



Kalaripayattu and its Performing Value: A Review

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Abstract

This article is trying to find out the influence of Kalaripayattu in performing art form directly and indirectly. Kalaripayattu has influenced so many folk forms in Kerala. Kalaripayattu is considered the most ancient and surviving martial art form originated in the southern part of India, it has influenced the history of Kerala and their culture. If the one who is watching the folk art forms in Kerala they can find the similarities and the influence of Kalaripayattu in these forms, Kalaripayattu providing a kind of presence which is very important for performers who wish to be able to recreate the energy that makes them alive in the spectator's eyes. This you can see in Kathakali, Kolkali, Thacholikali, Poorakali, Parichamuttukali, Velakali, Margamkali, Chavittunatakam, and Krishnanattam. Also direct influence is visible in Parichakali, Kolkali, Margamkali, Kambukali, Vadiveesu, Panthamveesu, Chavittukali, Vattakali, Thacholikali, Adithada and Onathallu, so learning and researching the Kalaripayattu not only gives the benefits of this form but also it helps to rediscover the history of Kerala.

Keywords: kalari, kalaripayattu, kerala

Introduction

History and legend

Kalaripayattu considered the most ancient and surviving martial art form originated in the southern part of India, at present, it has been widely practicing in the state of Kerala. It has a deep-rooted link and history with the culture of Kerala and its folk forms. It is believed that it originated in 3rd BCE and influenced the different realms of the culture directly and indirectly in the southern region of India. According to the legend the Sage Parasuraman is considered to be the founder of Kalaripayattu who taught this art form to a group of twenty-one brahmins to protect the land which he retrieved from the sea. In ancient times it was a martial art form and its ultimate goal was to protect and serve society, apart from that the Kalari masters were serving the society as traditional doctors called vydyas, and Kalaripayattu has developed its traditional system which has been serving the local community till now, altogether a Kalari was a hub of a village in its holistic way it was the center of the village and its culture. The 14th-century account of life in Kerala written by Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa describes Kalaripayattu as an integral part of its society.

According to legend, Bodhi Dharma, a Buddhist monk who lived during the 5th century has been credited with introducing Chan Buddhism and Kalaripayattu to monks in China. When Zen Buddhism made its way to Japan with its martial art components, it stopped over in Okinawa, where Kalaripayattu fused with local combat techniques to become Karate. In the history of world martial art society even though India's influence has not been decisive, it has certainly been significant.

Kalarippayattu is an art

Irrespective of age and gender, anyone can join this art. Vadakkan Pattukalⁱ is considered the ballad of Northern Kerala. These ballads give much emphasis on various aspects of Kalaripayattu late E.P Vasudeva gurukkal a well-known kalarippayattu gurunadhanⁱⁱ originally hailed from the Northern region of Kerala and started a kalarippayattu Sangamⁱⁱⁱ in kaduthuruthy middle Kerala used to say that kalarippayattu is having three important aspects it is a defensive art, it is a good exercise and it is a drysya Kala^{iv} or performing art, anyone can enjoy it without any prior knowledge

The dimensions of this art began to change during the 16th century. When the need for fighting skills is diminished, an emphasis on personal spiritual growth became more evident. The earlier man had to physically fight for existence which resulted in the development of various defending and attacking movements. The spiritual aspect came with the spirit of the times. One can note that if you change the rhythm of most of the martial arts, they can be performed like a dance. Later on, these movements did influence various performing art forms and continue to do so today.

There is yet another realm of awareness Kalaripayattu traverses towards. It can be described as what lies on the edges of what since and knowledge expose today. One objective of martial art is to learn to be present at the very moment of action. It is perhaps this common objective despite different results that explain the influence that martial art has had on most Asian theatre forms because of historical contingencies. martial arts have generally lost their military value to a large extent this heritage has been transformed, some martial arts have turned into dances and martial art exercises have become the basis of various dances and other theatrical forms.

In 1804, the British banned the practice of Kalarippayattu fearing its use against their army, and thus for over a century it was not practiced in several parts of Kerala. Nevertheless, a few practitioners such as Kottakkal Kanaran Gurukkal, Kovilkandi Kelu Kurup Gurukkal and Maroli Ramunni Gurukkal secretly keep the art alive. Then came Chirakkal T. Sreedharan Nair (1909-1984) and C.V. Narayanan Nair. Nair took up the task of writing one in Malayalam, and it was published in 1963. Studies have been made on the relationship between martial art and personality and it has been found that the learning of martial art through the repetition of physical actions leads to awareness. It not only enhances one's awareness of one's body but leads to a larger awareness of one's existential body and its relationship to our environment. This aspect of Kalaripayattu in its essence has been adapted into performing arts. This kind of presence becomes extremely important for performers who wish to be able to recreate, every night the quality of energy that makes them alive in the spectator's eyes.

Influence of Kalarippayattu in folk forms

Kalaripayattu is not only a martial art system but also an impressive performing art form. Moreover, many performing art forms of Kerala have taken in various aspects of Kalaripayattu to develop their visual richness and to increase the

capability of the actor. Apart from that, many entertainment art forms and games were developed with Kalaripayattu. They provide relaxation to the students soon after the tight session of the practice of Kalaripayattu. Even though these art forms are merely for entertainment, it contains the martial beauty of Kalaripayattu. We can find various postures, jumps, kicks, twisting and enormous speed in the performance of these art forms. The presence of Kalaripayattu has greatly influenced many folk art forms as well as classical art forms. Another important thing is that beyond the barriers of caste and religion the elements of Kalaripayattu are spread over different art forms, like Kathakali, Kokkali, Thacholikali, Poorakali, Parichamuttukali, Velakali, Margamkali, Chavittunatakam, Krishnanattam as well as in the modern theatre forms, lots of modern Indian theatre companies are using Kalaripayattu for their practicing session. EP vasudevagurukkal says that “the style of vatten thirippan^v has influenced the parichakali,kolkali, margamkali,kambukali, vadiveesu, panthamveesu,chavittukali, vattakali thacholikali, adithada and onathallu”

According to SRD Prasad Gurukkal Gurukkal an eminent Kalarippayattu guru and researcher in this field"Many embrace Kalari for different reasons. Artists who do folk arts like Theyyam, Parichamuttu, Poorakkali, Poikali, or Vela kali have used Kalari for their performances. Some Kathakali artists learn Meypayattu, some modern theater artists also use Kalari. For some others, it's a fitness activity"

In India, martial art tradition is not well known as yoga, dance, or music though it is very much part of India’s cultural heritage Kalaripayattu is also neglected for some time for different reasons the study is meant to unearth the unknown realms of Kalaripayattu. The scope of the study would lie in the possibility of a new awareness of Kalaripayattu which has had an impact throughout the history of Kerala; it may help us rethink the past, present, and future of Kalaripayattu.s

The

Kalari

The Kalari is the place where the youth received training in the technique of warfare irrespective of gender, were given training in the Kalari at a very early age also you can see in Kerala that the asan kalaris are the places where the young children used to receive their basic education so the literal meaning of Kalari is that the place where you do your training Unniarcha and Kodumala Kunki who figure in the ballads were two medieval heroines of North Malabar famous for their martial exploits There are different types of Kalaris Nedum Kalari, kuzhikalari, Thara Kalari, Prathishta Kalari, Anka Kalari, Attakalari the intention and the purpose of each kalaris were different.

Conclusion

The researcher has collected and analyzed 25 books and 10 journals which are available in hard form as well as online, the materials also included more traditional resources such as magazines, newspapers, and reports, also consist of electronic media such as audio and video recordings, and films, and online resources like websites, blogs, and bibliographic databases. All of these show that the field of research is still far behind if you compare it with other forms most of these books are still covering the basic information and the commands. there are few experimental studies have happened to find out the effect of Kalarippayattu practices, and the interviews in the magazines and other social media are giving a glimpse of its benefits but the subject is so wide and the progress in Kalarippayattu practices most of the time seems gradual and longer, so we need the longitudinal studies which may give a different dimension and reveal the hidden benefits behind this art form

One of the important reasons to research this art is that it's a philosophy not only an art to learn how to fight. The teachers of kalaripayattu emphasize keeping fit and rejuvenating your body, defending the helpless- to restraint and meditation. The long years of difficult practices make your system find out your rhythm, which helps you to transform your information as knowledge, your knowledge which successfully helps you to convey your ideas to the world or your spectators.

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ⁱ Vadakkan pattukal-ballads from the northern Kerala

ⁱⁱ Gurunadhan-master

ⁱⁱⁱ Kerala Kalaripayattu Association

^{iv} The literal meaning of Kala is art , the art means that which take you to the lower level to the higher level in all aspects physically , mentally and spiritually

^v In Northern style of Kalaripayattu there are three important Styles called Arappukai, Vattenthirippen and Pillathangi

