

**“LET ALL THE CHILDREN DANCE
AND PEACE SHALL SURELLY FOLLOW”¹**
**THE ROLE OF DANCE AND MUSIC EDUCATION IN
SUSTAINING WORLD PEACE**
**(ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE DANCE AND MUSIC CULTURE
OF THE INDONESIAN ISLAND OF BALI)**

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ABSTRACT

The Bali people believe in a metaphysical world. This world, according to the islanders' faith, is inhabited by ghosts, gods and demons. Thus, an individual never feels alone or alienated. The Bali people are entangled in cosmological dualism, where good and evil are in a constant, never-ending struggle. Victory on no part is possible, as it would disrupt the harmony of being, which constitutes the foundation of the Balinese cosmology. Human existence depends on sustaining this harmony between good and evil. These strong beliefs helped the Bali people survive the suffering during the crisis of the terrorist attacks on the Island in 2002 and 2005. The islanders did not allow for a victory of evil.

A Bali person remains in a ceaseless dialogue with the invisible, supernatural world. He or she makes symbolical offerings and eagerly celebrates uncountable festivals that are accompanied with dance and music. They are an inherent part of the life and culture of Bali. Dance and music have the power to cast away demons and bring peace and harmony. Dance and music re-create the order of the world.

Rituals are the dominating aspect of Balinese life and the religious rites play a major role in social interactions.

Irrespective of the geographical latitude, teaching dance and music makes it possible to root in children's consciousness all the life's crucial values. Without these values it is impossible to reach harmony between a human being and the environment. Communicating through movement is a significant skill to be taught to children. Moreover, dancing together facilitates their emotional and social development. Formative processes in each person's development are based on cooperation and non-verbal communication. Dance and music go beyond borders and divisions, therefore we should teach them to children, so that they could dance us the peace...

Key Words: Dance, music, education.

¹ Cit. Miyako Yoshida.

Irrespective of the geographical latitude, teaching dance and music makes it possible to root all the life's crucial values in children's consciousness. Without these values it is impossible to reach harmony between people and their environment. There is a direct relationship between the personality and the content of the specificity of the non-verbal communication. The way a person moves is also related to his or her developmental stage. (Lange, 2000; 109) Communicating through movement is a significant skill to be taught to children, because formative processes in each person's development are based on cooperation and non-verbal communication. Participating in dances enhances a child's social and emotional development. It also helps to integrate the personality. When working in education, teaching dance gives opportunity to compensate for the defects of the modern civilisation. (Lange, 2000; 114) It is worth emphasising that young people have a strong need of movement and games. As a result, children and youth prefer activities that include dance and music. This provides wide possibilities of communicating values through movement in education. It is characteristic of a number of traditional cultures to place dance in the curriculum of the informal educational system. (Kubinowski, 2002; 121)

Our modern world needs constructive and fruitful cultural activity, such as for example traditional culture education, which includes teaching dance and sometimes music. The main objective should be cultivating the ethnic culture and developing tolerance and respect for cultural differences and for people who represent other countries and ethnic groups. Early traditional cultures were based on values that are crucial from the humanistic perspective and worth referring to in the present day life. Dance has never caused ethnic conflicts, on the contrary, being one of the characteristics of cultural identity it often functioned as a significant factor in social integration.

The traditional upbringing based on handing down and adopting values is the way to teach young people to live in a multicultural community of a given area, region, country or even the whole world. (Kubinowski, 2002; 120-121) When teaching dance and music, the cultural or religious context should be provided. Otherwise, the dance becomes soulless acrobatics. In its essence, the dance treats our civilisation and the present day human condition. In the world of chaos and materialism, dance can be the means of restoring the spiritual values. It functions in the sphere of creativity, philosophy, psychology, education and upbringing. (Wycichowska, 2000; 86) The movement, of which dance is composed, is the translation of thoughts into action. It is therefore ambiguous and ambivalent. This secures the subjectivity of both the performance and its reception, which is valuable in the modern, unified world.

The symbolism of dance makes it possible to convey profound ideas that relate to a person's life, cosmology and visions. Dance embraces the whole spectrum of human life. This includes the biological side, which cannot be

ignored in the context of dance, and the magical-religious side, where gods and spirits are praised. (Lange, 2000; 105) It should be stressed that the spiritual aspect of dance was significant since the dawn of humanity. Dance can be the carrier of information and values. Thus it is useful in acquiring a given culture and teaching tolerance to other people and cultures. Dance fulfils such a role on Bali, which is one of the most unusual Indonesian islands as regards ethnicity, religion and mentality.

The Balinese believe in a metaphysical world, as do the representatives of other ethnic groups of Indonesia. The world of people is inseparable from the world of the ubiquitous spirits. The spirits inhabit, among other things, the volcanoes, the seas and the ocean. Bali is situated in a subduction zone; therefore, earthquakes and volcano eruptions are frequent. The highest volcano is Gunung Agung (3142 meters above sea level) (Indonezija, 2003; 47). The islanders believe it to be a sacred mountain and the seat of gods, who are able to cause eruptions. Gunung Agung is believed to be the very Meru. It serves as a reference point when establishing directions for the whole Indonesia. A mountain, water and the sun are the three most important natural symbols in the religious life of the Balinese. (Geertz, 2006; 117) A human being is perceived as an inseparable part of the nature and he or she worships it. The Balinese strive to reach harmony with nature. Sustaining harmony with the surrounding world is required by their faith.

An individual on Bali relays on his or her family, caste and other villagers (*desa*). General welfare is a priority. Society of the Bali island is grouped into village organisations (*banjar*) based on collective responsibility. The community finances gamelan, among other things. The reflection of the community life on Bali is *seka* (a club), a music organisation. There are strict rules as to the expenses of each club and the fees for performances. Each *seka* can be characterised by its own specificity and the repertoire of dances and music. They depend on the tastes and interests of the group members. One *seka* usually consists of artists from the same village. The musicians are predominantly amateurs, who play for pleasure and, in case of the recognised clubs, prestige. (Sadie, 1980; 180) The works they perform range from simple, ceremonial music to pieces that require many hours of practicing. Dancing or playing an instrument is mainly taught by imitation. The Balinese organisations that raise youth by teaching them to dance or play the instruments of gamelan are closely linked with the monotheistic religion of the island, *Hindu-Dharma*, and their activity strengthens social bounds. In the religion of the Balinese there could be noticed animistic elements relating to the ancestor worship. There has also been a strong influence of Buddhism.

The history of Bali and its identity as a separate political organism made it possible to sustain the traditional social structure based on a long established economic system (Jakimowicz, 1974; 164). The island remains in closest

contacts with Eastern Java, where Hindu kingdoms had resisted Islamic influence for a long time. Bali entirely defied Islam, when it was entering Indonesia, which makes the island resemble a reservation of Indonesian culture. Social life and culture, formed under the Hindi influence, have not changed until recently.

Our world, according to the islanders' faith, is inhabited by spirits, gods and demons. Thus, an individual never feels alone or alienated. The Bali people inhabit in cosmological dualism, where good and evil are in a constant, never-ending struggle. Victory on no part is possible, as it would disrupt the harmony of being, which constitutes the foundation of the Balinese cosmology. There are numerous rituals and rites that enable an individual to reach harmony. Art, including dance and music, is their integral part, as it helps sustain the dialogue with spirits and supernatural powers. Rituals are the dominant aspect of everyday life on Bali. Ceremonies and religious rites, specified by the calendar², play a key role in the social interactions. With the use of a system of calendars, Brahmin priests determine the so called good days, when one can work or organise meetings of importance either for the community or for individuals. Above all, the division into good and bad days is useful for setting a favourable moment for a ceremony. Such calculations are regulated either by the *Uku* system (with a seven-day week) or *Wariga*. A *Pawukon* year consists of 30 *Uku*³ or 210 days. (Mordowo, 1973; 37) Different days of the week overlap, creating different combinations. One of the most important combinations is *Kajeng Kliwon* (the last day of a three-day week overlapping with the last day of a five-day week), which takes place every 15 days. It is a good day for prayers, therefore numerous religious celebrations take place on this day. *Kajeng Kliwon* is also a very dangerous day, because of the presence of evil powers, to which special gifts are offered so that they do no harm.

The islanders are not compelled to faith; their beliefs help them. The people of Bali are aware of the power of rituals. The time when they occur, specified in the calendar, as well as the place are significant. The people who are present become participants. There are no passive onlookers among the Balinese.

² There are two different calendar systems on Bali: the lunar (*Saka*) and *Pawukon*. In the *Pawukon* cycle, there are 210 days and 10 different systems of the weeks. The length of weeks varies from one to ten days. Their names are derived from Sanskrit words for the numbers of the days. All types of weeks co-occur, creating a complex system. They come in cycles. The other calendar, which has its roots in the Hindi culture, is the lunar calendar, *Saka*, which consists of twelve months in accordance with the moon phases. Each month ends with the new full-moon, called *Tilem*. A very important day is the first day of the tenth month, called *Hari Nyepi*, as it is the first day of the new year at the same time.

³The names of the *Uku* are as follows: *Sinta*, *Landep*, *Wukir*, *Kurantil*, *Tolu*, *Gumbreg*, *Wariga*, *Warigadyan*, *Julung manis*, *Sungsang*, *Dungulan*, *Kuningan*, *Langkir*, *Medangsyia*, *Puyut*, *Parang*, *Krulut*, *Mrakih*, *Tambir*, *Medangkungan*, *Matal*, *Wuye*, *Manila*, *Prangbakat*, *Bala*, *Wugu*, *Wayang*, *Klawu*, *Dukut*, *Watungunung*.

In Balinese society, art merges with religion on a daily basis. Music and dance have religious functions. They accompany most ceremonies that take place in island's numerous temples. The large amount of temples on Bali is institutionalised and gather the majority of population animating it's social life. The temples reflect Balinese Hinduism. They seem ubiquitous. They can be seen on rice fields, near the roads, on graveyards, in households, in the palaces of royal families, etc.

Cosmos in the Balinese faith is composed of the following elements: the frame of time and space, the matter that exists within this frame and the forces that initiate interaction between these elements. (Lenartowicz, 2004; 31) A human being is a hybrid of body and soul. The universe is divided into the macrocosm, Shiva, and microcosm, a human being. "Vishnu represents absolute truth, Brahma-activity, whereas Shiva is the element of darkness, the centrifugal force of disintegration, differentiation of potential and destruction. This destruction, however, becomes the source of rebirth, the new life." (Jakimowicz, Jakimowicz-Shah, 1982; 239) Cosmologically dualistic Shiva transforms the world and becomes its body and soul. He is the Creator and the Destructor at the same time. The god Shiva created the world by his dance. He is dancing in the very centre of the world. His dance becomes the mediator between the opposing forces that constitute existence. According to the beliefs, Lord of the Dance dances to sustain the life of the universe and leads to salvation. His dance comes from the centre of the universe and from the human heart. It symbolises the relationship between time and space.

Dance is the primary component of the Balinese culture. It creates functional-symbolic entities. As a cultural phenomenon, it should be analysed and taught in a broader cultural context. Balinese dance is a form of transferring cultural content. It is connected with meaning and mythological beliefs. Its symbolism functions in semiotic reference with other fields of art, above all the gamelan music, with which it forms a common message that results from interaction between them and other means of expression. Both music and dance are elements of a broader context, in which the characteristic features of the traditional relationships between these two elements can be more clearly demonstrated. Dance and music gain equal status and supplement each other. (Hanna, 2001; 61) They are correlated in the way a dancer and a musician are, as they have the same socio-cultural background. In the *Baris* and *Topeng* dances, the musicians should follow the dancer's improvisations. The relationship between dance and music actually depends on the mutual relations between the musician/musicians and the dancer/dancers. These are in turn based on the common set of cultural and social norms (Giurchescu, Torp, 1997; 155).

Dance, being an artefact and a means of communication at the same time, is a model of reality. It is hierarchically organised as a whole and its particular elements interact between one another. In case of the majority of traditional

cultures, including the Balinese culture, the dancer, his or her expression through movement, and his or her imagination are limited by the patterns imposed by the group. The meaning of the dance is subordinated to its function of sustaining social bonds.

The Balinese dances can be divided into sacred and secular, the latter being presently created mainly for the tourists. There are four groups of sacred dances: temple dances, ritual dances (very often patriotic, e.g. *Baris*), *Barong* and *Sanghyang*.⁴ *Tari Pura* (the temple dances) play a very important role in the Hindu-Dharma ceremonies that take place a few times in the Balinese calendar. This group includes the following dances: *Pendet*, *Gabor* together with *Rejang* and *Oleg* that are performed by girls (in case of *Pendet*) or women. These dances are performed exclusively in temples and the dancers make offerings to the gods.

Sanghyang and *Barong* are the dances that fulfil both magical and social functions in the culture of Bali. The former is a trance dance, preformed to overcome illnesses or plagues. Its power can protect the Balinese from evil forces and dark magic. The *Sanghyang* dance can be performed solely by girls before menstruation, because the gods can enter only their pure bodies. They are usually carried by men around the village. They dance with their eyes closed and enter a trans in which they can contact the spiritual world. The Balinese believe that a person in a trance can speak for the gods. There are a few types of the *Sanghyang* dance. One of the types, *Sanghyang Jaran*, that is present mainly in the Southern Bali, is performed by men. This dance resembles the Javanese *Jathilan*. The dancers hold a wooden or a bamboo horse, imitate the movements of the animal and enter a trance, which enables them to purify the village from the evil forces. In order to be able to perform a sacred or a magic dance, the dancers need long preparations as regards both their body and psyche.

The sacred *Barong Rangda* dance is not only a perfect example of the Balinese theatre, gamelan music and various dance forms. It is primarily a form of integrating society of the Bali island through a magical mystery. In the Balinese mythology, *Barong* is a wild, four-legged totemic animal. *Barong* is a manifestation of good forces; it is a symbol of heaven, a man, a father, a guardian. It constantly struggles with the incarnation of evil, *Rangda*, that has great vital powers and is identified with earth, a woman and a mother.

Nusa Panida, an island South-East from Bali, is believed to be inhabited by evil forces and demons that regularly cause trouble to the Balinese, who are forced to fight them. The repeated ritual, accompanied by the dances of *Barong* and *Rangda*, combined with *Calonarang*, which illustrates the struggle between the dark and white magic, has the power to defeat evil. This dance is always

⁴ The division of Soedarsono.

concluded with the *Kris* dance, in which the dancers influenced by the evil force of *Rangda* begin to attack themselves with daggers (*kries*). In the end, the good prevails, only to be defeated by evil later on. The ritual is completed, the harmony of the universe sustained. Music and dance make it possible to sustain the harmony of the world, which is essential in the life of every Balinese person. This makes teaching dance and music so important. Without it, the ritual could not be completed; its continuity would be disturbed and the world would descend into chaos. The children and youth that participate in the act of dancing assimilate the values that help them discern between good and evil in everyday life. The humanistic values facilitate the development of tolerance and respect for other people and their dissimilarity, which can be evaluated against the background of one's own culture. It has already been mentioned that there exists a close relationship between a dancer's personality and what he or she expresses in movement. Teaching dance from the early formative stages should be combined with conscious communicating and assimilating the values that are associated with movement. In case of the Bali island, where dance and music are placed in the curriculum of the informal educational system, equal treatment of the physical and spiritual aspects is crucial. These spheres cannot be analysed, let alone taught separately. There would be no point in dancing the *Sanghyang* dance without believing in its power, or putting on the *Rangda* costume without humility and previous spiritual preparation. Depriving dance of its spiritual, philosophical and religious character leaves people entangled in soulless civilisation. People nowadays live in the global village and start to feel alienated in the crowd, with which they cannot communicate. The norms and rules of the modern world limit their expression and disturbs the development of personality. This causes conflicts.

The personality of the islanders of Bali is shaped by the constructive dance movement that functions as a factor that integrates society. Believing in the supernatural powers, the viewer becomes a participant of a given dance event. There exist schools of traditional dance and music, yet it is still the tradition-centred families and the above mentioned village organisations that are crucial to teaching tradition.

Over the centuries, human existence have invariably depended on sustaining harmony between good and evil. Dance and music re-create the order of the world. A Balinese person remains in a ceaseless dialogue with the invisible, supernatural world. He or she makes symbolical offerings and eagerly celebrates uncountable festivals that are accompanied by dance and music. Rituals are the dominant aspect of everyday life on Bali, while ceremonies and religious rites play a key role in the social interactions. In contrary to the highly developed regions of the world, on the Bali island dance and music are the integral part of life and culture. They have the power to defeat demons and bring peace and harmony.

These strong believes helped the Bali people survive the suffering during the crisis of the terrorist attacks on the Island in 2002 and 2005. The islanders did not allow for a victory of evil.

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