

# Thoughts on the Diplomatic Role of Chinese Classical Dance Culture

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**Abstract**—Cultural diplomacy is not an emerging concept. As early as July 2009, Hu Jintao, then the president of China, proposed to “carry out various forms of foreign cultural exchange activities and spread the excellent Chinese culture.” Culture is obviously symbolic in a certain environment, and art, as a kind of carrier under the branch of culture, has an irreplaceable role in both the recognition of culture and the identity of the nation. Although the historical background involved in dance culture is not the most comprehensive, it covers the spiritual culture and material culture of all walks of life in the history of the Chinese nation. It is a cultural category with rapid spread, deep roots and wide coverage.

**Keywords**—Chinese classical dance, Culture, Diplomacy

In terms of the analysis of diplomatic environment of the countries in the world is concerned, cultural diplomacy is indeed an effective way to enhance national understanding and bring the country closer. The culture in dance is not only physical, but also spiritual and emotional. It contains history, beliefs, values and concepts, and is a multi-integrated cultural approach. The dance culture exchange among the countries is both three-dimensional and flat. It is both mutual study of dance and historical comparison.

## I. DANCE ART IN THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

The “cultural dimension theory” is the concept put forward by Geert Hofstede, the director of the Netherlands Institute for International Cultural Cooperation, in studying the differences of the influence of transnational cultures. It is a framework for measuring the cultural differences between different countries. He divided the cultural differences between different countries into four basic cultural dimensions: 1. Power Distance 2. Uncertainty Avoidance 3. Individualism/Collectivism 4. Masculinity versus Femininity. The four dimensions are Hofstede’s original theory, and it is the more quintessential part of the concept of cultural dimension. The latter two dimensions are supplemented after the investigation and research based on the original dimensional concept of other scholars. The concepts cited into the cultural dimension theory are: 5. Long-term versus Short-term 6. Indulgence versus Restraint. Each dimension analyzes the differences of transnational culture from different aspects and levels, and sets up research frameworks and templates for such research. As one of the most primitive cultural forms of human beings, dance art is an important way and method to study the differences of national culture. The national culture covered in dance is solid, contemporary and dynamic, and it preserves the cultural evolution process and development trend of a country or a nation well and is of cultural research value. Each dimension mode of the concept of cultural dimension can be applied to the study of dance culture, and find comparison from the history of dance development and the history of national culture development.

The art of dance is called “human embryonal art”. The so-called embryonal nature means that the germination of this art form is closely related to the emergence of human beings. It is accompanied by a series of survival evolution processes such as human emotions, labor and migration, and is an important way for primitive humans to exchange emotions and record customs. The ancients danced around the bonfire, danced when they were in high spirits, and danced when they were sad. They all carried the versatile emotional expression of primitive humans. The theory of human evolution has gradually enriched the social function of dance art. The form of “dance sacrifice” is a derivative of the human spiritual world. It serves as a special medium for people to pray for well-being, to pay homage to the ancestors, to communicate with the gods, and to act as an important node of transition from “empathy” to “send thoughts” for dance art. It also represents human’s exploration and conjecture for the unknown world. As a part of the expression of body in sacrifice, “dance sacrifice” serves as a bridge for people to lead the ideal world, adding the persuasive power of the ancient superstition. In the human development vein, dance is endowed with new meanings. Its inclusiveness and symbolism have made its particularity, so that every existing dance form has a profound historical view and cultural attribute. Dance art is not only the perfect expression of contemporary thought and emotion but also the true portrayal of human society development at different stages.

## II. THE CULTURAL PARTICULARITY OF CHINESE CLASSICAL DANCE

In the existing Chinese dance culture concept, although Chinese classical (Gu Dian) dance is not the most representative, it is indeed the most symbolic. The so-called “Gu” is ancient time, history and the past. “Dian” is a model and elegance. The concept of classical dance has a strong national sentiment and traditional aesthetics in a special context. In the history of interaction and exchange with other dances in China, it has not only absorbed nutrients, but also perform constant

self-examination and development. Its cultural diplomatic attributes come from the homogeneity of Chinese nation's aesthetic cognition and the universality of multi-ethnic cultural exchanges since ancient times. Compared with other styles of national folk dances with strong representation, its character seems to be more moderate and easier to make the whole great nation accept and agree. Und under such conditions, it is also representative.

Delving into the development of Chinese classical dance, it does not seem to contain all the aesthetic paradigms of the development of ancient Chinese dance. It is an art discipline reconstructed after the founding of New China, and it has had a period of fault. Looking at the changes of Chinese classical dance from the perspective of historical trends, we can't evaluate the value and nature of an art category with the nodes of faults and reconstruction, and we must not doubt the purity of it by learning the training methods of other dances. This is one-sided and unwise. Our great and sacred socialist system with Chinese characteristics was created in this era by the Chinese descendants based on effective foreign experience. For Chinese classical dance, it is its history, and it is also a feature of its continuous development and maturity, which itself is exemplary. The ballet element is not a finishing touch for the Chinese classical dance process. It is only a booster rather than a catalyst. It is a factor that does not affect the ontology.

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With Chinese opera as the main body and in the context of cultural transnational communication in combination with the Chinese classical dance created by various Chinese art forms, its cultural diversity seems to have become a bright spot. Although the drama dance is formed in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, its body vocabulary is all mingled with the legacy after the evolution of the dances in former dynasties. Thus, it is of a classical nature. This special form allows other countries to appreciate the various artistic elements of the country in the carrier of dance art. These elements are closely attached to the main body, and the main body is rooted in the national culture, which constitutes the cultural particularity of Chinese classical dance. Its form is not only the interpretation of national culture but also the voice of the national notion. Its inclusive ideology, subtle and introverted dance style is the best cultural brand of Chinese nation.

### III. THE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF CHINESE CLASSICAL DANCE

Why Chinese classical dance is more appropriate as a form of cultural diplomacy, the main reason is that it can better represent the overall cultural background and humanistic concept of the Chinese nation. It is different from the regional characteristics represented by the folk dance, that is, each kind of dance of the minority represents the national culture of a certain region or a certain ethnic group in China. This style can only appear in the form of national great celebration in the cultural diplomatic activities of national nature. The Chinese classical dance is different. Its growth environment has always been closely related to the national political form and the trend of the people. Its prototype is court dance that is a collection of the essences of the ethnic minorities dance in each dynasty. Its cultural epitome is both a large national and small national. It is more vulnerable to protection in the historical environment and is more culturally representative. For example, during the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, the Qing Shang music and dance formed along with the southward movement of the national political center. In order to adapt to the needs of the country's political rule at the time, it not only retained the style characteristics of the Han dance, but also widely absorbed the Hu dance, Hu music and the art culture of other minorities in one. Thus, it's historical and representative.

It is also feasible to analyze the cultural diplomacy of Chinese classical dance from the perspective of cultural dimension. Its historical evolution process can be brought into the basic four major initial dimensions. Firstly, the concept of the right distance is the acceptance degree of the unequal distribution of power in society or organization by people with low status in a certain society. Because of the different understandings of power in various countries, there are great differences in this dimension. China's feudal society is a highly centralized state. The development of dance culture is all mingled with the changes and adjustments made in the dance style, dance posture and dance theories to cater to the rulers. These changes in dance styles are all due to the mandatory distribution of the ruler's ideology at that time, which also represents people's recognition of high power.

Secondly, the uncertainty avoidance refers to whether a society will avoid and control uncertainty through formal channels when it is threatened by the uncertainties and unconventional environment. People in society are the basic unit symbols, and the changes in the forms of their dance activities directly reflect the ideology of society for uncertain avoidance. All kinds of music and dance for sacrificing ancestors and gods in ancient China and the appearance of various totem worship dances are all from the subjective consciousness of human beings. For the blind worship of ancestors, praying for blessing peace and prayer for future life, this uncertain event cannot avoid and control through formal scientific channels.

The individualism/collectivism dimension measures whether a whole society concerns the interests of individuals or the interests of the collective. The relationship among people in a society that is prone to individualism is loose, while the society is prone to collectivism concerns the relationship within the group, cares for the big family. The strong ethnic relationship can give people continuous protection, while the individual must be absolutely loyal to the ethnic group. This concept of cultural

dimension is also reflected in the form of dance. The form of “team dance” (dance team) in the Song and Tang Dynasties came into being under the humanistic environment of the time. It is large in scale and number, but it’s well-organized in internal distribution, which is reflected in the cooperation and coordination of the collective. The team dance of the Song Dynasty is divided into “the small second team” and “female disciple team”, and each has ten types of team dances. The former has 72 people and the latter has 153 people. The last kind of masculinization and feminization mainly reflect the quality of a society representing men, such as more competition and arbitrariness, or the quality of women, such as modesty, caring for others, and the definition of male and female functions. This kind of dimension is more obvious in the ancient Chinese dance form. In the feudal society of China, the masculine consciousness is strong, the music and dance artists are mostly women, and their status is low. Their dance forms and styles mainly cater to the male aesthetics. We can realize that Chinese classical dance can reflect the ideology and spiritual outlook of historical society, and it helps other countries to understand Chinese culture and historical origin.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The cultural identity and profound nature of history of Chinese classical dance determine that it can more appropriately represent the dance culture and historical concepts of the Chinese great nation. It has diplomatic nature. Today, with emphasis on cultural soft power, the outstanding dance culture not only allows other countries to understand China, but also enhances China's international cultural competitiveness, so that friends from all over the world can recognize Chinese dance and taste Chinese culture.

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