

Research on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Site — Ganzi Muya Guozhuang

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ABSTRACT

The national intangible cultural heritage of "Muya Guozhuang" in Ganzi Prefecture has a unique and unprecedented dance rhythm and performance form, forming a unique cultural and artistic form of Muya. It holds a high position in the Tibetan ethnic song and dance art and is an indispensable member of the Tibetan cultural and artistic treasure trove. This article uses the research method of oral history to interview the inheritors of Muya Guozhuang in Ganzi Prefecture. It conducts a field study on the basic characteristics, performance forms, inheritance difficulties, and inheritance status of Muya Guozhuang's dance, performs original filming and recording of Muya Guozhuang, converts it into textual and audio-visual materials, reproduces the emergence, development, and evolution of Muya Guozhuang, and provides "live" historical materials for the study of Muya Guozhuang. At the same time, it is conducive to a comprehensive understanding of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in Muya Guozhuang, as well as showcasing the current reality of its inheritance, providing a new perspective for the study of Muya Guozhuang, and providing a case study for the research and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Oral history, Intangible cultural heritage, Muya Guozhuang.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The national intangible cultural heritage "Muya Guozhuang", with its unique form, is considered a rare flower in Tibetan Guozhuang dance and an indispensable member of China's Tibetan folk traditional cultural heritage. In the past century, Chinese and foreign experts and scholars in various fields have conducted research on the Muya Tibetan ethnic group and achieved certain results. In the academic community, there is still no clear conclusion on the origin of the Muya Tibetan ethnic group. The culture passed down by the Muya ancestors is unique and has formed its own unique ethnic cultural form, which is highly characteristic of the Muya ethnic group. The Muya Guozhuang culture is a business card of the customs and culture among the people of Muya, a "living fossil" for studying the ethnic culture of the Muya region, and an extremely valuable spiritual wealth created, enriched, and left over by the Tibetan people living in the Muya region over the long history. With the progress of society and the advent of the information age, the traditional art of Muya

Guozhuang dance is increasingly influenced by external factors, and its development and inheritance space are increasingly limited. In addition, many inheritors are generally of high age, and the oral historical and cultural resources of Muya Guozhuang are in an endangered state. In order to achieve a live inheritance, it is urgent to collect and study oral historical materials.

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

On the Tibetan Yi ethnic corridor, there is a unique ethnic group called Muya, some of which are also translated as "mi yao"¹. Muya is an ancient name that holds a very important position in both Tibetan history and the "Gesar Epic"². Muya is a branch of the Tibetan people, divided by regional

1. Dawa Zhuoma, A Study on the Name of "mi nyag" [J]. *Tangutology*, 2022, (01),168-180.

2. Qimai Renzhen, Research on the Inheritance and Changes of Muya Guozhuang [D]. Master thesis of Qinghai University of Nationalities, 2017. <https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD201801&filename=1017230998.nh>.

boundaries. The Muya region generally refers to the Tibetan people living in the areas east of Dong'eluo in Yajiang County, Ganzi Prefecture, south of Bamei in Daofu County, west of Zheduoshan in Kangding City, and north of Tanggu Township in Jiulong County. The Muya people have created a rich and colorful Muya culture and unique folk customs. The Muya people have their own unique language (Muya language), which is different from other Tibetan Guozhuang. Its unique culture has attracted the attention of many experts and scholars from different fields in China and foreign countries. In the past hundred years, scholars including historians, ethnologists, anthropologists, linguists and other scholars have studied the history, social change, cultural inheritance, ethnic origin and other aspects of the nation, and have also made certain research results. However, due to the limited historical documents available for textual research on the Muya people, there is still a dispute in the academic community about the definition of the ethnic origin of the Muya people.

The Muya Guozhuang dance is a concentrated point of the historical and cultural changes of the Muya nationality, and it is also a reflection of the history and social change of many nationalities. It has a long history, profound accumulation and other characteristics, and is an effective way for the outside world to understand the living customs, aesthetics, and culture of the Muya Tibetan people. The traditional Muya Guozhuang dance reflects the life orientation and aesthetic values of the Muya people in a specific historical period, especially in the era where there is no written record medium, reflecting the production and living forms of the ethnic group. In 2008, Ganzi Guozhuang (including Muya Guozhuang, Xinlong Guozhuang, Dege Zhuoqie, etc.) was included in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Extension List (No. III-20). However, through collection and organization, the author found that there are very few literature records on the national intangible cultural heritage of Muya Guozhuang. The use of Muya language among the Muya people is also decreasing, and many traditional cultural ceremonies of the ethnic group have not been effectively passed down and have disappeared, affecting the inheritance of collective memory of the ethnic group.³ The uniqueness of Muya

3. Li Ping, Construction of collective memory in Oral History Documentary — Take the personal work Lanzhou Battle -- A veteran's Memories as an example [D]. Master's thesis, Northwest Normal University, 2022, <https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFDTE MP&filename=1022617360.nh>.

Guozhuang poses a more severe challenge to its survival field.

3. MUYA GUOZHANG

Muya is not only a term for this ethnic group, but also a name for the region where this ethnic group resides. The Muya Guozhuang studied in this article mainly refers to the folk dance "Guozhuang" performed by the Muya people in the western dialect area⁴. Muya Guozhuang is the crystallization of the wisdom of generations of Muya people's production and labor. It is an artistic form for Muya people to express their inner thoughts and emotions, hiding infinite vitality in harmony, presenting a unique scenery that is simple, free, and vigorous, passionate. The lyrics have a beautiful rhythm, which not only exudes a strong sense of life, but also contains religious significance, life philosophy, etc., reflecting the development of politics, economy, culture, agriculture, animal husbandry, and folk customs in Muya for thousands of years. They are a typical representative of the culture in the Muya region.

3.1 Inheritors of Muya Guozhuang

The inheritor is an important carrier of intangible cultural heritage and the main body of its inheritance. Intangible cultural heritage relies on oral transmission and personal instruction from the inheritor, and records the life journey, artistic experience, and life experience of the inheritor group in oral form⁵. Inheritors can be divided into representative inheritors and natural inheritors.

Representative inheritor: On July 5, 2022, the authors conducted an oral history interview with Muya Guozhuang in Bajiaolou Township, Yajiang County. Representative inheritor Cideng, born in 1971 in Muzexi Village, Bajiaolou Township, Yajiang County, Tibetan. According to Cideng, in the Bajiaolou area, people also refer to the Guozhuang dance (Duotizuo) as the "Divine Deer Dance". This Guozhuang was created by his

4. The commonly referred to "Muya" is actually only Muya in the western dialect area, which mainly resides in the areas west of Kangding, east of Yajiang, south of Daofu, north of Kowloon, and southwest of Danba. It is divided into Kangding County, Daofu County, Yajiang County, and Jiulong County. Correspondingly, Muya in the eastern dialect area is mainly distributed in Wanba Township and Hongba Township of Jiulong County, as well as in the northern and western parts of Shimian County.

5. Han Fei, The Significance and Reflection on the History of Representative Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage [J]. Culture Industry, 2021, (16),32-33.

ancestors and passed down. His great ancestor was Zeren Duoji, who was skilled in singing and dancing, and made a living by hunting. He was a famous hunter from afar. During a hunting trip, he saw a magical scene: two divine deer fighting and playing in the morning light, with elegant yet noble movements. His heart was greatly shaken, thinking that it was a revelation from the deity who descended to earth. Therefore, facing the divine

deer, he made a devout oath: he and his descendants will never hunt again. The beautiful movements of the divine deer fighting were deeply imprinted in his mind, and upon returning home, he created "Divine Deer Dance" (Duotizhuo) based on them. Cideng is the fifth generation inheritor of the family, and the lineage of inheritance is as follows ("Table 1"):

Table 1. Lineage of inheritance

Name	Generation/Branch	Relationship with inheritors	Social duty	
Zeren Duoji	1st generation	Creator	Hunter	Died
Gongga	2nd generation	Father-son	Farmer	Died
Asu	3rd generation	Father-son	Farmer	Died
Jiazhi	4th generation	Father-son	Farmer	Died
Cideng	5th generation	Father-son	Farmer	

Natural inheritor: In Riou Village, Jiagenba Town, Kangding City, there is an elderly person named Guoguo (also known as Baima Raoji). He is 61 years old and a farmer who is good at singing and dancing. He is the lead dancer of Muya Guozhuang in the village.

In the memory of Guoguo, Muya Guozhuang is an indispensable part of people's lives. Whether it is during sacrifices, festivals, leisure, or entertainment, people will express happiness or sadness by dancing Guozhuang. Children have been influenced from a young age, following adults and constantly imitating, until the elements of Muya Guozhuang are engraved in their bones. However, they are not very clear about the origin of Muya Guozhuang, they only know that it was passed down from their ancestors.

3.2 The Basic Form of Muya Guozhuang

Ethnic songs and dance are cultural symbols of a nation, and even the same type of dance varies in different fields. Muya Guozhuang is a highly participatory folk cultural and entertainment way for the Muya people, without the need for specific places. The courtyard, living room, grassland in the wild, weddings, festivals, and when people gather together, they will dance Guozhuang. Muya Guozhuang is particularly famous in the Bajialou area of Yajiang County and the Jiagenba area of Kangding City, but the Guozhuang in these two places are completely different.

3.2.1 Types and Characteristics of Muya Guozhuang

There is a Tibetan saying: Guozhuang tunes are like stars in the sky, countless and numerous. The style and melody of Muya Guozhuang are historical traces of the hardworking and optimistic life of the Muya people, influenced by production and life, folk customs, religion, and other aspects. Muya Guozhuang is divided into ancient Guozhuang and new Guozhuang. The ancient Guozhuang has a sacrificial nature, with fixed lyrics and the use of language specifically belonging to the sacrificial category; the dance steps are slow, steady, simple, and solemn, with a relatively ancient form. The lyrics and dance steps follow the ancient paradigm and cannot be changed. New Guozhuang mainly refers to guozhuang that performs in production and daily life, which can be divided into self-entertainment type and entertainment type. For example, performances on formal occasions such as weddings and festivals belong to the entertainment type, and are generally performed by people who are good at singing and dancing in their attire; The small-scale Guozhuang for leisure and entertainment is a self-entertainment type, which can participate even if people don't know how to dance, and there is no requirement for clothing. The lyrics, content, and dance moves of new Guozhuang are relatively flexible, mainly reflecting production labor, family love, and beautiful landscapes. In different jurisdictions, the style of

performance in Muya Guozhuang varies, with unique features in performance content, program, singing style, and clothing. From the perspective of the types of Guozhuang, Muya Guozhuang embodies the development and changes of Muya culture, and is a manifestation of the material and spiritual life of the Muya people in folk culture.

3.2.2 Performance Form of Muya Guozhuang

Yajiang Dautizhuo: It is popular in the Yajiang Bajialou area and is called "Dautizhuo" in Tibetan, also known as "Divine Deer Dance". The entire dance is presented in the form of male and female pairs, and people believe it is a Guozhuang about love. In fact, Yajiang Dautizhuo praises the divine deer, expresses praise for the master, expresses gratitude for those who have created a better life, and wishes for a better tomorrow.

Dancing with a strong body is usually done in pairs of men and women dancing clockwise, with an even number of people, usually at least 4, and sometimes up to hundreds of people. The choreography and creation of dance movements imitates the movements of the divine deer during combat, cornering, and evasion. When men and women dance together, the dancers sometimes look at each other, sometimes turn around and pick their feet, and their movements are diverse, gentle, and firm. The melody is simple and melodious. According to research, the Muya Guozhuang melody in the Bajialou area has its unique melody, and only the local people can sing the authentic charm.

Jiagenba Muya Guozhuang: In Jiagenba, the men and women who dance Guozhuang dance are divided into two teams, usually with the men's team leading and the women's team trailing. There is no strict limit on the number of people, and in most cases, the number of men and women is the same. Men and women sing in unison, ask and answer questions. When the men's team sings and dances, the women's team listens in a listening manner and their stride decreases, with their limbs gently swaying naturally to the beat, and vice versa. The movements change with the lyrics, and the melody is slow and melodious.

3.3 The Basic Characteristics of Muya Guozhuang

Guozhuang is basically presented in the form of group circle singing and dancing, with participants

dancing hand in hand, and matching lyrics and dance postures based on the characteristics of the performance occasion to express the meaning. According to research, the biggest characteristics of Muya Guozhuang dance steps are bending down, bowing down, slow, and gentle. The foot movements mainly include point step, mark time, drag step, leisurely step, pick up step, lift up step, facing the sole of the foot, trembling part, etc.; Hand movements include lifting the waist, raising the hand, single lifting the hand, swinging the hand back, waving the hand, etc; The steps mainly include sliding forward and backward with trembling steps, raising legs to feet, three steps and one lift, diagonal step turning, and single hand raising and side looking at each other. The strength of the steps, accompanied by the cadence of the melody and lyrics, vividly expresses the inner emotions of the Muya people. Through singing and dancing in folk life, harmonious development and coexistence are displayed, showcasing the simple, sincere, pure, and free spirited personality traits of the Muya people, reflecting their attitude towards life.

3.4 Clothing Characteristics

The clothing of the Muya people in the Jiagenba area of Kangding City is unique and the most distinctive. Women's hair is woven with colored silk or wool and coiled around their heads. They wear white and peach red long sleeved shirts on their upper body, paired with Tibetan clothing made of Pulu. They wear a colorful Pulu pleated skirt at the waist, with 80 or 108 pleats. The colors of the skirt are freely matched, with red, yellow, blue, green, and black tones as the main colors. Men wear a Tibetan top hat (with a circular top and red silk threads hanging down), white, red, and yellow shirts, Tibetan pants, and Tibetan boots; Some accessories include wearing Tibetan knives, Tibetan sewing bags, necklaces, etc.

4. PROTECTION AND INHERITANCE OF MUYA GUOZHUANG

Intangible cultural heritage contains the ineffable meanings, emotions and the deepest roots of traditional culture. It also preserves the original state that has formed the culture of the people. The reason why intangible cultural heritage should be protected is not because it looks good, but because it is useful.

4.1 Dilemma

With the development of the times, the traditional folk cultural ecology has been affected, and the survival field of Muya Guozhuang has become smaller and smaller, and inheritance is facing difficulties.

The rapid development of information technology has exposed people to a large amount of foreign information through television and mobile phones, posing great challenges to the inheritance and development of traditional folk culture in Muya Guozhuang. The range of use of Muya language is becoming smaller and more, and more and more Muya teenagers are stepping out of the highlands and entering big cities. In addition, with the passing of the elderly Muya, the inheritance field of Muya Guozhuang has greatly narrowed, greatly affecting the effective inheritance of Muya Guozhuang. According to research, Muya Guozhuang quietly disappeared during the Cultural Revolution, and it was not until the 1990s that Muya people began to dance again. The gap between them lasted for decades, and there was even a period when Muya Guozhuang was almost forgotten by the masses, and many ancient music scores had already disappeared. Muya Guozhuang was passed down naturally through oral teaching through words and deeds, without effective written records and preservation, resulting in many classic tunes and dance techniques gradually disappearing with the passing of representative figures. It was not until the country vigorously advocated the inheritance of national traditional cultural heritage that it once again entered people's vision. Secondly, the number of inheritors of Muya Guozhuang is decreasing. With the change in people's ways of leisure and entertainment, and the enrichment of content, more and more Muya people have gradually adapted to modern lifestyles and production methods, becoming increasingly unfamiliar with traditional folk culture. There are fewer and fewer inheritors of Muya who truly understand the culture and essence of Muya Guozhuang.

4.2 Inheritance Status

With the increasing protection of intangible cultural heritage by the country, relevant policies have been issued, providing strong institutional guarantees for promoting the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. Muya Guozhuang is listed as a national intangible cultural heritage and has participated in multiple stage art

performances and exhibitions, making it more and more well-known to the audience. For example, the dance "By the Yalong River" created by Duotizhuo in Yajiang County participated in the second Youth Art Festival of the whole state in 2000 and won the creation award. The Pengbuxi Muya Guozhuang team and the Yajiang Muya Guozhuang team have participated in multiple cultural and artistic performances, including the 2014 Kangba TV Spring Festival Gala, the 2017 Sichuan Agricultural Expo, the Kangding April 8th Running Horse Mountain Turning Festival Cultural and Artistic Performance, and the Kangding International Love Song Festival.

During the entire field research process, it was found that the inheritance of Muya Guozhuang among the people was entirely based on the transmission of the inheritance population, and no original texts related to the records of Muya Guozhuang's skills were found. Many dance and singing skills were accumulated solely through the experience of the inheritors. Therefore, if there is no timely collection, recording, and preservation of information, key skills will disappear with the passing of the inheritor.

5. CONCLUSION

Recording the inheritance status of Muya Guozhuang through oral history is also a reconstruction process of the life journey, life experience, and artistic experience of the inheritors of Muya Guozhuang. Through this method, the inheritance context, skills, performances, and storytelling situations are collected, sorted out, and verified. After later compilation into oral historical texts, it plays a supplementary role in the protection of this intangible cultural heritage. Through interviews and organization with inheritors, the changes of Muya Guozhuang can be clearly seen. By combining audio, video, and text, the oral materials of Muya Guozhuang are preserved in their original ecology, enriching the local traditional cultural system and leaving valuable information for future generations to promote, research, enhance, and inherit intangible cultural heritage. With the development of the times, the aging of representative inheritors is severe, and intangible cultural heritage has also entered a peak period of decline. Faced with the unique characteristics of the population and environment for inheriting intangible cultural heritage, if timely and effective protection measures are not taken for intangible cultural heritage and its inheritors, the

passing of the inheritors will also mean the loss of intangible cultural heritage. The authors believe that it is crucial for the protection of intangible cultural heritage to carry out the protection of existing inheritors, use the oral form of inheritors, and utilize digital technology to record and organize the ritual process of intangible cultural heritage through images, sounds, and other means, to form a complete intangible cultural oral archive.

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