
**Creative Factors and Ethnic-folk Dance: A Case Study of the Peacock Dance in
China (1949-2013)**

by

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Abstract

My dissertation topic focuses on the interaction between dances, their contexts, and their meanings. I am interested in a wide range of creative factors that are involved in the dance-context interaction. I chose to investigate these factors by looking at the Peacock Dance, which originates in the Dai culture. I write about eleven case studies and focus on four different creative factors that have changed the peacock dance - individual, community, nationality, and state.

Creative factors are the factors that actively influence the form/context/meaning of an ethnic-folk dance in certain ways. I call these factors as “creative factors” because they influence the creation of new characteristics of the ethnic-folk dances. Various factors can influence change in ethnic-folk dances, and the ones I focus on are only four of many. Change in ethnic-folk dance usually happens under the influence of one or all four creative factors, though each factor may be more or less active.

These case studies demonstrate how four creative factors have changed the peacock dance from the Dai ethnic group. Because of the absence of earlier detailed information, there is no original peacock dance to make comparisons in an absolute sense. I consider Dance #1, the peacock dance by Mao Xiang around 1949, as the “original” peacock dance in my dissertation. Various peacock dances were directly or indirectly developed from this dance as time went on. If we considered this peacock dance the origin, then it has produced at least four generations of peacock dance (the other ten pieces of peacock dance). Comparisons show that all the eleven peacock dances are related to each other, but none of them is the same as the original, or the same as any other one. The peacock

dance is only one example of how an ethnic-folk dance can be changed by creative factors. These four creative factors are also only some of many potential creative factors that could influence an ethnic-folk dance. In some contexts, an ethnic-folk dance could be changed for more localized reasons.

In the first chapter of the dissertation, I introduce why I am interested in this topic and explain my personal connection to this research. In the second chapter, I describe the eleven versions of peacock dance that serve as core examples for the analysis. I describe various aspects of the dances, such as the movements, formations, music, cultural meanings, social functions, performing locations, etc. I also provide pictures to help the reader to establish a clearer understanding of the dances. Chapters three to six focus on one of the four creative factors: individual, community, nationality, and state. I describe how these creative factors influenced the peacock dance by comparing various versions. The last chapter includes several key points about my research.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jiaying You. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board on June 21, 2012. The project name is “Chinese folk dance in Canada and China” and number in 00031100.

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1. Chapter I - Introduction.....	1
1.1 Theoretical Concepts.....	4
1.2 My Project.....	17
1.3 Biography.....	22
1.4 Methodology.....	22
1.5 Structure of the Dissertation.....	25
2. Chapter 2 – The Eleven Peacock Dances: Some Basic Information .	27
2.1 Introduction.....	27
2.2 Dance #1: The peacock dance by Mao Xiang (毛相) before 1950.....	33
2.3 Dance #2: Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞) .	41
2.4 Dance #3: Peacock Dance (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞).....	46
2.5 Dance #4: Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯与楠木诺娜).....	50
2.6 Dance #5: Golden Peacock (Jinse De Kongque, 金色的孔雀).....	55
2.7 Dance #6: The Spirit of Peacock (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵).....	60
2.8 Dance #7: Peacocks in Green Wave (Bibo Kongque, 碧波孔雀).....	63
2.9 Dance #8: The Peacock Princess (孔雀公主).....	66
2.10 Dance #9: <i>The Love of Peacocks</i> (雀之恋).....	69
2.11 Dance #10 & #11: The peacock dance by Wang La (旺腊) & Yue Xiang (约相)	72
2.12 Conclusion.....	77
3. Chapter 3 - Creative factor – Individual.....	79
3.1 Introduction.....	79

3.2	Case study: Yang Liping and her peacock dances (dance # 5, #6, and #9) ..93
4.	Chapter 4 - Creative factor – Community 124
4.1	Introduction 124
4.2	Case study: Cindy Yang Dance Academy and <i>The Peacock Princess</i> (dance #4, #6, and #8)..... 134
4.3	Conclusion..... 141
5.	Chapter 5 – Creative factor – Nationality..... 142
5.1	Introduction 142
5.2	Case study: Peacock dance by Mao Xiang (毛相), Wang La (旺腊), and Yue Xiang (约相) (dance #1, #10, and #11)..... 152
5.3	Conclusion..... 165
6.	Chapter 6 - Creative factor – State..... 167
6.1	Introduction 167
6.2	Case study: Peacock dances representing China (dance #1, #3, #5, #6, #7, #9) 178
6.3	Conclusion..... 192
7.	Chapter 7 - Conclusion 194
8.	Bibliography 199

List of Tables:

Table 1: Eleven versions of the peacock dance.....	29
Table 2: Information of peacock dance in Yunnan around 1949	40
Table 3: Information of <i>Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)</i>	46
Table 4. Peacock Dance (孔雀舞, 1957)	50
Table 5: <i>Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯和楠木诺娜 1956, 1963, 1979)</i>	55
Table 6. <i>Golden Peacock (金色的孔雀, 1978, 1980)</i>	59
Table 7. The Spirit of Peacock (雀之灵, 1986, 1989)	63
Table 8. <i>Peacocks in Green Wave (碧波孔雀, 2004)</i>	66
Table 9: The peacock dance in <i>The Peacock Princess</i>	69
Table 10. The Love of Peacock (雀之恋, 2012).....	72
Table 11: Peacock dance by Wang La (旺腊).....	76
Table 12: Peacock dance by Yue Xiang (约相)	77
Table 13. <i>Golden Peacock VS. The Spirit of Peacock</i>	101
Table 14. Comparisons among Yang Liping's <i>The Spirit of Peacock</i> (1989, 2002, 2003)	106
Table 15. Comparison between <i>The Love of Peacock</i> and <i>The Spirit of Peacock</i> ...	113
Table 16: <i>Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona VS. The Peacock Princess</i>	139
Table 17: Ethnic-folk dances that are changed by its nationality in different contexts	151

Table 18: Comparisons among Peacock dance at Ruili (瑞丽) in 1949, 1956, 2013	
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

.....	160
-------	-----

Table 19: Comparison on stages among six peacock dances.....	187
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List of Figures:

Figure 1: Peacock (Bronze figurine) from ancient Dian Guo (5th – 1st century BC) (Retrieved December 12, 2015, from http://toutiao.com/i5397048670/)	30
Figure 2: Mahamayuri.....	32
Figure 3: Mao Xiang (毛相)	35
Figure 4: Costume for peacock dance.....	39
Figure 5: <i>Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)</i>	44
Figure 6: <i>Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)</i>	45
Figure 7. <i>Peacock Dance (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞, 1957)</i>	48
Figure 8: <i>Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯和楠木诺娜 1979)</i>	54
Figure 9. Golden Peacock (金色的孔雀, 1978, 1980)	58
Figure 10: The peacock-head gesture in <i>the Spirit of Peacock</i>	61
Figure 11. The Spirit of Peacock (雀之灵, 1986, 1989).....	62
Figure 12: Peacocks in Green Wave (碧波孔雀, 2004).....	65
Figure 13: The Peacock Princess (孔雀公主, 2010)	68
Figure 14: The Love of Peacocks (雀之恋 2012).....	70
Figure 15: Wang La's peacock dance	74
Figure 16: Yue Xiang's peacock dance	74
Figure 17: "Dancing in the moon" Yang Liping used lights to help make her peacock image more mysterious and otherworldly (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://news.wudao.com/20111201/33243.html).....	98

Figure 18: Spinning in <i>The Spirit of Peacock Dance</i> (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_13dfa8f290102vhfb.html).....	99
Figure 19: Dance in the moon (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://news.k618.cn/yl_37061/201211/t20121103_2579050_4.html).....	102
Figure 20: "Dancing in the Moon" in the third version, the moon was changed to take up the whole stage with specially designed yellow lights (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://news.ifeng.com/gundong/detail_2012_08/16/16833807_0.shtml).....	103
Figure 21: Stage design of <i>The Love of Peacocks</i> (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50cf0ef701018rgz.html).....	109
Figure 22: Body painting in <i>The Love of Peacock</i> . (Reteieved August 27, 2016, from http://news.wudao.com/20121016/64687.html)	111
Figure 23: <i>Two Trees</i> (两棵树, 1993).....	115
Figure 24: Moonlight (月光, 2004).....	115
Figure 25: Bamboo (竹, 2006).....	116
Figure 26: Ma Wenjing is showing the movement of fish fins in the Dai fish dance (Personal interview recording).....	121
Figure 27: Costume of <i>Peacock Dance</i> (1957).....	122
Figure 28: The stage that Yue Xiang built at his home	154
Figure 29: The Peacock dance with bamboo tail performed by Yi Tuan in 2011 ...	157
Figure 30: Wang La's students practice peacock dance at his studio (Personal interview recording).....	163
Figure 31: Yue Xiang teaches peacock dance to his students at his home.....	163

Figure 32: Map of Burma in 1950	182
Figure 33: Stage decoration of <i>Peacock Dance</i> (A scree shot from the video of <i>Peacock Dance</i>)	188
Figure 34 Stage decoration for <i>The Love of Peacocks</i> (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://news.hexun.com/2012-01-23/137486316.html).....	188
Figure 35: Some key influences among the eleven peacock dance	197

Chapter I - Introduction

According to a common definition, ethnic dance is a type of dance that connects with a specific culture and tradition. It has deep historical resources, and is changeless and timeless. There is an expectation in popular culture stereotypes that ethnic dances are very ancient (unchanged) dances. This is why we often hear some agents claim that they are old and permanent. Such agents include, but are not limited to, individuals, communities, nationalities, and states. This belief became clear in my observations of how Chinese people passionately protect their ethnic dances, especially after the guidelines set out by the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) department, which was established by UNESCO and introduced to China at the beginning of the 21st century. The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH) that was adopted by UNESCO was created to protect cultural elements identified as fitting in the category of intangible cultural heritage. This has been accomplished by applying measures such as identification, documentation, preservation, and protection of cultural heritages (UNESCO, 2003a).

The aim of the ICH program is to protect and promote valuable cultural heritage; however, the outcome has not been what the founders of the ICH program expected. For example, China joined the CSICH in 2004 and then started a national ICH program to protect many cultural forms of China. One particular cultural form added to the protected list was an ethnic dance named *Anhui*

Huagudeng (安徽花鼓灯), which was originally performed in Anhui province. To illustrate the influence of the ICH program, changes in the dance can be traced. The original dance had the following characteristics: 1) In many locations, *Anhui Huagudeng* (安徽花鼓灯) was a participatory dance that was for celebrating various festivals. 2) Most dance participants were peasants. 3) The dance was popular in a wide range of geographical locations along the Huai River (淮河) in Anhui province. The dance forms practiced in different locations may have been different in some ways, but were similar for the most part. 4) The dance was alive in people's daily lives. There was no limitation on when or where people could dance and there was no special place for educating children either.

After the dance was labeled as ICH in 2006, many of the characteristics of the *Anhui Huagudeng* (安徽花鼓灯) changed: 1) Most of the time, the dance now is a representative dance performed for tourists. The government uses ICH as a way to attract tourists through the promotion of folklore tourism. Dance groups organize and perform the dance to tourists regularly. 2) Many of the performers, who were peasants, have given up farming because performing the dance is more profitable than laboring in fields. 3) The governments from many locations in the Anhui province have applied for their own *Huagudeng* as ICH. To highlight the uniqueness of their dances, various locations have exaggerated the differences and ignored the similarities between dances. 4) A specific context is made for the dance in the form of original ecology. For example, there was a famous dancer named Feng Guopei (冯国佩) in the city of Bengbu (蚌埠) located in the

northeastern part of the Anhui province. After the dance from Bengbu was labeled as ICH by the government, the village where Feng Guopei was born and lived was rebuilt and promoted as “The First Village of Huagudeng in China” for tourism. A huge amount of money was spent on rebuilding the village, including removing and rebuilding buildings which were not constructed using the Hui style (the style symbolizing Anhui’s culture). 5) One billion Chinese Yuan (about 167 million Canadian dollars) was spent last year on the “*Huagudeng* (花鼓灯) Carnival” in Bengbu. Several groups of buildings were built around a *Huagudeng* (花鼓灯) performing theatre. Each group of buildings has a main purpose such as the *Huagudeng* (花鼓灯) cultural square, carnival square (shopping mall), folk market (local food with *Huagudeng* performance), world of speed (roller coaster), world of adventure, world of happiness, world of water park, etc. This program was identified as a model that successfully combines traditional culture and tourism. Many people might think that *Anhui Huagudeng* (安徽花鼓灯) has been protected, promoted, and popularized since being labeled as ICH; however, the truth is that the dance has changed greatly. These changes show that the ICH program has brought *Anhui Huagudeng* (安徽花鼓灯) away from protecting it as it was which was the original goal of the program.

Anhui Huagudeng (安徽花鼓灯) is only one of many examples that show how the ICH program has influenced cultural preservation in China. The emphasis of the program is no longer about the dance and other cultural forms themselves, but rather on the promotion of particular economic interests. Various levels of

Chinese government have become interested in applying for ICH support because the program brings great opportunities to develop tourism and the accompanying economic benefits. In addition, it also provides prestige for leaders which increases their opportunities for advancement.

A foundational motivation for the ICH program is to promote ethnic dance as a stable and fragile object that needs to be protected from disappearing. However, I believe that this concept does not reflect the true nature of ethnic dance. Ethnic dance involves not only forms and movements, but also meanings and contexts, with the latter two playing an important role in forming the dance. It exists as a process that is influenced by the ways it fulfills various demands in its context. In other words, ethnic dance is always influenced by various context dependent creative factors in which it lives at the particular moment. My dissertation will discuss how various creative factors change ethnic dances in particular contexts. I will use peacock dance as an example to explain how various creative factors change ethnic dances.

Theoretical Concepts

Anthropology

If ethnic dance is thought of as a dynamic process, then traditions, cultures, and nations also exist as subjective phenomena, malleable each time they are manifested and imagined. Ethnic dance and concepts such as tradition, culture, and nation are strongly associated with each other because ethnic dance is seen as a part of the traditions of a particular cultural group. In this case, it is

unsatisfactory to talk about ethnic dance without understanding the terms “nation,” “tradition,” and “culture.”

Benedict Anderson defines nation as a “cultural artifact of a particular kind” (1991, p. 4), instead of a changeless history and culture that are passed on from generation to generation. Anderson’s (1983, 1991) famous concept of “imagined communities” has become synonymous with the concept “nation.” He focused on how a nation is constructed from inside a community. He argued that communities are created on the basis of the members’ imagination of their history and culture. This imagination comes from shared experiences that are driven by many things, including print-capitalism, as it affects people’s consciousness. Print-capitalism (Anderson, 1983, 1991) is printed media, such as newspapers and novels, which propagate an image of unity to people. Shared experiences include not only the shared history and knowledge of the group, but also memories. Such shared experiences propagated by print-capitalism create an imagined picture which provides people with a conceptual basis to imagine a unity (imagined community) among themselves and other unknown people without face-to-face communication. It is an endless process through which a nation is maintained. Anderson’s argument provides strong support for the idea that nation is a constructed concept rather than a natural, inherited phenomenon.

The notion of “tradition” has also served as a tool to solidify an imagined community as a stable nation. In popular culture, tradition is believed to be based on historical knowledge that is handed down and unchanged from one generation to the next since ancient times. However, scholars such as Trevor-Roper (1984),

Bharucha (1989), Hobsbawm (1992), and Briggs (1996) have argued that traditions are invented for various reasons, including the service of ethnic politics. Trevor-Roper (1984) traced how clans markings and kilts, which are now believed to be part of traditional dress for Scottish Highlanders, were actually invented when the people started claiming their own identity after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. Bharucha (1989) argued that there are many ways by which traditions are invented to explain the same idea. He described how various Indian traditions have been invented on the annual "Republic Day Parade" in New Delhi. The festival is organized to represent Indian traditions to the world; however, many of the so called traditions shown in the festival are not understandable to the people in India. Hobsbawm (1992) emphasized that the invention of traditions occurs more and more frequently when traditions are deemed useful to maintain social cohesion by serving as a spiritual center to keep a group of people united. Briggs (1996) also conducted research on both Native American and Pacific traditions. He argued that traditions are created in the present to support claims of homogeneity. Similar to nation, tradition is a political concept rather than a cultural phenomenon because it is often used as a tool to serve ethnic politics.

Similar to nation and tradition, culture is a constructed concept as well. The construction of culture occurs not only from inside a group, but also through comparison between the group and others. This comparison is very important in creating cultural identities, and Barth (1969) argued that the differences and similarities between ethnic groups are significant to create communities. The comparison between two ethnic groups creates cultural boundaries that divide

groups and make members of both groups think about who they are and what unique features they possess. Through comparison, differences are exaggerated and similarities are ignored in order to claim they are unique. In addition, similarities are created or emphasized by the members of a group to emphasize their unique identity (i.e. traditions are invented in this way). Sahlins (1993) also argues that it is the relations between cultures help us to know a particular culture. He believed that cultural characteristics reveal themselves in the way a culture responds to its diverse surroundings. Through this response, cultural forms are organized or changed in specific ways. In another article, Sahlins (1999) claimed that non-Western cultures have an active attitude toward the Western culture that has been added to their culture. He used the example of how Eskimos keeps changing their culture in response to the white European culture. He argued that the local culture engages international capitalism to develop their cultural orders. In addition, the world is re-diversified during the process of engagement.

Dance Anthropology and Ethnochoreology

In this section, I will explain more about dance in relation to understanding nations, cultures, and traditions as inventions. Dance as a representation of culture is not a new academic idea.. Franz Boas (1944) was one of the first academics in the United States who used anthropological methodology to study dance and analyze dance as culture in his study of Northwest Coast Indian dance. The anthropology of dance in America, therefore, came from the theoretical tradition of Boasian anthropology (Kaeppler, 1991). In this tradition, dance is not simply an artifact in and of itself, but a reflection of its culture, and a scholars' purpose in

studying dance is to better understand the culture as a whole. Dance research in America as a formal discipline started after Kurath published her well known work, *Panarama of dance ethnology*, in 1960. Kurath is considered “the parent of dance ethnology” (Kaeppler 1978: 31) because of this academic work. She argued that the study of dance should be “an approach toward, and a method of, eliciting the place of dance in human life” (Kurath 1960: 250). Both Boas and Kurath emphasized that dance and culture are tightly connected to each other. Thus, they influence each other in the process of creation.

Ethnic dance will be the main focus of my dissertation. , There are various definitions ethnic dance and folk dance, and different people understand them in various ways. Ethnic dance and folk dance overlap in many ways but have different focuses. Ethnic dance is strongly related to ethnicities and cultural boundaries. Ethnic dance symbolizes a specific cultural group, and often makes allusion this group’s history, customs, religions, and so on. Folk dance is originally related to peasants, and later is used to define both the dances performed by peasants, and the dances derived from them (Nahachewsky 2012: 32). In China, the department tasked with teaching folk dance and ethnic dance in the Beijing Dance Academy (BDA) is named the Department of Ethnic-Folk Dance (Zhongguo Minzu Minjianwu Xi, 中国民族民间舞系). Both Han dance and dances from other ethnic groups are taught to students in this department. I will follow the BDA’s convention in using ethnic-folk dance as the main concept to define my object of study because it is already a longstanding, publicly accepted concept in China.

Ethnic-folk dance in this context serves as a representation of a culture. Thus, it is used as one important strategy to serve the purpose of inventing cultures, traditions, and nations. Ethnic-folk dance is created in the process of fulfilling the requirements of this purpose by re-presenting a previous version of the dance in certain ways. The academic study of ethnic-folk dance emerged in relation to the use of ethnic-folk dance for the above purpose. Giurchescu (1991) contended that the emergence of dance research in Europe was rooted in the cultural politics of 18th and 19th-century Europe. The main idea associated with cultural politics at the time was to build a nation-state based on common cultural features. Ethnochoreology served this purpose by arguing to citizens within a national boundary that they share common cultural characteristics including ethnic dances. Therefore, dance researchers contributed to the development of a national identity by studying what was perceived to be “traditional” ethnic-folk dance.

I am inspired by Hoerburger’s (1968) concepts of “folk dance in the first existence” and “folk dance in the second existence.” For Hoerburger, folk dance in the first existence is the folk dance that is in its “original” peasant context, while folk dance in the second existence is that which is active in any other context except the original one. Folk dance in the first existence is the basis of folk dance in the second existence. Hoerburger (1968) identified several differences between the first existence and the second existence. In general, choreographers often collect materials from first existence dances, then re-organize them and choreograph performances in the second existence. Hoerburger’s concepts have been criticized (Nahachewsky, 2001) because his

discussion is based on one-sided understanding of folk dance both as the first existence and the second existence. For example, his concept could not explain dances that are practiced in the context of the first existence, but using second existence forms. However, Hoerburger's concepts still provided me with a direction to think about Chinese folk dance.

Nahachewsky (2012: 24) proposes the concepts of "vival" and "reflective" to understand different motivations for dancing. He focused on historical self-consciousness of participants (as a high or low priority in their dancing activity) and the purpose of the dance. He also further identified three main paradigms of reflective dance: national, recreational, and spectacular. Both Hoerburger and Nahachewsky's concepts have helped me to conceptualize Chinese ethnic-folk dance into various contexts before I start analyzing specific ethnic-folk dances.

Ethnicity In China

In popular culture conceptualizations, ethnicity is thought of as stable and timeless because it is often related to a specific culture, which is considered as long, timeless, and traditional. However, the truth is that ethnicity has never been an objective and static concept, but rather a subjective and dynamic one, similar to the concepts "culture," "nation," and "tradition," which I have discussed in the first section. Harrell (1996) pointed out that the nature of ethnicity is fluid and changeable. He argued that ethnic groups are defined according to cultural characteristics that are created by both the culture itself (internal influence), and the environment (external influence). The key point he emphasized in the creation

of ethnicity is that it happens with a “complex world with multiple social relationships” (Harrell, 1996, p.4). Roosens (1989) claimed that ethnic identity has three dimensions: cultural, social, and psychological. The cultural dimension creates a folk group from the inside of the group, while the social and psychological dimensions create it from the outside. According to both Harrell (1996) and Roosens (1989), the process of creating an ethnic group involves constant negotiation.

Ethnicity in China, just as in any other state, is a political phenomenon used with the intent to hold society together. A modern understanding of ethnicity in the PRC started from the idea of Greater China (a united multi-ethnic country) which was developed by Sun Yat-sen (孙中山), the original leader of the Kuomintang (国民党) (time period). He developed this idea to encourage the people to rise up against the Qing government (established by the Manzu), which was considered an external enemy at the time. Later, after he and his revolutionary team established the Republic of China (ROC) in 1911, he also included the Manzu in his Greater China to unify all the people in the state. Thereafter, the idea of a united multi-ethnic country, which included the Han, Manzu, Mongolians, Hui, and Tibetans at that time, was promoted and adopted by the Chinese Communist Party (Gladney, 1998).

The idea of Greater China was further developed in the PRC on the basis of the Ethnic Classification Project (Minzu Shibie, 民族识别) because the five nationalities in Sun’s concept were not enough to represent all the people in the PRC. This massive project started in 1950 and lasted until 1987. Fifty-six

nationalities were officially affirmed by the government of the PRC. Western scholars have been studying the Ethnic Classification Project for a long time, and various arguments have been developed. Many western scholars have argued that the Chinese government classified ethnic groups too simplistically. For example, research has shown that some ethnic groups were classified into different nationalities even though they speak the same language, and others who believed in different religions and had unique cultural customs were classified into the same nationality. Many of the critical scholars would propose different arguments and therefore different ethnic categories. Brown (1996) pointed out that intermarriage, migration, and changing cultural characteristics from generation to generation have made identity transformation very complex. Similarly, Harrell (1996) pointed out that the shifting and fluid process of negotiation is the real nature of ethnic relations, past and present, and by extension in the rest of the world also. According to both Brown and Harrell's arguments, it is impossible for the Chinese government to clearly classify ethnicity and maintain it permanently

Gladney (1998) and Bilik (2009) have developed their research projects from different angles, engaging in the meaning of the concept of nationality in China. Gladney argued that the Chinese government assigned labels to various groups of people, which led to a psychological change within the groups. Bilik, a Mongolian-Chinese anthropologist, made an argument about Chinese ethnicity focused on his particular background. Bilik noticed that the meaning of "nation," "nationality," and "class" are sometimes not distinguished in China, which is one reason that the government's minority policy is sometimes challenged. He

believed that tension between nationalities in China is inevitable because of its Marxist foundation which focuses on class relations and social conflicts. He argued that nationalism and Marxism temporarily united together during the period of war between China and Japan (1937 - 1945) because they were facing a common enemy. In peace time (after 1949), the incompatibility between nationalism and Marxism emerged. The Chinese government was making ethnic groups for political purposes by conducting the Ethnic Classification Project. Once various ethnicities were made, the label of each ethnic group changed the people psychologically to make them believe that their cultures were traditional and pure. In present China, about 50 years after the Ethnic Classification Project was conducted, various nationalities have started to claim their rights to protect and develop their “traditional” and “pure” cultures.

Mullaney (2011) recently published a study about the Ethnic Classification Project in China, and has more detailed information about the project. He described the process of the project in terms of three periods. The first one was self-identification. In the process of self-identifying one's ethnic affiliation, more than 400 ethnicities were proposed. One hundred and fifty seven ethnic groups were identified in Yunnan alone, of which 92 had less than 100 people and 20 had only one person. This result was not accepted by the state. Subsequently, the government adopted the Soviet Union's definition of nationality, which marked the beginning of the second period. Stalin argued that four characteristics should be used as standards for identifying nationalities: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life, and a common psychological makeup

(described later as a common culture) (Mullaney, 2011). However, Stalin's standards for identifying ethnic groups were not suitable for the Chinese situation because they required that "the group has reached the stage of capitalist production and this was not plausible for the vast majority in Yunnan" (Gladney 1998: 14). Finally, the third period emerged, characterized by a unique Chinese way of classifying ethnicities. The Chinese government hired ethnographers and linguists to do fieldwork involving the classification of ethnicities. In this process, language was the main factor in distinguishing groups. Eventually, fifty-six nationalities were recognized in 1987, with some groups still left for final classification (Mullaney, 2011).

The research conducted by Gladney, Bilik and Mullaney help me understand how ethnicity in China is a political phenomenon at least as much as a cultural concept. Mullaney argued that the Chinese government knew they were, in some parts, making ethnicity rather than classifying ethnicity, and this was done for political reasons. Actually, the project was initially set up with a political rationale. In 1953, right after the PRC was established, the Election Law stipulated that each minority would have at least one representative seat in the National People's Congress regardless of the size of the minority group. This is the basic reason why the Chinese government conducted the Ethnic Classification Project. The project was started for political reasons, and continued to maintain its political orientation as it evolved. Mullaney's research provided strong support for understanding ethnicity in China as a political phenomenon. This understanding will serve as a foundation for understanding Chinese ethnic-folk dance as a political

phenomenon too.

Chinese Ethnic-folk Dance

The practical study of Chinese ethnic-folk dance in the new political context (the political and social environment after the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921) started around the 1930s when Miss Dai Ailian (戴爱莲), the famous pioneer of cataloging and performing Chinese ethnic-folk dances, began to collect dances during wartime. The purpose in cataloging and disseminating information about Chinese ethnic-folk dances at that time was to establish cultural symbols that the Chinese could rally around in solidifying the Chinese nation-state identity. This is a clear example of how ethnic-folk dance was used in the process of inventing a state. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the explicit purpose gradually broadened to one of preserving and exhibiting immensely rich Chinese cultures. To fulfill this purpose, a department was built in dance schools to specifically teach Chinese ethnic-folk dances, which were later called school-style ethnic dances. At present, school-style Chinese ethnic-folk dance has become one of the most important aspects of dance education in the country.

At the same time as the school-style ethnic-folk dance was taking shape, the theoretical study of ethnic-folk dance was also being developed. Ethnic-folk dance is one way to demonstrate the homogeneous character of a state. As a result, theoretical research has often focused on the historical stability of ethnic-folk dances for the purpose of keeping people tightly linked as one group in the state. Such research can be divided into the following categories, each having a slightly

different focus.

The first category documents the forms of ethnic-folk dances. Most of these research projects concentrate on the characteristics of the form; analyzing the typical form and symbolic movements of specific ethnic-folk dances. Some of them also concentrate on changes in the symbolic movement, and the reasons for these changes. One of the most influential references in this category is *The Collection of Chinese Ethnic-folk Dance (Zhongguo Minzu Minjian Wudao Jicheng, 中国民族民间舞蹈集成)* published in 2000. The collection is organized into 30 volumes, with 52,500,000 Chinese characters and a great number of photos (as of Nov. 10, 2012, <http://www.whb-jch.cn/jicheng.asp?bigclassname=中国民族民间舞蹈集成>). It took numerous editors around twenty years to finish the whole collection. The primary intent of the collection was to record the ethnic-folk dances of all the nationalities in China, and to focus on not only the dance itself, but also the associated contexts where the dances have been practiced. The academic significance of this collection relates to the fact that ethnic-folk dances have been recorded at a particular moment, which enables comparison between dances performed in different contexts.

The second category is research publications dealing with the historical development of specific ethnic-folk dances. These studies provide information on the origins, interaction among cultures in contact, characteristics of dances in different historical periods, etc. E (额, 2011), the author of *Fan Dance: Cultural and Historical Change of Hani Nationality's Brown Fan Dance in Yang Street*,

Yuanjiang, Yunan Province (扇舞哀牢: 云南元江县羊街乡哈尼族棕扇舞文化历史变迁), has studied the historical development of the Brown Fan dance of the Hani people, providing the audience with historical information about the dance.

The third category includes research that focuses on the cultural meaning of specific ethnic-folk dances. Such research explains certain aspects of the cultural function of the dances. Zhang's (2009) publication, *Celebrating Festivals: Natures of Ritual and Non-ritual of Shandong Yangge (闹节: 山东三大秧歌的仪式性和反仪式性)* belongs to this category. Zhang investigated three types of *Yangge (秧歌)*, but only focused on the versions performed in contexts of celebrating festivals. She argued that the nature of both ritual uses and non-ritual uses existed in Shandong *Yangge (秧歌)* at the same time at various levels.

My Project

My dissertation topic will focus on the interaction between dances, their contexts and their meanings. I am interested in a wide range of creative factors that are involved in the dance-context interaction. I chose to investigate these factors by looking at the Peacock Dance, which originates in the Dai culture.

I am not the first person who researches the peacock dance. Zhang Shasha did research on stage peacock dance in her master thesis in 2007. Zhang's research questions were as follows: How can we protect ethnic-folk dance traditions as they undergo a process of modernization? How can we ease tensions between art and tradition? (p53). She chose six peacock dances to try answer

these questions. She considered that five of the dances, Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞), Peacock Dance (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞), Golden Peacock (Jinse De Kongque, 金色的孔雀), The Spirit of Peacock (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵), and Peacock flying over (Kongque Feilai 孔雀飞来) were successful modernized dance choreographies. The sixth one, Peacocks in Green Wave (Bibo Kongque, 碧波孔雀), was declared unsuccessful. She focused on the form of the six peacock dances, discussing her sense of which new choreographic elements made each dance successful or not. For example, her comments on the Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞) were that this was the first big change in the process of modernization of the peacock dance after the founding of the PRC. Compared to earlier traditional peacock dances, this performance became a complete stage dance with a beginning and an ending. The dance movements had no high artistic expression, but it kept original movements of peacock dance (p13). Zhang's focus remains choreologic: examining if each new choreography modernized the peacock dance and at the same time, kept the traditions of the dance. She provided suggestions about how to protect ethnic-folk dance traditions in the process of modernization. Her perspective is that of a professional trained dancer, searching for principles by which to choreograph successful stage ethnic-folk dances. She does not widen her perspective beyond the school-style, as an anthropologist or folklorist does.

As I elaborate below, I will write about eleven case studies and will focus on four different creative factors that have changed the peacock dance in diverse

situations - individual, community, nationality, and state.

Creative factors are the factors that actively influence the form/context/meaning of an ethnic-folk dance in certain ways. I name these factors as “creative factors” because they influence the creation of new characteristics of the ethnic-folk dances. Various factors can influence change in ethnic-folk dances, and the creative factors; individual, community, nationality, and state, are only four of them. Change in ethnic-folk dance usually happens under the influence of one or all four creative factors though each factor may be more or less active.

“Individual,” as a creative factor, is designed to explore how specific individuals change ethnic-folk dances. Individual decisions regarding how a dance manifests itself will be influenced by various complicated factors, such as his/her physical condition, personality, social role, life experience, cultural background, educational level, etc., leading to the alteration of ethnic-folk dance in certain ways. Sometimes the change brought about by a specific person can be huge.

“Community,” as a creative factor, is more about how communities can function as an important creative factor in changing Chinese ethnic-folk dance. Communities are smaller than nations and nationalities, as they are groups of people who can actually meet and interact with each other directly in a particular locality. When looking at the community-level influence on ethnic-folk dance, one can observe specific characteristics of the community members: language, life habits, age, gender, career, life experiences, religion, cultural background, location,

physical environment and so forth. Often, communities are held together through their common features and experiences. Also, the objective characteristics of a community play a role in influencing particular dances. These characteristics are social status, economics, political position, relationship with other communities, etc. These two aspects of a community shape it from both inside and outside, creating a specific balance in each case. Changes in this situation may cause changes in ethnic-folk dance performances.

“Nationality” is another important creative factor that influences the stability or change of ethnic-folk dances. Compared to the individual and community creative factors, nationality involves a greater degree of politics because it is more actively involved in creating cultures and identities. Nationality here could relate to a diasporic group that lives in a multicultural society like the U.S. or Canada, or an autochthonous cultural group that lives in a multicultural society like China, the former USSR, or many other countries. In my dissertation, I focus on the group which was named Dai during the Ethnic Classification Project and are from Yunnan province in China, when I talk about nationality as a creative factor.

“State” is the politically strongest among all four creative factors in influencing ethnic-folk dances. The main interest a state has in ethnic-folk dance is perhaps to maintain a strong political control of the country. By representing the country positively both to the insiders and the outsiders, ethnic-folk dance is one of the tools for a state to maintain its political dominance. Financial support (or lack of support) is the main way that a state controls and changes ethnic-folk dance. The result of change in China includes the following characteristics. The

dance is considered a professional dance if it is performed by professional dancers on stages. This dance is a completely different dance compared to the ethnic-folk dance in the local area from which it originates, but is considered as representative of the culture. Each type of ethnic-folk dance is highly symbolic of the culture, and, at the same time, presents mixed cultural features as well. The mixed features may include ballet, modern dance, Chinese drama, and the ethnic-folk culture itself. The dance is a nationally-known dance, and it is popular all over the country because of the state's political strategies.

The peacock dance is a traditional dance in the Dai culture. It is related to the Dai people's worship of peacocks, which are considered to be a divine bird in their culture (Liao 1994: 54; Zhang 2007: 13). The peacock dance was performed at many important events, such as religious ceremonies and festival celebrations. It is now one of the most famous ethnic-folk dances in the Dai nationality, and has become a representative dance of the Dai culture. In the practical world of Chinese ethnic-folk dance, there have been many versions of peacock dance between the 1940s and the 2010s, and almost all aspects of the dance have been altered. I choose eleven versions of peacock dances that have been created and performed during these seventy years. I will describe these dances and analyze the influence of the four different creative factors to see how some of the versions were developed under these influences.

My dissertation topic will demonstrate how a wide range of creative factors has influenced the creation process of an ethnic-folk dance through the interaction between dances and their historical and performative contexts. As I will elaborate

below, I will use the peacock dance that was practiced in its local places in the 1950s as a starting point, and then compare it with other versions of the dances that I collected.

Biography

I am a member of the Han nationality. I studied Chinese ethnic dance, both physically and theoretically, in dance schools for more than ten years before I came to Canada in 2008. I was committed to a career in dance studies in China which focused on the cultural implications of ethnic dance and the government's policies in this field. For my Master's degree, I studied Chinese ethnic-folk dance education in schools with the goal of improving the quality of this education. I became very aware that Chinese ethnic-folk dances in schools are not always "authentic," and that their meanings change in the school context. I have been involved in Chinese ethnic-folk dance in Edmonton, Alberta continually since I started my Ph.D. program in 2009. I am in an ideal position to look at Chinese ethnic-folk dance in different ways and in diverse contexts. I am very familiar with Chinese ethnic-folk dance in dance schools in China, and how the dance education system works. I now study in Canada, and have the opportunity to understand how people from outside of China look at China and Chinese culture, as well as how Chinese Canadian dance is experienced.

Methodology

My dissertation will involve a variety of research methods inspired by the

procedures summarized by Buckland (1999) and Kurath (1960) to conduct fieldwork in researching dance. My procedure included field work to observe and record data, as well as lab work to identify the structure, explanation of the style of dances, analysis of basic movements and steps, combinations of the various elements of the dance, and comparisons and conclusions. In sum, based on this procedure, my methodology featured two parts - fieldwork to collect data and lab work to analyze the data.

Collecting Data

The central methodology I used to collect data is fieldwork that includes participation in and observation of dances as well as interviews with the participants. Besides fieldwork, I also looked for data using online resources such as dance performances on Youtube, various secondary publications, and different archives in both Canada and China.

The main methodology in dance research is fieldwork, which has been developed and practiced in contemporary anthropological research for approximately one hundred years. Fieldwork is what dance researchers do to collect information about the object of investigation in its native location. The main point of participant observation is to be in the native location.. Malinowski (1922), the anthropologist who is often credited as elaborating most importantly on participant observation as a method, believed that it is very important for scholars to keep daily contact with their informants to truly understand their culture. Participation enables researchers to be an active part of the investigation. Through the process of engaging in field research, researchers can really get

involved in the community where the investigation takes place in order to get first-hand information.

Observation is used when researchers want to record a specific dance in its exact form. Interviews enable researchers to understand the experiences of others, which cannot be ascertained through observation, only through oral communication. Interviews provide effective access for researchers to understand the research participant's behavior and the meaning of the behavior in a specific context.

In addition to conducting fieldwork in local contexts, another important method for me was the use of technical equipment. The development of technology, such as cameras, computers, and the Internet have provided dance researchers with an efficient means to collect a wide range of data. By using technical equipment, researchers can collect more data in a short time. For example, I have collected various versions of the peacock dance which were performed in different times and in different locations around the world. Researchers are also able to provide audiences with clear images accompanied by literary analyses that enable audiences to better understand the whole academic work.

Analyzing Data

All data I collected was analyzed and compared using a framework of four creative factors - individual, community, nationality, and state. The order in which these four factors are presented is based on the level of political involvement. There is no definitive boundary between them as, most of the time, they have an

overlapping influence on ethnic-folk dance. The difference between them is how active a specific creative factor is visible in the forefront as the ethnic dance changes.

Structure of the Dissertation

In this first chapter, I have provided a brief introduction of my dissertation. I have introduced why I am interested in this topic, and explained my personal connection to this research. I then introduced theoretical support from various perspectives including anthropology, ethnochoreology, Chinese ethnicity, and Chinese ethnic dance. In addition, I provided an introduction to the methodology that will be used.

In the second chapter, I will describe the eleven versions of peacock dances that serve as core examples for the analysis. I will describe various aspects of the dances, such as the movements, formations, music, cultural meanings, social functions, performing locations, etc. I will also provide pictures to help the reader establish a clearer understanding about the dances.

Chapters 3-6 will each focus on one of the four creative factors: individual, community, nationality, and state. I will describe how the creative factors influence the peacock dance by comparing various versions.

The last chapter will be a conclusion, which will develop several key points about my research.

·Chapter 2 – The Eleven Peacock Dances: Some Basic Information

Introduction

I choose eleven performances of the peacock dance (Table 1) to serve as my case studies in this dissertation. The peacock dance is not a specific composition with settled music and movements, but the name of a category of folk dance from the Dai culture. The performances of peacock dance in the Dai culture are different from one dancer to another, and from one location to another (Liu 2004, Lü 2008, Li 2013). The “peacock dance” is a general name for all these different performances. There are some general characteristics of the peacock dance in the Dai culture, and such characteristics are the standards to recognize peacock dance. In addition, there are many performances of the peacock dance on stages or off stages and in different parts of the country and beyond. These performances, including the peacock dance performed by the Dai people, are very different in many ways (i.e. dancers, forms, music, costumes, performing environments, audiences, performing purposes, and so forth). However, they are all peacock dances and are thought of by many as representative of the Dai culture in various contexts. I choose these eleven dances out of numerous performances of the peacock dance to serve as my case studies because they feature significant influences on the development of peacock dance in various contexts. Some of the dancers developed the stage style of peacock dance that became a strong and influential dance type; some of the dancers developed a new style of peacock

dance and such style became leading style that influenced many other performances; others are transmitters of peacock dance that is certified by the national Intangible Cultural Heritage program which represented the development of the local peacock dance in the Dai area; and other versions of the dance were developed outside of China to represent Chinese culture.

In this chapter, I will introduce basic information about the peacock dance, such as the diverse reasons for its performances and locations, as well as information about dancers, costumes, dance movements, music, etc. to give a general idea about what the dances look like. Various comparisons will be made in later chapters to explain how the dances are changed or recreated by different creative factors. The information I introduce in this chapter will be helpful for understanding similarities and differences between the dances in later comparisons.

Dance #	Dance	Dancer	Time
Dance #1	The peacock dance by Mao Xiang (毛相)	Mao Xiang (毛相)	Before 1950
Dance #2	Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞)	Mao Xiang (毛相) Bai Wenfen (白文芬)	1956
Dance #3	Peacock Dance (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞)	The Central Ensemble of Songs and Dances (中央歌舞团)	1956
Dance #4	Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯与楠木诺娜)	Dao Meilan (刀美兰), Yang Liping	1956, 1963,

		(杨丽萍)	1979
Dance #5	Golden Peacock (Jinse De Kongque, 金色的孔雀)	Dao Meilan (刀美兰)	1981
Dance #6	The Spirit of Peacock (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵)	Yang Liping (杨丽萍)	1986/1989 2002 2003
Dance #7	Peacocks in Green Wave (Bibo Kongque, 碧波孔雀)	China National Song & Dance Ensemble (中国歌舞团)	2004
Dance #8	The Peacock Princess (Kongque Gongzhu, 孔雀公主)	Cindy Yang Dance Academy (Vancouver)	2010
Dance #9	The Love of Peacocks (Que Zhi Lian, 雀之恋)	Yang Liping (杨丽萍), Wang Dim (王迪)	2012
Dance #10	The peacock dance by Wang La (旺腊)	Wang La (旺腊)	2013
Dance #11	The peacock dance by Yue Xiang (约相)	Yue Xiang (约相)	2013

Table 1: Eleven versions of the peacock dance

Academic studies mainly explain the origin of peacock dance in two ways. The first one is typified by Yang Deyun (1985) who believes that peacock dance is popular in the Dai culture and is determined by the environment they live in. He believes that the peacock is popular not just for dance, but also for decoration in

the Dai culture. This has been a long time phenomenon because the peacock is one of the most beautiful and common animals in the Dai environment. Yang used a bronze figurine from ancient Dian Guo (滇国) (5th – 1st century BC), to support his argument. This bronze figurine might be a decoration and was made to look like a peacock (Figure 1). The location of ancient Dian Guo is around where the Dai people live in now. The bronze figurine demonstrates that the peacock has been important in the life of the people who lived in the same area as the Dai people live now, and these people might be the ancestors of the Dai people.



Figure 1: Peacock (Bronze figurine) from ancient Dian Guo (5th – 1st century BC)

(Retrieved December 12, 2015, from <http://toutiao.com/i5397048670/>)

The second way, which is also the most popular way to explain the origin of peacock dance, is that peacock dance originally derived from religious legends (Liao 1989; Li 1991; Su 1991; Jin 1995; Liu 2004; Liu 2005) It is believed that the origin of peacock dance was related to Hinayana Buddhism, the main religion in the Dai culture. According to Trimondi (1999), Hinayana Buddhism is the

second phase in the history of Buddhism:

“The history of Buddhism is normally divided into four phases, all of which found their full development in India. The first recounts the legendary life and teachings of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who bore the name Siddharta Gautama (c.560 B.C.E.–480 B.C.E.). The second phase, which begins directly following his death, is known as Theravada Buddhism. It is somewhat disparagingly termed Hinayana or the “Low Vehicle” by later Buddhist schools. The third phase has developed since the second century B.C.E., Mahayana Buddhism, or the “Great Vehicle”. Tantrism, or Tantrayana, arose in the fourth century C.E. at the earliest. It is also known as Vajrayana, or the “Diamond Vehicle.” (Trimondi 1999: <http://www.trimondi.de/SDLE/Part-1-01.htm>)

There are several legends in Hinayana Buddhism that describe how the peacock dance came into being. One of the legends is that the peacock dance originated from the believers’ worship of Mahamayuri (Kongque Ming Wang 孔雀明王, Figure 2), which is a Bodhisattva in Buddhism (Liu 2005: 70). Another of the legends portrays the peacocks as magic birds. The story about them relates that two devils came to the forest one day. The Buddha asked the peacocks to fight with the devils and to protect the other animals in the forest. The peacocks won the fight, all the animals danced to celebrate the win, and the peacock dance became popular afterwards (Su 1991: 23). There are several more legends that describe how the peacock dance relates to Buddhism, but that is not within the scope of this dissertation.



Figure 2: Mahamayuri

I believe that there is no real “origin” of the peacock dance with a clear time and location in the history. However, we still need to know what the general understanding is about the peacock dance. The first recording of the peacock dance was found in *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (*Xin Tang Shu*, 新唐书), which was completed in the Northern Song Dynasty (960 – 1127 A.D.) and is the official historical record of the Tang dynasty (618 – 907 A.D.). According to this book, a peacock dance was performed by a music and dance group that traveled to Chang’an (长安) from Biaoguo (骠国) in 802 A.D. (Zhang 2007: 6; Zhang 2006: 19). The purpose of the trip was to build good relations between Chang’an, the capital city of Tang dynasty, and Biaoguo, which was the kingdom around Yunnan (the province where the Dai people live nowadays). That the music and dance group from Biaoguo performed the peacock dance to people in Changan

demonstrates that people from Biaoguo (the Dai's ancestors) considered the peacock dance as a representative dance of themselves. The book is evidence that peacock dance has been performed for at least 1300 years. We do not really know much about the peacock dance from 1300 years ago, and it may not have been similar to the peacock dance of the 1950s or the 2010s. However we know that at least the name and perhaps some other elements of the dance have existed for a long time in Dai culture.

Dance #1: The peacock dance by Mao Xiang (毛相) before 1950

In this section, I will introduce the peacock dance as performed by Mao Xiang (毛相) in the Ruili (瑞丽) area in Yunnan (云南) province before 1950 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) started governing this area (Lü 2008: 125). If I have to identify an original peacock dance for later comparisons, the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang before 1950 will be the one I use in this dissertation. Changes have surely happened over time to the dance since the first recording of the peacock dance in 800 A.D, but I chose the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang before 1950 as the "original dance" because this dance serves as a useful foundation for many variants that were performed later. We don't know much about the specific form of the dance just before this time, but do have some information on his performances. I believe that the peacock dance has gone through many changes for complex reasons as time went on, and we cannot know anything about any original version that existed at the beginning. However, I will treat this version of the peacock dance as the "original" dance to serve for

various comparisons to support my argument.

Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950 is important for this study for the following two reasons. Mao Xiang (Figure 3) was born in 1922, and he had become a famous peacock dancer at Ruili by the early 1950s. In addition, he was one of the people who started moving peacock dances onto stages, started choreographing stage peacock dances with the government's support, and his dance before 1950 was the basis for various peacock dances that were developed later. In addition, Mao Xiang taught many dancers who later became famous stage peacock dancers. The process of change that the state made to the peacock dance started with him. This dissertation focuses primarily on the changes in the peacock dance that have happened since PRC was founded, and Mao Xiang played an important role in beginning this process. Unfortunately, I could not find any film recordings of Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950. The information below that I will introduce comes from my interviews with Mao Xiang's students, as well as written records from various articles.



Figure 3: Mao Xiang (毛相)

The peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang before 1950 was mostly performed for religious festivals and activities (Lü 2008: 53). At that time, Mao Xiang's peacock dance was mainly performed in the squares outside of temples, lawns, simply built stages, or some person's house (Lü 2008: 57). Religious festivals or activities were usually organized at temples or golden pagodas (pagodas with a roof that is covered by golden coat). The peacock dance was performed, with many other kinds of performance, on the streets (like a parade) when people walked to the temples or golden pagodas from various villages. They then gathered around a temple or golden pagoda to perform the peacock dance, and many other kinds of performance, sometimes throughout the whole night (Liu: 1983, Lü: 2008, Li: 2012). Lü said that performing teams existed in various villages, and Mao Xiang and his performing team came from Hui Ha Zhai (回哈寨, zhai means village, Hui Ha was the name of the village). Performing teams from various villages gathered together and performed for religious activities and sometimes they competed with each other for improving their reputation (Lü 2008:

58). The dance still had rich religious meaning because most of the Dai festivals that include the peacock dance were related to Hinayana, but the dance also grew in secular significance. Also, Lü mentioned that Mao Xiang saw a peacock dance performance at a wedding, which means that the dance was performed in a variety of contexts before Mao Xiang started dancing (Lü 2008: 31).

Mao Xiang became a famous peacock dancer because he fulfilled the two requirements for people who wanted to be a good peacock dancer before 1950. First of all, peacock dancers had to be males. Females were not allowed to perform peacock dances because they did not have a high enough status in Hinayana Buddhism. Jin reported that females were forbidden to attend religious ceremonies in Dai religions (Jin 2000: 72). According to my interview with Ma Wenjing (马文静), a female performer, who grew up in the Dai area in Yunnan and has been studying and choreographing Dai dances since the 1950s, females' low social status can also be seen through the fact that they were not allowed to sit and eat with guests at the dining table. In this case, it is not surprising that females were forbidden to perform religious peacock dances.

Secondly, Mao Xiang had been studying technical movements from Dai martial arts, which provided him with extra abilities to be a good peacock dancer. For instance, one of Mao Xiang's famous characteristics as a peacock dancer was his nimble eye movements. He was able to move his eyes faster than other peacock dancers because his martial arts teacher, Wai Gong (外巩), asked him specifically to practice using his eyes. According to Lü, the way he practiced using his eyes was first to stare at clouds without blinking for longer and longer,

and then looking at raindrops individually during a rain storm. This is a technique studied by people who learn Dai martial arts, but Mao Xiang also used it in his peacock dance (Lü 2008: 86).

I could not find any video recordings or photos of Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950. The movements I will introduce in this section are described in previous research on the peacock dance. Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950 contained the following characteristics. First of all, his peacock dance was a solo dance, which had certain patterns, fixed steps and positions, and specific drum accompaniment. The patterns, fixed steps and positions were mostly in imitation of a peacock's movements and mannerisms such as peeking and checking, walking in forests, playing around lakes, chasing and playing with each other, drinking water, and so forth. I do not know if he created the patterns or he learned the patterns from his masters, but the patterns have been inherited by some of his students. Similar patterns have been seen in the following dance examples. Secondly, he finished all his movements using a continuous rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees. Thirdly, as I have mentioned above, Mao Xiang's performance is famous for his eye movements, which comes from his training in Dai martial arts (Liao 1989, Zhang 2007, Lü 2008, Li 2012). The video link in the Table 2 is the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang's son, Yi Tuan (依团), in the 2013 New Year's celebration on a China Central Television (CCTV). As my interviewees told me, Yi Tuan's performance is not as good as his father, and not as complicated as his father's either, but the video will provide us with some idea of the peacock dances that was performed before 1950 by Mao Xiang.

Mao Xiang wore a special costume for his peacock dance before 1950. Unfortunately, I could not find any photos that show it. Due to the quality of the photo, I believe that the photograph in Figure 3 was taken after 1950, and it is showing Mao Xiang doing a peacock dance on a stage. He stopped using the traditional costume after he started performing the peacock dance on stage.

The costume included three important parts: a golden crown, a mask, and a tail. The golden crown was shaped like a tall pagoda. The mask was painted like a Bodhisattva, which demonstrates the close relationship between peacock dance and Hinayana Buddhism. The third part of the costume for the peacock dance was a big peacock tail, which was made of bamboo and silk cloth. Peacock eyes were painted on the silk cloth as decoration, and the cloth was put on a bamboo frame shaped to represent a peacock's tail. The dancer used string tied from the tail to his arms and wrists so that he could control it (Zhou: 1988, Jin: 1990, Liu: 2005, Chen: 2007) (Figure 4).

Unfortunately, I couldn't find any pictures to show what Mao Xiang's costume before 1950s looked like. Figure 4 was the only clear picture I found that shows this kind of costume. I found this picture on a local newspaper of Yunnan, Spring City Evening (春城晚报), which was published in 2011. The newspaper didn't explain why the dancer in the picture did peacock dance. The main focus of the article with this picture was to introduce what "traditional" peacock dance looks like. It also introduced that the dance in the picture was from an autonomous county called Meng Lian (Retrieved August 26, 2016, from http://ccwb.yunnan.cn/html/2011-03/07/content_299480.htm). Even though

Figure 4 is not exactly Mao Xiang's costume before 1950, it provides us with an idea about what his costume most likely looked like.



Figure 4: Costume for peacock dance

The last aspect of Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950 that I will introduce is the music. Before 1950, the peacock dance was accompanied only by percussion, such as Xiangjiao drum (象脚鼓), Mang luo (铙锣), and Cha (钹), and there was no melody (Lü: 2008, Li: 2012). Melodic instruments started being involved in peacock dance after 1950. However, because of the importance of the ICH program values in settings to emphasize maintenance of the “original” dance, local peacock dancers only used percussion to accompany their dances again in various contexts during my field research in Yunnan in 2013, (see dances ten and eleven described below).

Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950 was rich with religious meanings. Such religious meanings were reflected in many aspects of the dance such as the reasons for performing, the locations, and the costume. The dance was performed on the streets, at temples, or in city squares to celebrate religious festivals or ceremonies. The dancer was one male who had received special training. There was a specially made costume, established movements and positions for the dance, and it was accompanied by Dai style percussion instruments (Table 2).

Time	Before 1950
Where	Streets; Squares; Temples; Around pagoda; people's houses;
Why	Celebrating religious festivals and ceremonies; Personal event such as weddings or birthday parties for seniors;
Dancer	Male solo; Local trained by both peacock dance teacher, Man Xiang (曼相), and Dai kongfu teacher, Wai Gong (外巩) at Ruili;
Move ments	Certain patterns, fixed steps and positions on imitating a peacock's movements such as peeking and checking, walking in forests, playing around lakes, chasing and playing with another peacock, shaking shoulders, drinking water, etc. Continual rhythmic bending and straightening of knees; Nimble eye movements;
Costu me	Golden crown; Mask with Bodhisattva's face; Peacock's tale made of bamboo and silk cloth;
Music	Xiangjiao drum; Mang luo; Cha
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HyMIMvyY-4&index=9&list=PLDFZ8KIyNC_4Y2fhZ7DgasQ-aIxc03Mav

Table 2: Information of peacock dance in Yunnan around 1949

Dance #2: Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞)

The second peacock dance I want to introduce is called *Duet Peacock Dance* (*Shuangren Kongque Wu*, 双人孔雀舞). *Duet Peacock Dance* was a stage peacock dance that was performed first in 1956. This dance was especially choreographed and performed at a gala organized by the Chinese government to celebrate and promote the friendship between China and Burma. It was a very high-level political event, and the premiers from both China and Burma attended the gala. In 1957 the *Duet Peacock Dance* was also selected as one of the representative dances to attend the sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow. It won the silver medal at the festival, which made the dance famous throughout China and internationally.

Duet Peacock Dance was performed by Mao Xiang (毛相) and a female dancer, Bai Wenfen (白文芬). Mao Xiang was also the choreographer of this dance. Mao Xiang started working partly as a professional choreographer and dancer after 1950 when the government of PRC started governing the Dai area, and became an official member of the Central Dance and Song Ensemble (Zhongyang Gewu Tuan, 中央歌舞团) in Beijing from 1953 until 1956. He went back to De Hong, a district in Yunnan where he grew up, to help with building the De Hong Song and Dance Ensemble (德宏州歌舞团) (Lü 2008: 125). He created *Duet Peacock Dance* there and the dance remained a part of his repertoire. Teaching students was one of Mao Xiang's jobs after he started his dance career, and Bai Wenfen was his student at that time. Thus she was one of the first few female

dancers who started doing the peacock dance on stage.

I will introduce the movements of *Duet Peacock Dance* in this paragraph. Unfortunately, I could not find any video recordings of the dance. The information below came from the previous research on the peacock dance. The movements of *Duet Peacock Dance* were mainly developed from Mao Xiang's male duet peacock dance in the late 1940s, as well as movements from other ethnic-folk dances (Lü: 2008, Li: 2012). Firstly, Lü mentioned that Mao Xiang had choreographed and performed a duet peacock dance, which was performed by Mao Xiang and another male dancer, in the late 1940s. Lü described the movements of this dance:

One beautiful peacock flew down from a hill, and he was combing his feathers. He was looking for food and water until he found a clean lake. The peacock flew to the hill happily to call his friend. His friend, another peacock, flew out, and they danced with each other beside the lake. They saw themselves mirrored in the lake, playing with each other, and drinking water. They used beautiful positions and movements to express shaking wings, dragging wings, and drying wings in the sun. They spread their wings and flew into a tree freely in the new rising sun. They spread their tails, and flew back to the green forest. (Lü 2008: 122)

Lü mentioned that Mao Xiang choreographed *Duet Peacock Dance* on the basis of this dance. She said that the main change for the new dance was in the relationship between the two peacocks. The dance in the late 1940s was performed by two male dancers, but *Duet Peacock Dance* was performed by a

male and a female dancer. Therefore, the relationship between the two peacocks in the dance changed from friendship to love. Consequently, communicating movements between the two peacocks also changed. *Duet Peacock Dance* presented a love story between a male and a female peacock, and the context of the dance was two peacocks playing beside a lake. The dance focused on painting a beautiful picture of a love story more than religious meanings. Except for this change, two of the characteristics of the duet peacock dance in the late 1940s had been preserved in *Duet Peacock Dance*. These are the continuous rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees and the imitation of the peacock's movements. The names in quotation marks in the description were the names of the positions and movements of the dance. As I have mentioned in Dance #1, fixed positions and movements for the imitation of a peacock's movements is one of characteristics of Mao Xiang's version before 1950. Secondly, Mao Xiang added some movements from other ethnic-folk dances to *Duet Peacock Dance*. He learned these dances when he was working as a dancer in the Central Ensemble of National Minorities Songs and Dances (中央民族歌舞团) in Beijing from 1953 to 1956. This ensemble was built for representing various nationalities within China and dancers from various nationalities were selected to work there. They received professional dance training and performed and taught their own ethnic dance to others. The dance movements from other nationalities that Mao Xiang learned and added to his *Duet Peacock Dance* included shoulder movements from Mongolian dance, hand movements from Bai dance, and head movements from Uyghur dance.

According to the only two photos (Figure 5 & 6) I found of *Duet Peacock Dance*, Mao Xiang used Dai traditional clothing as the costume. He gave up the special costume for the peacock dance from the religious and festival environment (Dance #1) at this time.



Figure 5: *Duet Peacock Dance* (*Shuangren Kongque Wu*, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)



Figure 6: *Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)*

The last aspect of *Duet Peacock Dance* that I want to discuss is its music. Lü mentioned that Mao Xiang still used traditional percussion instruments to accompany *Duet Peacock Dance*. The focus of the music was rhythm. The dance was structured by changing tempos and rhythms. The half of the instrument that is on the extreme left in the Figure 5 is the Xiangjiao Gu (象脚鼓). An expert on percussion instruments from the Yunnan Song and Dance Ensemble, Zhang Baorong (张宝荣), was selected to accompany *Duet Peacock Dance* in Moscow (Lü 2008: 132).

Duet Peacock Dance was a staged peacock dance that was performed by a male and a female dancer. The dance was first performed to celebrate the friendship between China and Myanmar, and then was selected as a representative dance of China to attend an international event. The dance was developed from Mao Xiang's earlier duet peacock dance. The costume was changed from the

traditional peacock dance, but the music seems to have been maintained (Table 3).

Time	The first performance was 1956; Received the silver medal in the Sixth World Youth Festival in 1957;
Where	Stages
Why	Performed at the gala for celebrating the friendship between China and Myanmar; Attending the sixth World Youth Festival (世界青年联欢节)
Dancer	Mao Xiang (毛相); Bai Wenfen (白文芬)
Movements	Continually rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees; Imitating peacocks' movement; and other more generic dance movements (as in the photo). Movements from other ethnic-folk dances;
Costume	Dai traditional clothing;
Music	Xiangjiao drum; Mang lu; Cha;
Video link	

Table 3: Information of *Duet Peacock Dance (Shuangren Kongque Wu, 双人孔雀舞, 1956)*

Dance #3: Peacock Dance (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞)

This third *Peacock Dance* is a stage dance that was choreographed by Jin Ming (金明) in 1956. The reason Jin Ming choreographed this work was to attend a national performance of joint nationalities. One year later, the dance was selected to attend the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow as a representative dance of China and obtained a gold medal (Tian: 2008). The dance became a famous dance in the professional community because of this prize.

Peacock Dance was performed by a group of female dancers. Both g and all

the dancers were from the Central Ensemble of Song and Dance (中央歌舞团) and were all professionally trained. Jin Ming used all female dancers because he believed that females were more suitable to perform the peacock dance. He believed that females are better at presenting the peacock's internal elegance than males. More importantly, it was the time when cultural changes in exhibiting female bodies took place. This cultural change and Jin Ming's background in classical ballet influenced him to make the decision to use all female dancers.

Jin Ming mixed three dance styles in *Peacock Dance*. The first style was from Mao Xiang. Jin Ming was of the Han nationality. He went to Dehong (德宏), where Mao Xiang lived at the time, and stayed there for a few months to learn the peacock dance from him before he choreographed his *Peacock Dance*. Both of the two main characteristics of Mao Xiang's style can be seen clearly in *Peacock Dance*. One characteristic is that all the movements are based on a continually rhythmic bending and straightening of knees. Another characteristic is that most of the movements focus on vividly imitating the peacock's various movements and postures, such as opening the tail, going downhill, drinking water, taking a bath, flying, and so on. The second important influence is derived from other types of Dai dances such as Gayang (嘎秧). Gayang was a simple Dai dance which contained a series of movements. The movements were developed from Dai people's farmer life such as planting, fertilizing, and harvesting, etc. The main feature of Gayang is rhythmic straightening and bending of the knees with various postures (Liu: 2010). The third style came from Jin Ming's own background. He was a professional dancer and choreographer and received training in ballet and

Chinese classic dance. Some movements from ballet and Chinese classic dance were used in *Peacock Dance*. Under the influences from the Soviet Union's stage folk dance, such combinations were considered a positive change in the 1950s. In addition to the movements, various formations were used to present a series of beautiful images.

Jin Ming used a specially designed costume for *Peacock Dance*. The costume included two parts. The top part was a light blue doublet with long sleeves, which shows a clear reference to the Dai symbolic costume. The second part was a light blue long skirt with a wide hem, which was decorated with shapes symbolizing peacock's eyes (Figure 7). The shape of the skirt is similar to the Dai traditional skirt for females, but the width of the skirt is much wider than the traditional one. In addition, a hair accessory was also included in the costume to imitate small feathers on peacocks' heads.



Figure 7. *Peacock Dance* (Kongque Wu, 孔雀舞, 1957)

The music of *Peacock Dance* was an especially composed piece. The music has a clear A-B-A structure with three parts of adagio–allegro–adagio. The accompanying instruments are Chinese traditional instruments like the Di (笛) the Xiao (箫), the Suo Na (唢呐), and the Dai traditional instruments (Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓), Mang (钹), and Luo (锣)) (Zhang 2007: 14).

Peacock Dance is a stage peacock dance performed by a group of professionally trained female dancers. The dance has specially designed costumes and music, and carefully choreographed movements and formulations. The dance won the sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow (世界青年联欢节), and has had a good reputation in the field of professional ethnic folk dance since the late 1950s (Table 4).

Time	1956; 1957
Where	Stage;
Why	National joint performance of professional music and dance groups; Performed at the sixth World Youth Festival Moscow (世界青年联欢节);
Dancer	Female; group dance; professional trained;
Movements	Mao Xiang's style; other Dai dances; Ballet;
Costume	Hair accessory with a peacock feather; blue; long-sleeved doublet in Dai's style; long skirt with wide hem; bottom of the skirt was decorated with peacock's tail eyes;
Music	Especially composed music; Adagio-allegro-adagio; Traditional instrument orchestra;

Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3dGwRaRsWc
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Table 4. Peacock Dance (孔雀舞, 1957)

Dance #4: Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯与楠木诺娜)

Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (召树屯与楠木诺娜) was a stage dance performance that was choreographed to represent the Dai culture. It was choreographed on the basis of a well-known Dai folktale by the same name. The folktale tells of a love story between a prince (Zhaoshutun), and a princess (Nanmunuona) peacock. Both the choreographer and dancers were from the Song and Dance Ensemble of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture (Yunnan Sheng Xishuangbanna Daizu Zizhizhou Wengongtuan, 云南省西双版纳傣族自治州文工团). There are three versions of this dance which were performed first in 1956 in Yunnan, then in 1963 in Yunnan, and finally in 1979 in Beijing. The 1956 version was a dance piece that was named *By the Golden Lake (Jinhu Bian, 金湖边)*, which represented how Zhaoshutun and Nanmunuona first met each other. The 1963 version was a short dance with five acts re-choreographed based on the 1956 version. More content was added in this version to represent a relatively complete story. The 1979 version featured seven acts, based on the previous two versions and was the most complete and influential. The 1979 version won the first prize for choreography and the second prize for its performance in the dance competition organized for celebrating the 30th anniversary of PRC (Qing: 1982, Yu: 2003).

Many male and female dancers were involved in the performance of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*. The most famous dancers were the two female dancers who both performed the role of the princess peacock. Dao Meilan (刀美兰) is called the first generation of the princess peacock for her performance in the 1956 version. She received professional dance training when she started working as a dancer in a local song and dance ensemble in Yunnan. She was transferred from a local song and dance ensemble to a national song and dance ensemble because of her excellent performance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*.

The second dancer was Yang Liping (杨丽萍) who is still the most famous peacock dancer in both China and the world. She successfully performed the princess peacock in the 1979 version and then had the opportunity to transfer to a national song and dance ensemble as well. She then performed on CCTV in 1989 and became the most famous peacock dancer in all of China.

The basic story of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* is that they met each other beside the Golden Lake (金湖) and fell in love. When they were just about to get married, Zhaoshutun was sent to a war by his father, the king. A sorcerer told the king that Nanmunuona was bad luck and would bring the war to the kingdom, so the king was convinced to kill Nanmunuona. Nanmunuona escaped and went back to her kingdom of peacocks. After he won the war and came back to the kingdom, Zhaoshutun killed the sorcerer and went to look for Nanmunuona. Zhaoshutun and Nanmunuona were eventually married and lived happily ever after. The choreographer of the dance used dance movements to present the whole story.

There are various dances in the dance, such as the peacock dance, the Xiangjiao drum dance (象脚鼓舞), the fist dance (拳舞), the horse and deer dance (马鹿舞), the straw hat dance (笠帽舞), and so forth. In the following discussion, I will focus just on the peacock dance for later comparison. I will focus on the 1979 version because it is the most influential one.

Movement analysis of the dance is very important, but unfortunately I have not been able to find any video of this dance. The following discussion is based on previous research about this dance. The movements of the peacock dance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* in the 1979 version came from three sources. The first was the 1956 version of the peacock dance (Dance #3). The second source was the peacock dance from Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar (then Burma) and Cambodia. As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, the area on both sides of the border between Myanmar and China share a common cultural background. In addition, people from both sides have had a long tradition of trading and cultural communication. The third source was Chinese classical dance and ballet. Even though Mao Xiang started a process of changing the peacock dance in the 1950s, his change was more about adding something new to his own dance because his professional dance training was limited. Professional choreographers mixed more Chinese classical dance and ballet into the peacock dance in Dance #3, *Peacock Dance*, and this was increased again in Dance #4. For example, *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* was developed from a simple peacock dance to a dance performance with many acts. The structure of the overall composition was strongly influenced by ballet (Qing: 1982, Yu: 2003). Later in this dissertation, I

will explore the significance of this dance as it was performed by Yang Liping (杨丽萍), and that the style became a source for her solo peacock dance a few years later.

The costumes for *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* were specially designed stage dance costumes. The costume of the princess peacock in the 1979 version represented the dress that Dai ladies wear in their daily lives. For example, Dai ladies' daily wear usually includes two parts, a top and a narrow long skirt. The costume includes both of these two parts. In Dai ladies' daily wear, the length of the top is usually only to the waist and the top is also tightly fitted. In the costume, the top part reaches only to waist as well, and also closely trimmed. The difference which made the costume a dance costume instead of daily wear is the design on the skirt. The bottom part of the costume is a long skirt with a gradient from yellow to green. The bottom of the skirt is decorated with peacock eyes like spots to imitate a peacock's tail. The shape of the skirt is similar to the traditional Dai female's skirt but much wider. Figure 8 is a picture of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* of 1979 version (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from <http://news.ilinyi.net/2015/0704/68784.shtml#g68784=9>). It shows the idea of what the costume looked like.



Figure 8: *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* (召树屯和楠木诺娜 1979)

The music of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*, like its version of the peacock dance, is also a mix of elements from various sources. These various sources are: Zanha music (赞哈音乐, originating in the Dai culture and representing Dai folk music), temple chant (Fosi Yongchang, 佛寺咏唱), Dai drama elements, traditional music from the Dai king's former palace, and modern music. In addition, the musical instrument Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓) is emphasized because it is the most typical, traditional instrument that is used to accompany the peacock dance. Most of the solo dances of the princess peacock are accompanied by Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓) (Chen: 2007).

In general, from the perspective of the government and professional choreographers, *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* represented the highest level of Dai stage dance of the time. It is a high-level artistic work, which contains various styles of dance, music, and drama. Through it, two female dancers became nationally renowned peacock dancers and many others became well known. It is a milestone in the history of the Dai dance at the professional dance level (Table 5).

Time	1956; 1963; 1979;
Where	Stage;
Why	Performed at the gala for celebrating the friendship between China and Myanmar in 1956; Celebrating the 10 th anniversary of Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture (西双版纳自治州) in 1963; Celebrating the 30 th anniversary of PRC in 1979;
Dancer	Dao Meilan (刀美兰); Yang Liping (杨丽萍)
Movements	Mixed with the movements of the peacock dance in the 1956 version, peacock dance from Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar and Cambodia, and Chinese classical dance.
Costume	Hair accessory with a peacock feather; light yellow; long-sleeved doublet in Dai's style; long skirt with wide hem; the bottom of the skirt was dedicated as peacock's tail;
Music	Mix of various sources such as Zanha music (赞哈音乐, Dai folk music), temple chant (佛寺咏唱), Dai drama, traditional music from the Dai king's former palace, and modern music. Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓)
Video link	

Table 5: *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* (召树屯和楠木诺娜 1956, 1963, 1979)

Dance #5: Golden Peacock (Jinse De Kongque, 金色的孔雀)

Golden Peacock is a solo peacock dance performed on stages. The dance was first performed in 1978 to celebrate the 29th anniversary of the PRC in Beijing. Later, in 1980, the dance was selected to be performed at the first National Dance Competition (第一届全国舞蹈比赛), and won the first prize in performance. The dancer of *Golden Peacock* was Dao Meilan (刀美兰), who is recognized as the

first generation of princess peacocks because of her performance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (Dance #4)* in 1956. Dao Meilan is of Dai nationality and was born in Yunnan. She was selected to work as a dancer in Xishuangbanna Ethnic Art Troupe (西双版纳自治州民族文工队). She learned the peacock dance with Mao Xiang and, at the same time, received professional dance training with other dance teachers in the troupe. She was later transferred to Provincial Song and Dance Troupe of Yunnan (云南省歌舞团) in 1959, and then was transferred to the Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble (东方歌舞团) in Beijing at the recommendation of Zhou Enlai in 1961. She is a dancer who has been trained both locally and professionally.

Golden Peacock painted a beautiful picture in which a golden peacock is waking up, playing around, and flying in a forest. Dao Meilan developed three representative movements in her *Golden Peacock*. The first movement was a hand gesture, which was used to imitate a peacock's head by pinching thumb and forefinger together and stretching the other three fingers (hand gesture in Figure 9). This hand gesture became famous after Dao Meilan used it, and became highly symbolic of the peacock after Yang Liping (杨丽萍) also used it in her solo peacock dance, *The Spirit of Peacock (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵 Dance #6)*. It will be mentioned many times later in this dissertation, therefore, I will henceforth call it the peacock-head gesture.

In addition to the peacock-head gesture, Dao Meilan, as Mao Xiang's student, also inherited Mao Xiang's characteristics such as imitating peacock's movements.

Such movements included walking in forests, playing around lakes, and shaking shoulders. The second movement was moving the arms to imitate a peacock flying. This movement came from Mongolian dance. One dance that represents Mongolian culture is the wild goose dance, and moving arms to imitate a wild goose flying is a very typical movement. The choreographer studied and mixed this movement into the *Golden Peacock* to represent a peacock flying (Zhang: 2007).

The third movement was the eye movements, which look very similar to the typical eye movements from traditional Indian dance. As I have mentioned, Mao Xiang has eye movements in his peacock dance. I do not know what Mao Xiang's eye movements looked like because I could not find any video of Mao Xiang's peacock dance. However, if I compared Dao Meilan's eye movements with Indian eye movements, there could be many similarities between them such as moving head and eyes along with music left and right. In addition, According to Xue, it is a tradition in the Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble (东方歌舞团) that performers learn various dances from many countries, especially Asian countries. This tradition started even before the ensemble was officially established in 1961. In 1955, two dancers from Beijing Dance Academy (北京舞蹈学院), who became the main performers and teachers later in the ensemble, were selected to learn dance in India, Burma, and Pakistan.

The ensemble was established in 1961 and the two dancers were transferred from the Beijing Dance Academy to the ensemble to work as teachers. More performers were needed at that time and this is when Dao Meilan was transferred

to the ensemble. (Xue 2013: 7-8). Dao Meilan studied different dance styles from many countries (e.g. Myanmar, Thailand, India, Japan, and African countries) when she was working as a professional dancer in the Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble (东方歌舞团). The eye movements in her dance are inspired from eye movements in the dances of India (Jin: 1995).

The costume of *Golden Peacock* is also a stage dance costume that was specially designed for this dance. The costume design was based on the costumes of previous peacock dances. The top is a green, narrow, and half-sleeved top, and the bottom is a golden, long skirt. It is similar to the costume of previous peacock dances in that the bottom of the skirt designed to imitate a peacock's tail (Figure 9). Interestingly, the costume contains less Dai style than the costumes of previous peacock dances.



Figure 9. Golden Peacock (金色的孔雀, 1978, 1980)

The music of *Golden Peacock* is a specially composed piece with a clear

structure of adagio–allegro–adagio. More western modern instruments were added to accompany the dance.

Golden Peacock is a stage peacock dance with a new style which mixes together influences from Mao Xiang's peacock dance, dance from other nationalities within China, and dance from other countries. Some of the movements from this dance started being considered by people from outside of the Dai culture, especially by professional dance choreographers and performers, as symbols of the peacock dance because of its popularity (Table 6).

Time	1978, 1980,
Where	Stage;
Why	Celebrating the 29 th anniversary of PRC in 1978 Performing at the first National Dance Competition in 1980;
Dancer	Female; Solo; Both local and professional trained;
Costume	Design based on the costume of previous peacock dances; Green, narrow, and half-sleeved top; Long, golden skirt with wide hem; Bottom of the skirt was decorated like a peacock's tail;
Representative Movements	The peacock-head gesture; Arm movements to imitate a peacock flying; Eye movements;
Music	Adagio-allegro-adagio; More modern accompanying instruments;
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnFAQm5xPlc

Table 6. *Golden Peacock* (金色的孔雀, 1978, 1980)

Dance #6: The Spirit of Peacock (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵)

The Spirit of Peacock is a solo stage peacock dance. It was choreographed and first performed by Yang Liping (杨丽萍) in 1986. She choreographed it to be performed at the second National Dance Competition and received the first prize in both choreography and performance. The dance became nationally famous after she performed it at a TV gala organized by CCTV to celebrate Chinese New Year in 1989. The annual TV gala for celebrating Chinese New Year that is organized by CCTV is the most influential program in China. The audience rating in the 1980s went up to 94% of the population. It is not surprising that Yang Liping and her *The Spirit of Peacock* became nationally renowned right after she performed on CCTV. Yang Liping re-choreographed *The Spirit of Peacock* later in 2002 and 2003. I will focus on the 1986/1989 version in this section, and will introduce the other two versions later when I make comparisons between the various versions of *The Spirit of Peacock* to explain how an individual can change ethnic-folk dance.

Yang Liping received professional dance training in a local song and dance ensemble in Yunnan and a national song and dance ensemble. She started her dance career by dancing in a local song and dance ensemble in Yunnan. She is praised as the second generation of princess peacocks because she performed the princess peacock successfully in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* in the 1979 version. She was elevated to a national song and dance ensemble, the Central Ensemble of National Minorities Songs and Dances (中央民族歌舞团), in Beijing where she

choreographed and performed *The Spirit of Peacock*.

Two movements from *The Spirit of Peacock* became reinforced as symbolic movements of stage peacock dance after it was performed. The first movement was the peacock-head gesture. This gesture was especially emphasized and repeated many times in the dance with various gestures, postures, and movements. Yang Liping used long, fake fingernails to emphasize the gesture, which made the gesture more vivid in imitating the peacock's head (Figure 10). Another main movement in this dance was a continually wavy movement. This movement was not only used vertically from the dancer's shoulders all the way to fingertips, but also horizontally from the dancer's waist to her upper body. Such wavy movement was small, quick, and required flexibility. Yang Liping focused on representing a peacock as an elegant bird from a fantasy world, and both of these movements have contributed to this focus. Because of the high audience rating of the TV gala, these two movements became symbols of stage peacock dance for the general population of China after *The Spirit of Peacock*.



Figure 10: The peacock-head gesture in *the Spirit of Peacock*

The costume for *The Spirit of Peacock* was a white dress. The top part of the

costume was a tight fitting tank top. The skirt was a long skirt with a wide hem, and the bottom of the skirt was decorated like a peacock's tail as in many of the previous peacock dances (except for #2). In addition, similar with Dance #3, a peacock feather was used as the hair accessory. (Figure 11).



Figure 11. The Spirit of Peacock (雀之灵, 1986, 1989)

The music for *The Spirit of Peacock* in 1986/1989 was a specially composed piece. The overall structure of the music is the familiar A-B-A structure with adagio-allegro-adagio. The instruments that are used to perform the music include traditional Han Chinese instruments, as well as a cucurbit flute, a representative Dai traditional instrument. In addition, recorded sounds like birds singing and the sound of running river water were added to the music.

The Spirit of Peacock was a solo female stage peacock dance. Since it almost instantly became a nationally renowned peacock dance, it is many people's main source for understanding Dai dance and Dai culture. It is also a new style of stage peacock dance, which has influenced the development of both stage peacock

dance and peacock dance in the local environment (Table 7).

Time	1986; 1989;
Where	Stage; TV gala;
Why	Second National Dance Competition; Chinese New Year Gala on CCTV;
Dancer	Yang Li Ping Solo; Professional trained
Costume	White; Tank top; Long skirt with wide hem; Bottom of the skirt decorated like peacock's tail; Hair accessory with peacock feather; Long nails;
Movements	The peacock-head gesture; Continually wavy movements from the shoulders all the way to the fingertips, and from the waist to the upper body; Fast gyration;
Music	Adagio-allegro-adagio structure; Han instruments such as Guzheng (古筝), Pipa (琵琶); Cucurbit flute; recordings of birds singing and the sounds of river water
Video link	1989: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_emMEITl1lo 2002: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLm-9Fry8y4 2003: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcFWqLEL7GE

Table 7. The Spirit of Peacock (雀之灵, 1986, 1989)

Dance #7: Peacocks in Green Wave (Bibo Kongque, 碧波孔雀)

Peacocks in Green Wave was first performed in 2004 by the China National Song & Dance Ensemble (中国歌舞团). It was a stage peacock dance performed by a group of female dancers. Both the choreographer and dancers were professionally trained. It is in contrast to the dances I have mentioned above in that it was made for commercial purposes instead of for competitions or festivals.

The movements in *Peacocks in Green Waves* include a mixture of Dai dance, belly dance, and jazz. The peacock-head gesture was kept in *Peacocks in Green Waves*, but was not emphasized, but the following two movements are emphasized. Firstly, the main movement in the dance was continually fast moving rib cages. Secondly, fast moving and swirling hips was also a main movement in *Peacocks in Green Waves*. To emphasize the fast moving hips movements, the dancers leaned their upper bodies back. This was the first time this posture was used in the peacock dance.

The costume used in *Peacock in Green Waves* was a sexy, bare midriff in light green (Figure 12). The costume includes a short top and a long, fishtail skirt. There are many glittery decorations on the top and waist of the skirt. In addition, glittery hair accessories are an important part of the costume, which made the costume looked florid.



Figure 12: Peacocks in Green Wave (碧波孔雀, 2004)

The music that accompanied *Peacocks in Green Wave* was a specifically composed piece of music. The music is basically in a modern style that involved many modern percussion instruments. Drums from Arabic music were also included. In addition, cucurbit flute, the Dai language, and birds singing were added to represent Dai culture.

In general, *Peacocks in Green Wave* was a peacock dance which was choreographed for commercial purposes. It was a seductive stage peacock dance. Its style was very different than all the previous peacock dances I have mentioned because of its distinct movements, costumes and music style (Table 8).

Time	2004;
Where	Stage;
Why	Commercial Performance;
Dancer	Female; Group; Professional trained;
Costume	Bare midriff; Light Green;

	Tank top; Long fishtail skirt; Bottom of the skirt was decorated like peacock's tail; Shiny decorations on the top and the waist of the skirt; Fake long nails; Glittery hair accessories with peacock feather;
Movements	Quick forward and backward movements of waist; Shaking hips;
Music	Modern style percussion instruments; Arabic drum; The Dai language; Birds singing; Cucurbit flute;
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s6Kg3VzG9w

Table 8. *Peacocks in Green Wave* (碧波孔雀, 2004)

Dance #8: The Peacock Princess (孔雀公主)

The Peacock Princess was a dance performance that was performed by the Cindy Yang Dance Academy in Vancouver, Canada in 2010. This performance was put on to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the dance academy. Its choreography was based on *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* (1979) and *The Spirit of Peacock* (1986/1989). It also presented a love story between a prince and a princess peacock and various other dances were included. I will only focus on the peacock dance for comparisons.

The dancers in *The Peacock Princess* were all students from the Cindy Yang Dance Academy, and all trained at the academy. They are Chinese Canadians who

learned the peacock dance and other types of Chinese dance in Vancouver. Their teacher, Yang Yang, was born in China and received professional dance training at the Central University for Nationalities (中央民族大学) in Beijing. The Central University for Nationalities and Beijing Dance Academy are the two main universities that provide dance training in China. The styles of the two schools are different in some aspects, however, they belong to the category of school styles. Therefore, Yang Yang's background in dancing is typical school style.

There were three sources for the movements of the peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess*. Firstly, the movements were mainly developed from *The Spirit of Peacock*. The two typical movements from the 1986/1989 version of *The Spirit of Peacock* were the peacock-head gesture and continually wavy movements from dancers' shoulders to fingertips. They were both emphasized in *The Peacock Princess*. In addition, Yang Liping developed *The Spirit of Peacock* from a solo dance to a female group dance in 2003. The movement from this new version, the shaking of the skirts, can also be seen in *The Peacock Princess*. Secondly, the school style of Dai dance was one of the sources for *The Peacock Princess*. Symbolic movements from the school style of the Dai dance, such as hand positions and body postures, were added in *The Peacock Princess*. Thirdly, movements from classical ballet were also added. These movements included jumping and lifting which represented the love between the prince and the princess peacock.

The costume for the peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess* was very similar to the costume of *The Spirit of Peacock*. It was a one-piece dress with a

tank top and a long skirt. The hem of the skirt was very wide and was decorated like a peacock's tail. The dress was yellow and the only difference from the costume in *The Spirit of Peacock* was that there was a small silk cape that was an important part of the costume for the peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess*. (Figure 13).



Figure 13: The Peacock Princess (孔雀公主, 2010)

The peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess* was a stage peacock dance that was performed by a group of female dancers. All the dancers were Chinese Canadians who learned peacock dance in Vancouver. This dance has been influenced deeply by *The Spirit of Peacock*. It used the same music as *The Spirit of Peacock* and the style of the costumes and the movements were very similar (Table 9).

Time	2010
Where	Stage;
Why	Celebrating the 20th anniversary of Cindy Yang dance academy; Commercial performance;

Dancers	Students from Cindy Yang Dance Academy; Professional trained; Chinese Canadians;
Movements	The peacock-head gesture; Continually wavy movements mostly from arms to fingertips; Movements from the school style of the Dai dances; Lifting movements from ballet; Shaking skirts;
Costume	Yellow; Tank top; Long skirt with wide hem, and the skirt was decorated like a peacock's tail; Small silk cape;
Music	The music of <i>The Spirit of Peacock</i> (1986/1989)
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AbjpQSV-EA&feature=youtu.be

Table 9: The peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess*.

Dance #9: *The Love of Peacocks* (雀之恋)

The Love of Peacocks was a stage peacock dance that was first performed in 2012 on the annual TV gala that is organized by CCTV for celebrating Chinese New Year. The dance was a duet performed by a male and a female dancer, and expressed the love between two peacocks. Yang Liping was the choreographer and the female dancer. This dance was seen as another milestone in her choreography of the peacock dance. Similar to *The Spirit of Peacock*, *The Love of Peacocks* became nationally renowned after it was performed on TV.

The movements of *The Love of Peacocks* included two parts. Firstly, the

movements were developed from *The Spirit of Peacock*. Yang Liping kept and developed the two main movements (the peacock-head gesture and continually wavy movements) that were established in *The Spirit of Peacock* in *The Love of Peacocks*. Secondly, this dance is a duet dance. Yang Liping, therefore, added more communicating movements between the two peacocks. These communicating movements were in the contemporary style with nothing from any other established dance style such as ballet or Chinese classical dance.

The style of the costumes in *The Love of Peacocks* was different from any other peacock dances. The costumes in *The Love of Peacocks* included two parts. The upper part was a tight top in light, tan color with blue decoration on it. The bottom part was a very long and thick skirt that was made of actual feathers to imitate a peacock's tail. In addition, body painting and exaggerated make up were used to emphasize a mysterious and natural decoration (Figure 14). Yang Liping also used computer techniques to design the stage and make the dance look more mysterious.



Figure 14: The Love of Peacocks (雀之恋 2012)

The music of *The Love of Peacocks* has a very modern and international style.

It was mainly composed of sounds that represent nature. Various instruments were mixed in, such as instruments from the violin family, the guzheng (古筝, Han traditional instrument), and cucurbit flute, etc.

The Love of Peacocks was a modern stage peacock dance. It has little Dai cultural content. Yang Liping used special costumes, body painting, exaggerated make up, and computerized stage design to emphasize a mysterious nature, and used her typical peacock dance movements to create two magical peacocks that live in nature (Table 10).

Time	2012;
Where	Stage; TV gala;
Why	Celebrating Chinese New Year;
Dancer	Yang Liping (杨丽萍); Wang Di (王迪);
Movements	The peacock-head gesture; Wavy movements from shoulders to fingertips, and from waist to upper body; Communicating movements between the two peacocks;
Costume	Blue; Long and thick feathered peacock tails; Tight top in light, tan color and blue painting; Body painting and exaggerated make up; Hair accessory with peacock feathers;
Music	Specially composed piece of music; Modern and international style; Various instruments were used; Sounds from the nature such as birds singing and river running

	were added into the music; No specifically cultural features;
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlOFflnAgW4

Table 10. The Love of Peacock (雀之恋, 2012)

Dance #10 & #11: The peacock dance by Wang La (旺腊) & Yue Xiang (约相)

In this section I will introduce dance #10 and #11 together. Dance #10 is the peacock dance performed by Wang La (旺腊), and Dance #11 is the peacock dance performed by Yue Xiang (约相). I put these two dances in one section because the two dancers are similar in many ways. They were both students of Mao Xiang in the 1950s. They were both born in Yunnan, and have lived there until now. They are both famous peacock dancers locally; and, more importantly, they are both transmitters of the peacock dance that were certified through the national ICH program. Therefore, their peacock dances developed in the same context and, consequently, are similar in many ways. However, there is one difference which is reflected in the movements.

Wang La and Yue Xiang's peacock dances are male solo dances that, especially after these men were certified as transmitters of the peacock dances by the national ICH program, are mostly performed to represent the Dai culture. Most of the time, their dances are performed on stages for diverse audiences and academic researchers. In addition, education is another main reason for their similarities. They teach their peacock dances to local children in Yunnan to spread

and develop the peacock dance, which is also their duty as certified transmitters.

Their students are not only males, but also many females.

Wang La and Yue Xiang are both locally trained dancers. They learned the peacock dance from Mao Xiang, as well as other teachers. According to my interview with Wang La, he learned the peacock dance with several famous peacock dancers in the 1950s. Yue Xiang's main way of learning was to observe and imitate peacocks and the peacock dance performance. Neither of them had been trained professionally before being certified.

They have specially designed costumes that are only used to perform peacock dances. The design of the costumes is similar but with different colors. Wang La's costume is green (Figure 15), and Yue Xiang's costume is white (Figure 16). The costume includes three parts, which are the hat, the top clothing, and the pants. The costume is designed from the cloth that Dai males wear in their daily life with more decorations on shoulders and waist to make the costume a formal dance costume. Peacock eyes are added onto the bottom of the pants to show that the costume is for performing peacock dances.



Figure 15: Wang La's peacock dance



Figure 16: Yue Xiang's peacock dance

The music for both Wang La and Yue Xiang's peacock dances are generally

the same as the music of Mao Xiang's peacock dance before 1950 (Dance #1). There is no melody in the music, only the rhythms played by Dai traditional percussion instruments; the Xiangjiao drum (象脚鼓), the Mang Luo (铓锣), and the Cha (铍). The rhythms are same as well.

Wang La and Yue Xiang developed their peacock dances in two directions, and their peacock dances are now different regarding the movements. Wang La has a systemic organization of his dance movements. He has developed five dance pieces with strict requirements regarding the hand positions and body postures. Yue Xiang's peacock dance, in contrast, is stronger and more angular than Wang La's because he added Dai Quan (傣拳, a type of Dai martial arts) into his peacock dance. However, they also have many movements that are similar. Both of them were students of Mao Xiang, so some movements of their peacock dances are from Mao Xiang's style. Two of Mao Xiang's movement features, continually rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees and imitating peacocks' movements, are preserved by both Wang La and Yue Xiang. In addition, they both adopted the peacock-head gesture as a symbolic movement in their peacock dances.

In summary, Wang La and Yue Xiang's peacock dances represent the development of peacock dance as it exists inside its culture of origin. Even though their dances never left the original geographic area, there are many aspects, such as performing reasons and locations, as well as movements, and costumes, that are different from Dance #1, the original peacock dance in this dissertation (Table 11 & 12).

Time	2013
Where	Stage;
Why	Representing the Dai culture at various occasions; Education;
Dancer	Wang La (旺腊); male; Mao Xiang's student; locally trained
Movements	Choreographed opening and ending; Continually rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees; Imitating peacocks' movements such as peeking and checking, walking in forests, playing around lakes, chasing and playing with each other; shaking shoulders; Shrugging; Eye expressions; Systematic organization of the movements such as five dance pieces, and eight hand-positions; Spread palm, and the peacock-head gesture; Turning over hands;
Costume	Specially designed costume in the Dai style; Green; Short sleeves; pants; Peacock eye decoration on the shoulders, waist, and the bottom of the pants; Hat with a decoration of peacock feather
Music	Traditional percussion instruments such as <i>xiangjiao</i> drum, <i>mang luo</i> , <i>cha</i> ;
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuOyDgC4NdQ

Table 11: Peacock dance by Wang La (旺腊)

Time	2013
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Where	Stage;
Why	Representing the Dai culture at various occasions; Education;
Dancer	Yue Xiang (约相); male; Mao Xiang's student; locally trained
Movements	Choreographed opening and ending; Continually rhythmic bending and straightening of the knees; Imitating peacocks' movements such as peeking and checking, walking in the forest, playing around lakes, chasing and playing with each other; Shaking shoulders; Shrugging; Eye expression; Spread palm, and the peacock-head gesture; Turning over hands; Movements from Dai Boxing (傣拳, a type of Dai Kung fu)
Costume	Specially designed costume in the Dai style; White; Short sleeves; pants; Peacock eye decoration on the shoulders, waist, and the bottom of the pants; Hat with a decoration of peacock feather;
Music	Traditional percussion instruments such as <i>xiangjiao</i> drum, <i>mang luo</i> , <i>cha</i> ;
Video link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yflqmS_KivY

Table 12: Peacock dance by Yue Xiang (约相)

Conclusion

These eleven versions of the peacock dance will be the main dances I will focus on when I examine the various creative factors that have influenced

ethnic-folk dance. However, there are, in addition, still some other peacock dances I will discuss in various comparisons. Such dances are less important than these eleven versions. Therefore, I will introduce them later during the process of comparison.

Chapter 3 - Creative factor – Individual

Introduction

“Individual,” as a creative factor, refers to the specific person who influences a particular ethnic-folk dance and changes it in a significant way. The individual’s influences usually reflect a clear personal style. This personal style is decided on by the individual with regard to his or her background – life experience, social position, professional level, personality, etc. Nahachewsky (2012) discusses, for instance, how Vasile Avramenko’s life experience influenced a version of the dance, *Kolomyika in Two Couples*, which became part of the Ukrainian national dance repertoire. The original version of *Kolomyika in Two Couples* was described, based on Osyp Kravchuk’s village of Luhy in what is now western Ukraine. Kravchuk shared the dance with his teacher, Vasile Avramenko, in order to assist him in developing a repertoire for his dance movement. As a staunch nationalist who sought to create symbols to support his national reputation during World War I, Avramenko elevated the status of the dance and changed the dance in many important ways. He standardized it, codified it, and commodified it to make it manageable for many different teaching situations. He adapted the dance to make it a national symbol. At first the specific composition was somewhat variable, but it quickly became standardized and reproduced similarly for thousands of subsequent performances. He published the standard prescription in his books and certified his students to further disseminate this particular

choreography. Eventually, the dance became associated with the Hutsul region (the original village Luhya is located in the Ukrainian ethnographic region called Boikivshchyna). This change also made it more effective as a national symbol. Kravchuk's life experience, Avramenko's dance experience and political devotion, and the political context made the dance a famous Ukrainian national dance. It has been performed thousands of times in Europe, North America, and other continents (Nahachewsky 2012: 97-99).

Igor Moiseyev is another strong example of how an individual can have a significant impact on the development of an ethnic-folk dance. As a result of the performances of his ensemble - The Moiseyev Stage Folk Dance Ensemble, Moiseyev became a famous dance choreographer. In the USSR he developed a style of staged folk dance that spread around the world (Nahachewsky: 2011). Shay also discussed how the Moiseyev-style model as successful, based on changes he made to ethnic-folk dances. Moiseyev made big changes to ethnic-folk dances as he moved the dances to stages. Ballet vocabulary was the main source of his changes. He reshaped character dance, a sub-genre of classical ballet with a unique movement vocabulary, and added elements with advanced technical skills to ethnic-folk dance. Characteristics from the original ethnic-folk dance are very few in his choreography (Shay 2002: 70). Shay has an example, *Road to the Dance*, to demonstrate this point:

They [dancers of *Road to the Dance*] use basic ballet movements as they perform at the barre, and Moiseyev, through his movement vocabulary, conducts the viewer from the simplest steps to the most complex leaps and

turns. The trained eye immediately recognizes that what the Moiseyev ensemble presents is not folk dance but ballet-based character dance in Moiseyev's unique stylization. (Shay 2002: 72)

Even though Moiseyev's compositions did not focus on authenticity, but featured spectacular elements and ballet aesthetics, many folk-staged dance groups, including various national stage folk dance groups in China have followed his style. He is an extremely important individual in the history of stage folk dance. The examples of Vasile Avramenko and Igor Moiseyev demonstrate how individuals can influence the development of ethnic-folk dance in significant ways.

In this chapter, I will explain how the individual, as a creative factor, changes ethnic-folk dance, why an individual would wish to change a traditional dance, and what changes they might make. Yang Liping's (杨丽萍) peacock dances will be the main subject matter in this case (Dance #6 and #9 from chapter 2). Yang Liping is a well-known peacock dancer whose performances contain unique characteristics. I chose her and her peacock dances because she interpreted the dance in a unique manner, which became famous. She is remembered for her performances of the peacock dance, and I would imagine that her name is equivalent to the peacock dance in the minds of most Chinese people. She has at least two peacock dance choreographies in her repertoire, and each of them demonstrate her own style. I will explore how much an individual can change a ethnic-folk dance by comparing various versions of Yang Liping's peacock dance.

Motivations to make changes

Motivations for individuals to influence ethnic-folk dance can be complicated. They are different from person to person and are always combinations of various elements such as personal desire, requests from people or organizations that give financial support, expectations from audiences, aesthetic creativity, and so on. I will introduce three main motivations below.

Personal motivation is one of the basic motivations for individuals to change ethnic-folk dance. Personal desire is not a simple concept but a combination of pure interest in dancing and interest in other things that come out of the dance itself. Normally, a person working on a dance is motivated by a combination of reasons. Pure interest in dancing is sometimes a small but necessary part of the combined reasons. An individual can only enjoy a process of choreographing dance when he or she has a strong desire to fulfill a dream of dancing. Other reasons include representing their culture to a larger population, promoting their personal reputation, and gaining financial income. Such reasons can influence a person powerfully when she works on an ethnic-folk dance.

There are many examples of this phenomenon in the field of dance. Durmus Genc is an individual artist in Turkey. He is famous in Turkey because he had a significant influence on taking the dance tradition in Semah out of its original ritual context (Cem) and making the dance a new genre of Turkish folk stage dance. Semah is a ritual dance practiced in a religious community (the Alevi) where Genc was involved. The reasons he changed the Alevi Semah and moved it to the stage were that he wanted to promote his own culture as an Alevi and wanted to be an active part of the performance context of the university he was

studying in (Ozturkmen 2005: 248). One of the results of his change of the dance from its original ritual context to stages is a quickening of the tempo. Genc's dancers are "good dancers," whereas he thought the dancers, who still perform the Alevi Semah in the ritual context, are "too slow." Interestingly, Genc's stage performance influenced the dance performed by younger generations in the ritual context (Ozturkmen 2005: 257).

Another example of a dancer and choreographer using dance to promote their culture comes from China. Dai Ailian became one of the most important choreographers and dancers after the 1940s in China because she was one of the first people who adapted and performed ethnic-folk dances on stage. Her ethnic-folk dance performance in 1946 in Chongqing (重庆) made a large contribution to improving learning and performing ethnic-folk dance in cities and schools. I could not find any detailed information about how she changed the ethnic-folk dances. There is only one sentence in one source showing that she collected various steps and movements from the Yao culture in Guangxi and then reorganized them into one dance piece with a choreographed beginning and ending. In addition, her way of collecting and reorganizing ethnic-folk dance became the basis of the work in dance schools after 1949 (Wang 1999: 77). She also popularized the ethnic-folk dances from southeastern provinces, such as Sichuan (四川) and Guangxi (广西), in main cities like Chongqing (重庆) and Shanghai (上海) in the 1940s.

Examples of individual innovation in dance are not limited to the area of ethnic-folk dance. Isadora Duncan started creating a new dance style, which

contributed to the development of modern dance later, after she developed her view that ballet was not beautiful. She believed that dance should reflect the human body's natural movement, which reflects human being's feelings about nature. Therefore, she believed that dance should involve movements that follow a natural rhythm. Her motivation to create a new dance style was contrary to the aesthetic standards of ballet at the time. Isadora Duncan created a large repertoire of dances, and many of them represented particular cultures and can be described as ethnic dances.

Each person has his own motivations to perform, and to change, ethnic-folk dances. Both Genc and Dai's desires were to build national identities through ethnic-folk dance, while Duncan's desire was to develop a new dance style to contrast with ballet. Regardless of what the desires are, they influence the person when they are choreographing and performing an ethnic-folk dance.

Requests by influential people or organizations to an individual can be another motivation for individuals to change ethnic-folk dances. Individual changes in ethnic-folk dance are never entirely a one-person behavior. There are always other people or organizations that are related to this process. Requests proposed by these people or organizations can become very powerful motivations for the individual to change ethnic-folk dance. Such people or organizations have usually important influence in the context in which the individual works. Most of the time, such influences are related to politics, financial support, or both. We will focus on their influences in later chapters.

Requests proposed by people or organizations influence the individual's

choreographing on various levels. The more powerful these people or organizations are, the more of an influence they might have on the choreography. A good example of this is Igor Moiseyev, a well-known choreographer from USSR. His dance company, Moiseyev Dance Company, has been perhaps the most famous stage folk dance company since the late 1930s in the USSR. Moiseyev created a new style of stage folk dance which became a model for many of other folk-staged dance companies. His choreography had its influences not only inside of USSR but also from outside (Shay 2002: 57). However, Moiseyev would not have achieved such huge success without the support from the Soviet government, and this support came with certain requests on Moiseyev's dance. They needed a dance that could represent the USSR in a positive way, and Moiseyev's dance style matched this goal. The government's support was not only financial, but also political. It is clear that the government would not have provided him with such support if he could not satisfy the government's objectives. The government's main goal was to build a positive image of the USSR to both insiders and outsiders, and Moiseyev's dance helped them greatly in this. A description from Shay explains how important government support was to its stage folk dance companies in the USSR:

Perhaps no nation in the history of the world has supported dance to the extent that the former Soviet Union did, both financially and politically..... The Bolshoi Ballet, a company on the same level as the Moiseyev Dance Company, employed more than two thousand people as dancers, musicians, costumers, scenery builders, wig makers, shoe and boot makers, stage

personnel, and administrators. Dancers, both those who performed folk dance and those in the classical ballet field, were well paid relative to other professions, and they were able to travel to the West, a rare opportunity for Soviet citizens. (Shay 2002: 62)

A similar example from China also shows how this motivation works. Dai Ailian was only practicing ballet and contemporary dance before she was introduced to Zhou Enlai (周恩来) and Deng Yingchao (邓颖超), who were both key leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the time. Zhou and Deng's suggestions and requests encouraged Dai to start working on ethnic-folk dance. They encouraged her to go to the rural areas and learn ethnic-folk dance, and to develop Chinese ethnic-folk dance in this way. She became more and more nationally famous through the support of CCP. Her most famous work, a gala named *Music and Dances From the Borders* in 1946 which included dances from minorities such as Yi, Tibet, and Miao, was supported by Zhou and Deng. She received a huge honor by being named the "mother of Chinese dance" after the new state was established. She received strong support from the government for her continued field research, and also for her performances and education in ethnic-folk dances (Wang 1999: 77). All of this would not have happened if she did not fulfill the requests proposed by the CCP.

The demand from the market on an individual's business is the third motivation that might inspire an individual to change ethnic-folk dance. Market demands include many aspects such as audiences' background and expectations, performing conditions, the profitability of the business, and so forth. Among all of

these, audiences' expectation can be one of the most significant motivations in influencing a choreographer's work because the choreographer can get a better reputation and financial income if audiences like his or her work. Dance #7, *Peacocks in Green Waves*, is a good example to demonstrate this phenomenon. The dance was criticized by dance critics as being too sexy to represent the Dai culture. Few Dai cultural characteristics were kept in the dance, and many sexy movements were added. However, the choreographer of Dance #7, Chen Weiya (陈维亚), said that the first thing he had to worry about was if the commercial market liked the dance or not. He needed to think about the market when he was choreographing the dance because he was not only a choreographer but also the director of the China National Song and Dance Ensemble (Zhongguo gewutuan, 中国歌舞团). He needed to worry about if he could use the dance to make enough money to provide for all people in his company. Chen believed that compared to the original ethnic-folk dance, adding new style to ethnic-folk dance is more attractive to the younger generation (Li 2003: 38).

The three motivations described above are important, though there are others as well. The process through which individuals change ethnic-folk dance is always motivated by a combination of various factors, and it is always an endless negotiation among these various motivations.

Principles for change

Principles are the rules that an individual follows when they influence an ethnic-folk dance. These principles are not like instructions that are written clearly and followed by everyone. The principles here are certain standards that a

choreographer follows, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly. A simple example is that if choreographers have dance school training backgrounds, then movement standards from dance schools will become one of the principles they follow naturally. They will very likely give up or add some movements to the original ethnic-folk dance, according to the dance school perspective and aesthetics.

The principles that guide individuals to change ethnic-folk dances are various. It is usually various principles combined together rather than one single principle that the individual follows. Diverse factors such as the individual's motivations for changing an ethnic-folk dance, in what context they are changing the dance, who provides financial support, affect the various principles. Some principles are common and many people follow them, but each individual has her own context and thus some principles are specific. Common principles and specific principles are not separately followed by individuals, but mixed together. It is always a process of balancing various principles when an individual works on an ethnic-folk dance.

First of all, professional dance training is the basic condition for choreographers and dancers to choreograph and perform ethnic-folk dance on stage in China. I understand that there is a large number of small amateur performances that takes place, and that they influence ethnic-folk dance as well through their work. However, I will focus on individuals who have made a significant influence on ethnic-folk dance, and how their changes create new ethnic-folk dances that influence more people in a broader context. These

individuals are strong examples in my dissertation to demonstrate that an individual is a creative factor that can influence ethnic-folk dance. Most of the time, such individuals have been trained as professional dancers, therefore, I believe professional dance training is a key principle for the individuals to change ethnic-folk dance. Stage folk dance is a type of professional dance, which requires both choreographers and dancers to be trained with highly professional standards. For example, Moiseyev had strict requirements for his dancers. “Talent, a striking personality, complete mastery of the dance technique, a highly developed feeling for music and rhythm – all these they have to possess. And they do” (Chudnovskii: 1959). He even had a special requirement about where dancers came from because he believed that students from areas other than Moscow “have a lower professional level.” For Moiseyev, this is “a matter of quality” (Shay 2002: 78). The situation in China is similar. Students have to have at least six years of basic training before they are accepted by Beijing Dance Academy to learn stage folk dance.

Secondly, claiming that the ethnic-folk dance is original or authentic is another common principle that an individual follows when she works on an ethnic-folk dance. Most of the time, the individual claims the ethnic-folk dance is representative of the mother culture of the dance. Yang Liping is an exception because she does not claim that her peacock dance is a Dai dance. Rather, she argues that her dance is original ecology style, which comes from the original context (CDFS: 2013). The level of authenticity is various. In reality, instead of actual authentic cultural standards, what happens is that the audiences’ cultural

background and aesthetic expectations determine if the dance is a successful staged folk dance. If the dance is beautiful, according to audiences' aesthetic standards, then the dance can be a successful choreography, even though the dance may contain few cultural characteristics of the dance tradition from which it is inspired. In some cases, the new choreography might connect with its source tradition by just the name or one symbolic movement. Yang Liping's peacock dance, which will be discussed more in a case study later, is a very strong example of this phenomenon. Her peacock dance only kept the name of the original dance from the Dai culture and a few other features. It was, however, accepted by most audiences as a development of the Dai dance because her aesthetic expression matched the audiences' aesthetic standards.

Ways to change

The individual, as a creative factor, usually changes the ethnic-folk dance in the following three ways: making the dance more virtuosic, increasing the symbolic elements, and adapting it to make it more personal.

Making the dance more virtuosic is the first way that an individual can change the dance. Ethnic-folk dance in its local, original setting is usually easy to learn, and requires little technique because it is usually a participatory dance that everyone in the context is involved in. To move such a dance to the stage, the first thing that choreographers do is to add professional content and techniques. This is the basic procedure in changing a dance from a participatory dance to a representative dance. Moiseyev and his stage folk dance is again a good example to demonstrate this idea. Moiseyev's folk dances were enriched by professional

art (Shay 2002: 69-70). The professional content that Moiseyev added to ethnic-folk dance came from classical ballet. “A movement analysis of Moiseyev Dance Company performances reveals that Igor Moiseyev has taken character dance, which is a sub-genre of classical ballet, and reshaped and expanded it to create a unique movement vocabulary” (Shay, 2002: 68). This strategy is very common in China as well.

Increasing the symbolic elements is the second way that an individual can change an ethnic-folk dance. Almost every choreographer claims that their stage folk dance is authentic (even though authenticity as a concept is untenable from an anthropologic perspective). To support his or her claim that the dance is authentic, a choreographer usually chooses one or more elements from the source dance or culture, uses them as symbols of that earlier form, and exaggerates them in the stage folk dance. By repeating and emphasizing such symbols, the dance “becomes” the “authentic” dance that the choreographer wanted it to be. Such symbols might include costumes, gestures, body positions, specific movements, etc. If the stage folk dance becomes accepted by many audiences as a successful choreography, the symbols then become standards by which both professional people and general audiences judge later choreography. Most of the time, symbols are adapted from their source dance or culture, but sometimes, symbols are created. Yang Liping’s peacock dance is an example of this. The two symbols in her peacock dance, the peacock-head gesture and the costume, are both created symbols which did not exist in the original context.

Adapting the dance to make it more personal is the third way that a

choreographer can change an ethnic-folk dance. In these cases, the ethnic-folk dance choreographed by an individual expresses the clear and strong personal style of that person. This topic is not new in dance criticism in both the Western and the Eastern academic world. However, most of the theories on this topic are about creative individualist art creation in Western elite dance. Here, I want to talk about how an individual makes ethnic-folk dance more personal. Making an ethnic-folk dance more personal happens as an individual changes the dance. This person's own cultural background, level of professional training, purpose for changing the dance, and aesthetic pursuit, creates a certain style that becomes evident in the dance. Yang Liping is a vivid example to demonstrate this. Her *The Spirit of Peacock* (dance #6) is considered a Dai dance, but at the same time, it contains strong personal features – features that are clearly evident in many of her other dances.

The Results of change

By looking at these three ways that individuals influence ethnic-folk dances, it is not hard to guess what the result looks like. The final production is a stage dance with high professional standards and an aesthetic focus. The professional contents are, most of the time, from established and high-status dance styles such as ballet and Chinese classical dance. The final production is a symbolic dance of a specific culture. By creating highly symbolic items, choreographers claim to represent an ethnic-folk dance. In addition, the final production of such dances is a specific person's dance.

Case study: Yang Liping and her peacock dances (dance # 5, #6, and #9)

Yang Liping is one of the most famous peacock dancers in China. Yang Liping became a nationally renowned peacock dancer after her performance of Dance #6, *The Spirit of Peacock* (雀之灵), on the CCTV gala for celebrating Chinese New Year in 1989. She created a beautiful white peacock and focused on expressing the spirit of peacock in the dance, which is mysterious and elegant. The CCTV gala for celebrating Chinese New Year has an enormous audience. Yang Liping and her peacock dance, therefore, were seen by most of the population of the country in just one night. It was very well accepted and thus this dance became beloved by millions. A huge number of those people had never seen a peacock dance before that and were not familiar with Dai cultural symbols. Thus, they came to think of her composition as the original style of the dance.

Yang Liping and her peacock dance is a strong example of how an individual changes ethnic-folk dance. It is true that Yang Liping's peacock dance was originally developed from Dao Meilan's style. However, Yang Liping's peacock dance incorporates many innovations as well. She created a new style of peacock dance, which influenced many other peacock dancers after her. In addition, she has changed her own peacock dance little by little, which can be seen in three recorded versions of *The Spirit of Peacock* (雀之灵) since 1986. She also choreographed and performed another peacock dance, *The Love of Peacocks* (雀之恋), on the CCTV gala for celebrating Chinese New Year in 2012. This dance is very different than *The Spirit of Peacock* (雀之灵) but still carries some important

stylistic features.

Comparison of Yang Liping's peacock dances

In this part, I will explore how Yang Liping personal style has been reflected through her peacock dances. I will compare: Dao Meilan's *Golden Peacock* (dance #5) with Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6); then three recorded versions of Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6 in 1986, 2002, 2003), and Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6) and *The Love of Peacocks* (Dance #9).

Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (dance #6) vs. Dao Meilan's *Golden Peacock* (dance #5).

Dao Meilan was the first famous female dancer that I could find who performed a solo peacock dance on stage. She created the characteristics of the staged female peacock dance that were followed by dancers of the next generation, including Yang Liping. Yang Liping's peacock dance was developed originally from Dao Meilan's dance in this perspective. However, these two dancers' peacock dances are also different in many ways.

Generally speaking, the main difference between the two dances is that Dao Meilan's peacock was a beautiful bird that lives in a natural forest, while Yang Liping's peacock is an elegant fairy that lives in a mysterious wonderland.

Yang Liping used the same general costume design that Dao Meilan used in 1980 but with two main differences. Firstly, the color of the costume was different. Dao Meilan's costume had a green top and golden skirt and the peacock's tail design on the bottom of the skirt was green as well (Figure 9). Yang Liping's

costume was white and the peacock's tail design on the bottom of the skirt was dark green and blue (Figure 11). The different colors suggest that the peacock created by Dao Meilan is similar to a real green peacock, and the peacock by Yang Liping is more close to a white peacock. In the reality, white peacocks do exist, but they are rare, so people usually think that white peacocks are more valuable than green peacocks. More importantly, white is usually considered a color that represents purity and elegance more than any other color. Therefore, Yang Liping's white costume sends a message to the audience that her peacock is pure and elegant. Secondly, the long sleeves of the top in Dao Meilan's costume were removed in Yang Liping's costume. Yang Liping's costume has no sleeves but looks more like top of the white swan's costume from the famous ballet, *Swan Lake*. I do not know if Yang Liping made this change consciously under the influence of ballet's aesthetic standards. However, the result was that this change made a strong contribution to creating a peacock as an elegant fairy in Yang Liping's peacock dance.

Yang Liping kept and exaggerated two movements from Dao Meilan's dance, which are the peacock-head gesture and the continually wavy movements of the arms. In Yang Liping's dance, she focuses on these two movements and uses them very often. Yang Liping emphasized the peacock-head gesture by using long nails. Her long nails extended her hands to make the image of peacocks' head more vivid and impressive (Figure 10). Furthermore, Yang Liping repeated the peacock-head gesture with different movements and body postures, and also used lights to emphasize the image. She used lights to give the appearance of a full

moon projected on the back wall (07'24" in the video of Dance #6). Her body's shadow with the peacock-head gesture created the feeling that this peacock does not live in real world, but in a mysterious moonlit night world (Figure 17). I will call this section of the dance "Dancing in the Moon". The long nails have become one of the most important features of Yang Liping. Many dances in her repertoire represent her personal style by using specific hand movements with long nails. She has used such movements in other choreographies, along with special lights, to represent a spirit of other themes as well: bamboo and fire. While Dao Meilan used continually wavy movements on her arms (0'21"-0'43"; 4'01"-4'10"; 4'22"-4'30"; 4'41"-4'59" in the video of Dance #5), Yang Liping exaggerated this theme not only on her arms, but also in her waist. Compared to Dao Meilan's movements, Yang Liping's wavy movements are faster, finer, and nimbler (2'05"-2'24"; 3'50"-4'04"; 4'16"-4'30"; 5'32"-5'53"; 6'22"-6'33" in the video of Dance #6). Both of these movements became increasingly powerful symbols of the peacock dance after Yang Liping's performance. Besides these two movements, Yang Liping added fast spinning elements in her dance (5'11"-5'30"; 6'43"-7'17" in the video of Dance #6, Figure 18), which was not part of Dao Meilan's dance.

On the other hand, another symbolic movement of the peacock dance, originating from Mao Xiang, was weakened by Yang Liping and no longer served as a symbol of the peacock dance for her. The movements for playing around a lake seem to have been a symbolic part of the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang. Unfortunately, I could not find any video recording of Mao Xiang's

peacock dance. I came to this conclusion by discovering the similar movement in the videos of the dance #3, #5, #6, #10, and #11. I firstly noticed that there is a stable part in the peacock dances performed by Yue Xiang and Wang La during my field research. This part is about expressing how a peacock is playing beside a lake by imitating the peacock's movements such as checking itself in the water, putting this water on its body, and so on (1'49"-2'04" in Section #1 of Dance #10, 1'23"-1'32" in Section #3 of Dance #10, 1'16"-1'28" in Section #5 of Dance #10, 1'42"-2'03" in Dance #11). Then I found similar movements in more peacock dances I studied (3'56"-4'15" in Dance #5, 4'01"-4'41" in Dance #3, 5'32"-5'58" in Dance #6). Many of my references have mentioned that "playing around lakes" as one of the symbols in Mao Xiang's peacock dance. I assume that this part is the "playing around lakes" mentioned by the previous researchers. Among all these versions of "playing around lakes," Yang Liping's version changed the most. All other versions have a similar sequence of movements which is: kneel down – sprinkling water – check his/herself in the water – drinking water - taking the water and putting on his/her body – shaking shoulders. This set of movements is fairly realistic. However, Yang Liping simplified the process to only drinking water with continually waving arms back of her body and subtly shaking shoulders (5'32" – 5'58" in Dance #6). This change made the earlier motif of "playing around lakes" kind of invisible and no longer a necessary part of peacock dances that followed.



Figure 17: "Dancing in the moon" Yang Liping used lights to help make her peacock image more mysterious and otherworldly (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from <http://news.wudao.com/20111201/33243.html>)

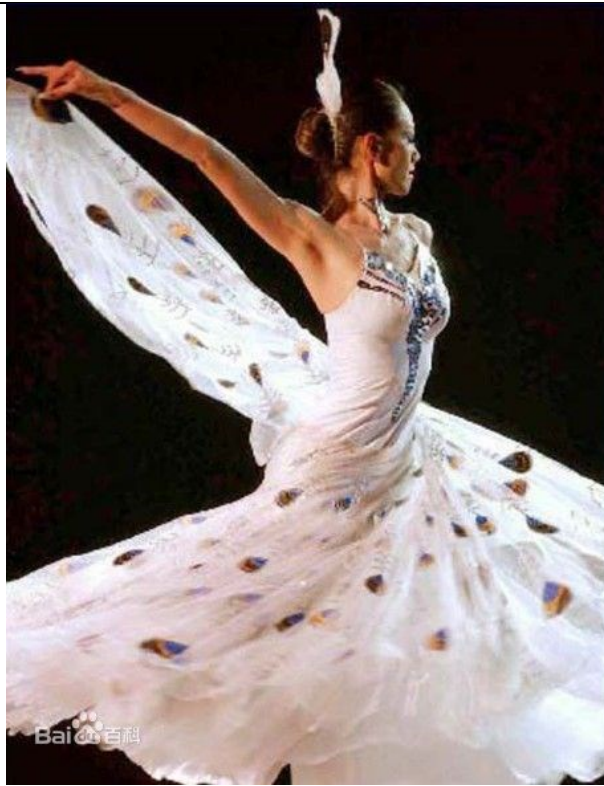


Figure 18: Spinning in *The Spirit of Peacock Dance* (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_13dfa8f290102vhfb.html)

Lastly, the two peacock dances are also different in terms of music. Yang Liping has three versions of *The Spirit of Peacock*, and each with a different music. I will use the first version from 1989 in this comparison, and compare these three versions later. In both Dao Meilan and Yang Liping's dances, the musical score has a clear adagio-allegro-adagio structure, and both were performed by a Chinese classical instrument orchestra. However, Yang Liping added the cucurbit flute (葫芦丝) and some sounds from nature in her music. The cucurbit flute is a special instrument, which functions as a symbol the Dai nationality (Fu 2010: 20). The sound of the cucurbit flute can be easily recognized by people who have even had only superficial contact with Dai culture. The music

of *The Spirit of Peacock* was a modern style of music, but with the sound of the cucurbit flute, it became actively symbolic of Dai culture to people who are not from the Dai culture. In addition, sounds from the natural world, such as birdsong and the sound of river water, were added into the music in Yang Liping's dance. These natural sounds, along with the costume and her movements, helped the audiences to imagine the magical place in which the white peacock lived, and where a green landscape, a clear river, gentle sunshine, and many magical animals exist.

Through all of these changes, Yang Liping created a peaceful, colorful, and beautiful environment where an elegant white peacock walked around like a fairy (Table 13).

		<i>Golden Peacock</i>	<i>The Spirit of Peacock</i>
Costumes	Similarities	Tight top; Long skirt with wide hem; Bottom of the skirt was decorated like a peacock's tail	
	Differences	Golden	Tank top; White; Hair accessory is peacock feather; Long nails
Featured Movements	Similarities	The peacock-head gesture; Continually wavy movements;	
	Differences	Eye movements	Fast gyration;
Music	Similarities	Adagio-allegro-adagio; Traditional instrument orchestra;	

	Differences		Cucurbit flute; Birds singing; The sounds of river water
Peacocks	Differences	A beautiful peacock that lives in the nature	A mysterious peacock that lives in a magic forest

Table 13. *Golden Peacock* VS. *The Spirit of Peacock*

Comparison of the three versions of Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (1989, 2002, 2003).

Yang Liping became a nationally renowned peacock dancer after her performance in 1989 on CCTV. Since then, *The Spirit of Peacock* has become her most famous work. She created three versions of *The Spirit of Peacock*; in 1989, 2002, and 2003. These three versions will be compared in this section to explain how Yang Liping slowly changed her own dance. The comparison will focus on a discussion of the movements and music.

Generally, the three key symbolic movements remain similar in the three versions: the peacock-head gesture, the wavy movements of arms and waist, and the fast gyration. However, three clear changes have happened. Firstly, the first two versions of the dance were solo dances, however, the third version became a group dance performed by one main dancer and 16 other dancers. Secondly, the significance of small and fast jumps is reduced from the first version to the third version. In the early version, Yang Liping clearly performs a number of fast and small jumps in the allegro section of music (6'00" – 6'19" in the first version). These jumps continued in the second version (5'55" – 6'05" in the second

version), but shortened. In the third version, the jumping was removed from the dance completely. Thirdly, Yang Liping emphasized “Dancing in the Moon” more from the first version to the third version. “Dancing in the Moon” is a strong image from *The Spirit of Peacock*. Audiences can see the dancing woman’s shadow in the “moon” (Figure 19). In the 1989 version, “Dancing in the Moon” appeared in the last ten seconds of the dance as the ending element and contained two movements. In the 2002 version, this element was extended to a full minute, and Yang Liping performed five different movement motifs there. In the 2003 version, the moon was not on the back stage wall anymore. Instead, it was moved to the whole stage by using specially designed lights. The dancers did not dance in front of the moon to make a shadow. Instead, they danced under a bright, yellow, shining light which looks like all the dancers were “Dancing in the Moon” (Figure 20).



Figure 19: Dance in the moon (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from

http://news.k618.cn/yl_37061/201211/t20121103_2579050_4.html



Figure 20: "Dancing in the Moon" in the third version, the moon was changed to take up the whole stage with specially designed yellow lights (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from

http://news.ifeng.com/gundong/detail_2012_08/16/16833807_0.shtml)

The biggest changes that Yang Liping has made among these three versions is associated with the music. Yang Liping used three different musical pieces for the three different versions of the dance, and the music was changed to be more mysterious and elegant. The music of the 1989 version, as I have mentioned, had a clear adagio-allegro-adagio structure. The instruments that were used to play the music were traditional, Chinese instruments (mainly associated with Han culture). The cucurbit flute was to represent the Dai culture, and vivid sounds like birds singing and the sounds of river water were especially added to represent the natural environment in which the Dai people live. However, the 2002 musical composition was from an internationally renowned Irish-Norwegian duo named Secret Garden. The composition, *Pastorale*, came from Secret Garden's first

album, *Songs From A Secret Garden* (1996). Secret Garden's music is famous for its tranquil qualities and peaceful melodies. One of the main instruments in this piece of music is violin, and the music keeps a soothing speed from the beginning until the end. This soothing speed plus the sound of violin created a peaceful and relaxing style. These qualities helped Yang Liping to create a pure and elegant peacock more than the composition she had previously used. Yang Liping has said: "I like the music from *Secret Garden* because it is melodious, and makes people feel a little blue which is beautiful blue emotion" (Yang, 2004). However, she also mentioned that: "it is not appropriate to use Western music for Chinese peacock dance" (Yang, 2004). A third musical composition was especially composed for the dance in 2003. This music has similar qualities to the second one, which is that it is tranquil, peaceful, and melodious, but is played by different instruments. The third music was played by some of the classical instruments from both Dai and Han nationalities, thus creating a Chinese style in the music. In addition, a soothing speed is maintained in the music from the beginning to the end. The slow speed, along with sounds of cucurbit flute, and some of other classical instruments from Dai and Han nationalities elicit peaceful feelings in audiences, reinforcing the feelings suggested by the peacock that Yang Liping has created.

What Yang Liping has done in her dance is clearly shown in this comparison. She has been continually creating an image in which a beautiful, elegant, pure, magic peacock lives in a peaceful wonderland. She has been creating not only an elegant peacock, but also the environment where the peacock lives. She has been refining the whole performance to strengthen the image of a place where

everything is beautiful and peaceful (Table 14).

		1989	2002	2003
Costumes		Tank top; Long skirt with wide hem; Bottom of the skirt decorated like peacock's tail; White; Hair accessory is peacock feather; Long nails		
Movements	Similarities	The peacock-head gesture; The wavy movements; Fast gyration;		
	Differences	Solo dance; Small and fast jump	Solo dance; Emphasizing "Dancing in the Moon";	Group dance; More fast gyration with various body posture; Shaking out skirts to imitate a peacock spreading its tail; Emphasizing "Dancing in the Moon"
Music	Differences	A-B-A structure; Traditional Chinese instrument orchestra;	<i>Pastorale</i> from <i>Songs From A Secret Garden</i> ; Violin	Specially composed; Cucurbit flute and other traditional

		Cucurbit flute; Birds singing; Sounds of river water		Dai instruments;
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Table 14. Comparisons among Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (1989, 2002, 2003)

Comparison between Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (dance #6, 2002 version) and *The Love of Peacock* (dance #9).

Yang Liping performed a new peacock dance, *The Love of Peacock* (dance #9), at the Chinese New Year celebration gala organized by CCTV in 2012. In this section, I will compare this dance and her *The Spirit of Peacock* (2002) to examine what changes have been made by Yang Liping to her own peacock dances over the course of 10 years. I chose the 2002 version of *The Spirit of Peacock* because this version is the best one to express Yang Liping's aesthetic pursuit, which she describes as pure aesthetics rather than representing Dai culture. Even though both dances are choreographed and performed by Yang Liping, they represent very different compositions.

The first key difference between the two dances is that the new dance is a duet dance instead of solo in 2012. As the name of the dance suggests, *The Love of Peacocks* indicates Yang Liping has a male dancer as her partner in the dance. The main focus of the dance became expressing love between the two peacocks. Many of the movements are developed from *The Spirit of Peacock*, but the movements were used more for communicating between two peacocks (Figure 21). In addition, more communicative movements were added. Two representative

movements from *The Spirit of Peacock*, the peacock-head gesture and the wavy movements are especially kept. The peacock-head gesture is the main hand shape in *The Love of Peacocks*, and it is emphasized at moments of 0'15" – 0'29", 1'17" – 1'20", and 1'31"-2'03". The wavy movements of arms and upper bodies is kept almost from the beginning to the ending of the dance, and are especially shown at the moments of 0'38" – 0'49", 2'33"-2'39", 3'52"-4'10", and 4'46"-4'56." In *The Love of Peacocks*, Yang Liping develops her own personal motifs further.



Figure 21. The Peacock-head Gesture in *The Love of Peacocks* as if the two birds are kissing. (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from <http://p.wudao.com/20130106/66929.html>)

The stage designs of the two dances are different, which created two very different environments in which peacocks dance. Stage design has become one of the most important parts of Yang Liping's performances. Yang Liping uses special stage designs to complete her choreography, such as the moon in *The Spirit of Peacock* and the computer techniques in *The Love of Peacocks*. This is not only

because of the technical and economic developments in China in the last decades, which provide more options for dancers as they create performances, but also because Yang Liping's performance has become more commercial since the 1990s, and creative stage design brings her more profit. In *The Love of Peacocks*, Yang Liping used computer techniques to design the stage with a mysterious atmosphere (Figure 22). She designed a green forest with big trees growing, pink flowers blooming, butterflies flying around, a clear river running, and shiny stars up in the sky. In this forest, two peacocks dance and express love to each other. The main color of this design is green. The stage design created a harmonious atmosphere where all beings live together happily. In contrast, the only color of the stage design of *The Spirit of Peacock* was white (later a bright yellow too). The design was focused on the operation of lights to make scenes like the "Dancing in the Moon." The whole design of the *Spirit of Peacock* communicates peace and elegance. The design of *Love of the Peacocks* communicates abundance, fertility and growth.



Figure 21: Stage design of *The Love of Peacocks* (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_50cf0ef701018rgz.html)

Yang Liping chose a different musical style for *The Love of Peacocks*. Music is important for creating the characters in a dance, and Yang Liping knows this well. Her music for *The Spirit of Peacock* emphasized tranquility, peacefulness, and melodious qualities. Comparatively, her music for *The Love of Peacocks* focused on presenting a natural, harmonious, and multi-layered quality. The music is played by different kinds of instruments such as the violin, the guzheng (古筝, Han traditional instrument), and the cucurbit flute. There is no typical Dai representation in this musical composition, instead, an international and modern sensibility was communicated.

Lastly, the difference between the two dances is reflected in the costumes. In *The Love of Peacocks*, Yang Liping uses not only long and thick skirts to imitate peacocks' tails (for both the male and the female), but also blue body paint to

emphasize the mysterious quality (Figure 22). In contrast, the *The Spirit of Peacock* costume was a simple, white chiffon skirt. As what I have mentioned in the comparison between Dao Meilan's *Golden Peacock* (Dance #5) and Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6), the white costume sent a message to the audience that the peacock in Dance #6 is an elegant fairy that lives in a mysterious wonderland. Elegance is the key quality of the peacock in Dance #6. Comparatively, the blue costume in Dance #9, *The Love of Peacocks*, is more mysterious than elegant. Yang Liping is still trying to create a peacock that does not mimic a natural animal, but this peacock is not an elegant princess anymore. The blue costume and body painting send a clear message that the two peacocks are more mysterious and magical.



Figure 22: Body painting in *The Love of Peacock*. (Reteieved August 27, 2016, from <http://news.wudao.com/20121016/64687.html>)

Through all the changes, a very different peacock dance has been created by Yang Liping in *The Love of Peacocks* more than twenty years after she first created the elegant peacock in *The Spirit of Peacock* in 1989. This difference is not necessarily about movements, but about the character. The main differences between the two dances is that peacocks are magic beings who live in a mysterious and beautiful planet in *The Love of Peacocks*, and the peacock is an elegant fairy who lives in a peaceful wonderland in *The Spirit of Peacock*. *The Spirit of Peacock* became famous in 1989 mainly because of the elegance that the

peacock expresses. The white, elegant peacock has become a symbol of the peacock dance for most audiences. This peacock has no emotions, life, and friends because she is too beautiful to be near to. Yang Liping created a peacock as a character which can be explained by one of the traditional Chinese sayings, “cannot be touched and only be admired from afar” (可远观而不可褻玩焉). Comparatively, the peacocks in *The Love of Peacocks* are more tangible than the peacock in *The Spirit of Peacock*, even though they do not live in a real nature as well. They express feelings and emotions and they live in harmony with all the other beings in nature (i.e. slow-moving leaves with lights, and butterflies, etc.) (Table 15).

		<i>The Spirit of Peacock</i>	<i>The Love of Peacocks</i>
Costumes		Sleeveless top; Long skirt with wide hem; Bottom of the skirt is decorated like peacock's tail; White; Hair accessory is a peacock feather; Long nails	Long and feathery blue skirt; Light tan tight top with painted blue peacock pattern; Blue and triangle hair accessory; Long nails; Body painting of a peacock feather pattern;
Movements	Similarities	The peacock-head gesture; The wavy movements of arms and waists;	
	Differences	Solo dance; Continually fast	Duet dance; Communicating

		spinning; Dance in the moon;	movements between two peacocks;
Music		<i>Pastorale</i> from <i>Songs From A Secret Garden</i>	Traditional instruments; Cucurbit flute; Birds singing; Modern style; More drumming and percussion
Stage design		Tranquil; Elegant; Peaceful;	Mysterious; Colorful; Magical;
Dance		The peacock is created as an elegant fairy;	The peacocks are created as magic beings

Table 15. Comparison between *The Love of Peacock* and *The Spirit of Peacock*

Yang Liping's influences on peacock dance

Influence 1: Yang Liping's personal aesthetic expectations altered the peacock dance and have become "traditional."

That Yang Liping became famous and had various influences on peacock dance is not a simple phenomenon. It is a result of the interaction of elements from many aspects such as politics, economics, techniques, cultural development, etc. However, I will not focus on how this phenomenon happened here, but only focus on what influences Yang Liping had on the peacock dance.

The first influence is that Yang Liping's personal aesthetic taste has been added to the peacock dance and has become conventional. Such aesthetic

expectations can be explained by her desire to express the spirit and beauty of beings and nature through her dance. She claims that every being in nature has an internal spirit and her job is to express this spirit through dance. Such spirit should be elegant, ethereal, and mysterious, which is how humans feel about these beings. The success of *The Spirit of Peacock* encouraged her to develop her dance style in this direction. According to all of Yang Liping's performance that I have researched, the development of her aesthetic pursuit occurred in two periods: the period when she focused on one or more beings from nature (the late 1980s to the early 2000s), and the period when she started focusing on nature as a whole context (after 2000).

I studied most of the dances that Yang Liping choreographed and performed from the end of the 1980s until the beginning of the 2000s, and all of them have shown very similar characteristics. These dances include *The Spirit of Peacock* (Que Zhi Ling, 雀之灵, 1989), *Two Trees* (Liang Ke Shu, 两棵树, 1993, Figure 23), *Moonlight* (Yue Guang, 月光, 2004, Figure 24), and *Bamboo* (竹, 2006, Figure 25). *The Spirit of Peacock* was the most famous of all these dances. The similar characteristics that these dances present was that they emphasized and displayed the secret and beautiful personalities of beings like trees, fire, the Moon, and bamboo. From all the dances listed above, we can see that she has a similar posture and lighting design in these dances. She focused on this kind of style more than the characters in her dances. She changed the being but not the style in every dance. She was the first famous dancer in China to focus on this motif. She has repeatedly emphasized this style in this ten year period and it has become her

personal style.



Figure 23: *Two Trees* (两棵树, 1993)



Figure 24: *Moonlight* (月光, 2004)

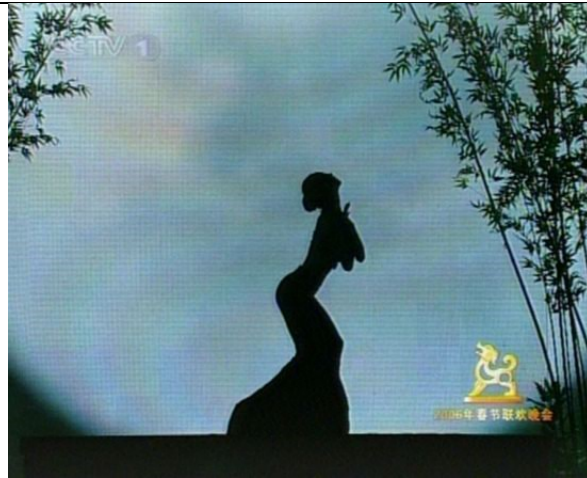


Figure 25: Bamboo (竹, 2006)

I have also studied dances that Yang Liping choreographed and performed after 2000. She changed her research to looking for singing and dances that have not been shown on stage or in dance schools in places from Yunnan and Tibet, and then move them to stages. What she has done in this process is to add her personal style to the singing or dances she has found. She still focuses on expressing the mysterious quality of the nature and culture, but in this period of time her focus has increased from a single being to a context in which many beings exist together. According to a media interview (CDFS news, 2013), Yang Liping started her business of commercial performance in 2003, and this is the time when the Intangible Cultural Heritage program from UNESCO started getting popular in China. She chose Yunnan and Tibet because they are neighbors and both have various nationalities that seem mysterious to audiences from other cultures. She choreographed four dance and musical productions: *Dynamic Yunnan* (Yunnan Yingxiang, 云南映象, 2006), *Tibetan Secret* (Zang Mi, 藏谜, 2007), *Sounds of Yunnan* (Yunnan De Xiangsheng, 云南的响声, 2009), and *Peacock* (Kong Que,

孔雀, 2012) to express the beauty of Yunnan and Tibet. This change of focus can be seen in *The Love of Peacocks*, which is a dance piece from the dance and musical production, *Peacock* (2012). She is still creating something with mysterious quality but not only elegant anymore.

Yang Liping has changed the peacock dance in the process of fulfilling her aesthetic goals. *The Spirit of Peacock* and *The Love of Peacocks* are very beautiful dances. However, these dances are not the peacock dance that was developed from the Dai culture. The focus of the peacock dance has been moved from the focus on the peacock to a focus purely on dance. Originally, the peacock dance performed by Dai people involved wearing costumes like a real peacock and imitating a peacock's real movements. Even though Mao Xiang changed the costume in the 1950s, most of his movements were still imitations of peacocks. The focus of the dance was on whether or not the movements looked like a peacock rather than whether or not the dance looked beautiful to particular audiences.

However, Yang Liping has moved the focus to dance itself in her peacock dances. She used the peacock as a medium to pursue her own aesthetic goals. Her main focus was to create a beautiful dance as a work of art. The peacock became a bird that has a noble, elegant, and mysterious personality in her dance because she, and most of the audience, believe that such a personality is beautiful and attractive. The cultural and religious meanings of the dance have been reduced, and a purely artistic meaning has been expanded. The peacock is not the most important theme in the dance anymore. Indeed, she still performs similar beautiful dances when

she uses different figures such as a swan, red-crowned crane trees, moonlight, fire, and bamboo.

In addition, she was also successful because her aesthetic vision matches most of the audiences' aesthetics. The introduction of *The Spirit of Peacock* (2006) in *Dynamic Yunnan* (2006) illustrates that she is aware of what she is doing. Yang Liping used two sentences as statements for the dance: "where do you dance, the lonely shadow in the Moon, the flying feather in clouds; where do you dance, the spinning skirts on rainbow, the secret dream in your heart" (你在那里舞蹈, 月中寂寞的身影, 云中飘落的羽毛; 你在那里舞蹈, 彩虹上旋转的舞裙, 心中猜不透的梦兆). The introduction already gives audiences the sense of the personality she is creating.

Yang Liping's aesthetic expectations have led her to continually change the peacock dance in the last few decades. She emphasizes two key themes through her peacock dance and other dances, which are spiritual and natural. She keeps looking for better ways to express the spirit in her dances, and this aesthetic expectation has become a key element to determine the principles of her choreography.

Influence 2: Yang Liping paid less attention to expressing Dai culture through her peacock dances.

Most Chinese audiences continue to consider Yang Liping's peacock dance a development of the peacock dance of the Dai nationality, however, her choreography decreasingly expresses any specific elements of Dai culture. She did not try to use any of the original movements of the peacock dance, she does

not wear the Dai traditional costume, nor use the traditional music for peacock dance. She focuses on creating a white peacock as a character who is distinguished – a peacock that represents a magic and brave bird who protects the Dai people. The spirit of Yang Liping's peacock is from her aesthetic interests and it is accepted by non-Dai audiences. Audience members consider this to be beautiful and the peacock happens to match their aesthetic requirements. In this sense, Yang Liping's peacock dance is not a Dai dance anymore. It is a more universal stage dance that is inspired by the Dai peacock dance. Yang Liping's peacock dance choreography is based on the aesthetic standards of herself and her audiences, and not really the folk culture of the Dai nationality.

Yang Liping has never focused on the cultural expression of nationalities in her dance. Her own ancestral nationality is Bai, one of the many neighbors of the Dai in Yunnan Province. However, she has no choreographies to express the Bai culture. According to her advertising material, Yang Liping's peacock is based on her understanding of Yunnan Province's natural environment. Most parts of Yunnan have a subtropical climate. The Province is home to 25 different nationalities which as a whole context is the main focus in her dance. The various folk dances from different nationalities are only the source for her to express the beauty of Yunnan. Cultural differences are vague in her dance. Through both the peacock dance and other ethnic-folk dances in her singing and dance productions after 2000 that she has choreographed, Yang Liping has been creating a common sense of Yunnan's beauty.

Influence 3: Yang Liping symbolizes a female stage peacock dance.

Through the performance of *The Spirit of Peacock* on CCTV, Yang Liping created the white peacock as a female stage peacock dance. For a long period of time after *The Spirit of Peacock* (1989), Yang Liping's white peacock was the standard used by the public to judge whether subsequent performances are successful female, stage peacock dances, even though none of the symbols, such as the peacock-head gesture and her costume in *The Spirit of Peacock*, (1986/1989) are from the original peacock dance (Dance #1).

The peacock-head gesture comes, at least in part, from the Dai fish dance. According to my interview to Ma Wenjing (Personal communication: August 25, 2013), who was the female partner of Mao Xiang in his second version of *Duet Peacock Dance* (1957) and who is now a famous Dai dance instructor and choreographer in China, this gesture was developed from a movement to imitate fish fins in the Dai fish dance. Ma said that this movement became a main component of the stage peacock dance after she and her colleague organized materials from the early peacock dance for the stage peacock dance in the 1960s (Figure 26). Dao Meilan used this gesture in *Golden Peacock* (1980). Yang Liping emphasized it and made it a symbolic gesture for peacock dance in *The Spirit of Peacock* (1986).



Figure 26: Ma Wenjing is showing the movement of fish fins in the Dai fish dance
(Personal interview recording)

Yang Liping was the first dancer who used a costume for female peacock dance that has no clear references to Dai culture. No female peacock dance existed before the 1950s, and there was no traditional costume for a female peacock dance (the large peacock tail is present only on male birds). However, costumes for females performing the peacock dance on stage before Yang Liping all at least contained references to Dai traditional clothing. Mao Xiang was the first person who had females perform stage peacock dance. Demonstrated clearly in Figure 5 & 6, which is a photo of Dance #2, the female dancer was wearing a traditional Dai jacket and skirt. In the first female, group peacock dance (Dance #3), the costume included a Dai traditional jacket with a newly designed long skirt that is decorated with patterns that suggest peacock feathers (Figure 27). The costumes are similar for Dao Meilan's *Golden Peacock* (Dance #5, Figure 9). All these costumes had the Dai traditional jacket with newly designed long skirts. In *The Spirit of Peacock* (1989), Yang Liping used modern designed one-piece

dressess without the Dai jacket. Nothing from the Dai culture remains. Nonetheless, this costume became a new standard for female stage peacock dances.



Figure 27: Costume of *Peacock Dance* (1957)

Conclusion

Yang Liping and her peacock dance is a strong example to illustrate how an individual can influence an ethnic-folk dance. She has a strong personal interest in choreographing an ethnic-folk dance (the peacock dance she learned before 1980s). This interest combined with the expectations of the market for these types of dance were the guiding motivations for her choreography. She added her own aesthetic expression to the peacock dance and has changed the peacock dance into a substantially different dance when compared to the peacock dances performed by her predecessors Mao Xiang (dance #1 & 2) and Dao Meilan (dance #4 & 5). Yang Liping created a new stage peacock dance and it has spread as a representation of the development of the Dai culture throughout China. The new style that she created was guided by her personal understanding and aesthetic

values on stage dance, peacock dance and other ethnic-folk dances after 2000.

This new style has become the typical Yang Liping's style that can also be seen in many of her other choreographies.

Chapter 4 - Creative factor – community

Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on how community functions as a creative factor in changing ethnic-folk dance. Among the four creative factors I discuss in this dissertation, community is the one that is larger than individual, but smaller than nationality and state. Members of a community usually know each other personally. They communicate with each other face to face, share their personal lives and help each other if needed. Ethnic-folk dances that are changed in various communities are varied from one community to another. Members of communities change ethnic-folk dance in various ways, and to create or maintain the identity of the community is one of the main reasons to cause the change. Among many communities that could possibly be studied for this dissertation, I will focus on one diaspora community. My focus will be on how members of this diaspora community change their ethnic-folk dance to create and maintain their identity.

Using and changing ethnic-folk dance to represent and create cultural/national identities is a widespread phenomenon that often occurs in diaspora groups. Shay (2006) focused on the way in which ethnic-folk dance is utilized and manipulated to represent various nationalities in a multicultural context. He explained how dance is practiced in two different contexts - within ethnic and immigrant communities and in Anglo-American folk dance revival

communities. In addition, he wrote about how dances are chosen and used to represent a particular nationality by various ethnic groups. My research will describe how and why the peacock dance was chosen and rechoreographed by Chinese Canadians for the purpose of strengthening their ethnic identity in a multicultural environment. Shay's (2006) detailed description of how various ethnic groups use ethnic-folk dance to create their identities has provided me with strong theoretical support to analyze my data.

Many scholars have conducted research projects related to Chinese diaspora groups living all over the world as well. DeBernardi (2004) focused on Chinese communities in Penang, Malaysia and their practice of Chinese traditional religion. She argued that religious communities do not only practice religions, but also practice politics through which they unify people and help establish their identity as a minority in Malaysia. She described how the religion has already changed as a result of the influence of colonialism and Malaysian culture. She also argued that religions can be considered as social movements to create and sustain communities and ideologies. Debernardi's description of the Penang Chinese community provided me with many insights into how communities function and how a sense of community survives in a multicultural environment.

In this chapter, I will focus on a Chinese diaspora community in Canada to see how these Chinese Canadians maintain and influence Chinese ethnic-folk dance. I have been studying and living in Canada for more than seven years, and the experiences I have had with Chinese Canadians provides me with rich and direct data to inform my discussion. The community I chose for this case study is

the Cindy Yang Dance Academy, in Vancouver. The Cindy Yang Dance Academy was established by Yang Xiaohua in 1990. Yang Xiaohua, who is a member of the Bai nationality, came to Vancouver in the 1980s from PRC. She now runs her schools with her daughter Yang Yang. Yang Yang graduated from The Central University for Nationalities (CUN) which is a special university for minorities in Beijing. The CUN has a strong ethnic-folk dance program, which has influenced Yang Yang in many aspects. Because of Yang Xiaohua and Yang Yang's backgrounds, this dance school focuses on teaching and choreographing dances representing Chinese minorities. More importantly, Yang Xiaohua learned the peacock dance in Yunnan with Mao Xiang and has been involved in various peacock dance performances since the 1950s. She also re-choreographed a peacock dance, *The Peacock Princesses* (*Kongque Gongzhu*, 孔雀公主), in 2010 in Vancouver to celebrate the 20th anniversary of her dance school. This peacock dance provides a great opportunity to explain how a community changes ethnic-folk dance in a new environment.

Motivations for change

An important purpose of members of a diasporic community is to build and develop its identity in a multi-cultural environment. However, the original ethnic-folk dances from a diasporic community's homeland can usually not be used directly as a proper medium to fulfill this community goal. Therefore, a diasporic community changes its ethnic-folk dance, consciously or unconsciously, for the purposes of building and maintaining its identity. There are at least three motivations for diaspora communities to change an ethnic-folk dance.

The first motivation for a diasporic community to practice ethnic-folk dance is to keep the group together. A diasporic community is created by a group of people who share common cultural characteristics. These common cultural characteristics are perhaps the most important bonding agent for the people to be together. Through repeating and emphasizing common cultural characteristics, ethnic-folk dance becomes a very efficient way to keep people together as a group. I have a vivid example to support this argument. I attended a celebration of Chinese New Year in 2010 which was organized by a Chinese community in Edmonton, Canada. Ninety-nine percent of the participants of the event were Chinese Canadians who speak Mandarin and were around age 40 and higher. Most of them were the first generation immigrants who came from mainland China. There was a dance in the performance, *Zhong Dance* (忠字舞), which impressed most of the people who were there. *Zhong Dance* was a very popular category of dance during the Cultural Revolution in China (1963-1973). It was a kind of dance that people used to express their loyalty to Mao Zedong during that period. Most people who were born before the late 1970s have memories about the *Zhong Dance*. The Cultural Revolution is a painful memory now for all the people who experienced it, however, that dance made people laugh that night. They were laughing at how silly they, or members of their families, behaved during the Cultural Revolution. Their common memory of the Cultural Revolution was recalled by this dance. Only people like them who have this common cultural background could understand the painful and at the same time funny feeling behind the laughter. The choreographer of this dance picked one of

the common cultural memories of this group of people and emphasized it in the dance, which tied people together as a community. Nobody missed the Cultural Revolution and nobody wants it back, however, no matter how painful it was it has become a common memory of this group of people that no one else could really understand or empathize with.

Presenting a strong identity to both insiders and outsiders is the second motivation for a community to practice its ethnic-folk dance. Ethnic-folk dance is one efficient tool for a community to create a strong sense of identity. A strong sense of identity in a diasporic community provides the community with political power which helps the community actively participate and influence various events in both its homeland and the new society where it lives. The stronger the identity is, the more powerful its influence. A diasporic community's influence is represented in the following two aspects. Firstly, an influential diasporic community is an active agent in connecting its homeland to the new society (e.g. politics, cultures, economics, etc.). An active connection between the two cultures brings both political and economic benefits to the community. Secondly, an influential diasporic community helps the immigrants from the same culture to gain more power in the new society. Such power plays an important role in protecting and improving the immigrant's quality of life in the new society.

The third motivation for members of a diasporic community to practice ethnic-folk dance is to pass down their traditions to new generations. New generations of the diasporic community usually have a different understanding of their traditions because they grow up in a new environment. Therefore, as the

older generations teach their ethnic-folk dance to the newer generations, the older generation has to change the dance according to the newer generation's expectations. In this case, some new content or styles might be added to ethnic-folk dances to attract the younger generation, and some existing contents ,may be given up.

Principles for change

Diaspora communities follow various principles to change ethnic-folk dances. Some of the principles are specific ones, which are only followed by certain communities, while others are general. In this part, I will talk about two general principles that almost every diasporic community follows. By following these principles, diasporic communities change ethnic-folk dances into a proper medium for identifying themselves as a diaspora group in a multi-cultural environment.

Creating and maintaining clear and unique cultural symbols is the first principle for a diasporic community as they change their ethnic-folk dances. Such cultural symbols are like labels that make an ethnic-folk dance become a proper agent for binding the community together, identifying the community, and showing their traditions to newer generations. In addition, the symbols need to contain the following features to be effective. Firstly, the symbols need to be clear enough to send a message about who the community is and what its traditions are. Secondly, the symbols need to be unique enough to represent the community in contrast to any other community. Thirdly, whether or not the symbols are authentic or traditional is not necessarily important. The key point is that they are

accepted by most of the members of the community, by outsiders, and by the new generations as representative symbols.

Making an ethnic-folk dance into something that reinforces a sense of belonging is the second principle for a diasporic community to change ethnic-folk dance. Immigrants are changed by the environment of their new society. Such changes are reflected in various ways, such as language, food, relationship with family members and other people, lifestyle, attitude, etc. These changes make diasporic people different from both the people from their home culture and those in their new social environment. Their ethnic-folk dances, in this case, are more about creating a sense of belonging instead of necessarily replicating original traditions. Their ethnic-folk dances may show not only their traditions, but also the new tradition that they are creating in the current social environment. Consciously or unconsciously, they want to show both who they were and who they are through ethnic-folk dance. Expressing this unique cultural reality is perhaps the most important purpose of their ethnic-folk dance for diasporic communities.

Ways to change

There are many ways to change and adapt an ethnic-folk dance to become a proper medium for a diasporic community's sense of belonging. I will talk about three basic ways in this section: symbolization, distinction, and professionalization. These three ways work together to shape an ethnic-folk dance into a form that serves the diasporic community's needs.

Symbolization is the first way that a diasporic community changes an

ethnic-folk dance. Diasporic communities need to change ethnic-folk dances to be highly symbolic for representing themselves. Most ethnic-folk dances are highly symbolic dances before they are adapted by diasporic communities. However, members of a diasporic community need to rebuild symbols into forms that are more suitable for creating their specific identity. Such symbols could be traditional cultural features (e.g. festivals, colors, costumes, specific decorations, specific dance props, instruments) that are taken from a diasporic community's mother-culture, are cultural features that are created in the new environment where the diasporic community lives, or a mixture of both. Even though members of a diasporic community usually claim certain symbols as traditional, the most important thing about the symbols is that they be accepted by most of the members of the community, and by outsiders, as representative of the community. Members of a diasporic community may have various sub-cultural features brought together by the differences in their hometowns, dialects, ages, etc. The symbols are usually chosen from a tradition that is as general as possible to fulfill most of the member's expectations. People usually repeat and emphasize those common cultural features for most of the members, and ignore the different sub-cultural features. The symbols also need to be ones that are considered as symbolic of the culture by the outside. The outsiders and the insiders of a culture have different access to understanding of the culture of origin. One item, which is considered as a symbol of a culture by the outsiders, might be given up by the insiders because the latter consider this item as old and unfashionable. Therefore, it is important for diasporic communities to always think about how the outsiders

may react when they choreograph and perform an ethnic-folk dance.

Distinction is the second way a diasporic community changes an ethnic-folk dance. This way is to make an ethnic-folk dance unique by adding a diasporic community's new traditions to the dance. As I have mentioned above, these new traditions are influenced by the new environment of the diasporic community and its reactions to those influences. Most of the time, diasporic communities do not want to change ethnic-folk dances in this way consciously. They claim that their dances are authentic to make the dance seem as traditional as possible. Such changes usually happen because of the diasporic community's unconscious reaction to the influences or the objective limitations of the new environment. For instance, locally organized celebrations of the Chinese New Year in China usually happen on the streets. However, many of them happen on stages inside various buildings in Edmonton. This makes the dances for celebrating Chinese New Year into stage dances in Edmonton, instead of participatory dances on the streets like in China. This change is not made by diasporic communities on purpose. It has happened because of Chinese Canadians' reactions to the limited conditions of Edmonton. One of the limitations is that Chinese Canadians are a small minority in Edmonton and they do not have public support to organize huge celebrations on streets. Another limitation is the weather. Edmonton is the northern most city (population over 500,000) in North America and the temperature sometimes goes down to minus 35 to 40 degrees during the Chinese New Year. People cannot stay outside to celebrate the Chinese New Year on streets in this low temperature. Therefore, ethnic-folk dances for celebrating Chinese New Year in Edmonton are

mostly stage dances.

Professionalization is the third way used by members of a diasporic community to change ethnic-folk dances. Professionalization, in this case, refers to people who have been trained in dance in China. This is not always the case, but being trained in China gets a practitioner the greatest legitimacy as an authentic Chinese dancer. I have been practicing Chinese ethnic-folk dance in Edmonton since 2008. What I have experienced is that people try to find a dance expert who is as professional as possible to teach or lead participants in various events regardless of whether the event is a performance to outsiders or a Chinese New Year party attended by insiders. Organizers of diasporic communities want their ethnic-folk dances to look as professional as possible. The most professional dancers or choreographers are usually invited to organize dance activities in a community because they know more about ethnic-folk dances than others. Most of them have received a professional education in ethnic-folk dance before they moved to the new society. They add professional content, such as sophisticated techniques, fancy movements, and complicated forms, to ethnic-folk dance to make them more impressive to audiences. The more professional the members are, the more professional the dances become.

The results of change

An ethnic-folk dance that has been changed by a diasporic community is a representative dance that clearly expresses both the symbols of a certain culture and the features of the community. Considering the above reasons of why and how diasporic communities change ethnic-folk dances, we can get a clear picture

of what the results look like. The dances are highly symbolic of a certain culture. In addition, the dances are clear expression of a diasporic community. Lastly, the choreographers try to make the dance as professional as possible.

Case study: Cindy Yang Dance Academy and *The Peacock Princess* (dance #4, #6, and #8)

Many of the professional dancers or choreographers in Chinese diasporic communities build dance schools to educate and develop ethnic-folk dances in their new environment. My case study in this chapter is about one of these Chinese dance schools. It is in Vancouver and is named the Cindy Yang Dance Academy of Canada (Jianada Yang Xiaohua Minzu Wudao Xueyuan, 加拿大杨小花民族舞蹈学院). The creator of this dance school, Yang Xiaohua (杨小花), was one of Mao Xiang's students in the 1950s. She was involved in choreographing Dai dances, including peacock dances, in mainland China until the 1980s, and in Canada since then.

Yang Xiaohua and her teachers at the Cindy Yang Dance Academy choreographed a dance performance, *The Peacock Princess* (dance #8), in 2010 as a part of a performance to celebrate the 20th anniversary of her dance academy. This performance was derived from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* (Dance #4), but has been changed in many ways. It is a great example for demonstrating how a diasporic community changes the peacock dance. In the following section, I will compare the two dance performances and discuss how the Cindy Yang Dance Academy has changed the dance.

Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona (dance #4) VS. The Peacock Princess

(dance #8)

The reason I will compare *Zhaoshutun and Nanmunuona* and *The Peacock Princess* is that *The Peacock Princess* is choreographed on the basis of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*. *The Peacock Princess* is another name of *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*. Nanmunuona is the name of the peacock princess in the latter, and the story is about the love between Nanmunuona and the prince, Zhaoshutun. The comparison between the two dance performances will illustrate how the peacock dance was changed by the Cindy Yang Dance Academy.

Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona and *The Peacock Princess* are not comparable regarding to the whole dance performance. *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* was a seven-act dance performance, and *The Peacock Princess* was a five-act dance performance. In addition, *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* was performed for celebrating the 30th anniversary of PRC in China. It had full financial support from the government, and there was also a group of professional staff of various kinds to work together on completing the performance. *The Peacock Princess* was performed for celebrating the 20th anniversary of Cindy Yang Dance Academy of Canada. The budget of the performance was limited and they had only two dance instructors. Yang Xiaohua and her daughter worked on it without any help. It is not surprising then that the scale of the two dance performances is quite different. However, we can make some comparisons if we focus only on the peacock dances of the two dance performances. I will compare the two peacock dances in terms of what changes there were and for what reasons the changes happened. Some of the

changes were Yang Xiaohua's active decisions and others were caused by passive limitations. This comparison will exemplify how a diasporic community may change an ethnic-folk dance.

The movements of the peacock dances from the two dance performances represented two very different styles. The movements of the peacock dance from *Zhaoshutun and Nanmunuona* had three sources: the peacock dance from the 1956 version, the peacock dances from Southeast Asia, and Chinese classical dance. Thus, the peacock dance presented a mixed dance style instead of primarily a peacock dance. It used multiple cultural features to represent the Dai culture. In contrast, the movements of the peacock dance from *The Peacock Princess* had only one source, Yang Liping's *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6). This dance presented Yang Liping's style, and almost all of the symbolic movements of the peacock dance, such as the peacock-head gesture, wavy movements, and shaking skirts, were used in this dance. I am not sure who decided to choose Yang Liping's dance instead of the dance from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* to be the source of *The Peacock Princess*. According to my interview with Yang Xiaohua, they believe Yang Liping's dance is more elegant and fashionable compared to the dance from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*.

The dancers who performed the peacock dances from the two dance performances were also very different. The dancers in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* were Dai people or people from other nationalities that lived near the Dai. Compared to the dancers who are not from the Dai culture, they have a richer cultural background and they may therefore know how to express the Dai

style in their peacock dance better compared to the dancers in *The Peacock Princess*. The dancers in *The Peacock Princess* were all young, Chinese Canadians. The story and the dance were new to them and were something that they were not familiar with in their daily lives. In this case, it would be hard for them to express the internal cultural features of the dance. Therefore, even though both of the peacock dances claimed to represent the Dai culture, the representation of the peacock dance through *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* focused on the internal expression, while the representation of the dance through *The Peacock Princess* focused on the external expression.

Lastly, the music of the peacock dances from the two dance performances was different. The peacock dance from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* was accompanied by Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓), which is the main instrument that accompanies peacock dance in the original environment (Dance #1). In contrast, the music in *The Peacock Princess* was exactly the same recorded musical composition used in the first version of *The Spirit of Peacock* (1986/1989).

Generally speaking, the peacock dances from the two performances are very different choreographies. The peacock dance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* was developed from the 1956 version of the performance. The choreographer of the peacock dance in *The Peacock Princess* claimed that it was developed from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona*, but it was actually from *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6). The peacock dance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* is closer to the original peacock dance (Dance #1) because it carried more of the original features than *The Peacock Princess* (Table 16).

		<i>Zhaoshutun</i> and <i>Nanmunuona</i> (dance #4)	<i>The Peacock Princess</i> (dance #8)
Why		Celebrating the 30 th anniversary of PRC;	Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Cindy Yang Dance Academy; Commercial performance;
Dancers	Similarities	Professionally trained	
	Differences	Dai people or people who were familiar with the Dai culture;	Students from the Cindy Yang Dance Academy; Chinese Canadians;
Costume	Similarities	Long skirt with wide hem, and the skirt was decorated like a peacock's tail;	
	Differences	Light yellow; Long sleeved doublet in Dai's style;	Yellow; Tank top;
Movements	Similarities	The peacock-head gesture;	
	Differences	Mixed with the movements of the peacock dance in the 1956 version, The peacock dance from Southeast Asia (e.g. Myanmar and Cambodia), and Chinese classical dance	Movements from Yang Liping's <i>The Spirit of Peacock</i> (Dance #6) such as: wavy movements and shaking skirts;
Music		Xiangjiaogu (象脚鼓)	The music of <i>The</i>

		<i>Spirit of Peacock</i> (1986/1989)
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Table 16: *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* VS. *The Peacock Princess*.

Cindy Yang Dance Academy's influences on peacock dance

There are three main influences that the Cindy Yang Dance Academy has had on the peacock dance which are demonstrated through the comparison between the peacock dances from *Zhaoshutuan & Nanmunuona* and *The Peacock Princess*.

Maintaining symbols that are accepted by both insiders and outsiders is the first influence that the Cindy Yang Dance Academy has had. Yang Xiaohua was born in Yunnan province and she was Mao Xiang's student. In addition, she was involved in choreographing and performing the peacock dance and other Dai dances for a long time before she came to Canada. Therefore, Yang Xiaohua clearly knows that the peacock dance in *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* has deeper historical roots compared to *The Spirit of Peacock*. She could have chosen the peacock dance from *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* as the source for *The Peacock Princess*, however, she chose Yang Liping's style to identify her community in Canada. Yang Liping is an international renowned peacock dancer. The symbols of the peacock dance that she created in *The Spirit of Peacock* are more accepted internationally. The Cindy Yang Dance Academy needs an "authentic" peacock dance to identify itself as a Chinese dance community, but this peacock dance needs only to be acceptable by the audience, rather than needing to accurately

represent the Dai culture. Therefore, Yang Xiaohua chose *The Spirit of Peacock* to create a clear cultural label for her community.

Simplification of the dance was the Cindy Yang Dance Academy's second influence on the peacock dance. Such simplifications are reflected in both the peacock dance and the story of the dance performance. Yang Xiaohua needed to simplify the movements of the peacock dance because students at Cindy Yang Dance Academy do not have much background for understanding the cultural context of the dance movements. Yang Xiaohua thus reduced the movements that contained the internal cultural meaning and focused on the external expression of the Dai culture. She also reduced the degree of difficulty of the movements and added various new formats to the dance. Yang Xiaohua simplified the story of the dance performance by de-emphasizing the conflicts between the protagonists and the antagonists. According to my interview with Yang Xiaohua, the conflict between the protagonists and antagonists in the *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* version was influenced by the bitter political environment of China at the time. Yang Xiaohua believed that the bitter conflict was inappropriate for expressing in *The Peacock Princess* because it is hard for Chinese Canadians and other audiences in Canada to understand it. Therefore, she de-emphasized the conflict by simplifying the antagonist from a wizard into a moose (which also made it very Canadian!), which made the story more like a fairy-tale such as *Sleeping Beauty* or *Swan Lake*.

The third influence that the Cindy Yang Dance Academy had on the peacock dance was to make it as professional as possible. The Cindy Yang Dance

Academy is a commercial dance school. One of its main purposes is to expand its business by receiving more students. Professional dance training is one important attraction for customers. This is the reason that sophisticated dance techniques from ballet and Chinese classical dance, such as lifting and jumping, were added to *The Peacock Princess*.

Conclusion

The Cindy Yang Dance Academy produced a peacock dance that can be shown as influenced by the academy's community. This peacock dance represents Chinese culture by emphasizing symbols that are accepted by both insiders and outsiders. It also represents the Cindy Yang Dance Academy through changes such as the simplification and professionalization of the dance. Some of such changes are actively made and others are passive. *The Peacock Princess* identified the academy as a community that focused on professionally educating and performing Chinese dance as well as a community that promotes and spreads Chinese culture.

Chapter 5 – Creative factor – Nationality

Introduction

Nationality, ideally, is more a cultural concept than a political one. Harrell defines nationality as “a group of people that shares a putative common origin through descent and putative commonality of cultural features” (1990: 516). Nationality is about a group of people who share, or they think they share, some common features, which normally include language, history, religion, tradition, food, clothing, and other cultural factors. However, the reality in China and in many other places in the world, is that nationality is more a political concept than a cultural one. There are 56 nationalities that are recognized by the Chinese government in China. This chapter is about how these nationalities influence their ethnic-folk dance in the process of building their identities.

Non-specialists often think about nationality as stable and timeless because it is related to a specific culture, which they consider as old, timeless, and traditional. However, the truth is that nationality has never been an objective and static reality. Harrell (1990) argued that ethnicity has a fluid and changeable nature. He claims that the real nature of nationality involves a shifting and fluid process of negotiation. Consequently, ethnic folk dance, as an important cultural item symbolizing a nationality, also continually changes as the nation changes.

When we talk about creating an identity of a nationality, it is not only the nationality itself but also the context that surrounds the nationality that is involved

in the process. Changes in the members' ideal of a nationality will be reflected in their ethnic-folk dance. As Barth (1969) argued, comparisons between a nationality and other cultural groups in its surrounding context provide the members of the nationality with an awareness of their own identity. Such awareness of other cultural groups provides the members of a nationality with a context for influencing their own presentation, and thus they may choose to keep or to adjust the dances through which they present themselves. This is why people have a stronger and clearer sense of who they are and where they come from when they are in a cross-cultural situation. For example, the members of a nationality who live in a multi-cultural environment may have a strong desire to demonstrate their nationality both to insiders and to outsiders.

Another important context through which a nationality recreates its identity is tourism. Desmond (1999) studied how members of nationalities change their dances for the purpose of tourism. She described how a performing group in Hawaii constructed the local life style into a performance and packaged it into a commodity for tourist consumption. The ethnic-folk dance of the Hawaiian group was not the main focus of Desmond's research, however, the events she described revealed how the Hawaiian group changed the dance to show its so-called "pure" and "authentic" culture to tourists. This represents a growing universal phenomenon of how communities change their own culture to fulfill the requirements of tourism industry.

In this chapter, I discuss the peacock dance and its relationship to the Dai nationality. The ways that members of the Dai nationality change the peacock

dance is a complicated phenomenon. They change the peacock dance to express their identity. However, the ways that they change peacock dance are different from one context to another. Some peacock dances are created for the purpose of tourism, some are created for politicians and academic researchers, and others are created for professional dance education and competitions. Sometimes, the function of symbolizing Dai culture is important to the performance. Other times, the characteristic of the performance as a symbol of Dai culture fades almost entirely. Different peacock dances are used to represent the Dai culture in various contexts and none of them are the same when compared to each other or to the original version (dance #1). It depends on who has the power to make decisions, what is the benefit, and who benefits from the change. According to the data I collected, I will focus more on the context of the ICH program. The two dancers I will discuss in this chapter were both Mao Xiang's students back in the 1950s, and are both transmitters of the national ICH program now. I will focus on how they change their own peacock dance in order to create Dai identity.

Motivations for change

Members of a nationality change their ethnic-folk dances for various reasons. Sometimes, a nationality changes its ethnic-folk dance as a part of process following the development of the society they belong to. Following its nature of fluidity and changeability, a nationality's culture is changed as time goes on. Such changes happen during the process of the development of a society. Such changes, reflected in its ethnic-folk dance, are generally natural, slow, continuous, and unconscious. In addition, the change is always a negotiation between traditions

and trends. Urbanization is one of the examples for this phenomenon.

Other times, active changes are made at the level of nationality for other reasons such as identifying themselves, maintaining uniqueness, or pursuing economic benefits. The reasons for motivations for what a nationality changes in ethnic-folk dance can be various and specific, but they all develop according to the three dimensions that Roosens (1989) has argued: cultural, social, and psychological.

Influences from the social and psychological aspects work together to cause a nationality to change its ethnic-folk dance. Such changes are faster, more active, and more complete compared to the changes that happen on an ethnic-folk dance through social development. My discussion of how the Dai nationality changes its peacock dance will mostly focus on these two dimensions. The social aspect relates to power from the outside of a nationality, and the psychological aspect focuses on power within. Both the power from the outside and the inside combine to influence a nationality and change its dance. Power from the outside can come from different sources. The outside power can be social differences. For example, changes in a society (e.g. a change of social system, politics, and policies) may be very influential factors that motivate a nationality to change its ethnic-folk dance. Sometimes they can change the ethnic-folk dance completely. Roosens (1989) argued that nationality does not result from a strong, objective cultural continuity, but the general, broad historical or political setting can play a decisive role in effecting changes. This also applies to ethnic-folk dance. Other times, the outside power can be the differences among various cultures, which are highlighted when

members of a nationality compare it to other ethnic groups. The process of comparison will make the members of a nationality more reflexive about themselves. Self-identification or self-consciousness is the key point of how the members of a nationality influence their ethnic-folk dance. In addition, it is not all the members of the nationality who change their dance together. People who engage with ethnic-folk dance on the nationality level are usually those who make decisions about how to change an ethnic-folk dance. This self-identification is changeable from time to time and depends on the context.

The discussion above outlines how a nationality can be created through a combination of powers that are from the culture itself (inside), and from the environment (social differences, cultural differences). According to Harrell (1996), this process of creation is a constant negotiation, which happens among various sub-groups of the insiders, between insiders and outsiders. Traditions tend towards maintenance and conservation, while trends push in the direction of creativity and change. In addition, internal and external influences that create the identity of a nationality are not always balanced. Often, social influences can be more significant in creating the identity of a nationality.

Principles for change

Uniqueness is one of the important principles that a nationality follows to change its ethnic-folk dance. Firstly, uniqueness brings a sense of pride to the insiders of a nationality. It is human nature to feel proud about something special that members of a group feel they have, but others do not. Uniqueness, therefore, brings psychological satisfaction to the insiders of a nationality in this way. The

psychological satisfaction encourages the insiders of a nationality to maintain their uniqueness. Secondly, uniqueness brings a sense of mystery to the outsiders of a nationality. This sense of mystery attracts outsiders' attention and curiosity to the nationality. It is also human nature that people feel curious about something they do not have but others do. More importantly, in context of this dissertation, curiosity from outsiders brings the potential for economic benefits to the insiders of the nationality. The best example of this phenomenon is the development of tourism. Tourism is often developed on the basis of the outsiders' curiosity about a nationality. Curiosity from outsiders, therefore, encourages insiders of a nationality to maintain and highlight their uniqueness. Thirdly, uniqueness helps to identify a nationality clearly.

Uniqueness cannot be based on nothing. It needs cultural and historical support. Such supports come from a nationality's traditions. Uniqueness is thus usually a combination of creation and tradition. Even though the traditional aspect sometimes occupies very small percentage of tourism materials, it can still help the members of a nationality claim historical and traditional uniqueness. This is significant to a nationality because they need to claim that both of the nationality and its unique culture have some essential elements that are timeless and changeless.

The process of changing ethnic-folk dance is, partly, a process of representing the uniqueness of a nationality through ethnic-folk dance. The uniqueness of a nationality should be represented by various symbols (e.g. colors, costumes, movements, instruments, music, etc.) in an ethnic-folk dance. Once

symbols are accepted by both the insiders and the outsiders of a nationality, they become relatively non-changeable parts of an ethnic-folk dance. All other parts of an ethnic-folk dance can be changed until the next symbol is created and accepted by both the insiders and the outsiders.

Ways to change

I have mentioned that not all members of a nationality change their ethnic-folk dance together. There are normally particular agents in a nationality who make decisions. In the context of the ICH program I will focus on, some of the agents are people who engage with ethnic-folk dance at the nationality level, others are people who make political judgments about whether the ethnic-folk dance matches their needs. In addition, the latter make the final decision most of the time. The basic strategy that the agents use to change their ethnic-folk dance is to create and maintain symbols. These symbols are significant because they are used by an ethnic group to support their claim of the uniqueness and authenticity of its ethnic-folk dance. The agents of a nationality use specific objective items, (color, design of costumes, symbolic movements, specific gestures or postures, etc.) as symbols in its ethnic-folk dance. Symbols like these are usually pulled from the history, culture, or traditions of this nation group. There are also sometimes legends or folktales behind these items to support their existence like the various legends about peacocks and the peacock dance that I mentioned in Chapter 1. These symbols are easily recognized by not only the insiders of a nationality, but can be quickly learned by the outsiders of the nationality. On the other hand, symbols are not necessarily historical or traditional, but may be

created items that become famous enough to be the symbols after certain events.

The peacock-head gesture is an example of this process. This gesture was created in the 1950s for a performance and became renowned after Yang Liping performed her *The Spirit of Peacock* in 1989 on TV. The outsiders of the Dai culture started considering this gesture as a symbol of the peacock dance. Later on, insiders started using this gesture as a symbol as well because it is so well recognized as a symbol by outsiders. During my field research in Yunnan, I saw both Wang La (旺腊) and Yue Xiang (约相) use this gesture in their peacock dances.

After the symbols are commonly accepted, combining new items with the symbols is the second way for agents to change its ethnic-folk dance. What will be added to ethnic-folk dance is determined by the context in which the dance is performed. I will discuss four contexts in the following section. Firstly, the choice of new items is related to the environment (political, economic, social, etc.) of the moment if the dance is performed for insiders at a cultural festival. These new items could be a new trend in costumes, music, or other aspects. The participants and audiences must not feel too uncomfortable about the new items as long as the innovations are within a certain scale.

Secondly, if the dance is performed for the outsiders to represent the nationality formally, the new items that are chosen to be added to the ethnic-folk dance need to be, as much as possible, from the nationality's own traditional culture. The reason for this is that perception of authenticity becomes more important in this context. For example, Yue Xiang (约相), a peacock dancer I

interviewed in my field research, and also one of the three peacock dancers I will talk about later in my case study, combined many movements from Dai Quan (傣拳, a type of Dai martial arts) into his peacock dance. This combination makes his peacock dance both unique and seem authentic because the martial arts movements he added to his peacock dance are also from the Dai culture.

Thirdly, the new items that are added to the ethnic-folk dance need to make the dance more appealing to tourists. Professional choreographers are usually involved in this type of dance. To make the dance professional is not always important for changing ethnic-folk dance at the level of nationality. It depends on the purpose that the dance is performed. Professionalism and sophisticated technology may not be as important as being authentic, as we have just discussed. In this third context, professional choreographers adapt not just other types of dance (e.g. Chinese classical dance, ballet, or even modern dance), but also sophisticated technology to make the ethnic-folk dance performance of a high quality and entertaining to tourists. The dance in this context should be choreographed with a fancy stage design and lights, and need to appear authentic as well.

Fourthly, complicated dance techniques will be added to the ethnic-folk dance to make the dance more professional if the dance is performed for attending competitions. Such techniques mostly come from Chinese classical dance and ballet. This context has been very popular in China since the 1950s. Various dance competitions are organized every year.

The results of change

Basically, an ethnic-folk dance that has been changed by its nationality represents the following common characteristics: uniqueness, symbolic representation, and recognition as authentic. This is, in certain cases, similar to the ethnic-folk dances influenced by state. Nationality and state may influence ethnic-folk dance in similar ways, especially when the members of a nationality need to build their identity to outsiders. Political needs are similar in these two cases. There are mainly four contexts in which ethnic-folk dances exist as a result of change by members of its nationality. The following table shows the specific characteristics that ethnic-folk dance presents in each context in China (Table 17).

Contexts	Characteristics of the dance
For local cultural events	Natural; Traditional; Reflect new social development;
For researchers	Authentic; Strong cultural and historical meanings; Traditional;
For tourists	Modern; Fancy, Sophisticated technology; Cultural meaning are mostly shown through costumes
For attending dance competitions	Complex dance techniques; Professional choreography

Table 17: Ethnic-folk dances that are changed by its nationality in different contexts

Case study: Peacock dance by Mao Xiang (毛相), Wang La (旺腊), and Yue Xiang (约相) (dance #1, #10, and #11)

In this section, I will discuss how the Dai people in the Ruili (瑞丽) area of Yunnan province perform their peacock dance. I will compare three peacock dances, which are the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang (毛相) after 1949 (Dance #1), the peacock dance performed by Wang La (旺腊) in 2013 (Dance #10), and the peacock dance performed by Yue Xiang (约相) in 2013 (Dance #11). All the three peacock dancers are famous local peacock dancers, this is the area where the peacock dance was an active tradition for a long time, and all three of these dancers identify themselves as members of the Dai nationality.

Comparisons between peacock dances performed by Mao Xiang (毛相), Wang La (旺腊), and Yue Xiang (约相)

The three peacock dances I will compare are similar in many aspects. They are all from the same geographical location, Ruili (瑞丽) in Yunnan province, and are all accepted by the local and state politicians and the national ICH program as representative peacock dances of the Dai culture. The three dances are all male solo dances, and the dancers are all locally trained performers with a limited professional dance training background. In addition, Wang La and Yue Xiang were Mao Xiang's students in the 1950s and the 1960s, and now both of them are state-level peacock dance transmitters and have been certified by the ICH program since 2006. In addition, all three dances focus on painting a vivid picture

of a peacock. To imitate the peacock is the basic focus of their dance movements. Lastly, the three dances all use representative Dai instruments such as Xiangjiao Gu (象脚鼓), Mang (铓), and Cha (铈) to accompany the dances. There does not appear to be any important difference in music between the three peacock dances.

Besides the similarities I have mentioned above, there are also many differences among the three peacock dances. The reasons and locations for the performance differ. In Mao Xiang's time, before or at the beginning of the reign of the People's Republic of China, he usually performed peacock dance in streets, squares, and temples. He performed to celebrate religious or cultural festivals and ceremonies. He rarely performed the peacock dance on official stages. Wang La and Yue Xiang more often perform peacock dances on official stages now. Yue Xiang even constructed a stage at his home for his peacock dance performance (Figure 28). They still perform peacock dances for celebrating various festivals and ceremonies, but most of the time they perform peacock dances for representing the Dai culture to both insiders and outsiders. Performing in various contexts to represent original Dai culture is one of their duties as official transmitters from the national ICH program.



Figure 28: The stage that Yue Xiang built at his home

The dance movements of the three dancers are different. Many records show that Mao Xiang's peacock dance was famous for his imitation of a peacock's real movements. Such imitations included checking around, walking in the forest, playing around a lake, pretending to chase and play with another peacock, shaking shoulders, and so on. Mao Xiang's performance was also famous for his special eye expressions. He was good at imitating a peacock's eye expressions by moving his eyes.

Wang La and Yue Xiang were Mao Xiang's students and, therefore, their performances contain similar movements such as those listed above. Besides this, each dancer's performance has his particular movement features. Wang La's performances show a systematic organization of the movements. According to the interview I had with Wang La, he organized his peacock dance into five sections of choreography. Each section has a choreographed beginning and ending and also fixed movements. He asked his students to perform the first, second, third, and fifth sections for me. Each section has set movements and a particular order.

These sections are the main teaching materials that he uses to teach his students. In addition, he also formalized eight hand positions and put them in a specific order. He mentioned that the first, forth, and eighth hand positions are the most often used positions. The first one involves both hands on the side of hip with palms down. The forth position is both hands lifted as high as possible with the palms out. The eighth position looks like the third hand position in ballet with all palms up. The impression I got after my interview with him was that he is trying to make his peacock dance organized and formal. He told me that he needs an organized system to teach his students, which is another one of his duties as a transmitter for the national ICH program.

Yue Xiang, in contrast, developed Mao Xiang's peacock dance in a different way. Yue Xiang added Dai Quan (傣拳, a type of Dai martial arts) into his peacock dance, which made his dance look stronger and more angular than Wang La's. Yue Xiang combined the peacock dance and Dai Quan, and first performed it at a national event in 1980. The sports department of the Yunnan government asked experts of martial arts to develop what Yue Xiang performed in 1980 into what is officially called Kong Que Quan (孔雀拳, peacock fist) (Li 2003: 145).

There is one thing that is the same in Wang La and Yue Xiang's peacock dances, which is that both of them added the peacock-head gesture into their dances. However, I cannot say that they are using the gesture as a symbol of their dance. It seems that they do not use the gesture very often. Wang La's students showed me four sections and only 25 seconds of the movements included the gesture (0'00"-0'25" in Section #3). He did not use the gesture in his own

performance during my interview. Yue Xiang's movements of the gesture was around 15 seconds in total out of his almost 5 minutes performance (0'23"- 0'25"; 0'36" – 0'43"; 2'24" – 2'31"). Compared to these, Yang Liping spent more time and focus on the gesture. As Wang La told me in the interview, he started using this gesture in 1974. I'm assuming that they added this gesture to their peacock dance because the outsiders think it's symbolic, and thus it is an effective embellishment of the dance.

The last part that is different between Mao Xiang, Wang La, and Yue Xiang's peacock dances are the costumes. Before he moved the dance to stages in the 1950s, Mao Xiang's costume was the golden crown, the mask with Bodhisattva's face, and the peacock's tail made of bamboo and silk cloth. After he moved to the stage, Mao Xiang's costume of peacock dance was a simple white shirt with white pants (Figure 3). There was no extra decoration on the costume. It looked like the clothes that men from the Dai culture wore in their daily life. Figure 15 and figure16 In Chapter 2 show that Wang La and Yue Xiang's costumes are specially designed for stage performance. They both have hats and Yue Xiang's hat has peacock feathers as a decoration. The costumes both are short-sleeved shirts with pants, and peacock eye decorations on their shoulders, waists, and bottoms of the pants. The two costumes are very similar, except for Wang La's green and Yue Xiang's white.

In addition, I saw a video of the peacock dance that was performed by Mao Xiang's son, Yi Tuan, on a TV program from CCTV after I finished my field research in Yunnan. Yi Tuan performed two peacock dances in the program and

one of them attracted my attention because the costume included a bamboo tail. I did not have chance to interview Yi Tuan when I was in Yunnan, so I did not add his peacock dance to my lists. However, I will write more about his costume below because his peacock dance with a bamboo tail was shown on a national TV program as a representative dance of the Dai nationality. In figure 29, the white Chinese characters on the upper left corner indicate “Dai frame peacock dances,” and the logo on the bottom right corner is “Chinese folk song” which is the name of this program. This TV show at least demonstrates that his peacock dance is recognized as a representation of the Dai culture by the local politicians who decide which peacock dance goes on TV.



Figure 29: The Peacock dance with bamboo tail performed by Yi Tuan in 2011

These three peacock dances (Dance #1, #10, and #11) are all performed inside of the Dai nationality. They are all chosen to be representative of the Dai culture by the political agents of the Dai nationality. Mao Xiang used to perform the peacock dance internationally, nationally, and locally. Wang La and Yue Xiang have performed their peacock dances at various occasions after they were certified

as transmitters from the ICH program. The three dancers have influenced the peacock dance in many ways. Wang La and Yue Xiang were two of Mao Xiang's students, and he built the foundations of the stage peacock dance genre. Wang La and Yue Xiang have many students as well. They teach students every summer to promote the peacock dance in the Ruili area. However, their dances are different in many ways. The fact that the differences are reflected not only in times, but also among dancers will help us to understand how a nationality changes its ethnic-folk dance in the next section (Table 18).

	The peacock dance by Mao Xiang	The peacock dance by Wang La	The peacock dance by Yue Xiang
Where	Streets or squares; Around pagoda Stages;	Stages; School education;	
Why	Celebrating religious festivals and ceremonies; Education;	Representing Dai culture at various events to both insiders and outsiders; Education;	
Dancers	Mao Xiang (毛相); Male; Local trained and limited professional trained	Wang La (旺腊); male; Mao Xiang's student; locally trained and limited	Yue Xiang (约相); male; Mao Xiang's student; locally trained

			professional trained	
Movements				
	Differences		Choreographed beginning and ending; Five sections of the dance; Eight hand-positions; The peacock-head gesture; Fixed orders;	The Peacock-head Gesture; Movements from Dai Quan (傣拳, a type of Dai martial arts)
Costumes		Gold crown, mask with Bodhisattva's face, and peacock's tail made of bamboo and silk cloth before the 1950s; Simple top and pants with no extra decoration after;	Special designed costume with the following features; Hat with a decoration of peacock feather; Short sleeved shirt; Pants; The pattern of peacock tail eye decoration on the shoulders, waist, and the bottom of the pants;	

Music	Traditional percussion instruments which include xiangjiao drum, mang lu, cha;
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Table 18: Comparisons among Peacock dance at Ruili (瑞丽) in 1949, 1956, 2013

Influences on peacock dance by the Dai nationality

The influences that the agents of the Dai nationality (both dance experts and local politicians) have had on its peacock dance are motivated and guided by the group's growing desire to identify itself as a strong, modern, and unique ethnic group to both insiders and outsiders of the Dai nationality. This process of self-identification is an endless cycle. Self-identifying the Dai nationality as a strong, modern and unique ethnic group will bring it both political power and economic benefits, which will consequently give the members of the nationality a better standard of living. If political power and economic benefits are brought to the nationality, it will further create the nationality as a stronger, more modern, and more unique ethnic group. In this process, the peacock dance plays an important role since it has become a famous symbol of the Dai culture.

The Dai nationality has had a variety of influences on the development of the peacock dance. One influence is that the uniqueness of the peacock dance has been (re)discovered or (re)created. This change is shown through the change of the peacock dance costume. There was only one type of costume for the peacock dance in the earlier environment before the 1950s, and a bamboo tail was one important part of the costume at that time. The bamboo tail was removed when Mao Xiang started performing the peacock dance on stages. In Mao Xiang's era, the costume with bamboo tail was removed because it was an old tradition and

was not used to represent the Dai culture after that. However, Yi Tuan started using the bamboo tail again recently because the agents of the Dai nationality claimed that the most traditional peacock dance had the bamboo tail. The tradition before the 1950s became valuable in the 2010s because it is seen as unique and authentic. That the new bamboo tail costume was shown on a national TV program supports this argument. The agents of the Dai nationality want something unique and authentic to represent the Dai culture. No other group in China claims this type of costume for the peacock dance.

In this case, at least two types of peacock dance exist at the same time now in the Dai culture as the representative peacock dances in this context. One uses a costume with the bamboo tail and another one does not. This context is the second context I referred to earlier in this chapter. The new item that the agents of the Dai nationality choose to add to peacock dance is more about authenticity. The Bamboo tail as a new “traditional” item is rediscovered in this case. Both types of peacock dances are considered traditional and representative dances of the Dai nationality now even though the bamboo tail had been removed in the 1950s and the one with no bamboo tail did not even exist before the 1950s. The fact that the agents of the Dai nationality reuse the bamboo tail as a unique symbol to create a representative dance of the nationality reveals how important authenticity and uniqueness is in the process of changing the peacock dance.

Another influence is that the function of the peacock dance is more about representing the Dai nationality in various contexts. The peacock dance exists less as part of the Dai people’s cultural life and more as a tool used by the agents to

represent the Dai culture. Such change is reflected in the following aspects. First, the peacock dance has increasingly involved dancers who wear specially designed costumes and perform peacock dances on various stages. The main purpose for performing a peacock dance before the 1950s was to celebrate religious festivals or ceremonies. However, the main purpose now is to represent the Dai nationality. This change happened because the tourism industry desires to profit and many cultural events and festival celebrations have become means for promoting tourism. Local politicians need political benefit, therefore, they promote ICH program. The agents build contexts in which peacock dance is performed to represent the Dai culture and consequently bring benefits to the agents. Secondly, the peacock dance, for the purpose of representing the Dai culture, is changed to be more of a stage art and a complete piece with a choreographed beginning and ending. In addition, more complicated movements and forms have been added to the dance as well. Thirdly, the agents further influence peacock dance by educating the younger generation. Systematic education has been the main way to promote the peacock dance and has been organized and practiced by various local peacock dancers (Figures 30 & 31). The created peacock dance, which is different from dancer to dancer, is slowly accepted by the younger generation as a traditional dance of the Dai nationality.



Figure 30: Wang La's students practice peacock dance at his studio (Personal interview recording)



Figure 31: Yue Xiang teaches peacock dance to his students at his home

A third influence the Dai ethnic group has had on the peacock dance has been to change the dance into different forms for different contexts, such as the peacock dance for the local people, for outsiders like politicians or academic researchers, for tourists, and for competitions. These peacock dances are quite

different in many respects but they all represent the Dai nationality in different contexts. I have listed the main characteristics of each peacock dance in the Table 17 and would like to further introduce the performers of each context in the following paragraph. By introducing the performers of each context, the characteristic of each context will be better highlighted.

Firstly, the peacock dance for local people is mostly performed by insiders to other insiders of the Dai nationality, a comparatively closed context (e.g. birthday party or wedding). The dance in this context is performed for celebrating life events. To perform the peacock dance is not the dancers' job that they do for living but a part of their cultural life that they do for fun.

Secondly, the peacock dance performed for outsiders such as politicians or academic researchers (outsiders who not tourists) is usually performed by special dancers (e.g. Wang La and Yue Xiang), who are recognized by local politicians as representative dancers of the peacock dance. The fact that they are transmitters certified by the national ICH program demonstrates that they are accepted as representative dancers for political needs. People (both insiders and outsiders) who are influenced by the ICH believe that they perform original and authentic peacock dances even though their peacock dances are different from each other and different from their teacher's. In addition to performing to represent Dai traditions, they also have a strong influence on the younger generation by teaching them peacock dances, which continue to be considered as traditional peacock dance that need to be protected by the ICH program. Their peacock dance is formally recognized as an authentic version in this context.

Thirdly, the peacock dance for tourism takes place in a very different system.

There are special teams of organizers, choreographers, and dancers, who choreograph and perform peacock dances for tourists. For example, in Kunming (昆明, the capital city of Yunnan) the local government has built a special location for tourists called the Yunnan Folkways Village (YFV 云南民族村). It is a place that displays the cultures of various ethnicities in Yunnan by showing their houses, costumes, song and dances, and so forth. A performing team lives in this village and performs the peacock dance to tourists every day. To perform peacock dance to tourists is their job.

Fourthly, the peacock dances that are practiced in professional dance schools and companies. The peacock dances in this context are organized with teaching materials and are performed for competitions at various dance schools and dance ensembles. The dancers who perform peacock dances in this context are usually professionally trained dance students or employed professional performers. Ma Wenjing, the choreographer I have mentioned in the chapter 3, had just designed a set of Dai dance teaching materials (including the peacock dance) for the Beijing Dance Academy when I had my interview with her in 2013. She said that she combined the symbolic movements from various areas in Yuannan to make this set of teaching materials. For example, she combined all the steps from different areas and organized them into a dance piece to train students specifically about dance steps from the Dai nationality.

Conclusion

In popular culture, many people think that nationalities and their ethnic-folk dances are timeless and changeless. However, the truth is that change on the level of nationality and its dance happen continuously. How the dance changes depends on the context. It depends on who the agents are in this context, what benefit a change brings, and who will benefit from the change. The ethnic-folk dance is changed in various contexts, therefore, the ethnic-folk dance that is changed by nationality consequently shows various representations. These contexts include maintaining the dance's tradition, following social development, promoting economic development, and so on. These representations are sometimes contradictory. For instance, the Dai people's life is changing because of social development, but they are required to maintain the oldest dance tradition even though sometimes the tradition is not otherwise relevant any more in their daily lives. They have to change their dance for the purpose of protecting the dance. As a result, various peacock dances have been created by the agents (dance experts) of the Dai nationality in order to represent the nationality in different contexts. None of them are the same as the original peacock dance from around 1949. In addition, these peacock dances have been continually developed in specific directions as time goes on and will continue to change in the future.

Chapter 6 - Creative factor – State

Introduction

State, as a creative factor, is interested in ethnic-folk dances to promote the country and to help maintain strong political control. State organizations may be involved in influencing the dances if these changes help them to reach their goals. As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, many scholars, Hobsbawm (1992), Shay (2002), Anderson (2006), Nahachewsky (2011), have dealt with this topic from various perspectives.

Political influence from a state on an ethnic-folk dance is varied according to the political context. Political influence on an ethnic-folk dance might make the dance significant and popular in one context, but also could suppress it in another. The peacock dance I will talk about is a good example of this. The peacock dance was an ethnic-folk dance that was active in only the Dai area before 1950. The state selected this dance as a representative dance and made it popular across the country in the 1950s. The reason for the state to do this was that the state wanted to build and maintain a good relationship with Burma at the time. The Dai nationality lived close to the newly forming border of China and Burma, and the peacock dance was popular on both sides of the border. The dance served as a bond to make the people from both sides feel closer to each other. However, the peacock dance was completely stopped during the Cultural Revolution. Dao Meilan, the first Princess Peacock who worked in the Oriental Song and Dance

Ensemble (Dongfang Gewu Tuan, 东方歌舞团) in Beijing, was sent to a construction machinery factory to work in Yunnan (Wang 2009: 34). The reason for this was that the policy during the Cultural Revolution did not support any ethnic-folk dance. The dance that was popular in China during the 1950s disappeared during the Cultural Revolution. The peacock dance was popularized again after the Cultural Revolution when the political context changed. Indeed, Dao Meilan and her team had chance to choreograph Golden Peacock and won a national competition in the subsequent years. The fate of the peacock dance demonstrates how dance can be influenced by different political environments. In the following section, I will introduce why and how the state influences ethnic-folk dances, and the results of those influences.

Motivations for change

There are two main motivations for influencing ethnic-folk dance on the state level. First, and most importantly, political authorities in a state want to maintain stable control over the country. Ethnic-folk dance helps authorities to hold the people of the state together as a group. Ethnic-folk dance has the power to activate people's feelings of affection towards the cultures they see represented. Such feelings make people who come from the culture feel close to each other because they all belong to the same culture. Even though the ethnic-folk dance traditions that a state uses to represent itself are not always from "authentic," existing traditions or histories, symbols of a culture that the ethnic-folk dance carries recall people's feelings towards the culture. To use this power, governments usually mix the meanings of state and culture consciously and unconsciously to give the

people a sense that love for culture is equal to love for state. States usually claim that they have as long history as the culture has. One of the claims the state makes is that regimes may change but the state does not. The love for the culture is same as the love for the state because the state is the home of the culture. For this reason, governments support the promotion of ethnic-folk dance because they are able to exert their influence through it.

Secondly, ethnic-folk dances can be useful diplomatic tools of a state because they help to paint an attractive picture of the state to outsiders. Every government needs representatives to show others an image of how the state wants to be perceived. Sometimes, the representatives are unique animals or plants, such as pandas from China, cherry blossoms from Japan, and maple leaves from Canada. More often, cultural items are used as symbols to promote two-way communication between states and audiences. Ethnic-folk dance is very effective in this category. It possesses rich and unique cultural characteristics, such as colorful costumes, smiling faces, young athletic attractive bodies, beautiful music, which paint a colorful, lively picture of the state they represent. Such images are always friendly, positive, and make audiences feel welcome, which is what states want to show outsiders. In addition, some ethnic-folk dances which represent border areas are loved by the people who live on the shared border and can be a good tool for communication between the two nations. They can be helpful for states in creating a good neighborly relationships.

Government strategies

States have various strategies for influencing ethnic-folk dances. States

provide job opportunities and give awards to choreographers and dancers who have made successful contributions in promoting ethnic-folk dance in the way that the states want. Various events, festivals, and competitions are also organized by states to promote the development of ethnic-folk dance. In addition, dance education in both special schools and general schools are promoted by the state to develop ethnic-folk dances. Lastly, the media helps states to develop ethnic-folk dance into the way they want them to be.

Financial support is perhaps the most important way through which a state influences an ethnic-folk dance. Shay (2002) discusses how the state changes ethnic-folk dance, directly or indirectly, by sponsoring dance companies and schools. He focused on how state sponsored dance companies are powerful vehicles for the expression of ethnicity and nationalism through the symbolic use of movement. This type of company creates exciting and popular moving images that communicate messages of ethnicity, gender, religion, and class through the use of choreography. Financial support from a state usually goes toward the following aspects.

The first aspect is to create job opportunities by building dance companies and dance schools to attract people to work in this area. Choreographers and dancers are paid for choreographing and performing ethnic-folk dance at various occasions. People who work in dance schools are paid to collect original ethnic-folk dances and then organize them into teaching materials to educate students professionally. In China, to be an employee in a dance company is a very good job. These people get paid well, have the opportunity to travel, and have a

low risk of losing their job.

Secondly, the state sponsors dance education in both special dance schools and general schools. At the state level, ethnic-folk dance needs to look virtuosic in performances that represent the state. Special dance schools are built for educating students professionally. The state also provides job opportunities to these students as well. Students from dance schools are chosen to work in various dance companies to represent the state. Similarly, they get paid well and also have the benefit of representing the state in performing Chinese professional ethnic-folk dance all over the country and the world. On the general school level, dance education is not one of the most important courses, except in elementary schools. However, ethnic-folk dance has always been the main teaching material in this form of dance education. The best example of this phenomenon is a song that is named as *our country is a garden*. This song is from a choreographed Uygur dance, and it is one of the most popular Uygur dances in China. Almost every child in China has been taught this dance in kindergarten or elementary school.

Thirdly, significant honors that the state offers to dance employees are also the way by which they influence ethnic-folk dance. An award offered by the state can improve a dancer's social position, which further attracts more people to work for the state in this area. Liu Min (刘敏), a famous female dancer in China, is a good example to demonstrate this point. In China, dance schools and dance companies also exist in the Chinese military. This has been a tradition since wartime in the 1930s. Liu Min (刘敏) worked in the Song and Dance Ensemble of

the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Zhongguo Renmin Jiefangjun Zongzhengzhibu Gewutuan, 中国人民解放军总政治部歌舞团) in the 1980s and now works in the Chinese People's Liberation Army Institute of the Arts (中国人民解放军艺术学院). She was offered the military rank of Major General in Professional Technology (ZhuanYe Jishu Shaojiang Junxian, 专业技术少将军衔) in 2005. She is now known as the youngest female general in China. Such honor brought her a very high social status and also gained her much respect from others (You, 2007).

Fourthly, the state organizes various types of ethnic-folk dance festivals or competitions to further encourage the development of ethnic-folk dance. All dance schools and companies are encouraged to attend such events. There are certain standards to judge dances at these competitions or festivals and the state's influences on ethnic-folk dance are demonstrated through these standards. The dance that wins at festivals or competitions is a model to show the public that what kind of dance the states wants. This kind of dance will be continually copied and improved on as time passes. In China, the biggest competition in ethnic-folk dance is the Lily National Ethnic-folk Dance Competition (Zhongguo Wudao Hehuajiang Minzu Minjianwu Pingjiang, 中国舞蹈“荷花奖”民族民间舞评奖), which is organized every two years. In addition, a further competition is organized specifically for youth that is named the Small Lily National Dance Competition (Xiaohe Fengcai Quanguo Shaoer Wudao Zhanyan, 小荷风采全国少儿舞蹈展演) to encourage youth to learn and perform ethnic-folk dances. These

competitions offer significant prestige to the dance group who wins and have become influential in improving ethnic-folk dance in the way that the state wants.

The last aspect through which the state influences ethnic-folk dance is through the media. This aspect is becoming more and more important in modern societies. Many aspects of the media are controlled by the state in China and, consequently, information received by the public is controlled by the state. Presenting ethnic-folk dances through the media is a powerful propaganda for promoting what kind of ethnic-folk dance the state likes. I will explore this aspect of state influence later with respect to Yang Liping. Ethnic-folk dance in local areas are further changed to the way that the state wishes, as people copy or re-choreograph the dance presented in the media. For example, many of the dances in the national dance competition organized every four years by CCTV have been copied and performed on various stages all over the country. This competition has become one of the most influential dance competitions in China.

The Results of change

Ethnic-folk dances that have been changed by the state are not the same as dances from their local area any more. During the process of influencing an ethnic-folk dance, the state may affect change in many aspects of the dance, including the movements, structures, music, costumes, and performing locations. Sometimes the change is extreme and only the name of the dance is kept. Consequently, the cultural meaning of the dance is changed. The new dance exists as a representative of its mother culture at the state level, even though the dance may have become a very different one. The following characteristics will suggest

the results of the state influences on ethnic-folk dances.

Firstly, ethnic-folk dances that have been influenced by the state always present a positive image of the state. One of these positive aspects is to show peace and happiness through the ethnic-folk dances, regardless of what their theme or style is. I have two examples to make this point clear. The first example is a story that one of my interviewees told me during my field research in Tibet in 2013, which is about the Tibetan yak dance. Tibetan yak dance was wild and slow because “yaks in Tibet have such characteristics” (Zha Xi Ci Ren Aug. 21, 2013). The dancers of the yak dance therefore used to walk with big and slow steps to imitate the animal. However, the movement has been changed by choreographers, after suggestions from people from the government, to jumping with small steps because such steps can express a happy emotion better than walking with big and slow steps. A happy emotion was deemed more important than cultural tradition by the government viewers in this case, because showing how happy the Tibetan people are to live in this new society is important to the state. Another result of changing the yak dance is that it looks more and more like the lion dance from the majority Han nationality.

Another example of how the state uses dance to promote a positive image is Dance #7, *Peacock Dance in Green Waves*, which was first performed by the China National Song & Dance Ensemble in 2004. Compared to the original peacock dance, this dance is sexy and lavish. It is sexy because dancers keep moving their hips forward and backward in the dance. In Han culture, sexiness is not an appropriate focus for formal occasions. From the state’s perspective,

sexiness cannot be used to represent the state internationally. Therefore, in a version of the dance performed as an international activity, which I watched later, the sexy hip movements of the dance were cut out, and the dance painted a more acceptable picture of the state internationally, which was modern, passionate and florid.

Another aspect of positive image management is that anti-state sentiments are forbidden in ethnic-folk dance training and performances at the state level. As previously mentioned, the main motivation for states to promote ethnic-folk dance is to bind people together, which provides the state with stable, political control. For this reason, ethnic-folk dance should focus on how to contribute to support of the state's governance instead of expressing anti-state emotions. Many examples can be used to demonstrate this characteristic. For instance, some of the performances organized by Falun Gong, such as *Astounding Conviction* (2010), expressed anti-state sentiments and Falun Gong itself is considered as an anti-state organization. Therefore, all cultural performances organized by Falun Gong are forbidden inside of China.

In addition, the ethnic-folk dances that are used to represent the Chinese state to outsiders and insiders are different. When showing ethnic-folk dance to outsiders a state may choose only one specific ethnic-folk dance or a limited repertoire to represent all the nationalities from the whole country. Shay demonstrated that many state ensembles tend to show only the single majority ethnic identity and not minorities when they establish their national icons and symbols (2002). In these cases, ethnic minorities often figure in as variations on

the main group's culture, perhaps with clear elements demonstrating their secondary status. However, when showing the ethnic-folk dance to insiders, each of the selected ethnic minorities or nationalities are presented to dance together happily. For example, such dances can be seen especially at the CCTV's annual gala for celebrating Chinese New Year on Chinese New Year's Eve.

The state usually claims that the ethnic-folk dances they promote are rooted in the traditional and the original dance of its mother culture. When the state changes an ethnic-folk dance for its own reasons, the dance continues to be presented as an authentic dance even though the dance is not the same. This is because that emphasizing "tradition" helps the state with creating a sense that the state has been a home for the people for a long time. In this context, ethnic-folk dance not only represents the culture, but also brings a sense of authenticity to audiences. The state usually claims that ethnic-folk dance is like a mirror of the long history of the state. Creative movements are downplayed in such situations..

The state also sponsors various programs to protect traditions, and the ICH is one of the most popular programs. China joined the international ICH program that is organized by UNESCO in 2004, and built its own national ICH program afterwards. After about ten years, the national ICH program has developed into a large organization with a comprehensive program and special institutions at various levels. According to the official website of Chinese national ICH program, six official institutions exist at the state level, and each of them has its own duties such as making policies, training, and appraisal. There is also special funding to subsidize the items that have been certified by the program as cultural heritage

assets. Around 1000 items have been certified as national ICH so far.

The heritage contents in the ethnic-folk dances that have been influenced by the state are highly symbolized. Choices of cultural symbols are decided on by the context of the dance. To non-Chinese audiences, the cultural symbols usually represent Chinese culture in a general way. To Chinese audiences with greater contextual knowledge, the cultural symbols can be more local and specific. In addition, the symbols are not always from their mother cultures. They are sometimes unconsciously created by the state for its own reasons during the process of changing ethnic-folk dance. Such symbols are created and then accepted by the public nationally and internationally to represent the culture.

In addition to active symbolization, many different cultural elements make their way into ethnic-folk dance, such as ballet, Chinese classic dance, contemporary dance, and dances from other nationalities. As time goes on, ethnic-folk dances need to develop – they need more material to make the dance increasingly rich on stages. The ethnic-folk dance usually operates in context with all other kinds of dance in this new environment, and such dance elements naturally became new materials for the ethnic-folk dance.

Virtuosity is also a way for the state to change an ethnic-folk dance. The state needs an ethnic-folk dance that is performed at a high artistic and technical levels when it is used to present the state. Therefore, the ethnic-folk dance, at this level, is performed by the dancers who are specially trained in sophisticated techniques. In addition, ethnic-folk dance is also choreographed with a complete structure and complicated forms which meets certain artistic standards. To balance between the

level of professionalism and cultural identity is a continuous process for ethnic-folk dance at the state level. A perfect ethnic-folk dance, from the state's perspective, should be a professional stage dance with outstanding technique, rich and clear cultural characteristics.

The third result of the state changing ethnic-folk dances is the growing popularity or disappearance of certain dances. The ethnic-folk dance that is chosen to represent the state usually gets popular all over the country through education and the media. However, this dance might disappear if the political environment changed. The peacock dance is a good example of this phenomenon. As I have mentioned in the introduction of this section, the dance was selected by the state in the 1950s and was popular throughout the country until the Cultural Revolution. However, it disappeared at the state level during the Cultural Revolution. Later on, it was re-popularized after Dao Meilan performed the *Golden Peacock* in 1978. Another example of this is *Our Country is a Garden*. This dance is a choreographed Uyghur dance that has been used to teach children in kindergartens or elementary schools. Almost every child knows this song and dance. It has become a necessary part of every Chinese person's childhood.

Case study: Peacock dances representing China (dance #1, #3, #5, #6, #7, #9)

In this section, I will make comparisons among various versions of peacock dances to describe how the state influences the dance. The comparison will involve six versions of peacock dance performed from about 1950 until the 2010s. The six versions are the peacock dance by Mao Xiang before 1950 (Dance #1),

Peacock Dance (dance #3), *Golden Peacock* (Dance #5), *The Spirit of Peacock* (Dance #6), *Peacocks in Green Wave* (Dance #7), and *The Love of Peacocks* (Dance #9). All the dances are used to represent China nationally and internationally except Dance #1 which serves as the original dance in these comparisons. The comparisons among the five peacock dances and the comparisons between the five dances and dance #1 will paint a clear picture about how the peacock dance has been used as a symbol to represent the Chinese state over the last seventy years, and how this function influences the form of the dance sometimes changing it in specific ways. My goal is to see how much the peacock dance has changed under the state's influences from the 1950s to 2010s, and in which ways the changes have happened.

Influence 1: Mao Xiang's peacock dance became a nationally-known ethnic-folk dance because of the state's attention and propaganda.

Mao Xiang's peacock dance became a famous ethnic-folk dance after the state chose the dance to be representative of China. According to Lü, Mao Xiang was selected by a traveling performing team from the Central Song and Dance Ensemble after they saw his performance of the peacock dance in Yunnan. Mao Xiang was brought to Beijing to be a member of the ensemble in 1953. This job opportunity provided him with the conditions to make more people inside the field of dance know about the peacock dance (2008: 123). The peacock dance became more popular after Mao Xiang performed *Duet Peacock Dance* (Dance #2) in Yunnan. Everyone reportedly liked the dance, "from leaders of Yunnan Provincial Party Committee Propaganda Department (Yunnan Shengwei

Xuanchuanbu, 云南省委宣传部) and Yunnan Cultural Affairs Bureau (Yunnan Sheng Wenhua Ju, 云南省文化局), observers from different ensembles all over the country, normal audiences, to dance experts from Beijing” (Lü 2008: 131). A large percentage of the professional choreographers and dancers in the country know about *Duet Peacock Dance* and through it the Dai culture. Lü also mentioned that many people heard about *Duet Peacock Dance* from different cities and went to watch the dance performance, including from distance places. This description demonstrates the fact that media helped to make the dance popular.

The popularity of the peacock dance in the 1950s was not a common phenomenon. The state had not decided on the 56 nationalities by the Ethnic Classification Project in the 1950s, and did not recognize Dai as a nationality at the time, this ethnic culture was not one of the biggest ethnic cultures with regards to its population or economic situation. However, the peacock dance from this ethnic culture received the state’s attention and has been one of the most popular ethnic-folk dances in China since the 1950s. Many other ethnic minorities, which include ones that are located in the Yunnan Province and neighboring the Dai people, do not have such a widely popular cultural symbol.

The state’s attention and support is one of the key reasons for the peacock dance’s popularity. The state needed to create and maintain a friendly relationship with Burma (Myanmar since 1989) after the creation of the Communist People’s Republic of China in 1949. China needed to resolve border problems with its neighbor countries peacefully after the new Chinese state was established. Burma

showed a positive attitude toward the state by being the first non-socialist country to recognize Communist China as an independent state. Therefore, border issues between China and Burma became the new China's first important diplomatic focus (Zhang 2012). Zhang also outlined three reasons the new Communist government had solve the border problem between China and Burma at that time, which were building a positive image of the new China, improving international opinions of the new China, and promoting new China's diplomacy.

Specifically, China wanted a buffer against India and Burma was located right between China and India (Figure 32). The border disputes between China and India had been an issue since the beginning of the 20th century, and the issue is still not resolved today. The dispute flared into a war on the border between China and India in 1962 (Du, 2011). Both China and India understood that the issue would probably remain a problem for a long time, so both countries tried to create and maintain good relations with Burma. These were the main reasons that the Communist China paid attention to the relationship between China and Burma. The peacock dance, as a dance that is familiar by people on both sides of the border between China and Burma, was specially chosen for this political goal by the state at that time.



Figure 32: Map of Burma in 1950

Cultural exchange is a significant means for developing and maintaining positive international relations. Mao Xiang's peacock dance was, thus, chosen to serve as a positive symbol for Chinese-Burmese relations in the 1950s. The Dai in China lived in the southern part of Yunnan province (云南省), in the border area between China and Burma. The people on the Burmese side of the border were culturally the same as the Dai people but with a different name, Shan. This ethnic group was the second largest minority in Burma (Wang, 2006). The pre-Dai and the Shan people, along with the Thai in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Lao in Laos, and the Ahom in India, all developed from a same cultural roots and all

declare themselves as Thai or Dai (Jin, 2010). The pre-Dai and the Shan had very similar cultural characteristics, and the peacock dance was one of the common folk dances they shared. The city of Ruili (瑞丽), where Mao Xiang lived, was located on the border between China and Burma. One of the villages in Ruili is currently surrounded by Myanmar on three sides. Another village in Ruili half belongs to China and half belongs to Myanmar. The peacock dance at Ruili was, unsurprisingly, culturally very close to Burma's peacock dance compared to all other peacock dances of the time. According to Lü, Mao Xiang could speak a little Mandarin (I could not find any source about how he knew Mandarin) and actively helped the new government. The new government later sent him to study in a cadre training school because of this, and this may be where he showed his talent of peacock dance. That was the time when the state was looking for common cultural features to develop the friendship between China and Burma (2008: 124).

Cultural exchange between China and Burma was intense during the 1950s, and the peacock dance, choreographed and performed by Mao Xiang and his students, was one necessary part of these activities. Trager describes that "the first Chinese cultural delegation arrived in Burma on December 9, and departed on December 28, 1951. The compliment was returned by the Burmese, April 19-June 6, 1952. From then on various missions were exchanged (Thakin Tin, August 1952; Bo Hmu Aung, May - June 1953) up to the exchange of goodwill visits on the prime ministerial level" (1964, p.30). Maung (1961) also recorded that: "on January 4th of this year [1961] Burma celebrated its thirteenth anniversary of independence. In Rangoon to take part in the rejoicing was Chinese Premier Zhou

Enlai (周恩来), along with more than 400 members of a Chinese ‘cultural’ delegation” (p.38). The 1956 gala in which *Duet Peacock Dance* (Dance #2) was first performed was at the peak of various performances of the peacock dance around that time. Zhou Enlai granted Mao Xiang an interview right after the performance. In this situation, Mao Xiang and his peacock dance became increasingly famous all over the country.

Peacock dancers’ lives have been changed as well by the state’s attention on the peacock dance. Mao Xiang and his students became professional dancers after the peacock dance was used as a tool to maintain a good relationship between the two states. As I have mentioned above, Mao Xiang started working as a professional dancer and choreographer in 1953, and started having a better life after that. He stopped living as a peasant and travelling artist, and started having a settled life with a monthly paid salary and other benefits such as prizes and travelling opportunities (Lü: 2003). One of his students, Dao Meilan, is another example of how peacock dancers’ lives could change dramatically. She was a 14 year old girl growing up in a peasant family when she was chosen to be a professional dancer in 1954. She became a famous peacock dancer after she performed *Zhaoshutun & Nanmunuona* (Dance #4) in 1956. She was an important member of the Chinese cultural delegation to Burma and went to visit Burma many times. She was nominated by the premier of the time, Zhou Enlai, to join the Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble (Dongfang Gewutuan, 东方歌舞团) in Beijing. Since Zhou Enlai was a very important leader of the government of the time, this was a huge honour. The peak of her dance career was after she

performed the Dai dance at the celebration of the 15th birthday of the new China in 1964, which was also supported by Zhou Enlai.

The lives and dances of Mao Xiang and Dao Meilan were profoundly influenced by the state. They received ballet training as professional dance training and also learned different ethnic-folk dances in national ensembles. These experiences influenced them when they choreographed and performed the peacock dance later, which I will talk about in the next section.

Influence 2: The peacock dance influenced by the state was changed to a formal stage dance, which brings many changes to the dance itself.

Firstly, since the beginning of state influence, people perform peacock dances more often on formal stages, instead of in squares and streets. As I have introduced in the Chapter 2, Mao Xiang sometimes performed the peacock dance (Dance #1) on simply built, temporary stages, but before 1950 it was usually in squares outside of temples, on lawns around villages, or the streets. However, all other versions of peacock dance after him in my selection were performed on formal stages. I believe that there were many performances of the peacock dance that were still performed in squares, lawns, or streets and maybe in monasteries as well, after the dance was recontextualized for the stage. However, at the state level the stage and its design have been more and more important for the performance of the peacock dance. The stage and its design are not only the context where the peacock dance is performed, but also an active part of the performance (Table 19). Nahachewsky defines the concept of “imputed setting,” which is the setting on the stage to suggest “where and when the dancers are

‘pretending’ to be” (2012: 28). The stage used in Dance #3, *Peacock Dance*, was designed like a forest with trees and a cloudy sky because the dance was about peacocks playing around in a forest (Figure 33). Dance #6, *The Spirit of Peacock*, used specially designed lighting to make an image of “Dancing in the Moon” on the stage (Figure 17 on Page 97). The moon was projected on the wall through lighting and the dancer danced in front of the moon, which made a shadow of the movement on the wall. As the name of this dance implied, it was about expressing the spirit of a peacock, which was presented by the choreographer as a mysterious and elegant spirit. Such stage design helped to emphasize the focus. The lighting design cannot be ignored in the performance because the focus of the dance would not be expressed as deeply as the choreographer wanted without the shadow in the moon. In Dance #9, *The Love of Peacock*, they used computer techniques to make a 3D forest, the moon, and a huge peacock tail that was coordinated with the dancers (Figure 35). Along with the change of performing locations of the peacock dance, the focus of the dance has been changed. The focus was dance itself in Dance #1, but the focus changed to the dance and the stage design in the other five versions of the peacock dance. The relative importance of the dance itself has been reduced because of this shift.

The stage and the imputed setting on the stage reflected the state’s attitude about changing ethnic-folk dance. As I have introduced in the section on the results of state’s change above, the state usually claims that the ethnic-folk dance they influenced is authentic, traditional, and original. The imputed setting on stages is one of the state’s strategies for this claim. At the same time, one of the

strategies by the state to change ethnic-folk dances is to make them more formal and virtuosic. At the state level, this means professional. Sophisticated design is one way to show that the dance is a formal and professional stage dance.

The peacock dance by Mao Xiang	Squares, streets, or temples
<i>Peacock Dance</i>	Stage with special decoration of natural forest
<i>Golden Peacock</i>	Stage;
<i>The Spirit of Peacock</i>	Stage with special designed lighting as a moon for making the image of “Dancing in the Moon”
<i>Peacocks in Green Wave</i>	Stage with modern lighting designation;
<i>The Love of Peacocks</i>	Stage with computer techniques designation: 3D forest, the Moon, and peacock showing its tail

Table 19: Comparison on stages among six peacock dances



Figure 33: Stage decoration of *Peacock Dance* (A screenshot from the video of *Peacock Dance*)



Figure 34 Stage decoration for *The Love of Peacocks* (Retrieved August 27, 2016, from <http://news.hexun.com/2012-01-23/137486316.html>)

The second aspect of the state-motivated changes that happened to the peacock dance are associated with costume. As my interviewee, Wang La, told me during my field research in 2013, after the peacock dance was moved to stages the golden helmet, mask, and bamboo tails that Mao Xiang had worn for the peacock dance were removed after suggestions by dance experts from the professional dance world. These dance experts from various national ensembles in Beijing

were sent by the different levels of cultural institutions to help develop the peacock dance, which happened to other kinds of ethnic-folk dance as well at that time (Lü 2008: 131). The reason for the suggestions was that the costume covered the dancers' facial expression and limited the dancer's body movements on stages. Removing the golden helmet, mask, and bamboo tails was a big change for the peacock dance. When the golden helmet, mask, and bamboo tails were taken off, the focus of the dance changed from the peacock to the dance movements. We remember that Mao Xiang had a reputation for nimble eye movements.

Dance #1 was more about the peacock character instead of the dance movements. As I introduced in Chapter 2, the peacock dance was a way for the Dai People to express one of the legends about the peacock dance. The dance was a way to express the Dai people's admiration and love of peacocks because the peacock was considered to be a magical bird that blesses and helps people in the Dai culture. In the other five versions of the peacock dance, the focus shifted more to dance movements rather than the peacock. Facial expressions in professional dance world are really important (Liu, 2004). Facial expressions help to express the dance by showing various emotions. This characteristic was added to the peacock dance after the golden helmet was removed. At the same time, more sophisticated techniques and complicated movements were added to the dance. In addition, The peacock dance costume continued to become more and more abstract as time went on. Along with the change of costume for the peacock dance, the focus of the dance has changed from imitating peacocks' movements to a wider range of dance movements. The dance has functioned more as a particular

stage art since that time.

The third aspect is with regard to the gender of the dancers. Female dancers performed more on stage and gradually became the main gender for performing the peacock dances on stage. As far as I have been able to find, peacock dances were only performed by males before it moved to stages. This tradition was disrupted by the state's influence. Dao Meilan was chosen to work as a professional dancer by the state, and became the first solo female dancer to perform the peacock dance on stage (princess peacock in the 1956 version of Dance #4).

The gender difference is the main change to the peacock dance. After Dao Meilan's performance, a group of female dancers were chosen to perform the peacock dance. The choreographer of dance #3, Jin Ming, said that he chose females to perform the peacock dance because females were better in expressing peacock's elegance (Zhang 2007: 14). After that, the dancers who performed the peacock dance on stage have been mostly female. Compared to male dancers, female dancers' movements are more mellow, flexible, and soft because of the gender difference. Therefore, the peacock dance performed by females is more peaceful and elegant. For example, in female peacock dances, there is a body posture that is called "three bends" (Huang 2012: 69). This "three bends" is sometimes extremely emphasized such as in Dance #7, *Peacocks in Green Waves*. The "three bends" are the bends between the dancer's head and chest, waist and hip, and hip and knees, which make the dancer's body like S shape (Figure 12 on Page 65).

A male peacock is more like a magical bird that can protect the Dai people and also brings the good luck. However, a female peacock is a beautiful bird that has a peaceful, elegant, and graceful manner. A strong and straightforward peacock has been replaced by a soft and flexible one in the dance, which is what the state needs to use for representing the country.

Influence 3: The peacock dance became more and more symbolic.

Symbolization is a process that goes along with the state's influence on the peacock dance. There are two aspects that are involved in symbolization. The first one is that the peacock dance became a symbol of the Dai culture inside of China and a symbol of Chinese culture in the international context. The second aspect is that the peacock dance itself became more and more symbolic.

Firstly, the peacock dance became a symbol of the Dai culture as well as Chinese culture in general. When the state chose the dance in the 1950s, one of the main goals of the state was to use the dance to create and maintain the friendship between China and Burma. The dance, thus, represented Chinese culture whenever it was performed for the Burmese or in Burma. As Dance #2, *Duet Peacock Dance*, became more and more popular later on, it was also used to represent China in Moscow, a broader international context. Dance #3, *Peacock Dance*, was also selected as a representative of Chinese culture when Jin Ming and his group performed it at the Moscow event.

Yang Liping's peacock dance was used as a symbol of Chinese culture in the international context as well. She performed Dance #6, *The Spirit of Peacock*, at the closing ceremony of the Asian Games in Beijing in 1990. Dance #7 has been

performed in more than 20 countries as a part of the Ethnic Arts Ensemble of China (Zhongguo shaosu minzu yishutuan, 中国少数民族艺术团) which is organized by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission of People's Republic of China (zhongguo guojia minzu shiwu weiyuanhui, 中国国家民族事务委员会) for various diplomatic events.

Secondly, the peacock dance has become more symbolic of the Dai culture to outsiders (both non-Dai Chinese, and non-Chinese). There are two symbols in the peacock dances that are encouraged by the state, which were not the symbols of the peacock dance performed by Mao Xiang before 1950 (dance #1). These elements are considered as symbols of the peacock dance from the perspectives of the state and people who are not from the Dai culture. They were created and accepted as symbols of the peacock dance after the dance was moved to the stage. One of them is the peacock-head gesture. Another symbol is the long skirt that is decorated like a peacock's tail. By comparing the pictures of all the female peacock dances in my collection, the long skirt firstly appeared in Dance #2 and the decoration of peacock tails first appeared in Dance #3, *Peacock Dance*, in 1956. Similar costume design can be seen in the female peacock dances, Dance #4 - #9, after that. Even though the color and the top part of the skirt are different, they all have long skirts with peacock tails decorations. After Yang Liping's 1989-version of *The Spirit of Peacock* on the CCTV gala, this design was accepted by most of the country as a symbol of the peacock dance.

Conclusion

The peacock dance's fate at the state level changed under various state policies during different periods of time. It developed from a locally known dance to a national and international dance in the 1950s, and then completely disappeared at the state level during the Cultural Revolution from the 1960s to the 1970s. It became repopularized again after the Cultural Revolution after the late 1970s with the state's support. In addition, many changes to the dance occurred under the state's influence. Mao Xiang began to change the dance after the People's Republic of China gave him a position as a professional choreographer and dancer. Ballet, other types of ethnic-folk dances he learned in Beijing, and the help he received from other professionally trained dancers influenced his choreography of the peacock dance (Lü, 2008). In addition to Mao Xiang himself, many choreographers from the Han or different ethnic groups came to learn the peacock dance and then choreograph their own dances. Thus, new peacock dances were created on stages.

All the changes I have outlined above - reputations, locations, costumes, genders, symbols - have changed the peacock dance that was performed by Mao Xiang before 1950 (Dance #1) into very different dances that were directly or indirectly influenced by the state. The other versions of the peacock dances are still called peacock dance and are representative of the Dai culture at the state level. They present the peacock as a peaceful, elegant, beautiful, gentle bird which is very different from the portrayal of the peacock previously in the Dai culture as a strong, magical bird that fights with demons to protect the people.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

I want to start my conclusion with a very old story from China, Ke Zhou Qiu Jian (刻舟求剑), which is from a Chinese philosophical masterpiece, *Lu Shi Chun Qiu* (吕氏春秋, *Lu*, B.C. 239):

Once upon a time, a man from the Chu (楚) of ancient China was crossing a river by boat, but carelessly his sword fell into the water. Immediately he made a mark on the boat, and said, “this is where my sword fell off.” When the boat stopped at the opposite bank, he went into the water to look for his sword at the place where he had marked the boat. Of course he couldn't find it. He didn't realize that the boat had moved but the sword had not.

Even children would laugh at this Chu person when they hear about the story, however, people do not realize that they make the same mistake in various situations. This story is telling a simple truth which is that everything in this world is continually changing and it is a mistake to perceive things as changeless. In my dissertation, I try to demonstrate that ethnic-folk dances are continually changing, yet people always think of them as changeless. Perhaps it is only people's common attitudes toward ethnic-folk dance that is really changeless. The effort to protect Anhui Huagudeng (安徽花鼓灯) by the ICH program is a vivid example of how people try “preserve” ethnic-folk dances that are continually changing.

In my dissertation, out of the eleven peacock dances that I chose from many other options, only the peacock dance by Wang La (Dance #10) and the peacock

dance by Yue Xiang (Dance #11) are certified as the peacock dance that needs to be protected and promoted by the national ICH program. The goal of the ICH program is to protect the traditional peacock dance from disappearance. However, they have only recognized the dancers from Dance #10 and Dance #11 as certified transmitters while disregarding the other dances I have presented, even though all these eleven dances are related to each other. In addition, the dance between Wang La and Yue Xiang are different but both of them are certified as the traditional peacock dance. Does that mean there are two traditional peacock dances? Which one is more “traditional”? As transmitters of peacock dance who are certified by the national ICH program, both Wang La and Yue Xiang have responsibility to educate the younger generations in peacock dance. What I found during my field research in Yunnan is that both Wang La and Yue Xiang have added more movements that they learned from other sources to their peacock dance for education because they both argued that they do not have enough peacock dance content to officially educate students. These new movements will henceforth be considered as traditional since they are transmitters of traditional peacock dance.

I presented case studies to demonstrate how the peacock dance from the Dai ethnic group has been changed by four creative factors. Each creative factor has changed the peacock dance a certain way. For my purposes, because of the absence of earlier detailed information, I understand that there is no original peacock dance to make comparisons in an absolute sense. I consider Dance #1, the peacock dance by Mao Xiang around 1949, as the “original” peacock dance in my dissertation. Various peacock dances were directly or indirectly developed

from this original dance as time went on. If we considered this original peacock dance as a mother, at least four generations of peacock dance (the other ten pieces of peacock dance) have been born into this family (Figure 39). The first generation is Dance #1. Dance #2, #3, and #4 are the second generation. They were all created in the 1950s under mostly the state's influence for the reason of representing the Dai nationality in various contexts. They were also created under the individual's influence, mainly by Mao Xiang and his colleagues. The third generation includes Dance #5, #6, #7, and #8. This group of peacock dances appeared after the Cultural Revolution, when various creative factors became more active. Dao Meilan combined Mao Xiang's peacock dance with dance movements from other cultures, such as Indian dance, to choreograph Dance #5. Yang Liping's Dance #6 contained characteristics from Ballet and modern dance. Dance #8 was created in Canada, it contains not only the features of both Dance #4 and #6, but also some Canadian culture. For example, a moose stole the peacock's shawl in the dance. Dance #9, #10, and #11 belong to the forth generation. Dance #9 was a development of Dance #6 by Yang Liping. It represents the peacock dance in a performing arts world. Dance #10 and #11 are combinations of multiple sources, including Dance #1, Dance #6, Dai Kongfu, and dances from other minorities in China. They illustrate how peacock dance have been changed in the local environment.

The comparisons have shown that all the eleven peacock dances are related to each other, but none of them is the same as the original, and the same as any other one. The characteristics of all eleven peacock dances differ. The peacock

dance is only one example of how an ethnic-folk dance can be changed by creative factors. These four creative factors are also only some of many potential creative factors that could influence an ethnic-folk dance. In some contexts, an ethnic-folk dance could be changed for small reasons.

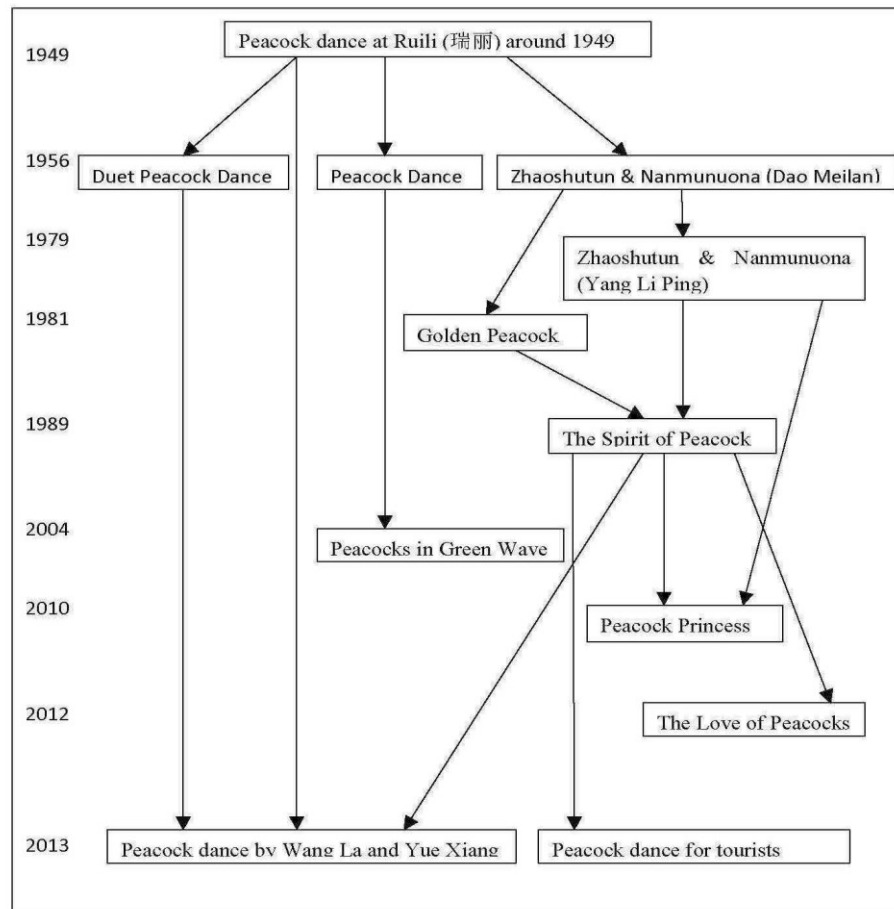


Figure 35: Some key influences among the eleven peacock dance

My research shows how an ethnic-folk dance can change in a very short period of time. I want to demonstrate that ethnic-folk dance is not changeless and timeless at all. Change depends on the context. The following aspects influence an ethnic-folk dance in various contexts: its purpose, the people who have the power

to make decisions, the benefit of the change, who will get the benefit, and so forth.

All these aspects influence each other and cause changes to the dance. Cultural heritage is only one small part of an ethnic-folk dance, other aspects, such as where, when, who, for whom the dance is performed, all contribute to create the ethnic-folk dance at a certain moment. When we talk about an ethnic-folk dance, we are actually talking about an ethnic-folk dance that exists in a specific context. If the context is changed, the dance is consequently changed.

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