



## DANCE IN ANCIENT LITERATURES

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### Abstract

For a performance to achieve its comprehensiveness an essential factors is vernacular speech. If dance is to achieve completeness, one has to performs with music and lyrics to convey the meaning of the play properly to all genres of audience and mesmerize them. “Nātya Dharmi” (mārgi) means adhering to certain principles and rules, with treatises, taking into consideration worldly matters, one has to follow the sastra and apply to literature or epics. ‘Lōka Dharmi’ (Desi) is belonging to certain regions with their traditions, and performing Desi style and folk dances in a natural way. Though the languages may be different and the regions may be distinct, what brings unity among human beings is the feeling of nationality when humans follow this path and try to reach God through music and dance facilitate the path of liberation.

**Key words:** literature,Nātyam,Nātya Dharmi,lokadharmi,Āngikābhinaya.....

### SANSKRIT LITERATURES: (LAND (LAKSHANA AND LAKSHYA GRANDHĀ-S)

#### Bharata’s Nātya Sāstra (Sanskrit)

Bharatā’s Nātya Sāstra is the basis for all the Indian Classical art forms. It also known as “Shat Sahasri” which consists 6000 slokas. It is believed that Bharata’s Natya Sasta belongs to 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., some say it is even more ancient this is belonging to 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. legend that Bharata is not the person, many other have contributed to write this treatise. According to Pānini’s sutras, there is also have mention of Silali’s and Kusasva’s Nata Sūtras<sup>17</sup> before Bharatha.

Yāmālastaka Tantra<sup>18</sup> it is believed that before Bharata there are 36,000 sloka-s treatise Yāmālastaka Tantra of Adi Bharata. Bharata’s Nātya sastra consists of 12000 slouches, which has been compressed into 6,000 slokas. The consolidations of this is in Sāradā Tanaya’s Bāva Prakāsam. This includes of drama, dance, music, instrumental music,



grammar, rasa and many aspects of dance. This later became a reference point for dance and literary experts.

### **Abhinaya Dharpanam (Sanskrit)**

After Bharata's Nāṭya Sāstra, a treatise which is on dance is Abhinaya Dharpanam. Nandikeswara is the author of this text. The whole text is in the form of poetry. In this specifies of Nrthyam, Nrītyam and Nāṭya are written about.

In 'Nāṭya Sāstra' only the word 'Nrutyam' and Nāṭyam were used. But Nandikeswara has described about the new term Nrutyam along with Nrṭtam, and Nāṭyam. In his abhinayadarpanam, particularly body postures and hand gestures have been described. Further, four types of abhinaya has been described.

He has talked about lāsya and tāndava well. The human body broadly consists of the head, the torso and the limbs called Anga. Further each parts has divided is called prathyanga, it further sub divided into vpangangas. How these are to be practiced in dance has been described. In dance, distinct positions and movements of various parts of the body are called bhedas like sthanakas, mandalas, charis, uthplavanas, sirō bdha-s (head movements) dristibēda-s (eye movements), Greeva bhēda-s (neck movements), Brubhēdas (eyebrows movements), hastābinayas(hand gestures)

Pāthralaksanam (characteristic of dancer), sabhalakshanam (characteristics of stage), kinkini laksana, (characteristics of anklets) have been explained. Another treatise written by Nadikeswara Bharatarnavam. In this too dance related and other aspects of dance have been explained.

### **Sangīta Ratnākaram (Sanskrt)**

Sanrangadeva<sup>17</sup> is a native of Kashmir belonging to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He worked as an accountant with the king of the yadava dynasty Singhana-II. He was written about Mārgiya and Dēsi music traditions as well as the dance in his treatise Sangīta Ratnākara. This text has been divided into 7 parts. The 7<sup>th</sup> chapter is about dance. It comprises of sources of dance, divine aspects of dance, about angikabhinayam, sirobhida-s, samyukta,



asamyukta hastha-s, 108 karānas about Mārgiya and Dēsi dance traditional, about lāsyā, suddha paddhati about satvika abhinaya (emotions).

### **Bhāva Prakāsam (Sanskrt)**

Sārada Tanaya<sup>20</sup> is from Kashmir. He has written that Rasa-s (sentiments) help in savoring the essence. He has said that Natya is rasa and rasa is natya. After Bharata, he has improvised rasa. He has explained about all the pre- requisites of Rasāswādhana. The dēsi and mārgi traditions have also been explained in Bhāva Prakāsam. He has further enunciated about Nāyaka, Nāyika distinctness Dasa Rūpaka-s, nata (dancer), prēkshaka (audience), grammatical rules, traits of sculpture, hand gestures two hand gestures, dancing arcane decorations, about native languages and foreign languages have all been talked about.

### **Nātya Darpan (Sanskrt)**

Rāmacandra and Gunacandra have writers of Natya Darpan. They are both disciples of Hemacandra. They are Jain monks Natya Darpanam is a treatise of dance and drama. In this there is description of professions, sentiment, emotions, and four types of Abhinaya.

12 rūpakas of dissertation, traits of dance drama have been written about.

In the treatise nine rasas have been delineated in two divisions. Rasa- s related to happiness are:

1. Srngāra – Romance
2. Hāsyā – Humour
3. Adbhutha – Wonder
4. Shānta – Peace
5. Vēra – Heroic
6. Karuna – compassion
7. Bhayānaka – Frightful
8. Roudra – Anger



## 9. Bibhastha – Disgust

Apart from the about Sātvikābavas (emotions) and Sātvikāsanubavas (emotions which experienced) which are gentleness have been written.

### Rasārṇava Sudhākaram (Sanskrt)

Rasārṇava Sudhākaram means an ocean of honey. The author of this text is Singha Bhūpala who belonged to the period 1300 A.D. He has described the text as three resplendences (vilasas), the first is about the genesis of dance, the traits of rasa, the characteristics of Nāyaka and Nāyika have been elucidated. In the second about erotic feelings and consistent emotion, the uses of Sanskrit and Prākṛt languages in the making of a good text has been talked about and third about rupakas.

### Kalidāsa nātakatram

Kumāra Giri Reddy belonging to the period 1386-1402 A.D. was a great patron of performing arts. He has been honored with karpūra vasanta rāya. He has to said that vasanta rājīyam is about the tradition of dance. His brother-in-law kātayavema is believed to have written a foreword for Kālidasa-s texts based on vanta rājīyam drama. He has also said a sloka about the courtesan Lakumādevi<sup>22</sup>.

### Ṣṅgāra Prakasa (Sanskrt)

Bhōja Maharāj belonged to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. He has written about drama and that he stated in the text ṣṅgāra is the only rasa. He has described about Alankāra sastra (Metaphor). In this, Ānandhvardhana's Dvanyāva lokanam (treatise), vṛṭti, prouṇvṛti, doshas, has been discussed.

### Nrṭta Ratnāvali (Sanskrt) – 1290 A.D.A

The author of Nrṭta Ratnāvali, Gīta Ratnāvali is the descendent of the Kākatiya dynasty Jāyapasēna. He gave the prominence for Nrṭta and named his treatise as Nrṭta



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Ratnavali. He included dēsi mārgi aspects of dance, anga, abinaya, mukhajābhinaya<sup>23</sup> and cēstakṛta abhinaya. Based on the antiquity of dance, that which is performed with anga, pratyanga and upanga with swara-s and jathis is called Nrṭta. Apart from explaining about mārgiya music, he has also talked about Desi music with appreciation. He has mentioned about Dēsi chārulu, bhomyachārulu, Dēsiākāsa chārulu, (all these are pertaining to the ethnicity of Dēsi Nṛṭyam), about prēriṇi dance tradition, traits of gati, and about different types of dances. Based on the previous narratives were nrṭta and nrṭya is nāṭya. Since Jāyapasena has given importance to Angikābhinaya the text was appropriately ‘Nrṭta Ratnā vali’. This dance is Gātra Vikshepaka Nrṭya.

### **Gīta Gōvindam (Sankrt)**

Jayadeva belongs to the village Kindhu Bilwa. He has written about Rādha and Kṛṣṇa’s love story in 12 sarga 24 asta padi-s, Sambhōga, Vipralamba eroticism in an exquisite way. This text can be compared with Aswaghosha, Bhavabōthi, Kālidasa, Kṣēmēndra and Sri Harsa’s writings. When Jayadeva sang this kāvya, his wife Padmavati Devi danced. Gīta Gōvinda can be considered under Madhura Bhakti genre.

### **Rasa manjari (Sanskrt)**

This text was written by Bhānudatta belonging to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In this he wrote about Nāyika – Nāyaka, Astavidha Nāyika avastās and about sṅgāra.

### **Mānasōllāsam or Abhilashithardha cintāmani:**

Based on the Dēsi tradition and dance related features, Tholkappiam, Pancamarabu, Kootanul, Nrṭta ratnavali, and Sangīta Ratnākara 7<sup>th</sup> chapter it has been explained. Among these Manollāsam is also one. It has been written by the Salukya King Sōmeswara III. He belongs to the region of Karnataka. He viewed dance as a source of entertainment. This treatise has been divided into five parts (Vimsathies). They are Gīta, Vinōdam, Vādyā Vinōdam, Nrṭya Vinōdam, Kathā Vinōdam, and Camatkāra Vinōdam.

Among these the fourth Vimsathi (part), fourth about is Nrṭya Vinōdam. In this he has described on what occasional dance is performed. For instance, in happiness, in victory, and competition as part of festivities.

These dance are replete with body gestures. They are Nāṭya, Lāsya, Tandavam, Lāghava, Visama, Vikata. The dancers are called nartaki, nata, nartaki. In this manner based on the



margiya tradition. Bharatas Natya Sastra, Abhinaya Darpanam, Abinava Bhārti, Dananjaya's Dasarūpaka, Silappadikāram, Bhārata Sēnāpatēyam, Bhāva Prakāsam of SārādāTanaya and many more texts it has been included. There are many dissertations which have written about aspects of dance which have been arranged **ordarell** and a special status has been accorded to them. Mānasōllasa is among the prominent, as well as Nrta Ratnāvali, which are exemplars of Desi tradition.

### Uttara Rāma Caritram (Sanskrt)

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Bhavabhūti had written Uttara Rāma Caritram which is embellished with Karuna rasa.

Bhavabhūti stated that Bharatās is the base for three art forms Abhinava, rāga, tāla (thourya trika sootra kartha<sup>24</sup>).

### Mālavikāgnimitram (Sanskrt)

Mālavikāgnimitram is one of the three love poems, written by Kālidāsa of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. In this Kālidāsa described love between Mālava Kingdom princess Mālavika and King Agnimitra. He described how she forced to become maid and how she learnt dance, and Kalidasa described Malavika's "chilitha nrutyam"<sup>25</sup>(graceful dance) very appealingly. In Vikramorvasiyam, he has written about Astarasa-s, about the celestial dancers practice. The description of women and dance in Kalidasa-s writings are exquisite.

## PRĀKRTAM LITERATURE

### Gādha Sapta Sathi (Prākrt)

Splendours of classical dances of Andhra Pradesh. From 200 BC to 200 C.E, during the reign of the Sāthavahana-s, Hala the Sātavahana ruler wrote 700 stories.<sup>26</sup> The collection of these stories is Gatha Sapta Sathi. In this it has been written about the life style people of these times and the romantic (sṛṅgāra) tales of men and women, the village folk life pattern, their folk dances.

## TAMIZH LITERATURE:

### TOLKĀPPIYAM:

*Tolkāppiyam*, one of the earliest extant works of Tamil grammar, is generally

associated with the Sangam age. Though it is primarily a grammatical text, it

also reflects the social, emotional, and poetic life of early Tamil society. One of its important features is the division of poetic subject matter into **akam** and **puram**. **Akam** deals with the inner world of love and personal feeling, while **puram** deals with the outer world of heroism, valour, and public life.



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The *akam*<sup>11</sup> tradition is further arranged through the **five landscapes (aintinai)**—**Kurinji, Mullai, Marutam, Neithal, and Pālai**—each of which is linked to a distinct emotional situation in love poetry. These are important from the point of view of dance because they bring together setting, mood, and human experience in a way that lends itself to expressive interpretation. The text also indicates the importance of music and dance in Tamil culture, including references to **dēsi** or regional performance traditions.

### Pañcamarabu:

*Pañcamarabu*, attributed to **Arivānar**<sup>12</sup>, is an important source for the study of Tamil music and dance traditions. It refers to five divisions, namely **Isai Marabu** (music), **Vācya Marabu** (percussion), **Nṛtta Marabu** (dance), **Avinaya Marabu** (expression/performance), and **Tāla Marabu** (rhythm). These classifications suggest that Tamil culture recognised the structural components of performance in a systematic way and understood dance as an art involving movement, rhythm, and expression.

### Kūttanūl:

*Kūttanūl* is regarded as a treatise connected with **dance, drama, and music**. It is traditionally attributed to **Sāttanār**. The available portions indicate an interest in aesthetic experience, emotion, performance features, and different varieties of dance. The text is therefore valuable in tracing early Tamil thought about performance and expressive representation.

### Silappadikāram

*Silappadikāram*, one of the major Tamil epics, is especially important for dance studies because it contains references to both **classical** and **folk** performance traditions. Through the character of **Mādhavi**, an accomplished dancer, the epic presents dance as a significant cultural medium connected with narration, celebration, and artistic expression. Its descriptions suggest that dance in the Tamil region developed within a rich framework of story, music, mythology, and performance practice.

### Bhārata Sēnāpatīyam

*Bhārata Sēnāpatīyam*, attributed to **Adivāliyār**<sup>13</sup>, is a Tamil treatise associated with dance and related artistic principles. Its divisions on **body, music, and rhythm** indicate an integrated



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understanding of performance. References to **bhāva, rāga, tāla, tāṇḍava**, and **kaṛaṇa-s** further show that Tamil artistic discourse engaged with the structural and expressive dimensions of dance in a serious way.

## TELUGU LITERATURES

There are no early Lakshana Grantha-s for dance or music in the Telugu language, similar to the Nāṭya Shastra. However, the first poetic texts, the **Āndhramahābhārata** of Nannaya, Thikkana, and Yerra Pragada, mention the dance performed by Arjuna in the Virāta Parva. Subsequently, in the **Panditāradhya Charitam and Bhasavapurānam**<sup>14</sup> of Pāṅkuriki Somanadha, various types of dance related to Śaiva Āgama-s few were discussed. In 15th century Sri Tāllapāka Annamacarya wrote lakshna grandha on padham and mentioned traits of desi form.

### Sankīrtana Laksana grandham (Telugu):

In 15<sup>th</sup> century Sri Tāllapāka Annamāchārya had written ‘Sankīrtana Laksanam’ treatise in Sanskrit. But is not available. However, his grandson Chinna Tirumalā Chārya had with the help of his father has translated in telugu language, which consists of 71 poems of Telugu. Its not the text meant for dance, but in this text found some features of dance mentioned by Sri Annamācārya.

It is believed that Annamāchārya followed Bharatā’s principles as well as Dattilam while composing Padam-s. It comprises of 71 Padam-s. He has taken Lord Venkateswara as the Nāyaka and inspirations from Bhāgavata, Rāmāyana and Mahā Bhārata. He has composed 32,000 Padā-s. But what is available to us is 14,328 only. Out of 71 poems The 18<sup>th</sup> poem he has described that he followed the basic principles of Bharatā’s NāṭyaSāstra and Sangita Ratnākara, Sangīta Candrika, Sangīta Cūdamani, to write padā, and have used the term ‘Dēsaila’<sup>15</sup> which they considered as language style.

From the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> poem, all the tenets laid down by Bharatās for pada has been followed by Annamāchārya. From 50<sup>th</sup> poem to 69<sup>th</sup> poem talked about Yaksagāna (Yaksagāna is traditional drama belonging to the state of Karnāṭaka which comprises of dance, music, dialogue, executed on the stage with props, costume and make-up). The 69<sup>th</sup> poem is replete with bhava and rasa. During the period of Annamācārya itself, Yaksagāna was prevalent. Siddēndra Yōgi belonged to the period 13<sup>th</sup> century, earlier to



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Annamācārya<sup>16</sup>Hence he wrote “Ara tera maruguna ādinadē” in the kirtana ‘Alarulu kuri yaga ādenadē’. Usually in kūcipudi dance tradition, the entry of stage is made with small courtain (Tera sāmpradāyam). In some compositions, many kīrtanas Goddess Alamēlumanga is portrayed and the Nāyika embellished with navarasa and as Astavidha Nāyika. There are many kīrtanās of Annamācārya which are portrayal of dance aspects like Abhinaya,Nāyaka – Nāyika bhava and more.

### Krīdābhirāmam

This is believed to be the earliest text in Telugu play(*veedhi nātakam*) which finds about dances. This text was close to Annamācārya period. There is dispute about the author of this text whether it is *Srīnadha or Vallabhāchārya*. This talks about social, economical and religious early life in Warangal (capital of kākatiya dynasty). In the remembrance of Rāja nartaki called *Mālcha dēvi*<sup>17</sup> belonging to the Kākatiya dynasty was written about Krīdābhirāmam. During this time the folk and *dēsi dances* performed by her such as Nandhi Kōlāttam, *Gōndli, prēri* and *kēlika*<sup>18</sup> were written.

### Conclusion:

These literary and performance-oriented sources are relevant to the present all the dance forms.because they point to a long-standing South Indian tradition in which **literary expression and performance were closely connected**. Their treatment of mood, poetic situation, emotional suggestion, and structured performance helps illuminate the larger aesthetic background against which lyrical compositions may be understood as dance material. In that sense, they provide a useful context for examining the dance features present in Śrī Tallapāka Annamācārya’s *saṅkīrtana*-s, whose lyrical richness, devotional depth, and expressive quality also make them suitable for interpretation in Bharatanāṭyam and Kuchipudi.



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