



Reflections on the Flying Sky Image in Dunhuang Dance

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ABSTRACT

The source of Dunhuang dance creation in Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, mural discovery is not only an important cultural heritage in China, but also one of the world's cultural treasures. In the cave murals appear most times, the most vivid image is the flying sky. Dunhuang's flying sky elements were used at both the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, which is undoubtedly to firm the national cultural confidence of China. This article will take Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes sky image as the breakthrough point. Explore the aesthetic image of flying sky, analyze the characteristics of flying sky image, understand the application of flying sky's image in Chinese dance, research the development of flying sky image in dance. The study of this subject has a positive effect on the development and dissemination of flying sky image in Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes in dance.

Keywords : Dunhuang Dance ; Flying Sky ; Dance Image

Introduction

Located in Dunhuang, a major Silk Road town on the northwest border of China, the Mogao Caves have encompassed the world's cultural heritage through ten dynasties: including the Northern Liang, Northern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Zhou, Sui, Tang, Song, Western Xia, and Yuan dynasties, covering many dimensions: political, economic, and cultural. It is all-encompassing and magnificent, and it is on the World Heritage List. The flying sky's images are everywhere and all the time on the 45,000 square-meters murals, making them the most representative symbol of Dunhuang.

In the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Chinese artistic gymnasts chose the "Flying Sky Dance" for their five-ball routine, incorporating elements of Dunhuang frescoes to create a strong Chinese style. The design concept of the Ski Jumping Platform at the 24th Winter Olympic Games in Beijing in 2022 has cleverly incorporated the "Flying Sky" elements of Dunhuang frescoes, spreading the Chinese culture on the international stage once again and making Dunhuang dance a typical representative of Chinese dance. The program "When Intangible Cultural Heritage Meets Winter Olympics" of the Central Radio and Television Station came to the birthplace of the Dunhuang dance teaching system in Gansu Province School of Arts to conduct a series of interviews with Professor Gao Jinrong, the founder of the Dunhuang dance teaching system, and as the inheritor of the Dunhuang dance teaching system, I feel very honored to spread the Dunhuang dance under such an opportunity. This has also made me interested in the study of "flying".

I. The origin and legend of "Flying Sky"

The mythical legend says that the Flying Sky was originally the incarnation of Qianxiao and Zunara, they were a loving couple, Qianxiao danced in the heavenly palace, responsible for providing treasures, flowers and other work, while Zunara lived with the heavenly palace, responsible for playing music, singing and dancing, but he could not fly in the heavenly palace, and later they were both inseparable. Regardless of gender into one now Dunhuang Flying Sky image. The image of the Flying Dutchman lasted for more than a thousand years and went through ten dynasties, first coming from India and evolving to incorporate Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Greek cultures, allowing them to collide culturally in the land of Dunhuang. The Mogao Caves in Dunhuang that we see now were formed. The flying sky, with its varied shapes and rich colors, appears vivid and emotionally on the cave murals, which became the inspiration for the flying sky dance created by the dance artists. In Buddhism, the main role of the flying figures is to play music, sing, dance and scatter flowers, that is a symbol of goodness and wishes, giving the world a sense of kindness and beauty. Some are painted in the four corners of the alcove, some are painted in the center of the alcove or around the drape of the alcove; some are depicted in the niche next to the Buddha's light and lotus dancers, some are depicted under the mantle of the Buddha's roof; some appear in the pavilion, some appear at the solemn moment of the Buddha's statement with drums and music; some soar with the flowing clouds in the blissful world, either ascending, swooping, or flying flat. Some soar with the clouds in the world of bliss, either rising, swooping, flying, swimming, or chasing." There are as many as 4,500 flying figures in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang. There are more than 600 of them with music in their hands to play and dance.

II. Dunhuang Mogao Caves frescoes in the characteristics of the flying days

In the Northern Liang period, the flying days are mainly male, mainly characterized by oval faces, round apertures, large eyes and straight noses, large scarves on the shoulders, naked upper body, rigid movements, rough lines, dance curves are not very fine and beautiful, no sense of motion, more influenced by the West and India, similar to the Western monks, the image of flying days in the murals in the shape of V, such as Mogao Caves 272, 275 Caves in the Northern Liang Flying Tian image, all have obvious V-shaped features.

In the Northern Wei period, the number of appearances of flying figures increased, and the female physique began to appear, although the flying figures still inherited the V-shaped characteristics of the Northern Liang period, but the dance posture slowly began to develop into a U-shaped, the face began to have the characteristics of the Chinese, the body became more slender, the painting method is more detailed, the dance posture changes began to diversify, such as the flying figures in Cave 206 and Cave 99, the arms have a Z Z-shaped curve, the formation of the wrist and palm and other postures. In the Western Wei period, there are both male and female figures of flying dancers. Inheritance is also influenced by the Chinese Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, is a multi-cultural coexistence of the period, the body is not rigid, appeared female sense of softness, dance posture is also more floating, in the costume increased the head wearing a crown of flying Tian image, the neck also appeared collar for decoration, silk belt around the addition of dynamic dots and lines, increased the visual effect of flying in the wind, in the dance posture shape or From the Northern Zhou period, the flying figures began to slowly female figures, dance characteristics also began to change from U-shaped to Z-shaped, legs appear to lean on the feet, cross-legged and other postures, such as downward flying Z-shaped body in Cave 106; in Cave 104 cross-legged rotation flying U-shaped body, etc., the posture of this period gave the dance choreographer a richer creative inspiration. The Sui dynasty flying figures are essentially feminine in character, with clear eyebrows or plump, elegant eyes, and the largest number of flying figures in the Mogao Caves murals of the period. Inheritance of a large change in the mural painting is not in a single form, but in pairs soaring in the air, began to have a change in S-shaped posture, ribbons compared to the previous dynasties to be much longer, but also appeared to hold a musical instrument flying shape, the most characteristic of the Sui dynasty 407 caves in the three rabbits flying Tian algae figure, surrounded by a circle of flying Tian image, the body formed the S curve, some holding a lotus flower, some some holding lotus flowers, some holding magic weapons, some holding spears, flying in the air in different postures. During the Tang Dynasty, there were flying women, and the heyday of flying images was reached, from the colors to the painting techniques, to the ornaments on the body, all more colorful. The most characteristic 148 caves, the goddess of fragrant sound appears six arms, respectively, holding a pipa, flute, magic tools and other props, flying in the air, while playing, while dancing six-armed flying image, posture has a strong S curve, beautiful, giving a limitless imagination. After the Tang Dynasty, the image of the flying heaven did not have greater development and innovation, but also lacked the dynamism and richness of the Tang Dynasty, without a strong dynamic vitality, the number of flying heaven also began to reduce, from the costume to increase the characteristics of minority clothing, by the influence of minority groups at the time, leaving the imprint of the times.

III. The presentation of "Flying Sky" in the new Chinese dance

With the founding of New China in 1949, all cultures and arts were slowly revived, and dance began to usher in its springtime, and the image of the Flying Sky appeared in the public eye once again.

In 1954, Mr. Dai Ailian, the pioneer of the Flying Trapeze dance, successfully choreographed a two-person dance called "Flying Trapeze" based on the image of the Goddess of Fragrant Sound in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang. The dance was a great success at the time and caused a sensation in the culture of Flying Heaven, which has played an indispensable role in the subsequent works of Flying Heaven.

The Dunhuang dances "Six-Handed Trick", "Six-Armed Flying Sky" and "Six-Armed Fragrant Sound" were all dance works inspired by the image of the six-armed flying sky in Cave 148 and created based on the image of the flying sky in the murals. It was also during this period that the classic shape of the bouncing pipa appeared. In 1979, with the reform and opening up, the first national dance drama with Dunhuang elements, "Silk Road Flower Rain", appeared in people's view, and the shape of the flying heaven bouncing pipa in the dance drama became famous throughout the country and became one of the classic dances in China and abroad. Once it was staged, it received a high response and recognition from dancers and audiences. The show visited more than 20 countries and became a model of Chinese folk dance, and Dunhuang dance was on the road to continuous development during this period.

IV "flying" in the Dunhuang dance excavation and use

Dunhuang dance has a history of more than 40 years, from the establishment of the name "Dunhuang dance" to the establishment of the teaching system, until today the works of Dunhuang dance have come into the public eye and integrated into our lives. The basic movements of the Flying Sky in the Dunhuang Dance teaching system that I teach are a combination of dances created by Ms. Jinrong Gao through her research and study of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, where she found commonalities in the shape of the Flying Sky. There are eleven basic flying forms in the combination, including side support, cross-legged leaning, leaning downwind, flying into the wind, leaning up to hold the support, stilted foot holding the flower, lying down to suck the leg, lifting the leg to take off, side single support, punching body double support, punching body downwind. These movements

can be found in their original form in the caves. For example, the windward slanting style in the combination is based on the shape of the frescoes in Cave 297 of the Northern Zhou period; the cross-legged slanting style can be found in Cave 272 of the Northern Liang period and Cave 296 of the Northern Zhou period; and the flying style is based on the shape of the dance in Cave 156 of the Middle Tang period. The creation of these Dunhuang dance flying postures, I believe, is in line with the characteristics of the Dunhuang frescoes in different periods of V, U, Z and S shapes, so that the Dunhuang Mogao Caves frescoes have really come into the Dunhuang dance teaching.

In modern society, the image of flying has been integrated into our lives, in the streets, tunnels, sculptures, you can see the image of flying, flying image is not only a "business card" of Dunhuang, but also a "business card" of China, in the The dance is becoming more and more systematic in the shaping of the flying image, the flying ground training combination, the flying hand training combination, the flying props training combination, the flying ribbon training combination, have been integrated into the teaching system of Dunhuang dance, from teaching to the stage, from the combination to the work, the dance in the shaping of the flying image has a complete system, the flying image is also continuing to develop in different ways and The image of the flying trapeze continues to evolve and move forward in different ways. The image of the flying trapeze has changed with the times, and is constantly evolving and developing in dance, growing in inheritance and development. The image of the flying trapeze is a representation of the Buddhist world of bliss, so what remains the same for the image of the flying trapeze is the desire for a better image of the flying trapeze, the longing for life and freedom.

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