

The Fate of Qiang Dance in the Aftermath of Earthquake 2008

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to discuss the following themes: 1. How, following the earthquake, Qiang's traditional dance was divided into two parts; 2. Following the earthquake, Qiang's people's cultural music and folk dance were designated as endangered cultural heritage, and some changes it has undergone are considerable; 3. The multiculturalism in the Qiang area, where multiple cultures coexist peacefully and intermingle. Studying the above phenomena helps us understand how the subjects of culture, guided by natural disasters and the outside world, of Qiang dance remain intact and maintain its self-identity and cultural values.

Keywords: Self-identity; Folk music; Qiang dance; cultural preservation;

Introduction

The devastating Earthquake hit China's Wenchuan region on May 12, 2008, at around 14:28. The intensity of the earthquake was recorded 8 on the Richter scale. As a result of this mega earthquake, 69, 227 people died, 17, 923 went missing, and overall, it affected no less than 15.1 million people. Countless tangible and intangible cultural treasures were harmed as a result of these events. Ninety percent of the homes in Radish Village, Watchtower at Taoping Qiang Village, Watchtower Group at Zhibo, Heihu Watchtower, according to initial surveys, had been demolished. Similarly, many houses in other

villages also collapsed, according to the preliminary findings. Many valuable physical objects required to carry out the activities of 7 highly important cultural heritage protection programmes, for example, the "Qiang Flute" and "Waerezu," were destroyed. Numerous priceless documents, photographs, and videos were destroyed, and priceless historical artefacts perished under the debris. Two of the Shibi heirs and as many as five artists of Qiang dance lost their lives, and many intangible holders of the cultural holders received physical injuries. The majority of the injured and traumatized were elderly inheritors and had been through a great deal of psychological shock (Zhang, 2009).

How exactly did the traditional Qiang society assist the villagers in getting past the challenges that they were facing as a consequence of the devastating earthquake and the subsequent crises that engulfed their lives? Since the earthquake occurred a decade and a half ago, there has been a significant shift in material and non-material, and economic landscape of the ancient society of Qiang. In the region of Qiang, traditional folk music and dance have had a significant impact on intangible cultural heritage, both in terms of their impact on and development in response to social change. This has been the case in terms of both their impact and development.

This study uses data from a field survey to examine the way of living in the villages of Qiang region in the aftermath of the horrible earthquake, the attempts to find the traces of the Qiang culture

by Qiang people in the face of the impact of other cultures and traditions, and the preservation of Qiang folk dance during the period of rehabilitation after the harsh experience of the devastation. During this time period, the traditional Qiang dance has been brought back to life in an effort to appease the national soul of the Qiang people, rekindle their great values of politeness and hospitality, besides an attempt to rekindle their patriotism and love for their beautiful homeland. Through reconstruction of the varieties of the spatial structure of Qiang dance, people's affinity for the cultural values of Qiang region strengthened. Moreover, the valuable and unique values and ethos of Qiang nationality had been disseminated to a wider audience.

1. The radical transformation in Qiang dance in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake

The Qiang people and the cultural traditions that they uphold have received a level of attention that has never been seen before as a direct result of the devastating earthquake that struck the province of Wenchuan. The Qiang people went through a period of profound change as a consequence of the post-disaster reconstruction that was carried out with the assistance of external drives. In the process of pairing aid construction, social forces do play a part; however, the capabilities of the state to organise and mobilise resources also allow it to happen. The Qiang people's ethnic culture went through a number of significant transitions in a short amount of time as a result of a variety of factors. During this time period, the development of Qiang culture was influenced not only by the Qiang people but also by a wide variety of social actors, including the government, social movements, and ethnic minorities, amongst others. Each different social subject "selectively" inherits or reconstructs Qiang culture, and each different behavioural subject has its own behavioural logic. Qiang culture is characterised by a strong emphasis on family and honour.

The cooperation of separate behavioural subjects that are restricted to one another, related to

one another, and interactive helps make possible the leapfrog changes that have occurred in Qiang culture. As a result of the interaction and entwining of a variety of social forces, Qiang culture is distinguished by the coexistence of two processes, namely inheritance and transmutation. Both of these processes have their roots in Qiang history. During the process of inheritance and transformation, the Qiang folk dance has developed into an important exhibition and performance symbol of ethnic culture. This transformation can be observed frequently in the Qiang region that has been rebuilt after the natural disaster.

Mao County's Qiang Soul, which has been described as a "large primitive song and dance of the Qiang nationality," made its debut on March 23, 2010, in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, and began its tour of the country the same day. Currently, "Flutes made by Qiang"¹, "Rrmea Salengw"², "Sheepskin Drum Dance"³ and "Qiang Multi-voice Folk Song", et cetera have achieved the status of having been put on the list of the "State-level Non-material Cultural Heritage." Whereas "Qiang Year"⁴ is reported to have made its place on the "List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding by the UNESCO." The "Qiang Soul" features a cast of approximately one hundred and twenty people, including both seasoned Qiang actors of Qiang nationality and regular Qiang citizens. On the stage, fifteen different programmes are presented, some of which are sacrificial ceremonies, wedding traditions, folk songs, putter, and the performances by the Qiang flute. The entirety of the performance

¹ With a more than 2,000-year history, the Qiang Flute is the world's oldest pneumatic instrument. It is most often played in northern Sichuan's Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, which is home to the Qiang people.

² "Rrmea Salengw," that literally translates to "sing and dance," considered a significant part of the culture of the local Qiang people. It serves both as a form of self-entertainment and an offering to the gods.

³ The primary type of dance performed during the ritualistic functions and festivities in the Qiang region is one of the defining aspects of their distinctive cultural traditions.

⁴ The Qiang New Year celebration is a long-standing custom in the Qiang settlement and is recognised as a national intangible cultural heritage.

not only begins with a "preface," which states that the ancestors of the Qiang people lived in the past and produced an illustrious history and culture, but it also incorporates four key elements, which are as follows: first, "sacrifice," which represented the activities of the Qiang people, such as their nature of advocating, praying to gods and worshipping mountains, as well as presenting long poetry as sacrifices to ancestors, etc.; second, "tillage," which portrayed the Qiang people's production and existence, and displayed production and harvest scenes such as "two bulls duelled," "digging hole and sowing seeds", "striking foodstuff", "sipping wine and opening the wine jar," etc.; third, "verve" which means people of contemporary times have a strong appreciation for the traditional songs and dances of the Qiang nationality, which are performed in minority areas. On the stage of today are the art cases "Qiang Soul" and "Great Beichuan", etc., After the "May 12" earthquake, a great deal of time, effort, and money was invested in the creation of these facilities. The purpose of these art cases is to display Qiang songs and dances in a centralised manner while maintaining the post-reconstruction position.

In the aftermath of the devastation, the scope and scale of the traditional festivals celebrated by the Qiang nationality were significantly increased. In 2013, the Government of Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County organised a Sharon dance performance that served as a showcase for Qiang dance after the earthquake. The performance drew tens of thousands of spectators and generated a great deal of media attention. It was a sacred occasion according to the "Qiang Calendar Year" for the Qiang nationality throughout the entire year, and many people travelled long distances to attend. The local Qiang Autonomous County held a large bonfire party in honour of this holiday in 2014, which included a dance that was performed by 10,000 people on sheepskin drums. A large-scale event such as this one could attract more people who are interested in Qiang culture to participate in similar participatory activities, which would be

beneficial to the local economy. This would allow the Qiang culture's customs to be displayed in a manner that is more accurate. This is absolutely necessary in order to preserve and further develop the traditional music and dance culture of the Qiang nationality.

2. Intangible Cultural Heritage after the earthquake influenced and developed traditional folk music and dance.

In addition to being a catastrophe for the entire nation, the "May 12" Wenchuan Earthquake is also a catastrophe for the Qiang nationality and has had a nearly catastrophic impact on the Qiang dance culture. The earthquake occurred on May 12. Geological disasters have had a significant negative impact on both the economy and the culture of the Qiang area. Intangible cultural legacies, such as Qiang's, are extremely vulnerable to the possibility of disintegration and face severe risks as a result. The Qiang people live in an area that is prone to experiencing natural disasters on a yearly basis, specifically landslides and mudslides. Because of the widespread damage done to the ecosystem, the vegetation in particular is in a precarious position as a result of the situation. In this one-of-a-kind and believable setting, we ought to not only proactively restore and rebuild the Qiang area, but we also ought to keep a close eye on the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage on a consistent basis (Wu,2016).

As a form of China's intangible cultural heritage, the Qiang dance culture has been accorded a high priority by the Chinese government. Rebuilding post-disaster social and cultural structures is an essential component in the process of restoring and advancing the cultural practises of underrepresented groups, such as minorities. Because of this, the government has a strong interest in ensuring that the traditions of Qiang dance are maintained and further developed. Despite this, the shortcomings in the development of Qiang dance are still very much visible. The transmission of qiang dance is extremely limited in terms of the transmission that occurs in colleges

and universities as well as in communication through modern media. There is no modern or advanced route of transmission for qiang dance. As a direct consequence of this, there are not many books or videos available on the market that are related to Qiang dance. The active promotion of Qiang dance's cultural dissemination will be of great assistance in bringing about the rise the famous folk dance of the Qiang people. We have to figure out how to make use of the vast scientific tools, theoretical resources, and enormous faculties that are located in educational institutions and colleges all over the United States. Next, we will need to select and delegate a group of researchers from colleges and universities who have expertise in Qiang culture, in addition to a galaxy of talented individuals, so that they can devote themselves to the preservation and recovery of Qiang cultural treasure. The culture of the Qiang and the Qiang dance will both benefit tremendously from this. It is not difficult for us to see that it is not enough to simply reestablish and inherit culture in the regions that are native to the Qiang and Tibetan peoples. We ought to make it possible for the culture and dance of the Qiang people to disseminate across the nation and even the entire world, and we ought to make it possible for the blooming of this beautiful flower of ethnic art everywhere. The only effective way to preserve the art and culture of the Qiang people is the one mentioned above. Qiang people are otherwise in serious danger of extinction.

3. Cultural Inheritance of the Qiang area's subject and object

To mobilise China's Qiang population as part of a top-down, mobilising, and selective strategy, the Chinese government is working to highlight the ethnic group's economic value, theatricality, and demonstrability, among other things. This is being done as part of an effort to mobilise the population. Specifically, the Qiang people are being encouraged to demonstrate how their ethnic culture can be demonstrated. The majority of people are

currently wasting their time.

4. The Government's provision of selective protection and inheritance

In recent years, the government has placed a greater emphasis on the preservation of the cultures of minority groups, and as a result, it has taken a more proactive approach to doing so through the implementation of various policies and systems. The government has shown selective preservation and inheritance of Qiang culture. Governmental appropriation of Qiang culture, on the other hand, is frequently rational, selective, and deliberate. In the aftermath of the catastrophe, the people of Qiang are not only engaged participants, but they are also the primary beneficiaries and guardians of Qiang culture. However, because of their vision and other factors, the self-selection ability of Qiang culture subjects is limited immediately following a disaster. Rebuilding the country from the ground up takes time, and supplies are scarce. The Qiang people now have a solid foundation thanks to the intervention of external forces. The development of ethnic culture cannot take place unless businesses recognise that the local area has the potential to exploit tourism and provide economic benefits through exploitation. Businesses rarely interact with locals. It frequently has more involvement with the government after obtaining a policy licence.

5. Qiang People's Survival Rationality

Whether they inherit the tradition or borrow elements from other cultures, when it comes to their own ethnic culture, ethnic culture elites as well as ordinary people at the grass-roots level frequently select and filter from the standpoint of survival rationality. This is true regardless of whether they inherit the tradition or borrow elements from other cultures. Inheritors of the cultures of minority groups. This is the deliberate or unintentional selection of creative cultural subjects, as well as ethnic culture protection subjects. For the Qiang, cultural development is frequently realised unwittingly via the prism of "pragmatism" in actual and tangible production and

living. In terms of cultural growth, the Qiang people demonstrate unconscious sublation. They virtually always follow tradition. They absorb and borrow advanced cultural practises. Qiang people are the founders and subjects of Qiang culture, and the legacy is "unconscious inheritance," that is, choices made by individuals who are preoccupied with survival.

As a result of cultural evolution, there will be a ripple effect on all levels of culture, regardless of whether the culture in question is spiritual or material. This effect will have a significant impact. Despite the fact that ethnic minorities are the subject of ethnic culture and are the producers and inheritors of ethnic culture, the government maintains a prominent presence in ethnic culture. When ethnic minority are removed from the larger culture, their pearls of wisdom in production and living lose their vitality. Ethnic culture is a dynamic process that requires ongoing innovation and development, with ethnic minorities serving as the primary driving force for advancement and innovation. "Big tradition" and "little tradition" are frequently transitioning, contacting, and colliding. If the two were severed, the supply of culture would be reduced. Nonetheless, only "blood transfusion" can sustain you for an extended amount of time. Plans for the development of the Qiang people ought to place a greater emphasis on their capabilities, and the Qiang people themselves ought to be the ones to take the initiative in preserving their culture.

6. The significance of inheriting traditional culture

The natural and social environments in which an ethnic culture is developed and passed down are major contributors to the culture's distinctive characteristics. This indicates that when natural conditions change, ethnic cultures will lose the biological foundations upon which they were built. If he is constantly in the company of an elderly person, he will recognise his own dependence on the old man, revere every word and deed of the old man, and naturally show respect to any and all

types of objects that have been passed down by the old man. The authority of age is therefore turned into the authority of tradition. Furthermore, any force that extends the aforementioned impact beyond childhood will strengthen this customary behaviour and way of thinking (Emile, 2000).

However, in the current socialisation mode, school instruction is rapidly completing the socialisation agencies of newly grown youngsters. Their effect on primitive ethnic villages has largely dwindled. The communal occasions on which important etiquettes of the community absorb ethnic culture have also declined. Qiang culture's inheritance mode is progressively fading. "Groups are maintained by tradition and 'condensed by time,' and there are compelling reasons to term it an organic whole" (Xu, 2006).

Inheritance through school education is methodical. In accordance with the tradition, the instances when family edification, family inheritance, and village collective activities completed inheritance have reduced. Furthermore, these rudimentary settings have altered, with no effect on what one regularly sees and hears. Schools also "consciously" pick ethnic cultures, those who oppose the educational purpose of the institution are typically screened out, while those who support the educational idea are glorified.

7. Qiang-Tibet nationalities' regional development and integration

There are two distinct ethnic groups that call the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province their home. These groups are the Tibetans and the Qiang. Mountains, rivers, or simply a single road bind them inextricably. There are numerous analogies between them. Two ethnic styles to be aware of are Tibetan Guozhuang and Qiang Rrmea Salengw. The Qiang and Tibetan ethnicities are usually referred to as Qiang and Tibetan twins because there is a strong correlation between geography, political and religious history, religion and folklore, and the ethnic and regional identities of people.

Tibetan and Qiang folk dances share the same

roots but take different techniques. They blur into one another. This is due to shared living habits, a nearby geographical context, and similar ethnic beliefs acquired through time. Its most notable feature is the emergence of a magnificent folk-dance tradition. Due to the fact that the two ethnic groups share a same history, geography, and environment, throughout the course of time, they have evolved dance traditions that are comparable to one another while yet maintaining their own unique qualities. In spite of the substantial cultural gaps that separate them, Tibetans and Qiangs have collaborated to create a remarkable dance heritage that benefits both of their communities.

Conclusion

Following the earthquake, ethnic identities in the Qiang area that rely on traditional culture for survival will undoubtedly be harmed. To some extent, ethnic identity is malleable, reflecting the implicit and explicit aspects of ethnic identification and social identity. The viewpoint it gives at the theoretical level of ethnic group is based on the theory of social identification and can be divided into "the theory of evolution" and "the theory of constructivism." This study investigates the post-disaster recovery efforts in China's Qiang area, which was devastated by the earthquake, as well as the peaceful coexistence of many cultures in this region and their intermingling with one another. In addition to this, it investigates how to inherit the cultural architecture of Qiang dance culture in a conscious and dynamic manner in the face of natural calamities, as well as how to do so in a selected manner.

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