

대천리

A Village Noted for Pongsan Mask Dance







Pongsan County in North Hwanghae Province is well-known across the country for mask dance.

Its locals say that their county is especially proud of mask dance, though it produces many specialties such as tasty and efficacious jujube and chestnut.

Pongsan mask dance is now widely disseminated in all parts of the province. Unjong-ri is a village which has a special bond with mask dance.

An official of the village said people have long called Pongsan County a place for mask dance, and the villagers regard them as the master of the mask dance.

Pongsan mask dance began to be renowned not only for its longest historical origin but for its distinctive dance movements scathingly satirizing and deriding the dissipated life of monks or aristocrats in feudal society. It represented the country's mask dance as it had the longest history in the area of Hwanghae Province and the progressive nature of its thematic, ideological and artistic contents. In the past the mask dance was played only once a year. At first, it began early in April, and, then, it was gradually played on a large

scale early in May.

Twenty years ago, Chairman Kim Jong Il saw the mask dance played by farmers of the village. Noting that it is of great significance in preserving the Juche character and national identity of the nation to inherit and develop the excellent cultural wealth created by the ancestors, he spoke highly of them for encouraging folk dances. Many years have passed since the unforgettable day, but the village has made efforts to train dancers and members of musical accompaniment systematically and make costumes and props necessary for the mask dance.

The mask dance which is played during a break of farming inspires farmers with enthusiasm and instills into them warm affection for their hometown and native land.

Thanks to the devoted efforts of the villagers in Unjong-ri who love and add eternal lustre to the excellent cultural heritage of the nation, Pongsan mask dance is handed down forever not only as the pride of their native land but as a precious treasure and heritage of the country and the nation.

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2023-10-24