

# A Study on the Inheritance of Twelve Sets Bronze Drum Dance of Zhuang Nationality — A Case Study of Guima Village, Guangnan\*

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**Abstract**—This study used the literature data method, field investigation method and interview method to investigate the inheritance of the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village, Guangnan County. Through a random sample survey of the local Zhuang people on the development, inheritance and protection of bronze drum dance, a total of 45 Zhuang people in Guima Village were visited. It was learned that Guima Village retained 12 sets of complete bronze drum dance, which are the real reaction of the local people's labor life and folk culture, people will beat the bronze drum and dance during the festival or leisure time, express their love for life and the joy of harvest. The dance has been included in the national intangible cultural heritage protection list. It is the pride of the local people. Through the investigation of the development and inheritance of Zhuang bronze drum dance in Guima Village, Guangnan County, more people can understand the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance culture. How to protect and inherit the bronze drum dance culture is explored to make it develop better.

**Keywords**—Guima Village; bronze drum dance; inheritance research

## I. INTRODUCTION

Guima Village, an administrative village in Nasa Town, Guangnan County, Wenshan Prefecture, Yunnan Province is located in the southwest of Nasa Town, 19 kilometers away from the town government. The road to the township is dirt road, and the traffic is inconvenient. It is 87 kilometers away from the county. Here, the mountains and rivers are beautiful and the trees are green. For generations, there are a group of happy, open-minded, temperate, warm and hospitable Zhuang, Miao and Han nationalities. The villages of Guima Village now have Zhuang people with the surnamed Nong, Lu, Shen, Liang, Dai, and Li. Among them, Dai family

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inherits a Majiang-style public drum. According to the records, it has been passed down for 13 generations. There are 264 Zhuang people families in the village, with a total of 1148 people, but now more than half of the people in the village work or study outside, so those who are at home are mostly old people and children. There are 12 sets of complete Zhuang people's bronze drum dance movement retained, which represent 12 months of the year, reflecting the different content of the production and life of the Zhuang people in each month.

The bronze drum dance is one of the important heritages of the ancient culture of the Zhuang people. It is a dance in which the drummers rhythmically beat the drums and the rhythm of the drums drives the dancers' movements and form change. According to archaeological findings, as early as the fourth century AD (the end of the Spring and Autumn Period), the bronze drum appeared in the scene of dance accompanied by music, which embodies the creative talents and ingenuity of the Zhuang people. As an important medium for studying the social history of Zhuang people and inheriting the national traditional culture, it has the historical and cultural connotations of maintaining the survival and development of the nation. It reflects the psychology and aesthetic tastes of Zhuang people from different angles and to varying degrees.

Bronze drum dance integrates culture and sports, which not only entertains the body and mind, but also has a good fitness effect. The Zhuang people's bronze drum dance that has been circulated in Guangnan County is a local art that is popular among the Zhuang people. Guangnan enjoys the reputation of "the hometown of Chinese bronze drum dance". In June 2006, the Zhuang bronze drum dance of Guima Village was included in the national intangible cultural heritage "bronze drum dance of Zhuang and Yi people" protection list, and the project was listed into the list of first batch of national intangible cultural heritage through the approval of the State Council, which is the pride of the local

people. However, in order to let the Zhuang people exert their artistic characteristics and charm, and let the bronze drum dance go higher and further, it is necessary to strengthen the protection and inheritance of the bronze drum dance, so that it can have better development.

## II. THE STATUS QUO OF ZHUANG PEOPLE'S BRONZE DRUM DANCE IN GUIMA VILLAGE, GUANGNAN COUNTY

The Zhuang people's bronze drum dance is mainly spread in the villages of Zhetu town, Diyu town, Zhetai, Zhulin town, Jiumo town and Nasa town in Guangnan County. During the major festivals such as the "Spring Festival", "March Sanhua Street Festival" and "Liulang Festival", the Guangnan Zhuang people will hold a grand bronze drum dance event in the villages with bronze drums. When the drum is beat, the villagers will wear festive costumes to sing and dance in the places where group activity can be carried out in the village.

The festivals when Zhuang people of Guima Village dance bronze drum dance are mainly Spring Festival, Women's Day, March 3, June 6, Double Ninth Festival, Longtaitou Festival, April 8th Festival, the Dragon Festival, and the Harvest Festival. Guima is called "the hometown of love, and the ocean of songs". It can be said that people celebrate festivals every month, dance every day, and sing every night. Every year, Zhuang people carefully prepare for the large-scale festival and carefully organize them. The masses wear costumes to beat the drums, sing and dance in the old pavilion. The content on the day of the festival is rich and colorful. There are traditional "bronze drum and towel dance" in Guima Village, "ritual music" and self-produced "Frog Dance", "Working Dance", and "Silk Music" and so on. At the small festival, the Zhuang people also danced with bronze drums to celebrate the festival.

The survey results show that the bronze drum dance is deeply loved by most Zhuang people in Guima Village. The movements of bronze drum dance are simple and generous, rich in content, and unique in dance style. People think that bronze drum dance can stimulate the body and mind, enhance emotions and promote national unity, which is one of the important spiritual pillars. It is also one of the important factors for the better inheritance and development of bronze drum dance. In 1988, on "The 3rd Kunming Art Festival in China", the bronze drum dance of the Zhuangzu in Guima Village was unveiled in the opening ceremony and made a great coup. On the March Flower Street Festival of Zhuang Nationality in 2002, Yunnan Ethnic Village specially invited Guima Village bronze drum dance to perform in Kunming. In 2004, on Kunming International Tourism Festival, Guima Village bronze drum dance was invited to perform in the Zhuang National Flower Street Festival in the Guangnan Branch. On the Spring Festival of 2005, the CCTV film crew went to Dai family that collect bronze drums in Guima Village to film the whole process of using the bronze drums (drum worship), and then the "echoes of bronze drum" was broadcast in the column of "Walking Through China". Guima Village "Zhuang people's bronze drum dance" is known as the "living fossil" of the interpretation of world bronze drum culture. It was listed in

the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage protection list approved by the State Council in June 2006, which is the proud of local ethnic group.

## III. CULTURAL CONNOTATION OF ZHUANG PEOPLE'S BRONZE DRUM DANCE IN GUIMA VILLAGE, GUANGNAN COUNTY

The performance of the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village seems to be a performance of people's interest. The movements are simple and tidy, mainly based on the changes in hands. There are crossing hands, swinging hand and raising hands. The movements of feet are mostly lifting and jumping. The whole activity is flexible and casual, with strong sense of rhythm. Each movement in the dance is a common movement in people's production and life, which all reflects a rice culture and life scenes. Each movement is naturally fresh and reproduces the desire of people to create a better life. The dance is mainly performed in circle. The steps are strong and vigorous, and the dancing postures are rough and flexible. It reflects the unrestrained and simple character of the Zhuang people, expresses their passionate and happy thoughts and feelings, and also shows the national spirit of unity and progress. It embodies the creative talents and ingenuity of the Zhuang people and also reflects the industrious, simple and kind character and aesthetic concept of the Zhuang people. It is an important medium for studying the social history of Zhuang and inheriting the traditional culture of the nation. It has the historical and cultural connotation of maintaining national survival and development, and also has functions such as fitness and recreation, strengthening national cohesion, and carrying forward national culture and performance.

The Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village has strong endemicity and national characteristics. Through rhythmic and regular limb movements, the dancers can play the role of dredging the muscles and bones, strengthening the body and pleasing the body and mind. It can also bring enjoyment of beauty to people, enhance national cohesion and maintain national sentiment. During the festival, the masses came from all directions to gather together to dance bronze drum dance, make emotional exchanges, enhance mutual understanding, strengthen mutual feelings and promote national unity. It is precisely because of their concerted efforts that the culture of bronze drum dance can be inherited and developed from generation to generation in the long history. The bronze drum dance, one of the important heritages of the ancient culture of the Zhuang people has been deeply rooted in the soil of the Zhuang people and closely linked with the production, customs and history of the Zhuang people. The bronze drum dance can not only promote the implementation of national fitness activities but also carry forward the national traditional culture. Through the success of the annual "March Sanhua Street Festival" in Guangnan County, bronze drum dance provided a model for the national traditional culture and art to enter the modern stage.

**IV. INHERITANCE OF ZHUANG PEOPLE'S BRONZE DRUM  
DANCE IN GUIMA VILLAGE, GUANGNAN COUNTY**
**A. The Inheritance Status of the Zhuang Copper Inspiration  
in Guima Village, Guangnan County**
**TABLE I. INHERITANCE GENEALOGY TABLE OF GUIMA VILLAGE ZHUANG PEOPLE'S BRONZE DRUM DANCE**

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Education Level</b>
first	Pu Fei	male	Zhuang	below primary school
second	Bu Huan	male	Zhuang	below primary school
third	Bu Shan	male	Zhuang	below primary school
Forth	Bu Jing	male	Zhuang	below primary school
Fifth	Bu Tian	male	Zhuang	below primary school
Sixth	Bu Yu	male	Zhuang	below primary school
Seventh	Dai Tiande	male	Zhuang	primary school
Eighth	Dai Wenyang	male	Zhuang	primary school
Ninth	Dai Yingzhong	male	Zhuang	primary school
Tenth	Dai Zhengzhao	male	Zhuang	primary school
Eleventh	Dai Lianfu	male	Zhuang	primary school
Twelfth	Dai Gaoxing	male	Zhuang	primary school
Thirteenth	Dai Zengliang	male	Zhuang	primary school

"Table I" records the thirteen generations inheritor of bronze drum dance of the Zhuang people in Guima Village. The inheritance of the bronze drum dance is mainly family inheritance. It was originally passed down from generation to generation by the Dai family and now it is spread to the whole nation. At present, there are 18 fixed people in the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance team who have relatively high performing level and often lead the team to perform: Li Wanzhang, Li Wanbang, Li Maoxiang, Shen Daozhen, Shen Longwei, Shen Fenglan, Shen Zhangliang, Liang Zhengfa, Liang Zhenggang, Liang Guifen, Wen Jin Xiu, Wang Fang, Nong Mingzhen, Dai Lianfu, Dai Gaoxue, Dai Gaojin, Dai Gaojun, Lu Guangjin. Nearly a thousand villagers, regardless of gender and age, are good at bronze drum dance.

The Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in the Guima village was passed down from generation to generation by Zhuang artists in the long history. During the Cultural Revolution, due to the "breaking four olds", the bronze drum dance was banned for some time, so its inheritance was briefly interrupted, and a large amount of information was also burned. It was not until the Cultural Revolution that the bronze drum dance re-entered the life of the Zhuang people in Guima Village. However, Guima Village has maintained 12 sets of complete bronze drum dance, reflecting the different production contents in the 12 months and four seasons. During the festivals and celebrations, the villagers of Guima Village organize the bronze drum dance. In the Zhuang language, it is called "Nong Ning Fa", "Nong" means "playing, dancing and performing"; "Yinfa" means "The Heavenly Drum". The traditional bronze drum dance of Guima Village shows 12 parts of theme and content, representing 12 months of the year:

The first month: in Zhuang language, it is called "Dangkou", "Dang" is "standing"; "kou" is "knee". The dance content is starting and then dancing.

February: in Zhuang language, it is called "Baiba", "Bai" means "swinging"; "ba" means knife, namely "opening up wasteland".

March: in Zhuang language, it is called "Lao Luo Shao Kao Fan", which means "to open up the road and plant the seed-grain".

April: in Zhuang language, it is called "Liao zan dan na", of which the basic movements of dance are pulling up seed, picking seed, throwing seed, and transplanting seed.

May: In Zhuang language, it is called "Dai na", referring to "removing weeds from rice fields."

June: in Zhuang language, it is called "dan pai cuan pai", which refers to "planting cotton and pulling cotton". The ancestors compiled the textile culture into dance to teach to future generations.

July: in Zhuang language, it is called "Jinji", which refers to the "July Festival". It is a festival in which the Zhuang nationality gathers for sacrifices.

August: in Zhuang language, it is called "diu nuo ga zan tan kao ma re", which is translated as "picking up the harvest rice and returning home". The movements are cutting millet, threshing, and picking up the millet to go home, presenting the prosperity of Zhuang people.

September: in Zhuang language, it is called "shou pai dan pang", which means "collecting cotton for weaving". The dance focuses on the movements of cotton harvesting, pulling thread, spinning and weaving, reflecting the textile production customs of the ancestors.

October: in Zhuang language, it is called "shou kao Ma Ren he Lao Ai", which means "collecting rice to make rice wine back home".

Winter Month: in Zhuang language, it is called "bai zhao kao lao", which means "giving a banquet to express thankfulness".

December: in Zhuang language, it is called "Xie hai San shi he jin", which means "polishing shoes and doing laundry for the New Year" [3].

Prof. Hong Xi from the Department of Chinese Studies of Dazhen University in Korea spoke highly of the better

protection of the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village, Guangnan. He believed that this is the unique cultural heritage in China and in the world.

People who believe that bronze drum dance needs to be improved hold that with the constant changes of the times, bronze drum dance should also be changed, so as not to lag behind the development of society. Adding some modern dance movements in the traditional actions of bronze drum dance can keep the original fun of dance, but also make the dance more beautiful, and attract more young generations, so that the bronze drum dance is better inherited and developed. The people who choose to improve think that they can maintain the traditional dance movements, so that the bronze drum dance can have original ecology inheritance and future generations can learn the traditional culture of the nation.

#### *B. Inheritance Way of Zhuang People's Bronze Drum Dance in Guima Village, Guangnan County*

The basic inheritance way of the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village include influencing by what one constantly sees and hears and teaching by personal example as well as verbal instruction, which is mainly reflected in family and group life. The family is one of the most basic social cells as well as the most basic and important form of human activities. It is also the main place for human beings to accept cultural homeland and inherit culture and provides a powerful material guarantee for human growth and development. People have accepted the knowledge instruction and influence of thoughts of the family from an early age. It can be said that most of the traditional knowledge and concepts that people have learned are taught through family education.

The bronze drum dance is the most important group entertainment activity of the Zhuang people in Guima Village during the grand festival. In Guima Village, where the economy is relatively undeveloped, bronze drum dance has an important influence on the production and life of the Zhuang people. It is created by the group, which is a way for them to pursue freedom and express national feelings. Through the celebration of such group activities, the people of Guima Village have been influenced from childhood. Through the observation of varied movements and rhythms of bronze drum dance, they imitated it by themselves at the activity place of bronze drum dance. After several times imitative studies, they will slowly get familiar with the movements of bronze drum dance and be able to participate in it, which naturally presents the inheritance of the group. The inheritance of master and apprentice is a more complete and systematic way of inheritance. The bronze drum dance artists select the more talented people from the group to teach carefully and make their bronze drum dance level relatively high, so that they will also become the leaders of the bronze drum dance in the village. Because the Zhuang people in Guima Village are a nation that only has their own language without characters, Zhuang culture has played a role relying on the inheritors of Zhuang nationality for generations. Especially for bronze drum dance, as the essence of the Zhuang culture in Guima Village, its

successful inheritance is the result of the unremitting efforts of the inheritors of bronze drum dance for generations.

#### *C. Main Factors Affecting the Inheritance of Zhuang People's Bronze Drum Dance in Guima Village, Guangnan County*

Guima Village is a relatively remote mountain village with relatively closed living environment, so the phenomenon of son preference still exists. Most of the older generation has only attended primary school and there are many female elderly people even didn't attend schools and can't speak Chinese, so they rarely go out of the mountains, and the bronze drum dance culture can't be better promoted.

The Zhuang nation is a nation that only has its own language without characters. In the long-term farming society, their traditional culture is passed down through oral communication. The reason why the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village can be inherited completely is because the old people teach to their descendants by way of oral imparting through a series of ceremonies and activities for generations. However, with the continuous development of society and the wave of reform and opening up, Zhuang people in Guima Village want to change their poverty and backwardness. Working outside can earn more than farming at home. The basic theory of Marxism holds: "People must first eat, drink, live, wear, and then engage in politics, science, art, and religion and so on." Therefore, they go far away from home, working and studying in the city and their lifestyle has changed. It is difficult for people out of the hometown for many years to come into contact with the traditional culture of the nation, so it is difficult for the bronze drum dance culture to be accepted by them through oral communication. Therefore, the bronze drum dance culture has gradually declined.

The arrival of the market economy has impacted the traditional lifestyle of the Zhuang people in Guima Village and affected the development of the Zhuang people's bronze drum dance culture. In the face of the impact of the market economy and foreign culture, the traditional inheritance way of oral imparting of bronze drum dance has been threatened. Before the liberation, the lifestyle and entertainment activities of the Zhuang people were relatively simple. People used bronze drum dance as entertainment and activity the major festivals and leisure time. The Zhuang people always like to play bronze drums and dance, so bronze drum dance has continued till now. Later, with the advancement of modernization, new entertainment methods were introduced, such as: radio, video, television, mahjong, and network, etc., these foreign cultures have made the people of Guima Village have more choices for life and entertainment. The Zhuang people are no longer concentrated on a single entertainment lifestyle. Now, bronze drum dance is only one of the ways of entertainment for Zhuang people, so its living space is getting smaller and smaller.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The Zhuang people's bronze drum dance in Guima Village derives from the original nature worship. It is a true

portrayal of the production and life of the Zhuang people. As a nation with only its own language instead of characters, Zhuang people inherit the bronze drum dance mainly through the way of oral imparting. More than half of the people learn bronze drum dance through family inheritance. In the process of inheritance and protection of bronze drum dance of Guima Village, we should continue to innovate and inherit the concept of protection in order to achieve better development.

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