



# Cultural Memory and Interpretation of Meaning: Mongolian Dance in the Perspective of the Chinese Nation Community

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**Abstract.** General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "The history of China is a course of the integration of various ethnic groups into a diverse and unified Chinese nation, and it is a history of the great motherland where all ethnic groups jointly created, developed, and consolidated unity." The exchanges, communication and interactions of all ethnic groups has always been the main theme and initiative in the formation, development and revitalization of the Chinese national community. As a cultural form with great ethnic characteristics, Mongolian dances come from people's daily life and contain profound cultural memory, whether it is the subject matter, behavioral activities, or the emotional thoughts and value appeals it carries. The cultural memory mentioned in this article involves memory, identity, and cultural continuation. The Mongolian dance culture is placed in the perspective of the Chinese nation community, and the cultural memory and collective memory of the Mongolian dance are comprehensively sorted out. In the context of the policies for exchanges, communication and interactions of various ethnic groups and the consciousness of the Chinese national community, Mongolian dance will continue to enrich its connotation of culture and aesthetic, and create excellent creations with national spirit and style of the times.

**Keywords:** Mongolian dance; Cultural memory; Consciousness of the Chinese national community

## 1 Introduction

"Cultural memory" was first proposed by French historian and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs [1]. In his view, social interaction is the source of collective memory, and only when people participate in social interaction can they produce memory. German scholar Jan Assmann proposed that historical memory has very rich carriers[2]. In addition to the common carriers such as word of mouth, books and documents, there are also ritu-

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als, dances, myths, diagrams, costumes, ornaments, paintings and scenes, which all reflect people's lives, experiences, emotions and thoughts in a specific historical time and space environment.

we can learn from the form of Mongolian dance memory carrier, including life practice memory, traditional festival memory; And memory identification and presentation forms, including body simulation to activate collective memory, body presence to form the memory of Mongolian dance culture and other aspects of in-depth excavation of Mongolian dance culture information, enrich the connotation of Mongolian dance culture, promote the development of traditional dance exchanges and inheritance in the concept of "three exchanges", and establish the concept of the spiritual home of the Chinese nation.

Exchanges, exchanges and integration of all ethnic groups have become an important theoretical basis and practical path for realizing common unity, common prosperity and development of all ethnic groups, and forging a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation. Dance, as an art form, can communicate, exchange and blend with various ethnic groups through various media such as body language, cultural symbols and other systems. This is also a unique way of transmitting cultural symbols containing emotional sustenance formed by various ethnic groups relying on the origin' of their dance culture.

## **2 Recall and Interpretation: Mongolian dance is an important part of the cultural memory of the Chinese nation**

### **2.1 Life practice memory**

The Mongolian people are one of the most representative nomadic peoples in Chinese history. As a form of cultural practice, Mongolian traditional dance is not only a typical representative of grassland nomadic culture, but also an important part of Chinese dance culture. It is characterized by the expression of strong national emotions in the way of body movements, independent existence or integration of "parasitic" in different cultural forms, and integration with social life in the way of living inheritance. Most of them are created and performed in the form of self-amusement, festival celebration and praying for naji. The subject content, movements, dances and costumes all come from People's Daily work or objects seen, so they are always deeply stamped with the "mark" of life practice. This kind of practical meaning of life shows people's activeness to real life. It is not only the representation or construction of the past history, but also the ideographic practice pointing to the reality.

For example, the Mongolian bowl dance is generally a female solo dance (See Fig.1). The Mongolian "bowls" are derived from specific objects in daily life, and the daily diet of every Mongolian household is inseparable from these utensils. On the occasion of festivals or weddings, the hospitable Mongolian herdsmen will invite their relatives and friends to their homes.

Pseur dance is also called Topseur dance (See Fig.1). It is a plucked instrument with two ancient strings in the course of music and dance. It is called Topshur, which has

distinct national characteristics. It is usually called Bei when jumping in Mongolian. This is exactly what Habwah said: "Collective memory comes from the monotonous practice of daily life, but through ritual, artistic and imaginative processing, this memory becomes 'alive' and can be preserved for a long time in the process of repeated rituals, artistic performances and imaginative expression, becoming the most precious historical and cultural resources of Mongolian dance culture."



**Fig. 1.** Stills of the dance Cup Dance and Psuer Music Dance

Photo source: Video screenshot of dance "Cup Dance"; WeChat public number to <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/BfqFU5siXYrJCIXoTtY9xQ>

## 2.2 Traditional festival memory

The traditional festival is an important carrier to show national characteristics, promote national unity and progress, and create an activist culture, popularization and materialization. It is in dynamic change with the transfer of time, and people generally use festivals and various ceremonies to promote the modernization of cultural memory. Therefore, "festival" has also become a form of national cultural memory. Nowadays, the traditional festival is no longer the gathering of a single nationality or region, but the joint participation of different regions and different ethnic groups. In the process of showing and communicating with each other, the mutual recognition of ethnic groups is promoted and the cause of national unity and progress is actively developed.

Nadam Fair is a traditional festival with unique characteristics of the people of Inner Mongolia, Ewenki, Daur and other ethnic groups living in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It not only contains the meaning of "entertainment and games", but also contains the core cultural concept of "advocating nature, cherishing life, and harmonious coexistence between human and nature". There are thrilling horse racing, wrestling, admirable archery, competitive chess skills, fascinating songs and dances, and various forms.

It has a history of nearly two thousand years. From the early Western Han Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, it has been developing continuously. It is rooted in the grassland nomadic culture and the life and production practice of the Mongolian people. In primitive society, in order to survive, human beings rounded up wild animals and communicated among tribes, giving rise to the embryonic form of Boke. For the human body, Bok pursues extremely strong and fit; In terms of social life, Boke pursues a beautiful relationship of mutual respect and love, peace and solidarity, lasting and eternal equality and infinite love among people.

The participation of people from different regions in this form not only increases the mutual understanding among different ethnic groups, but also deepens the Mongolian people's sense of identity towards their own culture and Chinese culture [3], and plays a huge role in promoting people's social communication, strengthening unity, entertaining temperament and regulating spirit. In this process, through the combination of dance creation, stage presentation and other ways including dance memory, ethnic dancers produce more dance works containing ethnic styles and put them into traditional festivals, which not only magnifies the communication role of traditional festivals, but also promotes the further development of ethnic dance culture.

### **3 Identification and Correspondence: Mongolian dance culture memory and the implication of Chinese National Community**

#### **3.1 Body simulation activates collective memory**

The Mongolian horse culture is one of its most representative cultures. The primitive rock paintings left over from ancient times in Inner Mongolia show a lot of topics related to horses, which have been marked in the production labor, social communication, literature and art of the Mongolian people [4]. To travel between ancient and modern times, the Mongolian people use horses as a means of transportation for nomadic life in four seasons, which has become a unique way of life and production to relieve the pressure of grassland and grassland, ensuring the endless growth of grass and water, and continuing the historical tradition of herdsmen and horses being dependent on each other. Therefore, the historical life of the Mongolian people has accumulated a deep and solid horse culture.

For the art of dance, the love of horses is expressed in body language, thus forming a unique spiritual identity. As a kind of physical performance art, the skillful movements of dance often come from the imitation of daily work, specific objects and behavior activities. After a long time of brewing, it eventually becomes an important historical memory of the masses. Such imitative behaviors and activities constantly stimulate the collective memory through repeated performance process, realizing the inheritance and communication of culture and history[5].

For example, the Mongolian men's group dance "Paradise Grassland created by dance College of Northwest University for Nationalities has different amplitude circle and hard shoulder in the body shaping, (See Fig.2) and adopts various movements of priority and urgency with vigorous horse walking of lower limbs. It is the galloping horse and the galloping Mongolian dance. The combination of the Mongolian patriarch, Khomai, Matougin, Uliger and other intangible cultural heritages of the world creates an ethereal and profound artistic conception highlights a strong sense of The Times, expresses the bold and brave national character of the Mongolian men, and extol the love of the simple and open-minded Mongolian sons and women for the grassland[6]. It shows the richness of the grassland culture and the confidence and strength of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the construction of national culture region.



**Fig. 2.** Still photo of the dance "Paradise Grassland"  
Photo source: Screenshot of the video of the dance "Paradise Prairie"

Horse culture has become an indispensable part of Mongolian culture in the long history of its development. The horse head Qin, the unique musical instrument of the Mongolian people, activates the artistic form of "horse". The use of the specific image of "horse in artistic creation not only symbolizes the "Mongolian horse spirit", but also represents the indomitable enterprising spirit of the Mongolian people, showing the spiritual connotation of the Chinese people.

### **3.2 The presence of the body forms the effect of Mongolian dance culture memory**

Knowing by indwelling, Polanyi once put forward the idea that "the human mind is essentially physical; it moves and resides in the body. Mongolian dance culture, as one element of Chinese excellent traditional culture, is becoming increasingly dynamic in its cultural inheritance and development through the presence of the body. It is necessary to consider the "mental image" projected by the body" of the Mongolian dance in each "field", to understand the dance culture of the Mongolian through the concept of dynamic body view, to awaken the deep cultural memory, and to understand the internal differences of the cultural symbols of the body when the time and space fields are different.

Therefore, there are some differences in the cultural symbols generated by the presence of the body in Mongolian dance due to the differences in the field occasions. The necessity and necessity of "body presence" has become the reality context of different field practice of Mongolian dance art. "Body presence" of Mongolian dance is conducive to broadening people's cognitive channel and carrier of Mongolian dance. Through different fields, the "on-site integration" of the symbols of Mongolian dance culture is realized, which undoubtedly makes the imprint of the memory of Mongolian dance culture imprinted in people's hearts from multiple aspects [6].

## **4 Cultural confidence and feelings of the Mongolian dance in the construction of the Chinese National Community**

Cultural confidence is a powerful spiritual force internalized in the spiritual gene of the Chinese nation. It can inspire the spirit and ideological character of the Chinese nation

and the Chinese people to uphold integrity and innovation, and enable people in different regions to feel the great creativity and vitality of the Chinese nation in the common cultural thoughts, thus forming a strong cohesion and centripetal force. The Mongolian people belong to a member of the Chinese nation community. Their folk dances not only carry the history, culture, spirit, ideology and emotion of the nation, but also embody the emotion, thought and value appeal of the Chinese people community to a certain extent.

At the same time, the feelings of home and country highlight the unique spiritual symbols of the Chinese nation. For example, *Inheritance*, a work by the Dance School of Northwest University for Nationalities, takes rural revitalization as the background and folk culture inheritance as the theme. (See Fig.3) It presents the inheritance patterns of ethnic minority folk culture in the new era on the stage in the form of dance. It explains that children in ethnic areas in the new era should integrate into higher education in the new era, so as to express that inheritance is not only the inheritance of skills, but also the spiritual inheritance of friendship, harmony, fraternity and the avenue.



**Fig. 3.** Still photo of the dance "Inheritance"

Image: WeChat public [https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ex6\\_3awuHGZq98u6lx6bHg](https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ex6_3awuHGZq98u6lx6bHg)

Mongolian dance culture reflects the characteristics and vitality of Chinese culture. It has the common cultural gene of Chinese culture in essence, and is based on the root and soul of Chinese culture. As a branch of traditional Chinese culture, Mongolian dance culture is shaped by synchronic space and diachroni cultural memory. It is a collective experience and collective feeling generated between individuals and others in the community of the Chinese nation. Studying the cultural memory of Mongolian dance is not only a simple aesthetic model. Butin the social context and overall perception of the situation of the original, so that we can better grasp the diachronic characteristics of the Mongolian dance memory, through the Mongolian dance memory as a bond can promote the communication and integration of various ethnic groups, enhance the cultural identity of various regions and ethnic groups. We should strive to create fine dances rich in modern and contemporary national spirit, and play an important role in strengthening the consciousness of community of the Chinese nation.

## 5 Conclusion

Therefore, we cannot just follow the so-called pure theoretical cultural memory research Canon, but should place it in the logical framework of historical and cultural background, put the Mongolian dance culture memory into the space-time coordinate

system of the Chinese nation community, and deeply plough the text of the Mongolian dance culture case, so as to shape the Mongolian cultural memory. In this way, the deep meaning of Mongolian dance culture can be revealed from multiple sides, angles and levels. Based on the perspective of building a community of the Chinese nation, the culture of all ethnic groups, including the Mongolian dance culture, is integrated into the overall pattern of Chinese culture, in-depth exploration of the connotation, function and dissemination of the cultural memory of the Mongolian dance, and a deep understanding of its historical value and practical role, which can further promote the practice of dance culture and establish the emotional connection between different ethnic groups. Strengthen the cohesion and centripetal force of the Chinese nation. At the same time, it is of great significance to carry forward the national culture, cultivate the consciousness of the isomorphism of home and country, and establish the national self-confidence.

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