

Appearance Relaxation, Internal Movement of Qi— On "Relaxation" in Classical Chinese Dance

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Abstract: *In the teaching practice of classical Chinese dance, there is often a lack of necessary and targeted training methods, which makes the body often appear "tighter than loose, more rigid than flexible, more dynamic than static, and more open than closed" and other problems. In this paper, we will discuss the importance of "relaxation" in the training of classical Chinese dance; "relaxation" is the precondition for the body to reach a state of integration so that the body and mind are in a state of "zero".*

Keywords: *Classical Chinese Dance; Relaxation; Dance Teaching*

1. Introduction

As the inheritance and precipitation of historical culture and art, Chinese classical dance has a very high artistic value. In the process of continuous development, it puts forward high requirements for its dance training courses. After a long time of exploration, creation, and continuous research, the teaching of classical Chinese dance has a certain mode and standardization. Entering the school's professional classroom, our body will be through a variety of professional training, in the classroom, often hear teachers emphasize "relaxation", and "sink the gas", but in the specific practice the lack of necessary, targeted training links and training methods. Over time, there is a gradual lack of perception of the body, the body often appears "tight more than loose, stiff more than soft, more than static, more open than closed" and other issues, making the students appear "breath does not pass," "feet did not follow the " "not distinguish the real from the virtual" "tight too loose" and other problems, and the root of these problems is that students do not have a "loose" consciousness. In this paper, we will discuss the importance of "looseness" in the training of classical Chinese dance, and emphasize that "looseness" is not loose. On the contrary, "loosening" is the precondition for the body to reach a state of integration; it is the concept of letting the body and mind in a state of "zero".^[1]

2. "Relaxation" in traditional Chinese culture

2.1 Overview of "slack"

Relaxation is a state of relaxation, laxity, or letting go, usually associated with stress reduction and physical and mental relaxation. This state can involve physical, mental, or behavioral relaxation, and can also be used to describe a relaxed atmosphere or environment. In the field of psychology, laxity, on the other hand, usually denotes emotional calm and relaxation. A state of psychological relaxation means that the individual feels emotionally calm and at peace, without excessive stress or anxiety. In this state, the individual usually feels emotionally happy, less anxious, thinks, concentrates well, and maintains a positive attitude toward life. In physiology, relaxation can refer to the relaxation of muscles or the dilation of blood vessels. Muscle relaxation means that the muscles are in a state of relaxation and are no longer in a state of tension and contraction. This state of relaxation helps reduce muscle pain and fatigue, improves blood circulation, and facilitates the body's recovery and repair.^[2]

2.2 The use of "relaxation" in traditional culture

2.2.1 "Soft but not Loose" - the "Looseness" of Taoist Taijiquan

In Taijiquan, relaxation is a very important concept and is considered one of the core principles that practitioners must master. Taijiquan emphasizes softness and seeks a state of relaxation of the body and the heart, and through relaxation, the harmony of body and mind is achieved. For one thing, physical relaxation is very important in Taijiquan. Relaxing the muscles and allowing the body to stretch and twist

naturally, can help reduce muscle tension and stress and improve the body's suppleness and flexibility. This state of relaxation also helps to improve the circulation of qi and blood and enhances the coordination and stability of the body. Secondly, Taijiquan focuses on driving movements through inner strength rather than relying on pure muscle power. Through relaxation and focused intention, practitioners can mobilize their inner strength to achieve a lighter, more flexible, and powerful performance. Third, Taijiquan requires practitioners to maintain inner peace and relaxation during practice. Through concentration and meditation, practitioners can adjust their emotions, maintain inner peace, and avoid a state of excessive anxiety or tension, thus better mastering the techniques and essence of Taijiquan. Fourth, Taijiquan pursues the unity of consciousness and body. By relaxing the body, practitioners can better perceive and control their bodies, so that their consciousness and movements can be more coordinated and unified, and they can achieve the state of unity of body and mind.[3]

2.2.2 "Rigid but not rigid" - the "pine" of Wushu Xingyiquan

In martial arts, relaxation is a very important concept that encompasses multiple dimensions physically, internally, and consciously. Relaxation is not only a posture in the process of fighting, but also an internalized state through which the martial artist can improve combat effectiveness, reduce the risk of injury, and achieve physical and mental balance and harmony. First of all, relaxation is crucial in the use of the body in martial arts. A relaxed body can better absorb external forces and reduce the risk of injury. When an opponent applies force, if the body can remain relaxed, this posture can absorb and disperse the opponent's force, reducing the pressure on the body while preparing for the next counterattack. In addition, a relaxed body is more flexible, responds faster, and is better able to make changes quickly. In practical applications, such as Judo, Aikido, and other forms of martial arts, a relaxed body state helps to achieve more accurate and effective throwing, wrestling, or scratching techniques. Secondly, in martial arts, inner relaxation is equally vital. Inner relaxation means remaining calm, clear-headed, and free from emotional distractions during a fight. An internally relaxed martial artist can analyze the situation more rationally, deal with the opponent, and remain calm under pressure. This state of inner relaxation helps to improve the martial artist's self-control, enabling him or her to keep a clear head in the heat of battle and deal with situations with ease. In addition, the relaxation of concentration is also an important part of martial arts. In a fight, a martial artist needs to stay alert, but not tense up his nerves. A state of relaxed concentration allows the martial artist to better perceive the enemy's movements and intentions, to catch the opponent's breaks, and to achieve a more precise attack and defense. Finally, it is worth emphasizing that relaxation is not the same as slackness. In martial arts, slackness is about responding better to combat, not about letting go. It needs to be coupled with training to keep the body and the mind in a state of equilibrium, capable of rising to the occasion while remaining dexterous and responsive.

2.2.3 "Loose and unremitting"-The "Loose" of Classical Chinese Dance

As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, Classical Chinese Dance emphasizes the expression of the dancer's inner peace, stability, and elegant beauty. In Classical Chinese Dance, relaxation is a basic physical state and inner quality, which runs through the dance posture, dance technique, and inner expression, and becomes the key for dancers to show themselves and their emotions. In the following, I will elaborate on the use of relaxation in Classical Chinese Dance. First of all, Classical Chinese Dance emphasizes the softness of the body and the elegance of the posture, and relaxation is the basis for achieving this goal. Dancers need to show a light, flexible, and graceful posture through a relaxed body state. Only under the state of relaxation can the body better fit the requirements of the dance movements, complete the beautiful turns and extensions, and show the unique stretching and ethereal beauty of classical Chinese dance. Secondly, in Classical Chinese Dance, relaxation is also an inner spiritual state. Dancers need to express their inner peace and calmness through the inner state of relaxation. In the process of performance, dancers need to face all kinds of emotions and dramatic expressions, and through inner relaxation, dancers can better control their emotions, making the performance more in-depth and connotative, and the audience will be more easily infected by its inner beauty. In addition, relaxation has an important technical significance in classical Chinese dance. Dancers need to stay loose when accomplishing difficult dance movements, which not only reduces the risk of injury but more importantly, makes the dancers look more natural, stretchy, and beautiful in their movements. Finally, relaxation in classical Chinese dance is also closely related to breathing. In the dance performance, proper breathing can help dancers maintain a state of relaxation, which makes the dance posture more fluent and natural. By controlling breathing, dancers can show more vivid and delicate emotions in the dance performance, which makes the audience more easily infected.

3. The Hidden and Outward Appearance of "Relaxation" in Classical Chinese Dance

3.1 *Intrinsic motivation for relaxation*

3.1.1 *"Internal Divinity"-Mind Power*

"Heart strength" is a very important concept in Classical Chinese Dance, which integrates the perfect combination of the dancer's inner state and outer performance, reflecting the deep cultural connotation and unique artistic characteristics of Classical Chinese Dance. In Classical Chinese Dance, relaxation does not simply represent the relaxation of the body, but more importantly, the inner strength and spiritual realm it contains. In the following, I will discuss it from different perspectives. First of all, the hidden strength of relaxation is reflected in the dancer's control of emotional expression. Classical Chinese dance pursues the idea of "calmness", that is to say, to express rich emotions in a state of calmness and ease. Through the inner strength of relaxation, the dancers can show their rich emotions in their dance movements, such as a strong-flexible style, melancholy emotions, or deep joy, which can be shown through the dance movements and leave a deep impression on the audience. Secondly, the relaxation of the hidden heart plays an important role in the dancers' characterization. Classical Chinese dance is often based on traditional operas or myths and legends, and dancers need to interpret various characters with specific connotations through dance. In this process, the relaxed implicit strength of the mind enables the dancers to understand the characters more deeply and vividly present their inner conflicts, struggles, and growth through the dance, making the characters fuller and more vivid, and bringing the audience an immersive feeling. In addition, the relaxation of the hidden heart energy is also reflected in the harmonious interaction between the dancers and the music. Classical Chinese dance emphasizes the close cooperation between the dancers and the music, and through the grasp and expression of the music, it achieves emotional resonance and inspires a more profound artistic effect. In this process, dancers need to maintain inner relaxation to better feel the rhythm and emotional connotation of the music, and integrate it into the dance performance, so that the audience can also feel the emotional resonance of the music when enjoying the dance. In a word, relaxation is an important part of the art of classical Chinese dance with profound connotations. It is not only embodied in the display of dancers' physical skills but more importantly, through the control of the inner state, the dancers can show a richer and deeper artistic expression on the stage, thus enabling classical Chinese dance to show its unique charm and inner beauty.[4]

3.1.2 *"Life essence" – breath*

In Classical Chinese Dance, relaxation is an important form of expression, which requires the dancer to realize the inner motive through the control of breath. Breath plays a crucial role in classical Chinese dance, not only affecting the dancers' movements and postures on the physical level but also mobilizing the dancers' emotions and inner strength on the spiritual level. In the following, we will discuss the intrinsic motivation of breath in classical Chinese dance from two aspects: physical performance and emotional communication. First, in terms of physical performance, breath is the foundation and soul of dancers' movements. By controlling the breath, dancers can adjust the tension and relaxation of the body, making the dance posture more natural and smooth. In Classical Chinese Dance, dancers need to regulate their breathing through deep inhalation and shallow exhalation, so that the body can softly and powerfully show the beautiful dance posture. In the dance, reasonable breath control can help dancers better master the strength and rhythm of the dance, so that the dance posture has more tension and beauty. Secondly, breath is also the medium and carrier of emotional expression. Through the regulation of breath, dancers can express their inner emotions and spiritual realm more deeply. In dance, dancers can present complex emotions such as sadness, joy, grief, and so on through the change of breath, which makes the dance work richer in connotation and emotional resonance. The subtle change of breath can help the dancers convey their emotions to the audience in a real way so that the audience can more intuitively feel the emotional world inside the dancers. In general, relaxation in classical Chinese dance needs to realize the inner motive through the control of breath. Breath plays a vital role in the dancer's physical performance and emotional communication, which not only influences the dancer's posture and movement but also helps the dancer to express his/her inner emotion more intuitively and show a richer and deeper artistic connotation of the dance work. Therefore, breath plays an indispensable role in Chinese classical dance and is one of the important elements to realize the perfect expression of dance art.

3.1.3 *"Kernel of action" – force*

In Classical Chinese Dance, strength is not shown by muscular tension and violent movements, but through the flexibility of the body, inner calmness, and emotional expression. First of all, Classical

Chinese Dance emphasizes soft and graceful movements. Dancers show the beauty and power of the dance through delicate gestures, smooth bodies, and stretching steps. This power does not come from the hardness of muscles but from the perfect control of the body and the release of inner strength. By relaxing in the dance, the dancers make their bodies able to show their inner strength more softly and smoothly, so that the audience can feel the power and depth of an inner strength. Secondly, classical Chinese dance shows inner strength through the expression of emotion. The power in classical Chinese dance is also reflected in the overall temperament and rhythm of the dance. The dancers present a perfect rhythmic beauty through the coordination of their bodies during the dance, and this power comes from inner calmness and concentration, which is shown through the grasp of music and rhythm. In a word, the power of classical Chinese dance is an inner, soft, and emotional power, which makes the dance works more connotative and charming through the control of the body, the expression of emotion, and the display of rhythm. This kind of power not only comes from the dancer's physical training and skills, but more importantly, it comes from inner strength and emotional communication, which brings the audience pleasure and shock in body and soul.[5]

3.2 External manifestations of laxity

3.2.1 "Tension and relaxation"-characteristic display of dance rhythm

In Classical Chinese Dance, the dynamic characteristics embodied in relaxation are mainly expressed in the softness, stretch, and inner strength of the dance postures and movements. First of all, classical Chinese dance is famous for the softness and stretch of its dance posture. The dancers show the softness and smoothness of the dance posture by controlling the breath and relaxing the body during the performance. This softness does not come from muscle tension and strength but is shown through the relaxation of the whole body and the stretching of the dance posture. Dancers do not express strength through violent movements and muscle exertion but show inner strength and beauty through the flexibility of the body and the gracefulness of the dance posture. Secondly, the relaxation in Classical Chinese Dance is also reflected in the inner strength of the movements. The dancer's state of relaxation during the performance enables the body to show its inner strength more softly and fluidly. The dancers' movements do not require overly exaggerated body movements and jumping steps but rather show the charm and connotation of the dance through the state of relaxation and the release of inner strength. Generally speaking, the relaxation in Classical Chinese Dance is mainly reflected in the softness and relaxation of the dance posture and the inner strength of the movement in terms of the characteristics of the dance rhythm. This relaxation not only makes the dance more rhythmic and elegant but more importantly, through the dancers' control of breath and body, the inner strength and emotion are expressed in a more profound and meaningful way. Therefore, relaxation is an important rhythmic characteristic of classical Chinese dance, which makes the dance works have more unique artistic charm and inner strength of classical dance.

3.2.2 "Reinforcement"--The physical expression of dance performance

In the physical performance of classical Chinese dance, relaxation is a very important way of expression, which is presented through the posture, movement, and body language of the dancers. First of all, the dancers will pay attention to the flexibility and fluency of the body in the performance. Through the state of relaxation, the dancer can show the flexibility and stretch of the body, which makes the dance more elegant and rhythmic. The dancers' movements will not be stiff and rigid but will show the beautiful curves and smooth changes of the limbs through the state of relaxation, thus presenting the audience with a sense of beauty and comfortable visual enjoyment. Secondly, the dancers will show their inner strength and emotion through the relaxed state in the physical performance. Compared with exaggerated body movement and jumping steps, dancers will release the inner strength of the body through a relaxed state and express their emotions in a more profound and meaningful way. This inner strength does not come from muscle tension and exertion but from the control of breath and body, which makes the dancer's physical performance more expressive and emotionally resonant. In general, relaxation in the physical performance of Classical Chinese Dance is characterized by the flexibility and fluency of the body, as well as the expression of inner strength and emotion. Through this way of expression, dancers can better show the unique charm and artistic connotation of classical dance, so that the audience can more intuitively feel the noble emotions and inner strength contained in the dance works. Therefore, relaxation plays a crucial role in the physical performance of classical Chinese dance, which gives the dance work a unique artistic charm and inner depth.[6]

3.2.3 "Virtual and Real"-the aesthetic presentation of the dance context

In classical Chinese dance, relaxation plays a crucial role in the expression of aesthetic mood. Through the state of relaxation, dancers can better express the aesthetic meaning pursued by the dance works, including the emotion, inner strength, and artistic realm conveyed by the dance works. First of all, relaxation helps to show inner peace and calmness in classical Chinese dance. Classical Chinese dance focuses on inner tranquility and internalization of emotions, and through the dancers' control of breath and relaxation of the body, it makes the dance more soft and smooth, and at the same time creates an aesthetic mood of inner peace. When the audience watches the dance, they will feel the serenity and peace conveyed by the dancers, thus creating a sense of beauty and emotional resonance. Secondly, relaxation also helps to express a transcendental realm. Through the control of breath and body, the dancers can show a kind of artistic realm that is beyond the chaos and the world. The dancer's relaxation in the dance can make the audience feel a kind of beauty and purity beyond daily life, which makes the dance works present a noble and elegant aesthetic mood. In general, the expression of relaxation in classical Chinese dance for the aesthetic mood is mainly reflected in inner peace and calmness, and the realm of transcendence. Through the control of breath and body, the dancers can convey this aesthetic mood to the audience, so that the audience can more intuitively feel the noble emotions and inner strength contained in the dance works, thus producing a profound aesthetic enjoyment and emotional resonance. Therefore, relaxation is one of the important means to realize the aesthetic mood in classical Chinese dance, which gives the dance works a unique artistic charm and inner depth.

4. The Training Method and Value of "Relaxation" in Classical Chinese Dance Practice

4.1 Relaxed training methods

4.1.1 Mastering the Body with God - The Grasp of Consciousness

Relaxation in Classical Chinese Dance is of great significance to the training of consciousness, which not only requires the dancers to achieve a soft and smooth state physically but also requires the dancers to carry out in-depth self-control and guidance of consciousness psychologically. First of all, relaxation in Classical Chinese Dance requires dancers to master their body state through consciousness training. Dancers need to perceive and control their limbs through concentrated consciousness to achieve the state of relaxing every muscle and bone. This kind of consciousness training not only requires dancers to perceive the depth of their bodies but also requires dancers to be able to accurately grasp the coordination of breath and limbs, thus making the dance movements more natural, smooth, and beautiful. Secondly, relaxation also requires dancers to express their inner emotions and artistic realm through the guidance of consciousness. Dancers need to dig deeper into their own emotions and moods through the training of consciousness and pass these emotions and moods to the audience through physical performance in a real way. This training of consciousness includes the deep experience of emotion and the understanding of the connotation of the dance work so that the dancers can more naturally and closely show the aesthetic meaning and emotional core of the dance work when performing. In a word, the training of relaxation on consciousness in classical Chinese dance is an in-depth cultivation process of the unity of body and mind. It requires the dancers to realize the softness and fluency of the body state through the guidance and training of consciousness, and at the same time express the inner emotion and artistic realm. This kind of training not only improves the dancer's ability to control his/her body state but also cultivates the dancer's deep understanding and ability to express emotion and aesthetic meaning, thus enabling the dancer to more naturally and closely show the inner strength and emotional core of the dance work during the performance.[7]

4.1.2 Longitudinal shape with the body - the control of the body

In Classical Chinese Dance, relaxation is very important for the training of the body. It includes the training of flexibility, strength, and coordination of muscles, bones, and joints. First of all, relaxation training requires dancers to have good muscle flexibility. Dancers need to make their muscles gradually reach a soft and flexible state through stretching and relaxation training so that they can execute more graceful and smooth dance movements. This flexibility training can help prevent dance injuries but also can make the dancer's performance more stretching and beautiful sense. Secondly, relaxation training also requires dancers to have good body strength and coordination. Although relaxation may seem contrary to strength, in dance, through the relaxation and contraction of muscles, dancers can better master their strength and transform it into smooth and graceful dance movements. In addition, coordination training is also a part of relaxation training. Dancers need to improve the coordination of

all parts of the limbs through continuous training, to make the dance movements more coherent and rhythmic. In general, the training of relaxation in classical Chinese dance involves many aspects such as muscle flexibility, strength, and coordination. This kind of training helps dancers to maintain good physical condition and prevent dance injuries and also helps to improve dancers' performance levels and dance skills. Through continuous relaxation training, dancers can show more beautiful and smooth dance movements on stage, bringing more profound artistic enjoyment to the audience.

4.2 The value of slack

4.2.1 Teaching Value--Creating the Body of Classical Dance

Relaxation has an important teaching value in the teaching of classical Chinese dance. Through relaxation training, dancers can enhance the flexibility and agility of muscles, to better master the skills of dance movements and the grace of dance. This kind of flexibility training can not only help the dancers prevent injuries but also make the dancers' dance movements more fluent and natural. At the same time, the relaxation training can also cultivate the dancers' deep perception and control of their body state, which can help to improve the dancers' performance level and dance skills.

4.2.2 Aesthetic value--Exhibition of the beauty of classical dance

Relaxation also has an important aesthetic value in classical Chinese dance. Through relaxation training, dancers can show more rhythmic and stretching dance movements on the stage, which can better express the beauty and elegance of classical dance. After relaxation training, dancers can better combine their inner emotions with their body movements, which makes the dance works more powerful and artistically contagious. This ability to show the beauty of classical dance not only attracts the audience's attention but also brings more profound artistic enjoyment to the audience, thus enhancing the artistic expression and infectious force of classical dance works. To summarize, relaxation embodies the important value of teaching and aesthetics in Chinese classical dance. It not only promotes the physical quality and skills of dancers but also makes classical dance works more rich in connotation and artistic infectivity, making an important contribution to the inheritance and development of classical dance.

5. Conclusion

This paper discusses the importance of "looseness" in the training of classical Chinese dance. It emphasizes that "looseness" is not looseness or relaxation, but a prerequisite for the body to achieve a state of integration. To control the body with the spirit, to control the form with the body. The sense of relaxation is very important for the control of consciousness and body in classical Chinese dance, and at the same time, relaxation training can also enhance the flexibility and agility of muscles, so as to better master the skills of dance movements and the grace of dance posture.

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