

Sleeve dance

Sleeve dance is an ancient Tajik female dance performed under the frame drum music. The main movement is performed by the long sleeves of the traditional female dress thus it gets its name from. It is performed during major traditional festivals and weddings and is widespread in Mastchoh, Ayni, Kulob, Istaravshan, and other areas of Zarafshon valley. The dance begins by the performers holding their arms on their sides and moving their sleeves in rhythm with their steps and melody played. Then they make various motions by moving their arms but holding their sleeves. The sleeve dance carries huge symbolic

elements such as feeling shy when the dancer holds one sleeve with one hand covers her face or she appears on the stage hold her arms in front of her face with her face covered and slowly then opens her face making facial mimics. The dance motions in this dance are repetitive.

In the version of the sleeve dance popular in Mastchoh ladies use a separate sleeve extension made from a colorful or embroidered fabric of 20 cm long which would be kept out from the underneath of their special overcoat used in this dance. This dance is performed under the drum music or melody of 6/8 rhythmic tact. The dance





involves using had joint in movement from one side to another or separately by spreading the sleeves. The sleeves in dance are moved by the hands to produce different motions.

Long sleeve in the costume of the mountainous population is significant element used as a hand fan or as a pocket. In the past the sleeve dance was performed on the wedding day. The older women in the family would normally perform this dance, which would symbolize that the large and long sleeves were full of happy life and blessings for the new family.

This dance at the end of the 20th century was officially included in the repertoire of the professional dance groups and is performed widely with keeping its regional nature.