



Inheritance and Protection of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of Yunnan Ethnic Minorities—Taking the Yi Ethnic Group's "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" as an Example

Wen Zhang ^{1*}, Yimiao Su ²

¹ PhD Candidate, Yunnan Arts University, Kunming, China

² Professor, Dr., Yunnan Arts University, Kunming, China

* **Corresponding Author:** 544781811@qq.com

Citation: Zhang, W., & Su, Y. (2025). Inheritance and protection of the historical and cultural heritage of Yunnan ethnic minorities—Taking the Yi ethnic group's "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" as an example. *Herança*, 8(1), 76-88. <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v8i1/818>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 17 Sep 2023

Accepted: 23 Dec 2023

ABSTRACT

Excellent traditional culture is the fundamental foundation for the inheritance and development of a country or a nation, and the protection and inheritance of national culture are of great significance. However, modern civilization and foreign culture have had a huge impact on traditional ethnic culture, causing many ethnic folk cultures to face a crisis of inheritance, including the Yi ethnic Ah Xi people's folk dance—"Ah Xi Tiao Yue". There are many ethnic minorities in Yunnan Province, and ethnic minority culture occupies an absolute position in the cultural system of Yunnan. As a national intangible cultural heritage, the Yi people's "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" contains rich connotations and significance. It is rooted in the traditional society of the Ah Xi people and is closely related to their production, life, weddings, funerals, ceremonies, entertainment, and other aspects. This article introduces the origin and dance characteristics of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". It analyzes the measures and methods for inheriting and protecting this traditional ethnic dance, which has a long history, rich style, and unique charm. It has theoretical and practical significance for the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" dance itself and provides a reference for other ethnic dances in terms of Inheritance and protection.

Keywords: Ethnic Culture; Ah Xi Tiao Yue; Big Three String Dance; Inheritance and Protection.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic minority culture is an important part of Chinese culture, with characteristics of ethnicity, Inheritance, and diversity. It is a precious culture formed and passed down by the Chinese nation through generations of production and labor. It has diverse forms of expression, such as folk activities, traditional craftsmanship, and other production techniques. It is a product formed within a unique cultural space and carries the Chinese nation's development history and the people's emotions (X. He, 2004; Yang & Rang, 2006). Chinese culture has a long history. As a unified multi-ethnic country, ethnic minority culture has left a rich and colorful mark on the Chinese cultural scroll. Among them, Yunnan Province, the province with the most ethnic minorities in China, has 25 ethnic minorities with a total population of over 14 million. It has a diverse ethnic minority culture, 105 national-level intangible cultural heritage projects and more than 400 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage projects (Meng, Zhang, Li, & Wang, 2015; A. Jiang, 2012).

There are many ethnic minorities in Yunnan Province, and ethnic minority culture occupies an absolute position in the cultural system of Yunnan. Due to its diverse types, wide distribution, and mixed regional characteristics, its ethnic minority culture has a very wide distribution range and has received widespread attention from all sectors of society (M. Chen, 2023). Since the reform and opening, Yunnan's social and economic development has been significant. The provincial party committee and government have invested much energy in protecting minority cultural heritage, and various ethnic and cultural resources such as traditional festival

activities, folk etiquette, and production techniques have been protected. As early as 2000, Yunnan Province issued the "Yunnan Province Regulations on the Protection of Ethnic and Folk Traditional Culture", This provides a legal basis for protecting the intangible cultural heritage of local ethnic minorities (D. Zhang, 2019; Fan & Wang, 2018). Although some achievements have been made in the protection of excellent traditional cultures of ethnic minorities in Yunnan, there are still some main problems that need to be solved due to various factors and constraints. Firstly, the disappearance of traditional cultural resources of ethnic minorities is becoming increasingly serious, and the loss of ethnic ancient books is prominent; Secondly, there is a gap in the inheritance of excellent traditional cultural talents from ethnic minorities; Thirdly, the ecological and cultural environment of traditional ethnic minority cultures has been damaged to varying degrees; Fourthly, the contradiction between the protection and development of excellent traditional cultures of ethnic minorities is becoming increasingly prominent.

Overall, Yunnan Province has many ethnic minority cultural projects, with over 10000 cultural items listed as intangible cultural heritage at all levels, covering various types from ancient ethnic books, language and writing to craft production, dance and singing (W. Li, 2016). Among them, a group of intangible cultural heritage protection work, represented by the Yi ethnic group's Ah Xi Tiao Yue, Xiaguan Tuo tea-making techniques, and Dali Bai clothing, has been continuously promoted, involving more than 20 ethnic groups such as Bai, Dai, Yi, and Hani. Strictly speaking, the framework system of minority cultural heritage in Yunnan is very large (Ran, 2017).

The Yi dance "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", also known as "Tiao Yue" and "Sani Da San Xian Dance", which is popular in Mile county, HongHe Hani Yi autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, is a folk collective dance deeply loved by Ah Xi people (Q. Meng, 2014; Yingrui Zhang, 2017; Mojmír, 2009). As a traditional dance of the Yi ethnic group, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" contains rich connotations and meanings. It is rooted in the traditional society of the Ah Xi people and is closely related to their production, life, weddings, funerals, ceremonies, entertainment, Etc. It has already become a daily entertainment for A Xi people to express their emotions. Usually, during festivals and festivities such as Torch Festival, wrestling rink, Vulcan worship, and welcoming guests, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" is performed. Whenever the dance reaches its climax, strings, flutes, applause, singing, and cheers merge, causing the valley to vibrate and move people's hearts with a momentum of eternal vitality (P. Li, 2017; Yuan & Qi, 2017). Excellent traditional culture is the fundamental foundation for the inheritance and development of a country or a nation, and the protection and inheritance of national culture are of great significance. However, modern civilization and foreign culture have had a huge impact on traditional ethnic culture, causing many ethnic folk cultures to face a crisis of inheritance, including the Yi ethnic Ah Xi people's folk dance—"Ah Xi Tiao Yue". This article explores the ways and methods of inheriting and protecting this traditional ethnic dance, which has a long history, rich style, and unique charm. The aim is to enhance the theoretical and practical significance of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" itself, and to provide a reference for other ethnic dances in terms of inheritance and protection (Yongfang Zhang, 2019).

OVERVIEW OF "AH XI TIAO YUE"

Origin of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue"

According to the book "Yi Dance—Yunnan Ethnic and Folk Dance Materials" published in 1984, it is recorded that "people have varying opinions on the exact history of the formation of the Da San Xian dance" (Liu, 2019). According to the elderly in Xishan District, some people danced Da San Xian during the Xuanton period. If this statement is true, the Da San Xian dance has at least a hundred years of history (Qiu & Zhang, 2019). It can be seen that "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" After at least a hundred years of development, dance and its position in society have established a solid foundation (D. He,2017; W. Jiang, 2015).

According to the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue Forum-Volume 1", during the Nanzhao period, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" was referred to as "one-legged music" or "Doujiao music" and later referred to as "Da Huo Dance" or "one-legged dance". After dancing with instruments such as the Little Three Strings, Moon Qin, and Bamboo Flute, it is also known as the "Little Three Strings Dance". The difference between the Big Three Strings and the Little Three Strings is shown in [Table 1](#). After the Zhengde period of the Ming Dynasty, it was called "Ah Xi Tiao Le" (J. Li, 2012). In 1964, Mr Wen Yiduo proposed "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". Later, in memory of Mr Wen Yiduo, the Ah Xi people from Maitreya Keyi Village, Phoenix Mountain, and other places first changed "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" to "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" (Pu, 2010; Wei, 2018).

Table 1. Differences Between the Big Three Strings and the Little Three Strings

Name	Material	Overall length/cm	Length of wooden shrapnel/cm
Big three strings	Cover the drum surface with sheepskin, and make the strings with cow tendons. Watermelon trees, pine trees, and Chinese toon trees	140.0	8.0
Little three strings		87.0	8.0

The "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" has a long history. There are many theories about the origin of the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" among the people, such as the "Wooden Deng Theory of Taking Fire", the "Fire Fighting Theory", and the "Seeking Couples Theory" (Yao & Liu, 2010; C. Zhang, 2019). Teacher Mei Zhihong, the cultural station of Xisan Town in Mile County and the provincial-level inheritor of "Ah xi Tiao Yue", gave the following answer to the origin of "Ah xi Tiao Yue": "Ah xi Tiao Yue" originated from the labor and life of A xi people. In ancient times, ancestors mainly lived in hunting and slash-and-burn farming, first cutting down trees in the forest and then setting fire to the mountains for cultivation (H. Liu, 2015). In order to catch the season and seize the time to sow, it often leads to sowing without waiting for the charcoal ash burned by the trees to cool down completely. Therefore, during labor, people often burn their feet, and they will constantly jump with their feet alternately. When the charcoal ash sticks to the soles of their feet, they will kick their feet outward and throw them off. Later, to celebrate the harvest, people played the flute, played the three strings, and imitated the appearance of their feet jumping alternately during farming, forming the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" (Ma & Li, 2019). [Table 2](#) provides comparative data on the string shapes of the big three strings and the little three strings.

Table 2. Comparison of the Form of the Big Three Strings and the Little Three Strings

Name	Barrel diameter/cm	Handle length/cm	Handle width/cm	Tube length/cm
Big Three Strings	26	85	4.5	23
Little Three Strings	17	65	3.5	17

In the long process of historical changes and ethnic migration, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" has gone through the evolution process of "Tiao Huo Shen (bonfire) - Tiao Nong Shen, Mu Shen - Tiao Huan (celebrating harvest) - Tiao Liberty (freely seeking partners and discussing emotions) - Tiao Joy, Tiao Happiness (Ah et al.) - Tiao Yue (Ah et al.)". From this, it can be seen that "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" has undergone nearly a century of development. Its social functions have constantly changed while forming its unique style characteristics and artistic value (L. Zhang, Liu, & Wang, 2014).

Dance Features of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue"

The "Ah Xi Dance Music" is a traditional folk dance of the Yi ethnic group that integrates blowing, playing, singing, and dancing. It contains rich connotations and meanings and is essential to Axi people's social life (Kang, 2022; Nor, 2012). After a long evolution and development, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" has formed its distinct characteristics in dance form. The "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" can be divided into two forms: "elderly dance" and "youth dance", with the prototype being "elderly dance". In the early 20th century, with different accompanying instruments and changes in dance rhythm, youth dance developed based on "elderly dance", which presents the manifestations of "elderly dance" and "youth dance". Perform the jump in a male-female manner, alternating the first three beats of jumping and turning with both feet and the last two beats of high fives facing each other. In the video documentary of Duan Zhengrong, the inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", it can be seen that the dance method of "Youth Dance" includes bouncing steps, hook foot jumps, flat turn jumps, and turn around jumps; The dance method of "Old Man Dance" includes appearance movements, basic movements, and hook foot jumps. Based on methods such as conducting research, reading books, and watching videos, it has been summarized that the main movements of "elderly dance" include swinging and jumping steps, crotch trembling steps, long leg jumping, crunchy crotch lifting, soft step jumping, and high fives. The movements of "youth dance" are mainly developed on the movements of "elderly dance", such as the clapping of the elderly dance is limited to the chest, and the clapping direction of "youth dance" is more freely wielded; based on the more stable and slow one-foot bounce step in "elderly dance", it has developed into the dynamic and fast two-foot bounce step in "youth dance", with the main movements including bounce step, double arm swing, hook kick step, high five, etc. [Table 3](#) shows the dancers' emotions exhibited by various movements in the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" dance. There is no requirement for the number of participants in the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" dance, and it can be played by men, women,

and children of all ages. The venue is usually at the junction of two villages or on the stage, with the formation mainly consisting of circles and double horizontal rows (Y. Chen & Zhang, 2014).

Table 3. "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" Dance Movement Indications

Body parts	Dance movements	Dance action refers to
Hand	Quickly swing and clap your hands	Relaxed and happy
	Expert clapping around the ear and chest	Open, relaxed, and cheerful
Foot	Bounce step, swing step	Light and excited
Crotch	Swing and Bow Progress (Male)	Excitement, courtship, or joy, excitement
Legs	Knee tremors, shaking, bouncing	Light and cheerful
Torso	Straighten your chest and back	Frank

The commonly used tunes of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" include local traditional folk songs such as "La Li Zha" and "Jumping Joy". According to the inheritor Duan Zhengrong in the "Rescue Record Protection Shooting Short Film", the main accompanying instruments during dance include the big three-stringed, big muffled flute, mezzo flute, soprano flute, wooden leaf, and four-stringed (Feng,2016; T. Wang, Fan, & H. Wang, 2016). The music of "Elderly Dance" is quite slow, with a speed of around 66, using the "Basic Performance Method of Small Three Strings" and "Performance Method of Small Three Strings". The "Youth Dance" music is more lively, with a speed of around 120, using the "Big Three Strings Performance Method". The big three strings play a crucial role in "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", as they are both the main accompaniment instrument in music and an essential prop in dance. The Da San Xian mainly has dry notes of 1, 3, and 5, with a thick and bright tone characterized by simplicity and high pitch. Combined with the characteristic 5-beat rhythm form, it further reflects the straightforward personality of the Ah Xi people. When used as a dance prop, the male dancer carries a large triple string on his shoulder while bouncing and jumping with agile steps, powerful movements, and magnificent momentum. A statistical analysis was conducted on the melodic composition of "Ah Xi Tiaoyue" in four villages, namely Fenghuang, Gosi, Malong, and Sanpo. The statistical results are shown in Figure 1, indicating that "Ah Xi Tiaoyue" extensively uses the three tones of "dol, mi, and sol". Due to the limitation of props, most of the arms play the three strings during the dance, so there are fewer upper limb dance movements, mainly consisting of alternating steps and turns of the feet.

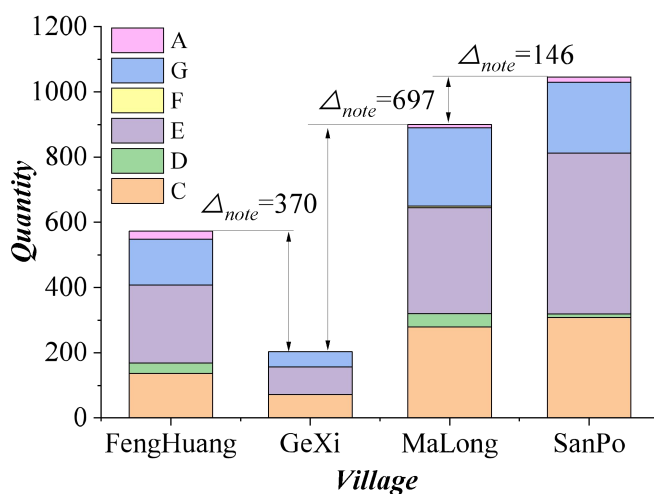


Figure 1. Number of Melody Composition Notes Appearing

People must wear formal attire to participate in the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" event. The woman is wearing a long robe-style top with a short front and long back. The elderly wear black, medium-length pants, and black cloth shoes, while the young wear a white or pink bottomed top and fold the back hem into a triangle to fit into the waist. The lower body is made of medium-length pants and embroidered shoes; On headwear, it used to be wrapped around the head with a headband after coiling, but now it leaves a bundle of hair outside the headband or replaces the bundle with a bead chain; Wear silver rings or chains in the ears, silver bracelets or rings in the hands, and thick black lines around the ankles. The men all wear white tops, black clothes, and a foreskin. The performer's clothing is shown in Figure 2.

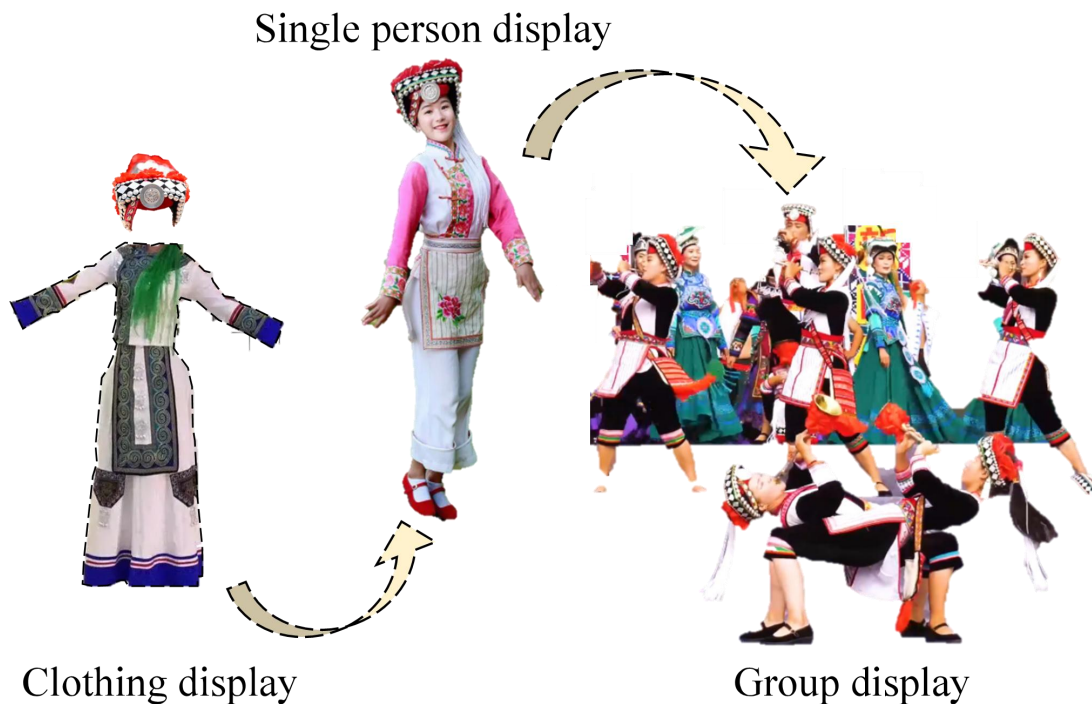


Figure 2. Costume and Performance Form of the Performer " Ah Xi Tiao Yue"

In summary, the dance movements, music, props, costumes, and other characteristics of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" constitute the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue Dance Culture" with the emblem of the A Xi people, vividly reflecting the passion and simple, persistent, optimistic and upward national character of the Ah Xi people. It is an important carrier of the spiritual world of the A Xi people and folk dance with artistic charm and national spirit; it symbolizes the upright, enthusiastic, and self-improvement spirit of the A Xi people and has developed into a unique and magnificent mountain flower in Chinese national art after nearly a century of development.

THE MULTI-CHANNEL INHERITANCE AND PROTECTION OF "AH XI TIAO YUE"

The rapid dissemination of technology and information in modern society and the fast-paced life are increasingly squeezing the living space of the traditional dance of the People's Liberation Army, making the inheritance path more and more narrow. It is necessary to seek and expand more ways and paths, and "multi-channel protection" has its pertinence in dealing with the impact and challenges of internationalization, modernization, and informatization in ethnic dance.

Pay Attention to the Protection of the "Source" and "Surrounding" Areas

In terms of "source" protection, the main residential area of the Yi ethnic group of the A Xi people in Mile County, the "Xishan Area," is the "native place" of the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", which is of utmost importance. The most crucial thing is to protect the environmental factors closely related to the generation and development of the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". Based on this, two aspects need to be strengthened:

One is to focus on in-situ protection and implement universal Inheritance. We all know that the foundation of any ethnic culture lies in the people. In terms of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", the extensive participation of the Yi ethnic group Ah Xi people is the "soil" that ensures the effective Inheritance of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". The "soil" of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" refers to all the people who, during a certain historical period, lived in the common social and cultural background of the "Xishan Area" in Mile County, Yunnan Province, and possessed the same dance type as "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". They are the participants, inheritors, and "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" owners. Also, because "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" not only belongs to the Yi people in essence but also has the distinct "collective" characteristics of ethnic folk dance, it is a typical male-female collective dance and a large-scale group dance that tens, hundreds, and even thousands of people dance together; Its Inheritance is mostly in a state of spontaneous participation by the masses. Therefore, in terms of Inheritance and protection, it is necessary to have a solid mass foundation and a vast cultural soil. We advocate for "in-situ protection and universal inheritance", which means that "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" should be firmly rooted in its cultural soil, closely connected to its own "roots", and closely connected to the "source" of water, to achieve true long-term protection.

At present, in the hometown of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", governments at all levels and cultural departments have taken some protective measures starting from traditional organizations in ethnic communities, implementing "soil" protection. For example, Xiyi Town, Xi'er Town, and Xisan Town, which belong to the Xishan region, have established a mechanism for protecting inheritors. In response to the current situation where young people are not enthusiastic about learning traditional ethnic dance, they have launched the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue into Campus" activity, sowing the seeds of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" on campus and normalizing it; Each township has also established an "Ah Xi Tiao Yue Ethnic Culture Inheritance Association" or "Folk Literature and Art Team" based on villages, forming a relatively complete protection system. At the same time, governments at all levels provide certain support in terms of policies and funding. A survey was conducted on 9 villages under the jurisdiction of XiSan town, including ZheYi, FengHuang, SanPo, Linma, DaMai, Gexi, Mayi, Malong, and Huakou, Basic information of the surveyed individuals is shown in Figure 3.

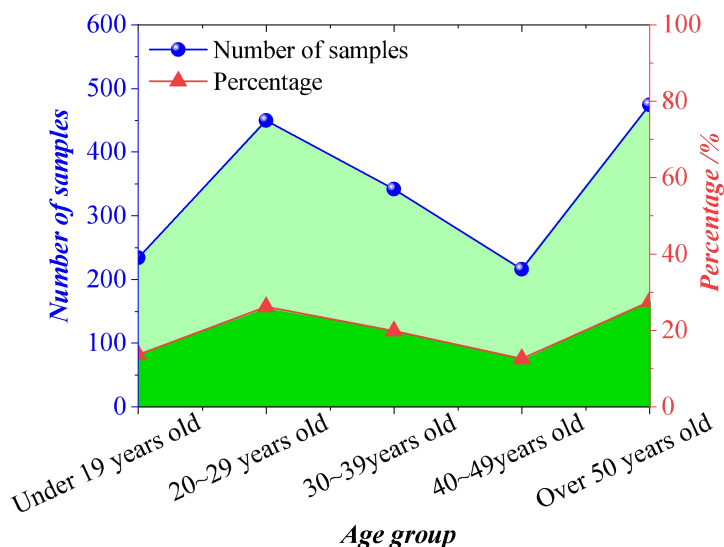


Figure 3. Distribution of Survey Subjects in Different Age Groups

In addition, as shown in Table 4, the gender distribution of the surveyed subjects is further provided. Among them, there are 1014 women, accounting for approximately 59.1%; there are 702 males, accounting for approximately 40.9%.

Table 4. Gender Situation of Survey Subjects

Gender	Number of samples	Proportion
Male	1014	59.1
Female	702	40.9

In the survey process, relevant satisfaction analysis was conducted based on the performance stages and stage design of different Ah Xi Moon Dance performances. For different forms of Ah Xi Moon Dance performances, the correlation between different variable influencing factors and Ah Xi Moon Dance related influencing variables was analyzed. As shown in Figure 4, the variation of combination reliability and average variance extracted values between different variables is presented.

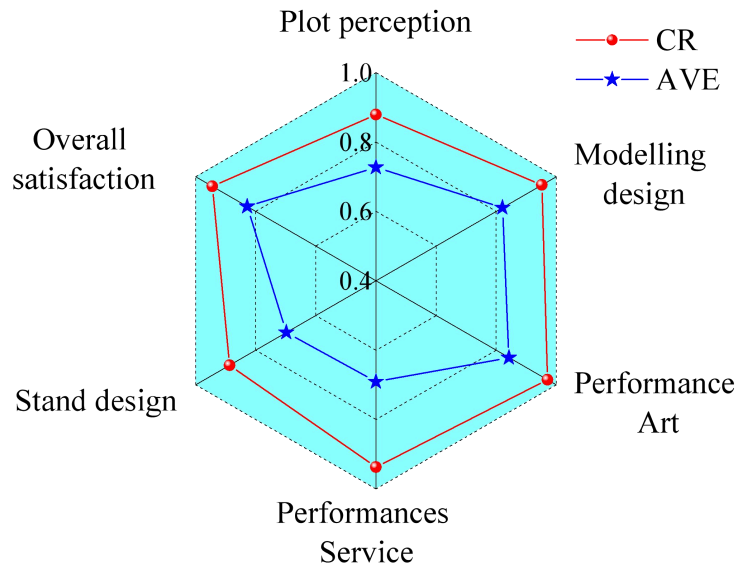


Figure 4. Analysis of Reliability and Validity of Different Variable Measures

As shown in Figure 5, the number of survey samples and prevalence rates for different villages are presented. From the figure, it can be seen that the number of people surveyed in each village ranges from 175 to 203, and the popularity rate of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" in each village has reached over 40%. The best performing villages, Fenghuang village and Malong village, have even reached 80%. This "in situ" protection based on the village can be said to be the primary protection.

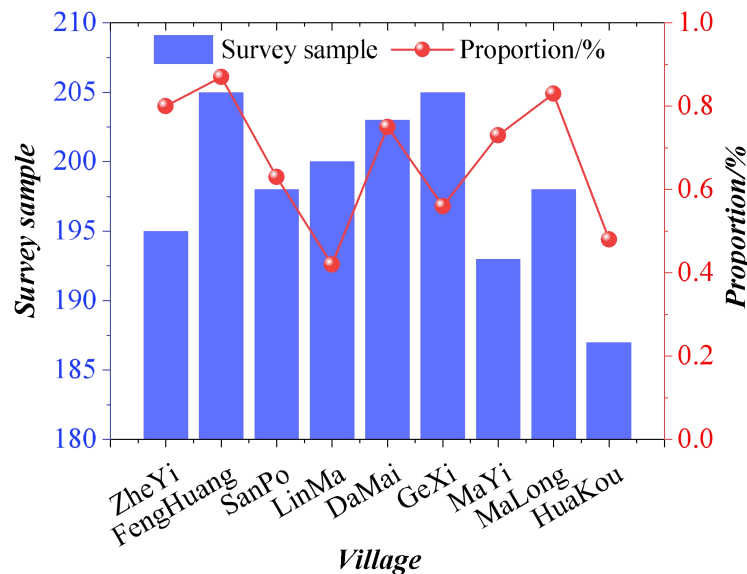


Figure 5. Sample Size and Prevalence of Surveys in Different Villages

The second is to maintain traditional ethnic festivals and strengthen the carrier of ethnic culture. Traditional ethnic festivals synthesize the history, culture, and folk customs of various ethnic groups and are also a very important carrier of ethnic folk dance. The most famous traditional festival of the Yi A Xi people is the "Fire Festival", which not only embodies the ancient "Fire" culture and primitive religious culture of the A Xi people but also carries the ancient sacrificial function of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". Furthermore, one of the main entertainment activities of the "Torch Festival" shared by the Yi A Xi people and other branches of the Yi ethnic group is to dance around the bonfire at night and celebrate. Therefore, protecting the traditional festivals of the Ah Xi people, such as the "Fire Festival" and "Torch Festival," is another necessary protection for the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". The "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" competition has become an emerging ceremony at the Fire Festival, where representative teams from various regions in Maitreya compete to learn the skills of jumping to the moon. The competition rules are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Scoring Standards for the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" Competition

Entry name	Full point	Pluses	Subtract item
Accompaniment instrument	1	High, medium, and low pitched harmoniously and loudly	Full length playback recording
Number of actors	1	Not less than 20 people (excluding accompanists such as pipers)	If there are less than 20 people, 0.5 points will be deducted for no less than 2 people, and so on
The situation of the male actor playing the big three strings	1	Strong and powerful, with a loud voice and good syllable completion	Male actors on stage do not play
Performing Emotions	5	Passionate, passionate and unrestrained, with innovative movements, neat and unified, beautiful, and well formed formation	Discretionary score reduction
Accompaniment coordination	1	Coordination between accompaniment and actors on stage	Discretionary score reduction
Actor expression	1	With a smiling face	Discretionary score reduction
Entry time	5	No more than 10 minutes	If it exceeds 10 minutes, 0.5 points will be deducted for every 1 minute

To this day, the traditional fire worship ceremony and large-scale "Jumping Moon" activities of the "Fire Festival" have been relatively intact in HongWan village and QiFei village in Kiyi Town, the hometown of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", and Keyi village in XiSan town. From it, we can glimpse the ancient style of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and explore the historical source and development context of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". However, in terms of actual protection, there are also two problems: firstly, compared to the 1950s, the scope of the "Fire Festival" has been greatly reduced, to the extent that large villages like FengHuang Village in XiSan Town, where A Xi people are most concentrated, have long disappeared from the traces of the "Fire Festival"; Secondly, only a few elderly villagers are aware of the history, cultural connotations, and historical changes of the traditional festivals of their respective ethnic groups, as well as the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". However, most young people participating in the "Fire Festival" activities are "only aware of it and do not know its reason". Furthermore, the "Torch Festival" of the Yi ethnic group is gradually fading in the social life of modern A Xi people. In this regard, restoring this important node of national traditional festivals has become very important. In order to analyze the attention of tourists to the Torch Festival, as shown in Table 6, the distribution of tourists with different educational backgrounds participating in the Torch Festival is presented.

Table 6. Analysis of Education Questionnaire for Tourist Samples

Category	Survey sample	Proportion
Bachelor degree or above	135	46.9%
Junior college	65	22.6%
High school	51	17.7%
Middle school	24	8.3%
Primary school and below	13	4.5%

From the perspective of the protection of the surrounding areas, with the Xishan area of Mile County as the center and radiating to surrounding counties such as Shilin, Yiliang, Luxi, Luliang, Shizong, and Qiubei, the widely circulated "dance music" and "big three string dances" in the Yi ethnic area of each county belong to the same dance species as the "big three string dances" in Yunnan. Their protection belongs to the "A Xi Tiao Yue" category and "cultural vegetation".

For example, in Shilin Yi Autonomous County, which is connected to the western mountains and rivers of Mile, the Sani and A Xi people in Shilin County and A Xi people in Mile County are like brothers. They have formed extremely similar and distinctive "Big Three String Dance" through long-term labor, production, life, and cultural exchanges. In history, the Yi people of both regions gathered during New Year's festivals or folk exchanges to perform "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and "Sani Big Three Strings" in a duet dance. At present, there is a common phenomenon that in terms of Inheritance and protection, both the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and "Sani Big Three Strings", which come from the same lineage, are facing a relatively good inheritance situation of "Youth Dance", while the inheritance situation of "Elderly Dance" is in crisis. The "Torch Festival" of the Yi ethnic group, which is also jointly owned by the A Xi and Sani people, is thriving in Shilin, even though the worship ceremony of Yi men, women, and children holding torches to roam the fields and drive away epidemics has now evolved into a

symbolic bonfire on the square; In the past, the "Dance Moon", where Yi people enjoyed themselves and talked about love, has also evolved into a form of tourism singing and dancing performances. However, the scale and popularity of the Yi Torch Festival in Shilin County have dwarfed the "Torch Festival" of the A Xi people in Mile County. Based on the above research data, further analysis was conducted on the educational distribution of participants in different dances, and the relevant analysis results are shown in Figure 6. In terms of inheritance and protection of the same dance genre and festival, there may also be certain differences in attention content due to differences in educational backgrounds in different regions. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the attention content of different educational backgrounds and age levels, and further strengthen the inheritance and protection of minority affiliated cultures.

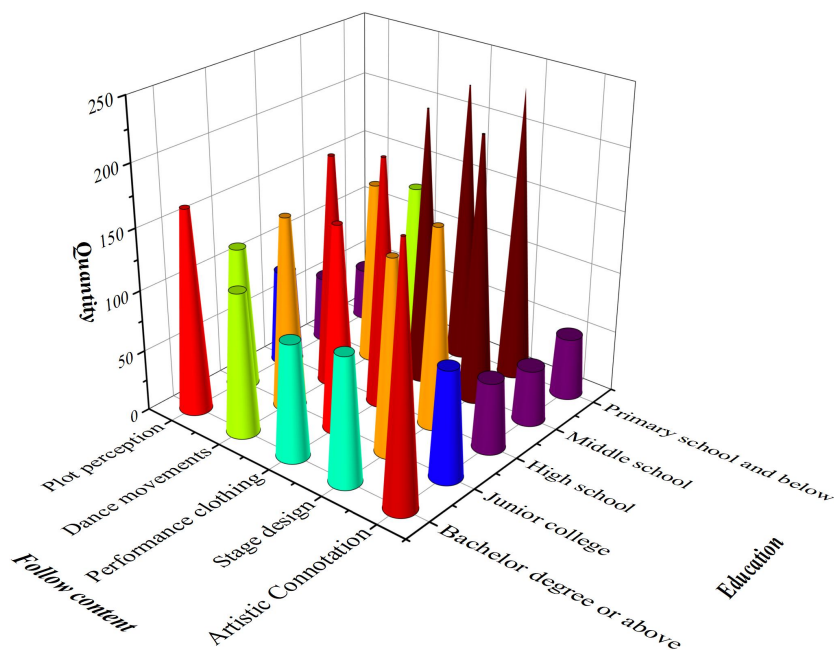


Figure 6. Educational Distribution of Participants in Different Dances

Key Protection and Development of Dance Subjects and Auxiliary Components

While protecting the dance subject of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", it is also necessary to protect the closely related auxiliary elements such as music, clothing, props, accompanying instruments, and the accompaniment form of small bands.

The dance subject of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" not only refers to the basic movements of "Three Step Music" but also includes a series of related movements, dance routines, dance formations, and especially some unique techniques exclusive to "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". For example, in "youth dance", a woman's movement of "quickly jumping one lap in a five beat and then grabbing three palms"; In the "elderly dance", the movements of male and female dancers "lifting one leg while swinging, turning around, and turning several times in a row". It should be said that protecting the dance technique system and core skills of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" is the basic principle for achieving the protection of the dance subject of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". At the same time, the essential auxiliary parts in the dance of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" cannot be ignored, such as the dance music of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", as well as the Ah Xi folk songs such as "Xiankeyi", "Xishan Ballad", "Lili Diao", which form the foundation of the dance music of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue"; For example, in "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", the large and small three strings, which are both the main instrument and important props, as well as the special playing techniques of the three strings; For example, the characteristic language used in the singing of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" - the Yi language "three beats six character lyrics", as well as the blowing instruments such as the bamboo flute, Suona, leaves, whistle, three strings, moon qin, and three-stringed instruments such as Sanhu, which play different roles in melody, rhythm, harmony, and command in the band accompaniment. In the face of modern recording and the proliferation of "MIDI" production, it has greatly impacted minority characteristic music today; the protection of ethnic dance music urgently needs attention and strengthening. Furthermore, as the most representative ethnic identity of the A Xi people's clothing, in the face of the accelerated localization of men's clothing and the loss of women's clothing handicrafts, it is also necessary to increase protection efforts.

If we only attach importance to the protection of the dance subject of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and do not pay

attention to the protection of the auxiliary parts, it is incomplete protection.

Integration and Preservation of External Form and Cultural Core

As a traditional ethnic dance with a long history, "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" embodies the trinity of song, dance, and music and the history, religion, culture, and customs of the ethnic group. It represents the survival status of Ah Xi people in different periods and various social functions such as worship, marriage, and entertainment. There is a variety of legends about the origin of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and "Dance". Through the "theory of extinguishing mountain fires" and "theory of farming", we can understand some of the life situations of the Ah Xi people in the flood and famine era and the social development history of slash-and-burn to farm. Through the "Sacrifice to the Fire God" theory, one can understand the detailed content of the "Fire Worship" of the A Xi people and its internal connection with natural worship, revealing the early sacrificial function of the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". This specific ethnic history and cultural connotations contained in the dance culture of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" are precious ethnic historical materials that we cannot find today. If only the protection of the dance movements, dance routines, and forms of expression of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" is implemented, it is still only external protection. The internal protection must further protect the history, culture, religious beliefs, traditional customs, and specific emotional expressions of ethnic groups closely related to "Ah Xi Tiao Yue"; and further grasp the historical context of the emergence, development, and evolution of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", as well as the dance content, form, rhythm, style, Etc. Only in this way can we achieve unity between external and internal and comprehensive protection.

In today's rapidly developing tourism industry, enhancing the concept of "cultural supremacy" in protecting ethnic dance and ensuring that traditional ethnic dance remains at the "core" of its culture is a crucial cultural principle.

Combination of Dynamic Protection and Static Protection

The dynamic protection and static protection of dance are two aspects. Dynamic protection refers to the form of protection directly completed by dancers, also known as "live protection". In terms of the essential characteristics of dance art, dynamic protection is the most fundamental and direct form of protection. Static protection mainly uses text or images to excavate, organize, and record dance to complement and complement dynamic protection. In the "Integration of Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dance - Yunnan Volume", "Chinese Dance Chronicles-Yunnan Volume", and "Investigation of the Current Situation of Chinese Folk Dance-Yunnan Volume", various static methods such as text, music scores, ballads, pictures, and dance legends have been used to protect "Ah Xi Tiao Yue". In addition, Liang Lun's adaptations of the dance "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" and "The Charm of" Ah Xi Tiao Yue ", Yang Guanghong's" Exploration of the Evolution of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", Li Yunyu's "Extremely Aesthetic Value of the Evolution of" Ah Xi Tiao Yue ", Chang Hanlin's" Legend of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", Zhao Wuchu Zha and Lai Mi Puno's "Ah Xi People and Their" Ah Xi Tiao Yue ", and Ge Yongcai's" Exploration of the Historical and Cultural Origin of the Yi Ethnic Group in Maitreya ", Monographs or articles such as Chen Baoshun's "The Story of Ah Xi Tiao Yue" also belong to this type of protection. Furthermore, a large number of photo influence materials reflecting different dance scenes of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" vividly and intuitively reflect the dance movements, postures, formation changes, dancers' faces, clothing and props, accompanying instruments, and surrounding environment of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", which have strong empirical significance. The fact shows that static protection is a good auxiliary form for dynamic protection.

Adhere to the Coordinated Promotion of Development and Protection

The purpose of protection is to inherit and continue to develop effectively. The three important stages of development experienced by "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" over a hundred years have been explained by historical facts: ethnic dance "develops with the development of the times" is a basic law, and it is also an important link for "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" to optimize itself continuously. The "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" has evolved from the early dance steps of "walking cross step tremble step", clapping one step, small amplitude, slow rhythm, and dancing one action to the end. Nowadays, it takes the "running jump step" and "bouncing jump step" as the basic dance steps and has a rich upper body and hand movements. The dance movements are large in amplitude, fast in speed, and have many jumping movements; From dance music as a commonly seen 2/4 beat, it has developed into a relatively rare folk characteristic music with a 5/4 beat that highlights the core melody of "13.5"; The main accompanying instruments have gradually evolved from the low pitched and weak volume gourd strings to the increasingly bright tones of the small and large three strings; The overall style of dance is relatively slow and smooth, to lively and jumping; From the subtle and implicit expression of emotions to extremely enthusiastic and unrestrained.

CONCLUSION

This article introduces the origin and dance characteristics of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", discusses the ways and methods of Inheritance and protection of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue", and emphasizes that "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" is constructed through the continuous enrichment and gradual improvement of generations, with a process of evolution from simple to complex, from single to rich; The cultural changes of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" also tell us that the most positive and effective way to protect traditional ethnic dance is to protect it during development; Adherence to tradition is a balancing force between development and innovation, confirming the value judgments of what can be done and what cannot be done. If there is a lack of perseverance, development and innovation may lose the necessary constraints and move towards the opposite of themselves. Today, we not only need to keep up with the times and continue to inherit and protect the excellent ethnic dance "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" but also to keep up with the times and continuously promote it. Realize protection in development and achieve development through perseverance. Taking the inheritance and protection method of "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" as a reference, we will better inherit and protect the historical and cultural heritage of more Yunnan ethnic minorities, and make them bloom into a wonderful chapter that is suitable for the cultural requirements of the new era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to the teachers at the Mile County Cultural Museum and the Mile County Library. During the process of writing my paper, they provided me with a lot of convenience and assistance in searching for information; With the help of Duan Zhengrong, the head teacher of the Xisanzhen Cultural Station and a folk artist from Fenghuang Village, my investigation was successfully carried out. I also want to thank the villagers of Phoenix Village for their enthusiastic help in successfully completing my paper.

REFERENCES

- Chen, M. (2023). Woguo minzu chuantong tiyu baohu yu fazhan yanjiu—yi yunnan “a xi tiao yue” wei li [Research on the protection and development of traditional ethnic sports in China: Taking the "Ah Xi Tiao Yue" in Yunnan as an example]. *Contemporary Sports Science and Technology*, 13(28), 1-4.
- Chen, Y., & Zhang, X. (2014). Research on dance and music of the morphology description and inheritance of fear ritual by Mao Nan nationality. *Journal of Beijing Dance Academy*, 9(06), 113-117.
- Fan, Y., & Wang, C. (2018). On the scientificity of traditional ecological culture of ethnic minorities. *Journal of Southwest Forestry University (Social Sciences)*, (05), 40-43.
- Feng, Q. (2016). Analysis and Inheritance of the culture of national traditional sports frog dance of Guangxi. *Journal of Shenyang Sport University*, 8(04), 139-144.
- He, D. (2017). Inheritance and protection of the ethnic languages in Guangxi under the background of "the Belt and Road". *Journal of Nanning Polytechnic*, 16(06), 30-33.
- He, X. (2004). On the traditional culture of China's ethnic minorities and ecological protection. *Journal of Yunnan University for Nationalities (Social Sciences)*, 8(01), 48-56.
- Jiang, A. (2012). A review of Chinese ethnic traditional ecological culture over the past decade. *Journal of Beifang University of Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science)*, 6(04), 109-114.
- Jiang, W. (2015). The Inheritance and protection of Miao serial pour festivals under cultural industrialization. *Journal of Guangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (06), 117-123.
- Kang, L. (2022). National music promotion and inheritance strategies based on the perspective of intangible cultural heritage. *Arts Studies and Criticism*, 2(4), 197-200.
- Li, J. (2012). A review of the studies of the minority's traditional ecological knowledge in China. *Journal of Guizhou Normal University (Social Science)*, (05), 70-75.
- Li, P. (2017). "Living state" inheritance and protection of ethnic original folk songs under the background of globalization. *Guizhou Ethnic Studies*, (12), 106-109.
- Li, W. (2016). Protection of the traditional culture in the ecological migration. *Journal of the Party School of Shengli Oilfield*, (02), 45-48.
- Liu, C. (2019). Study on cultural protection and inheritance strategies of minority villages under the background of rural revitalization: Taking the Beijing Bayuanzi village planning as an example (Master's thesis, Chang'an University, Xi'an, China). Retrieved from https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=9w9hix65dQSOrv-FdswZdLxLOUvMpJqmtMhiBSbPL-1pa9Z1WY7ydoBaRObtu6zw4SRfNuMIYDoxdzJHE_1crqBjOvdbOSUZv8l-N9OcwvkwEIXtOR5RvRhwT7vcMrDwWfcGt-QgoH4dP5_k92_MoQ=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Liu, H. (2015, October). Research on inheritance and development trend of Chinese national folk dance. In *2015 International Conference on Economics, Social Science, Arts, Education and Management Engineering* (pp. 139-142). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Atlantis Press.
- Ma, Z., & Li, J. (2019). Research on the inheritance and ways of protection of the yao nationality's brocade crafts—Taking the Goulan Yao village in Jianguyong county of Yongzhou as an example. *Hunan Packaging*, (05), 70-73.
- Meng, Q. (2014). Protection of minority ecological culture from the tourism development perspective: A case study of the Naxi nationality. *Ecological Economy*, (06), 163-165.
- Meng, W., Zhang, J., Li, H., & Wang, H. (2015). Research on the function and the inheritance and development of the Yi people. *Sichuan Sports Science*, 12(06), 104-107+111.
- Mojmír, B. (2009). Etiquette is a style of addressing relatives in Slovakia and in the environment of Slovak minorities in countries in Central and Southern Europe. *Slovak Ethnology*, 57(1), 59-68.
- Nor, M. A. M. (2012). Dance as culture: Appropriating ethnochoreology on dance research in the Maritime-Malay societies in Southeast Asia. *대한무용학회논문집*, 70(1), 281-298.
- Pu, L. (2010). A study on inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in school education—Based on an investigation of Yunnan province. *Journal of Research on Education for Ethnic Minorities*, (02), 35-42.
- Qiu, L., & Zhang, B. (2019). Research on rural cultural construction and development in minority areas under rural revitalization—Taking GuangXi Rongshui Miao autonomous county as an example. *Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences*, (14), 258-260.

- Ran, H. (2017). Research on the contemporary folk inheritance of outstanding traditional culture of ethnic minorities: "liu san-jie" in Guangxi folk songs as an example. *Guizhou Ethnic Studies*, (05), 106-111.
- Wang, T., Fan, L., & Wang, H. (2016). Research on the development and Inheritance of the Shanxi ansai drum. *Zhejiang Sport Science*, 22(03), 54-55+92.
- Wei, S. (2018). Inheritance and research of music culture on khitan Liao music and dance. *Journal of Chifeng University (Philosophy and Social Science Chinese Edition)*, (10), 98-101.
- Yang, H., & Rang, Q. (2006). On the traditional culture of Mosuo ethnic minorities and its ecological protection. *Journal of Xichang College (Natural Science Edition)*, 11(04), 124-128.
- Yao, X., & Liu, S. (2010). Research on Hebei traditional music culture inheritance and development. *Journal of Shijiazhuang University*, (02), 104-108.
- Yuan, Y., & Qi, J. (2017). On the status survey and protection measures of the folk drama in ethnic regions of Chongqing. *Journal of Guangxi Teachers Education University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (05), 82-86+113.
- Zhang, C. (2019). On the foundation of the Inheritance and development of minority music culture. *Guizhou Ethnic Studies*, 21(04), 104-107.
- Zhang, D. (2019). Woguo minzu zizhi diqu chuantong wenhua de lifa baohu [On legislation protection of traditional culture in ethnic autonomous area of China]. *Chongqing Social Sciences*, 2(02), 45-54.
- Zhang, L., Liu, K., & Wang, T. (2014). Study on the protection and Inheritance of Hainan li intangible cultural heritage—A case study of the bamboo pole dance. In *Proceedings of the 10th Euro-Asia conference on environment and corporate social responsibility: Tourism, society and education session, PT III* (pp. 101-104). Retrieved from <https://www.inbar.int/resources/article/study-on-the-protection-and-inheritance-of-hainan-li-intangible-cultural-heritage-a-case-study-of-the-bamboo-pole-dance/>
- Zhang, Y. [Yingrui] (2017). On the value of traditional culture of ethnic minorities and grafting inheritance: Taking the judicial etiquette of traditional customs of ethnic minorities as an example. *Guizhou Ethnic Studies*, (07), 108-111.
- Zhang, Y. [Yongfang] (2019). Inheritance and protection of the folk songs from the background of the rural revitalization strategy. *Journal of Bengbu University*, (03), 125-128.

ETHICAL DECLARATION

Conflict of interest: No declaration required. **Financing:** No reporting required. **Peer review:** Double anonymous peer review.