

# FROM CEREMONY TO CAMPUS SPORTS: IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION OF THE YI FUNERAL DANCE KAHONGBEI RESEARCH ON THE INHERITANCE PATH OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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**Abstract:** This paper takes the Yi funeral ritual dance "Kahongbei" as the research object. Through literature review, participant observation, and analysis of the action recordings of Kahongbei, this study investigates the feasibility of its transmission within the context of university physical education. The research reveals that the 25 traditional dance segments of Kahongbei embody cultural connotations related to Yi hunting, farming, communal cooperation, and expressions of life and death. However, current social transmission faces challenges such as the dissolution of ritual contexts, weakening of kinship bonds, and generational disconnection in family transmission, as well as structural deficiencies in educational ecosystems and curriculum systems within school transmission. The study proposes establishing an activity-based action preservation database, enhancing the cultural symbol translation and sports-oriented deconstruction of Kahongbei, promoting university pilot programs and tiered teaching, and strengthening faculty development and professional capacity building. These measures aim to facilitate the transition of the Yi traditional dance Kahongbei from a funeral ritual to a campus sports activity, providing a theoretical foundation of "action-culture-education" trinity for the living transmission of ethnic traditional sports dances.

**Keywords:** Kahongbei; Yi funeral dance; College sports; National sports dance; Inheritance path

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Wumeng Mountains serve as the boundary between Guizhou and Yunnan provinces and are the ancestral homeland of the six branches of the Yi ethnic group. "Kahongbei" originated in the remote village of Xiaomiduo, located in the heart of the Wumeng Mountains. The Yi population in this village is predominantly Black Yi, preserving primitive beliefs such as bamboo worship and tiger totems, which are reflected in the rugged and uninhibited style of their dance forms. Kahongbei is a traditional Yi sacrificial dance imbued with a sense of mystery. The six branches have divided the dance into six segments, each led by Bimo (shaman) and dancers to distinct regions. Due to significant dialectal differences across these areas, the dance has acquired various local names. For instance, in the Bijie region of Guizhou, it is known as "Kenhebei" or "Lingdangwu" (Bell Dance)[1], while in Yiliang County, Zhait is called "Bisuna." Despite these variations, all forms belong to the same category of funeral ritual dance[2]. Etymologically, "Kahongbei" derives from language: "Ka" (to sing), "Hong" (to see), and "Bei" (to jumping), signifying "dancing to exorcise evil spirits" and honor ritual spirits through song and dance[3]. It is also referred to in Chinese as "Tiaojiao," "Zhuaijiao," or "Guaijiao[1,4]." Traditionally led by groups of four men representing four warriors guarding the four directions, Kahongbei fulfills functions such as "purifying the soul," "strengthening ethnic cohesion" and "cultural transmission" among the Yi people. The origin village of Xiaomiduo is situated in a remote, high-altitude mountainous area at an elevation of 1,720 meters, characterized by harsh climatic conditions. These environmental factors shaped the Yi ancestors' subsistence mode of "living off the mountains" and their primitive beliefs "animism," which has contributed to the preservation of Kahongbei's archaic form.

In the traditional context, Kahongbei serves as a medium for 'communication between humans and deities' among the Yi people. For instance, the 'monkey rubbing maggots' movement, performed in conjunction with the Bimo's 'scattering of five grains' ritual, fulfills the 'exorcism' function recorded in the \*Yi Creation Myth\*; the 'spousal reunion' formation corresponds to the 'Taiji diagram' of the Yi Bagua calendar, symbolising the 'spatio-temporal convergence' of departed and ancestral spirits[3]. The seven basic dance steps and 25 technical movements in Kahongbei are both biomimetic re-enactments of hunting, farming and warfare scenes, and physical training to cope with the high-altitude, cold environment; their essence lies in endurance training for mountainous migration. However, as a result of urbanisation, the exodus of young people from Xiaomiduo Village to seek work elsewhere has led to the "disappearance of ritual contexts"; there are now very few inheritors capable of performing all 25 dance segments in their entirety, and the technical movements are on the verge of being lost. Against this backdrop, introducing the Yi funeral dance "Kahongbei" into universities for sports-based transmission effectively addresses the issue of its "diminished ritual demand," thereby revitalizing the modern vitality of traditional culture.

## 2 MORPHOLOGICAL DECONSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL CONNOTATIONS OF KAHONGBEI

### 2.1 Dance Form and Movement System

Kahongbei comprises 25 traditional dance segments, with core movements categorised into basic and technical movements. Basic movements predominantly depict scenes of religious rituals, daily life, ancestor worship and migration[5-6], such as the ‘striding step’ and ‘bell-swinging step’, which simulate hunting and farming scenarios, embodying the productive memory of ‘living off the land’. Acrobatic movements largely embody the military formations and collective wisdom of the Yi people’s ancestors in warfare.

## **2.2 Ritual Functions and Symbolic Systems**

### **2.2.1 Symbolic expressions of nature worship and bodily practice**

The movement system of Kahongbei is characterised by ‘biomimicry’, drawing extensively on animal behaviour and natural phenomena to form a mechanism for translating bodily symbols into cultural cognition. For example, ‘Monkey Climbing the Pole’ simulates the scene of climbing trees to pick fruit. Dancers must perform the ‘squat-support-jump-shoulder’ movement, wherein the squatter rapidly stands up to lift the jumper, whilst the jumper stands on one leg on the squatter’s shoulder, swinging bells as they move forward. Through the interplay of physical strength and cooperation, this recreates the Yi ancestors’ memories of interacting with the natural environment; ‘Eagle Spreading Its Wings’ requires the arms to be extended at a 120-degree angle and the torso to be bent forward at a 45-degree angle, simulating the posture of an eagle soaring through the sky. Its movement trajectory is deeply intertwined with hunting memories, symbolising a reverence for strength and freedom. Kahongbei reinforces participants’ collective memory of their ethnic origins and modes of production, whilst using dynamic visual symbols to activate the ritual’s sacred and recreational dimensions, thereby achieving communication between humans, deities and nature.

### **2.2.2 Collective order and the ethics of cooperation in ritual interaction**

The coordinated movements of multiple participants in the Kahongbei construct a metaphorical system that extends from physical interaction to social order, mapping the ethics of cooperation within the ethnic group through bodily connections and the division of roles. For example, in the ‘Couple’s Reunion’ segment, four participants squat in a circle to form a Chinese knot formation, crossing their left hands to form a knot whilst swinging bells in their right hands and rotating counter-clockwise eight times. The formation corresponds to the Yi people’s Bagua calendar and the Taiji diagram, symbolising the unity and symbiosis of family and community; ‘The Dog Crawling Through the Hole’ requires multiple participants to “form a tunnel and crawl through it”, simulating the division of labour and coordination in agricultural cooperation, as well as scenarios of evading danger, thereby reinforcing a collective consciousness of mutual aid and symbiosis.

### **2.2.3 Soul transcendence and ancestral spirit reversion in bodily symbolism**

The props for the Kahongbei consist of bells and white mourning cloth. The ringing of the bells is regarded as a signal for ‘communication between the departed and ancestral spirits’, whilst the waving of the mourning cloth symbolises the ‘purification of the departed’. These props and movements embody the Yi people’s understanding of life, death and the soul, constructing a bridge of communication between ‘this world and the next’ through spatial movement, bodily symbolism and auditory symbols. For instance, the double forward somersault performed during the ‘Crossing Mountains and Ridges’ sequence requires the performers’ backs to remain pressed tightly together in a continuous, uninterrupted motion. This mimics the migration route recorded in the \*Guide to the Path\*, symbolising the departed soul’s passage through the ‘nine checkpoints’ to return to ancestral lands; the ‘Monkey Wrestling’ sequence employs a series of 180-degree flips to simulate the ‘soul’s crossing of the boundary between the realms of the living and the dead’, with the circular trajectory of the movements serving as a metaphor for the cycle of life and eternity. Spatial behaviours within the ritual, such as “dancing in a circle” and “turning counter-clockwise”, correspond to the Yi people’s ancestor worship centred on kinship, emphasising the continuity of “root culture”. By simulating the soul’s journey, the ritual helps the living overcome their fear of death and reinforces the belief in “ancestral protection”, whilst simultaneously fulfilling the farewell and blessings for the deceased through collective dance, thereby achieving ethical education that harmonises life and death.

## **3 THE PRACTICAL NECESSITY AND FEASIBILITY OF PROMOTING THE SPORTS INHERITANCE OF KAHONGBEI IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

### **3.1 The Practical Need for Transmitting Kahongbei through University Physical Education**

As a living vehicle for Yi funeral dance, the transmission system of Kahongbei faces multiple spatial crises in the process of modernisation, making it imperative to achieve an innovative transformation of its transmission pathways through university physical education.

#### **3.1.1 The dissolution of ritual contexts in social transmission spaces**

The process of urbanisation has directly impacted the traditional ritual spaces upon which Kahongbei relies for its survival. In core transmission areas such as Zhenxiang County and Hezhang County, funeral ritual settings are gradually disappearing. This has led to a weakening of the dance movements’ religious symbolic meanings—such as the functions of ‘exorcising evil spirits’ and ‘guiding the spirits’—whilst highly technical movements, such as the squatting and trembling in ‘Monkey Rubbing Maggots’ and the 180° turn in ‘Crossing Mountains and Valleys’, are on the verge of being lost due to a lack of practical performance contexts. In response, Zhenxiang County has promoted a shift towards “social fitness” through a combination of “intangible cultural heritage performances and short video

dissemination”, though this has compromised the authenticity of the movements; Hezhang County has adapted the dance for the stage, reducing the number of bells from 28 to 6 and integrating it into the curriculum of ethnic minority schools[7], yet the original movements have been lost due to simplification; Yiliang County, meanwhile, relies on sporadic performances during festivals such as the Torch Festival and has yet to establish a stable modern transmission context, highlighting the transmission dilemma of “the dissolution of rituals and the fragmentation of practice”.

### **3.1.2 In the context of family succession, there exists a weakening of bloodline bonds and an intergenerational rupture among the principal successors**

The transmission of Kahongbei centres on the ‘maternal uncle’s authority system’ within the Black Yi clan. Locally, the Yi people practise earth burial; during the ‘wake’, the ‘Keyo’ (meaning a troupe of singers and dancers) from the maternal uncle’s family performs the ‘Kahongbei’ [4]. However, in recent years, the exodus of young Yi people to seek work elsewhere has led to a decline in the frequency of family gatherings. The context for transmission has shrunk from collective rehearsals during the ‘wake’ at funeral ceremonies to short-term training sessions during the Spring Festival, and the role of blood ties in sustaining the transmission of skills has significantly weakened. At the same time, regional transmission capabilities exhibit divergent characteristics. In Zhenxiong County, the Black Yi clan, centred on the Wang Sirong lineage, has undertaken emergency preservation through ‘oral history combined with video recordings of movements’. Among these, movements such as ‘Riding Horses Around the City’ are family secrets, yet the average age of the inheritors exceeds 65; In Bijie City, the Su Wanchao family has established a clear lineage spanning five generations, having trained over 300 disciples since 1977[8]; however, the movements have been severely simplified, leaning more towards stage performance and losing the original significance of the Kahongbei. In Yiliang County, the absence of a systematic family lineage means that transmission is dominated by the master-apprentice system. This has led to regional variations in the details of movements such as ‘Monkey Rubbing Maggots’, compromising the accuracy of the cultural codes and reflecting the structural contradiction between the ‘resilience of the core group’ and the ‘disruption of overall transmission’.

### **3.1.3 The school transmission context suffers from a weak educational ecosystem and structural deficiencies in the curriculum system**

The school-based transmission of Kahongbei has yet to form a standardised system, and regional development imbalances are prominent. Primary and secondary schools in Zhenxiong County have not implemented systematic curricula, relying solely on sporadic guidance from intangible cultural heritage bearers; Although Bijie City has incorporated the adapted “Bell Dance” into its “integration of physical education and academic teaching” assessment, developed online courses and integrated them into morning exercises[9-11], and increased student participation to 85%, there remains an imbalance between movement standardisation and cultural diversity, alongside issues such as the absence of textbook compilation and teaching evaluation systems; in Yiliang County, in 2024, intangible cultural heritage promotional activities were conducted only at the Ethnic Middle School and were not incorporated into regular teaching. Common bottlenecks in the transmission across the three regions include the lack of a unified movement database, a professional teacher training mechanism, and curriculum development standards, leading to the loss of core movements and further exacerbating the crisis of transmission.

## **3.2 The Feasibility Foundation for the Sports-oriented Inheritance of Kahongbei in Higher Education Institutions**

The movement repertoire and cultural connotations of Kahongbei are intrinsically aligned with the objectives of modern university physical education, providing multi-dimensional support for its sports-oriented transmission.

### **3.2.1 The athletic training value and feasibility of modular teaching adaptation of Kahongbei**

Kahongbei encompasses 25 traditional dance segments that embody rich elements of athletic training, with biomechanical characteristics that align closely with the objectives of university physical education. For instance, the "Crossing Mountains and Ridges" segment employs a dual-person cooperative pattern of "squat-180° torso rotation-stride," effectively enhancing core stability and lower limb explosive power. Meanwhile, the synchronized circular arm movements in "Couple Reunion" serve to strengthen cardiovascular function and shoulder flexibility. From a modular teaching perspective, scholars have adapted Kahongbei's classic representative movements, integrating drum beats and bell sounds, into campus fitness routines, thereby increasing students' engagement and initiative in physical education. However, the realization of Kahongbei's training value and pedagogical potential necessitates the integration of traditional dance movement semantics with biomechanical foundations. For example, the three-stage structure of Kahongbei performance—"Guiding the Way," "Exorcising Evil," and "Uniting Spirits"—can be decomposed into teaching units of "m-up," "Core Training," and "Cool-down." Movements such as the dynamic half-squat in "Monkey Scratching" are suitable for lower limb endurance training modules, providing a clear set of movement materials for the design of university sports dance curricula (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Deconstruction of 25 Movement Connotation and Sports Characteristics of Yi Traditional Dance Kahongbei

Action Name	The action connotation of Kahongbei	Deconstruction] of Sports Characteristics	Exercise Goals
Crossing mountains	Simulate the action of climbing high mountains during migration,	Two person collaboration turning and stepping: Two people face each other and	Core stability, lower limb explosiveness

cross the mountain ridge	Reflecting the resilient migration spirit of the ethnic group.	alternate between squatting—turning 180 degrees—taking steps, swinging their hands naturally.	
Reunion of husband and wife	Four people circle around and weave a "Chinese knot" formation, symbolizing the unity and coexistence of family and community.	Collective synchronized loop: Four people hold hands in a circle and do a "deep squat stand up horizontal loop with both arms (amplitude 180 °)", combined with nasal and oral breathing.	Heart and lung function, shoulder flexibility
Toad weaving round stake	Interactive actions of two people building and drilling through the "door" simulate the encirclement tactics during hunting.	Double Cross Step Jump: Two people stand in a cross position and do a "left and right cross step+double arm cross swing bell (lightweight dumbbells replace bells)", with foot cushioning before landing.	Lower limb agility, ankle stability, reaction speed
Monkey carrying heavy objects	Single person weight-bearing movement, simulating the transportation of prey or production tools, symbolizing respect for labor.	Load bearing squat recommendation: Hold 1-2kg dumbbells in both hands and do a "squat (hip angle < 90 °) - get up - raise both arms horizontally in front of you".	Lower limb muscle groups and upper limb extension strength
Monkey carrying stump	Double person "squatting support jumping shoulder" action, simulating climbing trees and picking fruits, reflecting dependence on nature and adaptability.	Archery Step Rotation: Single person archery step (with front legs bent 90 °), with both hands simulating "moving stakes" and extending upwards to the side (at an angle of 45 °).	Waist and abdominal core, lower limb flexibility
Monkey rubbing maggots	In a squatting position, rotate your left and right feet to simulate the movement of clearing pests in the field during labor, emphasizing lower limb endurance and joint flexibility.	Dynamic Half Squat: In a full squat position, alternate between small back and forth rubbing steps (with a stride of 15cm) with both feet, and swing your hands naturally for 30 seconds per set.	Lower limb endurance, knee joint stability
Monkey climbing stump	Four people surround each other, two people cross over and walk in, two people squat and jump on their shoulders, simulating a scene of group collaboration climbing, symbolizing the spirit of mutual assistance among ethnic groups.	Hand and foot alternating climbing: Perform the "hand touch opposite ankle - alternating upward" movement in place, coordinate with breathing, moderate movement amplitude, and avoid excessive stretching.	Whole body coordination, spinal flexibility
Monkey wrestling	Two people embrace each other and roll sideways, simulating animal fights, symbolizing the reverence for power and ceremonial confrontation.	Two person confrontation balance: Two people hold hands face to face and perform the "lateral lunge (stride of 25cm) - center of gravity transfer" movement to resist resistance and maintain body stability.	Core control and response speed
Monkey hug	Two people face each other and lean back, with their left knee touching and their right hand shaking the bell, to strengthen community cohesion and emotional connection.	Double person collaborative stretching: Two people sit back to back, cross their arms and hold each other, do a "synchronized squat (hip angle 90 °) - stand up", straighten their chest and shoulders when standing up, and stretch their back muscles.	Back flexibility and collaborative awareness
Monkey picking fruits	Two people hold hands and shake the bell, simulating the precise action of picking fruits, emphasizing hand eye coordination and limb extension, symbolizing the wish for a bountiful harvest.	Vertical jump to reach height: Jump vertically in place, with both hands facing upwards to simulate "picking fruits" (30cm above the top of the head at the high point), and bend your knees to the ground (with a buffering angle of 15 °).	Lower limb explosiveness, cardiorespiratory endurance
Monkey scratching its back	Two people sit back-to-back with crossed necks, combining ritual entertainment and interpersonal interaction functions. The movements require relaxation of the spine and natural breathing.	Rotating and touching feet: Stand alone and do a "lateral rotation (angle 45 °)+one hand touching the opposite ankle" to maintain spinal extension and avoid lumbar compensation.	Lumbar and abdominal flexibility, spinal flexibility
Monkey sitting on sedan chair	The three person coordination of two people riding a sedan chair and one person sitting in a sedan chair simulates the hierarchical order of "priority for the honored" in the ethnic group.	Double support squat: Two people work in pairs, with one person supporting the other's shoulders with both hands, and the supported person holding their neck with both hands, simultaneously doing a "squat stand up".	Lower limb strength and core stability
Tiger pounce	The solo "waist and front bridge" action simulates the explosive power of a tiger pouncing on food, symbolizing the brave and skilled national character.	Simplified version of forward somersault: Starting from a kneeling position, use both hands to support the ground and perform a "forward somersault (removing the air movement) - kneeling up", emphasizing the rolling of the spine section by section to avoid	Body coordination, spinal flexibility, vestibular function

Eagle spreads its wings	The arms are extended wide to simulate an eagle soaring into the sky, symbolizing the yearning for freedom and strength, and reflecting the cosmology of "unity of heaven and man".	neck stress. Open and close both arms to expand the chest: Stand with both arms raised horizontally (shoulder height), do a "backward expansion (scapula contraction) - cross the chest (upper arm pressed against the chest)", and take deep breaths.	Chest muscles, shoulder flexibility
Beating buckwheat with a bamboo pole	Three people cross hands to simulate the action of "hitting buckwheat", reflecting the collaborative labor in agricultural life.	Two person cooperative arm swing: Two people face each other, holding a light stick with both hands to swing sideways and downward, emphasizing core control.	Upper limb strength, waist and abdomen rotation ability
Hairy dog weeding	In the lunge posture, one hand swings the bell diagonally downwards, simulating the action of a hunting dog searching for objects by pulling grass.	Arched step side swing: Arched step, with the same hand doing a "downward grass movement" (amplitude 45 °), alternating left and right legs.	Lower limb endurance, hip flexibility
dog drilling hole	The chain action of multiple people building "holes" and drilling "holes" simulates the scene of a group avoiding danger, emphasizing reaction speed and spatial perception ability.	Bending down to pass through obstacles: Two people hold hands to form a "doorway", while the others do a "bending down and lunge through", emphasizing spinal extension and avoiding bowing their heads and holding their chests.	Full body flexibility, lower limb explosiveness
Cow rubbing back	Double person back-to-back collision movement, simulating the behavior of cattle rubbing against each other to expel insects, with both cleaning and social functions.	Double person back friction: Two people stand back to back and do a "small left and right swing+back bump" to relax their back muscles.	Shoulder and back relaxation
cross mountains and rivers	Riding on a single person's shoulder and rotating in a certain direction, simulating the migration process of crossing mountains and valleys.	Ladder style high leg lift: do "high leg lift+arm up swing" in place, with a leg lift height of 45 ° and a stride frequency of 70 times/minute.	Cardiovascular endurance, lower limb explosiveness
Horseback city tour	Four people squat back to back and ride, simulating the ritual of cavalry cruising through territory.	Horse Step Alternating Arm Swing: Cross your hands and hips to do the "Horse Step - Get Up - Swing Your Arms Left and Right", emphasizing that the knee joint direction is consistent with the toe.	Lower limb strength and hip stability
Four horses chasing sheep	The four person straight-line chase action simulates the hunting scene of encirclement, demonstrating collaborative combat capabilities and symbolizing the group's mobility and cohesion.	Intermittent variable speed running: Straight back and forth running (distance 10 meters), "run fast for 10 seconds (step frequency 180 steps/minute) - jog slowly for 20 seconds (step frequency 120 steps/minute)".	Heart and lung function, speed endurance
Sheep horns collide with horns	The confrontation movement of two people using their shoulders to push each other, simulating a ram fight, symbolizes the competition for strength and honor.	Double shoulder confrontation: Two people face each other with their hands on each other's shoulders, doing small shoulder pushes to maintain core stability.	Shoulder strength, core control
Wild chicken drilling fence	The agile movement of crossing legs and crossing the "fence" by two people simulates the flexibility of prey to avoid obstacles, reflecting observation and imitation of natural creatures.	Lateral Cross Step: Perform a "lateral cross step (with a stride of 25cm)+raise both arms horizontally" with a stride frequency of 60 times per minute, emphasizing accurate foot landing points.	Lower limb coordination and reaction speed (neuromuscular activation)
Pig pulled rake	Four people squat and cross over, simulating the collective labor of pulling a rake and turning soil in farming.	Bending over rowing simplified version: Hold elastic bands with both hands and do "bending over (hip angle 45 °) - pulling back both arms".	Back muscle strength, upper limb endurance
Leg sucking step	Single person alternating leg sucking and jumping movements simulate stepping on the ground to pray for blessings in worship, with fast and small steps, symbolizing devout worship of ancestors.	Stand still leg suction jump: Hold your chest with both hands and do "single leg suction (knee to chest) - alternating landing", jumping 80 times/minute, landing gently and slowly.	Heart and lung function, lower limb explosiveness

### 3.2.2 The feasibility of symbolic translation from religious narrative to campus cultural identity

The construction of campus cultural identity through the Kahongbei dance requires grounding in phenomenology of the body and educational semiotics, establishing a closed loop comprising embodied cognition, symbolic translation, and identity elevation. Merleau-Ponty posits the body as the bridge between language and the world, serving as the cognitive subject. Leveraging Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body as the cognitive subject, the "action-perception-meaning" embodied pathway is employed to transform Kahongbei's bodily movements—such as "monkey rubbing maggots" and "eagle spreading wings"—into a reenactment of ancestral labor and natural worship experiences. Through the

intersubjective construction of counterclockwise circular dancing, abstract ethnic memory is converted into perceptible collective bodily rhythm.

At the level of educational semiotics, Hall'sory of "signifying practice" is adopted to implement a "signifier modification-signified reconstruction" strategy. The white mourning cloth used as a prop is replaced with red Yi embroidery ribbons diminish funerary connotations, while bilingual Yi-Han commands facilitate the semiotic shift of the copper bell's sound from ritual signal to educational rhythmic tool. Additionally, analyzing the relation between Kahongbei formations and the Yi ethnic group's Bagua calendar and Taiji diagram guides students in actively decoding cultural deep structures. Guided by FeXiaotong's "unity in diversity" framework, cross-cultural dialogue and campus cultural scene innovation elevate Kahongbei from an ethnic cultural carrier to a symbol of interaction, exchange, and integration across ethnic groups. Ultimately, this constructs a tripartite path of campus cultural identity rooted in bodily practice, symbolic interaction, and value identification, providing a practical basis for the living heritage of traditional ethnic dance.

### **3.2.3 Feasibility of expanding the ritual functions of KaHongbei to campus-community linkages**

The traditional social functions of the Kahongbei can be innovatively transformed through transmission within higher education institutions. In traditional contexts, spatial behaviors such as "circle dancing" and "counterclockwise circling" served to sustain village relationships centered on kinship. Following modernization, new scenarios like campus fitness competitions and hearthside teaching workshops can be constructed to build cross-group bonds. For instance, Bijie Vocational and Technical College has implemented a model combining bell dance cultural and creative product development with community fitness. This has enabled Bimo practitioners to transition from ritual officiants to cultural disseminators, thereby driving collective economic growth and reinforcing the "university-community" cultural co-construction.

## **4 THE PATH OF SPORTS INHERITANCE IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OF KAHONGBEI**

The establishment of a pathway for the sports-based transmission of 'Kahongbei' in higher education must centre on the preservation of authenticity and innovative transformation. This involves creating a database of authentic movements and quantifying the biomechanical parameters of 25 core movements to preserve cultural DNA; translating cultural symbols by converting religious narratives into Yi-Han bilingual fitness commands, and extending these to diverse settings such as interval exercises and cultural festivals; deconstructing traditional dance segments into a 'warm-up-training-cool-down' sports-oriented structure to enhance fitness functions such as cardiovascular and strength training; promoting pilot schemes and tiered teaching in higher education institutions, offering general education courses, specialised courses and creative practice sessions, and integrating ethnic cultural education; and strengthening the development of teaching staff and professional capacity building. This will facilitate the functional transformation of Kahongbei from a funeral ritual to a form of campus sport.

### **4.1 Establishing an Authentic Movement Preservation Database**

The construction of a scientific movement data system forms the foundation for introducing Kahongbei into university teaching. Its core objective is to utilise technical means to build a movement preservation database, safeguarding the authenticity of movements and providing precise reference for teaching adaptations and cultural heritage. Firstly, utilising Vicon 3D motion capture technology, systematically record the joint movement trajectories of 25 core movements—such as the rotational angle of 'Crossing Mountains and Valleys' and the frequency of squatting and rising in 'Monkey Rubbing Maggots'—to establish a biomechanical model library containing parameters such as velocity, angle and angular velocity; Secondly, through 'dance factor' analysis, irreplaceable cultural symbols are identified, such as 'dancing in a circle' symbolising ethnic unity and 'the sound of bronze bells' corresponding to the communicative function of rituals, ensuring that the data encompasses both technical details of the movements and preserves their core cultural significance. The establishment of this database enables the standardisation of movement data and the precise extraction of cultural symbols, providing scientific support for subsequent movement adaptation and curriculum development in teaching. This prevents cultural distortion caused by subjective adaptations, thereby safeguarding the authenticity of transmission and the feasibility of teaching from a technical perspective.

### **4.2 Strengthening the Translation of Kahongbei Cultural Symbols and Their Deconstruction through Sport**

Transforming the religious and narrative cultural symbols found in traditional rituals into vehicles of cultural identity that are acceptable within the university setting is the key pathway for integrating Kahongbei into the sporting heritage of higher education. Firstly, narrative reconstruction: the lyrics from \*The Book of Kaimi\* that 'guide the spirits of the deceased back to their ancestors' can be adapted into bilingual (Yi and Mandarin) fitness chants, imbuing the movements with positive psychological cues. Secondly, scenario expansion: the single ritual setting of the 'Wake' can be broadened into diverse contexts such as '15-minute break exercises', 'campus fitness competitions' and 'cultural arts festival performances'. Thirdly, cultural connections should be demonstrated by using multimedia teaching materials to analyse the deep links between the movements and Yi culture, helping students understand the symbolic meanings of these cultural elements. Through this symbolic translation, the mystique of religious rituals can be stripped away whilst preserving cultural memory, enabling students to naturally absorb cultural influences during physical training. This

achieves a progressive sequence of ‘movement training – cultural cognition – identity formation’, thereby enhancing the feasibility of cultural transmission.

Based on the physiological characteristics of adolescents and the principles of physical education, the physical deconstruction and scientific adaptation of the Kehongbei movements are the core elements in ensuring the programme’s value for promotion in higher education. Optimisation can be achieved in three areas, drawing on the National Fitness Guidelines: firstly, simplifying movements and ensuring safety by removing high-difficulty, hazardous actions to reduce the risk of sports injuries; secondly, enhancing fitness functions by incorporating elements such as cardiovascular endurance, strength and flexibility; thirdly, the implementation of tiered training objectives. From the perspective of a four-dimensional design framework encompassing ‘cardiorespiratory fitness, strength, coordination and flexibility’, difficult movements should be adapted into fitness exercises such as interval running, speed endurance and flexibility training. The adapted movements will not only meet the safety and universality requirements of university physical education but also achieve scientifically sound fitness outcomes, thereby transforming traditional dance from a ‘ceremonial performance’ into a ‘campus ethnic sports dance’, and possess the pedagogical feasibility for large-scale promotion within higher education institutions.

### **4.3 Advancing the University Pilot Scheme and Tiered Teaching of Kahongbei**

Firstly, building a tiered teaching system in universities based on pilot schemes serves as the organisational guarantee for the orderly integration of Kahongbei into the university curriculum. Priority should be given to establishing pilot schemes at universities with deep-rooted Yi cultural heritage, such as those in Kunming, Yunnan, and Bijie, Guizhou, utilising regional cultural advantages to reduce resistance to promotion. Secondly, tiered teaching design should be implemented, primarily divided into movement, curriculum and educational levels. At the movement level, general elective courses should be offered to all students, teaching simplified core movements such as the ‘stamping step’ and ‘bell-swinging step’; at the curriculum level, specialised courses should be designed for physical education students, incorporating technical movements optimised through biomechanics; the educational level involves supporting measures, such as compiling teaching materials that include learning objectives, movement standards and cultural interpretations. Drawing on the experience of Hezhang County, the curriculum should be incorporated into the physical education assessment system, encouraging students to create campus ethnic sports dances using modern choreography techniques whilst retaining traditional cultural symbols such as ‘circle dancing’. This will foster ethnic cultural education. Through pilot schemes and tiered curricula, we can both validate the feasibility of the teaching model on a small scale and adapt to the needs of different students, thereby accumulating replicable experience for the promotion of Kahongbei across universities nationwide, ensuring the orderly and sustainable implementation of teaching.

### **3.4 Strengthen the Construction of the Teaching Workforce and Enhance Professional Competence**

Building a tiered teaching team that integrates internal and external resources, and enhancing teachers’ ability to master movement techniques and cultural connotations, is the core pillar for ensuring teaching quality. Firstly, internal staff training: organising physical education teachers to conduct field research in Yi ethnic enclaves (such as Xiaomi Duo Village in Zhenxiong County), learning authentic dance sequences and the significance of rituals from intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and systematically mastering the biomechanical characteristics of the 25 movements, such as the muscle activation patterns in ‘Monkey Rubbing Maggots’; Specialised training is conducted, covering the interpretation of movement lineages, methods for translating cultural symbols, and principles of biomechanical adaptation, such as safe ranges of joint mobility; secondly, external experts are brought in, with ICH inheritors and scholars of ethnic dance appointed as part-time lecturers to participate in curriculum design and textbook compilation, whilst regularly conducting workshops to guide core skills such as “bell rhythm control” and “formation coordination”; Thirdly, we have established a collaborative teaching and research framework between the university and the local community, creating a cross-institutional exchange mechanism to enhance teachers’ practical capabilities through demonstrations of exemplary courses and seminars on teaching case studies. Through this integrated internal and external training approach, teachers are able to master the technical details of the movements with precision whilst gaining a profound understanding of the cultural significance, thereby providing a professional teaching workforce for ‘Kahongbei’ instruction and ensuring both the scientific rigour of the curriculum and the accurate transmission of cultural heritage.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Through a deconstruction of the sports-oriented characteristics of the traditional Yi dance ‘Kahongbei’, this paper systematically analyses the practical needs and feasibility of its transmission within higher education. It proposes the establishment of a motion database using Vicon technology to safeguard authenticity, the translation of religious symbols through ‘Yi-Han bilingual commands’, and tiered teaching approaches tailored to university requirements. This provides a theoretical foundation of ‘movement-curriculum-education’ for the living transmission of ethnic sports dance, thereby supporting innovation in ethnic sports dance courses within higher education institutions.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

## FUNDING

2024 Yunnan Vocational College of Sports Institutional Project "Obstructing Factors and Breakthrough Strategies for Promoting the Development of Yunnan Ethnic Traditional Sports Public Services via Digital New Productive Forces" (Project No.: YNTZ2024014).

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