

Tibetan Folk Dance

THE TIBET REGION

Tibet is a part of western China that is often called the “Roof of the World” because of the high mountain ranges that run through the region. Tibet is an autonomous region of China, which means that Tibet is not its own country, but has some control in local government. As a result of China’s rule over Tibet, Tibetan folk dance uses ideas from both traditional Chinese and Tibetan culture.

FOLK DANCE

Dancing is a very important part of Tibetan culture. Dancing and singing are components of almost every Tibetan ceremony, festival, wedding, and religious event. In many folk dances, the dancers join in circles, wear local clothing, and sing as a community. For example, the “Sgor Gzhas” folk dance translates to “circle dance,” and is performed while holding hands to thank Buddha for good harvest. Similarly, in the “Gar” folk dance, female dancers link their arms together in a circle while the male dancer carries and plays a drum. There are a lot of different styles of Tibetan folk dance, including the one that you will learn from Xinhua!

MUSIC

Many folk dances are performed with traditional music, including the dran yen (long-necked lute) or the pi wang (fiddle). Although Xinhua teaches a folk dance in this video, the music she chooses to dance with is a contemporary song. Today, Tibetan dancers use new music and traditional music to accompany their dancing.

CLOTHING

In this video, you will see Xinhua wearing traditional clothing. The long, wide sleeves she wears are called “water sleeves” (or shuixiu in Chinese) and are worn while dancing to mimic the way that water ripples and waves. Watch how Xinhua also uses the movement of the sleeves to help convey emotion! How does this dance make you feel?

Sources

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