

A Comparative Study of Dance Characteristics on Han Dynasty Portrait Stones in Nanyang and Shandong

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Abstract. The Han Dynasty was a prosperous period in Chinese history, during which dance art also made significant advancements. This paper focuses on the study of portrait stones from the Han Dynasty, conducting a classification, comparison, and regional distribution analysis of dance images on Nanyang and Shandong portrait stones. By integrating historical literature, archaeological data, and contemporary dance theory, the paper reveals the characteristics of dance culture in different regions during the Han Dynasty and their geographical differences. The research finds that the dances depicted on Nanyang portrait stones exhibit distinct regional features, showcasing a vivid, natural, and simple folk dance style. In contrast, the dances on Shandong portrait stones are influenced by Confucian culture, displaying a more splendid and standardized character. These differences reflect the diversity of regional cultures and the flourishing of folk dance during the Han Dynasty.

Keywords: Han Dynasty portrait stones; cultural fusion; dance culture; Nanyang portrait stones; Shandong portrait stones.

1. Introduction

Han Dynasty, a flourishing period in ancient Chinese history, marked a vibrant era of development for dance art in our country. During this time, dance served not only as a form of entertainment and emotional expression but also as a vehicle carrying the unique expressions of various factors such as society, culture, and region. The Han Dynasty portrait stones, among the precious legacies of Han culture, document various aspects of contemporary social life, providing valuable tangible evidence for the study of dance art during the Han Dynasty.

The dance images on Nanyang and Shandong portrait stones, as significant carriers of dance art in the Han Dynasty, exhibit distinct regional characteristics and temporal features. The dances in the Nanyang region showcase the local folk dance style with its natural and lively traits, while those in the Shandong region are influenced by Central Plains culture, displaying a unique and splendid yet standardized style. Through the classification, comparison, and regional distribution analysis of dance images in these two regions, we can glimpse the diversity of regional cultures and the prosperity of folk dance during the Han Dynasty.

This thesis aims to conduct an in-depth study of the dance characteristics on Nanyang and Shandong portrait stones from the Han Dynasty, exploring their regional and cultural differences, and revealing the rich connotations and diversity of Han Dynasty dance art. By analyzing the costumes, movement characteristics, and symbolic meanings behind the dance images, we will explore the societal and cultural information embedded in these dances, hoping to offer new perspectives and insights for future dance creation, dance theory research, and cultural exchange. Through this in-depth study, we can better understand the unique expressions of ancient dance art in different regional contexts, further enrich our understanding of the diversity of ancient Chinese culture, and contribute to the inheritance and development of outstanding Chinese dance culture.

In the following chapters, we will delve into the differences in dance characteristics on Nanyang and Shandong portrait stones, as well as the societal and cultural phenomena reflected behind these characteristics, presenting readers with a vivid and colorful panorama of Han Dynasty dance art.

2. Overview of Dance Art in the Han Dynasty

2.1. Historical Background and Development Characteristics of Dance in the Han Dynasty

The political center in the Central Plains during the Han Dynasty was consolidated, and the social system gradually improved, with significant progress in agriculture, handicrafts, and commerce. In such a historical context, dance, as an important cultural expression, experienced significant development and inheritance.

2.1.1. Court Dance

During the Qin and Han periods, court dances were often associated with banquets, celebrations, and rituals, expressing the majesty and dignity of the royal family.

1. Banquets and Celebrations: Court dances were typically performed during banquets and celebratory occasions, including major national celebrations, religious ceremonies, and private banquets of the nobility. Dances might constitute a part of the entire celebratory event, showcasing the prosperity of the nation and the glory of the rulers.

2. Confucian Rituals: Confucian ideology dominated during the Qin and Han periods, with rituals emphasized as crucial means to maintain social order and governance. Court dances might play a special role in ritual activities, highlighting the ceremonial sense of the royal family and Confucian values.

3. Ritual Music System: A comprehensive ritual music system was established during the Qin and Han periods, with dance being an integral part. The royal court might have had dedicated dance ensembles, and the dancers could have been professionally trained court officials or specialized performers.

4. Themes of Dance Performances: The themes of court dances might involve expressions of the prosperity of the nation, the authority of the royal family, and reverence for the divine. The movements and choreography of the dances could be influenced by the aesthetic standards and cultural ideals of that time.

5. Costumes and Makeup: Dancers in court dances likely wore exquisite costumes adorned with splendid accessories, showcasing the richness and dignity of the royal court. The makeup of the dancers might also have been specially designed to emphasize the artistic effects of the performance.

2.1.2. Folk Dance

Coexisting with court dances were a rich variety of folk dances. During the stable and prosperous society of the Han Dynasty, with an improved standard of living, various forms of entertainment flourished. Dance, as a popular form of social and recreational activity, was widely passed down and developed. Folk dances were typically more free-spirited, lively, and infused with a strong sense of daily life, reflecting the emotions and aesthetic tastes of the people at that time.

1. Banquets and Celebrations: In the Qin and Han periods, banquets and celebratory events were integral to socializing and entertainment. On these occasions, various forms of dance accompanied by music performances might take place. These events aimed to celebrate bountiful harvests, significant family events, or societal festivities.

2. Agricultural Activities: During harvest seasons or other agricultural activities, people might celebrate their labor achievements through dance. The forms of dance could vary based on regions and social groups but generally expressed joy in agriculture.

3. Religious Ceremonies: Religious activities held a significant place during the Qin and Han periods, and religious rituals combined with dance might occur during sacrifices and other religious celebrations. Dance could be considered a sacred form of expression used to worship deities.

4. Dance Styles: Folk dances could exhibit diverse forms and styles, influenced by regions, social

classes, and cultural factors. Some dances might be more solemn and ceremonial, while others could be more energetic and joyful.

5. Musical Instruments: The use of a variety of instruments was common in folk dances. Ancient instruments such as the zither, pipa, and flute might be employed in the dance ensemble, providing musical accompaniment to the dances.

2.1.3. Characteristics of Cultural Integration

1. Diverse Regional Cultural Influences: During the Han Dynasty, China was under a relatively unified political system, facilitating cultural exchanges among various regions. In dance performances, one can observe the fusion of dance elements from different regions. Dance movements, music, and costumes may have incorporated characteristics from diverse regional cultures, giving rise to a diversified dance form.

2. Influence of Exotic Cultures: In the Han Dynasty, the opening of the Silk Road facilitated the exchange of cultures between China and foreign lands. This exchange was evident not only in economic and trade aspects but also reflected in the cultural and artistic domains, including dance. Some elements and styles of exotic dances may have been integrated into Han Dynasty dances through this exchange, resulting in a more enriched cultural expression.

3. Religious Rituals and Sacrificial Activities: During the Han Dynasty, dance performances were often associated with religious rituals and sacrificial activities. Different religious ceremonies might gather followers from various regions, leading to cultural diversity in religious dances. These religious dances could have absorbed elements of beliefs from different regions, showcasing a unique cultural fusion.

2.2. The Unique Value of Han Dynasty Portrait Stones in Dance Research

Han Dynasty portrait stones hold an outstanding and irreplaceable position as physical evidence in the field of dance research. Their significance is reflected in several aspects:

1. Providing Precious Physical Evidence: Han Dynasty portrait stones offer researchers direct and valuable physical evidence of Han Dynasty dance, greatly facilitating a profound understanding of details such as ancient dance movements, postures, and costumes.

2. Reflecting Social Culture and Aesthetic Concepts: The dance scenes depicted on these portrait stones reflect the cultural, religious, and aesthetic concepts of the time, providing valuable clues for the study of ancient social culture. Researchers can gain deep insights into the understanding and appreciation of dance in Han Dynasty society.

3. Revealing the Status of Dance in Social and Religious Activities: The lively depictions on portrait stones showcase the importance of dance in social and religious occasions such as banquets, weddings, and ceremonies. This aids in a comprehensive understanding of the role of dance in contemporary society, offering valuable references for the study of social and religious activities.

4. Contrasting and Analyzing Cultural Differences in Dance: Through the comparative analysis of portrait stones from different regions, researchers can uncover the cultural differences in dance across various areas during the Han Dynasty. This provides a solid foundation for studying regional cultural characteristics, promoting a better understanding of the diverse culture of the Han Dynasty.

5. Assisting in the Interpretation of Historical Documents: As physical evidence, Han Dynasty portrait stones can assist in interpreting historical documents, providing researchers with more comprehensive and accurate information. This aids in reconstructing the status of dance in social culture during the Han Dynasty and its impact on contemporary society.

In summary, Han Dynasty portrait stones are not only unique physical witnesses in dance research but also crucial support for in-depth exploration of ancient dance and cultural differences. They offer

scholars powerful assistance in restoring the magnificence of ancient dance and understanding the diversity of social culture.

3. Analysis of Dance on Nanyang Portrait Stones

3.1. Classification and Characteristics Analysis of Dance Images on Nanyang Portrait Stones

The dance scenes depicted on Nanyang portrait stones exhibit various unique characteristics, providing a profound reflection of the rich and vibrant dance culture in the region:

1. **Vivid Folk Dance Scenes:** The Nanyang portrait stones vividly portray a diverse range of folk dance scenes, showcasing lively movements and expressions that capture the unique dance ambiance of Nanyang. In these scenes, dancers may be seen leaping, spinning, and expressing themselves through lively gestures, creating a cheerful atmosphere. These images seem to transport viewers through time, immersing them in the ancient life of Nanyang and offering an immediate experience of the local customs during the Han Dynasty. These dynamic scenes not only document specific dance movements but may also reflect the celebratory atmosphere of the society at the time, people's entertainment habits, and their love for life. Through these vibrant depictions, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the daily entertainment and cultural activities of the people in Nanyang during the Han Dynasty.
2. **Diverse Dance Themes:** The dance themes on the portrait stones exhibit a rich diversity, covering various scenarios such as celebrations, banquets, and rituals. This reflects the vibrant and colorful life in the Nanyang region, where dance, as a cultural expression, played multiple roles in social and religious contexts. Each image acts as a cultural puzzle piece, providing researchers with clues to unravel the rich and diverse ancient society in Nanyang.
3. **Natural Dance Poses:** The dance poses depicted on Nanyang portrait stones tend to be more natural and lively, aligning with the lively and melodious music and dance atmosphere of the Nanyang region. This natural dance posture allows viewers to easily sense the dynamism and vitality of the dancers on the stage, while also reflecting the harmonious integration of local dance culture with the natural environment. A scholar once noted, "The Han portrait bricks from Luoyang and Zhengzhou... lack the sense of repetitive stiffness... appearing clear and refreshing[1]."

In conclusion, the classification of dance images presented on Nanyang portrait stones is diverse and varied, possessing a profound cultural significance. It serves as a unique window for researchers to explore the ancient dance styles of Nanyang, enriching our understanding of the ancient culture and social life in the region.

3.2. Characteristics of Dance Costumes and their Regional Cultural Associations

Dancers depicted on Nanyang portrait stones often wear locally distinctive costumes, and the characteristics of these costumes are closely associated with regional culture: The attire of the dancers is relatively simple, highlighting the unadorned style of folk dance in the Nanyang region. The design of the costumes may be influenced by regional traditions. The attire of the dancers typically reflects the traditional clothing of the local ethnic groups, showcasing the diverse culture and ethnic differences in the Nanyang region.

3.3. Dance Movements and Artistic Style

The dance movements depicted on Nanyang portrait stones reflect a unique artistic style: The movements of the dancers tend to be graceful and fluid, showcasing the distinctive charm of dance in the Nanyang region, in harmony with the region's warm climate and leisurely lifestyle. The movements are lively, reflecting the attitude towards life and the love for nature in the Nanyang region. Long-sleeve dances are commonly depicted on Nanyang portrait stones, and "this type of dance is

characterized by the use of long sleeves, and the slender waist of the dancer attracts attention... displaying a graceful and stretched posture[2].”

By classifying and analyzing the dances depicted on Nanyang portrait stones(Fig. 1, 2, and 3), we can gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of dance culture in the Nanyang region during the Han Dynasty. This helps reveal its unique aspects in terms of art, culture, and society, contributing to our comprehension of the evolution of dance and its cultural significance in the local context.

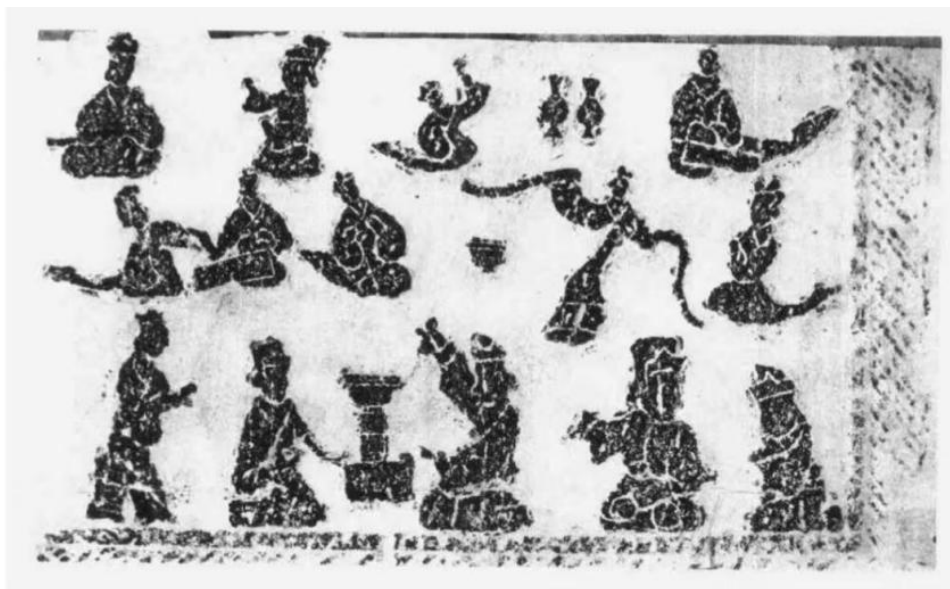


Fig. 1 Liu Bo, Music and Dance, Western Han Dynasty. Dimensions: 138x64 cm Excavated from the Knitting Factory in Tanghe County, during the Western Han Dynasty.

“Three layers divide the screen – top, middle, and bottom. In the top layer, from left to right, one person sits upright with a serious demeanor, while another person sits sideways. A third person raises their hand as if shaking a tambourine, and the fourth person plays a zither, with two pots placed in between. The middle layer depicts five individuals: one figure is blurred and indistinct, another plays a zither, a third clasps their hands together, a woman gracefully dances with long sleeves, and a person appears to be accompanying with vocals. In the center, there is a flask. In the bottom layer, on the left, stands an attendant observing a chess game, with two others engaged in a game. In the center are a gaming board and a flask, with six gaming pieces held by chopsticks. On the right, a person raises their right hand in a gesture resembling placing a bet, indicating involvement in the chess game. To the right is an image of paying respects. ‘Liu Bo’ refers to an ancient Chinese game originating from the Shang Dynasty, played with twelve pieces – six black and six white – each player having six pieces. In the game, players first cast chopsticks, then proceed to make moves on the board, with the winner being the one with the most successful moves.”[3]The illustration showcases different scenes and activities on each level, involving various performance elements such as drumming, playing the se, dancing, watching chess, and gaming. This indicates the diverse nature of dance culture in the Nanyang region, encompassing a rich array of artistic forms and performance elements. The dancers, adorned in long sleeves, embody fluid, gentle, and natural movements.



Fig. 2 Dance and Music. Dimensions: 170x90 cm Excavated from Dongguan, Fangcheng County, during the Eastern Han Dynasty.

“In the painting, there is a depicted drum with a vertical canopy with feather decorations on top, and a horizontal beam from which four gongs are hung and two bells. Two people are holding drumsticks, beating the drum and dancing. Below, three musicians are portrayed: one playing a pan flute, another shaking a pellet drum, and the third hitting a side drum.”[4]The illustration simultaneously features different dance elements such as drumming, playing the flute, and using a rattle, indicating that Nanyang dance scenes are diverse and blend various dance techniques and styles. This multifaceted integration adds vibrancy to the dance scenes, reflecting the unique aspects of dance culture in the Nanyang region.



Fig. 1 Dance and Music Extravaganza "Xinjing Tianfeng" Dimensions: 153x56 cm Excavated from the tomb of Yu Ping, Da Yin, Xin Nong, New Lane, New Store, Tanghe County, in the fifth year of Xinjing Tianfeng

“Starting from the left of the painting, there is a musician seated, holding a pipe in the right hand and playing it. Another person is seated cross-legged, shaking a pellet drum with the right hand and playing a pan flute with the left hand. In the middle, a female performer is portrayed, swirling her sleeves in a circular dance. On the right side, a muscular man is depicted with an exposed upper body, holding a pair of pots in the left hand and tossing two objects with the right hand. Another performer is shown executing a one-handed handstand on a wine vessel. Circular dancing, known as 'pan dance,' was a popular court dance during the Han Dynasty.”[5]The illustration showcases diverse dance techniques, including the plate dance of female performers, the pouring of a vessel by a man from the Han dynasty, and one-handed handstand performances. This variety reflects the integration of different performance techniques in Nanyang dance scenes, highlighting the richness of dance artistry in the Nanyang region.

4. Dance Characteristics on Shandong Portrait Stones

4.1. Dance Image Classification and Feature Analysis

The dance scenes depicted on Shandong portrait stones present a unique and distinctive aspect, reflecting the rich and diverse dance culture of the region. Some scholars posit, "Confucianism emphasizes pursuing official careers. The ethical thoughts of promoting filial piety and the customs of elaborate burials and the admiration of achievements form the social foundation for the creation of Han portrait stones."

1. Standardization of Courtly Dance: The portrait stones showcase a diverse array of dance scenes, encompassing both courtly and folk dances. However, the dances intended for important occasions in the court and for high-level appreciation are more predominant. The layout on the portrait stones is more standardized and symmetrical, possibly reflecting the influence of Confucian culture, which emphasizes order and standards, on the Shandong region.

2. Elaborate Costumes Symbolizing Social Status: Confucian culture places importance on social hierarchy and status differences. The courtly dancers depicted on Shandong portrait stones wear extravagant attire, reflecting symbols of social status and class. In Confucian thought, attire is often regarded as a symbol of social status and identity, showcasing differences in familial and class positions, a theme evident in the costumes of courtly dancers. Through the observation of attire, researchers can glimpse the societal structure and cultural values of that time.

The intertwining of these two characteristics makes Shandong portrait stones a cultural mirror. Not only do they reflect the diverse development of courtly and folk dances in the local area, but they also offer valuable insights into social hierarchy and cultural attitudes. Such multi-layered depictions provide researchers with rich materials to explore the ancient dance culture of Shandong, offering robust support for reconstructing the societal landscape and cultural nuances of that era.

4.2. Dance Movements and the Degree of Standardization

The dance movements depicted on Shandong portrait stones exhibit a certain degree of standardization, highlighting the following characteristics: The movements of the dancers show influences from Central Plains dances, displaying a degree of standardization and formalization. This may reflect the close connection between the Shandong region and Central Plains culture. The movements of courtly dancers tend to be more solemn and ceremonial, expressing the pursuit of dance standards in the courtly culture of the Shandong region.

4.3. Dance Costume Features and Social Status Correlation

The costumes of dancers on Shandong portrait stones are closely correlated with social status, presenting the following features: Courtly dancers typically wear luxurious attire, reflecting their noble social status and adherence to courtly culture. In contrast, the simple attire of folk dancers stands in stark contrast to courtly dancers, being more modest and closer to the lifestyle of the local populace.

Through the classification and analysis of the dances depicted on Shandong portrait stones (Fig.4 and 5), we can glimpse the diversity of dance culture in the Shandong region, revealing differences between courtly and folk dances, as well as between opulent and modest styles. This aids in a deeper understanding of the societal status and cultural characteristics of dance in the Shandong region during the Han Dynasty.

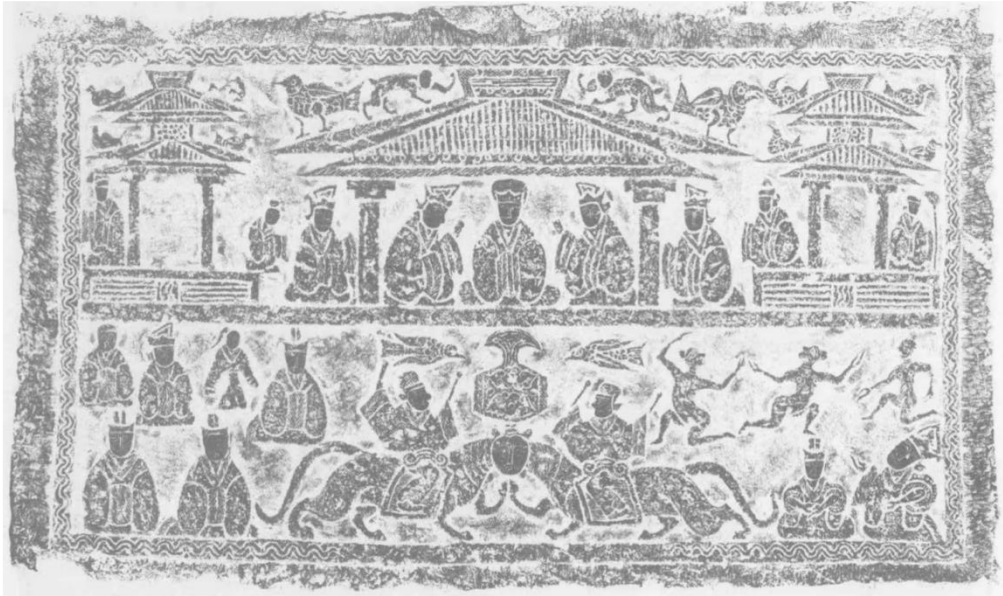


Fig. 4 Stone surface: 81 cm (vertical) x 138 cm (horizontal)

“The painting consists of three layers: In the upper layer, there's a hall with two gateways. Inside the hall, the host sits upright with two people on each side paying respects. Below each gateway, there are two people, one of whom holds a comet-shaped object. In the lower layer, two people are seated on a double tiger drum seat, playing a large drum. On the left side, there are six people, and on the right side, five people. Among them, three children are depicted performing a dance in a bare-bodied state.” [6] This arrangement and combination exhibit a certain standardization and order, implying that the dance scenes depicted on the Shandong pictorial stones may be associated with specific religious, social ceremonies, or court activities. This indicates that the dances on the Shandong pictorial stones are not merely simple folk entertainment; they might involve formal rituals and protocols.

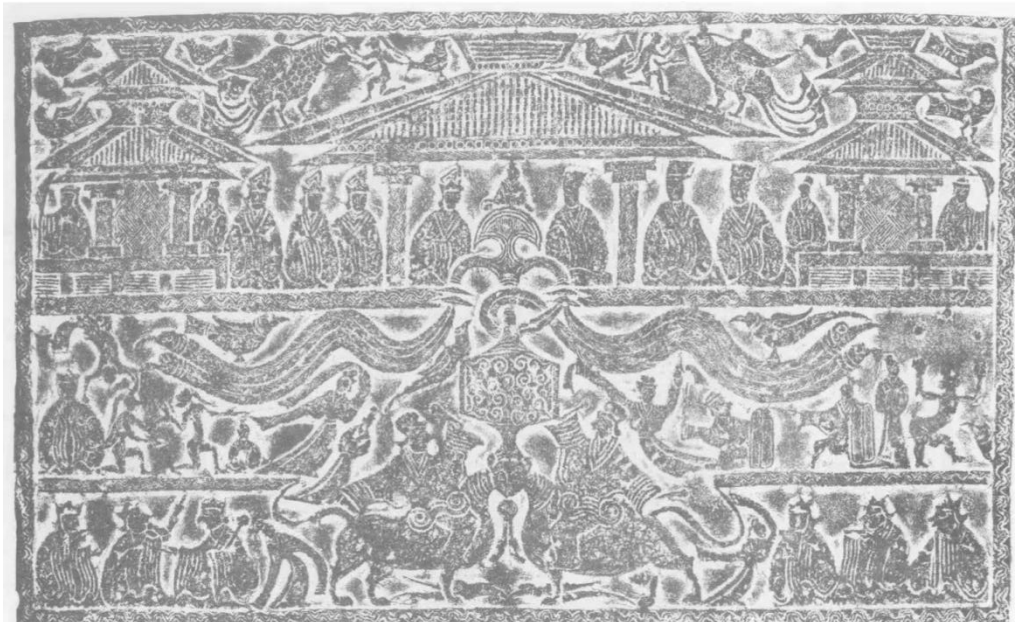


Fig. 5 Stone surface: 89 cm (vertical) x 147 cm (horizontal). "Complete Works," Initial Compilation, Figure 129.

“The painting consists of three layers: In the upper layer, there is a hall with twin gateways and figures. On the roof, there are feathered individuals feeding phoenix birds. In the middle and lower layers, there are depictions of erected drums, feathered decorations, and a mixture of music, dance, and acrobatics.” [7] The pictorial stone provides a detailed depiction of the characters' costumes, reflecting

the splendor of attire in the Shandong region. The feathered individuals are often associated with a noble and mysterious image, and the act of feeding a phoenix may further emphasize the noble status of the participants.

5. Comparison Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Comparison of Regional Characteristics

The depictions of dance on the Nanyang and Shandong pictorial stones reveal unique regional characteristics, reflecting profound cultural differences between the two regions during the Han Dynasty:

1. **Nanyang Region's Atmosphere:** The dance scenes on the Nanyang pictorial stones portray a relaxed, natural, and simple atmosphere. The dancers' movements are smooth and lively, aligning with the warm climate and leisurely lifestyle of the region. Through dance, this atmosphere vividly expresses the pleasant living conditions in Nanyang during the Han Dynasty.
2. **Shandong Region's Coexistence of Courtly and Folk Dances:** In contrast, the Shandong pictorial stones depict both courtly and folk dances, indicating the coexistence of courtly and folk cultures in the region. This demonstrates the fusion of Shandong's courtly and folk cultures, showcasing diverse forms of dance across different social strata. This coexistence highlights the rich and diverse cultural landscape of Shandong, where dance takes on various forms for different occasions.

5.2. Comparative Analysis of Costume Characteristics

The costumes of dancers on the Nanyang and Shandong pictorial stones exhibit striking differences, reflecting variations in regional culture and social status:

1. **Nanyang Region's Simple Style:** The attire of dancers in Nanyang is relatively simple and often reflects traditional local clothing. This unembellished style aligns with the emphasis on the enjoyment of life and the expression of folk culture in Nanyang, portraying the simplicity and authenticity of local dance culture.
2. **Shandong Region's Symbolism of Social Status:** In contrast, the costumes of courtly dancers in Shandong are more luxurious, potentially symbolizing differences in social status and class. This emphasizes the social hierarchy and status symbolized through attire in Shandong's courtly dance. The observation of costumes provides insights into the social structure and cultural values of the time.

By comparing costumes, we gain insights not only into the aesthetic and cultural values of Nanyang and Shandong but also into the distinct roles that attire played in dance expression across different regions

5.3. Differences in Dance Movements and Expressive Forms

The dance movements depicted on the Nanyang and Shandong pictorial stones show significant differences in form and expression:

1. **Nanyang Region's Softness and Naturalness:** Dance movements in Nanyang tend to be graceful and natural, showcasing the unique charm of Nanyang's dance. The dancers' fluid motions align with the region's warm climate and leisurely lifestyle. This soft and natural expression allows viewers to easily immerse themselves in the emotions and stories conveyed through dance.
2. **Shandong Region's Standardization and Dignity:** Comparatively, dance movements on Shandong pictorial stones show influences from Central Plains dance, displaying a degree of standardization and formalization. The movements of courtly dancers lean towards solemnity and ritual, reflecting Shandong's pursuit of dance standards in courtly culture. This standardized and dignified dance form demonstrates a certain level of orthodoxy in Shandong's cultural expression.

By comparing dance movements, we gain a deeper understanding of the stylistic differences and expressive techniques in dance art between Nanyang and Shandong, reflecting each region's unique interpretations and pursuits of dance.

5.4. Association of Dance Scenes with Social Activities

The association of dance scenes on the Nanyang and Shandong pictorial stones with social activities highlights regional differences:

1. Nanyang Region's Social and Religious Activities: Nanyang's dance scenes are often associated with social gatherings and banquets. This reflects the significant role of dance in social and religious activities in Nanyang, where dance serves as a means of fostering interpersonal relationships, conveying blessings, and showing respect. Nanyang dances are closely tied to the joy and celebratory nature of social events.
2. Shandong Region's Courtly and Formal Occasions: On Shandong pictorial stones, courtly dance scenes are more closely linked to formal and solemn social occasions. This indicates that, in Shandong, dance is not merely an element of entertainment in social events but an integral part of courtly culture. These dances might be performed at dignified banquets, ceremonies, or important rituals, highlighting the solemnity and formality of dance in Shandong. Additionally, Confucian culture, with its profound influence on ancient Chinese society, politics, and culture, is reflected in Shandong's dance performances.

Through the comparison of dance scenes and their associations with social activities, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the differences in the choices and expressive modes of dance performances in Nanyang and Shandong. This also reflects the diversity of Han Dynasty society, where different regions attributed different meanings and roles to dance in social activities.

6. Conclusion

Through in-depth research on the dance characteristics depicted on the Nanyang and Shandong pictorial stones from the Han Dynasty, we not only appreciate the unique charm of dance art during the Han Dynasty but also glimpse the diverse aspects of dance culture in the Nanyang and Shandong regions.

1. Dance in Nanyang Pictorial Stones: The dance portrayed on Nanyang pictorial stones exhibits characteristics of simplicity, naturalness, and liveliness. The dancers' movements are smooth and lively, seemingly showcasing the relaxed and natural atmosphere of Nanyang. This characteristic brings dance closer to everyday life, becoming a genuine and vivid form of social expression.
2. Dance in Shandong Pictorial Stones: Shandong pictorial stones reveal a coexistence of courtly and folk dances, reflecting the fusion of courtly and folk cultures in the region. This dual representation demonstrates the diversity of dance across different social strata in Shandong, showcasing a rich and varied cultural landscape.
3. Costume Contrasts: Attire in Nanyang tends to be relatively simple, reflecting traditional local styles. In contrast, the lavish costumes of courtly dancers in Shandong may symbolize social status and class differences, emphasizing the norms and solemnity of Shandong's courtly culture.
4. Contrasting Dance Movements: Dance movements in Nanyang tend to be graceful and natural, displaying the unique charm of Nanyang's dance. This soft and natural expression allows viewers to immerse themselves easily in the emotions and stories conveyed through dance. In Shandong, courtly dancers' movements, influenced by Central Plains dance, show a degree of standardization and formality, emphasizing solemnity and adhering to dance norms.

This study deepens our understanding of the cultural diversity in regional societies during the Han Dynasty, providing crucial insights for future exploration of ancient Chinese dance art. The sincere simplicity of Nanyang's dance and the elaborate norms of Shandong's dance showcase the diversity

and richness of ancient Chinese dance. These dance characteristics not only reflect the aesthetic preferences and lifestyles of the local people but also carry the essence of Han Dynasty societal and cultural values.

In future dance research and creative endeavors, it is essential to prioritize understanding and respecting regional cultures. Drawing inspiration from the dances of Nanyang and Shandong during the Han Dynasty, we can inherit and promote the outstanding traditions of ancient dance. Simultaneously, attention should be given to contemporary cultural exchanges and integration, combining traditional culture with modern aesthetics to drive continuous innovation and development in dance art.

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