

Yugur Dance: Inheritance, Innovation and Dance Educational System

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Abstract:-Yugur dance carries the same characteristics of "dynastic history" as its national history. Besides, the ancient dance language of Yugur has already been an endangered culture. and only a few words are left about the ancient dance "style" of Yugu nationality in the national cultural heritage. As a result, people can only seek identity in "Yugur dance", which originated in national production and life and spread among Yugur ethnic groups, on the premise of academic identity of contemporary ethnic cultural diversity. This article explores the inheritance and innovation of Yugur dance and the construction of teaching system with reference to field practice data. From our point of view, today's inheritance and development of Yugur dance and the construction of teaching system have become the emphasis of research and teaching about Yugur dance. In the context of the development of national culture, the inheritance, development and teaching of Yugur dance is not only a vital carrier of national cultural self-confidence, but also a new consideration for the future development of the nation.

Keywords: Yugur; Dance Form; Inheritance and Development; Cultural Diversity

Introduction:

Yugur is one of the nations with a small population of about 14,000 in China and one of the unique ethnic minorities in Gansu Province, chiefly residing in Zhangye City and Jiuquan City in the middle of the "Hexi Corridor". The ethnic culture of Yugur is characterized by "internal diversity and external integration", and dance culture is one of the important manifestation carriers of Yugur's self-confidence, undertaking the mission of live transmission of Yugur culture. Today, "the inheritance, protection, development and development of national folk dance has always been a hot topic and focus of close attention by dance artists from all countries" (Shi Yuzu, 2007). In the new

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era of China, it has become a new opportunity and a new journey for the inheritance and development of national folk dance and the construction of dance discipline system, building a development bridge for the inheritance and innovation of Yugur dance and the construction of teaching system.

Body Text:

I. Inheritance and Innovation of Yugur Dance

As Yugur dance carries the characteristics of "dynastic history" in the national cultural heritage on account of external factors such as war, after the historical fault, the language and written description of Yugur dance are basically in a state of "undocumented", so Yugur dance is a new dance art, and the research on Yugur dance can only remain in the modern historical stage. "The research on Yugur dance has been going on for more than 70 years, from field practice to theoretical research to new creation of dance, from the emergence of musical dramas to the germination and development of dance teaching system in colleges and universities." (Quan Xianfeng, 2021). The development framework of Yugur dance from point to surface is constantly improving and developing, which lays the foundation of dance language, dance connotation and dance practice for today's dance inheritance and innovation of cultural core.

(I) Scientifically protect the high-quality "genes" of Yugur dance.

In most folk activities of any nation, Yugur dance is the witness of the development of folk culture, and the concentrated manifestation of human life customs in a certain region. Folk art activities, as cultural carriers, closely link dance art with people's lives, so that social culture and dance art can permeate and blend with each other. "National folk dance, as an artistic form that shows the national artistic style and cultural value of my country, is not only a cultural treasure, but also a fusion of modern civilization and art." (Ting Wang, Tao Yu, 2020). The dance forms remaining in the folk activities of Yugur as well as the records about dance in some documents and cultural relics are crucial ways to study the traditional forms of Yugur dance at present, and these traditional dance forms must be protected and passed on. The development of Yugur dance at present, traditional dance embodies Yugur people's special feelings for life. Thus, dance workers need to collect a lot of folk songs and folk rhymes and sort out the materials of Yugur dance and create brand-new dance works endowed with special meanings by certain methods, such as being close to society, life and the masses." (Deng Xiaojuan, Zhou Qing, May 2012). Furthermore, they can introduce the traditional dance cases currently remaining in folk activities into the folk dance classes of colleges and universities or the elective courses of junior and senior high schools by virtue of the conditions of the school. Both middle schools and colleges and universities offer the elective courses of dance art appreciation. To systematically sort out and analyze the styles and characteristics of folk dance of Yugur is to strive for Yugur folk dance to inherit its own culture in the course of development, without losing the essential factor that embodies the national character, that is, the thick and simple dance performance style. If the natural factors weaken or disappear, the dance art

will lose its soil and vitality. Thus, while retaining the original style essence of the existing Yugur dance, dance workers should learn and absorb the art forms of other dances in a planned way in combination with the characteristics of the current times, and open up a new way for the development of Yugur dance. Scilicet "despite the cultural diversity in dance movements and contexts, the primary communicative functions of dance may be the same across societies." (Fink Bernhard, Bläsing Bettina, Ravignani Andrea et al, 2021).



(Figure 1 Traditional Dance Costumes of Yugur)

(II) Reasonably inherit and develop the essence of Yugur dance

1. Innovation and development of dances

Ethnic minorities tell the next generation about their own history and impart production skills and hunting experience by means of folk dances. The inheritance of folk culture is a common feature of ethnic minorities in different regions. Even if some ethnic minorities are only in possession of their own language but no characters (Yugur and Dongxiang nationalities), they can also carry part of their own historical culture and folk culture on the strength of Yugur dance, which is considered as this kind of situation. "Yugur dance culture is one of the cores of Yugur culture, an artistic presentation of Yugur people's life and a 'living history book' marking the survival and development of Yugur." (Quan Xianfeng, 2018).

"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." (Fen Li, 2020). For historical reasons, Yugur people used to roam the Qilian Mountains all the year round for a living. In their geographical location, the east and northeast and the vast living areas of Han nationality are interlaced with each other; the northwest and north are adjacent to Kazak and

Mongolian residential areas; there is only a mountain between the south and the southwest and the Hui and Tibetan communities in Qinghai.

Thus, prior to liberation, the living environment and region of Yugur people were often squeezed and interfered by the surrounding ethnic groups in order to survive, which also forced Yugur people's life style to be fast-paced, and then this life style was fully manifested in the dances they created, making Yugur people's dance rhythm to be simple, bright, fast and untidy. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, auspicious dances celebrating harvest and joy also appeared in Yugur dance art, with obvious rhythm. If Yugur dance is to develop, it is necessary to innovate first. The innovation of ethnic Yugur dance is presented from its theme content and performance form.

First, It is necessary to create and adapt while inheriting the original dance foundation of Yugur. We have to study and develop the traditional advantages while bring vitality to Yugur dance. As prerequisite, it is necessary to get familiar with the traditional culture, style and rhythm characteristics of Yugur dance, so as to further generalize and extract valuable and meaningful dance vocabulary. The new Yugur dance works created in this way will not lose the traditional characteristics of their own nation, but incorporate new language elements, which in this essay, refers to the main elements or themes that constitute the dance vocabulary. Then, dance workers must deeply experience Yugur people's life and make artistic arrangement and reproduction of life situations. Art comes from life, and definitely, dance is no exception. In the course of concrete observation and experience of life, from the perspective of methodology, they should see the essence through phenomena and sum up the characteristics of Yugur people's life, in a bid to artistically adapt the daily life movements and artistically reproduce Yugur people's life situations. Last, dance workers should absorb the excellent features of other ethnic dances, because the national culture of each nation will be influenced by other nations to varying degrees in the course of development, and dance art is no exception.

2. Communication mode of Yugur dance

I. Develop Yugur dance in the form of cultural communication. Scientists should study the Yugur's historical context, social culture, all types of folk activities and documents in a thorough and clear manner. Ethnic dance is one of the manifestations of a nation's history and culture, and the development of Yugur dance will be more meaningful with a large number of relevant historical documents and materials as theoretical basis and guidance. Apart from that, they should research the origin history of Yugur dance, the development context and changes of its style and characteristics more scientifically from the perspectives of sociology, history and archaeology by consulting the murals of Yugur dance, unearthed cultural relics and documents.

II. Develop Yugur dance with all-out publicity, that is, increase the popularity of Yugur dance through all sorts of media publicity. It also includes setting relevant traditional culture courses in

schools, collecting historical and cultural materials by art groups, creating dances with distinct traditional cultural elements, and inheriting and developing the high-quality genes of Yugur dance, which also requires folk or government organizations to set up relevant funds or institutions, hold as many Yugur's national dance competitions as possible, etc. These ways can motivate Yugur people, enhance their national pride, further lay the foundation for the development of Yugur dance, and increase the inheritance and protection of Yugur dance.

III. Develop Yugur dance by means of science and technology. Taking the Sounds of Nature - Yugur as the representative, modern technologies such as computer and stage lighting have been extensively used, which has become the symbolic feature of modern dance art. It is necessary to make Yugur dance spread more extensively and recognized by more people by use of science and technology, innovate the dance itself in technology and stage art design first, and then spread Yugur dance on the strength of the Internet.

Nowadays, even the dances of other nations with a long history and distinctive personality are in the living space of society, and the development situation takes on an almost diversified trend, and Yugur dances are flourishing, specifically as below:

1. Yugur Dance in the Form of Stage Art

The Yugur dance began to be put on the stage in the 1960s. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, owing to social stability and the encouragement of the Party and state policies, the dances of ethnic minorities gradually recovered their vitality and developed and prospered after experiencing hardships. Therein, Yugur dance also made enormous progress, many new Yugur dance works were created through the unremitting efforts of dance workers, and the performances imposed a good social impact. "In 1974, after the establishment of Wulan Muqi Art Troupe in Sunan County, the Yugur folk dance works such as Milk Lamb and Greeting the Wedding Road were newly created." (Deng Xiaojuan, Zhou Qing, 2012.05). These dances carry strong Yugur characteristics, and they are all made by dance workers after a long time of in-depth exploration and arrangement of Yugur people's living and working situation and customs and etiquette, which makes these excellent dances show strong vitality on the stage.

2. Development of contemporary Yugur dance

At the end of the 20th century, China began to carry out the reform and opening-up policy, and then the process of global economic integration emerged, and all sorts of literary thoughts and artistic forms came into being. While these new ideas and forms occupy a place in society, they naturally exert an enormous impact on traditional culture and artistic forms, even in the economically underdeveloped northwest region. However, there are still a large number of specialized researchers and dancers of Yugur dance who launch rigorous textual research and exploration while inheriting their own national traditions, make constantly development and innovation, and perfect Yugur dance through many modern dance techniques. Besides, they have not abandoned the fundamental

characteristics of Yugur culture, and the strong and simple dance style is the foundation of Yugur's national character, which must not be abandoned. If these fundamental characteristics are weakened in dance, the national characteristics will be lost as a result. Hence, as mentioned above, they should combine the characteristics of the times while retaining the essence of the original Yugur dance style, and learn from the high-quality elements of other ethnic dances, so as to create a new way and provide new strength for the development of Yugur dance. It is precisely because of their efforts that the number of Yugur dance works on the stage increases that the road of prosperous development begins,



(Figure 2: Yugur Dance Costumes)

"such as: Toast Song, New Yugur Wedding, Clouds on the Other Side of the Mountain and other dance works." (Zhong Zhifeng, 2018). Moreover, they should study and discuss the dance language and the value of dance art more openly. For example, the elements with Yugur cultural symbols are refined and summarized, and the movements are integrated into the editing process of Yugur modern dance, making the works carry distinct characteristics of the times, which can strongly reflect the traditional cultural inheritance, life taste and aesthetic tendency of the Yugur people at present. After the efforts of scholars who have been focusing on and studying Yugur dance for more than 50 years, Yugur dance has been inherited in the course of excavation, and besides, there have been many innovations and developments in spreading abroad. As a constantly developing and changing cultural form, the objectively existing Yugur dance bears on history and raises

expectations for the future. Now science and technology will change many things every day. What all our Yugur's cultural researchers and dancers think about is how Yugur dance can adapt to the development of the current era after applying to become "intangible cultural heritage", and whether it can continue to develop and innovate on the achievements already made, and also inherit its own national characteristics to further develop and improve it. It is necessary to constantly put forward a series of opinions and suggestions on the development of contemporary Yugur dance art, in order to realize the development of Yugur dance.

In conclusion, just like other ethnic minority dances get nutrition from folk customs, Yugur dance is also provided with its unique style characteristics and aesthetic value owing to the particularity of its own national historical development. The continuous inheritance and development requires the protection and inheritance of all sorts of folk activities, so that the soil for its survival can be guaranteed and developed. Only in this way can there be a place for ethnic dance in many modern arts, so that it can stand out among many dances and carry forward and spread excellent Yugur culture.

II. Build a training system of Yugur dance

(I) Build a complete teaching method system

To build a complete teaching method system, dance teachers are required to explore the dynamic characteristics of national dances and give them a breakdown. "The teaching of Chinese national folk dances has shaped a certain paradigm in the course of more than 60 years' development. Along with the reform and innovation of folk dance teaching of ethnic groups, it is necessary to break through the unified teaching mode and take a unique path with specific methodology." (Xu Mei, 2011). The construction of the training system of Yugur dance also is also provided with its own characteristics and particularity.

Firstly, it is essential to attach importance to the nationality of Yugur dance. "The spread and inheritance of every ethnic dance both lay emphasis on this aspect - 'nationality'. In teaching practice, nationality is chiefly reflected in the refining and processing of materials, the design and arrangement of movements and the manifestation of dance emotions." (Wang Xinyuan, 1999.02). Thus, the nationality of Yugur dance is reflected from two aspects: I. The multicultural fusion of Yugur dance makes its dance materials carry unique dynamic rhythm. II. As far as the teacher's mastery of nationality in the teaching process is concerned, it is mainly that the teacher should deeply understand and study Yugur dance, and accurately integrate nationality into dance teaching actions in the teaching process, in order to give students a more intuitive feeling and understanding.

Moreover, the structure of teaching materials of Yugur dance should be taken into account. "Standardization and systematicness are indispensable attributes of teaching materials. As the teaching materials, it has to be systematic and scientific, thus the specific teaching method can be operated quantitatively. It must reflect the regularity of the object, in a bid to draw an analogy, find

out the movements and combinations with typical training significance from a large number of original folk dance materials, and conduct development and creation taking this as a starting point, and finally form a set of training system with the meaning of 'elements'"(Wang Xinyuan, 1999.02). Thus, to establish the teaching materials of Yugur dance, it is necessary to classify, refine and sort out the teaching combination with Yugur dance characteristics. Similarly, "stage performance" is a new situation after the functional theory of dance structure. The national characteristics and national identity have also been further strengthened during the performance of dance works. Almost every minority dance is provided with a strong social function and cultural function. However, the national dance performances created and performed at present are also faced with obvious shortcomings. Most of them have turned into rigid artistic forms of performance, and rarely reflect the cultural characteristics and regional characteristics of their own nation. As a traditional cultural form, they lack the traditional cultural environment on which ethnic Yugur dances depend.

(II) Reform of Teaching Forms and Individualized Teaching

In the known dance teaching or stage practice at present, what can be seen is nominally Yugur dance works. It is clearly learned from the subject matter and basic dance movements that it is impacted by other ethnic cultural factors, and the degree is gradually deepening. Thus, there is no unique cultural symbol of Yugur dance. Therefore "starts with the artistic value of folk dances, looking for specific ways to promote the reform of folk dance teaching in colleges and universities, hoping to make suggestions for other teachers." (Ting Wang, Tao Yu.2020)

In individual teaching, it is chiefly to inherit the "high-quality genes" of the nation. The most basic and symbolic rhythm features, ethnic costumes and props of Yugur dance are utilized to a full extent. Some scholars and experts hold that Yugur dance language is also influenced by Tibetan dance and Mongolian dance due to the influence of Mongolian and Tibetan culture, and its performance form is a compound dance performance form of Tibetan dance and Mongolian dance. Besides being influenced by Tibetans, Mongolians and Uighurs, Yugur dance carries a large number of cultural characteristics belonging to its own nation; it is only by its own national vitality that it has been continuously integrated and developed, otherwise it has already been eliminated by history. Undoubtedly, as a form of culture, it is bound to be impacted by other cultures, which is provided with both advantages and disadvantages. It depends on how this nation treats the influence of foreign cultures, whether it is inclusive or blindly exclusive. Definitely, exclusion can make its own national culture more pure, but it will be trapped in a self-trapped circle, which is not conducive to the inheritance of national culture. In today's environmental situation, it is a historical choice to take its own national culture as the leading factor and accept other cultures.

"In the teaching of ethnic dance, it is not suggested to not only focus on the teaching guidance of body shape and dancing posture, but also dig deep into the culture behind ethnic dance, in a bid to truly return the dance education to its original nature and enhance the students' cultural and artistic

experience." (Kong Weina, 2020). In the teaching course of Yugur dance, teachers should divide the dance practice teaching into several parts in detail, and conduct targeted training respectively. For example, it can be divided into training with prop combination, with the main props of horn drum, swan piano, grandma's bag, etc.; combining comprehensive performances, which can add story scenes such as wedding and shaving to training, in a bid to grasp the connotation of Yugur dance movements more clearly and inherit Yugur characteristics and Yugur dance culture from teaching, which also becomes the embodiment of individuation of Yugur dance teaching.

Conclusion:

In the process of material collection and essay writing, it is found that the traditional Yugur dance is basically lost in the community memory of Yugur people, however, it can't be neglected that in the development history of Yugur, the traditional Yugur dance did exist, with distinct ethnic characteristic and regional cultural features. It was as same as the northwest minority dance, sharing the same enriched dance language and this statue had lasted very long time. The Yugur people in the new era and the workers who inherit and study Yugur dance have affirmed the inheritance and innovation of Yugur dance in the new era, the construction of teaching system of dance theory teaching and practice and the recognition of the promotion effect of development of national dance on their own cultural self-confidence, and fully agreed that the inheritance and innovation of Yugur dance culture and the construction of teaching system are the important cultural characteristics of external recognition of their own national culture and an important embodiment of enhancing national self-confidence.

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