

# Discussion on the Artistic Form Connotation and Inheritance of Xingning Cup Flower Dance from the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection

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**Abstract:** The cup flower dance is a popular folk dance in Xingning area of Guangdong province. As one of the important protection contents of intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong province, cup dance is a living treasure to inherit and carry forward Lingnan folk dance culture. In the process of history, Xingning cup flower dance has high artistic value and humanistic charm. The spiritual essence of developing cup flower dance art is also the balance point of seeking national foundation and modern consciousness. We need to strengthen the work of protection and inheritance to promote the healthy development of the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage people in Guangdong. From the perspective of intangible cultural heritage protection in Guangdong province, this paper expounds the artistic form and inheritance and development of cup dance, based on how to establish a scientific and effective protection mechanism, activate the spiritual essence of art noumenon, in order to achieve the organic combination of inheritance and protection.

## 1. Introduction

The cup flower dance originated from Taoist dance and has a history of more than 100 years. The dance program in Taoist practice is the main content of the cup flower dance. In the development period of the cup flower dance, it mainly appeared in some activities of exorcism and ghost hunting. Its main purpose is to expel some ominous things[1]. During the Qing dynasty, the development of Taoism was extremely prosperous, and the innovation stage of the cup flower dance was mainly in the late Qing dynasty. At that time, the Taoist priests will perform rap with five sentences while performing, and will also dance with rhythm with bamboo. By the end of the Qing dynasty, this form of performance gradually changed, and the original bamboo plate also evolved into the Bogong Cup, which was produced in Xingning county. When performing in the performance of the Bogong Cup, the rhythm of the performance became more abundant, and the sound was more pleasant than the previous bamboo board. It is precisely because of this that the cup flower dance has a new development direction[2].

Among the ancient art forms of humanity, national dance occupies a very important position. In general, ethnic dance originated from the productive labor of human beings. In ethnic dance, both movement and rhythm are inextricably linked to labor. Take the cup dance, the dance movement is very beautiful, and in the graceful dance, people can fully appreciate the local folk characteristics. Not only that, the rhythm of the music in the cup dance is very crisp and sweet. With its unique artistic charm, cup flower dance has not only been loved and praised by the masses, but also added glory to folk dance art[3].

The cup flower art of Xingning Hakka in Meizhou, Guangdong province is a dynamic symbol and living treasure of Xingning culture, showing the social style, cultural tradition and national personality of the Hakka area. Xingning cup flower dance was included in the second batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong province in 2007. The following year, Xingning was named as the “hometown of cup flower dance art” by the Ministry of Culture, fully affirming the cup flower dance. The important value of the Chinese national cultural heritage. When the global promotion of intangible cultural heritage is promoted, China attaches great importance to the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage[4]. However, the protection and

inheritance of Xingning cup and flower dance is not very optimistic at present, so it is not from the perspective of non-existence. It is of great significance to explore and protect the inheritance and inheritance measures of Xingning cup flower dance.

## 2. Forming factors of Xingning cup flower dance

There are about as many dances as there are countries and regions in the world that are blocked by mountains and oceans. The formation and development of dance is closely related to the region, nature and human environment. Over time, a dance with specific cultural connotation and morphological characteristics has been formed, which is enjoyed by the relatively concentrated ethnic groups and spread naturally among the folk[5]. This is what we usually call the folk dance. In a sense, it can be regarded as a national marker and the remains of ancient dance culture. Cup flower dance is the most representative folk dance in Xingning area of Guangdong province. It is a wonderful flower of folkdance art, presenting the unique regional cultural and artistic characteristics of Xingning. The analysis of the historical process of Xingning cup flower dance is shown in Figure. 1.



Figure.1 Analysis of the historical process of xingning cup flower dance

### 2.1. Impact of natural ecological environment

Xingning, the birthplace of cup flower dance, is located in the northeast of Guangdong province and is one of the most representative hakka areas in China. The territory has a mild climate, abundant sunshine and superior natural environment. It has always been an important center of economy and culture in eastern Guangdong. It is a new capital of ancient capital with beautiful scenery, outstanding people and economic development. Xingning's natural ecological environment has its own uniqueness. Geographically, Xingning is located in the hilly area of northeastern Guangdong, influenced by the northeast to southwestern Lotus Mountains and the Luofu Mountains[6]. From the perspective of commercial and transportation, it is a land transportation hub of Guangdong, Fujian and Guizhou. The important commodity distribution center in the northeast is known as “small Nanjing”; from the climatic characteristics, it is located at low latitudes and is affected by the specific terrain of the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean and the mountains. It is a transitional climate between South Asia and Central Asia. The temperature is hot and cold, the light is sufficient, the airflow is blocked, and the rain is abundant and concentrated. This superior natural ecological environment has created a positive attitude towards the local people. This attitude of life can be typical in the Xingning cup flower dance performance. The cup flower in the dance has the characteristics of joyful joy, obvious movement and undulation, and more natural dance[7].

### 2.2. The influence of cultural ecological environment

The long history and cultural development have cultivated people's sentiments, entrusted

people's spiritual yearning, and promoted the exchange and communication of culture, spirit and emotion of various nationalities. Folk dance is created by people in labor and life, and it reflects the traditional culture, customs and spirit of a nation and a region. With the development of the times, today's cup of flowers has gradually evolved into a beautiful festival square dance, the figure of the cup flower dance has become the most representative folk dance in Xingning.

### 3. Artistic characteristics of Xingning cup flower dance

The reason why Xingning cup flower dance has been spread so far is that it is approved to be included in the second batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage list of Guangdong province because of its unique artistic characteristics. The artistic characteristics of cup flower dance are mainly reflected in the following three aspects.

#### 3.1. Performing props

The unique performance props of Xingning cup flower dance are cups, as shown in Figure. 2. The performer can make people feel pleasant by tapping the cup and making a crisp and pleasant sound; the tapping of the cup has a distinct rhythm, and there are allegro, slow board, drag board, etc., which emits a varied rhythm, usually in the cup of flower dance, the sound of the cup is slow, sometimes fast, sometimes short and crisp, sometimes continuous and melodious, enriching the dance music to a certain extent[8]. The use of dance props can enrich the dance vocabulary and increase the skill of the performance. The dancers used the tapping dance cups to make a crisp and sweet, cup-like sound that made the whole dance atmosphere happy and exciting. In order to make the actors dance freely, the dance cadres of the Xingning culture center reformed the cups, drilled a small hole in the bottom of the cup, and fastened the cups so that the performers could easily and quickly sculpt the cups. The rhythm makes the dance more cheerful and fully reflects the charm of the cup.



Figure.2 The unique performance props of Xingning cup flower dance

#### 3.2. Dance skills

In cup flower dance, dancers usually sing and sing while dancing. The main dance steps are cloud step, horizontal step, kneeling step, lower plank waist step and so on. The steps are smooth in the dance and move forward and backward freely[9]. In the development of cup flower dance, artists have made bold development and greatly enriched the dance vocabulary of cup flower dance in Xingning. The form of duet has been changed, and the content and feelings to be expressed in the lyrics have been reflected by dance actions. Then there is the change of dance movement, which absorbs the steps in the original Taoist dance, and improves the rhythm and speed, including fast, slow, fast and slow, so that the rhythm of hitting the cup can be combined with the dance step organically, which has not only tense scenes, but also lyrical mood, and constantly uses the

formation change, character modeling, silhouette and freeze frame to enhance the artistic appeal, as shown in Figure.3. Due to the changeable rhythm of music, dancers need to coordinate the rhythm and dance steps of hitting the cup, and the dance movement should also do a lot of quick and slow processing in speed[3]. In the composition of dance, cup flower dance is extremely rich in both the movement line of dancers in the stage space and the screen modeling.



Figure.3 Extraordinarily powerful of cup flower dance

### 3.3. Musical characteristics

Traditional cup dance music is relatively monotonous, just one person singing, two people beating drums and cups accompaniment, singing five sentence tune, which is relatively simple. It adopts folk ditty and Xingning Shuikou folk song to make the dance atmosphere warm. When creating the cup flower dance “the moon shines on the countryside”, on the basis of retaining the original folk tunes and folk tunes, some new musical elements were added, and more attention was paid to the change of musical mood in the dance section, so that the dance music became light, soft and lyrical, and the rhythm of music and cup percussion was more harmonious, especially the female solo of the dance music when the figure shape was cut and fixed brought people in[6]. The dance music of the cup flower dance “the moon shines on the countryside” was broadcast overseas by the International Department of the Central People's radio station, and was highly praised.

## 4. Inheritance, protection and development of Xingning cup flower dance

### 4.1. Inheritance and reform

The more national it is, the more cosmopolitan it is. Xingning cup flower dance has a unique charm because it originated from the fertile soil of folk art, evolved from folk dance, and has a deep mass foundation. However, folk art needs to develop, to keep pace with the times, we must carry out reform, develop on the basis of tradition, reform on the basis of retaining the original national style and artistic characteristics, extract the essence, discard the dross, eliminate those parts of feudal superstition and color which are contrary to ethics and morality, and give positive and healthy ideas to the tradition[4]. The folkart melts into the modern atmosphere and radiates new brilliance. Therefore, when inheriting Xingning cup flower dance, we not only keep the original props and cups, but also keep the basic elements of Taoist dance, such as “cloud step”, “horizontal step” in dance, and “shaking cup” and “rolling cup” in knocking cup, and use local folk tunes and folk tunes in music configuration to really let people feel the original characteristics of cup flower dance and appreciate it. Inheritance is not the same as it was, it must be reformed. In inheriting the cup dance, we must reform from the content, form, performance skills, music and other aspects to give new things, so as to improve the artistic level of the cup dance and give people a fresh feeling.

### 4.2. Breakthrough and innovation

With the development of the times, Xingning cup flower dance should also develop with people's

aesthetic requirements. It is necessary to innovate from the perspective of promoting aesthetic taste, conforming to the trend of the times, giving profound connotation, making folk dance have strong vitality, and giving people the strength to forge ahead. However, how to innovate Xingning cup flower dance to meet the needs of people's interests is worth thinking about. It is worth noting that when we deal with the inheritance and development of cup and flower dance, we need to deal with the problems of “change” and “unchangeable” as well as how to “change”, and appropriately grasp the unity of opposites between “change” and “unchangeable” in folk dance. While inheriting the folk tradition, we should study the change and development of the cup dance in the process of historical development, find out the relationship between the cup dance culture and social culture, and make the compilation and creation of the cup dance have evidence and history to follow.

## 5. Conclusion

Intangible cultural heritage protection is an urgent and long-term project. With the development of social multi-cultural, people put forward higher requirements for material and spiritual pursuit. Therefore, the inheritance and protection of Xingning cup flower dance, a folk traditional culture and art, is bound to meet practical challenges. How can we make the new generation of young people realize the value of the traditional art and culture of our nation; how to retain the essence of “source” and “origin” in the traditional art and culture; how to inject the elements of the times and measure the relationship between “degree” and “quantity”; and so on. These problems are all worthy of thinking by dance artists. Therefore, in the development of folk dance, what we need to do is to find the root of retaining the artistic and cultural charm of folk dance, and at the same time, we need to break the single form of dance expression and refine it, so as to penetrate the generation and sense of the times. Therefore, under the impact of modern society, we should pay attention to the traditional primitive folk art, carry out in-depth research and inheritance development, which is also a great respect and protection of traditional folk culture.

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