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Study on the Costume Modeling of the Baishou Dance of the Tujia Nationality in Enshi

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Abstract:
This study explores the styling characteristics and cultural significance of the Baishou dance costumes of the Tujia nationality in Enshi. It highlights the functionality and practicality of these costumes, which are designed to ensure that dancers experience comfort and flexibility during performances. The colors and patterns used in the costumes reflect the Tujia people's reverence for nature and totems, as well as their hopes for good fortune and happiness. This artistic expression vividly represents the community's aspirations for joy and prosperity. Consequently, the Baishou dance costumes of the Enshi Tujia people serve as a visual manifestation of stage art and a tangible connection to the Tujia people's rich history, unique culture, and noble national spirit.

Keywords:
Enshi, Tujia Nationality, Baishou dance, clothing, culture

1.Introduction

Each ethnic group possesses its own myths, legends, folk tales, and pictorial symbols that carry specific meanings. Over time, these cultural elements have evolved into a rich and complex cultural system through processes of accumulation, differentiation, and integration. For people without a written language, their myths, legends, and pictorial symbols serve as a record of their national identity and embody profound cultural significance. These communities express their thoughts and pass down their civilization through these symbols and their meanings. [1]

The Baishou Dance of the Tujia nationality is recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage. It serves as a significant symbol of the rich traditional culture of this ethnic group and showcases a unique blend of artistic charm alongside its deep historical roots [2]. The costumes worn during the Baishou Dance play a crucial role not only in the visual representation of the performance but also as symbolic carriers of the Tujia people's material civilization and spiritual culture. It's important to highlight that the Tujia, a populous nation without a written language, rely more on tangible forms to record their history and culture. Therefore, studying the costumes of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance is essential for preserving and developing this cultural tradition. It also enriches contemporary costume design by incorporating regional cultural elements and contributing to the understanding of regional culture, traditional patterns, and costume modeling. Furthermore, this study offers new perspectives on the innovative development of both the Baishou Dance and

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its costumes, fostering cultural confidence and identity. There is hope that this traditional culture can evolve while retaining its rich cultural significance.

2. The Origin and Development of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance

2.1 Origin of Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance

The origins of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance have been widely acknowledged and analyzed by various scholars. Over time, the Pendulum Dance has evolved into a folk dance that combines elements of sports, entertainment, and artistic performance. Its historical roots can be examined from three perspectives: folklore, rituals and prayers, and everyday life and labor.

In folklore, the “Laifeng County Records” from the Qing Dynasty recount a story about the “Pushe Tree.” During the Five Dynasties period, there was a Pushe Tree in Manshu village that was revered as a miraculous tree [3]. The descendants of the Tan family would often gather to sing and dance beneath its branches. The Tujia ancestors lived and worked here in peace and contentment, and the tradition of dancing around trees gradually evolved into the Baishou dance. Another legend traces its origin back to military warfare: the Tusi King invited his subordinates to dance to boost morale and celebrate victory. To commemorate the Tusi King, later generations passed down the hand-waving dance from generation to generation and integrated it into the daily life of the Tujia people. While these folk tales may seem mysterious and their authenticity is yet to be confirmed, they showcase the distinct artistic nature of the Tujia people.

From the perspective of sacrifice and blessing, the "Yongshun County Annals" state that "To this day, the Tujia temple holds annual competitions, and the waving hand dance is especially popular during festivals [4]." This confirms the relationship between the waving hand dance and sacrificial activities and that it is a dance used by the Tujia people to perform sacrifices and pray for blessings. The Tujia people express their respect for their ancestors and love for their leaders through the hand-waving dance and remember the great achievements of their ancestors. In the dance, they pray for good weather and prosperity for their descendants, and at the same time warn the descendants not to forget the kindness of their ancestors and recall the hardships of starting a business, vividly reproducing the life scenes of the Tujia ancestors.

From the perspective of daily life and labor, the movement characteristics and content of the Baishou dance are derived from the daily life practice of most Tujia people [5]. The dance incorporates elements of farming activities such as transplanting rice seedlings, sowing seeds, and weaving. It is not only an artistic reproduction of production life but also an important way to celebrate the harvest. It is worth noting that the unique "Shunguai" (same hand and same foot) and "bending knees" movements in the dance are a vivid portrayal of the living environment of the Tujia people. It reflects that the Tujia people have lived in the mountains and dangerous roads for generations. They must use the same hands and feet posture to adapt to the rugged terrain. This living habit is naturally integrated into the dance.

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2.2 Development of Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance

The Baishou dance is a grand collection of Tujia traditional culture, which fully reflects the historical changes, agricultural work, and living customs of the Tujia people. It is a microcosm of the production and life of the Tujia people. However, under the impact of cultural globalization, the waving hand dance is disappearing in the tide of the times. Influenced by social and economic development, the younger generation is leaving their hometowns and moving to cities, leaving only the elderly and children in the villages, resulting in a lack of successors to the Baishou dance. Especially in the 1960s, the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou dance was on the verge of being lost. In 2005, Peng Nanqing became the village party secretary and formed an 80-member waving dance team. Villagers learned the dance during their slack season and often participated in large-scale events in surrounding areas, making the dance an important medium for communication, interaction, and integration among multiple ethnic groups. The dance, which was on the verge of being lost, has returned to the public eye. [6]

With more and more attention and efforts from all walks of life, Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance has won many honors and has been exported many times, frequently appearing on various stages at home and abroad. To better inherit and popularize the Hand-Waving Dance, Laifeng County's cultural and tourism department combines the Hand-Waving Dance with modern art and incorporates square dance elements and fashionable musical beats into the choreography and gong and drum accompaniment, so that the Hand-Waving Dance can enter the daily life of the people.

3. Types and characteristics of the costumes of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou dance

3.1 Classification of Baishou Dance Costumes

The structure and style of the costumes of the Tujia Nationality Baishou dance are based on the principles of simplicity and practicality. They are loose and simple in structure, but they pay attention to details. They are loose-fitting, short-short clothes, and have wide cuffs and trouser legs. Men, women, old and young, all wear collarless, right-side-opening shirts. The edges and collars of the shirts are embroidered with patterns, which are exquisitely crafted and colorful and have a strong ethnic flavor. However, the costumes of the Tujia people's waving hand dance show distinct gender differences. Men's costumes are mainly practical, with simple and loose designs to facilitate dancing. As for headwear, adult men usually wrap their heads with a 2-3-meter-long blue cloth scarf in a herringbone shape with an open top [7]. As for clothing style, middle-aged and elderly men prefer short-collared, right-fronted, full-fronted shirts with a belt of the same color; young and middle-aged men mostly wear stand-up collared plain double-fronted shirts with 5-7 pairs of cloth buttons and blue cloth pants with white waistbands.

In contrast, the clothes worn by women in the Tujia hand-waving dance are more exquisite, and the overall style is fresh, elegant, pure, beautiful, and peaceful. Like men, Tujia women also like to wrap their heads with scarves, and young women prefer white scarves with embroidery. The top is mainly a round-necked right-opening gown with short and wide sleeves. The front, hem, and cuffs are decorated with colorful lace,

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highlighting the delicate craftsmanship. Some wear eight-panel silk skirts with floral embroidery on them, while others wear trousers of the same color as their tops, which usually have two or three embroidered laces on the cuffs. When dancing, women often wear embroidered aprons, which are tied with colorful ribbons through silver rings. The embroidery patterns on the aprons are rich and varied, including magpies playing with plum blossoms, wild deer holding flowers, fish leaping over the dragon gate, etc., which have beautiful meanings.

3.2 Clothing material characteristics

The costumes worn during the Tujia people's waving hand dance are typically made from self-spun, self-woven, and self-dyed fabrics known as "local cloth" and "local brocade." These materials are characterized by their distinct ethnic features and strong regional essence. One type of fabric, called "Tubu" or "old coarse cloth," is woven by the Tujia people on hand looms. Tubu is known for its breathability, moisture-wicking properties, and anti-static qualities. As a result, garments made from this cloth are rough yet soft, durable, and resistant to curling and pilling.

"Tujin" also known as "Xilankapu" is one of the iconic symbols of Tujia costumes. "Xilankapu" is woven on a traditional wooden oblique waist loom using a technique that involves passing the warp through the weft and weaving on the reverse side. "Tujin" is characterized by its bright colors, unique patterns, thick texture, durability, simplicity, and elegance, reflecting strong ethnic characteristics and high artistic value. It is regarded as a remarkable Tujia folk craft that embodies the wisdom and diligence of Tujia women, symbolizing auspiciousness and beauty.

3.3 Color matching characteristics

Traditional Tujia costumes are vibrant and colorful, typically featuring dark red, black, or indigo as the base colors, complemented by decorations in red, green, yellow, purple, blue, white, and other shades. These colors are simple, bright, fresh, and natural. The costumes worn during the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance also adhere to the color-matching principles found in traditional Tujia attire. For the men's dance costumes, the primary colors include black, dark blue, and white, while the women's costumes predominantly feature red, white, blue, and black. These bright colors maintain a high level of purity, creating a strong contrast that still feels harmonious.

In addition, the Tujia people are accustomed to using white and gray lines and surfaces to interlace the edges of colors, which not only plays a harmonizing role between colors but also highlights the main pattern. The Tujia people do not have any specific rules to follow when using colors. They mainly match colors based on the base color or the fixed colors that have already been used, and bright and vivid colors are preferred. The Tujia ethnic group has a saying: "There is no trick in painting; liveliness comes first; there is no trick in using colors; colorfulness is best." This shows the Tujia people's requirements for color. Sometimes in a painting, red can express leaves and green can express flowers. There is no need to be faithful to the color of the object itself, but rather to match colors based on the creator's overall conception. This flexibility is a key feature of the color used in the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance costumes.

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3.4 Clothing pattern characteristics

Clothing patterns are an important part of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou dance costumes. They not only play a decorative role but also have the important function of conveying emotions. These patterns do not simply imitate the appearance of objective forms but adopt the method of abandoning the form and taking the meaning, treating the objective objects as visual information symbols that convey aesthetic emotions and artistic culture, and convey the creator's aesthetic emotions and social and cultural information. For example, the white tiger pattern symbolizes the national totem, while the cloud pattern, water pattern, and flower and grass pattern reflect the observation and understanding of nature.

The "Forty-Eight Hooks" pattern is one of the most representative geometric designs found in clothing. It evolved from the "Eight Hooks" to "Twelve Hooks" and eventually to "Forty-Eight Hooks. [8]" The term "hook" originated from the inverted hook vine. The "Eight Hook Flowers" are divided into four groups, with each group containing two hooks that correspond to each other. These pairs represent the newlyweds, celestial phenomena, terrestrial objects, and ancestral gods, respectively. By adding four more hooks to the original eight, the design became the "Twelve Hooks," which symbolizes heaven, earth, humanity, deities, objects, and society. Over generations, the Tujia people expanded upon this design to create the "Forty-Eight Hooks." Each layer of hooks is interconnected, representing harmony and consistency across all aspects of life. This pattern conveys the idea that everything goes well and thrives.

4. The cultural connotation of the costumes of the Baishou dance

4.1 National aesthetics

The primary fabric used for the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou dance costumes is coarse cloth, which is locally woven. This choice of material reflects the Tujia people's practical approach, showcasing their full utilization of natural resources and their desire for a simple lifestyle. In terms of color, the costumes for the Tujia hand-waving dance predominantly feature black and blue, creating a simple yet elegant visual appeal. This selection of natural colors not only aligns with the local environmental tones but also resonates with the Tujia people's aesthetic values, which emphasize respect for nature and a love for the earth. Unlike elaborate and ornate clothing, the Tujia people prefer styles that are simple, natural, and approachable.

The hand-waving dance costumes of the Tujia people showcase strong ethnic characteristics, whether they are headwear, tops, or pants. Starting with headwear, the unique "human"-shaped headdress effectively protects the head and neck while also creating a distinctive visual rhythm during dance movements. This headdress plays a vital role in the Tujia cultural identity. In terms of tops, the traditional "pipa collar" style not only reflects the dressing habits of ethnic costumes but also offers a rich and diverse visual effect due to the variations in collar height. Additionally, the incorporation of centipede buttons adds to the ethnic appeal of men's tops. For bottoms, the wide, loose trouser legs are designed to integrate regional decorative elements like leggings, which highlight the strength and fortitude of Tujia men. Women wear an eight-piece skirt that further emphasizes the unique charm of Tujia costumes.

The costumes for the waving hand dance have evolved by integrating ancient elements while maintain-

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ing their traditional roots. On one hand, these costumes preserve many traditional styles developed over the years, such as the "pipa collar" top and the herringbone headdress, showcasing the Tujia people's dedication to preserving their cultural heritage. On the other hand, costume designs also reflect a positive response to modern trends. While retaining national characteristics, contemporary elements have been introduced, such as the innovative designs of double-breasted tops and coverless pockets. These updates ensure that the overall appearance aligns more closely with current aesthetic preferences and the demands of dance performances. This innovative approach, grounded in tradition, allows the Tujia people's hand-waving dance costumes to not only embody the charm of their national culture but also to resonate with contemporary spirit, reflecting their unwavering cultural confidence.

The costumes of the Enshi Tujia Nationality Baishou Dance pursue simplicity and naturalness, highlight national characteristics, and integrate tradition and modernity, reflecting the unique and rich national aesthetic pursuit of the Tujia people.

4.2 National Spirit

The design and production of the Tujia people's waving hand dance costumes clearly reflect the hardworking and straightforward spirit of this ethnic group. The materials used for these costumes primarily consist of "home cloth," which is locally sourced, spun, woven, and dyed by the community. This practice showcases their self-sufficient production methods. Unlike more elaborate and intricate clothing, the Tujia people prioritize practicality and affordability, highlighting their pragmatic and frugal approach to life. The clothing designs are simple and generous, avoiding excessive decoration or embellishment while focusing on functionality. For instance, the loose-fitting tops allow for ease of movement, and the three-piece aprons serve to block the wind and provide warmth. These aspects emphasize the Tujia people's commitment to practicality and their simple values. The aesthetic of their clothing, which values nature and prioritizes utility, is in harmony with the Tujia people's industrious, courageous, and grounded lifestyle. This connection deeply reflects their diligent and humble national spirit.

The hand-waving dance costumes of the Tujia people vividly embody their spirit of self-reliance and independence. In terms of costume production, the Tujia utilize local resources and traditional handicrafts to create their garments, showcasing their commitment to self-sufficiency. Even in this modern age, where technology has advanced, they continue to prioritize the preservation and inheritance of these traditional crafts. This dedication to independent creation further illustrates their strong sense of national self-confidence. Additionally, the coordinated attire of different gender groups reflects the Tujia people's values of unity and mutual assistance. Regardless of gender or age, their clothing displays a high degree of harmony and consistency in color and style. This highlights the community-oriented ethos of the Tujia people, which emphasizes group harmony and the collective good.

The costumes of the Tujia people's waving hand dance showcase their hardworking and simple nature, self-confidence in self-reliance, and warm, friendly character.

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5.Conclusion

The costumes worn in the Enshi Tujia Hand-Waiting Dance are a vital aspect of intangible cultural heritage. They not only reflect the unique aesthetic pursuits of the Tujia people but also deeply convey their spiritual essence and cultural identity. Moreover, these costumes provide an ideal visual medium for presenting dance art on stage.

However, public understanding of the waving dance and its associated costume culture often remains superficial, viewing it merely as an ornamental form of performance art. This limited cultural engagement hinders in-depth cultural inheritance and sustainable development. To achieve a true living inheritance of this tradition, it is essential that traditional culture transcends performance contexts and becomes part of the everyday lives of ordinary people. This shift requires not only support from government policies and guidance from cultural professionals but also the active participation and continued efforts of society to create a positive ecosystem for the preservation and development of tradition.

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