DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE





Field: Intangible Heritage

Subject: Performing Arts

Type: Dance

Heritage Object: Lion Dance on Poles

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Lion Dance is a traditional folk art that combines martial arts and sports, with more than a thousand year of history. It is widely practiced in China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia, but it has different styles and forms of the dance. In Malaysia, Lion Dance on Pole is the most representative, which is now well spread around the world.

Lion Dance is part of the traditional dance in the cultural heritage of the Chinese community, where dancers imitate the movements of a lion using a lion props and costumes. The lion props and costumes are performed by two dancers, with one dancer at the front moving the head of the prop, while the partner dancer plays the back part of the lion costume. Both dancers move like a lion on the prepared stage. This lion dance is accompanied by gongs, drums, and cymbals, and sometimes firecrackers, which are said to bring good luck and furtune.

For the Chinese community, the lion is considered a beneficial creature. The lion represents unparalleled strength that can dispel bad luck and prevent crime. Therefore, since ancient times, during Chinese New Year celebrations, or leading a procession to welcome a deity, even when there are natural disasters or personal calamities, they will hold a lion dance to pray for blessings from heaven. The lion dance is a major event in Chinese New Year celebrations. Currently, lion dance is regarded as an important element during not only Chinese cultural events, but also corporate events.