

The Inheritance Value of the Bai Ma Tibetan Dance "Deng Ga Gan Zhou"

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the inheritance and protection of the Bai Ma Tibetan dance, specifically the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance. It provides an analysis of its historical and cultural background, performance forms and significance, as well as the current status and issues of its inheritance in contemporary society. Furthermore, it explores the value and significance of the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance in cultural heritage protection, ethnic cultural inheritance, and cultural exchange. The paper concludes by offering suggestions and measures for its further inheritance and development. Overall, the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is a treasure of the Bai Ma Tibetan people and serves as a "living fossil" of their culture, holding significant value for cultural heritage protection and ethnic cultural inheritance. Although there are challenges in its current inheritance and development, the value and significance of the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance are indispensable. Additionally, it is hoped that this study will stimulate reflection on the value of inheritance and protection of other intangible cultural dances.

Keywords

Bai Ma Tibetan, Deng Ga Gan Zhou, inheritance value, intangible cultural heritage.

1. Introduction

The culture of the Bai Ma Tibetan people is of great significance. As one of the oldest ethnic groups in East Asia, they have a long history and a rich ethnic culture that is rare both domestically and globally. Among the existing dance forms of the Bai Ma Tibetan people, two common types are the Nuo dance and the fire hoop dance. In recent years, Bai Ma culture has received attention from the government and scholars. In 2008, the Bai Ma Tibetan "Chi Ge Zhou" was included in the expanded list of the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage projects. In 2013, Longnan Teachers College compiled a large-scale dance epic called "Chi Ge Zhou." In 2015, the Wen County government arranged a large-scale song and dance drama called "Bai Ma Mark." The research on Bai Ma Tibetan folk culture is also gradually developing and moving in new directions. However, in this process, there have been some issues concerning the protection and inheritance of Bai Ma Tibetan folk dances. With the rapid economic growth and urbanization in the 21st century, the living environment, lifestyle, aesthetics, and labor patterns of the Bai Ma Tibetan people have undergone changes. The survival space for traditional culture has been gradually shrinking, and in recent years, some dance elements have almost disappeared, with performances becoming more modernized and losing their traditional meaning. The migration of young adults for work has also raised

concerns about the inheritance of Bai Ma Tibetan dances. As a dance researcher, there is a strong sense of urgency to protect and explore Bai Ma Tibetan dances. The dance forms of the Bai Ma Tibetan people are diverse and have their own unique style. The dances encompass multiple artistic characteristics, such as sacrificial, ceremonial, recreational, and folk elements. Among them, the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is an important cultural expression. In 2014, it was included in the fourth batch of national intangible cultural heritage list and is currently only preserved in Caodi Township, Jiuzhaigou County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. In Chinese, it is also known as "Xiongmao Wu" or "Mao Mao Wu." It is a unique form of Nuo dance specific to the Bai Ma Tibetan people, imitating the movements of pandas in a ritual dance. Every year from the 15th to the 18th day of the first lunar month, two young adults perform the dance in the local area. They wear panda masks and perform the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance with cow tails and hanging copper bells. The dance performance is creative, requiring the performers to showcase unique rhythm and dance skills, forming a distinctive artistic style. Studying the inheritance value of the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is of great significance for promoting the inheritance and development of Bai Ma Tibetan culture, enhancing cultural confidence, strengthening ethnic identity, and promoting cultural diversity and exchange. By researching the current status of inheritance, performance forms, historical and cultural background, as well as the significance and value of the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance in contemporary society, we can gain a deeper understanding of the ethnic culture and artistic traditions of the Bai Ma Tibetan people and contribute to the protection and inheritance of their culture.

2. The Historical and Cultural Background of the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" Dance

From the perspective of bathroom activities, the physiological factors that impose negative impacts on the elderly to engage in bathroom activities can be roughly separated into two aspects, namely, motor function and sensory function. On one hand, in terms of motor function, the degeneration of muscles and bones is expected to mitigate the flexibility of activities of the elderly, which means that the dominant force of the body is sometimes expected to be out of their own control. In such case, it is easy for the elderly to feel powerless in the bathroom activity, where mostly they need to rely on auxiliary facilities to complete those activities. On the other hand, in terms of sensory function, against the backdrop of the deterioration of sight, hearing, and smell, the ability of the body's different senses to transmit signals to the central system decreases, which will contribute to the fact that the elderly tend to be not sensitive to temperature. During the migration and transformation process of the Bai Ma Tibetan people, four major tribes and five clans naturally formed. The four major tribes are called "Duo Bu Yi Wo" (Pingwu Bai Ma Tibetan River Division), "E Bu Yi Wo" (Jiuzhaigou Bai River Division), "Ma Gai Yi Wo" (Xiatang or Xiayangdong Division), and "Ma Li Yi Wo" (Jiuzhaigou Bai River Division). Each tribe has its own unique cultural characteristics, including dance forms. The "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is specific to the Ma Gai Yi Wo tribe, which is mainly distributed in Caodi Township, Jiuzhaigou County, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

The "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is deeply rooted in the history and culture of the Bai Ma Tibetan people. It is believed to have originated from the ancient worship of the panda, which is a symbol of good luck and blessings in the Bai Ma Tibetan culture. The dance is performed

during the traditional Lantern Festival, which falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month. It is a ritual dance that serves as a way to pray for a good harvest, prosperity, and the well-being of the community.

3. Performance Forms and Significance of the " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" Dance

The performance of the " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance is characterized by its unique movements, costumes, and accompanying music. The dancers wear panda masks, cow tails, and hanging copper bells. The dance movements imitate the playful and agile behavior of pandas, with rhythmic jumps, spins, and gestures. The accompanying music consists of traditional instruments such as flutes, drums, and cymbals, creating a lively and festive atmosphere.

The " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance holds significant cultural and symbolic meanings for the Bai Ma Tibetan people. It embodies their reverence for nature, the panda as a sacred animal, and their spiritual connection with the natural world. The dance also reflects the unity and harmony of the community, as it is performed by two young adults representing the collective aspirations and blessings of the entire village.

4. Current Status and Issues of Inheritance

Despite its cultural significance, the " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance faces challenges in terms of its inheritance and development. The rapid social and economic changes in the 21st century have led to the migration of young adults for work, resulting in a decline in the number of individuals who can perform the dance. The modernization of performances and the loss of traditional meaning also pose threats to the authenticity and integrity of the dance. Additionally, the shrinking space for traditional culture in the face of urbanization further exacerbates the risk of cultural erosion.

5. Value and Significance in Cultural Heritage Protection and Ethnic Cultural Inheritance

The " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance possesses great value and significance in the context of cultural heritage protection and ethnic cultural inheritance. It is not only a unique artistic expression but also a carrier of intangible cultural heritage. By preserving and promoting the dance, the Bai Ma Tibetan people can maintain a strong cultural identity, enhance intergenerational bonds, and foster a sense of pride and belonging among community members. Furthermore, the dance serves as a bridge for cultural exchange and understanding between different ethnic groups, promoting cultural diversity and mutual respect.

6. Suggestions for Inheritance and Development

To ensure the continued inheritance and development of the " Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance, several suggestions and measures can be taken. Firstly, efforts should be made to strengthen the documentation and research of the dance, including its history, movements, and cultural significance. This will contribute to a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the dance. Secondly, educational programs and workshops can be organized to train and cultivate young dancers, passing down the knowledge and skills of the dance to future generations. Thirdly, collaborations between cultural institutions, local communities, and government

authorities can be established to provide support and resources for the protection and promotion of the dance. Lastly, raising awareness and appreciation of the dance among the wider public through performances, exhibitions, and cultural events can help to generate interest and support for its preservation.

In conclusion, the "Deng Ga Gan Zhou" dance of the Bai Ma Tibetan people holds significant inheritance value. It represents a cultural treasure and a living testament to their rich heritage. By recognizing its importance, implementing effective measures for its protection and promotion, and fostering a sense of cultural pride and identity, the Bai Ma Tibetan people can ensure the continued vitality and relevance of this unique dance form for future generations.

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