

## Mosuo Jiacuo Dance from the Perspective of Female Gender Construction

He Jiayue<sup>1</sup>, Kerdsiri Noknoi<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Fine-Applied Arts and Cultural Science, Mahasarakham University, Maha Sarakham 44150, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Informatics, Mahasarakham University, Maha Sarakham 44150, Thailand

**Corresponding author:** Kerdsiri Noknoi, E-mail: kerdsiri.n@msu.ac.th

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history

Received: January 05, 2025

Accepted: March 26, 2025

Published: March 31, 2025

Volume: 13 Issue: 2

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the research and development of Mosuo Jiacuo dance in Chinese dance from the perspective of female gender construction. As an ethnic group with a unique culture, the Mosuo people's dance art embodies profound gender connotations and cultural qualities. Through an in-depth study of the historical origin, evolution, religious beliefs, cultural practices and dance forms of the Mosuo people, the important role played by China's unique matrilineal society in constructing women's social gender roles and related arts is analyzed. Through a comprehensive analysis of the intertwined relationship between the historical evolution, cultural connotation and gender construction of the family wrong dance, this paper reveals the complexity and richness of the family wrong dance in shaping and presenting the gender roles of female society. In China, the literature on gender construction and cultural identity of women's society as a research concept is still relatively small and belongs to a relatively new research field. Therefore, this paper analyzes the form, value and significance of Jiacuo dance from the perspective of gender construction. It provides a scientific and feasible model for the inheritance and creation of Jiacuo dance in contemporary society.

**Key words:** Mosuo, Gender, Jiacuo Dancet, Matriarchal Society, Art Literacy

### INTRODUCTION

The Mosuo people, a branch of the Naxi or Mongolian nationality, live around Lugu Lake at the intersection of Yanyuan and Muli counties, Liangshan, Sichuan Province, and Ninglang County, Lijiang, Yunnan Province. Located at the intersection of two provinces, they are in a unique geographical position. The plateau farming and animal husbandry ethnic group, the Mosuo, retains the original and last matriarchal social system, and is regarded by scholars as the "Lively image of matriarchal society", with the unique custom of Male-leaving Marriages (Li, 2017). These mysterious ancient national cultures can be seen through the inherited JiaCuo dance. Mosuo people like singing and dancing, every grand festival, wedding, funeral and other important celebrations, they will dress in costumes, gather in Lugu Lake to dance the traditional national dance handed down for thousands of years - Jiacuo dance. Jiacuo dance is a name card of the Mosuo nationality, a rare treasure of tourism resources, and a national intangible cultural heritage project in China. Jiacuo dance shows the hard-working and kind-mindedness of Mosuo women and the ruggedness and rigor of Mosuo men, as well as the history and cultural customs of Mosuo people. It is a fresh example and precious historical data for the study of national dance, and has high value for the study of dance and folklore. Jia Cuo dance is a kind of song and

dance with both self-entertainment and performance, which contains the rich primitive culture and art of clans and tribes and information of ancient civilization, and shows the historical stories and living habits of ancient ancestors (Jiang, 2019). It has the characteristics of self-entertainment, interest, enjoyment and participation. It can be said that the Jiacuo dance is the symbol of the Mosuo people, and also the identity of the Mosuo people in the society, which has important research significance.

From a religious point of view, most ethnic groups in the world have ancestor worship, but mainly worship male ancestors, while the Mosuo ancestor worship is mainly to worship maternal ancestors, or male and female ancestors. This is more unique. The Mosuo people of Lugu Lake believe in the Daba religion, which is a primitive religion, named after the shaman Daba, it has no systematic teachings and scriptures, no religious organizations and temples, only a few dozen (hui) oral chanting, and a divination book (commonly known as the day book), which is written in the original picture of 32 different forms. In the religious concept of the Mosuo people, their ancestors are not called ghosts (Chu), but are called (U), there are various gods, but people will not become gods when they die, and there is a separate place for their activities, that is, Sibü Anawa. The ancestral deities of the Mosuo people, including the female patriarchs,

goddesses, clan ancestors, and recently deceased elders. However, there is generally no idol, only a Taoist platform as a symbol of ancestors. The ancestors of the maternal family are provided in two places: The wooden cabinet between the beds, and a case before it. Then there are the bowls and chopsticks that ancestors liked on the table; one is Guozhuang Stone, with which they ate every day; that is to say, usually every meal would be sacrificed, and the diners would ask ancestors to eat with their families. Among the Mosuo people's gods, the mountain is the symbol of the goddess, and there is a grand ancestor worship activity every year, called the "Turning Mountain Festival". People held a grand sacrificial ceremony in the event, and danced Jiacao dance, praying for her to bless the Mosuo population prosperity, agricultural harvest, centuries of prosperity (He & Min, 2013).

Emperor, that is, the supreme ruler, which is the unity of the three powers of theocracy, paternity and imperium. And the Mosuo religious ceremony host Daba, also must participate in labor production, worship god is also mainly female, is one of the world's few three power separation of social form and religious belief form. We usually see in other ethnic groups in China that the chief of the tribe or the high priest has supreme power, but in the Mosuo, it is just the opposite. From the perspective of religious teaching, the Mosuo performing art has the characteristics of matrilineal clan tribe both in connotation and form, which has very important research significance and value.

From a sociological point of view, the cultural structure of Mosuo society is the matriarchal family culture, the Mosuo people believe that the mother is respected, the woman is valuable, the mother is the axis and support of the Mosuo people's life, and women enjoy a noble social status in the matriarchal family. Most of the Mosuo people still retain the matriarchal clan marriage system of "men do not marry, women do not marry, freedom of union, freedom of separation" (Liu, 2021). This system gives full equality to both men and women. Women can work, live and love freely in this land according to their simple nature and follow their own hearts, so we can see in the Jia cuo dance that most of the artistic performance forms of mosuo are cheerful and dominated by women, and the forms are varied and not limited. As a matriarchal society, the Mosuo people's respect for women's status reflects the pluralistic construction of female social gender. It provides a unique case for us to study the art of matriarchal society.

From the artistic point of view, Jiacao dance not only retains the form of the original "round dance", but also has a very rich form expression in the content of the movement. According to legend, there are 72 kinds of tunes, corresponding to 72 kinds of dances, but most of them are in a state of loss or disappearance, nearly 30 kinds have been recorded and collected, and only 10 kinds have been fully circulated so far. Including, Jiacao (inviting guests), Goddess worship dance, war celebration dance, (reflecting the love of young men and women), etc. It can be seen that according to the needs of different occasions, the performance forms of Jiacao dance are different. The variety and content of the performances are unique compared to the other few "round

dances". The performance song, dance and music are closely integrated, integrating appreciation, lyricism, interest and participation, and full of a strong sense of history and life. Today's Jiacao dance has become an entertaining square dance for Mosuo ethnic groups, a song and dance for people to celebrate harvest, celebrate festivals and pray for gods, and also provides convenience for young men and women to talk about love. In general, the aesthetic characteristics of Jiacao dance are mainly reflected in its beautiful movements, strong sense of rhythm, rich emotional expression, distinctive national characteristics and strong performance.

With the rapid advancement of the modernization process and the impact of foreign culture, the development status of Jiacao dance is facing some problems and challenges. First of all, the inheritance and development of Jiacao dance has been impacted by modern forms of entertainment. In modern society, people have a variety of entertainment choices, and digital, networked entertainment has gradually replaced the traditional cultural forms. This has led to a gradual decline in the younger generation's interest in and understanding of traditional art forms such as Jiacao dance, and a lack of motivation for inheritance and development (Seal & Lusino, 2018). Secondly, the inheritance and development of Jiacao dance is limited by the lack of talents. Despite the high artistic value and historical value of Jiacao dance, there is currently a lack of professional and systematic inheritance methods and education systems, which is difficult to attract more young people to learn and inherit. At the same time, the older generation of Jiacao dancers are also facing problems such as growing age and poor physical condition, which makes the inheritance and development of Jiacao dance face the dilemma of talent shortage. In addition, the development of Jiacao dance is also challenged by economic interests. In modern society, cultural tourism has become an important industry in many places, but in the process of pursuing economic interests, some places may ignore the importance of traditional culture, resulting in the development of traditional art forms such as Jiacao dance is limited.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Domestic Research Status in China

The topics of the articles include: Lugu Lake area (254 articles), Mosuo people (227 articles), Naxi people (30 articles), Mosuo culture (28 articles), Mosuo ethnic group (25 articles), Mosuo houses (20 articles), Mosuo elderly people (18 articles), Mosuo tourism development (16 articles), and matrilineal society and culture (16 articles). The disciplines involved include: tourism (414 articles), ethnography (194 articles), culture (193 articles), administration and state administration (131 articles), Geography (106 articles), Architectural Science and Engineering (104 articles), Ethnic and Local History of China (86 articles), Sociology and Statistics (82 articles), Chinese Literature (81 articles), Chinese Language and Literature (57 articles), Fine Arts, Calligraphy, Sculpture, and Photography (45 articles), Drama, Film, and Television Arts (41 articles), Chinese Politics and

International Politics (39 articles), Environmental Science and Resource Utilization (39 articles), Biology (37 articles), Secondary Education (34 articles), Religion (34 articles), Biography (34 articles), Economic System Reform (23 articles), and 101 articles related to music and dance, accounting for 9% of the disciplines and directions of research on the Mosuo. These papers and writings, although the proportion of class literature is only 9%, but the research results of these other disciplines as well as for this paper provides a very rich reference, especially history, geography and socio-cultural research (Wang, 2014).

As for the history of the Mosuo tribe, although there are still some disputes about the origin and details in the academic circles, the opinions on the history after the Tang Dynasty are basically the same. That is to say, the Naxi began to appear in history books from the Tang Dynasty onward, and were mainly divided into three branches: the eastern branch was distributed in the area along the border between Ninglang in present-day Yunnan Province and Sichuan Province; the central branch was distributed in the area along the Jinsha River Bay; and the western branch was distributed along the Jinsha River (Figure 1). Since then, the central branch continued to grow, especially after the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when it merged with the western branch, and reached its peak during the reign of the Mu Clan in the Ming Dynasty, and then declined after the reorganization of the land in the Qing Dynasty. The eastern clans, on the other hand, remained relatively independent, with fewer exchanges with the Han and slower development. This historical lineage and geographic distribution provide the basis for this paper to analyze the history of the Mosuo and the Kabuki Dance. In the investigation of the Mosuo social pattern, family structure, production life and religious culture, a large number of cases have been collected, which not only corroborate with the macroscopic historical research, but also provide valuable clues for this paper to carry out case studies in the mountains and deep valleys of the Mosuo ethnic area.



Figure 1. Distribution diagram of Mosuo ethnic group

### Foreign Research Status

The Mosuo ethnic group is called “Maosuo” in Chinese historical records, which is translated as “Mo-so” by westerners. In the late nineteenth century, a large number of western missionaries, explorers and government officials came to the southwest region of China for missionary work and investigation. 1867, the French missionary Descourdins firstly discovered the scriptures written in hieroglyphics by the Mosuo people, and sent 11 pages of facsimiles back home. Westerners were deeply interested in this kind of hieroglyphics, and after that, during the following hundred years, there were western scholars coming to the Naxi (nowadays, the Mosuo in Yunnan is also called the Naxi) to collect and translate the Dongba scriptures, to investigate and study the local humanities, geography, language, writing, religion, and culture, and gradually formed the Naxi as the object of study - Western Naxiology. Western Naxiology began in the middle and late nineteenth century, when a large number of Western missionaries, explorers and diplomats flooded into the interior of China, mostly for the purpose of investigating the Tibetan region. At that time, the Qing government prohibited Westerners from entering Tibet, and as Western missionaries and explorers were often killed in Tibet, many of them could only stay in places close to Tibet, such as Sichuan and Yunnan. These people inadvertently discovered other minorities in southwestern China besides the Tibetans and wrote about them in their travelogues, and the Naxi were among them. However, at the beginning, there were few monographs on the Naxi, and information about the Naxi was scattered in the travelogues and notes of westerners in Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet, so we call this stage missionary and travelogue Naxiology, which is the budding period of western Naxiology. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were still western missionaries, explorers and scholars coming to Southwest China to investigate, among which the one with the greatest achievement was the French scholar Barker. The publication of Barker’s “Some Studies” has a milestone significance, which is the sign of western Naxiology towards scientification and specialization. This period was the development period of Western Naxiology. Although Barker was less than 20 years old at that time, he went to the Naxi area twice, did a more detailed field investigation in the Naxi area and brought back a large number of documents and cultural relics, especially the publication of the study of “some of them” caused a great deal of attention from scholars at home and abroad. Because Barker published the study of some of them and then switched to the study of Tibetan ancient literature, the Western Naxiology was silent for a long time, until the mid-twentieth century when the American scholar Rock appeared, and the Western Naxiology ushered in a peak. The mid-twentieth-century Naxiology research is the mature period of Western Naxiology research, and the achievements made by Locke in the investigation of Naxi humanities, history and geography, the collection, collation and translation of Dongba scriptures, and the analysis and study of Dongba rituals have been hard to be surpassed by the future generations. For more than one hundred years,

Western missionaries, explorers and local scholars in Europe and America have been exploring the historical and geographical, linguistic, religious and folklore fields of the Naxi people during their visits to the Naxi area, and have compiled and published lists of Naxi words, character lists and dictionaries, which ultimately led to the gradual formation of the discipline of Naxi as the object of study and attracted more outstanding scholars at home and abroad to devote themselves to it. As a result, we can now see the relevant research materials about the Mosuo ethnic group in Yunnan from the western Naxi studies.

To summarize, the Mosuo ethnic group lives on the shore of Lugu Lake on the border of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, so the research on Mosuo in the West is limited to a part of the Mosuo ethnic group in Yunnan which is now classified as the Naxi ethnic group, and does not involve the research on the whole Mosuo ethnic group in Sichuan.

### **The Historical Origin of Mosuo Nationality and Jiacuo Dance**

As a unique ethnic group in China, the Mosuo have attracted much attention from academics and society for their unique social system and cultural traditions. The Mosuo are the only matrilineal clan social group in China, and their social structure is centered on women, with matrilineal blood relations playing an important role in social life. The historical origins of the Mosuo are of great significance in understanding the formation of their social system and cultural traditions (Wang & Lv, 2013).

#### ***History, origin and distribution of the Mosuo***

The Mosuo, also known as Mosuo people, are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Nyingchi, with a history of more than 2,000 years, dating back to 111 B.C. (the sixth year of the Yuan Ding period of the Western Han Dynasty). The name of the Mosuo people has changed in historical documents, such as “Moshayi” in the Book of the Later Han Dynasty, “Moshi” or “Moshi” in the Tang Dynasty, and different names in the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The history of the Mosuo people can be traced back to the Warring States period, when Qiong, the leader of the Qiang people in order to avoid the threat of the Qin state, led his people to move south, through Gansu, Northwest Sichuan, Southwest Sichuan, and later migrated to the Yuezhu, i.e., the southeast of present-day Xichang in Sichuan Province and other areas. In the Later Han Dynasty, they were called “Moxie”. These “some” people live in the Dadu River Basin for a long time, some of them have long migrated to the Yalong River. Later, the Mosuo people moved south to Dingban, i.e. Yanyuan, Yongning and Lugu Lake in Sichuan, and became a local ethnic group.

The title of Mosuo people is recorded in a variety of homophones in the voluminous historical records. In the Records of the Grand Historian and the Book of Han, they are called Yak Qiang or Yak Yi. In ancient times, Mosuo was a nomadic people called yak herders. Mosuo a, first seen in the “Hou Han Shu” Volume 23, “County and State V”

in the school doomed to board (now Sichuan Yanyuan) recorded in the article: “County in the county in the west, Bin just pay white Mosuo Shayi have salt pits”. Thereafter, the Tang said that some or grinding West, Song said that some or Moses, Yuan said that Mosa or some, Ming said that the grinding West or Moses, Qing said that Mosa or Mathay. Warring States period, the Qiang people in the Ministry of the chief called Qiong, in order to avoid the threat of Qin, led the clan to move south, moved to Gansu, Northwest Sichuan, Southwest Sichuan area, and then migrated to the Yuezhu --- now Xichang, Sichuan, Southeast and other areas, the ancient yak yi or Yuezhu Qiang, to the latter Han Dynasty, known as the 么 some. Some of them have been living in the Dadu River Basin for a long time, some of them have long migrated along the Yalong River. Later, the Mosuo people moved to the south of the Ding board, that is, the present Sichuan Yanyuan, Yongning, Lugu Lake area. According to “yuan history - geography” mosuo settled in yongning has been more than 1500 years. According to the Mosuo Taiba “Returning to the Clan and Leading the Way Scripture”, the Mosuo people in Landlady Drainage Area moved to Landlady Drainage Area from Sichuan Ware (now Qianshuo Township, Zuoshuo District), and the genealogy of the 62 generations of the ancestors was recorded, according to which it was estimated that there were more than 1,500 years of Mosuo people settling in Landlady Drainage Area.

In recent times, most of the Mosuo live in the upper reaches of the Jinsha River. Yanyuan, Muli and Yanbian counties in Sichuan Province and Ninglang in Yunnan Province are areas where Mosuo people live. In 1950, the documents of the Second People’s Congress of Lijiang Prefecture for All Ethnic Groups clearly recorded that: “There were 13 representatives of the Mosuo ethnic group attending the meeting.” On September 5, 1956, the Lijiang Commissioner’s Office made five explicit references to the “Report on the Establishment of the Nyingchi Yi-autonomous County of Landlimb” to the People’s Committee of Yunnan Province. “Mosuo ethnic group”. That is to say, in “Nyingchi and Liangshan, where the Yi ethnic group resides and includes twelve ethnic groups, including Mosuo, Lisu, Xifan and Han”, “There are twelve ethnic groups in the county, including Yi, Mosuo, Han, Xifan, Lisu, Tibetan, Bai, Zhongjia, Naxi, Miao, Panyi, Hui, and so on....”, ‘three Mosuo inhabited townships’, ‘Mosuo know Tibetan’, ‘Mosuo, Xifan believe in Lamaism’. This report was later forwarded to the State Council by the Provincial People’s Committee and approved to be implemented in Nyingchi; on September 20, 1956, at the inaugural meeting of the Nyingchi Yi Autonomous County, it was solemnly announced that there were twelve ethnic groups in the county, including the Yi and the Mosuo, etc. In 1959, the “Overview of Nyingchi” prepared by the office of the Nyingchi Work Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) made reference to “the Mosuo ethnic group” at various places. However, later on, the relevant state departments categorized the Mosuo living in places like Nyingchi in Yunnan as Naxi, and the Mosuo living in Yanyuan, Muli, and Yanbian in Sichuan

as Mongols. Yang Fuquan wrote in his article "A Study of the Ethnic Relationship between the Namui and the Naxi": "The work of ethnic identification carried out in the 1950s and 1960s in China is of far-reaching significance and is of great merit. However, we should not avoid the problems left behind due to some negligence at that time. For example, the same ethnic group that calls itself 'Na' or 'Na Ri' has not been recognized as an ethnic group in Sichuan, but has been referred to as the Mongols by some upper class people and is still in use today, whereas in Yunnan, the Na people (Mosuo people) have been classified as a sub-group of the Naxi people. Which is a subfamily of the Naxi. The Standing Committee of the Yunnan Provincial People's Congress adopted the Regulations on the Autonomy of the Nyingchi Yi-Autonomous County at its seventh and eleventh session, held on April 27, 1990, in which the Naxi were identified as the "Mosuo people," while the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the State Council have always regarded the Naxi as a branch of the Naxi ethnic group, both internally and externally, in terms of their propaganda to be regarded as a branch of the Naxi ethnic group.

Over the years, the majority of Mosuo cadres and masses have strongly demanded a solution to the issue of the Mosuo ethnicity, and the Party and government organs and Mosuo people in Nyingchi County have repeatedly reflected this issue to the relevant Party and state departments through a variety of forms and channels in a historical and objective manner, urgently requesting that the Mosuo ethnicity be restored as soon as possible. Deputies to the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh National People's Congresses of Nyingchi Prefecture have made.

### *History of the Jiacao Dance*

The art of songs and dances of the Mosuo people includes love songs, mother-songs, Jiacao Dance, Ghost Dance, Geer Dance, Ba'ao Dance, etc. Among them, the Jiacao Dance appears in the daily life of the Mosuo people with high frequency. Among them, the Jiacao Dance appears in the daily life of the Mosuo people at a high frequency, and the dance content of the Jiacao Dance includes the production, life, war, hunting, harvest, rituals, courtship and other aspects in the ancient times. In the festival celebrations, religious activities and other occasions, the Mosuo people will jump up Jiacao dance, as a way to express their love of life, young singles will also be in the dance of Jiacao dance to find a preferred couple, the two sides of the mutual clasping of the palms of the hands three times or each other vigorously shaking hands, that is, said to be mutually affectionate, and can be entered into the stage of love.

Yanyuan's dance "Jiacao" is a national non-heritage dance. "Jiacao" is very far from the northern Mongolian dance, almost the same as the local Naxi and Yi dance rhythms. The Mongols who stayed behind in the Yuan Dynasty have been fully integrated into the lives and cultures of the ethnic groups in the Yanyuan area, living in the "wooden houses" of the Mosuo people, practicing Axia marriage, and engaging in agricultural production and horse trade. Therefore, Yanyuan's "Jiacao" dance is characterized

by strong southern ethnic dances, such as arm-twisting, foot-pairing, foot-swinging and other movements. Only the individual stepping movements and the song "Roots Where to Come" accompanying the dance still retains the pure artistic characteristics of the northern Mongols.

Jiacao dance is commonly known as "pot Zhuang dance", "erratic rubbing dance", "beat jumping", etc. "Jia" is the meaning of good, "cuo" is the meaning of dance, "Jiacao" that is, dancing in the good time. Jiacao dance originated from Lugu Lake Mosuo people's production and lifestyle and marriage customs, unique primitive characteristics. The origin of the dance is a dynamic and multifaceted process, some originated from the fear of the gods and prayers, some originated from the celebration of war victory, some originated from the harvest revelry, some originated from the fishing, herding, farming, hunting and other modes of production, and some originated from the courtship of men and women. There are also more stories about the origin of the Jiacao dance, of which the most important and most recognized is about the origin of war, the origin of war is recorded in the canonical records of the Mosuo primitive religion of the Daba religion, and there are also primitive dance murals of the Stone Age on the cliff walls of the caves around the Hugu Lake, which also record the scenes of war, hunting, and life, and so on. According to religious texts, in ancient times, the ancestors of the Mosuo tribe because of occupying a superior geographical location and often suffered from the invasion of neighboring tribes, so the Mosuo tribal leaders let the people in the village entrance lit a pile of bonfires, people around the bonfire shouting and stomping, used to create a large number of momentum to confuse the enemy, after the enemy, and then dance around the bonfire to celebrate the victory in the war. Later, the custom of dancing around the bonfire as a group was passed down and became the Jiacao Dance.

The cultural space of the dance is mostly related to annual festivals, weddings, house building, housewarming, and harvest celebrations. The content of the dance is mostly a reflection of labor life such as fishing and spinning. The core idea of the dance focuses on "unity" and "praise". From the point of view of the dancers' costumes, movements and cultural practices, the dances share many common characteristics of other ethnic groups in the region. From the point of view of costumes, the male dancers wear wide-brimmed cow felt hats, high-collar lapel coats with trimmed edges, burlap pants, embroidered belts of white cloth, short swords, and pointy leather boots; the female dancers use velvet to braid and plait their hair, hanging on one side, with spikes on the left side of their heads, jewels on their braids, earrings, pleated skirts, embroidered belts, embroidered shoes, and white cloth leggings. The high collar and big lapel right overlooking for the Mongolian traditional clothing style, the other more with the Yi and Naxi clothing style elements. The dance costume style of "Jiacao" reflects the real situation of interaction and communication between Yanyuan Mosuo people and other ethnic groups.

In the process of development, the content of the dance is enriched, and people will also dance by the bonfire when

celebrating festivals, celebrating harvests and worshipping the gods, which makes the tunes of the dance and the corresponding dances of the dance more and more. It is said that there are 72 kinds of tunes and corresponding dances in the A-Rub Dance, but most of them are in a state of loss or have already disappeared, and there are nearly 30 kinds of them recorded and collected, of which only more than 10 kinds have been handed down completely to this day, including the De-Rub, the A-Rub You (Inviting Guests), the Gem-Rub (Dance of Honoring the Goddess Gem), the Ash-Sar-Rub (Dance of Celebrating the War), the Kezan Miscellaneous (Reflecting the Love of Young Men and Young Women), Ash-Sar-Rub and so on. Nowadays, the A-Rub Dance is a popular dance in China.

Nowadays, A rub dance is an essential part of the daily life of the Mosuo people, in the festivals, the completion of the new house, into the ceremony, guests from afar to visit and other happy events, family members or nearby villagers will gather together to dance A rub dance. Villagers first raised a roaring bonfire, in the bright sound of the flute, the leader of the dancers play the flute to lead everyone to jump up the rude and heroic A rub dance. In addition, when young men and women are engaged in love, they will also choose to dance, as shown in Figure 2.

### The Construction of Female Social Gender in Jiacao Dance

#### *The concept of gender*

The origin of gender studies theory can be traced back to the feminist movement in the West in the mid-twentieth century. During this movement, people began to reflect on and criticize the traditional concept of gender and social structure, and conducted in-depth research and study on the issue of gender inequality. Against this background, the concept of gender was proposed and gradually developed into an important branch of feminist theory. The core idea of gender theory is that gender is not completely fixed, but is full of plasticity and is shaped by social and cultural institutions. This theory emphasizes that gender is not a biological attribute, but an environment or institution that exists



**Figure 2.** The Original Jiacao Dance (Xinhua News Agency, 1980)

in human society. It analyzes in depth the root causes and essence of gender inequality in human society and asserts that the unequal relationship between the sexes is essentially an inequality of power. The origin and development of gender theory is inextricably linked to the contributions of some important scholars and theorists. Among them, Gayle Rubin, a famous American anthropologist, is regarded as one of the pioneers who put forward the concept of gender. Her research results laid the foundation for the formation and development of gender theory. In addition, gender theory has received attention and influence from a number of scholars in the fields of sociology, psychology and culture. Through different disciplinary perspectives and research methods, they have conducted in-depth research and discussion on gender roles, gender identity, gender inequality and other issues, further enriching the content and system of gender theory. Overall, the origin and development of gender research theory is a complex and diversified process involving multiple disciplinary fields and socio-cultural factors. It has not only provided us with new perspectives and tools for understanding gender issues, but also provided important theoretical support for promoting gender equality and diversity.

#### *The application of the concept of gender*

The Mosuo people are an ethnic group distributed in the border of Sichuan and Yunnan in southwestern China, with Lugu Lake as the core area. The unique matrilineal family structure of the Mosuo people, the system of visits between the two sexes and the ethical and moral concepts of respecting mothers and honoring daughters have constructed the uniqueness of the Mosuo culture. The unique cultural qualities of the Mosuo people have shrouded them in mystery since they entered the public eye. Gender research on Mosuo people has always been a hot area of concern for ethnologists and anthropologists, with different scholars showing different research interests and academic concerns at different times, and the research results have become popular for a while, while the conclusions of the research are not uniform. Cai Hua believes that the gender construction of Mosuo society is based on the constraint mechanism of “social blood relatives’ sexual exclusion (sexual taboo between blood relations and blood relatives)”. Shi Chuanguang believes that the uniqueness of the Mosuo case in terms of cultural gender is the centrality of women in traditional culture. Weng Naiqun, on the other hand, summarizes the cultural structural system of gender in Mosuo society as “female origin and male flow.” Zhou Huashan points out that the gender structure of Mosuo society is “emphasizing women but not men, praising women but not devaluing men,” gender equality, complementarity and mutual assistance, and harmony between yin and yang. He Zhonghua thinks that the gender division of labor in Mosuo matrilineal family is characterized by “male dominates outside and female dominates inside”, but the regulations on gender roles formed by this division of labor do not have the social content of gender inequality and gender discrimination. For a long time, cultural anthropology has generally considered women to be in a subordinate position in social life. Evans-Pritchard made the assertion, based on

field observations, that “in almost all social systems, regardless of the structure to which these societies belong, men are in a position of superiority”. Donald Brown, in summarizing the basic characteristics of culture, also declared: “In the public political sphere, men are generally in a dominant position”. The concept of gender is an organic part embedded in the overall culture of the society, which is closely linked to cultural matters such as traditions, customs, language, religion, etc., and is the result of socio-cultural creation. The cultural construction and practice of female gender in Mosuo society may provide a rare and unique perspective for us to study Mosuo art and Mosuo Kabuki dance.

In traditional Mosuo culture, women are at the center of the whole culture. Although over the century, Tibetan and Han cultures have had a great influence on the Mosuo people, this female-centered concept is still clearly visible in all aspects of Mosuo life. For example, the cultural rules and gender constructs of “honoring the mother and revering the woman” and “women stay and men go” in Mosuo cultural practices. The kinship system of the Mosuo people emphasizes matrilineal relatives, and the extreme lack of patrilineal titles and in-law titles explains the Mosuo culture’s emphasis and highlighting of women’s status and gender consciousness. The semantic metaphor and praise of “mother and woman” in Mosuo language reflect the uniqueness of Mosuo culture in the construction of female gender. In the beliefs and religious ceremonies of the Mosuo people, women are given the role of goddesses, who are worshipped by the people, and the role of mother ancestors, who are honored by the members of the family, and they are also honored and loved the most as mothers and sisters, who make the greatest contribution to the prosperity of the family through giving birth to a new life to start the cycle of a life, and bringing up the new life to adulthood. Unlike women, men are given the role of descendants who, as sons or brothers, end a life cycle by sending the souls of the dead back to their ancestral homeland in a funeral ceremony. This cultural construction of “women’s origin and men’s end” explains the ultimate understanding of women’s gender in Mosuo society.

This paper analyzes and researches the Mosuo Jiacuo Dance based on the concept and perspective of female gender construction in Mosuo society, and tries to provide a unique ethnographic data for the study of female gender construction dance in the world, and a unique case contrary to “common sense” for ethnographers and anthropologists to carry out cross-cultural gender studies and comparisons. Only when we use multiple perspectives and thinking to scrutinize the research object can we get closer to the essence and truth of things. These qualities are not only a kind of expectation and ideal for women in Mosuo traditional culture, but also the core value of Mosuo art and Mosuo Jiacuo dance research.

#### ***Female gender construction embodied in the Jiacuo dance***

From the origin and morphological characteristics of the Jiacuo Dance, the Jiacuo Dance has many primitive dance relics, and it can be speculated that it has a long history and

may have arisen in the early stage of human society. As the Mosuo people live in the mountainous areas at high altitude, the climate is relatively harsh, and in the process of continuous development, the Mosuo people’s national character of perseverance, bravery, optimism, and enthusiasm is formed, coupled with the fact that the Jiacuo Dance favors hand and foot movements, emphasizes repetitions of movements, and lively and extraordinary dance scenes, which creates the rough and dynamic dance style of the Mosuo Jiacuo Dance. The movements of Jiacuo Dance are extended from the labor situation of Mosuo people, and it is said that there were 72 kinds of tunes and dances, but the only ones that have been passed down completely are “Cuo De”, “Cuo You” and “Gem Cuo”, “Ashshar Cuo”, “Jiamomu” and more than ten kinds of dances have been handed down to this day. Jiacuo to group performances, song, dance, music is closely integrated, the dance melody is beautiful, the dance steps change colorful, integration of ornamental, lyrical, fun, participatory as one, full of a strong sense of history and the breath of life. In the long course of history, Jiacuo dance gradually turned into a group recreational square dance, become people to celebrate the harvest, festivals, praying for God’s songs and dances, but also for young men and women to talk about love, make friends with Asha to provide a convenient.

#### ***Jiacuo dance in the marriage system***

Jiacuo dance is an important medium for Mosuo young men and women to express their love and establish a romantic relationship. In the bonfire party, young men and women hold hands and dance with a light posture, the women’s action of the Jiacuo is soft and graceful, while the men’s action is mainly characterized by swiftness and forcefulness. In the process of jumping, we will see through the dance to see whether the other side can attract their own, and young men and women will quietly touch each other’s palms through the dance to confide their love, of course, touching the palms of the same also have to pay attention to, can only touch three times, if the other side is also interested in, will be back to touch. Therefore, we can see that in the patriarchal society, women are still insisting on the marriage of parents’ orders and matchmakers’ words, Mosuo women have been free to choose their own half, and this situation shows that Mosuo women are different from the perception of patriarchal society women. The Jiacuo Dance is a manifestation of the freedom of love for Mosuo young people, through which they can express their feelings and love to their heart’s content.

#### ***Dance of Jiacuo in trans mountain festival***

On the day of Trans Mountain Festival, the Mosuo people are immersed in a joyful and warm festival atmosphere. Besides horse racing, swinging and song pairing, the most popular folklore activity is the Jiacuo dance. In this important festival, the Mosuo people with dance to express the joy of the heart, in order to enhance the emotion between each other, but also with dance to express the respect for the goddess of Geum, while in the mountain festival this day is also a young man and woman befriending days. People around

the fire, hand in hand, arm in arm, with the cheerful music dancing, they are through this series of folk activities to promote mutual feelings. Different steps of the Jiacao dance, the meaning is not quite the same, like some dance is the Gem Goddess Celebration Dance; some dance generally as a big opening; and some dance is a war dance, reflecting the victory in the war, the defeat of the enemy after the carnival, and more enthusiastic carnival rugged and bold form of display. Jiacao dance is often a song after a song, one after another until the end of the dance, and the content of the dance and the lyrics of the accompanying songs reflect the ancient history, society, production, life, marriage, war, etc., and each dance and each song has its own corresponding stories and anecdotes, so the content is rich and deep. At the time of jumping, not only the leader of the dancers while playing musical instruments to lead the dance group, but also in the whole process of dancing, always dancing and singing, singing and roaring, so that the dance is always in a state of excitement and joy, and with its strong infectious force so that the onlookers cannot help but participate in it.

## CONCLUSIONS

Mosuo culture has integrated the essence of Tibetan, Mongolian, Yi, Naxi, Pumi and Han cultures, forming a unique Mosuo culture system, which dominates all aspects of its social life. As a dance in Mosuo culture system, it also has the characteristics of multi-ethnic songs and dances. Mosuo dance, like other minority dances, embodies the characteristics of nature worship, ancestor worship and ghost worship, and the Mosuo songs and dances with motherly colors centered on goddess worship reflect the cultural characteristics of this "daughter country of the East". Although the Mosuo people are categorized into two different ethnic groups (Naxi and Mongolian) due to historical reasons, they share the common language and customs of the Mosuo people, and have the same songs and dances for festivals and rituals, customary ceremonial songs and dances, and religious ritual songs and dances. According to statistics, Mosuo people have more than 70 kinds of traditional songs and dances,

native dances are colorful, with distinctive national characteristics, of which the more common is the Jiacao Dance. In the songs and dances of Mosuo people, a large number of contents are praising mothers. The songs and dances of the Mosuo people put the mother to a sacred position, which coincides with the lofty position of the mother in life, and is a reflection of the Mosuo people's goddess worship. The prerequisite for the existence and continuation of the Mosuo song and dance culture is the survival of Axia marriage and matrilineal system. Mosuo songs and dances vividly reflect the human birth, reproduction, totem worship, sacrificial ceremonies, hunting, farming, war, socializing, and all aspects of life, extremely maternal color, which reflects the essence of the culture of the nation from one side.

## REFERENCES

- Li R. (2017). Analysis of the phenomenon of "marriage and love" dance among ethnic minorities in Southwest China - a special study on the "marriage and love" custom dance of the Mosuo ethnic group. *China Ethnic Expo, 11*, 14-16.
- Jiang L. (2019). Research on the characteristics and styles of Mosuo ethnic music. *Daguan Forum, 5*, 112-113.
- He Q., & Min W. (2013). An analysis of the current situation of traditional sports projects of the Mosuo ethnic group. *Contemporary Sports Technology, 3*(19).
- Liu S. (2021). *Research on Mosuo folk art* [Master's Thesis]. Shenyang Normal University.
- Seal, I., & Lusino, L. (2018). Academic Seminar on Enhancing People's Livelihood and Promoting Social Equity - Summary of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Chinese Women Economists *World Economic Forum, 5*, 113-119.
- Wang, J. (2014). The impact of tourism development in ethnic minority areas on ethnic culture: A case study of the Mosuo ethnic settlement in Lugu Lake. *Tourism Overview, 18*, 166-168.
- Wang, X., & Lv, J. (2013). Research on the fitness exercise of Mosuo ethnic group's armor rubbing dance. *Journal of Military Sports, 32*(4), 30-32.