

The Return of the Great Goddess – Celebrating her presence with dance

It never was—and yet always is. (Sallust)

The myth of the Great Goddess tells us that cosmic space is her body which brings forth all life, transforms it and re-absorbs it in order to bring forth new life.

In traditional lore dedicated to the Great Goddess she is the projection surface for all human longings and imaginings: "*Tat tvam asi – that is you*" is the essence of her message. In this project a peace mantra from the Vedas is dedicated to her.

The various symbols and signs act as memory models that enable us to orientate our lives. The associated stories, music and rhythms testify to the powers of the Great Goddess.

The movements and dance models shown in this project invite the reader to approach the traditional goddess figures of myth, whom we revere as role models, in a ways of a meditative celebration.

Within the context of our observations the claim of a creator figure loses its validity, having apparently commanded the first humans in the Garden of Eden:

"Have dominion over the Earth and subdue it"(Genesis 1,28).

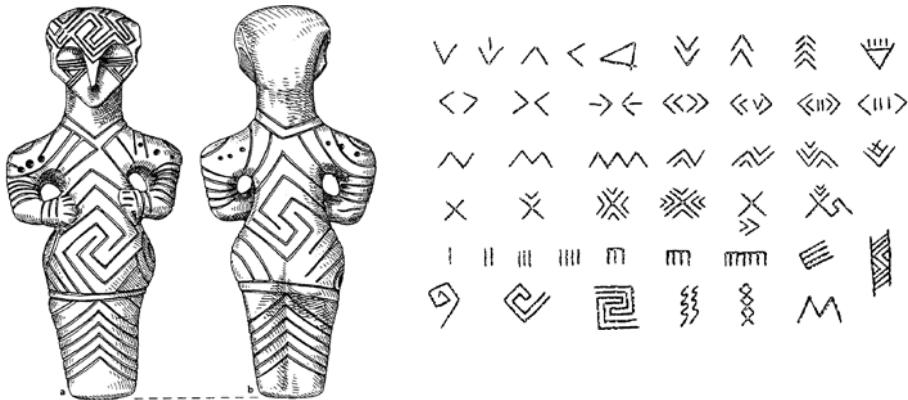
It is more likely that the visitor to the Garden urged the first parents to become "gardeners" in the Garden of Eden and, in face of the divine creation, to celebrate the art of life with songs, music and dance.

Our existence has its origin in the divine dream of creation as the spiritual power that moves the universe. In our time the awareness has grown of experiencing creation as a unity and serving its continued existence. Those who recognise and worship the ancestral Goddess may experience her as the gateway to a dimension beyond time, whereby only the encounter with Death in the "Labyrinth of Life" will result in the perfect human being.

The traces of the dance paths, the legacy of a tradition of worshipping the Great Goddess which stretches back over a thousands of years invites the opening of the spirit to new creative encounters in a guided meditation. As symbolic forms in the re-enactment through movement, they open up the possibility of an experience of the integration into the creative process, in order to reveal the here and now in such a way that it is contained in the perfect present of a breath.

Traditional dances with their rhythms and songs, which have acquired their form over the course of the millennia, are moving symbolic images for all goddess figures born of the human ability to conjure up images. Thus prehistoric figurines with symbolic scratch drawings on the surface of their bodies point to the significance of the content of these images: the Goddess herself is the labyrinth-like path as she is also the true guiding and symbolic figure which shows the way to a life beyond temporal experiences. Those of us who are interested in dance, recognise the many movement patterns copied from Nature as the basic structures of traditional dance forms:

Dreams, formed in the language of the body, are able to concentrate on the essentials by means of moving images. And so we undertake a shared journey to ourselves as we move in meditation.



Figurine of a goddess with movement symbols on her body, Balkan region, ca. 4,000 BC.

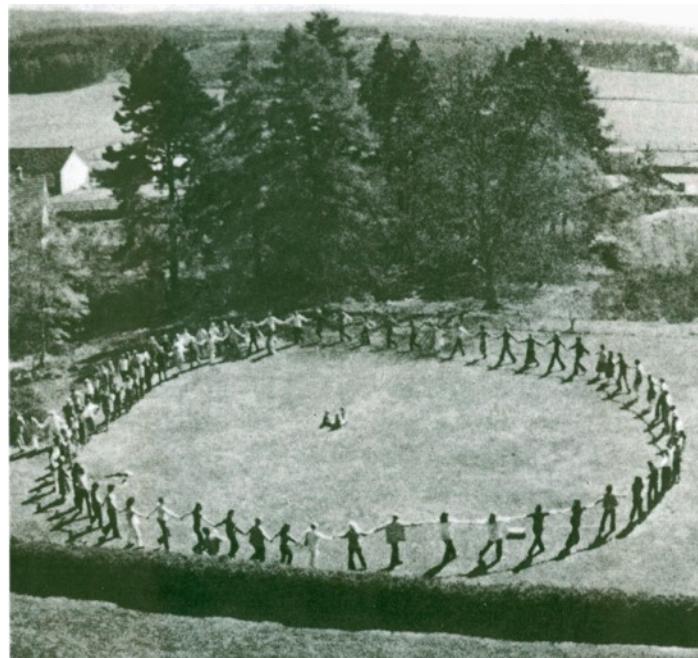
When we dance our way across the Earth, life will spring up from our footsteps and will connect us once more to the original dream of creation.

Dance, as a physical exercise and act of faith, is based on the knowledge that our physical birth must be followed by a second spiritual birth of our innermost being. That means that linear historical time, which we experience physically through the senses, must be adapted to the multilayered dimensions of the soul which link us with eternity and timelessness.

In a meditative state, the subtle or “inner” body, with its multilayered experience levels, can be felt with particular intensity.

In ritual of gestural dance, the body becomes the vessel and instrument of transformation: while the dancer practices lending form to the immortal body, while the energy generated can be expressed by guiding the movements of dance.

Our dance project “The Return of the Great Goddess” incorporates presentations of the triune goddesses of the oldest cultures and their contemporary interpretations.



Traditional dance at the Findhorn Community, Scotland, late 1970's

The dances presented in the project are models of remembrance which appeal to the newly awakened awareness of the presence of the mother goddess.

The chapter “Dreamtime” marks the beginning. Here we recall our first ancestor who spins the thread of light and life. This thread of light, which she receives from the universe, can also be seen as the umbilical cord of souls in expectation of their incarnation.

In the next chapter we introduce the dances and prayers for the Great Goddesses of the Indian cultural region and the Himalayas, dedicated to the goddesses *Mahashakti*, *Kali* and

the *Green Tara*, followed by the chapter on the subject of the triune goddesses *Demeter*, *Kore* and *Persephone* from ancient Greece and the medieval figure of the *Virgin Mary* as mother who passed away and ascended to heaven.

Our thoughts also turn to two archetypical ancestors whom we still recognise as projection figures of timeless longings and visions: *Ariadne* and the *Queen of Sheba*.

In the final chapter we explain by means of two examples of traditional dance the timelessness of the subject of the relationship between humans and the gods:

The movement meditation from the priestly art of Nepalese dance, “*Charya* – dance as a spiritual exercise”, inspired by the figure of *Padmanateshwara*, the symbol of wisdom who dances on the crown chakra of the devotee, and - “*Garba*”, an Indian dance model from the province of Gujarat, that celebrates the partnership in dance of the incarnation of the god *Krishna* with his beloved, *Radha*, the beauty of the world and of all humankind.



Dancing Devi. The Great Goddess executes a graceful dance on a lotus blossom.
India, Rajasthan, ca. 1725, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.