

The Study of Social, Political, Ethical, and Athletic Aspects of Qolam Reza Takhti's Life

Mohammad Ehsani, Ph.D

Dept of Physical Education and Sport Science

Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: ehsani@modares.ac.ir

Rasool Nazari, Ph.D Student

Islamic Azad University Naein Branch, Iran

Received: December 6, 2010 Accepted: March 24, 2011 doi:10.5539/ass.v7n7p153

Abstract

Takhti's Life process is a turning point in Iran wrestling history, specially his life created an explicit relation between sport and politic and athletic sociology. Takhti is different from others and athletic generation because he had philanthropic and patriotic moral. Today it seems that we are looking for a special hero who is a leader for having meaningful and philanthropic life, not mundane winning. He lived like others. He was partner of happiness and sadness of people. The athlete is known by picture and commercial names. The hero is know by him/her self but famous by athletes are know by public advertisement. Takhti was famous by public advertisement and commercial propaganda? See that person can go form heroic field to fame field. Indeed, Takhti foster hero characteristics in him. He did not submit to others for special anxiety about lawful country was studied. His life is a multidimensional and complicated phenomenon which is resulted of time and place conditions. We result that the truthfully supporting of society is result of his tendency to support of poor people and unanimity to people whom know him like themselves. Qolam Reza Takhti is an exceptional athlete. He was humble and honor.

Keywords: Social, Political, Ethical, Athletic, Qolam Reza Takhti

Introduction

In this research, have been considered various aspects of Qolam Reza Takhti's life; as well as, different branches of his life which made him a hero and a champion. Almost any aspect of life in Iran including sport is influenced by social, economical, and racial conditions. So it is no wonder that however Iran has so many sport stars, just a few of them have been known as heroes, and just one of them stayed for good in history. The current research is a type of historical research which is done by library method, and interviewing some of Takhti's friends and teammates. As you know the method of historical research like any other way of researching is being used in Humanities. However this method seems to be easy, it requires meticulous, systematic, and universal scientific approach for reviewing historical data and those observed by others.

Qolam Reza Takhti was born in August 27, 1930 in Khani Abad-Tehran in a religious family with low financial affords (Abassi, 1999, p10). He studied in Manouchehri elementary and high school located in Khani Abad for 9 years. He never stood first at school, but living among people and for people taught him some thing that even studying in college and universities could not have taught him these things (Seprdar, 1994, p8)). Qolam Reza started exercising in his teens. At that age, he was tempted to be the champion. Referring to poverty and difficulties in his adolescence, Takhti said in an interview that "however I was fond of sport, I needed to get a job. Living required money. I went to Khozestan for a few years, and worked for an income of 7-8 tomans per day, and I had a hard life" (Safari, 1997, p11).

Sporting aspects of Takhti's life

Takhti was actually acquainted with wrestling in Poulad club. As he saw many sport clubs and he was attracted to humility of athletes, he went to Poulad club and after a while he attracted attention of the manager of the club

Hussein Razi Zadeh. Takhti said about Razi: "He was a good man; if he had found that some one is talented he would not have let him free. We undressed in the warmth of the summer and started wrestling since 2 PM for a few hours. There was no hot bath. Wrestlers went to Khazinh (Old Iranian bathroom) for losing weight, and they filled wrestling mattress with cotton, however, straws were more than cotton. He made a fresh start in wrestling when a new opportunity had been made, and special attention was given during the military service". "When I took part in France championship in 1949, I was thrown to the ground, and then I started to work harder, and it helped me understand the essence of fighting. Although I was eager to win, I knew that working hard is the origin of winning" (Rafaat, 1988, p20).

So, little by little Takhti excluded himself from losers by his perseverance, and finally in 1951 he became a member of Iran national team on 79 kg. However he was only 21 in the first World wrestling championship 1951 Finland, he stood second place. It continued with winning tens of championships and conquering championship platforms in international sport fields. In Finland-Helsinki 1952, he got silver medal in Olympic Games. In the second stage of the World competition, held in Tokyo in 1954, he came forth on 78 kg. Qolam Reza also got silver in Warsaw international festival in 1955. However, the third stage of World Championship which was held in Istanbul brought him bitter experience. Because he was wrestling in heavy weight hands, but he was lighter than his competitors. In Melbourne Olympic Games held in 1956, Takhti appeared on 87 kg once again and got gold medal by defeating all of his competitors. And it was the first time that two champions of America and Soviet were standing lower than Iran in such world considerable championship stand. In 1958 he won gold and silver in Asian games and in World Championship respectively and in Sep 1959 received the third of his world champion title. In Rome 1960 Olympics, the captain of Iran National Team, also the most experienced wrestler, Takhti, who took part in competitions, got silver medal. In Japan 1961 World Competition, "Jahan Pahlevan" Takhti (The world champion, Takhti.) faced his rivals and got his last gold. In the sixth stage of the World Championship held in Toledo-America, he was meritorious, and defended Iran wrestling reputation and finally after tying the game with Madwed, deprived from getting gold for being heavier than his rival for 200g, and satisfied with silver (Kadiri, 2000, p35).

In selecting competition for world tournament, Takhti, the well-known face for technical results and defeating to knockout, also the best wrestler in seventh weight set out for America; however, inappropriate behaviors from some superiors weakened him mentally. Setting off for America, he said to the reporter of Keyhane Varzeshi magazine among a large number of people who came for seeing him off that "nothing can delight me, neither money, medal, gold, nor even the love. I feel ashamed toward these people. By the way how much love I owe you? Why should I travel with team and faced with such meetings. If I knew the answer, I could claim that I'm like others. When someone fails to find what will cause them to be happy, they can't say why they should wrestle and travel with team" (Rooinpour, 1995, p31). Takhti who left there for facing the young seeking for reputation was defeated and afterward kissed the wrestling goodbye for ever. In Iran competition, Takhti succeeded to gain the title of Iran Champion by defeating the blessed Hossein Nouri, and get the armlet and it was repeated in 1957 and 1958 (Raraat, 1995).

Altogether he got ten medals in Olympics, world champion, world cup and Asia including 4 gold's and 6 silvers. He gained one gold and two silvers from Olympics and two gold's and two silvers from the World Championship and one gold from Asia, one silver from world festival and one silver from world cup. Note that, medals gained by the person who preferred the people love better, are being kept in Astan Ghods Razavi museum as a reminder (Abassi, 1998, p56).

Takhti ethical characteristics

Jahan Pahlevan Takhti (the world champion) the most honorable face of Iran sport history, also the conqueror of championship platforms, is a famous person not only in Iran but also all over the world. Despite over 4 decades of the Takhti's last presence in the World Championship, as well as Olympics and years over of his death, his name is still shining among the most famous wrestling champions in Olympics. No doubt, the secret of such popularity and matchless remaining should be sought in his ethical and obvious human characteristic and in his loyalty toward people not in the medals he gained. After Takhti, there were many champions who dreamed obtaining Takhti's position by gaining the world championship medals and imitating his behavior toward people. And they succeeded to obtain the title of the World Champion for a while, but they never owned people's heart (Sajadi and Moradian, 2008, p123).

Takhti, who grew up in a religious family, was a righteous and faithful from the very beginning in his teens. He had purified faith and highly respected the religious law and he never overlooked praying or fasting. He often went on pilgrimage on Friday night and had special attention to Holy Imams, specially the eighth Imam. At

every opportunity or before going out of country, he went to Mashhad for making pilgrimage. It is quoted from his relatives that, when he stepped into holy shrine, he became completely another person. He behaved in a way that every one was influenced. Whenever he was setting out for sporting purpose, he went to Mashhad, and resorted to Imam Reza (A.S). However many people from physical education bodies of the province and the superior welcomed him, he preferred visiting his friend hero Vafadar (Behmanesh, 1988, p31).

Babak Takhti who knows his father from people's narration says: "There are so many diaries about his helps. From helping newly-wed mate who were paralyzed to helping a jobless young man buy a stall and etc. Whenever he was given a present from Rail Way Company (his work place) or other organizations, bestowed it to those he adopted secretly without opening it. After his burial ceremony, one of his friends saw that an old woman is looking for someone in the corridor of wrestling federation, he asked her about it, and she said, I don't know. I'm looking for a person whose body is like athletes, he helped me, but I haven't seen him for a few days, I bet I can find him here. Or the young man who unveiled this secret that he had helped a family out of poverty". Referring to the liking and sympathy people had in reciprocated toward Takhti, Babak considers people's behavior like theirs in the past. "one time that my father was coming back to Iran from Germany with his private car, an Iranian student who wanted to send his German wife back to Iran, met Takhti in Frankford and entrusted her to Takhti, but apparently there was some thing wrong with his car, and Takhti said stated that your wife can come with my friend's car. But that student insisted that she should come with you. And she finally came to Iran with Takhti" (Abassi, 1998, p18).

Actually Takhti was a matchless body. Wrestling provided a safer and calmer situation for showing mannish roughness. Indubitably, Takhti's prosperities cause teenagers from slums to find that wrestling can save them temporarily or permanently from poverty or related social sicknesses. However there is always the danger of analyzing such description about champions as an honest face. Qolam Reza Takhti as an athlete owns matchless skills which can scarcely find in anyone else, and prosperity in their major permits them to use their credit beyond the sport dominion. About Takhti, it is considerably includes elements of a heterogeneous society in Iran. His life was based on manliness and merit. And his life can be defined with a fundamental sense of respecting toward anyone who had contact with him. The way by which he attracted attention was different and he was the image of some controversial aspects in Iran. Like many sport characters, Takhti's life was synchronized with making an aim for his proponents and providing temporary calmness in racial-denominational cycle as a counter part against the triteness in daily life. Champions become famous among the competitors of individual sports, as their abilities in obtaining the best will be improved in loneness. In wrestling which is among the roughest sport, the Hero Takhti was influenced by his innate manliness, ethical factors and his stable spirits. Undoubtedly, he like any other sport star reflected his local, racial and individual characteristics as well as his experience in sport scenes (Karimbakhsh, 1996, p45).

Manliness and human characteristics in Takhti which have roots in his beliefs were on everyone's tongue who knew him. There are so many stories in this regard. Alexander Madwed, the famous soviet wrestler and sturdy opponent of Takhti narrated an interesting story about it. "In 1962 competition held in Toledo America, Takhti and I met in final competition. During this stage of competition I hurt my right leg badly and my spirits sank. I didn't know how to wrestle with him with such hurt leg. That time I wasn't aware of his ethical characteristic and his high behavior. But I referred to all of these in that competition and I was really influenced. As he heard that my right leg was hurt, he never attacked me in right leg. He wrestled manly to the last moment, and never took advantage of my hurt leg. Takhti showed that he is a real athlete. After that, we became close friends. He loved me. He also loved his peoples, and I think he lived just for them. I had the honor of being his friend. He wrestled technically and very well, and I took so many lessons from him. On the mattress we were 2 diligent opponents, but 2 inseparable friends. Takhti can be a good example in sport and behavior for your teenagers" (Sajadi and Moradian, 2008, p123).

The great Iranian myth, the athlete whose name has been put on the most stadiums of Iran, the athlete to whom so many has written, and mark his memory. Takhti whose name is accompanied with Jahan Pahlevan (the world champion) and no one but him deserves this title. The time Iran was experiencing its first prosperities, and champions were ordinary people who lived among people with no vanity, the time that there was no TV and people became aware by radio, and the time there was no sport newspaper, just great characters in sport were Iranian contentment. The successes of these champions were the only stimulus of poor people. He was a man who never became arrogant in his dignity. He always appeared in the mattress just for his peoples. He was interested in helping people and his heart beat only for calmness and convenience of people. Takhti was a symbol of manliness; it was his athletic behavior that made him unforgettable. All of the world respect his

ethical values and athletic character, and know him as the most prominent athlete. He is a great example for those teenagers who didn't touch his bravery (Behmanesh, 1988).

Political aspects of Takhti's life

The first and the most terrible event that effected his childhood and made it unforgettable for him was that his father was obliged to pledged their house. It is important to note that Pahlavis seized 30 acres of his grandfather's lands for railway. Takhti was humanism. It is said that once university students got together in Tehran University, and the university was surrounded and it was not possible to go and come. Takhti went into university with food in his hand. The security guards knew him and no one asked him because the amount of food was not too much. In fact he entered the university by different entrance and distributed the food (Nazari and Shayesteh, 2010, p53)

He was aware of poor people likeness toward himself. When he was asked by foreign and domestic correspondent which medal is the most valuable he answered: "the best award and present I have gotten is not silver or gold medal. One's heart is more valuable than thousands of gold medals and I know that I have small place in the heart of thousands of thankful people". Through his life, Takhti begged only once, that was for people, and people helped him. Aug 1962, a few days after the earthquake in BobinZahra, While Takhti and some of his friends were looking at disastrous results of earthquake through newspapers, they talked about the reasons of lacking help and the fact that people don't care about helping. Some of Takhti's friend believed that people are careless about such disaster, and they don't really want to help them. Takhti who was aware of the purified character of people, said: "the reason that people don't care about helping is that they don't trust the government and those who were responsible for collecting the helps". These debates, also one of his friend's disagreements cause Takhti to make his mind. Takhti decided to do something by himself. Not to prove his statements but to be agent of raising helps for charity. The day after that he went to ValiAsr Junction without announcing and decided to gather people helps for victims of the earthquake. The amount of helps was matchless. Mahmoud Rafeat, one of Takhti's friend and the writer of "Takhti, unforgettable man" narrated this story as below: "People, who heard from others, came and helped as much as they could. Some university students took off their coats and put them on other clothes, pedestrians helped from what they had with them or at home, from blanket, dishes, to jewelry. Among these people, there was an old woman who gave her veil (Chador) and kissed him in his forehead and said to him: "God bless you for remembering disastrous people, god make you a man of honor. I'm ashamed that I don't have anything else. Pahlevan gave it back to her as his eyes were filled with tears. That old woman put it again on the helps and as she was bored at his insistence, said to angrily: "we poor don't have right to help". He went crimson and said "don't say this; you are richer than any other one. You have right because you are open-minded and soft-hearted". As the old woman saw that he became red, went back (Roeinpour 1995).

He lived among people and like them. He felt sympathy for all people, shared their sadness and the happiness of his winning. And absolve their sadness by winning. Many oppressed people were compensated by his power and forgot their wishes just for his name, and instead, sought their aims in manliness of Takhti who never betrayed them. We remember how he refused Pahlavis' invitation for taking pictures. He had pictures with people oppressed by the tyrant instead. And it is why he became little by little a stable myth. Takhti's manliness and his character which had roots in his beliefs were not limited just too social levels. Jahan Pahlevan (pouryaie Vali), showed his high nature in sport events. His life attracted fans of sport. However, his life can not be summarized in wrestling. A study of his life shows us his love toward people. In his last interview he knew holy Imams, the secretes of his prosperity. "I learned from Imam Ali (A.S) that we should be resistant to life difficulties, and doing the best for being successful, and appeared in events just by putting trust in God. I have done the same, and became prosperous. But not the prosperity I really wanted, because some people didn't let me. Having a spartan life and satisfaction were among his characters. In spite of the financial problems he had because of the regime pressure, not only he refused tempting offers but also distributed his small salary among needy wrestler and students, as he loved them. People honestly returned his favor too. Despite over years for his death, new generation who didn't see him or his wrestling but heard of him, are interested so much in him and mark his remembrance. There has been better wrestler than Takhti, but people weren't interested in him for his style. There have been also many champions, but Takhti got the medal of humanism. Helping the needy people is one of his obvious characters, which can be found in so many narrations (Behmanesh, 1988).

Social aspects of Takhti's life

Regarding Takhti's profile, and studying his sensitive, social and cultural reaction to his prosperity. If we believe that, wrestling is just wrestling and nothing else; in fact we limit it to fighting and overlook its social importance. However, Takhti's life was a turning point in the history of Iran wrestling, and specially made obvious

relationships between sport and politics, also sport and sociology. It continues until a wrestler from Khani Abad Tehran went toward reputation. What distinct Takhti from other sport generation is that he was charitable and patriot. However, different kind of sport in Iran aims at focusing on the fact that a society is superior to the other, wrestling has potentially the power of overcoming this opposite relation. If you want to come to a fact about wrestling, it can be said that Takhti was fond of humanism. All people from athlete to ordinary people respect him. Among celebrities; Ayatollah Taleghani, Dr. Chamran or Jamshid Mashayakhi the Iranian actor put him as an example for their life.

It is the nature of people culture that studies about contemporary champions. Tannsjo stated that we seem to look for a more sensitive champion who is busy not just for worldly winning but for directing people in the spiritual path. However, we seem to need a lantern with many lights in this way. Purified thought is not sufficient, nor is absolute cleverness, humbleness, the sense of contemplating. So what was special with Takhti who had all these together? Confirmed that the character of athletes should be found in their cultural texture in order to make their credit meaningful and their effect on society understandable (Holt and Mangan, 1996). We know the athlete, a person who is encouraged for the obtained situations and considered an example or an ideal person (Novak, 1993). He claims that a champion is the symbol of a dream in which the ordinary life goes beyond every other thing. Stated, most stories in the culture of nations showed the boys of that time heroes and considered the problems solvable through ethical bases (Alexander, 2000). No sport but wrestling provide the conditions for showing manliness based on its fighting nature. Where symbols like flag, slogan, and nation itself are considered sacred, those who are in this trend like to be replaced (Tannsjo, 2000). The question he raised in his essay is "is praising the champions a kind of nation-orienting?" In spite of his opponent's praiseworthiness, praising Qolam Rezaas a wrestler and a person is confined to recognizing personal prosperity.

Praising the winner brings the loser's humiliation, is basically criticized (Mary, 1995). In spite of Takhti's praiseworthiness as a wrestler, he respected his opponents because of the lessons he took. A famous athlete is a person who is known for his reputation (Boorstin, 1992). Champions are distinguished based on their prosperities. A well-known athlete is known by his mark. However heroes make themselves, a well-known athlete becomes famous by the help of the media (David, 2005). The question can be asked here is that "is this right about Takhti?" did he become famous by the media or the commercial or relationships. It can be removed from Takhti based on sporting, social, ethical, and political events. However it is comprehensible that a person can go beyond both of these or at least goes from championship to reputation. In fact Takhti as a champion who was growing athletic character in himself fasted for reputation, and because of that he never was dependent on any other one. In these circumstances, it is surly includes the level of patriotism, unities, his concerns about Iran.

The death of the myth

Retirement is a disaster for champion of not only Iran but also the world. If they were not included as professional coach, they would feel awful. But here is Iran and the myths are killed like Rostam Dastan. The great men deserve martyrdom. And no wonder if mythologists give it a special effect. Did Takhti pass away? Did he commit suicide? Was he killed? Or it was the mythologist who killed him in their mind. They have been questions on every one's lip for years and passed to generations to unveil the secret of his death. Sep 1967, was the day of a great sadness, the day in which people went to pieces. That day, announcing of the fact that he passed away made every one sorrowful. He was a champion in people's heart. People knew him as the symbol of ethic, brevity, courage, generosity, devotion, and manliness. He had people's love in his heart and kept it until the last day. He was buried by a large group of people, as they were weeping all the day. And all of them were astonished at his death. The secret of his eternity was that, he lived among people as he had two inseparable links. A link to God and a link to people. Takhti was just Takhti and nothing else. Because he was the peoples' wish, but not a champion or a writer, or an athlete. He has been the symbol of our history, and a righteous man, also a fighter and aim-oriented. He is not among us anymore, but his way can be followed. Today, people cry out for honesty. And Takhti was from a generation who held a lantern to show us the right way. Every December, people from different cities come here to show that despite over years, they still know him a real champion. And they have engraved his name on their heart (Abassi, 1998, p97).

Conclusion

The world of unpredictable heroes. Iran is now the world of myth and epic. And by the right comprehension of Takhti's life, they should be described as a multi aspect and a complicated phenomenon which is the product of the same temporal and local events. as a conclusion, Takhti's capacity in attracting people's support was the result of his trend to support vulnerable people, and a sort of sympathy whose example is BobinZahre earthquake. Living among people and for them taught him some thing that studying in the most valid universities couldn't have taught him. Life, also taught him to like people and help them as much as he can. His prosperity in his first presence in the World Champion which was less than two years after he had begun wrestling is the best evidence for his perseverance, faith and attempt, also his talent in wrestling. The only fact among all anecdotes in

wrestling is that Takhti was a real fighter. He was famous just for his merit and manliness. He was thankful to the values that formed the first stage of his start. And he reflected the effect of his coach and family, who were his eagerest supporter. In fact Takhti as a champion who had all characteristic of an athlete in himself fasted for reputation and because of that he wasn't ready to be dependent on others. In such circumstances, it surely includes studying the level of patriotism and unities and his concerns about Iran. It can be said that Takhti himself was the reason of his prosperities. He never accounts on his teammate's support nor was he provided special supports. Rising to the peak of world wrestling was the experience he got. Not only he was manly on wrestling mattress but also he was vulnerable toward those people who became discouraged at losing the game. All of his championship pictures are among the best. Because he grew up in slums of Tehran. Some districts in Tehran are known as the economical and social poor areas, because of high level of unemployment. He made these people strong and paid a little attention to complicated elements of wrestling, and more attention to people's power instead. He was a man like us in some respects. He was a person who reminded us the fact that we are human. However, his life rekindles that champions' life, despite the sporting aspect, has echo. And bridging the gaps was special with Takhti. And this ability stimulated the blessed Ali Hatami to make a movie about him. A project that remained incomplete because of his death until Behrooz Afkhami continued it and named it JahanPahlavan which won many awards in 1998 Fajr Festival. In fact, champions are from low level of the society and are given special attention. Qolam RezaTakhti as a special athlete is described in different ways. He was meek, purposeful, and honest. A person who appeared from the worst conditions to attain reputation. And brought all people close to each other by his behavior in order to make Iran more flourishing, as every one had wished.

References

- Abass, F. (1998). *Takhti' Life and Death in the Mirror of the Documents*. Tehran, Jahan Ketab Publication.p18-97.
- Abassi, M. (1998). *History of Wrestling in Iran*. Tehran, Majid Publication, second edition, p.56.
- Abassi, S. M. (1999). *Life and Death of Takhti*. Tehran, Jahan Book Publication, p.10.
- Alexander, J. S. (2000). The feminine hero of the Silence of the Lambs, in Kittelson the soul of popular culture. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, p.51.
- Behmanesh, A. (1988). *Jahan Pahlavan: I bow to the people*. Tehran,Bita, Chapar, Publication, p.31.
- Boorstin, D. (1992). *A guide to pseudo-events in America*. New York, 1992, p.57.
- David, H. (2005). A Champion inside the Ring and a Champion Outside it. An Examination of the Sociopolitical Impact of the Career of Barry Mc Guigan. *Sport in History*, Vol. 25, No. 2, August 2005, p.9.
- Holt.R and Mangan, J.A. (1996). Prologue: heroes of a European past. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, pp. 1-13.
- Kadiri, D. (2000). *From Khani Abad to bottom of People's Heart*. Cultural Duty of Physical Education Organisation of Iran. Tehran Nasher, p.35.
- Karimbakhsh, M. (1996). *Takhti is History of sport*. Tehran, Motazedi Publication, p.45.
- Khori, M. (1998). *Poems and articles about Takhti*. Tehran, Mehr Publication, p.22.
- Mary L. K. (1995). *The soul of popular culture*. Chicago, p.8.
- Michael N. (1993). *The joy of sports,* in C.S. Prebish, ed., Religion and sport: Themeeting of the sacred and the profane (Westport, CT, 1993).
- Nazari.R and Shayesteh. M.R. (2010). *Takhti, a man whose medal gained by the people*. Esfahan, Elmafaren published, p.53.
- Rafaat, M. (1988). *Takhti who is the man always lives*. Elm Publication, Tehran, second Edition, p.20.
- Roeinpour, B. (1995). *Jahan Pahlavan Takhti*. Published in Book Institutes, p.31.
- Saei, M. (2007). *Historical research method and applied in public relationship sciences*. Research Centre of Humanities.
- Safari, M. A. (1997). *Story of Jahan Pahlavan Takhti*. Tehran, Namak Publication, p11.
- Sajadi, N. and Moradian, K. (2008). *Jahan Pahlave Takhti' life*. Traditional Federation Publication, p.123.
- Sepidar, A. (1994). *Tear of Hero*. Tehran, Piroz Publication, p.8.
- Tannsjö, T. (2000). *Is it fascistic to admire sports heroes?* in Torbjorn Tannsjöand Caludio Tamburrini, eds., Values in sport (London, 2000), pp. 9-23.