

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva

Ananda Coomaraswamy and The Dance of Shiva: Exploring the Cosmic Symbolism

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva stands as a remarkable intersection between Eastern philosophy, art history, and religious symbolism. This phrase evokes the profound work of Ananda Coomaraswamy, a pioneering scholar who introduced Western audiences to the rich spiritual and artistic traditions of India, particularly through his exploration of the iconic motif known as the Dance of Shiva or Nataraja. In his writings, Coomaraswamy delved deep into the symbolism of this cosmic dance, revealing how it embodies concepts of creation, destruction, and the eternal cycles of the universe.

Understanding Coomaraswamy's interpretation of the Dance of Shiva not only broadens our appreciation of Hindu art but also invites us into a contemplation of universal themes that transcend culture and time.

The Life and Legacy of Ananda Coomaraswamy

Before diving into the Dance of Shiva itself, it's important to grasp who Ananda Coomaraswamy was and why his insights carry such weight. Born in 1877 in Sri Lanka, Coomaraswamy was an art historian, philosopher, and metaphysician who dedicated his life to bridging Eastern and Western thought. He was particularly fascinated by Indian art, mythology, and traditional philosophy.

Coomaraswamy saw art not merely as decoration but as a sacred language, a medium that conveys metaphysical truths. His writings emphasized the spiritual dimensions of traditional art forms and critiqued modern materialistic perspectives. Through his work, he illuminated the symbolic depth behind Indian motifs, including the Dance of Shiva, enabling Western audiences to appreciate these not just aesthetically but as profound expressions of cosmic principles.

What is the Dance of Shiva?

The Dance of Shiva, or Nataraja, is an iconic depiction of the Hindu god Shiva as the cosmic dancer. This image shows Shiva performing the Tandava, a vigorous dance that symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction.

Symbolism Embedded in the Dance

Every element of the Dance of Shiva carries symbolic meaning:

- **The Circle of Fire (Prabhamandala):** Represents the universe's cycle of birth and destruction.
- **Shiva's Raised Left Leg:** Symbolizes liberation and release from ignorance.
- **The Drum (Damaru) in His Right Hand:** Signifies creation and the rhythm of life.
- **The Fire in His Left Hand:** Represents destruction, making way for renewal.
- **The Dwarf Under His Feet (Apasmara):** Symbolizes ignorance that Shiva tramples upon.
- **The Serpent Around His Neck:** Denotes kundalini or spiritual energy.

This complex iconography encapsulates Hindu cosmology and philosophy, portraying Shiva as both the source and the end of all existence.

The Cosmic Dance as a Metaphor

Beyond religious art, the Dance of Shiva serves as a metaphor for the dynamic, ever-changing nature of the universe. It illustrates the balance between creation and destruction, order and chaos — concepts that resonate with modern scientific understandings of the cosmos as ever-evolving. Coomaraswamy's interpretation highlights how this ancient symbolism aligns with universal truths about life, change, and transformation.

Ananda Coomaraswamy's Interpretation of the Dance of Shiva

Coomaraswamy approached the Dance of Shiva not only as an art historian but as a philosopher deeply engaged with traditional metaphysics. He argued that the image of Nataraja is a visual representation of the principle of "rhythm" or cosmic harmony.

The Dance as a Symbol of Cosmic Rhythm

In Coomaraswamy's view, the Tandava dance signifies the rhythmic pulsation of the cosmos — the continuous cycle of manifestation and dissolution. He emphasized that this rhythm is not random but governed by an underlying order, a divine law (Dharma) that sustains the universe.

He wrote extensively about how the dance represents the interplay of the five fundamental activities (Panchakritya) of Shiva:

1. **Creation (Srishti)**
2. **Preservation (Sthiti)**
3. **Destruction (Samhara)**
4. **Concealment (Tirobhava)**
5. **Blessing (Anugraha)**

These five actions collectively explain the cosmic process, and the dance is the dynamic expression of these principles.

Art as a Manifestation of Spiritual Truth

Coomaraswamy also saw the Dance of Shiva as a prime example of how traditional art serves as a vehicle for spiritual knowledge. Unlike modern art, which often focuses on individual expression or aesthetic innovation, traditional Indian art is deeply symbolic, designed to invoke contemplation and inner realization.

Through his essays and lectures, Coomaraswamy urged Western audiences to look beyond surface appearances and understand the metaphysical language encoded in such imagery. His work helped shift perceptions, encouraging a more respectful and profound engagement with Eastern traditions.

The Relevance of the Dance of Shiva in Contemporary Culture

The Dance of Shiva continues to captivate artists, scholars, and spiritual seekers worldwide. Thanks in part to Coomaraswamy's pioneering scholarship, this ancient symbol has found resonance in diverse fields.

Influence on Modern Art and Philosophy

Many contemporary artists and thinkers draw inspiration from the Dance of Shiva as a symbol of transformation and the interconnectedness of all things. It serves as a reminder that destruction is not an end but a necessary phase in the creative cycle, a concept that has relevance amid environmental, social, and personal upheavals today.

Philosophically, the image encourages reflection on the balance between chaos and order, encouraging a holistic worldview that values change as an essential aspect of existence.

In Spiritual Practice and Meditation

For practitioners of yoga, meditation, and Hindu spirituality, the Dance of Shiva is more than an artistic motif—it is a meditative aid and a symbol of inner awakening. Visualizing or contemplating the dance can help deepen understanding of the transient nature of life and encourage surrender to cosmic rhythms.

Coomaraswamy's writings provide valuable context, enriching these spiritual engagements by grounding

them in a comprehensive philosophical framework.

Exploring the Iconography: Tips for Appreciating the Dance of Shiva

If you're new to the Dance of Shiva or want to develop a deeper appreciation for its symbolism, here are some helpful tips inspired by Coomaraswamy's insights:

- **Look Beyond the Surface:** Notice the details—the position of Shiva's hands, the objects he holds, the expressions on his face. Each element conveys specific meanings.
- **Understand the Context:** Familiarize yourself with Hindu cosmology and the concept of Panchakritya to grasp what the dance represents.
- **Consider the Dance as a Whole:** The image is a holistic symbol. Its power lies in the interplay of all parts, not just individual features.
- **Reflect on Universal Themes:** Think about how the dance relates to cycles in your own life or in nature—birth, growth, decay, and renewal.

Engaging with the Dance of Shiva through these lenses can transform your viewing experience from passive observation to active contemplation.

Books and Resources by Ananda Coomaraswamy on the Dance of Shiva

Coomaraswamy's writings remain invaluable resources for anyone wishing to explore the dance in depth. Some noteworthy works include:

- ***The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays*** — This collection contains Coomaraswamy's essays where he elaborates on Indian art and philosophy, including detailed analysis of the Nataraja icon.
- ***Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*** — While broader in scope, this book provides insight into Coomaraswamy's approach to traditional art, including Hindu symbolism.
- Various articles and lectures available through academic archives and online repositories also offer accessible introductions to his thought.

Reading these materials can deepen your understanding of not only the Dance of Shiva but the broader spiritual and cultural context that shapes it.

Ananda Coomaraswamy's exploration of the Dance of Shiva invites us to see art not just as decoration but as a profound expression of cosmic truth. His work bridges East and West, past and present, encouraging a timeless dialogue about the rhythms that govern existence. Whether you encounter the Dance of Shiva in a museum, a temple, or a book, carrying Coomaraswamy's insights with you enriches the experience, turning a static image into a living symbol of the universe's eternal dance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was Ananda Coomaraswamy?

Ananda Coomaraswamy was a pioneering Sri Lankan philosopher and historian of Indian art, known for his influential work in interpreting and promoting traditional Indian culture and aesthetics.

What is 'The Dance of Shiva' by Ananda Coomaraswamy?

'The Dance of Shiva' is an essay by Ananda Coomaraswamy that explores the symbolism and spiritual significance of the cosmic dance of the Hindu god Shiva, highlighting its connection to cosmic cycles and creation.

Why is the Dance of Shiva significant in Indian art and culture?

The Dance of Shiva symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction, representing the dynamic forces of the universe, which is a central theme in Indian philosophy and art.

How does Coomaraswamy interpret the symbolism of Shiva's dance?

Coomaraswamy interprets Shiva's dance as a profound metaphor for the rhythmic process of the universe, where the god's movements embody the eternal cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

What role does the Nataraja iconography play in 'The Dance of Shiva'?

The Nataraja iconography, depicting Shiva as the cosmic dancer, is central to Coomaraswamy's analysis, as it visually represents the theological and philosophical concepts of cosmic balance and transformation.

How did Ananda Coomaraswamy contribute to the understanding of Hindu art?

Coomaraswamy bridged Eastern and Western perspectives by providing deep insights into Hindu symbolism and philosophy, helping Western audiences appreciate the spiritual dimensions of Hindu art.

Is 'The Dance of Shiva' relevant to contemporary spiritual or philosophical discussions?

Yes, 'The Dance of Shiva' remains relevant as it offers timeless insights into the nature of change, balance, and the interconnectedness of life, which resonate with contemporary spiritual and philosophical thought.

Where can one read or find Ananda Coomaraswamy's essay 'The Dance of Shiva'?

The essay 'The Dance of Shiva' can be found in various collections of Coomaraswamy's writings, such as 'The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays,' available in print and through academic or digital libraries.

Additional Resources

****Ananda Coomaraswamy and The Dance of Shiva: An Exploration of Symbolism and Philosophy****

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva stands as a seminal intersection between Eastern philosophy and Western art history, embodying a profound analysis of one of Hinduism's most evocative symbols. As an influential art historian and philosopher, Ananda Coomaraswamy's interpretive work on the Dance of Shiva, or Nataraja, elucidates not only the aesthetic dimensions of this iconic figure but also its metaphysical and cosmological significance. His scholarship bridges cultural gaps, offering a lens through which modern audiences can appreciate the richness of Indian religious iconography.

The Significance of The Dance of Shiva in Hindu Tradition

Central to Shaivism, one of Hinduism's major sects, the Dance of Shiva symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction. The figure of Shiva as Nataraja—Lord of the Dance—captures the dynamism of the universe in perpetual motion. This dance is not merely artistic but is an allegory for the eternal rhythm governing existence itself.

Ananda Coomaraswamy the dance of shiva discussions often highlight how the iconography serves as a visual theology. The image typically depicts Shiva dancing within a ring of flames, balancing on a demon symbolizing ignorance (Apasmara). The multiple arms wield symbolic objects: a drum representing

creation, fire signifying destruction, and gestures denoting protection and liberation. This composition encapsulates complex philosophical ideas about the cyclical nature of time and the interplay of forces shaping reality.

Ananda Coomaraswamy's Interpretation: Bridging East and West

Coomaraswamy's approach to the Dance of Shiva was groundbreaking. At a time when Western scholarship often relegated Eastern art to exotic curiosities, he advocated for understanding Indian art within its own philosophical and cultural context. His writings emphasize that the Dance of Shiva is not just a religious artifact but a universal symbol of cosmic principles.

He argued that the dance represents the synthesis of form and formlessness, motion and stillness, and creation and annihilation—a dynamic balance reflective of the Hindu worldview. Coomaraswamy interpreted the Nataraja as a metaphor for the creative energy inherent in the universe, a concept that resonates with both mysticism and natural philosophy. His analysis drew parallels with Western notions of rhythm and cosmic order but insisted on respecting the symbolic language unique to Indian tradition.

Artistic and Iconographic Features Explored by Coomaraswamy

In his detailed examination, Ananda Coomaraswamy the dance of shiva analysis delves into the specific iconographic elements that define the Nataraja figure. Each component holds layers of meaning, making the sculpture a rich theological and philosophical text.

- **The Ring of Fire:** Symbolizes the universe's cyclical nature, encompassing birth, death, and rebirth.
- **Shiva's Multiple Arms:** Each arm carries symbolic gestures (mudras) or objects that convey protection, destruction, and creation.
- **The Drumming Hand:** The damaru (drum) represents the primordial sound of creation, the origin of time and rhythm.
- **The Fire in the Other Hand:** Represents dissolution and transformation, the destruction necessary for renewal.
- **The Demon Underfoot:** The dwarf-like figure signifies ignorance and illusion, subdued by Shiva's cosmic dance.
- **Shiva's Serene Expression:** Reflects transcendence and spiritual calm amidst cosmic activity.

These features underscore the complexity of the Dance of Shiva, inviting viewers to contemplate not only the visual spectacle but the metaphysical truths embedded within.

The Philosophical Depth: Coomaraswamy's Emphasis on Symbolism

Coomaraswamy's scholarship stresses that the Dance of Shiva is fundamentally a symbolic representation of universal principles rather than a literal narrative. He posits that this icon should be read as an allegory for the eternal cycles of nature and consciousness. In his view, the Nataraja embodies the concept of the universe as a living organism engaged in continuous transformation.

This philosophical perspective contrasts with more reductionist interpretations that might see the image as a mere cultural artifact. Instead, Coomaraswamy invites a holistic understanding, where art functions as a conduit for spiritual insight. His work thus contributes to a broader discourse on the role of symbolism in religious art, highlighting how visual forms can encode complex metaphysical ideas.

Comparative Perspectives: Coomaraswamy and Contemporary Interpretations

While Ananda Coomaraswamy's interpretations remain influential, modern scholarship often builds upon or diverges from his foundational work. Contemporary researchers may incorporate archaeological findings, textual analysis, and ethnographic studies to deepen understanding of the Dance of Shiva's historical development.

In comparison to Coomaraswamy's largely philosophical approach, some current studies emphasize the socio-political contexts in which Nataraja imagery evolved. Others explore how performance traditions of classical Indian dance embody the theological concepts symbolized by Shiva's cosmic dance. Nonetheless, Coomaraswamy's insistence on the symbolic and universal dimensions continues to resonate, especially in global interpretations of Indian art.

The Impact on Art History and Religious Studies

Ananda Coomaraswamy the dance of shiva scholarship significantly influenced Western art history and religious studies by introducing a nuanced framework for interpreting non-Western religious art. His interdisciplinary method combined art historical analysis, comparative religion, and philosophy, setting a precedent for future scholars.

His work encouraged a move away from Eurocentric perspectives, promoting respect for indigenous symbolic systems. This shift has helped integrate Indian art more fully into global art historical narratives, enriching cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation.

Challenges and Critiques of Coomaraswamy's Approach

Despite his pioneering contributions, Coomaraswamy's interpretations are not without critique. Some scholars argue that his emphasis on universal symbolism sometimes downplays the specific historical and cultural contexts of the artworks he studied. Others suggest that his romanticized view of Eastern spirituality may overlook the diversity and complexity within Indian traditions.

Moreover, Coomaraswamy's perspective, shaped by his early 20th-century milieu, occasionally reflects a philosophical idealism that may contrast with contemporary academic methodologies emphasizing empirical evidence and cultural relativism.

Nonetheless, these critiques do not diminish the enduring value of his work but rather invite ongoing dialogue and refinement of interpretive frameworks.

Why Ananda Coomaraswamy the Dance of Shiva Remains Relevant

The enduring appeal of Ananda Coomaraswamy the dance of shiva scholarship lies in its capacity to inspire deeper engagement with Indian art and philosophy. His work serves as a gateway for readers and scholars seeking to move beyond surface-level appreciation toward a more profound understanding of symbolism and cosmology.

In an increasingly interconnected world, Coomaraswamy's insights remind us of the power of art to transcend cultural boundaries and convey universal truths. The Dance of Shiva, as interpreted through his lens, continues to captivate as a symbol of the eternal dance of existence itself.

Exploring this dance through Coomaraswamy's writings not only enriches academic discourse but also invites personal reflection on the rhythms that govern life and the cosmos.

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Coomaraswamy, 1974 -Fourteen Indian essays with preface and introduction by Roman Rolland, incl 34 illust.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: Modern Indian Literature, an Anthology: Plays and prose K. M. George, 1992 This Volume Is Devoted To Plays And Prose Writings, The Task Of Bringing Together Samples Of The Best Of Modern Indian Writing Is Now Complete. The Translations Have Been Done By A Competent Team And Are Sure To Appeal To Lovers Of Literature

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: The Dance of Shiva Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, 1967 The life of Ananda Coomaraswamy was given to interpreting the East to the West, and often the West itself. Throughout these beautifully written, integrated essays he puts forward the Indian way of life as expressed in art and religion, to serve as a lesson to Western peoples who have been caught up in a search for happiness solely through material accumulation. Reminding us of the resources in our own tradition, he suggests that the vigor of European action must be united with the serenity of Asiatic thought if civilization is not to destroy itself. Coomaraswamy's message is particularly appropriate now when many in the West feel that our culture has reached a dead end, and are casting about for a new ideal that can replace that of Faustian man.--Back cover

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: The Dance of Shiva Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, 2023-10-06 There is also a section on Indian music, which is also studied in great detail. Besides, this volume also covers the issue of the status of Indian women, Sahaja philosophy, the intellectual community, Indian youth, and individualism.

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ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: Poems to Siva Indira Viswanathan Peterson, 2014-07-14 Composed by three poet-saints between the sixth and eighth centuries A.D., the Tevaram hymns are the primary scripture of the Tamil Saivism, one of the first popular large-scale devotional movements within Hinduism. Indira Peterson eloquently renders into English a substantial portion of these hymns, which provide vivid and moving portraits of the images, myths, rites, and adoration of Siva and which continue to be loved and sung by the millions of followers of the Tamil Saiva tradition. Her introduction and annotations illuminate the work's literary, religious, and cultural contexts, making this anthology a rich sourcebook for the study of South Indian popular religion. Indira Peterson highlights the Tevaram as a seminal text in Tamil cultural history, a synthesis of

pan-Indian and Tamil civilization, as well as a distinctly Tamil expression of the love of song, sacred landscape, and ceremonial religion. Her discussion of this work draws on her pioneering research into the performance of the hymns and their relation to the art and ritual of the South Indian temple. Originally published in 1989. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *The Iconic Imagination* Douglas Hedley, 2016-02-25 Is it merely an accident of English etymology that 'imagination' is cognate with 'image'? Despite the iconoclasm shared to a greater or lesser extent by all Abrahamic faiths, theism tends to assert a link between beauty, goodness and truth, all of which are viewed as Divine attributes. Douglas Hedley argues that religious ideas can be presented in a sensory form, especially in aesthetic works. Drawing explicitly on a Platonic metaphysics of the image as a bearer of transcendence, *The Iconic Imagination* shows the singular capacity and power of images to represent the transcendent in the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. In opposition to cold abstraction and narrow asceticism, Hedley shows that the image furnishes a vision of the eternal through the visible and temporal.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *Colonial Visions, Postcolonial Revisions* Shanthini Pillai, 2008-12-18 This book offers reflections of the representations of the Indian diaspora of Malaysia according to two spectrums, colonial and postcolonial. It takes seed from the belief that any engagement with the Indian diasporic experience in Malaysia must take into account the role of the pioneer Indian immigrants who carved the niche of existence for the overseas Indian on Malayan soil. It begins by tracing their presence within the terrain of colonial narratives to uncover, not only the ways in which they were subordinated to colonial ideological discourses but also, and more significantly, the suppressed story of coolie resistance that lies under the weight of such masks of conquest. It then moves on to show how postcolonial revisioning is able to reconstruct the Indian immigrants of Malaya as choreographers of the diasporic identity that they have left as the most significant legacy for contemporary Malaysian Indians. This book ultimately reveals the politics of Malaysian Indian identity from colonised to globalised grounds, and the ways in which the subaltern spaces of the former can be reclaimed and reterritorialised in the latter.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *Divine Cartographies* W. David Soud, 2016-07-01 Recent critical studies of late modernism have explored the changing sense of both history and artistic possibility that emerged in the years surrounding World War II. However, relatively little attention has been devoted to the impact of poets' theological deliberations on their visions of history and their poetic strategies. *Divine Cartographies: God, History, and Poiesis* in W. B. Yeats, David Jones, and T. S. Eliot triangulates key texts as attempts to map theologically driven visions of the relation between history and eternity. W. David Soud considers several poems of Yeats's final and most fruitful engagement with Indic traditions, Jones's *The Anathemata*, and Eliot's *Four Quartets*. For these three poets, working at the height of their powers, that project was inseparable from reflection on the relation between the individual self and God; it was also bound up with questions of theodicy, subjectivity, and the task of the poet in the midst of historical trauma. Drawing on the fields of Indology, theology, and history of religions as well as literary criticism, Soud explores in depth and detail how, in these texts, theology is poetics.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *Perspectives On Indian Poetry In English* M.K. Naik, 1984 -----

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ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: Journeys East Harry Oldmeadow, 2004-04-28

This is the first book to treat the impact of religious, philosophical and psychological traditions of the East on Western intellectuals, artists, travellers and spiritual seekers in the twentieth century. Addressed to both general readers and scholars of religion, it is especially valuable for its penetrating and inter-religious analysis of two of the most compelling themes now facing the world: the emergence of cross-cultural religious understanding of the natural order and ecological crisis and the metaphysical basis for both the formal diversity and essential unity of religious traditions of both East and West. The West has long romanticized the mysterious East, but it has, also, judged its traditions as uncivilized. Our notions about Eastern spirituality have been formed by a succession of travellers, scientists, artists, intellectuals, poets, philosophers and missionaries, as well as by Eastern travellers who have spent time in the West. This book helps us to recognize the influence of Eastern ideas upon modern Western thought by tracing the history of engagements between East and West up until the present day. It concludes with a section that helps us to perceive the timeless value of the many Eastern contributions to the West's current intellectual and spiritual state.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell, Daniel W. Conway, 2002-08-08 This collection of essays examines Nietzsche's aesthetic account of the origins and ends of philosophy.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: The Wisdom of the Serpent Joseph Lewis

Henderson, Maud Oakes, 1990-09-04 The tribal initiation of the shaman, the archetype of the serpent, exemplifies the death of the self and a rebirth into transcendent life. This book traces the images of spiritual initiation in religious rituals and myths of resurrection, poems and epics, cycles of nature, and art and dreaming. It dramatizes the metamorphosis from a common experience of death's inevitability into a transcendent freedom beyond individual limitations. This is a classic work in analytical psychology that offers crucial insights on the meaning of death symbolism (and its inevitably accompanying rebirth and resurrection symbolism) as part of the great theme of initiation, of which [Henderson] is the world's foremost psychological interpreter. This material is really the next step after the hero myth that Joseph Campbell has made so popular, and provides an understanding of how not to use the hero myth in an inflated way as a psychology of mastery, but as an attainment progressively to be died beyond. [Henderson] is helped by the presence of Maud Oakes, who is a trained anthropologist with exquisite taste in her choice of mythic materials and respect for their original contexts.--John Beebe

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: **Dancing Culture Religion** Sam Gill, 2012-08-10

In this provocative study of dancing, Sam Gill examines the interpretive styles of a variety of cultural dance traditions in discourse with the philosophic traditions of Schiller, Merleau-Ponty, Barbaras, Derrida, Leroi-Gourhan, and Baudrillard. As a scholar of religion, Gill provides special consideration to the importance of this emerging appreciation of dancing as a perspective inclusive of body and experience. Each chapter delves into the many factions of dancing: moving, gesturing, self-othering, playing, seducing, and masking. Gill also draws on the analysis of contemporary dance films and musicals, his experience as a dancer and dance teacher, his extensive research on dance traditions, and his interest in neurobiology and phenomenology to develop the core of this rich exploration of

“dancing,” the structurality of all dances.

ananda coomaraswamy the dance of shiva: *From the Land of Hibiscus* Yong-ho Ch'oe, 2006-11-30 In 1903, 102 Koreans migrated to Hawai'i in search of wealth and fortune—the first in their country's history to live in the Western world. Thousands followed. Most of them, however, found only hardship while working as sugar plantation laborers. Soon after their departure, Korea was colonized by Japan, and overnight they became international orphans with no government to protect them. Setting aside their original goal of bettering their own lives, these Korean immigrants redirected their energies to restoring their country's sovereignty, turning Hawai'i into a crucially important base of Korean nationalism. *From the Land of Hibiscus* traces the story of Koreans in Hawai'i from their first arrival to the eve of Korea's liberation in 1945. Using newly uncovered evidence, it challenges previously held ideas on the social origins of immigrants. It also examines their political background, the role of Christian churches in immigration, the image of Koreans as depicted in the media, and, above all, nationalist activities. Different approaches to waging the nationalist struggle uncover the causes of feuds that often bitterly divided the Korean community. Finally, the book provides the first in-depth studies of the nationalist activities of Syngman Rhee, the Korean National Association, and the United Korea Committee. Contributors: Yŏng-ho Ch'oe, Anne Soon Choi, Sun-Pyo Hong, Do-Hyung Kim, Lili M. Kim, Richard S. Kim, Brandon Palmer, Judy Van Zile, Mahn-Yŏl Yi.

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