

KALARIPAYATTU AND THE ART OF VARMAM IN TRAVANCORE

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ABSTRACT

Travancore is the home to many age old traditions art and culture. Kalaripayattu and Varmakalai are the arts of warfare in South Tamilnadu and South Kerala. These art forms are commonly used by the Nadars of the country as an art of Self-defense as well as art of recreation and above all it has a lot medicinal. Varmakalai was mainly projected as a self defense and sports system. Varmam indicates the life force that flows like a stream from one point to another in its own path where the body mind and the soul interconnect and communicates.

Key Words: Kalaripayattu, education, Kanyakumari District, Martial Art, Health Tourism, Travancore

Introduction

Kalaripayattu is called the mother of Martial arts. It increases physical fitness as well as mental concentration. Out traditional Martial Art Kalaripayattu, is an unexplored area which can be promoted as a pioneer in Health Tourism. The medicinal branch of Kalaripayattu can be widely utilized by all communities. Kalaripayattu teachers in TamilNadu are known for their profound. Knowledge of the human body knowledge of Kalaripayattu has become inevitable for self defense. Kalaripayattu leads to physical fitness, balanced mind and capable of controlling emotions. As the mind gets sufficiently strengthened, its influence will be felt on the senses.

Kalari

The vital knowledge of Kalari treatment originated from the treatment of bruises and fractures that occur during Kalari Practice. A strong and agile physique can be developed with maipayattu. The bare handed defence and attack, the last stage in Kalaripayattu, can be practically used in many sports items. Kalari Gurukkal needs much support and recognition for treatment regarding the physical and mental fitness. The medicinal branch of Kalaripayattu can be widely utilized by all communities.

Travancore can boast of a long Martial tradition. We can trace the tradition to the distant past when every able-bodied man underwent rigorous training in the use of weapons. Every young man and even woman knew the art of fighting foes. Anyone who had not learnt the Martial art of Travancore called "Kalaripayattu" was looked down with disdain and contempt between young men trained in them was a common occurrence. Every 'tharavad' (family) worth the name had a Kalari managed by a 'gurukkal' master of 'Karanavar' (patriarch) of the family. The ancient ballads of north Kerala sing the heroism and skill of the warriors who were experts in Kalaripayattu.

The British established their rule over the whole of India, and 'Kalaripayattu' as a system of Military training became extinct. Perhaps the invention of gun powder and the use of guns in warfare also contributed to the decline of 'Kalaripayattu' as a system of military training and 'Kalaris' became rare sights in Kerala. Still a few gurukkals preserved the Kalari system and gave training to the young, who exhibited their skill before appreciative spectators on special occasions. With the advent of freedom came a resurgence of Indian

Arts and people came to recognize 'Kalaripayatt' as an effective method of physical training and self defense. Though it has lost its value as military training, it still remains the means for vigorous exercise which imparts strength and flexibility to the limbs and the body in general.

As is evident, 'Kalaripayatt' is the combination of two words Kalari and Payat. Kalari is the shed where the young are trained in combat with or without weapons. The Kalari is an enclosed space usually 35 feet long, 17 and half feet wide with a roof which is 17 and half feet high. It is built in the east – west direction with one door on the eastern side. In the south west corner of the Kalari is the 'Poothara' the seat of presiding deity. The 'gurukkalas' right from the earliest ones to the present one are represented by a small 'peattam' on the western side of the Kalari. Every student deities, and the gurukkal. He also salutes the presiding deity at the end of the practiced 'Kalaripayatt' used to wear the 'Katcha' a long and narrow piece of cloth worn round the waist. Gingelly oil is smeared on the body before beginning the practice.

Varmakalai

Varmakalai was mainly projected as a self defense and sports system. But on the other hand, it's extremely powerful healing system. Varmam indicates the life force that flows like a stream from one point to another in its own path where the body, mind and the soul intersperse and communicate. In case any obstruction happens on this path, there will be a disruption in the flow which gets disconnected and that energy will stagnate in a nearby location which in turn will cause an imbalance in the force at the points situated at, before and after around this obstruction and will lead to deficiencies and diseases relevant to the points situated at, before and after around this obstruction and will lead to deficiencies and diseases relevant to the point. Response to stimulus is an example of varmam stimulation. Varmam is the action that causes loss or bone joints is called varmudi varmam strike. The actual points, or nerve junctions etc. themselves may be called varmam. The systematic study, art of method of performing the actions in the applications of Martial arts self defence is called Varmam or Varmakalai.

Everything in the world has its own uniqueness. Because some are self contained and others are like parasites, which depend on others for their livelihood. But human beings alone have the power of rationality. In olden days, they moved from place to place in search of food like a rover and hunted animals. While hunting animals. While hunting animals, they got injuries, wounds, fractures unconsciousness and even caused to death.

Knowingly or unknowingly, they used some herbs and shrubs for recovery. Soon they realized that some provided immediate relief and some become more dangerous. However when they became more aware about it, it was the humble beginning of herbal treatment as well as the origin of Siddha medicine. Varmam is a branch of Siddha medicine. The physical therapies of varmam and most other therapies of Siddha are the still existing tradition in South TamilNadu. However, such practices existed in various ancient cultures and medical applications of these are extensive in peninsular India. But they were persistently discouraged and the recent researches have shown that these systems of medicine had a great past.

In Ayurvedha, Varmam is called Manna Ravana Kaaviyam says that varmam means marmam. Varma has been given many meanings in it. The word varmam is derived from the root word 'Varmam'. Ramayanam describes it so. Varmam is a rooted term of vanmai and vanmam. In the Bible, the word is referred as malice. It has many alternative meanings as harden, force, skill, and anger. Generally, it means strong, dangerous and the secret places of a human body. There are 108 varma points or nerve centres in the body of human beings. They would be the common factor for human beings and for death, long span, diseases, treatment and health. In Tamil Language, marmam means 'secret'. Later it is termed as varmam. Incidentally, there is a ruling class known as 'Varma'.

Conclusion

Security is an important concern girls and boys. Kalari is being developed from 6th century. It has taught that the rise of self confidence starts from the training when a Martial artist enters the fight and beats the opponent. Kalari has helped to learn to defend and offending himself. Kalari gives protection, braveness and courage to face our enemies. Indian Martial artists became knowledgeable in the field of traditional medicine and massages. Kalaripayattu teaches this message and has borrowed extensively from Ayurveda and equally lends to it. Kalaripayattu is believed by many historians to be the mother of all Martial art must spread throughout the world to regain its lost importance meetings, information pamphlets help them to know about them even better.

Varmakalai is a component of traditional massage alternative medicine, traditional yoga and martial arts in which the body's pressure points are manipulated to heal or cause harm. Its art was almost dead but is gradually being revived. It continues to be used to cure certain kinds of ailments including paralysis, sprains, fracture and nervous disorders with the arrival of firearms, the art witnessed a decline in the transmission of varmakalai knowledge went underground. It was only passed through family lineage and rarely to very dedicated disciples. Today only some families are keeping the tradition alive to receive this art make use of the efficient art only then it can pass from one family to family. In the martial art a person's physical fitness may be boosted, strength, stamina, movement coordination etc., As the whole body is exercised and the entire muscular system is activated beyond contributing to self esteem, self control, emotional and spiritual well being, For these reasons, a number of martial arts schools have focused purely on therapeutic aspects, deemphasizing the historical aspect of self defence or combat completely.

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