

THE DANCE IN MARTIAL ARTS

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ABSTRACT. Arts warriors were considered sacred, because the gods of war participates with together with earthly mortals to the earthly struggles. What was in heaven was on earth. If the world of the gods in heaven, they carried the fighting powerful, means that the same events are also on earth. The ancient and medieval word has experienced so many forms as of leisure, as of training of war, by using dance and arts of the war. The dance was not very popularized together with martial arts since historians have researched separately, detached from the context of society. A common approach (dance - martial arts) would lead to a better understanding of how people in ancient times conceived the world in which they lived.

Keyword: Temple, priestesses, Devadas, martial arts, dance, Greece, Spartans, India, Yamaguci, Koshti, Legong.

REZUMAT. *Dansul în Artele Marțiale.* Artele marțiale sunt cunoscute din perspectiva luptelor și tehnicilor. Japonia, China, Coreea, Vietnam sunt doar câteva dintre țările care au ieșit în evidență în ceea ce privesc artele războinice. Istoricii au omis, de-a lungul timpului, o abordare împreună cu ritualurile religioase. Dansul este unul dintre aceste ritualuri extrem de importante, fără de care nici nu am putea vorbi despre arte de luptă. Astăzi nici un luptător nu mai cere ajutorul Zeului Războiului, pentru ca regulile s-au schimbat. Dar reminiscențe ale acestuia le vom regăsi în diferite întreceri: dansul rugby-iștilor din Noua Zeelanda, dansurile judecătorilor din Sumo sau dansurile din Africa, ce le regăsim în Capoierea. Această lucrare dorește să cerceteze rolul pe care l-a avut dansul în istoria militară. O prezentare generală ce poate lăsa loc unei cercetări științifice de nivel superior.

Cuvinte Cheie: Templu, prințese Devadas, Arte marțiale, dans, Grecia, Sparta, India, Yamaguci, Koshti, Lelong.

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Introduction

Ancient and medieval history recorded over time a strong connection between the arts of war and music respectively dance. Present in religious rituals in temples, dancing was not a form of relaxation, but also a symbolic expression and body for those who went to war. In Greece, Japan, in many Islamic sects, and the tribes of Africa or New Zealand and Australia, warrior rituals included at least one dance scene.

Even in the modern dance music remains as one of the instruments that increase efficiency psychology soldiers. Military music was present on all fronts of war, symbols of dances performed by masters of stage movement are being presented to soldiers that were to go to war. The joy of victory was manifested through dance, music and drink.

Although the present in the life of society researchers have not occupied discovering symbolism contact and psychological role of music and dance. Present work tries to do a broad review of the influence of dance movement in ancient and medieval societies.

Ancient Greece

Dance and martial arts, though not very popular in the modern world, were part of the warrior society of ancient and medieval periods.

Greece, Rome, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, but also in other regions of the world, music was used in warrior arts. In Japan, in most samurai fighting styles, music and dance appeared as auxiliary forms.

We would be tempted to believe that a samurai was preparing his fighting techniques through dance and music. No, dance and music were mystical forms, as well as many arts that the practitioner used in prayers, prayers that kami (spirits) were required to participate in military training. Following these delightful legends say that Yamagugi, forest spirits can participate and even reveal some secret techniques (Barboș, 2015).

Dancing was an art practiced in ancient Greece in all social life areas. Philip of Macedon (379 BCE-336 BCE), father of Alexander the Great, was married to dancer Larissa, the fifth wife of the seven wives he had. Philip of Macedon fell in love with Larissa at a banquet after she presented a dance (Worthington, 2010).

In the ancient Greece dances were not executed mixed, only in very few situations. They generally took place either just between men or just between women. Situations where dancing is mixed (men and women) were usually conducted at a chain.

Dances in Athens and Sparta were taken over from Crete, once with its conquest in 1500 BCE by Greeks. Whether we are talking about dancing in Apollo's honour, whether we are talking about those dedicated to Dionisy, both were given lame to the gods and warrior arts.

A warrior dance originated from Minoan Bronze Age from ancient Greece, was "Pyrichi" (*Dancing in armour*) (gr. Πυρρίχιος or πυρρίχ). Pyrrhus was the son of the legendary Achilles, who couldn't been killed unless a weapon touched his heel. Another legend says that when Zeus was born, to hide it from his father, the god Cronos, not to be eaten, nine goddesses (Kouretes) cared for the little one. When he cried, the goddesses were beating down the shields for the sounds of weeping to be covered. It was a victorious warrior dance. Its origins are Doric, and the warriors passed it from generation to generation under the form of movements that imitates fight against the enemy.

In Athens, this ritual was present when a son was born. The father showed his joy by dancing accompanied by striking a shield.



Figure 1. *Gymnopaedia Festival held for Apollo in Sparta. Ancient sarcophagus*

Spartans children were required to be initiated into the art of dance from the age of 5. Under the leadership of a warrior, children were initiated into the art of dance, hymns and sacred rituals, all addressed to the great gods. Another very popular dance in Sparta was Gymnopaedia. It was held once a year in the (Agora) market. Here men didn't wear any clothes as they performed dance movements combined with boxing and wrestling, to the delight of those watching.



Figure 2. Πυρρίχιος, Vatican Museums, Pius-Clementine Museum, Room of the Muses, 66

A pure Greek military dance was called *Korybante*. Phrygian origins, *Korybantum* was initially dedicated to the vegetation gods and to *Kyzbel* goddess. In the third century BCE, this dance was gradually transformed into a warrior dance, but including also many orgiastic scenes (Fink, 2009).

East Asia

In India, dancing was present not only in the temples dedicated to gods, but also in the warrior castles, where along with prayer, sacred symbols were transmitted in this form. The role of Grand Nataraja, the Hindu god of cosmic dance, is to perform a series of dances with the aim of destroying the universe, thereby paving the way to Brahma in the creation of the world.

Special attention is given to God Nataraja especially in southern India at Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga temple in Madhya Pradesh state. Here religion and art of dance blends in perfect harmony (Berkson, Doniger, Michell, 1983).

In temples dedicated to the god *Nataraja*, priestesses (*Devadas*) devoted their entire life's to dancing and prayers. At these temples numerous warriors came from Indian tribes to pray and to inspire the works of the great warrior Nataraja.

The importance of these dances and religious rituals led to elaborating a paper with the name "*Natyashastra*" in 200 BCE. 200 CE period, having as presumed author Bharata Muni, a theatrical, Indian musician and man of letters (Daumal, 1970).



Figure 3. *Shiva / Nataraja* -Painting

In other parts of India, the dancing was, and still is today, dedicated to the goddess Apsara, Gandharva god's wife, the god of music who plays instruments and his wives are dancing in celestial palaces. The origin of these dances is dates from the time of King kmer Suryavaman the second (1113-1145). The dance was performed only in the royal palace, and it was addressed strict to the great royal personalities. It was made public once with the Khmer Rouge regime.

In Persia (today Iran) there were several types of dances, one of which was a warrior dance, accomplished with the aim of preparing soldiers for battle. Fighters were called Koshti and they were practicing a kind of wrestling in a room called Zoorkhaneh synonymous with the Greek word gymnasium. Its originates from (132 BCE.-226).

Among fighting movements carried out by akoshti, on music rhythms warrior dance was also executed.

This form of art has been banned in Iran once with the Iranian Revolution of 1979, when the ultra-religious parties came to power, who considered dance as pagan. Despite these prohibitions, Persian art and dance were taken over by Sufi Muslim rituals (Farzad, Nekoogar, 1996).



Figure 4. Yurkhaneh, the traditional sport.
Picture by NAEINSUN form Training hall-Iran, 2013



Figure 5. Legong dance (from: www.esatradi.deviart.com)

One of the most famous Asian dances is called Legong. Legong is originated from Indonesia, it is believed that from the nineteenth century. It comprises a series of complicated movements performed with the hands and feet. Every gesture of the hands has a special significance, which must be in perfect harmony with facial mimicry. Legend says that Prince Sukwati had a dream in which two young virgins performed a dance on gamelan music (performed with mallets). As soon as he woke up, he implemented the movements making the Legon dance. The dance was so much appreciated that it was taken over by theatre artists.

Legong dancers interpret warlike scenes, such as the story of King Lasem Malat, who lived in the twelfth century. He had a conflict with his father, who did not want to have Princess Ranjaswari as his daughter in law, and the princess felt the same about Lasem. Crazed with love, Lasem took the princess in hostage, but a giant raven comes to her rescue. The whole story is presented as a pantomime, and skillfully executed by dancers dressed in bright colorful costumes (Davies, 2006).

Conclusions

If war and the art of dancing have always been closely related, today they are separate arts, with distances between them, not representing each other anymore. Those who want to study the history of martial arts, but also the beginnings and the evolution of dance styles throughout history, have to approach them together.

Existing work though many, is unfortunately treated separately, leading to confusion and time-consuming to be understood in the context in which they have developed throughout history.

We are hoping for a more detailed approach through a comprehensive research study in the upcoming period.

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