats.

Holding High-Level Seminars: Invite domestic and international experts, scholars, and artists to discuss the inheritance and development of Dunhuang music and dance culture. These seminars will provide insights into current research trends and directions, offering guidance for future initiatives. Additionally, promote academic exchange and collaboration to advance research and enhance dissemination efforts.

4.2 Strengthening Exchange and Cooperation Inside and Outside Universities

Promoting Artistic Exchange and Collaboration: both domestically and internationally it is essential to build platforms for exhibitions and performances. This will enhance the popularity and influence of Dunhuang music and dance culture, facilitating its inheritance and development.

Establishing Cooperative Relationships: Universities, research institutions and enterprises should collaborate on research and preservation efforts. By integrating resources, we can elevate research quality and practical skills.

Applying Collaborative Results in Practice: Strengthening the application of collaborative outcomes in performances, teaching, and research can achieve resource sharing and mutual benefits. Incorporating co-developed works into classroom instruction and performances will enhance their impact.

Activating High-Quality Domestic Resources: Exploring deep integration models among troupes, colleges, and research institutes will lead to shared success. Developing performance models that combine tourism, culture, and creativity by launching new cross-media works and cultural products centered on Dunhuang elements supports the high-quality development of the cultural and tourism industries.

Combining Traditional Artistic with Modern Vision: Dunhuang serves as a treasure of multi-ethnic cultural exchange and a gene bank of human civilization. Cultivating talent in music and dance should creatively draw from classic culture while promoting the swift development of talent teams—an urgent and necessary endeavor.

Holding Exhibitions and Educational Activities: Enhancing public awareness and interest through exhibitions and educational outreach initiatives, such as campus and community events, will allow the public to personally appreciate the charm of Dunhuang culture through performances, lectures, and interactive experiences.

4.3 Leveraging the "Flying Apsara" Effect of Silk Road Flower Rain

The Flying Apsara music and dance in Silk Road Flower Rain have transcended art itself, possessing cultural, social, and financial value. The Flying Apsara has become a global social brand, with hundreds of enterprises and trademarks named after it, such as Flying Apsara TV Station, Flying Apsara Grand Hotel, Flying Apsara Seed Industry, and the Flying Apsara Television Award^[40]. Continuing to leverage this effect can drive the comprehensive revival of Dunhuang music and dance, forming widespread cultural consciousness across the country. Pioneering the integration of art and finance, combining public welfare and commercial performances, has paved a successful path for cultural development and artistic prosperity.

Promote Traditional Culture: Emphasize openness, exchange, inclusiveness, and innovation inherent in Dunhuang music and dance. Tell the Dunhuang story to the world, spread China's voice, and expand transformation into literary scripts, stage art, film and television, sculpture, crafts, urban landscapes, and trademarks. Produce a series of works and products reflecting rich cultural connotations, achieving artistic transformation and highlighting unique charm. In the context of globalization, create new culture with national characteristics and global recognition. Enhance acceptability, dissemination, and recognition of activated original cave art, strongly promoting cultural construction of the Belt and Road initiative.

4.4 Using Artificial Intelligence to Bring Flying Apsara to Life

With the development of artificial intelligence technology, we can now use advanced AI methods, such as SORA animation technology, to bring the music and dance murals of Dunhuang Mogao Caves into a new visual and perceptual dimension. These ancient, silent murals can be presented dynamically to showcase their unique artistic charm and profound cultural connotations. By using AI animation technology, the Flying Apsara figures are no longer static images but become vivid, lively characters with agility and strong storytelling. Audiences can see a "living" Flying Apsara dancer gracefully moving, "hear" harmonious melodies of ancient instruments, and feel the joyful atmosphere. This application not only restores artistic scenes from a thousand years ago but also allows modern people to deeply understand the emotions and spiritual pursuits of that era.

The use of AI greatly enhances the audience's experience and educational value. People can appreciate restored ancient art visually and experience the formation of Dunhuang studies from multiple levels such as musicology, dance studies, painting, architecture, aesthetics, philosophy, and cultural thought. AI makes these murals not just artistic displays but interactive educational platforms, allowing learning and feeling through interaction. It provides researchers with new angles to study ancient art and culture, helping better understand artistic intentions and social backgrounds. Combining traditional art with modern technology protects and inherits valuable cultural heritage and builds a bridge connecting past and future, revitalizing ancient art with new vitality and significance in modern society.

4.5 Strengthening Policy Support and Funding Investment

The government should formulate targeted policies to support and encourage the inheritance and development of Dunhuang music and dance art. For example, provide resources like rehearsal and performance venues and equipment, and offer opportunities for artists to create and research.

Establish Special Funds: Set up dedicated funds to support research, education, performance, and dissemination activities. These funds can finance creation, rehearsal, and performance of projects, as well as support education and talent cultivation.

Encourage Social Donations: The government should encourage donations from all sectors to support inheritance and development. Through donation channels and events, attract participation from enterprises, individuals, and other social forces.

Strengthen Project Approval and Supervision: Enhance project initiation, approval, and supervision to ensure reasonable use of funds. Establish specialized evaluation mechanisms to assess feasibility and benefits, ensuring effective use.

5. Conclusion

The inseparable trinity of poetry, music, and dance is the positioning for the future development of Dunhuang music and dance and the essence of inheriting its art, achieving harmony and unity between music and dance through traditional culture.

Seeking the lost musical scores from Dunhuang literature and finding corresponding dances in mural scenes is the breakthrough to interpreting mural musical scores, providing a pathway to overcome challenges in translating ancient notations.

Recommendations for the development model of Dunhuang music and dance in China's education management:

Create a Dunhuang Music and Dance Education Management System: Strengthen specialized education and practice.

Enhance Exchange, Cooperation, and Promotion: Improve public awareness of Dunhuang music and dance art.

Strengthen Policy and Funding Support: Ensure policies and funds are in place for inheritance and development projects.

Pioneer Integration of Public Welfare and Commercial Performances: Forge a successful path for cultural development and artistic prosperity.

Apply Advanced AI Technology: Bring ancient murals into a new visual dimension, making them

"come alive" to showcase unique artistic charm and profound cultural connotations, thereby prospering China's cultural and artistic endeavors.

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