

Jinnan Drum Dance as a Representative Folk Dance of Shanxi Province

Chen Donghui¹ & Leng Poh Gee²
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
e-mail: cdh3486045489@163.com¹, lengpohgee@fmsp.upsi.edu.my²

Article received: January 17, 2025

Article accepted: June 5, 2025

Article published: December 29, 2025

Cite this article (APA): Chen, D. & Poh Gee, L. (2025). Jinnan drum dance as a representative folk dance of Shanxi Province. *Jurai Sembah*, 6(2), 68-80. <https://doi.org/10.37134/juraisembah.vol6.2.1.2025>

Abstract

Jinnan Drum Dance is widely recognised as a representative folk dance within the Shanxi folk dance system, distinguished by resonant drumming, vigorous postures, and an embodied aesthetic rooted in the cultural logic of agricultural civilisation. Despite its listing as provincial intangible cultural heritage, its living transmission is increasingly threatened by globalisation and modernisation, including a shrinking base of inheritors and a growing tendency to privilege spectacle and external form over cultural meaning. At the same time, digital technologies and new media have enabled innovative remediations of the traditional performance system. Such transformations can expand modes of circulation and audience reach, yet they also risk symbolically deconstructing and reassembling cultural elements in ways that blur genealogies of practice and produce cultural alienation. Responding to these tensions, this study argues that safeguarding representative folk dances in Shanxi requires research that moves beyond morphological description toward an interpretive paradigm grounded in cultural meaning. Using dance ethnography as the primary methodology, the research integrates analysis of performance fields shaped by Jinnan's geographical space with attention to the seasonal festival calendar, ecological conditions, and implicit cultural rules that structure local practice. Data were generated through field investigation in southern Shanxi, in-depth interviews with inheritors, folk artists, cultural workers, and community members, and systematic literature review. The study provides culturally situated documentation of Jinnan Drum Dance and proposes a meaning-centred approach to understanding, protecting, and sustaining Shanxi's folk dance heritage.

Keywords: cultural connotation, Jinnan Drum Dance, folk-dance culture, representative folk dances

Introduction

Shanxi Province is located in the western part of North China. The region is covered with loess, with undulating terrain, gullies and ravines, and serious soil and water loss problems (Chinese national folk-dance collection - Shanxi volume, 1993). Linfen and Yuncheng are located in the southern part of Shanxi Province, collectively known as Jinnan. South Shanxi borders Changzhi to the east and is adjacent to the southeastern Shanxi region. It is surrounded by the Yellow River on the west and south sides and faces Shaanxi and Henan provinces across the river. It borders Lüliang and Jinzhong to the north (Tian, 2000). Historically, natural disasters have occurred frequently in Shanxi, which have had a serious impact on people's lives and production, and even caused huge losses. Shanxi Province is located in an inland mountainous area, with the Taihang Mountains and the Luliang Mountains located on the east and west sides of the province respectively. These two mountain ranges block the summer warm and humid air currents from the North China Plain to a certain extent, resulting in less precipitation throughout the year in the basin between the east and west mountains and the mountainous areas

along the Yellow River west of the Luliang Mountains (Tian, 2004). In addition, Shanxi Province is far from the ocean, and the barrier effect of the eastern mountains makes it difficult for warm and humid air currents to penetrate deeply. The annual precipitation in the province is mostly between 370 and 650 mm, and water resources are relatively scarce, which has become the main reason for the proneness of drought in Shanxi. At the same time, the uneven distribution of precipitation during the year further increases the probability of drought.



Figure 1. Map of Shanxi Province (Photo credit: Baidu)

Folk dance in southern Shanxi is deeply influenced by Chinese culture (more than 8,000 years ago) and agricultural culture (which has continued from ancient times to the present) (Suo, 2020). ‘Yi Xici’ records that as early as three thousand years ago, the ancients were engaged in farming in the Fen River Valley in southern Shanxi. Archaeological discoveries at sites such as the Taosi Culture (about 4,300 to 3,900 years ago), the Xihoudu Culture (about 2.43 million years ago), and the Dingcun Culture (Middle Paleolithic Age) indicate that early ancestors used clay, fire, and stone tools to make production tools in southern Shanxi to maintain survival and development. Therefore, southern Shanxi can be regarded as one of the important birthplaces of Chinese culture. Chinese people scattered across the country regard southern Shanxi as their spiritual homeland for tracing their ancestors, forming a unique culture of seeking their roots, which further enriches the connotation of the root culture of southern Shanxi (Shanxi Provincial Library, 2010).



Figure 2. Excavation site of Taosi ruins (Photo credit: Chen Donghui, 2024)

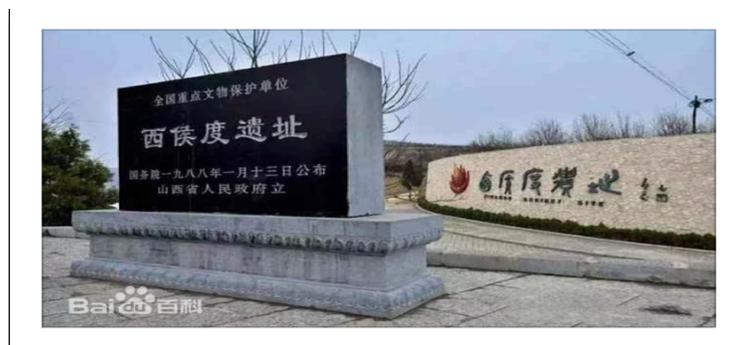


Figure 3. Picture of Xihoudu Ruins (Photo credit: Baidu Encyclopedia, 2022)



Figure 4. Picture of Ancestors Collecting Fire during the Xihoudu Period (Photo credit: Baidu Encyclopedia, 2021)

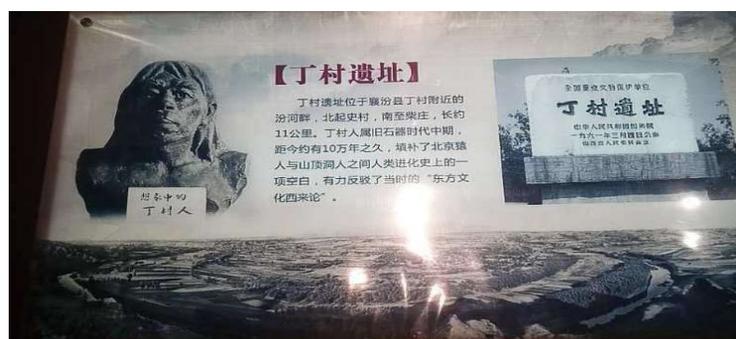


Figure 5. Map of Dingcun ruins (Photo credit: Baidu Encyclopedia, 2019)

Folk dance in southern Shanxi is rooted in the profound traditions of ancestral culture and farming culture. As one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization, southern Shanxi relies on its long history and geographical advantages of the Fenhe River Valley to provide rich soil and material support for cultural development. The formation of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is closely related to the local geographical environment, historical background and folk culture. It is a kind of prayer for good weather and good harvests by farmers in Jinnan since ancient times in order to meet their survival needs. It is also a manifestation of cognition, emotion and willpower (Wei, 2013). The folk dance in southern Shanxi vividly reflects the local people's attachment to the land through the rhythm of body movements, the level of spatial dynamics, and the costumes and props that integrate farming images. It also carries the spiritual core of respecting heaven and ancestors and cherishing the dead, and demonstrates the cultural philosophy of the coexistence of man, nature and history. As time goes by, *Jinnan Drum Dance* in southern Shanxi has gradually developed into a folk dance with distinct regional characteristics and has been widely spread in Shanxi and surrounding areas (Bi, 2024).

The term representative folk dance is derived from the Russian Народный характерный танец, the essence of which is to refer to dance forms with unique national style, local characteristics or characteristics of a specific industry (Journal of Beijing Dance Academy, 2024). Shanxi Province, as a treasure trove of folk

dance, has more than 230 registered dances. Its artistic characteristics are mainly reflected in the richness and diversity of props and costumes, the ingenuity and variety of dance movements, and the richness of performance forms (Shangguan, 2022). However, how to select the folk dance that is most representative of regional culture from numerous dances is the key to the research. The selection of the most representative Shanxi folk dance must meet the following conditions: first, it must originate and spread in Shanxi; second, its performance form and cultural connotation must be relatively intact; and third, it must be distinctively typical (Tian, 2004). Many studies have also shown that the *Jinnan Drum Dance* in the southern Shanxi region has undergone historical sedimentation, fully demonstrating the unique charm of Shanxi folk dance and is highly representative (Bi, 2024; Wei, 2021; Zhang, 2020). Therefore, this paper uses field research in ethnographic research methods to deeply analyze the cultural connotation of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, in order to provide dance scholars with a more comprehensive understanding perspective and help more scholars conduct in-depth research on the representative folk dance of Shanxi, *Jinnan Drum Dance*.

Methodology

The researcher will use ethnographic research method in qualitative research as the main research method. In the dynamic changes of contemporary social culture, the cultural research paradigms of anthropology and sociology are undergoing profound transformation, among which qualitative research focusing on contextualized understanding is increasingly highlighting its academic value. The ethnographic research method is the core method in this field, in which field investigation systematically records the practical logic in a specific cultural field through participant observation, in-depth interviews. This ethnographic research based on long-term field investigation not only lays the methodological foundation for anthropology, but also opens up a new dimension of interpretation in dance culture research. Since the maturity of the anthropology discipline system in the 1950s, the method of dance ethnography has broken through the limitations of traditional art form analysis and emphasized the interpretation of the cultural meaning behind body movement symbols from the perspective of cultural holism. Under this framework, dance ethnography not only records body language and performance forms, but also deeply decodes historical memory, belief system and social structure in the movement vocabulary, thus building an interpretive bridge connecting body practice and cultural context (Wang, 2020). This research method, through embodied cultural writing, enables dance research to transcend the level of formal aesthetics and truly become an important academic path to gain insight into the cultural genes of ethnic groups.

This research uses dance ethnography as its methodology and focuses on the southern part of Shanxi Province to carry out systematic field work. The research path design includes four dimensions: First, relying on in-depth field investigations, will go deep into the core area of Jinnan Drum Dance culture - focusing on selecting intangible cultural heritage villages such as Hongdong and Xiangfen as field points, and using participant observation methods to record the body language, drum rhythm, clothing patterns and other explicit cultural representations of drum dance performances, and use video ethnography technology to holographically collect the performance venues; at the same time, will conduct oral history interviews, dialogues with inheritors, folk artists and community members, and decode the cultural semantics of Jinnan Drum Dance. Secondly, use the literature reading method in ethnography. By reading relevant books and documents, will collect information about the history, culture, social background, origin, development and current situation of Jinnan Drum Dance, a representative folk dance in Shanxi. Third, will deeply grasp the theoretical framework of dance ethnography, focusing on core concepts such as body language, cultural symbols and social functions. Fourth, the research results will be presented in the form of a standardized academic paper. Fourthly, the research results will be presented in the form of a standard academic paper, which includes an introduction, research methods, data analysis and discussion, and conclusions. It will also provide more explanations on the representative folk dance of Shanxi, Jinnan Drum Dance, by combining textual discussion with image materials. This will ultimately form a dance ethnography research result that has both academic depth and practical value.

Discussion

The Origin of Jinnan Drum

In ancient Chinese culture, the drum is a prop with great symbolic significance. *'Shuowen Jiezi'* mentions that the sound of the drum is like the sound of seeds breaking their shells, sprouting, and growing vigorously in the fields during the spring equinox. This reflects the ancient people's understanding of the drum, and they believed that the drum is a vivid portrayal of the growth of all things. The Book of Songs also mentions drums many times, showing its multiple roles in ancient society. It explains that young men would use the sound of drums to express their love for the women they like. Guests beat drums during banquets to express their inner joy. In wars, drums were an important tool for communicating with the gods in heaven, using the power of the gods to defeat the enemy. It can be seen that drums in ancient times not only represented the power of natural growth, but also carried the sacred mission of communicating with the gods and expressing emotions. Archaeological discoveries provide solid evidence for the historical context of Jinnan Drums. In 1978, eight alligator drums and six earthen drums were unearthed at the Taosi cemetery in southern Shanxi. These drums date back approximately 4,300 to 3,900 years and are the earliest evidence of drums in Chinese history. The length of the alligator drum can reach 100 cm. Its drum skin is made of the skin of the Chinese alligator, and the drum body is made of tree bark. Due to the long history, only part of the material of the crocodile drum remains after being unearthed. The earthen drum is made of mud and is shaped like a gourd. These ancient cultural relics bear witness to the long history of drum culture in southern Shanxi.

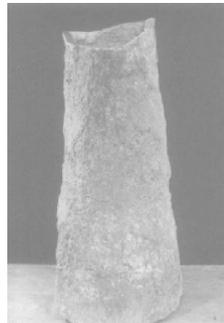


Figure 6. Alligator drum (Photo credit: Baidu Encyclopedia, 2019)



Figure 7. Earth drum (Photo credit: Baidu Encyclopedia, 2019)

The Yao period (2188-2067 BC) was the first period when ancient Chinese ancestors had a calendar. Emperor Yao, as the first monarch to teach his people how to farm, laid the foundation for agricultural culture. Emperor Yao built his capital in Pingyang, which is today's Linfen City in the southern part of Shanxi Province. The excavation of alligator drums and earthen drums shows that drums had already appeared in southern Shanxi more than 1,000 years before the Yao period. This shows that the unique natural conditions in southern Shanxi provided rich resources for the agricultural life of our ancestors. The climate here is suitable and the soil is fertile, which is not only suitable for the growth of plants and animals, but also the production and living style of the Yao tribe teaching people to farm here, which promoted the unique farming culture of this area and

enabled our ancestors to live and work in peace and contentment. This cultural and geographical environment laid a solid foundation for the origin and development of Jinnan Drum. The southern part of Shanxi has a subtropical climate, which allows animals such as alligators and rhinos to survive here. The ancestors used the skins of these animals to make drums, which provided material support for the emergence of southern Shanxi drums. As a result, drum instruments such as crocodile drums and earthen drums came into being. These drums not only met the living needs of the ancestors, but also played an important role in sacrifices, wars, and entertainment exchanges among tribal members. They were the link between the ancestors and nature, gods, and society, carrying rich cultural connotations and witnessing the civilization process in southern Shanxi from ancient times to the Yao period.

The Prototype of Jinnan Drum Dance

As a very representative traditional folk dance in the Jinnan region of Shanxi Province, the prototype of *Jinnan Drum Dance* can be traced back to ancient society. The early *Jinnan Drum Dance* integrated religious sacrifices, military drills and farming culture to form a unique art form. The following researcher analyzes its prototype characteristics from the aspects of historical background, performance form, cultural function.

In terms of historical background. The earliest form of *Jinnan Drum Dance* may have sprouted in the Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Jinnan is located in the Jinnan Plain, which was the ancient land of Tang Yao and the intersection of Central Plains culture and military strongholds. According to the '*Yicheng County Chronicles*', local drum music was mostly used in early times to worship heaven and earth, pray for rain and ward off disasters, and the sound of drums was believed to be able to communicate with the gods. In addition, because it is located at the intersection of important military towns, drums are also used as military orders. Soldiers use drum beats to transmit signals and boost morale, which gradually evolved into a collective dance with martial dance characteristics (*Yicheng County Chronicles*, 1929).

In terms of early performance forms. In terms of early performance forms. The musical instruments and props are centered on the flat drum, which is made of animal skin and has a rich sound. It is supplemented by percussion instruments such as gongs and cymbals to form a rough rhythm system. The movements in the embryonic stage were simple, emphasizing strength and rhythm, such as stomping, striding, and swinging arms, simulating life scenes such as farming and fighting. In the early stages of formation arrangement, most of them were straight or circular formations, reflecting collective cooperation, which was related to the circular formations in ancient military formations or sacrificial ceremonies (Zhang, 2020).

In terms of its early social functions, firstly, *Jinnan Drum Dance* was often used as part of community fire rituals, for spring prayers and autumn reports. Secondly, dancers wear totemic masks and beat drums to dance, which is intended to drive away evil spirits. The dance, which integrates folk customs and military, is interspersed with movements such as leaping and stabbing, and retains traces of ancient war dances, such as "setting up formations" and "breaking through the siege" and other formation changes. Third, during festivals or temple fairs, drum dancing becomes a form of self-entertainment for the people, which has the effect of enhancing the cohesion of the community (Qin, 2015).

The prototype of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is rooted in the profound farming, military and community entertainment culture of southern Shanxi. Its rough rhythm and practical functions embody the simple concept of the unity of man and nature in early folk art. With the development of the times, this art form gradually absorbed elements such as opera and acrobatics, and eventually evolved into today's magnificent treasure of intangible cultural heritage. However, the original vitality of its embryonic stage still provides important cultural genes for modern inheritance.

The cultural connotation of the language of Jinnan Drum Dance

Dance language is not only a living carrier of cultural memory, but also a cross-cultural medium for emotional communication. It breaks through the limitations of words, stores collective identity with muscle memory, reconstructs social relations with dynamic aesthetics, and completes the transformation from individual experience to civilization code in the interweaving of reality and illusion. Dance language is the transmission of cultural information and emotional experience through body movements, music rhythm, space and symbolic

symbols. In this section, researchers analyze the prominent movements, music, costumes and role-playing of *Jinnan Drum Dance* to explore the deep context of *Jinnan Drum Dance* rooted in the history, beliefs, emotions and social structure of Shanxi Province. This will allow readers to clearly grasp the cultural connotation of *Jinnan Drum Dance* and understand the representative folk dance culture of Shanxi.



Figure 8. Representative folk dance of Shanxi Jinnan Drum Dance (Source: Baidu,2018)

Movements of prominent parts

Zi (2012) pointed out that prominent part movements are the most prominent typical movements of the human body, which have strong visual appeal and can determine the meaning and attributes of the entire movement symbol system. In *Jinnan Drum Dance*, the upper limbs, trunk and lower limbs are the core body parts that constitute the basic movements of the drum dance, and their movements are particularly critical. Therefore, this study explores the prominent movements of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, the upper limbs, trunk and lower limbs of the dancers, in order to reveal the internal connection and development law of the drum dance movements.

First of all, the movement system of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is deeply influenced by the characteristics of drum props. The two interact with each other and promote the development and evolution of the movements. When the upper limbs hold the drums with both hands and make large movements, the lower limbs need to adopt a specific posture in order to maintain the balance and stability of the body. Local performers generally believe that performing the movements in a squatting or half-squatting position can achieve more stable development, changes and movements. Therefore, the basic movements of the dancer are to bend the knees slightly and squat in a horse stance. Based on this, a series of rhythmic movements are formed, such as jumping, leaping, rolling, spinning, bouncing of the lower limbs and pushing, pulling, twisting, surging, shrugging, shaking and swinging of the upper limbs. For example, the rapid left and right shaking and the backward leaning after the shaking are two contradictory aspects of the movement. It not only relies on the drum to complete the leaning action, but also relies on the reaction force of the leaning to form the left and right shaking. It is the existence of this contradiction that constitutes the core of the movement characteristics, and it is the special rhythmicity of these elements that plays a special role in training. These twisting, swinging, and fast shaking in the opposite direction movements require not only the trunk to complete, but also the arms, trunk, and lower limbs to move at the same time. These movements are fast-paced and large-scale, and the performer needs to use the strength of the whole body to complete the performance. Therefore, after a whole set of combined movements, the performer's body will feel very tired, but at the same time it is also a state of tiredness and happiness.

Secondly, the performance of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is deeply influenced by the local geographical environment and production and lifestyle. The Jinnan region is located in an open plain, close to the Yellow River and has a mild climate, which makes the local people make a living by farming. Agricultural production is highly dependent on natural conditions, and farming needs to adapt to the land, climate and a stable social environment, otherwise farming activities will be hindered. Therefore, in the *Jinnan Drum Dance*, dancers imitate the images of farmers working in the fields to show life scenes, and through coordination with drum

props, they pray for good weather and good harvests throughout the year. The upper limb movements are mainly pushing, pulling, circling, and hitting with the hands in coordination with the drum beats; the lower limb movements are mainly kneeling, bending, sitting, squatting, and bowing, with the center of gravity swinging downward and stepping on the ground, vividly showing the image of farmers working continuously on the loess.

For example, the dance *Huang Tu Huang* is a very infectious male group dance work, which deeply shows the life and emotions of farmers on the loess land. At the beginning of the dance, although there was no musical accompaniment, all the male actors on the stage started the performance in a very tense way. They first stood still, puffed out their chests and beat the drums quickly. The drumbeats seemed particularly powerful on the quiet stage, as if imitating the farmers' excited love for the land on the loess earth. Afterwards, the actors swung their arms up and down with great amplitude, and their upper bodies made large forward and backward movements, showing a primitive sense of power and the rhythm of life. As the music sounded, the dance entered its climax. The actors' bodies opened and closed with increasing amplitude, and the spatial changes of their bodies from squatting on the ground to standing up and then leaping into the air created a strong visual impact. The arms beat the drums in rapid succession, and the drumbeats and body movements are closely coordinated to form a thrilling rhythm. All the actors shout as they beat the drums, and these shouts contain awe and gratitude to heaven and earth. Dancers in the dance *Huang Tu Huang* used strong body movements and passionate shouts to thank the heaven and earth for giving them the resources to survive and allowing them to live happily on this land. This work not only shows the hard work of farmers, but also conveys their awe and gratitude for nature. It is a hymn to the life force on the yellow earth.



Figure 9. Representative folk dance of Shanxi Jinnan Drum Dance Works: Huang Tu Huang (Source: Baidu,2018)

Finally, *Jinnan Drum Dance* requires dancers to master various traditional training techniques skillfully and freely before they can coordinate with various auxiliary body movements. For example, when performing with multiple drums tied to the body, the dancer has to hit the drums on the waist, chest, shoulders and other parts of the body, thus forming a coordinated coordination of body movements such as twisting and swinging of the waist. The various complex drum beats in training cultivate the actors' keen sense of rhythm, and the coordination of various beats and movements develops the coordination of the actors' hands, feet, torso and the ease with which they use props. During the performance, the dancers have to hit the drum head (right drum head) and also hit the drum with their legs, hips and turning around, forming a complex dynamic of fast drumming. This is an important training content that other types of prop dance training cannot involve.

Music

In dance performances, music, as an important part of dance language, closely cooperates with action language in rhythm, giving the body regular movements in time. This synergy not only enhances the expressiveness of dance, but also improves the audience's aesthetic experience. In the performance of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, the

use of percussion instruments is particularly prominent, becoming a key element in creating atmosphere and promoting dance rhythm.

There are many kinds of percussion instruments in *Jinnan Drum Dance*, mainly including gongs, cymbals, cymbals, cymbals and plywood. Most of these instruments are made of copper and wood. The striking of copper against copper, and of wood against copper, produces clear and loud sounds, providing a strong sense of rhythm for the dance. The use of multiple musical instruments makes the performance atmosphere warm and cheerful, greatly enriching the appeal of the dance. Without the accompaniment of these instruments, *Jinnan Drum Dance* will lose most of its atmosphere and vitality.

The music rhythm of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is mainly based on 2/4 beats, and the rhythmic patterns are mostly composed of quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes, such as |××|, |×××|, |××××|, |×××××|. Syncopated notes or legato notes rarely appear. This rhythm with distinct strengths and weaknesses forms a perfect match with the dance movements. Through the coordinated cooperation of music accompaniment and dance movements, *Jinnan Drum Dance* vividly expresses the people of southern Shanxi's love for the land and their passion for life. The musical creation of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is closely related to the local history and culture, farming culture and people's production and life. There is Si Ma Tou Tang which praises the achievements of Emperor Yao, and Picking Mulberries, Cutting Leeks and Little Boy Plowing the Plough which reflect the working days. These pieces of music not only provide rich material for the dance, but also complement each other through the performance of percussion instruments, deeply reflecting the social life of the people in southern Shanxi.

Costumes and role play

In the performance of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, the actor who beats the drum is called a drummer. There are male drummers and female drummers. There is also a role-playing called a clown. The drummer and the clown are two types of roles with distinct characteristics. Their costumes and performance forms reflect the unique cultural connotations and spiritual appeals of the southern Shanxi region. The costumes of the drummers are designed to be close to life. The male dancers wear the same headscarf as the farmers when they work in the fields, and a square scarf around their heads to wipe their sweat. This dress reflects the close connection between the drummers and the working people, and shows the beauty of labor and the simplicity of life. The female dancers wear red tops with large flowers, flowered bloomers, and red embroidered shoes. The colorful and exaggerated costumes not only show the vitality and enthusiasm of women, but also convey a love for life and a vision of a better future.

The costumes of clowns are more distinctive and expressive. They wear red tops with big flowers, green pants, bells on their shoulders, and black cloth shoes. Although the image of clowns looks ugly, its meaning is very beautiful. The clowns play an important role in the performance. Through exaggerated performances and unique costumes, they reflect various phenomena in life in a humorous way, satirizing and criticizing some behaviors that hinder agricultural production and progress in life. This satire is not a simple ridicule, but arouses the audience's thinking through humor, telling the audience that these behaviors are not desirable. The clown forms a sharp contrast with the drummer, adding a comic effect to the performance, allowing the audience to feel the wisdom and fun of life in laughter. Therefore, there is no fixed requirement for the clown's costumes. The more exaggerated and uglier they are, the more they can attract the audience's attention and better play their special role in the performance. Whether it is the drummer or the clown, they are all played by ordinary people in life. Through different costumes and performance forms, they show the rich and colorful life picture of the people in southern Shanxi, conveying their love for life, respect for labor and yearning for a better future.



Figure 10. Representative folk dance of Shanxi Jinnan Drum Dance Performances by folk artists (Source: Chen Donghui,2024)

This land of rich resources and outstanding people gave birth to the unique folk dance, *Jinnan Drum Dance*. After a comprehensive analysis of the dance movements, music, props, and character costumes of *Jinnan Drum Dance*. Researcher believe that *Jinnan Drum Dance* is not only an important part of Shanxi folk dance, but also an important carrier of the culture of the Yellow River Basin. It profoundly reflects the profound heritage of Jinnan regional culture and the simple ideals of the people of Jinnan. The performance forms of *Jinnan Drum Dance* are rich and varied, and its movement design is very regional. The dancers beat the drums continuously and vigorously with both hands, showing the strength and enthusiasm of the working people; the lower body is based on squatting and sinking in horse stance, combined with somersaults and jumps in the middle and low altitudes, showing a simple and vivid beauty. This movement design not only reflects the simplicity and tenacity of farming culture, but also conveys the love and yearning of the people of southern Shanxi for life. *Jinnan Drum Dance* accompanies the development of agricultural civilization, coexists and integrates with people's survival needs and psychological needs. This dance is not only an artistic reproduction of labor life, but also a yearning and pursuit for a better life. Through dance, the people of Jinnan express their awe of heaven and earth, their gratitude to nature and their love for life. Through generations of inheritance, *Jinnan Drum Dance* not only retains the essence of regional culture, but also radiates new vitality in the new era. This inheritance not only reflects the ecological and cultural characteristics of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, but also highlights the adherence and inheritance of traditional culture by the people of southern Shanxi.

In summary, as a folk dance with distinct regional characteristics, *Jinnan Drum Dance* is not only an important part of Shanxi folk dance, but also an important carrier of the culture of the Yellow River Basin. It vividly shows the life and spiritual world of the people of southern Shanxi through unique movement design, rich musical performance, vivid props and costumes, and diverse performance routines. The development of *Jinnan Drum Dance* to this day is not only the protection of traditional culture, but also the adherence to the spiritual homeland.

Challenges faced by Jinnan Drum Dance

As a representative folk dance in Shanxi Province, *Jinnan Drum Dance* carries rich regional culture and historical memory. However, in the rapid development of modern society, researchers found that *Jinnan Drum Dance* faces many challenges when conducting ethnographic field surveys, which need to be paid attention to and solved.

The lack of inheritors is a serious problem

With the acceleration of urbanization, the lifestyle and entertainment choices of the younger generation have changed dramatically, and their interest in traditional folk dance has gradually waned. Most of the inheritors of

Jinnan Drum Dance are elderly people. As they gradually age, many precious dance skills and traditions are at risk of being lost (Wei, 2023).

Impact of Modern Entertainment

In the context of the diversification of modern entertainment, the influence of traditional folk dance has gradually declined. As a traditional performing art form, *Jinnan Drum Dance* has difficulty competing with modern popular culture, resulting in its lack of appeal among young people. For example, *Jinnan Drum Dance*, which was widely spread in rural areas in the past, is now performed skillfully by fewer and fewer people (Chen, 2023).

Imperfection of the education system

At present, there are obvious deficiencies in folk dance education in Shanxi Province. The number of folk dance-related courses offered in colleges and universities is limited, and the curriculum is not comprehensive enough to meet the needs of inheritance and development. In addition, the popularization of folk-dance education is relatively lagging behind, and many young people lack understanding and interest in folk dance (Chen, 2023).

Changes in the cultural ecological environment

The acceleration of urbanization has caused traditional folk activities to gradually fade out of people's vision. As a dance form closely linked to farming culture, *Jinnan Drum Dance* has lost its soil for taking root and sprouting, resulting in the loss of its original form. In this context, how to preserve the original flavor of *Jinnan Drum Dance* has become an urgent issue (Yang, 2023).

Challenges in the new media environment

The development of new media technology has brought new opportunities for the dissemination of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, but it has also brought some challenges. The uneven information on the Internet has led to distortion or misrepresentation of some *Jinnan Drum Dance* performances. In addition, the commercialization and over-entertainment of dance works in the new media environment have a negative impact on the inheritance of *Jinnan Drum Dance* (Bi, 2024).

Conclusion

This study, through an in-depth study of the representative folk dance of Shanxi, *Jinnan Drum Dance*, reveals the rich cultural connotations of this folk-dance form. *Jinnan Drum Dance* is not only an important carrier of Shanxi regional culture, but also a treasure of traditional Chinese folk art. It vividly reflects the lifestyle, values and aesthetic tastes of the local people in southern Shanxi, and embodies the cultural wisdom and artistic creativity of the Chinese nation.

In contemporary society, the inheritance and development of *Jinnan Drum Dance* faces both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, with the country's emphasis on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, *Jinnan Drum Dance* has received more attention and support; on the other hand, as a representative folk dance in Shanxi Province, *Jinnan Drum Dance* faces many challenges such as the lack of inheritors, the impact of modern entertainment methods, the imperfection of the education system, the change of the cultural ecological environment, and the new media environment. These problems not only affect the inheritance and development of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, but also pose a severe test to the protection and inheritance of the entire Shanxi folk dance. Therefore, it is urgent to take effective measures to create a good environment for the inheritance and development of *Jinnan Drum Dance* from multiple aspects such as policy support, education popularization, and cultural protection. How to achieve innovative development while maintaining traditional characteristics is the key to the future development of *Jinnan Drum Dance*.

As a carrier of Shanxi regional culture, Shanxi's representative folk dance, *Jinnan Drum Dance*, deeply reflects the local people's lifestyle and values. The farming culture elements contained in the dance vividly show the production and life scenes in rural Shanxi Province. At the same time, *Jinnan Drum Dance* also reflects the hardworking, simple and optimistic spirit of the Shanxi people, becoming an important symbol of regional cultural identity. In terms of folk beliefs and rituals, *Jinnan Drum Dance* is closely related to local traditional festivals and sacrificial activities. *Jinnan Drum Dance* is often used in sacrificial ceremonies to pray for good weather and good harvests, reflecting people's awe of nature and yearning for a better life. The aesthetic value of *Jinnan Drum Dance* is reflected in its unique artistic expression and profound cultural heritage. The combination of hardness and softness in the dance movements, the rhythm of the music, and the color matching of the costumes together constitute the unique aesthetic characteristics of *Jinnan Drum Dance*. This aesthetic feature not only reflects the aesthetic taste of the local people, but also embodies the idea of harmony between man and nature in traditional Chinese aesthetics. The performance of *Jinnan Drum Dance* can often resonate with the audience, giving people aesthetic enjoyment and spiritual pleasure. In contemporary society, *Jinnan Drum Dance* is not only an art form, but also a cultural symbol and spiritual symbol. It carries the historical memory and cultural identity of the Shanxi people and is an important link between the past and the present. Through the performance and inheritance of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, can feel the charm of traditional culture and enhance our sense of identity and pride in local culture.

In order to ensure the sustainable development of *Jinnan Drum Dance*, the representative folk dance of Shanxi, a long-term development strategy needs to be formulated. For example, First of all, should strengthen theoretical research on *Jinnan Drum Dance*, systematically sort out its historical origins, artistic characteristics and cultural connotations, and provide a solid theoretical foundation for inheritance and innovation. Secondly, a sound mechanism for cultivating inheritors should be established to attract more young people to participate in the inheritance of *Jinnan Drum Dance* by setting up special funds and providing training opportunities. At the same time, new technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can be used to develop immersive *Jinnan Drum Dance* experience projects to attract more young audiences. In addition, the brand building and market promotion of *Jinnan Drum Dance* should be strengthened. The popularity and influence of *Jinnan Drum Dance* can be enhanced by producing high-quality documentaries and developing cultural and creative products. Finally, should actively participate in cultural exchange activities at home and abroad to promote *Jinnan Drum Dance* to a broader stage. The society should call on the majority of dance lovers to attach importance to the inheritance and development of the inner culture of *Jinnan Drum Dance*. Only in this way can we truly popularize more content of *Jinnan Drum Dance* and further enhance the inheritance of traditional culture. Researcher believe that in the near future, *Jinnan Drum Dance* will be able to shine in China and even the world.

Acknowledgement

The author declares that there are no specific acknowledgements for this work. This manuscript was developed independently, without external funding, institutional sponsorship, or collaborative assistance requiring formal recognition.

References

- Bi, Z. L. (2024). The historical evolution and social concept changes of Jinnan Guwu in the Yellow River Basin. *Comrades*, 38-39.
- Chen, D. H. (2023). Exploring the path of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into university dance classes under the background of the new era. *Journal of Drama Home*, 35, 133-135.
- Chinese National Folk Dance Collection Editorial Department. (1993). *Chinese national folk-dance collection - Shanxi volume*. China ISBN Center.
- Journal of Beijing Dance Academy. (2024, September 12). *Lu Wenjian: Representative folk dance*. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bsmRMSjFaBMulPp-ZVBjug>
- Ma, S. D. (2023). Why can't traditional dance intangible cultural heritage be trained in the "academic" education model? *Contemporary Dance Art Research*, (02), 41-46.
- Qin, Y. N. (2015). Folk dance in the regional environment of Linfen, Shanxi. (Master's thesis, Shaanxi Normal University).

- Shangguan, Y. T. (2022). Research on the artistic style and inheritance and development of Shanxi folk dance. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, (06), 22-27.
- Shanxi Provincial Library. 2010. *Illustrated History of Shanxi Dance*. Shanxi Publishing House, 6.
- Suo, M. C. (2020). *Research on the representative folk dance language of Shanxi from the perspective of cultural geography*. (Doctoral dissertation, Chinese Academy of Arts).
- Tian, C. F. (2000). Regional cultural characteristics of Shanxi folk dance. *Dance*, (5), 55-57.
- Tian, C. F. (2004). *History of Dance in Shanxi*. Beiyue Literature and Art Publishing House.
- Wang, Z. Q. (2020). Review of Western postmodern dance ethnography research. *Journal of Beijing Dance Academy*.
- Wei J. N. (2023). A preliminary study on the optimization and development of Shanxi folk dance under the multicultural environment. *Journal of Art Panorama*, (10), 105-105.
- Wei, B. (2021). *Research on the Excavation and Innovation of Jinnan Drum Dance Vocabulary in Southern Shanxi*. (Master's thesis, Shanxi University).
- Wei, Y. L. (2013). Research on the inheritance genealogy of drum dance in Linfen area of southern Shanxi. *Dance Culture Research*, (06), 83-88.
- Yicheng County Chronicles*. (1929). Fangzhi Publishing House.
- Yuan, M. (2023). Research on the promotion of dance art by multimedia technology. *New Art Theory*, (03), 41-44.
- Zhang, K. Y. (2020). An analysis of the aesthetic value of Shanxi folk dance Jinnan Drum Dance. *Drama Home*, (28), 91-92.
- Zi, H. J. & Wang, N. (2012). *Dance Ecology*. Culture and Art Publishing House.