

# Origin of the Miao Loong Dance

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**Abstract:** As an important part of Miao culture, the Miao loong Dance has a long history and deep cultural connotation. loong culture occupies an important position in ancient Chinese culture and has been inherited and developed in minority cultures, including the Miao. This paper explores the origins of the Miao loong dance and its manifestations in different regions, including the beckoning loong dance in Hainan, the loong catching dance in western Hunan, and the long-shirt loong in Guiding, Guizhou. Through the analysis of these dance forms, it reveals that the Miao loong Dance is deeply rooted in the traditions of nature worship and totem worship, and demonstrates the Miao people's worship of the loong as well as the cultural connotation of praying for good weather and good harvests through the dance. These dance forms not only enrich the cultural connotation of the Miao people, but also demonstrate the diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Loong Culture; Miao Loong Dance; Folk Dance.

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## 1. Introduction

As one of the important symbols of Chinese culture, loong culture has a long history and rich connotation. The loong not only occupies an important position in Han culture, but also has been inherited and developed in many minority cultures, including the Miao. In the long history of China, the image of the loong has evolved and been given different symbolic meanings in different cultural backgrounds and social structures. As one of the ethnic groups with a long history in China, the Miao people have also deeply integrated the worship of the loong into their culture, forming a unique loong dance culture. The Miao loong Dance is not only an important ceremony for the Miao people to pray for good weather and good harvests, but also an important form of displaying national culture.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the historical origin of the Miao loong Dance, analyze its manifestations in different regions and its cultural significance. First, this paper will sort out the origin and early development of loong culture, and understand the importance of loong culture in ancient Chinese culture and its inheritance and evolution in Miao culture. Subsequently, this paper will focus on the typical manifestations of the Miao loong dance, such as the beckoning loong dance of Hainan, the catching loong dance of western Hunan and the long-shirt loong of Guiding, Guizhou, and explore the historical background, artistic characteristics and its cultural connotations of these dance forms. Through the study of the Miao loong Dance, we will further understand the richness and complexity of the Miao culture, as well as the diverse expressions of loong culture in Chinese culture.

## 2. The Origin and Spread of Loong Culture

loong culture is an important part of ancient Chinese culture with a long history and rich connotation. loong culture not only occupies an important position in Han Chinese culture, but also has been inherited and developed in the cultures of many ethnic minorities, including the Miao. loong

culture is one of the important symbols of Chinese culture, representing strength, wisdom and good fortune. In the long history of China, the image of the loong has evolved continuously and has been endowed with different symbolic meanings in different cultural backgrounds and social structures.

### 2.1. Origin and Early Development of Loong Culture

The image of the loong can be traced back to the Neolithic era of archaeological discoveries, in 1987, a nearly 7,000 years ago, the Yangshao culture period of ancient burial complex, archaeologists from the 45th tomb, found the "China's first loong"; Liangzhu site of the excavation and research, evidence of China's civilization of more than 5,000 years of history. At present, the Liangzhu site found in the loong, jade carving loong works and pottery engraved loong pattern, the number of more. Early images of loongs, symbolizing primitive man's worship and fear of natural forces, have been found on pottery of the Yangshao culture and on jade artifacts of the Liangzhu culture. These artifacts show that as early as 5,000 years ago, the image of the loong already appeared in Chinese art and religion. The painted ceramic loongs of the Yangshao culture, the painted coiled loongs of the Longshan culture, and the jade loongs of the Liangzhu and Hongshan cultures are all representatives of early loong culture.

In ancient Chinese myths and legends, loongs are often depicted as divine beasts capable of calling the wind and controlling the waters. The earliest records of loongs date back to the Classic of Mountains and Seas, which recorded the Candle loong, Ying Long, Cang Long and so on. For example, the Classic of Mountains and Seas - Overseas and Northern Scriptures recorded: "Beyond the Northwest Sea, north of the Red Water, there is Zhangwei Mountain. There is a god with a human face and a snake's body and a red body, and his straight eyes are being multiplied. He closes his eyes in the dark, and his eyesight is bright. He does not eat, does not sleep, does not rest, and is visited by wind and rain. It is the Candle Nine Yin, which is called the Candle loong." This ancient geography describes in detail a variety of exotic

creatures, including many images of loongs, reflecting the ancient worship of the mysterious and sacred attributes of loongs. The Guangya Yun: "Horned is said to be gnarled, and hornless is said to be chi loong." A chi loong is a type of loong in ancient myths and legends. Hornless loongs were called chi loongs, representing good luck and happiness. These myths not only reflect the ancient people's interpretation of natural phenomena, but also the importance of loongs in early beliefs.

The origin of loong culture can be traced back to the Neolithic Age. Through the archaeological discoveries of the Yangshao, Liangzhu and Hongshan cultures, as well as ancient documents such as the Classic of Mountains and Seas, we can see the importance and symbolic significance of the image of the loong in early society. The loong is not only a symbol of primitive man's worship and fear of natural power, but also a manifestation of sanctity and authority in early society. loong culture was gradually enriched and deepened during the development of Chinese civilization and became an important part of Chinese culture.

## 2.2. Development and Evolution of Loong Culture

loong culture has gone through a long process of development in Chinese history. From the Xia Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, the image and symbolism of the loong have constantly evolved and enriched.

As early as in the Xia Dynasty, there is a record of the Kongjia years, when the sky descended two loongs, a female and a male, fell outside the door of the court. This shows that the loong occupies a certain position in the symbol of kingship. During the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, the image of the loong was widely used on bronze, jade and ceremonial vessels. Such as the Beijing city axis of the Chinese archaeological museum collection of summer dynasty important turquoise loong ritual, by many experts and scholars known as "Chinese loong" precious relics; and then the baoji bronze museum collection of the western Zhou Jing Ji kui tripod, tripod belly decorated with a week back to the head, tail kui loongs, appearing mighty and mysterious, was given to the protection and strength of the symbolism of the meaning. After the Middle and Late Periods, jade ornaments were characterized by the presence of a kui loong. After the middle and late periods, the image of the loong in jade jewelry also underwent a major change, with an increase in the number of round-carved loongs and the emergence of the loong Juan, which was divided into the loong-shaped jade piece, curved loong, and regimentation of the body of the loong. With the development of the times, the jade loong became more and more characteristic of the "S" shape, giving people a sense of beauty of the flow, establishing the art of formal beauty, highlighting the progress of carving technology.

From the mural painting on the top of the main chamber of the Western Han Dynasty tomb in Yongcheng City, Shangqiu City, Henan Province - the Four Gods of Cloud and Air, it can be seen that in the Western Han Dynasty, the loong, as one of the Four Elephants, was the guardian god in the hearts of the ancients, and was an auspicious beast of the heavenly realm and the earthly world, and at the same time expressed the ancient people's imagination of the universe and of the sky. It also expresses the ancient people's imagination of the universe.

After the Han Book - five lines of Zhi" in the record: "Lingdi light and the first year of June Ding Chou,

and black gas abortion in the North Palace of the East Court of the Palace of Wenming, black as a car cover, up Fen Xun, body colorless, with a head, the body length of more than ten zhang, the shape of the appearance of the loong." This account describes an anomaly where black gas falls and reveals the image of a loong, a phenomenon regarded as important auspiciousness and a symbol of imperial power and majesty.

The Book of Jin - Volume One Hundred and Nine - The Ninth Book of Records recorded: "In the first year of the Yonghe year of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (the fourth month of the year 345 AD), there were black loongs and white loongs, and each of them was seen on the loong Mountain. The Emperor himself led a group of bureaucrats to see it, and went to the loong for more than two hundred paces, and sacrificed it to Taizai. The two loongs crossed their heads and played and soared, and then they unclipped their horns and went away." This account describes in detail the strange sight of the black and white loongs on loong Mountain and their sacrificial rituals. Black and white represent yin and yang respectively in traditional culture, symbolizing the harmony and balance of all things in heaven and earth. The appearance of the loongs is regarded as a sign of heavenly destiny, reflecting the sanctity and orthodoxy of imperial power. The dazai (sacrificial officials) in the rituals symbolized the fear of heavenly destiny and the worship of the gods, reflecting the importance of loong culture in the rituals.

It is recorded in the Supplementary Record of the Tang Dynasty: "At the end of the Tang Dynasty's Xiantong period, a green loong fell into the territory of Tongcheng County and died on the spot because of a wound in its throat. The loong was more than ten zhang in total length, with half of the body and half of the tail, a flattened tail, double horns on the head, mouth whiskers up to two zhang in length, feet under the belly, and a red membrane on the feet." This account describes in detail the appearance of a green loong and its characteristics. The green loong is one of the four elephants in Chinese culture, representing the east and spring, symbolizing growth, prosperity and strength.

The ancient book of the Song Dynasty, "Er Ya Yi", recorded that the loong has "nine similarities": "Horns like a deer, head like a camel, eyes like a ghost, neck like a snake, belly like a mirage, scales like a fish, claws like an eagle, palms like a tiger, ears like an ox", which is a detailed description that shows the complexity and diversification of the loong's image. The loong's "nine like" description reflects the complexity and diversity of the loong's image, a combination of a variety of animal features, symbolizing power, wisdom and mystery. The diversity of the loong's images enhances its mysterious and sacred qualities, showing the important position of the loong in Song culture. The diversity of loong images reflects the inclusiveness and integration of Song culture, which absorbed many cultural elements.

The Yongpingfu Zhi records that in the summer of the 19th year of the Daoguang period (1839 CE), a loong landed in the territory of Leting County on the lower reaches of the Luanhe River, and that the local people built a shed for it to shield it from the sun and kept splashing its body with water, and that the loong left its place three days later in the midst of a heavy thunderstorm. This account describes in detail the appearance of a loong and the reaction of the local people. The appearance of the loong was regarded as a celestial phenomenon and a mysterious event, reflecting the worship

and reverence for loongs in Qing Dynasty society.

loong culture has undergone a long development and evolution in Chinese history, from being a symbol of power and sanctity during the Xia, Shang and Zhou periods, to an auspicious beast during the Han and Tang periods, to the complex and diverse images of the Song and Qing periods, the symbolism of the loong has been enriched. By analyzing the records of loong culture in different historical periods, we can see the important position of the loong in Chinese culture and its diverse characteristics. This not only reflects the ancient Chinese society's worship of natural power and reverence for power, but also demonstrates the unique charm and profound heritage of Chinese culture.

### **3. Historical Origin of Miao Loong Dance**

Miao is an extremely ancient ethnic group in China, with a history of more than 7,000 years. Enlightenment in the "East Mongolia" and Fuxi Taihao, flourishing in the "Nine Li" and Chi You, decline in the "three seedlings" and cans pocket era; Xia, Shang, Zhou period at the "Southern Barbarians", the Spring and Autumn and the "Southern Barbarians", the Spring and Autumn and the "Southern Barbarians", the Spring and Autumn and the "Southern Barbarians". Southern Barbarians", the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period is the main inhabitants of Chu, Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, North and South Dynasties period of the main body of the Miao known as Wuling, Wuxi, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing period of the main body of the Miao migrated to Southwest China, and ultimately a part of the migration to the overseas evolved into the world's ethnic groups. As an important part of Miao culture, the Miao loong Dance has a long history and deep cultural connotation.

#### **3.1. Origin of the Miao Loong Dance**

The origin of the Miao loong Dance can be traced back to the Miao ancestors' tradition of nature worship and totem worship. In ancient times, loongs were regarded as deities controlling the waters and capable of bringing abundant harvests and happiness. Therefore, the ancestors of the Miao people prayed for favorable winds and rain and a good harvest by dancing the loong. In some ancient documents, it is recorded that the ancestors of the Miao people danced loongs to pray for rain and performed rituals. For example, in the Song of Receiving the loong of the Miao people of Taijiang, it is recorded that there are 24 kinds of loongs that must be drawn during the activity of "drawing the loong", including "the buffalo loong, pig loong, goose loong, duck loong, fish loong, toad loong, boat loong, loach loong, group fish loong, snake and flower fish loong, snake loong, net loong, chicken loong, goat loong, dog loong, tiger loong, horse loong, human loong, turtledove loong and tiger loong, Horse loong, human loong, turtledove loong, swallow loong, spider loong, chair loong, sedan chair loong, handful of skips loong" from which we can see that there is a big difference between the Miao loong and the loong symbolizing the majesty and imperial power, the Miao is to give a kind of 'everything can be a loong' illusion, which essentially demonstrates that the Miao people a kind of loong as opposed to other animals or gods and goddesses. In essence, it shows that the Miao people regard the loong as an equal and symbiotic attitude with other animals or gods.

#### **3.2. Hainan Zhao Long Wu**

Historical records show that the loong Dance originated in the Ming Dynasty during the Jiajing and Wanli periods, and the Miao people moved to Qiong, which has a history of more than 400 years. The ancestors of the Miao people in Hainan worshiped the loong, and in order to worship the divine loong, prayed for the blessing of the divine loong, and eliminated disasters so as to form the "loong Dance" with the dancers holding jackets and white lanyards to imitate the "loong's head" and "loong's tail" and jumping. "The loong Dance is a folk dance of the Hmong people of Hainan. The loong Dance is a traditional dance of the Miao folklore in Hainan, called "Shake Gong" in Miao language, which has a unique status in the Miao dance. In ancient times, the low productivity of the Miao people, powerless to resist natural disasters, they can only pin their hopes on the heart of the worship of the "loong", that the "loong" can make the God of heaven rain, when the drought, the villagers will set up an altar to sacrifice, jumping loong Dance to pray for the "loong" to pray for the "loong" to ask for rain. "When there is a drought, the villagers will set up altars and pray for rain by dancing the loong Dance, praying for good weather, peace in all seasons, blessing them with good food and clothing, good weather, and living and working in peace and contentment. 2005, the loong Dance of the Hmong was selected as the provincial intangible cultural heritage list of Hainan. Recruiting loong dance has a long history, ritual folk strong, it reflects the ancient period of Hainan Miao people in the process of fighting with nature in the spiritual culture of a national religious beliefs, which for the exploration and understanding of Hainan Miao national religious beliefs and religious history and culture, has an important research value.

#### **3.3. Xiangxi Jie Long Wu**

The Miao Solitaire Dance originated from the Miao Solitaire Ritual, and the early Solitaire Dance was only a part of the ritual activities. Through the elegant and vivid dance movements such as "honoring the God of Heaven, hoping for the return of the loong, the loong turning over, the loong grabbing the treasure, the loong showing its claws, and catching the loong at the loong's door", the dance is very spectacular because of the teamwork scheduling of "the loong wearing the flower" and "the loong undulating". In 1940, Ling Chunsheng and Rui Yifu of the Institute of Languages of the Chinese Academy of Sciences recorded in their Report on the Investigation of the Miao People in Western Hunan that: "The Miao people wish for the prosperity of their families and make wishes to catch the loong, and the period is between September and November. After the date is set, in January or half a month before, the loong is haunted. Drums and gongs are played, trumpets and suona are blown, and the event goes on until the end of the night. It is believed that "catching the loong" can get rid of illnesses and disasters, people's life and well-being, the wind and rain, and the prosperity of six animals. The loong dance is loved by the Miao people and carries the good wishes of the Miao people. Every year, after the spring plowing and autumn harvest, they hold the "loong catching" activity and perform the joyful loong catching dance. 2008, the Xiangxi Miao loong Catching Dance was identified as the second batch of intangible cultural heritage protection list of Hunan Province.

#### **3.4. Guiding Chang Shan Long**

The "Drum loong and Tiger - Long Shirt loong" of the

Miao people in Guiding County, Guizhou Province, is a dance that imitates the “loong”. It has a long history of more than a thousand years. As early as 518 A.D., the first year of the founding of the Sui Dynasty, the establishment of “Binhua County” (now Guiding County), participated in the county's founding celebrations, “Guiyang Prefecture Zhi Guiding County Zhi Zhi Manuscript,” recorded in the Song Dynasty, the black barbaric loong to follow Yue Fei's success in fighting against the Jin Dynasty, was enshrined as a general of the loong and tiger, and then Yue Fei's father and son were killed in Feng Feng Pavilion, “wailing for several days in mourning and hunger strike. “Crying and mourning for a few days and died of hunger strike”. He is the hero of the Miao compatriots, in his honor, “drum loong drum tiger long shirt loong” dance was “stereotyped” and has been handed down from generation to generation. In the Yuan Dynasty Tai Ding two years (1325 AD) by the Dapingva pacification division chief Di Liang return to the court and establish “shun Yuan road military and civilian pacification division”, to reach the first in China's history of the alliance of the two races of Miao and Mongolian and held a celebration, “drums loong drums tiger - long shirt loong” dance The dance of “Drums, loongs, Tigers and Long Shirt loongs” was the main performance of the festival. The long shirt loong accompanies the growth and life of the Miao compatriots and is an indispensable part of their lives.

## 4. Conclusion

The origin of the Miao loong Dance is deeply rooted in the worship of nature and totems, and the loong is regarded as a deity that controls the waters and can bring a good harvest and happiness. Through the loong Dance, the Miao ancestors prayed for favorable weather conditions and good harvests, which were expressed in various festivals and rituals. Traditional dances such as the loong Dance of the Miao people in Hainan and the loong Dance of the Miao people in western Hunan not only show the rich cultural connotation and unique art form of the Miao people, but also reflect the Miao people's worship of the loong and their yearning for a better life.

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