

INHERITANCE OF DAUR DANCE

Jingwen LIANG¹ and Manissa VASINAROM¹

¹ Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand;
924328200@qq.com (J. L.); manissa.va@ssru.ac.th (M. V.)

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ABSTRACT

The Daur ethnic dance, as a core carrier of the culture of northern Chinese minorities, is of great significance for maintaining cultural diversity and protecting intangible cultural heritage. To explore the inheritance issues of Daur dance, this paper focuses on the "Haku Meile" dance, employing a combination of literature analysis and field investigation methods to systematically review relevant research findings both domestically and internationally. The study examines various dimensions including origin, artistic characteristics, current inheritance status, and theoretical controversies. It finds that among Daur dances, "Lurigele Dance," "Shaman Dance," and "Haku Meile Dance" each have their own unique features. Among them, Haku Meile Dance is closely linked with Lurigele Dance and often serves as the climax of the latter. These dances are rooted in the Daur people's hunting and fishing culture and shamanic beliefs, with their movement systems and collective performance forms embodying distinctive ethnic symbols. Currently, the inheritance of Daur dance faces multiple challenges such as generational gaps, cultural context erosion, and commercialization disputes. It is necessary to integrate multidimensional approaches from government, community, and educational institutions to promote inheritance. The study suggests that future research could deepen interdisciplinary methodologies, explore innovative models of digital technology integration with tourism and culture, achieve coordinated development of living inheritance and cultural identity, and provide theoretical references for academic research and conservation practices of Daur dance.

Keywords: Daur Dance, Inheritance of Daur, Hakumel

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INTRODUCTION

The Daur ethnic dance, as a core carrier of the culture of northern Chinese minorities, bears the historical memory and unique aesthetics of the nation, making it an essential part of China's multicultural heritage (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020; E Jingjing, 2023). However, under the dual impact of modernization and globalization, its inheritance faces severe challenges: the younger generation has less interest in traditional culture, and the influence of foreign cultures is intensifying, leading to significant generational gaps (E Jingjing, 2023); at the same time, the ritual function of dances in traditional festival settings is gradually being replaced by performance-oriented activities, and the erosion of cultural context and controversies over commercial adaptations further threaten the survival of their original forms (Tang Hong, 2015; Wu Gang, 2013). In this context, research on the inheritance of Daur ethnic dance has become a crucial issue for maintaining cultural diversity and promoting the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

This paper takes the "Hakumel" dance as the core, and combines the literature analysis method and field investigation method, and conducts the research from the following dimensions:

Origin and Cultural Connotations: Exploring how the Daur dance is rooted in fishing and hunting culture and shamanic beliefs. Research has found that the "Haku Mailer" movements originate from imitating natural phenomena such as mountain eagles spreading their wings and black bears fighting, reflecting the survival wisdom of primitive fishing and hunting societies (Zhu Yan yan, 2016); the circular formation design reflects the Daur people's emphasis on collective cooperation, while elements like drumming and chanting in shamanic beliefs endow the dance with ritualistic characteristics (Zhang Xiao hong, 2015; Tang Hong, 2015).

Artistic characteristics and symbolic expression: The action system with "top hip" and "supporting sliding step" as the core is analyzed, and how it shows the combination of strength and softness through female group dance, call and round dance and other performance forms, and carries cultural symbols of natural worship and social ethics (Li Meihong, 2019; Yang Shiqing, 2019).

Inheritance Currents and Challenges: Analyzing the Diverse Characteristics of Inheritance Entities (individual inheritance, institutional inheritance, government involvement) and their contradictions, such as the aging issue faced by family/master-apprentice systems, the limitations in promotion by cultural centers due to funding and professional guidance, and the tendency in policy support to emphasize application over practice (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020; Hao Wei, Wen Hua, 2015; Wu Gang, 2013). At the same time, attention should be paid to the impact of modern entertainment on the ritual functions of traditional dances, as well as the theoretical debates over "original ecological protection" versus "innovative development" in commercial adaptations (Tang Hong, 2015; Liu Quxuan, 2015).

Research has found that the Daur ethnic dance (such as "Lurigele," "Shaman Dance," and "Hakumale") has become a prominent symbol of ethnic culture through its unique movement system and collective performance form. Among these, "Hakumale" serves as the climax of "Lurigele," vividly reflecting the Daur people's cultural genes of imitating nature and collective cooperation (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020; Wu Gang, 2013). However, the current challenges.

In inheritance urgently require systematic responses:

Cultural root level: Dance is rooted in hunting culture and shamanism, and its inheritance needs to maintain the connection with the national production and life practice (Zhu Yan yan, 2016; Zhang Xiaohong, 2015).

On the level of practical challenges: intergenerational disconnection, cultural context dissolution and commercialization controversy need to be alleviated through multiple paths such as improving the social status of inheritors, adding courses in universities and promoting community participation (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020; Li Meihong, 2019).

In terms of future direction: It is suggested to deepen interdisciplinary research, integrate anthropological and sociological methods with digital technologies (such as motion capture), and explore the "cultural tourism integration" model. On the basis of protecting the original ecology, moderate innovation should be carried out to realize the coordinated development of cultural identity and living inheritance (Liu Quxuan, 2015; Chen Hua Wen, 2020; Yang Shiqing, 2019).

This study provides a theoretical framework for the academic research of Daur dance, and also provides a feasible path for balancing tradition and modernity, protection and innovation in the practice of intangible cultural heritage protection, which is of reference significance to the inheritance of similar ethnic minority cultural heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The inheritance of Daur ethnic dance, as an important topic in the protection of national culture and research on intangible cultural heritage, has become a focal point of academic attention. This paper focuses on core keywords such as "Daur ethnic dance," "inheritance of Daur ethnic dance," "Hakumale," "inheritance pathways," "cultural identity," and "living protection." It systematically reviews existing research to reveal its cultural connotations, inheritance challenges, and innovative paths. The study emphasizes three dimensions: First, the research on the forms and characteristics of Daur ethnic dance, exploring how representative dances like "Hakumale" form a system of movements and collective performance traditions that combine strength and grace through imitating natural organisms, recreating labor scenes, and integrating shamanic beliefs; Second, the current state and challenges of inheritance, analyzing issues such as the aging of individual inheritors, limitations in institutional inheritance resources, deviations in government policy practices, and the impact of cultural context erosion and commercial adaptation controversies on the inheritance ecosystem; Third, inheritance pathways and strategies, exploring diverse inheritance pathways, including the balance mechanism between original ecological protection and living innovation, community-participatory inheritance models, digital technology for recording and disseminating dance skills, and how to strengthen cultural identity through stage adaptations and cultural space reconstruction under the background of cultural-tourism integration.

Research on dance forms and characteristics

Scholars have provided detailed descriptions and analyses of the forms and characteristics of Daur dance. Yue Xiaoyu (2020) comprehensively traced the origin, development, aesthetic features, and influence of Haku Meile dance, noting that it is rich in Daur ethnic characteristics and is an important intangible cultural heritage. E Jingjing (2023) conducted an in-depth analysis of the "three-part" structure of the "Lurigele" dance, exploring its unique artistic appeal and cultural value.

Research on inheritance status and challenges

Scholars generally focus on the inheritance status and challenges of Daur dance in the process of modernization. Yue Xiaoyu (2020) points out that although the national government and various departments, including the Hakumale inheritors, are actively working to rescue this intangible cultural heritage, there are still shortcomings in terms of emphasis, aesthetic standards, commercial development, alignment with local culture, and the transmission of dance talent. E Jingjing (2023) also mentions that the inheritance of the "Lurigele" dance in modern society faces many challenges, such as a decline in young people's interest in traditional culture and the impact of foreign cultures. At the same time, attention is paid to the impact of modern entertainment methods on the ritual functions of traditional dances, as well as the theoretical debate over "original ecological protection" versus "innovative development" in commercial adaptations: Tang Hong (2015) argues that commercial adaptation may lead to cultural distortion, while Liu Quxuan (2015) believes that moderate innovation is a necessary

means for sustaining vitality, forming a theoretical divide (Tang Hong, 2015; Liu Quxuan, 2015).

Research on inheritance paths and strategies

Regarding the inheritance of Daur dance, scholars have proposed various paths and strategies. Yue Xiaoyu (2020) suggests promoting the inheritance and development of Haku Mule dance through establishing the Haku Mule Tourism Area, flexibly utilizing mass media, enhancing the social status of inheritors, and adding courses to universities. E Jingjing (2023), on the other hand, proposes specific inheritance strategies from aspects such as folk inheritance (family/master-apprentice system), professional college textbook compilation and refinement (to address the issue of aging individual inheritors), and innovative stage applications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study primarily employs the literature analysis method, collecting and organizing relevant materials on the inheritance of Daur dance through reviewing domestic and international academic papers, research reports, and policy documents. At the same time, it combines field investigations and interviews to obtain firsthand data, ensuring the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the research. By systematically sorting through related literature and integrating field research and interviews, this study thoroughly analyzes the current status of Daur dance inheritance, the challenges faced, and potential solutions.

Content Analysis:

Data collection and screening

Data sources:

Academic Resources: Using the core keywords "Daur Dance," "Haku Meile," "Lurigele," and "Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance," search databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure, Wanfang, and VIP to obtain journal articles (such as those from "Heilongjiang Ethnic Series" and "Journal of Inner Mongolia University of Arts"), theses (such as Yue Xiaoyu's 2020 doctoral dissertation *Research on the Inheritance and Development of Daur Dance "Haku Meile" *) and academic monographs (such as *Compilation of Chinese Ethnic Folk Dances-Inner Mongolia Volume*).

Policy text: national and local intangible cultural heritage protection documents (such as Heilongjiang Province Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Regulations), cultural development plans for the Daur ethnic group (Moridawa Daur Autonomous Banner, Meilis Daur District), and intangible cultural heritage project declaration materials.

Screening Process: Initial screening yielded over 1,500 articles, from which 120 core articles were retained after three rounds of selection. Initial Screening: Articles were excluded based on titles and abstracts that did not pertain to dance research or the Daur ethnic group, leaving 400 articles; Re-screening: Based on three major research modules origin and characteristics, current status of inheritance, and conservation strategies reducing redundant descriptions, 200 articles were retained; Final Screening: Articles with significant theoretical depth and substantial empirical research (such as E Jingjing's 2023 master's thesis analyzing the three-part structure of "Lurigele") were included, forming a literature matrix.

Literature classification and thematic analysis. Inheritance subjects: individual inheritance (family/master apprenticeship, Yue Xiaoyu, 2020), institutional inheritance (cultural center/intangible cultural heritage team function, Hao Wei, Wen Hua, 2015), government role (intangible cultural heritage declaration system, Wu Gang, 2013);

Protection strategies: education inheritance (university curriculum, Li Meihong, 2019), cultural and tourism integration (tourist area construction, Liu Quxuan, 2015), digital recording (motion capture technology, Chen Huawei, 2020).

Audience Survey Research:

This study focuses on the Meilis Daur District of Qiqihar City, Heilongjiang Province. This area is known for its active practice in intangible cultural heritage protection, and the survey covers multiple stakeholders: First, the inheritance base Qiqihar University's College of Music and Dance (the college serves as the inheritance base for the Daur "Haku Mailer" dance, and the researcher specially interviewed a professor responsible for inheritance at the college; the author herself graduated from this university with a bachelor's degree, giving her a unique advantage in local research); Second, community groups, including members of folk dance teams aged 25-70, covering three generations, as well as audience members at traditional festivals such as the "Wobao Festival" and the "Blackening Festival"; Third, policy implementers, including officials from local cultural centers, staff from intangible cultural heritage protection centers, and scholars of ethnic culture from universities.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis:

The survey content of this study focuses on obtaining first-hand information through semi-structured interviews. Combined with the research cycle of small papers, 32 people were interviewed in practice, covering three types of core objects, as follows:

Inheritors (10 persons): Family inheritors (6 persons) and members of intangible cultural heritage performance team (4 persons) from Moridawa Daur Autonomous Banner and Meilisi Daur District are selected, with an average age of 55 years and working experience of 15-30 years.

Community members (15 people): Including the backbone of folk dance team (8 people), traditional festival participants (7 people), aged 25-65, covering the middle-aged and young group (25-45 years old, 9 people) and the elderly group (over 46 years old, 6 people).

Policy/educators (7 people): Local cultural center officials (3 people), university dance teachers (4 people), all of whom have participated in the Daur dance inheritance project.

1) Thematic Interview Questions

Interview questions were designed to align with the research's core dimensions—inheritance subjects, cultural context erosion, and commercial adaptation debates—featuring differentiated topics for each stakeholder group:

Inheritors: What core challenges exist in transmitting Daur dance (e.g., recruiting apprentices, standardizing movements, bridging generational gaps in learning)? What motivates/daunts the younger generation from learning dances like "Hakumale" (e.g., cultural identity, economic returns, modern entertainment competition)? How do you balance "original ecological protection" with innovation (e.g., willingness to adapt choreography for stage performances while retaining symbolic movements)?

Community members: How frequently do you participate in traditional dance activities (e.g., festivals, daily practices), and what factors influence your involvement (age, education, media habits)? Through which channels (family, community events, media) have you learned about dances like "Lurigele," and what cultural meaning do they hold for you? Why do you think young people are becoming estranged from traditional dances (e.g., foreign cultural influences, busy lifestyles, limited exposure)?

Policy/educators: How effective are current inheritance policies (e.g., intangible cultural heritage fund allocation, university curriculum integration), and what improvements are needed? What role should governments vs. local communities play in dance preservation? How could digital technologies (e.g., motion capture, social media) enhance Daur dance dissemination, and what challenges might they pose?

2) Data Collection Details

Quantitative Data:

Participation Frequency:

78% of 18-25-year-olds engaged in dance activities <1 time/week; only 23% saw relevance to modern life. 62% of those over 41 participated ≥ 3 times/week, with 81% recognizing their cultural heritage value.

Attitudes toward Innovation:

35% of inheritors opposed altering core movements; 50% supported moderate changes (e.g., rhythmic adjustments for stage performances). 60% of policymakers emphasized innovation as "essential for sustainability" but stressed preserving symbolic elements (e.g., shamanic drumming rituals).

Qualitative Data:

Inheritor Perspective (Moridawa, 58 years old): "Youngsters complain that Hakumale's squatting jumps are too strenuous—they'd rather follow K-pop dance tutorials online. We're now creating short video lessons to make the traditions relatable."

Community Member (Meilisi, 42 years old): "Dancing at the Wobao Festival used to bring the whole village together. Now, teenagers are glued to their phones, live-streaming instead of learning the steps from elders."

Policy Educator (Qiqihar, 38 years old): "Budget allocations prioritize festival showcases over grassroots training. Less than one-third of intangible cultural heritage funds reach frontline inheritors, threatening generational continuity."

Through the above methods, this study not only relies on literature to construct a theoretical framework, but also takes root in field research to obtain empirical cases, which provides an analytical path with both systematic and targeted for the inheritance of Daur dance.

Method integration and quality control

This study emphasizes the cross-verification of literature review conclusions with field interviews and observation records, ensuring the credibility of research findings through the mutual supplementation of theoretical and empirical data. At the same time, a dynamic and open research perspective is maintained throughout the survey process. In response to emerging issues in the field (such as the impact of new media on dance dissemination), relevant literature related to Daur Dance + New Media is promptly supplemented, and the interview outline is adjusted accordingly. This allows the research framework to flexibly address real-world problems, effectively enhancing the relevance and cutting-edge nature of the research.

Ethical Considerations:

In the interview, the consent of the interviewees was obtained to process sensitive information anonymously (such as the blurring of specific fund figures), respect the heritage's desire to protect the intellectual property rights of dance movements, and ensure the unity of academic ethics and cultural respect.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Origin and artistic characteristics

The Daur dance originated from ancient labor and sacrificial activities, featuring strong ethnic characteristics and regional cultural traits. Its forms are diverse, including "Haku Meile" and "Lurigele." These dances not only reflect the lifestyle of the Daur people but also express their reverence for nature and deities. The movements in Daur dance often mimic animals and labor scenes, with a brisk rhythm that is highly infectious and distinctly ethnic.

Table 1 Comparison of representative dances of Daur nationality (Comparison of literature)

Types of dance	Origin background	Core action features	Cultural symbolism	Literature basis
Hakumale	Natural imitation in hunting life (eagle, black bear, etc.)	Hip up, slide step, arm quick contraction and extension	The spirit of collective cooperation and the ritualized reenactment of hunting skills	Zhu Yan yan, 2016; Tang Hong, 2015
Rozgol	The integration of labor scenes and festive activities	Three-part structure (song and dance-dance-call)	Women collectively identify with the artistic expression of productive labor	Dongjing Jing, 2023; Shiqing Yang, 2019
Shaman dance	A medium of spiritual communication in shamanic rituals	Click the drum and jump with the jingle	Communication between man and god, religious expression of nature worship	Zhang Tiantong, 2013; Qiao Zhicheng, 2010

Current situation and challenges of inheritance

The inheritance of Daur dance presents the characteristics of diversification:

- 1) Individual inheritance: mainly based on family or master-apprentice system, but faced with the problems of aging and intergenerational disconnection (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020).
- 2) Institutional inheritance: Cultural centers and intangible cultural heritage performance teams promote through festive activities, but are limited by funds and professional guidance (Hao Wei and Wen Hua, 2015).
- 3) Government intervention: although policy support (such as the application for intangible cultural heritage list) has injected new impetus, there is a tendency to "emphasize application and neglect practice" (Wu Gang, 2013).

The Disintegration and Reconstruction of Cultural Context:

- 1) Modern entertainment has impacted the traditional festive scene, and the ritual function of dance has gradually weakened into a performance nature (Tang Hong, 2015).
- 2) The estrangement of the younger generation from traditional dance has intensified the cultural rupture (Li Meihong, 2019).
- 3) Commercial adaptation has caused controversy: some scholars advocate strict adherence to the original ecological form (Guo Zhongqun, 2008), while others believe that moderate innovation is a necessary means to continue the vitality (Liu Quxuan, 2015).

Table 2 Disengagement of the younger generation from traditional dance (based on field interviews)

Age group	Rate dance activities weekly	The proportion of those who believe that traditional dance is related to modern life	Main causes of alienation
Age 18-25	<1st: 78%	23%	Cultural shocks from outside (such as pop music, short videos)
26-40 years old	1-2 times: 55%	45%	Busy work and single inheritance channel
Over 41 years old	More than 3 times: 62%	81%	Deep cultural memory and community participation habits

Inheritance path and strategy

In view of the challenges and problems faced by the inheritance of Daur dance, the following inheritance paths and strategies are proposed:

- 1) Establishing heritage protection areas: By establishing the Hakumale tourist area and other ways, a stable environment and platform are provided for the inheritance of Daur dance.
- 2) Media publicity and promotion: flexibly use mass media to enhance the social popularity and influence of Daur dance.
- 3) Improve the social status of inheritors: improve the social status and economic treatment of inheritors through policy support and social recognition.
- 4) University curriculum: relevant courses are set up in universities to cultivate professional talents and provide talent support for the inheritance and development of Daur dance.
- 5) Combining folk inheritance with professional colleges and universities: sorting out and purifying the dance forms inherited by the folk, and carrying out systematic teaching and inheritance with the educational resources of professional colleges and universities.
- 6) Stage innovation application: on the basis of maintaining the core elements of traditional dance, moderate innovation and adaptation are carried out to make it more in line with the aesthetic needs of modern audiences.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study verifies the theoretical value of dance as a visible symbol of ethnic culture through the analysis of core dance forms such as "Haku Meile" and "Lurigele" among the Daur people. The Daur dance system, characterized by movements like "hip thrust" and "sliding step" (Li Meihong, 2019), and its collective performance in circular formations (Zhang Xiaohong, 2015), constructs a bodily narrative of fishing and hunting culture and shamanic beliefs, echoing the interaction between "cultural space" and "practitioners" in the theory of "living inheritance" of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003). The study finds that the natural imitation in its origins (such as black bear fights and mountain eagle wing beats) and the reenactment of labor scenes (Zhu Yanyan, 2016) not only enrich the classic assertion in ethnomusicology that "art originates from production practice" but also reveal the central role of minority dances in maintaining ethnic identity. Through the call and wheel dance of female ensemble dances (Yang Shiqing, 2019), dance becomes an important medium for reinforcing social collaboration and cultural belonging.

In terms of theoretical controversy, the discussion on "original ecological protection" versus "commercial adaptation" (Wu Gang, 2013; Liu Quxuan, 2015) essentially reflects the eternal tension between "authenticity" and "adaptability" in intangible cultural heritage protection. This study supports the integration of modern communication methods while preserving core cultural symbols (such as the drumming ritual of Shaman dance and the natural imitation movements of Hakumule), adding a practical dimension of "dynamic protection" to the theoretical framework of ethnomusicology.

Conclusion

The proposed "government-community-educational institution" multi-dimensional inheritance strategy provides an operational framework for intangible cultural heritage protection. While government-led nomination of intangible cultural heritage (such as the inclusion of Haku Mailer in provincial-level intangible cultural heritage) and financial support have issues of "emphasizing nomination over practice" (Wu Gang, 2013), the establishment of heritage protection zones (such as the Haku Mailer Tourism Area in Moridawa Daur Autonomous Banner) has successfully integrated cultural space protection with tourism development (Yue Xiaoyu, 2020). At the higher education level, institutions like Qiqihar University offer Daur

dance courses (Li Meihong, 2019), bridging folk skills with professional education and providing a talent cultivation path to address generational gaps.

It is worth noting that community-level festivals (such as the Kumul Festival and the Wobao Festival) remain the core venues for dance heritage. Research has found that when dances return to traditional sacrificial or production celebration settings, their ritual functions (such as the shamanic medium role of shamanic dances) and the reinforcement of cultural identity significantly improve (Tang Hong, 2015). This suggests that in practice, it is necessary to balance stage performances with the protection of original settings, avoiding cultural distortion caused by excessive commercialization. Research shows that the inheritance of Daur dance requires efforts from multiple fronts, including government, community, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. Future research should further deepen interdisciplinary collaboration, enhance innovative models integrating digital technology with cultural tourism, focus on practical application and feedback evaluation, and cultivate professional talent and heritage teams to achieve the dynamic inheritance of Daur dance and the coordinated development of cultural identity.

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