

The Characteristics of Dance Style of Vcham Dance of Vajrayana, Tibetan Religion

Xiujia Li

Northwest Normal University
Lanzhou, China

Abstract—Regong of Qinghai Province is a multi-ethnic area, which is located in the three counties of Jianzha, Tongren and Zeku, and is the Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Henan Mongolian Autonomous County. The local aboriginal religious beliefs mainly include Gelugpa (Yellow Sect of Tibetan Lamaism), Nyingma and Bon. It has the characteristics of multi-ethnic integration of Tibetan nationality, Han nationality, Tu nationality, Mongolian nationality and so on. The temple has many close relationships with the customs of various ethnic groups and the colorful Tibetan folk dances. Through the field interview of monks and more than a dozen folk artists, such as Qungong Renboqie of "Nyingma", Kasu Renboqie of "Gelugpa", and Gele Lengzhiiacuo Renboqie of "Bon", this paper introduces the historical development of the temple and the dance style of the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana. From the oral account and performances of monks and local folk artworks of "Nyingma", the author basically grasped the style of "Nyingma" dances such as "Nine-headed Vajras". There are many sects in Tibetan Buddhism, among which the god dance, dragon dance, witch dance, Zhuo, and Yumian dance (the dance used by Tibetans to exorcise ghosts) are different from the dance forms and movements of the "Gelupa" and other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Shilunjingangyuan of the Tibetan Buddhist Temple generally selects the students who are good at charity and learning to be together to practice the static and dynamic movements in the "Nyingma" monasteries. And the unity and promotion of the romantic charm, temperament, rhyme and virtue in the movement will be conducive to enhancing self-awareness and value.

Keywords—Tibetan nationality; Nine-headed Vajra; Vcham Dance of Vajrayana; dance

I. INTRODUCTION

The author went to Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province to conduct field investigations, record and collect the Vcham dances of the major temples. Taking the Vcham dance of "Nine-headed Vajra" of the Vajrayana in the Jiamao Village of Tongren County, Qingnan Province as the research object, this paper analyzes and studies the rich religious teachings and complex and varied dance movements contained in the Vcham dance. Based on the real existing situation, this paper explores the deep cultural connotation of the Vcham dance of "Nine-headed Vajra". "Vcham" is a Chinese transliteration of Tibetan nouns. In Tibetan, it means a dance performance with moving limbs. In the long-term extension, "Vcham" has become a special synonym for Tibetan Buddhism and

religious dance. It is a practice ceremony in which dance is the main practice method. Its core purpose is to praise the gods and remove the ghosts. Most of the views of "Vcham" in academia are believed to be created by Padmasambhava from India during the period of Zhanpuhisong Dezan of Tubo Dynasty. "Vcham dance" is a dance art with ethnic characteristics that has flourished with the development of Tibetan Buddhism. Since its birth, it has strictly followed the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, both in terms of art variety and content. Also, it belongs to the category of religion. With the changes in social life and the introduction of new humanistic spirits in the Regong area, the masks, costumes, instruments, and dances of the "Vcham dance" are also becoming new.

II. VCHAM DANCE OF VAJRAYANA OF "NYINGMA"

Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma" is extremely unique religious dance art. It integrates mask shape, dance, music, costumes and other elements. In the process of missionary teaching as the main purpose, Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma" creates a lively religious dojo for all sentient beings and also fully demonstrates its aesthetic connotation and value on many levels through the form of dynamic sculpture. The aesthetic value of the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma" is first reflected in the life consciousness and the intensity of attention to life. Tibetan Buddhism advocates reincarnation, that is, people's life and death are based on the different behaviors of good and evil before birth, namely, "six reincarnations". In the close relationship between good and evil, the sentient beings rise up with the blessings of the good, and slip down with the sinfulness of the evil. The sentient beings die in this way, reincarnate that way, and then die and reincarnate another life. With such continuation, the world flows in the cycle, never ending. The reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhism can be said to have penetrated into the dignified, solemn and mysterious land of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to become the spiritual pillar and emotional sustenance of the Tibetan people living in this area. The core content of the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana is a concrete interpretation of the life concept of the believers of "Nyingma". Although the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana is a religious dance with deep religious connotations, the whole dance style has retained a lot of folk dance characteristics, such as dancing with the same as hand and foot and drastically kicks, cross-over, jump and other actions, which is closely related to local folk dance.

Therefore, in the dance style of the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana, the dignified sacredness of the religious charm is preserved, and the characteristics of the rough and unrestrained Tibetan folk dance are preserved. There are various performance forms of the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana, such as solo dance, double dance and group dance. The dance movements and composition settings vary widely, reflecting the character characteristics of different characters. Monk performers are quick and flexible, with double kicks and light landings. The speed of jumping across the legs is extremely fast. The completion of the whole skill is better than that of professional dancers. The performance of group dances has certain stability. The whole dance is mainly based on leg skills, with waist skills as the mainstay, as well as shoulder skills and hip skills. Some of the dynamic quick shoulders, quick steps, dragging down the waist, etc., fully reflect the integration and development of the multiculturalism of all ethnic groups. Dances are sometimes soft and ethereal, sometimes magnificent, strong and orderly, powerful and relaxed. The characteristics of the Vcham dance are mainly solemn and steady. The dance rhythm is characterized by stable control, knee flexion and extension, and vertical leg jump. There are many changes of upper body movements, such as shaking the head, shaking the shoulders, swinging hands, pushing hands, and other gesture changes; there are also some dance techniques, such as legs jumping, cross-leg rotation forward and backward, bowing archery, and lifting legs (opening of hooks), etc. The performances of the Vcham dance are magnificent, solemn and majestic. Although there are sometimes scenes of playfulness, it is mainly based on dignified emotions, highlighting the sacred and dignified side of religion, and the magical charm and value of Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma".

III. THE "NINE-HEADED VAJRA" DANCE OF VCHAM DANCE OF VAJRAYANA

A. *Performance Form of "Nine-headed Vajra" Dance*

The deity of the Vajrayana is the Vajra dance. It is one of the goddesses in the hearts of believers and is the core figure in the performance ceremony of the Vajrayana. The Red Vajra Dance is the most solemn ceremony in the Vcham Dance of Vajrayana. The Vajra dance is obviously different from that of other gods. The seven highly respected elders of the Vajrayana stood in a row, and carried a incense burner, hold aqueous humor, hold buttered tea, hold the barley wine, hold lotus flower, hold grain, and hold "Gaduo" cooked by each different family respectively (ie.: tribute). The elders who are highly respected will memorize the scriptures and incantation of this character. After the blessing, all the people will line up in front of the sacrificial altar, and all the tributes in their hands will be burned in the fire of the funeral (referring to the tribute to the gods). And then, people began to play the flute and drum made of human leg bones and human skin (also known as blowing copper qin). Two monk singers carried the big copper qin into the dojo and played the small horn, Tibetan pipa and other instruments. At this time, all the men in the Vajrayana held Hada and gorgeous satin, and Hada was used to greet the Vajrayana. The monk who plays the Vajrapana wears a three-eye red mask, a

crown with five small skulls, a peacock feather on the top of the cap, and a black skirt with three eyes on the waist, boots and hold colored diamond swords in the right hand, meaning that the diamond sword can cut off all disasters. The dancers will appear in an exaggerated "cross-leg flip" dance and unrestrained jumping dance. The left hand takes the "Gabala Bowl". The dance movements are sometimes fierce, violent and horrible, like walking on the fire. "Nine-headed Vajra Vcham" is one of the most important Gods of the Vajrayana, and is the central figure in the performance of the Vcham dance performance. The "Nine-headed Vajra Vcham" was performed in the form of a solo dance, and all the ceremonies lasted for 23 minutes. The dance route is basically based on the original place, sometimes straight forward and backward. The horizontal movement of the dance steps is very slow, achieving the unity and coordination of the romantic charm, spirit and rhyme, and the three steps and turns show the meaning of the six reincarnations of Buddhism. After long-term development and creation, the gestures and posture movements of the Vcham dance of "Nine-headed Vajra" are unique, further highlighting the strong expressiveness and blessing function. The performer of Vcham dance of "Nine-headed Vajra" is a monk with some training in dance who plays a different role with a mask. Under the accompaniment of playing percussion instruments, they make the dance with different props. The monks combine religious teachings with the dance. They take the structure of dance and use the body language of dance, in which contains the idea of religion and render the deterrent power of the Buddha. The dance language makes the obscure teachings intuitive and popular. Due to the constraints of specific content and religious purposes, "Nine-headed Vajra Vcham" has always had strict movements, dresses, soundtracks and dance performances. Like many monasteries in the Tibetan area, the Vcham dance of Vajrayana is based on the original blueprint of the Vajra dance of Basmyas and evolved and developed on the basis of local culture. The Vcham dance of "Nine-headed Vajra" in Jiamao Village reflects the two characteristics of inheritance and variation. This kind of variation caused by time, region and conditions has not only changed its original characteristics, but greatly enriched its artistic expression. It uses dance performances to convey the true, good and beautiful of Buddhism and to remove evils.

B. *Performance Content of "Nine-headed Vajra" Dance*

As is known to all, the Vajrayana of Tibetan Buddhism is a combination of Mahayana Buddhism and Brahmanism. The predecessor of the "Vajrayana Vcham" dance was based on the Vajra dance of the Vajrayana of Tibetan temple. Buddhism Vajrayana believes that through the "three secrets" (body, mouth and meaning), that is, the hand-written seal (specific gestures and sitting), the swearing of the true mantra (the spell), and the mind of the deity, achieving the quiet of the "three secrets". The body secret includes the hand-written seal, which means that the fingers are used to form various shapes (also known as printing, seal, etc.). In the temples in Tibet, most of "the maidservants of God" are supported. Most of them are the daughters of believers. Therefore, the combination of various wonderful gestures is subtle and vivid. There are no more dances suitable for

expressing the godliness and admiration for God. Due to the different sects in Tibetan Buddhism, there are many dance genres and different styles, but they all have one common feature: to spread the teachings with the rich and abstract dance movements as the main means of performance. Buddhism was originally from India. Buddhism Vajrayana is inextricably linked to local curses, rituals, folklore and dance. As one of the tantric practice rituals, the Vajra dance will certainly absorb nutrients from the expression of Indian dance. It is not surprising that rich gestures and body dynamics appear in the Vajra dance. The Vcham dance of Basm yas has rich body movements at the initial stage. Although the "Vcham" dance of the various monasteries has changed a lot, the characteristics of this posture are still very obvious. However, the complicated gestures are gradually not obvious. It is gratifying that some basic gestures of "Nine-headed Vajra" dance are still preserved. Buddhism believes that life and death are two major issues in life. There is a duality between life and death. Life refers to the process of growth and development according to the body. Death is the premise of life and the beginning of another life. In the Vcham dance, the major theme of life saving is fully demonstrated through the carrier of dance. To a certain extent, the teachings of Buddhism's "Bar do thos grol" provide a multi-layered platform for the Vcham. The performers of the Vcham dance show the "Antrabhara". Although it is based on the study of death, it reveals the mystery of life as the essence, helps people to participate in or watch performances, and explores the role of life and death in the social society paved the way for the gradual transformation of the Vcham dance into a popular pilgrimage. The Vcham dance of "Vajrayana" is a unique religious dance art of Tibetan Buddhism. The dancers are trained by the dynamic training while practicing Buddhist scriptures, rule and theory. People finally obtain the truth, get rid of their troubles, do good deeds not the evil, and benefit others not harm others, becoming a Buddha. Finally, the balance, harmony and unity of human material and spiritual civilization, and the crystallization of truth, goodness and beauty will be achieved.

IV. THE AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VCHAM DANCE OF VAJRAYANA

In the context of great environment and new situation, dance art has never been the birth of modern aesthetics. Dance is one of the earliest forms of art produced by mankind. Its intuitive and vivid art form is loved by the majority of Tibetans. People have a new understanding on the dance form of the Vcham dance of Vajrayana in the Tibetan religious temples. The changes of people's aesthetic concepts have some influences on the appreciation and evaluation of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation. As a special dance style in the Tibetan dance system, Vajrayana Vcham has become an important part of Tibetan Buddhism activities in the long-term historical development process. At the same time, religion and art pay attention to human emotions. They jointly explore the life-related themes of human life and death, good and evil. Whether it is artistic aesthetic emotion or religious emotion, it is to satisfy people's psychological needs and spiritual sustenance.

Through the field investigation of the Vajrayana Vcham dance, the author skillfully integrates the dynamics of Tibetan dance into a dance combination. As a traditional class dance material of Tibetan dance, it has achieved effective training effect and aesthetic value. The performances of the Vcham dance are magnificent, solemn and majestic, highlighting the sacred and dignified side of religion, and the magical charm and value of Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma". The Vcham Dance of Vajrayana is a sacrifice dance with deep religious connotations. However, the whole dance style has retained many characteristics of folk dance, such as dancing with the same as hand and foot and drastically kicks, cross-over, jump and other actions, which has close relationship with local folk dance. Thereby, the dignified sacredness of the religious charm and the characteristics of the rough and unrestrained Tibetan folk dance are preserved in the dance style of the Vcham Dance. There are many changes of upper body movements, such as shaking the head, shaking the shoulders, swinging hands, pushing hands, and other gesture changes; there are also some dance techniques, such as legs jumping, cross-leg rotation forward and backward, bowing archery, and lifting legs (opening of hooks), etc. The performances of the Vcham dance are magnificent, solemn and majestic. There are some scenes of playfulness, and these scenes are mainly based on dignified emotions, highlighting the sacred and dignified side of religion, and the magical charm and value of Vcham Dance of Vajrayana of "Nyingma".

In the legend, "Nine-headed Vajra" dance of the Vajrayana is derived from the spread of Buddhism by Sakyamuni, which displays various images of gods according to the contents of Vajrayana. As Buddhism was introduced to Tibetan areas, especially the Buddhist master Padmasambhava, the ancient Indian monk in the 8th century AD, came to Tibet, and introduced the ceremonial performances of the Vajrayana prevailing in India to Tibetan areas. On the basis of the original Bon Vcham, a religious Vcham with Tibetan Buddhist characteristics was produced. Many historical books have said that Padmasambhava arranged Vajra Vcham dance at the inauguration ceremony of the Basm yas, which was performed at the celebration of the opening ceremony. The performer took a mask of God to cast spells to expel ghosts. There is also another saying. On the basis of absorbing the ritual dances of the Bon religion expelling the evil spirits, the Tibetan religious Vcham dance merged with the Vajrayana of Tibetan Buddhism, and created the "Nine-headed Vajra" dance that has continued to this day.

V. CONCLUSION

"Vcham dance", that is, Tibetan religious dance, is an art form of dance developed in sacrificial activities, and later developed into a ritual of Bon Vajrayana to display various figures in the altar city, that is, "Vcham dance" generally refers to the ritual dance of Bonismo religion and Tibetan Buddhism. "Vcham dance" is a verb in Tibetan, which means to jump or dance. As it is a religious dance often performed according to the sacrificial content in sacrificial activities, the word "Vcham dance" has become a special

term for Tibetan religious dance over time. As Buddhism was introduced into, for the first time, Master Padmasambhava jumped up to the sky with Vcham dance at the foundation laying ceremony of the Samye Monastery. In the Tantric Buddhism ritual activities of Tibetan Buddhism, he began to dance the Vcham dance, which was presented to the world in a unique form of "conveying the secret with dancing", and reached the effect of "human and god dance together" with colorful dances, leaving the audience the imagination space of "true god and changeable god". The Vcham dance is the earliest Tibetan creation art with the longest history, the widest range of circulation, and the most direct expression of the Tibetan people's emotions. It is also the most representative and most nationalistic in the history of Tibetan nationality, and it is the dance art that best reflects the national character and aesthetic taste. It is a heartedly and diligently dance. The Vcham dance uses "body", "sound" and "emotion" to present "the dialogue between God and man". It dances a rich and profound philosophy of life and dances the spiritual aspirations and rich imagination of the Tibetan people for generations. It does contain too many things worth learning, inheriting, reflecting, and proud. The image of the dance image of Vcham is a space for thinking in extreme abstraction. Its movements have a static posture in the constant flow, and the song (dance) in the rhythm of the song (dance) cooperates with each other. Masks, costumes, and props have reached a very high level in artistic creation and have important research value. In short, the study of the Vcham dance is to study the Tibetan dance culture, study the human form and inner feelings, and study the formation process of Tibetan dance history and dance theory. In the research, it is necessary to adhere to the correct research ideas and methods. While affirming and absorbing the essence of the dance of Vcham dance, it is also a necessity to criticize and abandon the ruin, and contribute to the development of innovative Tibetan dance.

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