

The Study of Body-building Value of Chinese Traditional Dance "Lianxiang "

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Abstract. " Lianxiang " is a Chinese traditional dance , people usually plays it for entertainment and body-building. The paper analyzed distinctive features of dance movements with methodology as data collection and analysis. The author presents the view that the dance can relax tendons and activate collaterals by striking shoulders, chest, waist, abdomen, buttocks, feet and acupuncture points of the four limbs, and slightly swaying knees together with shoulder, the set of movement can also exercise bones, muscles, articular ligaments. The paper aims to study the body-building value of the traditional dance, with the hope of advocating more people participate in the dance. By promoting " Lianxiang " to the public, pressure can be relieved by exercising and the beauty of the traditional sports can naturally be inherited.

1.General Information of "Lianxiang "

"Lianxiang " is generally called as "Lianxiang Thrashing", it's a traditional dance that is quite popular in lots of regions. It's a national dance with effects of entertainment and building body. "Lianxiang "dance is equipped with a segment of bamboo poles with the length 80 to 120 centimeters, and its diameter is 2.5 to 3 centimeters. The middle of the bamboo is implanted with the copper coin or the pad, both ends tied up with colored silks or small bells. The performer holds the instrument called " Lianxiang" , doing various movements. The dance can maintain health by striking shoulders, chest, waist, abdomen, buttocks, feet and acupuncture points of the four limbs.

Folktales refer to "Lianxiang "are various, one of them is told as follow. Late in the Ming dynasty, there was a couple who did bamboo craftwork to support their family, as most of the bamboo working procedures required sitting, and she seated herself on their cold bamboo bed. Therefore, the wife got arthritis rheumatic; her legs ached painfully and even unbearable to walk. One day, a group of children were holding green bamboo poles with small copper coins on both ends. They used it to thrashing their feet and their backs; the sound coming out of the copper coins was so pleasant to hear, and the wife was so happy to enjoy the sound that she immediately asked her husband to make a bamboo pole with copper coins. From then on, she thrashed her feet, legs, back and shoulders form right to left every day, she always did this set of movement until sweat dripped out from her forehead. After less than a month, miracle happened, the ache had all gone, and the body has recovered from illness gradually. News spread, everybody followed the exercise, as the practicing time got longer, everybody's backache and waist pain had gone because of the practice. So the bamboo pole sports got its name as " Thrashing Lianxiang" (Lianxiang in Chinese means the continuous sound). People thought that "continuous sound" is not so elegant that they refined the phrase to "lotus smell", which pronounced the same in Chinese.

"Lianxiang" dance vary numerously in different regions in China. Its name also differs. In Hubei, Badong called "Nine Heirs' Whip", LiChuan for "Knobby Lianxiang", Xua'en for "Rolling Dragon Lianxiang. All names came from its distinctive features of movements in different regions.

2. Characteristics of the Dance

2.1 Characteristics of the movements

Three characteristic of the movements are: thrashing, quivering and lowering. The performer holds bamboo pole to play various dance movements by striking shoulders, chest, waist, abdomen, buttocks, feet and acupuncture points of the four limbs, and slightly swaying knees together with shoulder vibration. The traditional movements are modified and developed to new patterns which are called single- thrashing and double-thrashing. Single-thrashing movements including crouch thrashing, jump thrashing, rolling thrashing and mixed thrashing with one bamboo pole. Double-thrashing are "swiftly steps as meteor "," reach second prime" "double dragons' water play", and there are counter-play, mixed-play and group play. It is a relaxed, active and natural dance with lively rhythm and strongly folk custom. The performance steps from easy to difficult, complying from slow to quick. Modern music together with graceful dance movements, dazzling red silk at both ends of the bamboo pole, all of these strike the audiences.

2.2 Characteristics of the music

The music of the dance contains two categories. The first kind is rap together with the sound of "Lianxiang" as background music. The rap libretto absorbs the popular ditty which is simple and easy to sing. Mostly sing with two short phrases but can be tailed with little suffix. Wang Dakun, the "Rolling Lianxiang" actor in Xuan'en, sung the song "Monthly flower blossom just like a beautiful brocade " is quite an example of this pattern. That the second kind gives first place to dance performance, music is subsidiary. It mainly emphasizes the varied forms of the movements and skills to thrash different parts of the body. In 1990s, the first pattern of movement was taken place by the second, dance became the major part and compiled with songs. There are folk songs accompanying with merry melodious music, and also sometimes modern music of happiness feeling.

2.3 Flexible pattern

The solidity and size of the area are not strictly required. Only flat area is enough and the space is flexible according to the number of participators. The dance is a flexible movement, its intensity, time duration, and the range of group members can be chose by the participators. Its broad adaptability allows both men and women of all ages to play. So the dance can be extended to the general public for body-building value.

2.4 Popularity in the public

"Lianxiang" come into the existence with the simplicity and purity of local style. It's a dance characterized by fluent, smooth, light and active. It is easy to learn for people of all ages. Over the field, people sing songs as well as thrashing "Lianxiang" to express their ardent love for life and relieve their sore muscles and tiredness. In the village, "Lianxiang"'s thrashing sound mixed with giggling, people share their delight of a good harvest and exchange best wishes respectively. In schools, students also play "Lianxiang" to celebrate Children's Day and other important festivals. The public likes the dance for lots of reasons, such as its wonderful dance movements, beautiful clothes, and lively rhythm, but mostly because of its enchanting ethnical features and massive public foundation.

3. The Body-building Value of "Lianxiang"

3.1 Promotes physical coordination and improve physical image

In the dance, people use "Lianxiang" cudgel to tunk shoulders, chest, waist, abdomen, buttocks, feet and acupuncture points of the four limbs. Their left and right brain function respectively. Slightly swaying of knees, waist and shoulders make all parts of the body improved harmonious of the body parts. It helps to correct the defects of physical image and movement, and takes good effects on acupuncture points.

3.2 Relax tendons and activate collaterals

“Lianxiang” thrashes acupuncture points of the whole body, the messenger gas flows the whole body, making the person be full of energy.

It is said that by thrashing acupuncture points of the body with “Lianxiang”, the gas inside the body can be mobilized, the venous vessels can be circulated actively to balance Yin and Yang. It can also relax tendons and activate collaterals to keep health.

3.3 Improve the function of cardiopulmonary

The dance movements are moderate, and it's a typical aerobics. “Lianxiang” dance can activate blood circulation, improving cardiopulmonary function and respiratory system. It can also reduce the disease of respiratory system.

4. The Welfare Value of “Lianxiang”

4.1 Promote communication and relieve pressure

(1) In the ancient days, the minority group was in relatively enclosed natural world and social environment and they get no access to the outer society. By making the advantage of their national culture characteristic, they found their own way to entertain themselves, enrich their cultural life and adjust their emotional feeling. “Lianxiang” is a body-building dance originated from Tu minority in the west of Hubei Province. The individual dance can relieve one's pressure by thrashing different parts of the body. The group dance can promote personal communication helping people to get rid of bad feelings and emotions, and enjoy a better life.

(2) With the development of economy as well as the acceleration of life speed, the pressure for both workers and students are greater and greater. Lots of anxieties and uncertainties come to people's mind; much psychological problems leave people to be indifferent to each other. Therefore, “Lianxiang” dance can be a best way to enhance personal communication. By taking part in the dance, mutual friendliness can be built among participators; personal social interaction can be motivated and satisfied. With the capacity to enrich and improve the life-style and to get rid of pressure, the dance is also a great way to improve personal relationship.

5. Conclusion

“Lianxiang” is a remark traditional dance that popularized in lots of regions and nations. It's a folk dance that combines entertainment and body-building into an integrated whole. It handed down “the aboriginal ecology” from the intangible cultural heritage. The dance absorbs the action element of aerobatics, martial art, and modern dance. With new content, pattern and skills, it will work out much more value.

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