

Influence of Dongyi Culture on Contemporary Folk-Custom Sports Activities

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Abstract

As an important source of Chinese civilization, Dongyi culture has a relatively special history position. Dongyi culture has a significant impact on Chinese civilization from the aspects of life, culture, ideology and morals. In ancient time, different nationalities that lived in Shandong area of China created their own cultures through their lives and work, and the cultures are called Dongyi culture. In Dongyi culture, characteristics of the folk-custom activities show intense Dongyi ethnic colors. In modern time, main characteristics of folk-custom sports activities are their regional and national characteristics; therefore, Dongyi culture has a strong influence on contemporary folk-custom sports activities.

Key words: Dongyi culture; Folk-custom activities; Regional

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INTRODUCTION

As an important source of Chinese civilization, Dongyi culture has a relatively special history position, and has a significant impact on Chinese civilization from the aspects

of life, culture, ideology and morals. Dongyi culture originated in the prehistoric culture period of Shandong and recorded the life, work and thoughts of the residents on this land. Dongyi culture's characteristics of the folk-custom activities show intense Dongyi ethnic colors. Main characteristics of local folk-custom activities are their regional and national characteristics, and folk-custom activities are mainly showed through the ethnic culture. Therefore, Dongyi culture has a strong influence on local folk activities.

1. THE HISTORY OF DONGYI CULTURE

In Chinese, Dongyi consists of "Dong" and "Yi" two words. Before the Shang Dynasty of China, the word "Yi" specifically referred to the people or the residents of the East, as *Da Dai Li • Qian Cheng* said, "The people who lived in the eastern region were called "Ri Yi". *The Book of Rites • King* said, "The oriental Ri Yi had their hair hanging down loosely and tattoos." In the Zhou Dynasty, Yi generally referred to nationalities and regions outside the Central Plains of China, for example, "*Shang Book • Zhou Book*" recorded: "A wise monarch has proper morals so every Yi surrenders." In the pre-Qin period, Yi mainly referred to nationalities and regions around the Central Plains. The Dongyi referred to the concept including the oriental tribes, nationalities and regions, and it was put forward during the Shang and Zhou dynasties when the Central Plains region gradually became the political, cultural and economic center of ancient China, for example, some literatures and bronzes handed down from ancient times said, "Zhou Gong had led the conquest of Dongyi, and Fengbo and Zhuangu were conquered..."; *Historical Records • Zhou Ben Ji* said, "Chengwang had led the conquest of Dongyi, and Xishen came to offer congratulations."

As an important source of ancient Chinese culture, "Dongyi culture" has made an indelible contribution to the

development of Chinese civilization. The archaeological discoveries such as Houli culture, Beixin culture, Dawenkou culture, Longshan culture and Yueshi culture show influence of Dongyi culture, especially, Dawenkou culture and Longshan culture represent the prosperous period of Dongyi culture. In the Spring and Autumn period or the Warring States period of China, the Qi State had conquered the Laiyi State that marked the disappearance of the Dongyi culture as an independent cultural group, but Dongyi culture later mixed with other cultures to grow a new culture (Wang, 2009, p.70). The spread area of Dongyi culture changed over time. In prehistoric civilization, the core area of Dongyi culture distribution was in Haidai of present Shandong Province. In Shang and Zhou Dynasties, Dongyi culture mainly spread in Tai and Yi Mountain areas, namely the Shandong Peninsula region. In the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, namely the pre-Qin period, Dongyi culture gradually integrated into all areas of the Central Plains culture.

2. INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT ON DONGYI CULTURE

Dongyi culture originated in the Shandong area. In this region, Dongyi nationalities created their own cultures through their lives and work. However, over time, Dongyi culture was more and more widely distributed. It was different from the Central Plains culture and was ahead of the Central Plains culture with Dongyi distinctive ethnic characteristics. Dongyi culture spread from the north of present Liaodong Peninsula to the Huaibei region of southern Jiangsu and from the east of the Shandong Peninsula to the east of Henan, and occupied an important position in the geography.

The influence of Dongyi culture on Central Plains culture was much greater than the influence of Central Plains culture on Dongyi culture that was manifested in the flourishing period of the Dongyi culture: Dawenkou culture and Longshan culture appeared in Central Plains culture of the same period, but Dongyi culture was not found in Central Plains culture of the same period. It shows that Dongyi culture was advanced at the time (Zhang, 1989).

The study of Dongyi culture can give neither an exact period nor some today's regional and national boundaries for Dongyi culture existence. Dongyi culture started from prehistoric civilization period when human activities and the geography had close relations; therefore, the geographical environment was an important influential factor for the cultural development in this period. The scope of human activities included the Shandong Peninsula, the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese archipelago and North America in this period, and human cultural exchanges also followed the human activities. From the

prehistoric period to the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, with the development of navigation technology, the exchanges of human culture were more rich and extensive. Therefore, the geographical environment also had a big impact on Dongyi culture.

2.1 Geographical Environment

The geographical environment of Dongyi culture was surrounded on three sides by the sea and the hilly environment. It also had disconnected mountains and properly spread valleys and basins, forming a very convenient traffic condition. Therefore, the regional environment of connecting the sea had a subtle influence on the Dongyi nationalities' lives and work. Scholar Liang (1999) said:

Sea can make ambitious people... so long living by sea, the human spirit will be increasingly brave and noble. Since ancient times, the coastal people have been more active and ambitious than inland people so the coastal people of the same race suddenly become independent national people. (p.638)

As coastal people, Dongyi people not only had passionate, free and unrestrained characters but also had the courage to explore. Dongyi people pursued freedom, strength and beauty because they had primitive worship for nature. Dongyi people had worshipped for heroes so there are many legends in Dongyi culture, such as Taihao, Shaohao, Chi You, Hou Yi, etc.. In the process of the worship, Dongyi people also found that the heroes' strength, courage, fighting skills and characters also were Dongyi people own pursuit. The spirit, which is showed in the heroes' strength, courage, fighting skills and characters, also is the pursuit of modern sports (Li, 2013). Therefore, Dongyi culture longing for freedom and health became Dongyi people's first connection with sports, due to the national character, Dongyi people more worshipped tribal heroes and hoped to obtain a strong power. It laid the foundation for the development of their sports.

2.2 The Natural Environment

Human beings have slowly mastered all kinds of survival techniques to overcome natural disasters, such as jumping, climbing, swimming, throwing and so on, in order to survive, human beings continue to develop their own potential for conditions of losing the help of external forces. Dongyi nationalities had national characters and they had the courage to explore, were firm, and longed for freedom and power so that they had strong and flexible bodies, calmly dealt with uncertainties in the natural environment, and exercised their bodies to further adapt to the natural environment in which they grew up. National characters of Dongyi people also prompted them to make efforts to study healthy life, surviving and competition. With the improvement of ability of adapting to the natural environment, Dongyi people's physiques had become increasingly strong and tall. According to archaeological data, in Dawenkou culture of Xixiahou

village, Qufu, the average height of men is 171.3 cm, and the average height of men of Dawenkou is 172.2 cm. The difference only is 0.9 cm. The estimate of height of men of Dawenkou site is 166.59-178.35 cm and the average is 172.26 cm, compared with the average height of men of Banpo group 169.45 cm and Baoji group 168.82 cm, the average height of men of Dawenkou site is higher and the highest height reaches 190 cm. The average height of men of Dawenkou is 3-4 cm higher than the ancestors of Yangshao culture of the Central Plains region (Huang & Xue, 2008, p.4). These data fully prove that the unique geographical environment created a unique national character of Dongyi people, and the national character gave the Dongyi people strong bodies to adapt to the natural environment. Their strong physiques had made them become superior nationalities.

2.3 The Military Environment

Cultural communication is the process of mutual blending and conflict. Compared with mutual blending, cultural conflict can make culture spread more quickly. The most direct manifestation of cultural conflict is war. The history of human civilization can also be understood in a sense as the history of war. According to research, Dongyi people's military defense first appeared in the Longshan culture period. In Dongyi, early wars were for the survival of the people, and Dongyi people had relatively frequent wars with other nationalities and tribes during this period. The Dongyi people's military was more advanced than other nationalities and tribes. *Hou Han Shu*• *Dongyi Zhuan* said,

Xia Dynasty's monarch Taikang did not have morals, and he was betrayed by Dongyi people. Since the monarch Shaokang started ruling, Dongyi people had obeyed his ruling, lived in the royal place and performed Dongyi people's dance and music... the monarch Jie was oppressive, and some nationalities had invasions of Xia Dynasty... When Shang Dynasty's monarch Wuyi declined, Dongyi people became stronger, then migrated to the Huai River area and the Tai Mountain area, and gradually lived in the Central Plains.

Because the national character of Dongyi people was the worship of power and longing for health and freedom, so in order to have better life, Dongyi people had more understanding of war. Soldiers needed strong bodies for wars. It also highlighted Dongyi culture development and dissemination.

3. THE SPORTS CHARACTERISTICS OF DONGYI CULTURE

The development of Dongyi culture is the activity history of Dongyi nationalities, and the development of Dongyi culture had very important influence on Dongyi national sports. With the continuous excavation and textual research, as well as in-depth study of Dongyi culture, scholars find that Dongyi culture had sports characteristics in primitive worship, rituals, recreational customs and

others during different historical periods. In Dongyi culture, sports activities mainly came from Dongyi folk activities in this area, and folk activities were the main manifestations of Dongyi culture characteristics.

3.1 Primitive Worship

In Dongyi culture, the primitive worship benefited from the Dongyi people's worship of nature, worship of totem, ancestors and many primitive rituals. According to research, the Dongyi people began living in the coastal areas of Shandong from the Houli period. They were close to the sea and near mountains. They not only engaged in agricultural work but also had hunting and fishing, and gradually formed a stable place to live. With Dongyi people's development of productive forces, exploration of the unknown world as well as worship for the strong forces of nature, they became infinite fear and awe. As a result, they had soothing minds to perform physical activities in the primitive worship for response to the natural environment. Dongyi people most worshipped celestial bodies, in Dongyi culture, there were records about worshipping celestial bodies in various periods, for example, the color sun patterns painted by rice on the pottery unearthed from Dawenkou tomb, some symbolic moonlight zigzag lines painted on the color pottery, and the celestial patterns of the moon and nebula bands discovered from the primitive rock paintings of the General Cliff in Lianyungang. *Shang Book* • *Yao Dian* said, "Order Xizhong to live in Yanggu of Yuyi to worship the sunrise specially and observe the time of the sunrise." *Historical Records*•*Wu Di Ben Ji* said, "Order Xizhong to live in Yanggu of Yuyi to respectfully worship the sunrise and arrange the spring farming." They show that there was a complete set of primitive worship activities in Dongyi culture. The primitive worship of Dongyi culture showed the actual reflection of Dongyi people in the activities of knowing nature, understanding nature, conquering nature and dominating nature, and also summed up their real activities and practical experiences in resisting the external natural environment.

3.2 Etiquette and Custom

In the primitive humans, "ceremony" was important. The intuitionistic, exciting, grand and orderly characteristics of sports activities make them tend to be the activities of ceremony performance. China is a nation that emphasizes ceremony. Dongyi people who accounted for a large part of China also had their own ceremony. *Shuo Wen Tong Xun Ding Sheng* said, "The customs of minorities were not like the Chinese people's, and the customs were beautiful." A note of *Shuo Wen* said, "The custom of Dongyi was benevolent and a kind person would have a long life, so there was a noble nation in Dongyi." It shows that the existence of etiquette and morals in Dongyi people. The *Historical Records* • *Qi Taigong Family* recorded, "Taigong came to the country, reformed

the government, followed the custom, simplified the etiquette, promoted the commerce and industry and helped fishing and salt production, and people liked Qi so Qi was a big country.” This shows that Dongyi had stable “customs” and “etiquette” of a long history and they could only be simplified but they could not be changed. *Zuo Zhuan • Xi Gong Twenty-Seven Years* said, “The Duke of Qi Huan came to see the monarch, and the Duke was called the Viscount when the Duke used the Dongyi etiquette.” Du Yu Noted, “Qi was descendants of the Central Plains people, and they were forced to go to Dongyi. Qi lived in different customs and they sometimes used Dongyi’s languages and clothes.” “If Qi used the Dongyi etiquette, they were treated as lower people.” It shows that the Dongyi people’s “etiquette” was tenacious. In Dongyi culture, ceremony was used to normalize the national spirit, and it was the part of the sports culture. As activities, sports showed characteristics of the Dongyi culture, so the people developed a set of social and ethical norms for sports, which was various physical activities and language expressed in the “etiquette” of Dongyi culture. It provided the material basis for the Dongyi primitive sports education, recreation and other activities in Dongyi culture.

3.3 Entertainment Customs

In the Dongyi culture of the Houli culture period, Dongyi people had more stable residence, and survival and living conditions had been greatly improved than before. After basic material and physiological needs were met, Dongyi people pursued a higher spiritual need, which required people to communicate with each other and show their feelings. For this demand, the Dongyi people invented music, dance and other entertainment practices. According to some ancient records, the Dongyi people in the Taihao and Shaohao periods invented the Qinse, Tao Xun and other musical instruments. *Shi Ben • Zuo Pian* recorded: “Shennong invented the Qinse. Shennong’s Qinse was six feet six inches long and had five strings: Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng and Yu.” So Taihao invented the Qinse. *Lu Shi • Hou Ji One • Taihao Ji Shang* said, “Taihao baked soil for Tao Xun and the ceremony music had a big development.” Taihao not only invented the Qinse but also invented the Tao Xun. According to historical records, Shaohao invented the drum and Qing and wrote “Jiuyuan” music. *Lu Shi • Hou Ji Seven • Shaohao* also said, Shao Hao “built drum, made Qing, changed people customs near mountains and rivers, and wrote *Da Yuan* music to harmonize Gods and human beings as well as the upper and lower society, and the music was called *Nine Yuan*”. Dance accompanied by music was an important cultural form in Dongyi culture with a variety of physical activities and sounds of melody as the form of expression. In the ancient music and dance culture, main purposes of dance accompanied by music of Dongyi culture were for the primitive worship, etiquette and physical fitness.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF DONGYI CULTURE ON CONTEMPORARY LOCAL FOLK-CUSTOM ACTIVITIES

Dongyi culture originated in the prehistoric period of Shandong area and was the records of the residents’ life and work in this land. Dongyi culture shows characteristics of folk activities that have distinctive colors of Dongyi national people.

4.1 “Whip Cattle in the Spring”

Shandong’s whip cattle in the spring is a most seasonal folk activity. The activity of whip cattle in the spring”, also known as “whip spring”, in which people whip “soil” cattle in the spring. This activity starts from one day before the “Beginning of Spring” day and the purpose is to welcome the “Mang God” or “Spring God”. In the lunar calendar of China, the “Beginning of Spring” is the first of the twenty-four solar terms, since ancient times, people have attached great importance to it, so-called “A year’s plan starts with the spring”. The “whip cattle in the spring” has started since very early ancient times, and it is increasingly active in rural areas and becomes an important part of the folk culture.

The whip cattle in the spring activities were arranged in accordance with the season, and they were very seasonal. With the time passing, the whip cattle in the spring evolved into an entertainment game activity later. In this activity, “grab spring” and “grab cattle soil” behavior have a certain role in physical exercises for people.

4.2 The “Carry Flower Bar” in Sacrifice

The carry flower bar, also known as the “flower bar dance”, originated in Wucheng County, Dezhou City. It is a widespread folk dance with local characteristics. The carry flower bar originated in people offering sacrifice to “Aunt” in the history and belonged to a sacrificial dance. Offering sacrifice to the Entertainment God was a kind of ancient primitive worship.

The original purpose of the carry flower bar was to thank and offer sacrifice to the god through this performance, praying for good weather and good harvest. The carry flower bar combines dance and Kungfu, forming a unique form of folk performing arts. After the establishment of P. R. China, people got rid of superstition and removed the Aunt Temples and Niangniang Temples, no longer sacrificing. The highly favored carry flower bar is also like the dragon and lion dance and other forms of folk arts to be performed in the Spring Festival, Lantern Festival and other festive occasions. In China’s many folk sports activities, the carry flower bar is unique with its primitive simplicity, skill and spectacle.

4.3 “Drum Yangko Dance” for Harvest

Shandong’s Drum yangko dance is a folk sports activity with distinctive farming culture characteristics, and it is

a folk art form for the celebration of harvest with singing and dancing. There are a lot of arguments about the origin of the drum yangko dance, and the widespread view is the “work producing dance”. Shanghe County is on the alluvial plain of the Yellow River, and it has a long history that can be traced back to the primitive society before the Xia Dynasty. As the *Book of Songs* said, “When people are excited, they start to talk. If they cannot express their feelings by using language, they use hands and feet to dance.” Through the continuing cycle of life, the Lubei people on both sides of the Yellow River have gradually formed their unique styles of life, survival and emotional expression. People knew the value of the yangko dance and experienced the joy of singing and dancing, so they promoted its original form and gradually changed the yangko dance. With improved props, the yangko dance continued to have changes and became the rudiment of the drum yangko dance.

CONCLUSION

Folk activities were the main forms of the development of Dongyi culture. Folk activities established on the basis of Dongyi culture inherited and preserved the unique

national characteristics of Dongyi culture, at the same time enriched the content of Dongyi culture. Some folk activities originated in sacrifice and primitive worship of Dongyi culture and some originated in the “music and dance” of Dongyi culture, with the changing times, they spread to all areas of Shangdong. Through the study and analysis of Dongyi culture, we can be better to understand Dongyi culture’s impact on folk activities.

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