

# *Inheritance and Development of Ansai Waist Drum*

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**Abstract:** The Ansai waist drum is a traditional folk art form originating from Shaanxi Province and is an important part of the local culture. It incorporates elements of dance and martial arts movements, creating a unique and magnificent style that reflects the simple and optimistic nature of the people of Shaanxi. As time has passed, the original military function of the waist drum has disappeared, and it has evolved into a form of entertainment and fitness. Today, people perform and enjoy the Ansai waist drum in various social gatherings and activities, as well as in spontaneously organized community events.

## 1. Overview of the Ansai waist drum

### 1.1 Of Ansai waist drum of Ansai is people's production and life needs

With the development of social and economic progress, objectives and priorities have changed, and great strides have been made towards eradicating poverty. People, having met their basic material needs, are now increasingly turning their attention towards their spiritual needs. The Ansai waist drum has a long history spanning 2000 years, and has been an integral part of the cultural heritage. It is a key cultural artifact that reflects the long cultural development trend of the region. The Ansai waist drum has become an indispensable element of festival performances and leisure activities, bringing joy, helping people make friends, enhancing their personality, and promoting physical and mental health. The geographical location of Ansai has also helped in the development of the local economy. With the success of the legacy application, the popularity of the Ansai waist drum has grown significantly, leading to a greater understanding of Ansai and its cultural heritage, and contributing to the development of the tourism industry. The unique materials used in the production of the waist drum have also stimulated the handicraft industry, reducing local unemployment. Overall, the Ansai waist drum has helped to improve the quality of life of the locals and provides an accessible national fitness program.

The Ansai waist drum is a folk art form that serves the function of national fitness. It is easy to learn basic movements and the music is sonorous and majestic, creating a spectacle that compels people to move. Ansai waist drum performers and practitioners come from all age groups, from children as young as eight or nine to the elderly, and all acknowledge that the culture is rooted in the waist drum itself. The practice of this folk culture has no strict rules and can be undertaken by just one or two individuals. If one wishes to perform, they need only a waist drum and a drum stick. The

instrument is easy to carry and can be used to perform in accordance with the size of the venue and the theme of the occasion. The Ansai waist drum has responded to the call of the national fitness program and has enriched the content of Chinese national fitness activities. This unique art form has developed with Chinese characteristics and provides a fitness activity not only for the people of Ansai but for all Chinese people, helping to improve their physical well-being [1].

### **1.2 The role of Ansai waist drum in a popular movement**

The Ansai waist drum serves as a tool for national fitness as it has simple movements, powerful music, and an awe-inspiring performance. The sound of the waist drum can make people move involuntarily. The culture of Ansai waist drum has a deep-rooted history, and participants come from all ages and backgrounds, ranging from young children to the elderly. There are no strict rules for practicing this folk culture, and even one or two people can practice. To meet performance requirements, the size of the venue, theme, and number of performers must be considered. The instrument requirements are minimal, with only a waist drum and drum stick needed, making it easy to carry out the activities [2]. Ansai waist drum has enriched the content of the national fitness program and developed Chinese-characteristic national fitness activities. It not only improves the physical quality of the Chinese people but also provides fitness activities for the people of Ansai in the national fitness program [3].

### **1.3 Ansai waist drum under the protection of the situation**

In today's globalized economy, many intangible cultural heritages are facing the threat of rapid decline, extinction, and loss. These non-physical heritages not only represent a regional history and culture of a nation, but also promote outstanding non-material culture, the construction of the socialist core value system, and have a particularly important role. Since the successful recognition of the Ansai waist drum as a state-level non-material cultural heritage in 2006, the government has paid special attention to its protection and development. The Ansai waist drum urgently needs to be inherited and protected by the people.

## **2. The status quo and existing problems of Ansai waist drum movement**

### **2.1 The status quo of Ansai waist drum movement**

The waist drum is an important part of traditional sports in the region, with a long cultural history. Currently, there is a waist drum association with 14 groups and 40,000 members, with over 6,000 experienced drummers. The waist drum is so widely spread that almost every family has one. Due to its long history and widespread popularity, the Ansai waist drum is known as the "Oriental first drum" and the "Chinese perfected" drum. In 2006, it was listed as the first national nonmaterial cultural heritage. It has also been awarded the titles of "township of the waist drum," "folk painting of the township," and "paper-cut of the township" by the National Ministry of Culture. These awards have not only enriched the content of traditional festivals but have also promoted the development of Ansai's sports tourism industry, leading to rapid economic growth and improving the quality of life for its people.

### **2.2 The idea lag**

It is important to strike a balance between preserving the tradition of Ansai waist drum and allowing it to evolve and adapt to modern times [4]. While it is understandable that some people may

view it as a source of economic benefit, it is crucial to remember that the cultural significance and value of Ansai waist drum should not be neglected. The continuous efforts in preserving and promoting the culture of Ansai waist drum will not only benefit the local community but also contribute to the richness and diversity of Chinese culture as a whole.

### **2.3 The ageing of Ansai waist drum culture inheritance**

To ensure the long-term development of the Ansai waist drum culture, it is crucial to prioritize its inheritance. Although the production of the drum is widespread and the culture is well-known in the Ansai region, the survey shows that there is limited understanding of the culture among the general population. Additionally, there are only a few skilled drummers, and the majority of cultural heritage is held by the elderly and some middle-aged individuals. Younger people are often occupied with daily life and show little interest in learning about or mastering the Ansai waist drum.

### **2.4 Lack of support for the Ansai waist drum culture**

As a local cultural brand, the waist drum has received some government support, but it has not achieved the expected economic and cultural inheritance effects. This is because the living conditions of the drummers are not ideal, and some of them have had to give up on the waist drum and choose other professions to make a living.

## **3. The factors influencing the inheritance and development of Ansai waist drum**

### **3.1 The geographical environment on the influence of Ansai waist drum**

The Liang Mao ravines and its surrounding areas have been known for the saying "look mountain runs a dead horse" since ancient times due to its complex geographical environment and poor transportation infrastructure. This has greatly affected the exchange and promotion of the Ansai waist drum culture both domestically and internationally. The Ansai area is mostly mountainous, covering 60.5% of the land area, followed by larger sloped areas (21.4%), with the smallest being the ChuanDe area, accounting for only 7%. The rest of the area consists of hilly terrain, accounting for 10.7%. Anyone who has been to the northern Shaanxi Ansai area would know that almost all the roads are built within the 7.4% land area of ChuanDe in Sichuan, and they are often built over narrow rivers, bending in the direction of the river flow, forming a tortuous transportation network. The population mainly lives in areas with relatively gentle slope gradients, inhabiting caves carved into cliffs. To visit relatives, families often have to climb several ramps or even several mountains. The geographical environment and transportation infrastructure not only hindered the travel of Ansai people but also seriously restricted the promotion of the Ansai waist drum culture heritage[5].

### **3.2 Of the local political environment on the influence of Ansai waist drum**

Ansai waist drum has been greatly influenced by important institutions located in the area, as well as the local customs and people's way of life. The government has a significant impact on the culture and enjoys a high level of trust from the people. The government's support for Ansai waist drum in the county has had a positive effect on its promotion and popularization. With the reforms and opening up, the government has once again attached great importance to folk literature and art, providing new opportunities for the development of Ansai waist drum. In recent years, the county government has invested nearly 300 million yuan to support the development of Ansai waist drum, providing policy guidance and funding for competitions and training classes. These policies and funding have not only

supported the development of Ansai waist drum, but also provided security for its future growth[6].

### **3.3 The intangible cultural heritage protection policy effect of Ansai waist drum**

The development of any culture requires policy guidance, and China has been working on the protection of "intangible" cultural heritage for more than a decade. Valuable experience and methods have been accumulated, which have significant guidance for the dissemination and promotion of Ansai waist drum. The intangible cultural heritage law in China provides legal protection for the inheritance, spread, and development of Ansai waist drum. Additionally, the protection experience of other intangible cultural heritage, such as Kunqu opera, is also significant for Ansai waist drum. After strict excavation, protection, and record-keeping, Kunqu opera was declared world non-material cultural heritage and a relevant protection base was established. Electronic information databases containing books, videos, photos, etc., were created for Kunqu opera. Ansai waist drum can follow these protection measures, establish an Ansai waist drum protection base, create teaching videos, shoot videos of Ansai waist drum performances, and develop electronic information databases for Ansai waist drum.

## **4. The countermeasures of development of Ansai waist drum inheritance**

### **4.1 The school sports teaching in the inheritance**

The Ansai waist drum is a treasure of Chinese traditional culture. Its survival and cultural environment are important for the spread of traditional culture, and school sports teaching is the main channel for its promotion. As a folk sports activity, the Ansai waist drum has not been widely promoted. Bringing excellent national traditional sports into schools can enrich campus cultural life and allow students to learn about China's outstanding traditional culture while engaging in relaxed and enjoyable fitness activities. This can have a positive impact on the humanistic qualities of teenagers and promote the popularization and improvement of the Ansai waist drum.

### **4.2 The innovation and development**

Innovation and development are crucial for the continued success of the Ansai waist drum. The art form must evolve and adapt to meet the changing needs and preferences of modern audiences while preserving its cultural heritage. One way to do this is to incorporate new elements into the performance, such as modern music and choreography, while maintaining the traditional techniques and movements of the waist drum. Another way is to explore new performance venues and audiences, such as international cultural festivals, to increase its exposure and popularity. Additionally, the use of technology can be employed to enhance the production value and reach of the performances through online streaming and digital media. Overall, the key to the continued success of the Ansai waist drum is to strike a balance between tradition and innovation, and to constantly strive for excellence in its performance and presentation.

### **4.3 The art form**

To enhance its artistic value, Ansai waist drum should incorporate a fusion of eastern and western elements. The addition of Western musical instruments, such as saxophones, can create a sense of elegance and modernity for the audience. Additionally, it should draw inspiration from both domestic and foreign dance moves, refine and adapt them to its own unique style. By continuously innovating and reinventing itself while preserving its traditional roots, Ansai waist drum can maintain its

uniqueness and appeal to a wider audience. The integration of old and new elements can elevate the cultural significance of Ansai waist drum[7].

#### **4.4 Regional differences between the north and the south**

Ansai waist drum displays regional differences between the north and south of Shaanxi, with each region having its own unique characteristics. In the south, waist drum emphasizes skill and hand drum dancing, creating a refined and elegant rhythm with natural and unrestrained hand movements. In contrast, the north focuses on the pace of dancing, with a strong and thick rhythm that is energetic and dusty. Combining the two styles creates a beautiful and harmonious performance.[8]

#### **4.5 Create "Ansai waist drum troupe"**

Although the government has taken measures to support the preservation and promotion of Ansai waist drum culture, such as establishing the China Association of Ansai Folk Culture and Art, organizing annual Yangko performances, and providing centralized training through the Ansai Waist Drum Association, there are still limitations to the number of performances due to the availability of drummers. To address this issue, the government can further support the establishment of professional Ansai waist drum groups, provide financial resources for commercial operations, and establish a comprehensive management system to ensure the stability of the drummers' careers, as well as the quality of performances, innovation, development, and inheritance of the cultural heritage.

#### **4.6 Intensify propaganda and performance**

By establishing a website, people from all over the world can access information about the history and culture of Ansai waist drum, and keep up-to-date with the latest trends and performances. Writing books and magazines can also help to spread awareness about this traditional art form, and promote cultural studies in the Shaanbei region. Regular publicity acts, such as performances in tourist spots and special holiday events, can showcase the unique charm of Ansai waist drum to a wider audience and increase its visibility. By using these different methods, the Ansai waist drum can continue to thrive and gain recognition both in China and around the world.

### **5. The future of Ansai waist drum**

The 21st century is an era of knowledge economy, dominated by mental work that is long and highly demanding, which can cause neurological and psychological fatigue. To alleviate this fatigue and achieve balance between the body and mind, people increasingly participate in sports activities voluntarily, leading to a rise in sports consciousness, investment, and spending on health, which has become a social trend. Entertainment, sports consumption, and sports services are becoming an essential part of the socialist market economy. As the pace of work accelerates, people realize the importance of health and integrate fitness activities into their daily lives.

National fitness is a human activity aimed at fitness and reconstruction, with sports as the main content. The human body is complex and orderly, and any changes must be made in harmony with its form and function. Therefore, national fitness activities must conform to scientific principles and have intrinsic cultural spirit support. Ansai waist drum is a popular fitness program that has unique fitness value and can be trusted by everyone. It has become a cultural brand that not only promotes the development of the local ethnic market economy, but also contributes to tourism benefits, stimulating regional economic growth.

Ansai waist drum can promote economic development in Northern Shanxi, enhance the cultural

quality of local residents, and contribute to local spiritual civilization construction. Moreover, Ansai waist drum plays a vital role in the inheritance and development of Chinese culture and tourism, as well as in the fitness industry.

## 6. Conclusion

The Ansai waist drum, with a history of over 2,000 years, has inherited and accumulated rich historical and cultural genes. Its development has gone through various stages, from ancient barracks culture to the red revolutionary culture, and now it has become a significant symbol on the loess plateau. In modern society, it embodies its cultural, entertainment, fitness, and economic values. Despite its rocky path of inheritance and development, being born in a barren environment, the Ansai waist drum exhibits a strong vitality. Especially in the digital age of wisdom, as an intangible cultural heritage, it must maintain its resilience to adapt to the new era of development.

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