

Development of Traditional Minority Sports: Based on China's Minority Games

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Abstract: Traditional sports of Chinese ethnic minorities are one of China's rich and colourful cultural heritages, while the Ethnic Minority Games are an important platform for displaying and passing on traditional sports of ethnic minorities. By analysing the previous Minority Games, this paper discusses the influence of Minority Games on the development of Chinese minority traditional sports, sums up the successes and shortcomings, and puts forward suggestions and outlooks for future development.

Keywords: Traditional minority sports; minority games; development, impacts.

1. Introduction

The development and influence of minority traditional sports in China's minority games. China has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, among which traditional sports of ethnic minorities, as an important part of ethnic culture, carries ethnic history, regional characteristics and cultural spirit. As a national sports event, the Minority Games are not only an important platform for the inheritance and display of minority cultures, but also an important way to promote national unity and communication.

Existing studies have focused on the historical origins of traditional ethnic minority sports, the study of sports programmes and inheritance, and the organisation and impact of ethnic minority games. (Zhang Li, 2006) studied the characteristics and inheritance methods of traditional sports of ethnic minorities, such as Mongolian wrestling, Tibetan archery and other traditional programmes. (Li Xiao, 2008) puts forward the role of minority games on minority cultural inheritance and national unity, but there is a lack of systematic and in-depth research on the specific impact of minority games on the development of minority traditional sports and its revelation. However, (Yao Zhongjun, 2010) suggests that minority games are not only a platform for the display of minority traditional sports, but also a mechanism to promote ethnic communication and cultural integration. Research on the impact of ethnic minority games on the development of ethnic minority traditional sports should be analysed from multiple levels and perspectives in order to fully explore its potential revelations and values. In this context, this study will focus on what specific impacts the successive Minority Games have had on the development of traditional ethnic minority sports in China, and how the experience of the successive Minority Games can inspire and inform the development of traditional ethnic minority sports in the future, and other related issues. Using the method of literature review and analysis, we systematically summarise the impact and inspiration of the Games on the development of traditional ethnic minority sports by combing through the literature related to the previous ethnic minority Games. Firstly, the organisation, content and impact of previous Games are sorted out and summarised; secondly, the display and inheritance of traditional sports of various ethnic groups in the

Games are analysed; and finally, the outlook and methodology of future research are proposed through the criticism of existing studies and the overview of cutting-edge views.

2. Development of Minority Games

2.1. History of the Ethnic Minority Games

The history of the development of ethnic minority games can be traced back to the early twentieth century. These games are usually hosted by ethnic minority organisations or local governments and aim to promote cultural heritage, sports development and unity and cooperation among ethnic minorities. The earliest minority games may have appeared in some multi-ethnic countries such as China, Canada and the United States. With the passage of time, these Games have gained more and more attention, and their scale and influence have gradually expanded. Some countries even organise minority games on a national scale to showcase the cultural characteristics and sporting prowess of various ethnic groups and to promote national unity and cultural exchanges. There are 56 ethnic groups in China, and they have nurtured the treasures of ethnic sports and culture in their ordinary but great productive labour year after year. However, for thousands of years, these brilliant pearls of Chinese civilisation have been scattered among the people and left to fend for themselves. The Minority Games rewrote history and opened the door to the profound traditional sports of minority nationalities. When the first National Minority Traditional Sports Games were held on the banks of the Haihe River, minority sports were given a new lease of life. The National Ethnic Minority Traditional Sports Meet was developed on the basis of the National National Ethnic Forms Sports Performance and Competition held in 1953. In the new historical period, in order to thoroughly implement the policy of nationalities, further inherit and develop the traditional sports of nationalities, and enhance the physical fitness of the people of all nationalities, the National Traditional Sports Meetings of National Minorities are held every four years. China's traditional sports for ethnic minorities are held every four years, and there have now been 11 traditional sports events for ethnic minorities.

2.2. Status of the Minority Games

Minority sports events are a guide for drawing minority sports out of the cultural community, and a bridge connecting the various ethnic groups in China, as well as the Chinese nation and the world of sports. Minority sports games provide a stage for minority groups to identify themselves, strengthen their sense of national identity, enhance internal cohesion, and promote national unity and social harmony. The Minority Games are an important platform for the cultural heritage and display of ethnic minorities, and a catalyst for the improvement of the lagging status quo of ethnic minority sports development. By showcasing the traditional costumes, dances, music, customs and habits of ethnic minorities, it helps to enhance understanding and exchanges between ethnic groups and promotes the development of cultural diversity. The Games are an event for sports competitions and a focal point for attracting the attention of the whole society to ethnic minority sports. Through participation in sports competitions, young ethnic minorities can show off their sporting skills, strengthen their physical fitness, promote their physical and mental health, and provide them with opportunities to pursue their personal values and achievements. Ethnic minority games also have political

significance, as an important component of national unity and social stability, and the Government and the international community often support and advocate such events to promote the protection of the rights and development of ethnic minorities.¹¹ The holding of the ethnic minority games has enhanced national unity and promoted the traditional cultures of ethnic minorities.

3. Basic Information on The Previous Ethnic Minority Games

As can be seen from Table 1, the number of units and people participating in the Minority Games, as well as the competition programmes of the Minority Games, have been increasing year by year, but the development of the programmes fluctuated greatly in the first and second sessions. Compared with the first session, although the number of participants increased in the second session, there was no new breakthrough in the competition programmes, and the number of programmes decreased, which was related to the historical background of China at that time. Overall, the scale and number of participants in the traditional ethnic minority sports games have shown a rising trend year by year.

Table 1. Traditional sports events for ethnic minorities in China

number of times	times	sites	sports event	entry	participant
1	1953	Tianjin	Competitions and performances, 414	9	397
2	1982	Hohhot, Inner Mongolia	Competitions and performances, 75	19	800+
3	1986	Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region	Competitions and performances, 122	29	1097
4	1991	until 1959, Guangxi province	Competitions and performances, 129	30	3000
5	1995	Kunming, Yunnan Province	Competitions and performances, 140	30	7000+
6	1999	capital of People's Republic of China	Competitions and shows, 110+	33	6002
7	2003	Yinchuan, Ningxia	Competitions and performances, 134	34	9000+
8	2007	Guangzhou, Guangdong Province	Competitions and shows, 110+	34	6000
9	2011	Guiyang City, Guizhou Province	Competitions and performances, 201	34	6773
10	2015	Inner Mongolia Ordos, region of Inner Mongolia administered as a prefecture-level city, and a people of the region	Competitions and performances, 195	34	6240
11	2019	Zhengzhou, Henan	Competitions and performances, 211	34	7009

As can be seen from Table 2, the traditional sports competitions for ethnic minorities are becoming more and more reasonable. In the first session, the stone lock, weightlifting and boxing programmes only existed for one session due to the lack of distinctive features of the ethnic minorities. In the second session, only wrestling and archery were retained, and no new items were added. In the third session, crossbow shooting, horse-racing, swinging, firecracker snatching and goat-carrying were added. After the fourth session, archery and goat-carrying were added to the horse events, and dragon boat racing and pearl ball were added. In the seventh session, the number of competitions

reached 14, and the number of competitions continued to increase, indicating that from the third session onwards, the traditional sports of ethnic minorities have paid more attention to the characteristics of ethnic minorities' sports. In addition, the design of the competition items highlights the common characteristics of ethnic minorities, and these items are the items with ethnic minority characteristics, which are more common in ethnic minorities' sports. This shows that the establishment of minority sports has fully taken into account the depth and breadth of the development of minority sports, and that they are widespread and popular.

Table 2. Competition programmes of traditional sports events for minorities in China

number of times	item on program of sports competition
1	Barbells, stone locks, boxing, wrestling, short arms, foot archery, martial arts, horsemanship; polo, Mongolian-style wrestling, lion dance,
2	Archery and Chinese Wrestling
3	There are 7 competition items and 115 performance items. In addition to retaining the wrestling and archery events of the previous edition, five additional events have been introduced: horse racing, goat-racing, crossbow shooting, firecracker snatching and swinging.
4	Horse Racing and Dragon Boat
5	Competitions: 11 major events: flower cannon, swing, dragon boat, crossbow shooting, pearl ball, wooden ball, martial arts, national wrestling, playing gyro, shuttlecock and horse event. There are 129 performance items.
6	Competition items are: snatch the firecracker, pearl ball, wooden ball, shuttlecock, cuju ball, swing, martial arts, shooting crossbow, dragon boat, playing gyro, national wrestling, horse project a total of 13 items, which shooting crossbow, playing gyro, betting on the plus.
7	There are 14 competition items: flower gun, pearl ball, wooden ball, shuttlecock, cuju ball, equestrian, swing, martial arts, dragon boat, national wrestling, crossbow shooting, high foot racing, gyro, betting on the plus, etc., and 125 performance items.
8	The competition items include 15 items such as flower gun, pearl ball, wooden ball, cuju ball, shuttlecock ball, dragon boat, swing, crossbow shooting, gyro, betting on plus, high-footed racing, cricket racing, martial arts, national wrestling, equestrian, etc. There are 149 performance items, and the category of aerobics has been added on the basis of the original three major categories of fitness, skill and competition.
9	There are 16 competition items, including firecrackers, pearl ball, wooden ball, cuju ball, shuttlecock ball, dragon boat, swing, crossbow shooting, gyro, betting on plus, high foot racing, cricket racing, martial arts, national wrestling, equestrianism, and bamboo drifting, among which bamboo drifting is a new item. There are 185 performance items.
10	There are 17 competition items, including firecrackers, pearl ball, wooden ball, cudgel, shuttlecock ball, dragon boat, bamboo rafting, swing, crossbow shooting, gyroscope, betting, high-footed racing, cricket racing, ethnic martial arts, ethnic wrestling, equestrianism, and ethnic fitness gymnastics; and 178 performance items.
11	There are 17 competition events and 194 performance events.

4. Impact of Minority Games on Traditional Minority Sports

4.1. Performance-based games to promote the popularisation of traditional ethnic minority sports

In the past half a century, the ethnic minority games have tapped a large number of new traditional sports along the development direction of inheritance, innovation and development. However, when we look at the programmes of minority games, it is easy to see that there are always more performance programmes than competition programmes. In order for traditional minority sports to take the international stage, it is necessary to combine both performance and competition. Under the impact of western competitive sports, only competition can let the world know the traditional minority sports in the fastest and most intuitive way. However, due to the lack of common ground between the traditional sports of each single ethnic group and those of other ethnic groups, and the lack of competition between the strong and the weak, minority sports are still mainly popular. Minority traditional sports have made a certain contribution to China's mass sports, providing more exercise programmes for national fitness.

4.2. Simultaneous development of performance and competition programmes to stimulate the excavation and collation of minority sports

Although there are more performing sports than competitive sports in the past years, the number of performing sports has increased while the number of competitive sports has also increased steadily. Popularity and standardisation are the necessary conditions for the transformation of minority sports from performance to competition. It is because more and more single minority sports are becoming more and more popular, standardised and accepted by more and more minorities that the number of competition events is increasing, while the newly excavated and organised events of various ethnic groups are enriching the performance events, and some of these events will eventually evolve into competition events, which will become the link connecting the cultures of various ethnic groups. The increase in the number of competition items in the minority games signifies the development of traditional sports of Chinese minorities, and the development of minority games stimulates the excavation and organisation of traditional sports of minorities.

4.3. Integration with world sports programmes signifies that traditional ethnic minority sports are going global

Nearly 40 per cent of the ethnic minority sports are on a par

with the Olympic Games. Including wrestling, archery, horse-racing among more than 20 ethnic minorities and wushu among more than 10 ethnic minorities, a large number of outstanding talents have emerged continuously in these ethnic minority traditional sports, and some traditional sports such as wrestling, archery and wushu have reached the advanced level in the world. The development of these minority competitions and the emergence of outstanding talents have promoted the popularisation and improvement of minority traditional sports, and at the same time ensured that China's traditional ethnic sports have become popular and competitive, and laid a solid foundation for minority sports to go global.

4.4. Continuous Improvement of Competition Rules to Promote the Development of Ethnic Minority Sports

The number of participants in the minority games is increasing, and there are more and more programmes, and the rules of the games are getting more and more perfect while gradually increasing the number of programmes. The setting of the competition programme takes into full consideration of the breadth and depth of the development of various ethnic minorities, thus highlighting the commonality of ethnic minorities. The competition rules are also becoming more and more perfect and scientific after the investigation, modification and implementation of the successive minority games. This provides a strong guarantee for the development of minority sports.

5. Development of Minority Sports from the Trends of the Minority Games

5.1. The increasing number of competition programmes promotes the development of ethnic minority sports

China's economic development has provided the necessary conditions for material and cultural exchanges among ethnic groups, and more and more single-ethnicity sports are likely to reach a consensus with other ethnic groups in the course of frequent exchanges and enter the competitive arena. The growth rate of minority sports will exceed the elimination rate, and most of the sports will develop steadily and be in line with the world sports, providing the country with competitive sports talents. Under such a development prospect, minority sports will develop rapidly, and take Chinese traditional culture together on the international stage, so that the world can better understand China's culture and history.

5.2. The gradual reduction of artistry in sports has deprived ethnic minority sports of their original charm.

An important feature of minority sports is the integration of culture and sports. The vast majority of ethnic groups in China are good at singing and dancing, and many sports are embedded in the sea of singing and dancing art. In the case of the gradual reduction of the art of sports in minority games, some minority sports will not be included in the scope of the competition, traditional sports will also lose its original value and charm, and will affect the development of minority sports.

5.3. Ethnic Minority Traditional Sports to Provide Options for the National Fitness Programme

Minority Games has promoted the excavation, collation and development of minority sports. The many competitions and performance items of the Minority Games are the essence of the traditional sports of various nationalities, and with the display of these items, the popularity of exchanges among various nationalities is also stirred up the sense of pride of their own nationalities, so that they have a wider and deeper understanding of their own nationalities' sports, from unawareness to knowledge and then to liking to personal participation, which finally achieves the purpose of national fitness. From ignorance to knowledge, then to liking, to personal participation, and finally to achieve the purpose of national fitness.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The emergence and development of traditional minority sports is a historical process. From the perspective of historical development, the value of traditional sports of ethnic minorities is a perfect combination of inheritance, innovation and development of sports cultures of various ethnic groups. China's ethnic minorities have rich and colourful cultures, and the traditional sports of ethnic minorities, which have been produced and developed under the background of their distinctive ethnic cultures, have changed with the rapid development of the productivity level of the ethnic regions and ethnic minorities, as well as the value of the times, and the people's aesthetic consciousness and needs are also changing quietly. Some traditional ethnic minority sports have certain recreational and physical fitness functions in the production and life of ethnic minorities, but the competitive and ornamental nature is not enough, which affects the promotion and development. If we can, on the basis of inheriting nationalities and traditions, modify and improve the rules of those sports with the aesthetics and needs of the times, and realise the organic unity of the traditional cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities and fashion, so as to make them always charming and become high-quality items, we are expected to go to the whole country and the world.

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