

## Original Paper

# On the New Development of Chinese Folk Dance

Hongye Chen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arts College of Sichuan University, Sichuan Chengdu, 610207, China

Received: September 26, 2022      Accepted: October 15, 2022      Online Published: October 17, 2022

doi:10.22158/jecs.v6n4p60

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v6n4p60>

### Abstract

*Chinese folk dance originated from people's working life and is a deduction of local people's life, customs and spirit. It is created and performed independently by the people and gradually developed into a traditional culture with local characteristics. From the perspective of multi-culture, the traditional folk dance has been impacted to a certain extent, especially in the youth stage. In order to change this situation and promote the new development of folk dance, certain measures must be taken to inherit and carry forward the folk dance based on the actual situation. This paper discusses the origin and development of Chinese folk dance, briefly outlines the inheritance and development strategies of Chinese folk dance, and promotes the new development of Chinese folk dance based on protection.*

### Keywords

*Chinese folk dance, Inheritance, Recent advance*

## 1. Overview of the Origin and Development of Chinese Folk Dances

In Cihai, folk dance is defined as “a traditional dance form that is widely spread among the people and has distinctive national style and local characteristics.” Has a long history, in the process of people from generation to generation gradually evolved into a very local characteristic of traditional culture, widely circulated. The content of folk dances from ancient times to the present includes hunting life in primitive society, group war, tribal totem belief, and worship to reproduction; In modern life, the entertainment activities of traditional festivals, such as national customs, sacrifices, and etiquette, are rich in content, and most of them are group dances, with the people singing and dancing in a lively atmosphere. Chinese folk dance has a historical record dating back to the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties in 770 b.c., and the folk dance figure drawn on the ancient painted pottery unearthed highlights the long history of Chinese folk dance. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, dance categories were gradually enriched. Explicit records included elegant dance, Yu dance, Wen dance, Nuo dance, and Wu dance. Dancers Xi Shi and Timo were recorded by later

generations. History books recorded that Xi Shi was good at dancing and tinkling. Bells were often tied on her dancing clothes. When dancing, the bells sounded clear and melodious. Qin and Han dynasties, the northern and southern dynasties Zhao Feiyan, such as Mrs Qi dance lithe and graceful; To the sui and tang dynasties dance and folk life more closely linked, the emergence of music and dance institutions; In Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, dance was integrated with traditional culture and opera, thus enriching cultural connotation. After the founding of New China in 1949, China's folk dance developed rapidly, with a wide range of topics and a large number. It was widely circulated among the people. Subject to the constraints of certain national culture and local customs, the forms of folk dance in different regions varied, and there were differences in performance skills and styles. However, all of them were forms in which the masses expressed their emotions and transmitted information by using body gestures in production activities. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China more than 50 years ago, 56 ethnic groups in our country have been united and friendly. The folk dances of all ethnic groups have developed rapidly on their original basis. The folk dances gradually present a beautiful scene of flowers blooming and a hundred schools of thought contending.

## **2. Main Types of Chinese Folk Dances**

Chinese folk dance provides creative inspiration for professional dance. Chinese opera and innovative dance learn from folk dance to some extent. Classical dance, theatre dance, popular dance and folk dance are inextricably linked. However, folk dances still exist independently in their original scope. Through generations, they have formed unique folk dances with local characteristics, which are divided into five categories based on their functions, i.e., sacrificial offerings, self-entertainment, etiquette, and production and labor transmission. At present, the dances are generally divided into five categories, i.e., festival customs, living customs, etiquette customs, beliefs and customs, and labor customs.

### *2.1 Festival and Custom Dances*

Festivals and customs dances are mainly performed during festivals, such as the Spring Festival, the Double Ninth Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and other festivals. They are used to celebrate the festival and express the joy and joy of the people. For example, the "Guzi Yangge", which is widely spread in Shandong Province, is mainly performed during the Spring Festival, using umbrellas, drums, sticks and other props. It is recorded that it appeared in the Jiajing Period of the Ming Dynasty and has survived to this day.

### *2.2 Life Customs Dance*

Life custom dances are mainly competitive dances used by people to amuse themselves, express their love, socialize to choose a spouse, perform and perform, or have a strong body. They are forms of dances performed by people in their spare time. They have various forms and few restrictions.

### *2.3 Etiquette Customs Dance*

The ritual and custom dances are often used in funerals, sacrificial ceremonies, military ceremonies,

birthday ceremonies, weddings, bar mitzvahs, fertility ceremonies, and other major occasions.

#### *2.4 Beliefs and Customs of Dance*

The belief custom dance is a folk belief dance from all over the country. Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam and so on have their own special dance forms, such as: Buddhism's Bodhisattva Manwu, folk Taoist dance Zui Baxian and so on.

#### *2.5 Labor Custom Dance*

The scope of the labor custom dance has not yet been clearly defined. It refers to various folk dances used to celebrate the harvest. The main form is the harvest season in East China. For example, northeast Korea will dance "agricultural music and dance" during the harvest season with rich movements. The most local characteristics are "dancing tambourines" and "throwing elephant hats", which express people's joy during the harvest season.

### **3. Analysis of the Characteristics of Chinese Folk Dances**

#### *3.1 Self-entertainment*

Self-entertainment, as the most important feature of Chinese folk dance, emphasizes that folk dance mainly focuses on self-entertainment. People dance mainly for themselves, which lies in entertaining themselves instead of showing others. Folk dance generally expresses people's love for life. Through dancing, people can enrich their daily life, obtain pleasant psychology and always maintain a positive and optimistic attitude towards life.

#### *3.2 Improvisation*

Folk dance movements are relatively simple and easy to be accepted and mastered by the broad masses of the people. Its dance form, performance form and dance movements are relatively low in constraint and relatively variable. Under the same rhythm, as long as the steps, rhythms and movements are generally consistent, the dancers can freely perform according to their own wishes. Impromptu dancing can be conducted so that the people in the villages can participate fully to form a large-scale dance.

#### *3.3 Stability*

Chinese folk dance is generally the embodiment of the cultures of all regions and all ethnic groups. Its cultural customs, national spirit, national characteristics and aesthetic pursuit are all reflected in folk dance. Its stability refers to the folk dance in a certain geographical, environmental and cultural constraints, in its development process is less affected by the outside world, although in continuous development, but relatively stable, little change.

### **4. Research on the Effective Strategies of Inheritance and Development of Chinese Folk Dances**

#### *4.1 The Protection of Chinese Folk Dance*

In recent years, with the national attention to folk dance, the state has issued a series of policies to protect Chinese folk dance, and the promulgation of relevant protection laws, which indicates that the non-moral protection and inheritance of folk has received the support of the state. Under the

implementation of a series of policies, people have gradually realized the folk dance and have made certain achievements in the protection of folk dance. Some of the endangered traditional folk dances have been listed in the national intangible cultural heritage, such as “ulla manchu yangge” in Jilin city, “Wang Gui dragon dance lamp” in Huangshan city, “yi people’s flower drum dance” in Yuxi city, “zhuang people’s pole” in Hechi city, and “doye” in Liuzhou city, which have effectively protected the folk dances. The government encourages folk dancers to show their traditional folk dances on the Internet, and takes advantage of modern Internet technologies, such as short videos, to lead people to understand folk dances. The government also provides some financial support to the dancers, thus promoting the protection of folk dances to become more perfect. However, in some areas due to inadequate publicity, some people have not yet realized the need to protect the folk dance, folk dance protection is not in place, based on this requirement of local governments to increase the protection of folk dance and inheritance publicity efforts, mobilize the people’s strength, to achieve the participation of the whole people, to jointly protect the folk dance, to promote the development and growth of folk dance.

#### *4.2 Inheritance of Chinese Folk Dance*

The new development of folk dance needs to be inherited on the basis of protection. Especially in the current network development period, under the impact of multi-culture, attention should be paid to the inheritance of folk dance, focusing on youth groups, to expand the influence of folk dance, to stimulate young people’s love of folk dance, and to urge young people to become the backbone of the inheritance and development of folk dance.

##### *4.2.1 Organize Folk Dance Activities to Expand Its Influence*

Folk dances are produced in people’s daily life, showing people’s yearning for life, love of festivals, praise of harvest, etc., which are closely related to people’s lives. Folk dance has certain regional characteristics. Local organizations can organize folk dance activities to strengthen people’s cognition and expand their influence, thus promoting people’s inheritance of folk dance. At the same time, with the development of the tertiary industry, especially the tourism industry, folk dances are gradually linked to the local tourism resources. All localities can strengthen the publicity to promote foreign tourists to feel the strong folk dance culture, display national characteristics, let more and more people know about folk dances, and promote the inheritance and development of folk dances.

##### *4.2.2 Mobilize Folk Artists to Pass on from Generation to Generation*

The majority of folk dances are inherited by folk artists and lack of organization and management, which is not conducive to the inheritance of folk dances. Based on this, the government can mobilize local folk dancers to form a folk dance organization, providing a stage and opportunity for one folk to perform, allowing the folk dance to appear in the public view, and protecting and inheriting the local folk dance. At the same time, it can attract interested teenagers as inheritors, cultivate outstanding successors of folk dances in the new era, realize the intergenerational transmission, and shoulder the important task of protecting and inheriting folk dances.

#### 4.2.3 To Carry out School Education, Cultivate the Interest of Young People

Young people, as the backbone of folk dance cultural heritage at this stage, can appropriately carry out folk dance teaching activities in school education, or organize folk dance interest classes to stimulate young people's interest in folk dance, and guide young people to learn more about and inherit folk dance. In actual teaching, young people with strong interest can be selected for key training to effectively promote the inheritance of folk dances. In the teaching process, dance teachers should not only teach the dance itself, but also pay attention to the guidance of students' thoughts, strengthen theoretical teaching, lead teenagers to learn folk dance in depth, understand its cultural customs and national characteristics, etc., so as to urge teenagers to appreciate its essence in the process of learning folk dance, and lay a foundation for the follow-up innovation of folk dance. In addition, in the period of development of modern network technology, dance teachers can also choose online teaching, make use of their spare time to produce folk dance teaching videos and upload them to the network, so as to enable interested teenagers to learn independently, improve their folk dance literacy and promote the new development of folk dance.

#### 4.3 *Developing Chinese Folk Dance*

In line with the development of the times, Chinese folk dances should take the essence and discard the dross. Its innovative development needs to incorporate new elements on the basis of retaining the original essence of folk dances, create folk dance teaching, create thinking collisions, motivate dancers to innovate in folk dances, and promote the continuous innovation and development of folk dances.

##### 4.3.1 Adapting to the Development of the Times, Innovating Chinese Folk Dance

The new development of folk dance must be based on the protection and inheritance of folk dance culture, conform to the development of the new era, realize the integration and development of folk traditional dance and multi-culture, and innovate folk dance. Under the influence of foreign culture, people's ideas are gradually opening up, especially the western dance culture is seriously eroding the youth. To promote the new development of folk dance on this basis, attention should be paid to strengthening the cognition of the original folk dance culture, looking at the folk dance from a developmental perspective, following the new requirements of people for dance at the present stage, incorporating the modern development concept to make appropriate innovation, promoting more and more people to know and love the folk dance, and promoting the development of the folk dance.

##### 4.3.2 Integrate New Elements and Retain the Essence of Folk Dance

From the perspective of multi-culture, the development of folk dance can appropriately integrate new elements while retaining its original dance essence to promote the innovative development of folk dance. In this process, emphasis is placed on the understanding and inheritance of the traditional culture of folk dance, following the folk dance culture, national customs, national spirit, national aesthetics, etc., and constantly exploring and innovating, strengthening the communication with dancers, resulting in ideological collision, so that the folk dance can achieve innovative development to a certain extent. For example, the Xinjiang dance "Sainaim Dance" mainly includes raising eyebrows

and moving eyes, shaking head and neck, clapping hands and flipping fingers, etc. When making innovations, the original dance features such as “moving neck”, “making eyes”, “flipping fingers” and “raising feet” must be preserved. On this basis, appropriate innovations should be made to integrate western and modern dance culture and promote its innovation and development.

#### 4.3.3 Create Folk Dance Teaching to Promote the New Development of Folk Dance

In order to promote the new development of folk dance, we can create folk dance teaching activities in the national region, attract people who love folk dance to participate, and inject new vitality into the development of folk dance. In the process of actual establishment, attention should be paid to the regionality of folk dances, and dance teaching should be carried out according to the types of local folk dances to ensure that participants have strong national culture and accomplishment to a certain extent. In the teaching process, it is necessary to strengthen the communication and interaction among the dancers, to stimulate the dancers' innovative consciousness, to break the ideological boundaries, and to promote the new development of folk dance in the exchange of ideas and innovative interaction.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, China's folk dance originated from the people's labor activities in daily life, showing the local cultural customs, habits and etiquette sacrifice, in the historical development has gradually evolved into a very local ethnic characteristic of traditional culture, has a long history. At the present stage, the new development of folk dance should be inherited and developed on the basis of protection, and relevant measures should be actively taken to conform to the trend of the times, incorporate new elements in a timely manner and promote the continuous development of folk dance culture.

## References

- Bi, D. (2017). The new era of China folk dance artistic charm. *Music life*, (09), 84-85.
- Dou, J. X. (2022). On the new development of Chinese folk dance. *Peony*, (14), 101-103.
- Gao, S. (2022). New media dance in the context of Chinese folk dance overseas dissemination of research. *Art evaluation*, (16), 53-56.
- Gao, Y. J. (2020). Chinese folk dance cultural heritage. *Art Kam*, (23), 112-113.
- Li, M. (2020). *Chinese folk dance creation of cultural consciousness and language innovation research* (Master's degree thesis). Yunnan Academy of Arts. Retrieved from <https://kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202102&filename=1020975413.nh>
- Liu, Y. X. (2018). China folk art composition on the guiding significance of dance research. *Intelligence*, (32), 196-198.
- Mu, X. Y. (2021). Chinese folk dance technology research. *Grand View (Forum)*, (11), 57-58.
- Ni, C. X., & Ouyang, J. T. (2018). China folk dance repertoire development and changes in research-to date after the founding of New China folk dance repertoire as an example. *Art Kam*, (27), 191-192.

- Tan, X. Y. (2019). The characteristics of Chinese folk dance and its integration with modern dance. *Scenic spots*, (01), 193.
- Tang, Y. (2018). China dance teaching and training analysis. *China artists*, (08), 244.
- Tong, Y. (2014). China's new trend of national dance thinking. *The motherland*, (02), 10.
- Zhao, R. X. (2020). The development of Chinese folk dance: cross-cultural influence. *Art Grand View*, (10), 73-74.