



CHAPTER 7

THE PRE CURSOR TO *MARGAM - PRABANDHA AND NIRUPANA*



"The Sanskrit texts on Sangeeta like *Brihaddeshi*, *Samgitaratnakara* and *Sangeeta Saramruta* belonging to 9th, 13th and 17th centuries respectively. They contain chapters dedicated to the topic of *Prabandha*-s. A *Prabandha* is a composition with four *anga*-s (parts) and six types of *dhatu*-s (elements)." ¹ The *dhatu*-s include *swara*-s (musical notes), *pada* (lyric), *biruda* (ornamentation of the pada), *pata* (rhythmic syllables), *tala* (beat) and *tenaka* ('nonsense' syllables like om nom tom). A study of these texts illustrate that the different types of *Prabandha*-s were produced by omission of certain *anga*-s and *dhatu*-s. However, the term *Prabandha* continued to be in use during Shahaji's period (1680-1700 Ad) and it denoted a set form of rhythmic musical compositions. Shahaji, with his innovative mind seems to have invested the elements of the Yakshagana dance drama into the literary form of *Prabandha* to create a new type which gave plenty of scope for dance with its *nritta* and *nritya* aspects.

The term *Prabandha* literally means a musical presentation with emphasis on poetical composition. Generally, it denotes any work based on a *purana* story or *sahitya*. *Prabandha* was the dominant song-form for a thousand years or a little more till about the 17-18th century. According to Sarangadeva, *Nibaddha* has three names: *Prabandha*, *Vastu* and *Rupaka*. The best and the most well-established form of *Nibaddha Sangita* is *Prabandha*. During the 5-7th centuries, it was described as a form of *Desi* composition of varied nature and forms (*Desikara-Prabandho yam*), such as: *kanda*, *vritta*, *gadya*, *dandaka*, *varnaka*, *karshita-gatha*, *dvipathaka*, *vardhati*, *kaivata*, *dvipadi*, *vardhani*, *dhenki*, *ekatali*, etc. In the context of music, *Prabandha* is a comprehensive term which refers to a well-knit composition and it stands for a particular, specified form of songs constructed according to a prescribed format. "*Prabandha* was, perhaps, first mentioned in the final Canto of Matanga's *Brihad-desi* (5th century). He described *Prabandha* simply as *Prabhadyate iti Prabandhah* (that which is composed is a *Prabandha*); and, classified it under *Desi Samgita* (a collection of many song types then popular in various regions)." ³ Matanga explains *Desi Samgita* with the aid of about forty-eight *Prabandha* songs. However, Matanga remarks that the *Prabandha*-s are indeed countless; and 'their complexities are beyond the understanding of weaker minds'. "*Prabandha* has been explained in detail in *Prabandha - adhyaya*, the fourth Chapter of Sarangadeva's *Samgitaratnakara*. Sarangadeva explained *Prabandha* as that which

is pleasant; and that which is governed by rules regarding *Raga*, *Tala*, *Chhandas*, *Vritta* (Sanskrit verses) and *Anga*. Sarangadeva has described about 77 separate *Prabandha*-s with more than 4200 of their sub -variations."²

Parshvadeva (9th - 10th century), was a Jain-musicologist-Acharya, who in his work, *Samgita-samaya-sara* divided the *Prabandha* into three classes: *Suda*, *Alikrama* and *Viprakirna* And, later in the 13th century, Sarangadeva split the *Suda* into *Shuddha Suda* and *Chayalaga* (the *Apabhramsa* or colloquial form of *Chayalaga* is *Salaga Suda*). With this, the major types of *Prabandha* were counted as four: *Shuddha Suda*, *Salaga Suda*, *Alikrama* and *Viprakirna*. Among these, the *Shuddha Suda* was considered pure but rather rigid. It had to contain by six *Anga*-s or limbs (*Svara*, *Birudu*, *Pada*, *Tena*, *Pata* and, *Tala*) and four sections or *Dhatu*-s (*Udgraha*, *Melapaka*, *Dhruva* and *Abhoga*).

In contrast, *Salaga Suda* set to *Desi Ragas* (*Desi-ragadi-samabandat Salagatvam api smrtam*) was a more popular form of *Prabandha*. It was simpler in structure and belonged to *Taravali Jaati* (class) of *Prabandha* and needed only two *Angas*: *Pada* and *Tala*. It also had only three *Dhatu*-s: *Udgraha*, *Dhruva* and *Abhoga* (but not *Melapaka*), and an *Antara* if needed. Hence, the *Salaga Suda* came to be known as *Tri-dhatuka Prabandha*; and, was considered pseudo-classical. Yet, the *Salaga Suda* ranks high among the ancient type of refined songs.

PRABANDHA AND NIRUPANA: THEIR TANJORE CONNECT TO DANCE

The two Maratha rulers of Tanjore, Shahaji II and Serfoji II, made a very significant contribution in the evolution of dance compositions during their rule in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their emphasis in dance presentation was essentially theme-based, therefore content and context became extremely important features that dictated the choreography. A considerable amount of literature related to this development of dance has been found compiled in manuscripts titled *Prabandha* (Shahaji II) and *Nirupana* (Serfoji II). Both rulers penned several compositions themselves and these seem to be the major link between the repertoire of the Nayaka period and that of the Tanjore Quartet of the 19th century. A study of these brings to light the gradual development of the Bharatanatyam repertoire. It also suggests that the single theme

focus of Serfoji's *Nirupana* (with the *Ekartha* concept) if properly utilized, could perhaps even be considered for contemporary Bharatanatyam recitals. Actually it has started happening. We shall discuss this in last couple of chapters.



Fig.1: Maharaja Shahaji II



Fig.2: Maharaja Serfoji II

King Sahaji II who received the title *Abhinavabhoja* was a great patron of Performing arts. Sahaji II was a great scholar. He was the author of number of works on drama, poetry, *padas*, *prabandhas* and *ragalakshanas*.⁴ Shahaji II wrote four *Prabandha*-s. They were *Siva Pallaki Seva Prabandha*, *Vishnu Pallaki Seva Prabandha*, *Tyaga Vinoda Chitra Prabandha*, and *Pancharatna Prabandha*. Among these four, the first two are operas (*geya nataka*-s) where though there is the dance element, there is a dominance of music and song. On the other hand, the last two *Prabandha*-s abound in dance compositions. The predominant feature of these two works is the complex presentations of pure dance while the thematic content of the work take a secondary position.



Fig.3 : Tanjavur Painting

Typically a compilation of various types of *daru-s* were the Shahaji II's *Prabandha-s*. Based on a variety of themes and of a purely devotional or philosophical nature, these *Daru-s* were depicted by the *nayikas*. They had no thematic link, all different. Especially this feature made the *Prabandha* different from the *nataka* of Yakshagana *Prabandha* which had a single theme. Each *daru-s* had specific *raga-s* and *tala-s* and in many places with *swarajati-s* and *swarasollu-s* as well. A single *Prabandha* included about 50 different *raga-s*. Rare *raga-s* like *Padi*, *Gumma kambhoji*, *Purabhi*, *Revagupti*, *Ghantarava* and *Lalitapanchama* were mentioned. Apart from the *sooladi sapta tala-s*, a wide variety of *tala-s* were given.

In the ancient form of *prabhandha-s*, *pada* signified the literary content of the composition. At a certain stage, it came to denote all compositions with meaningful *sahitya*. Today, the term *pada* is synonymous with a particular form of lyric that offers full scope for the expression of emotions that is *Abhinaya*. In the history of Carnatic music, composer-poet Kshetranya's *pada-s*, came in the wake of the *madhura bhakti* cult (10th century), and left a deep impression. These *pada-s* on Muvva Gopala depicted various types of *nayika-s* and appear to have been one of the most important inspirations for Shahaji. He wrote about 400 *pada-s* in Marathi, all of which were marked by a spontaneity of expression, linguistic skills and originality of ideas. The *pada-s* are classified into various groups like *Bhakti pada-s*, *Sringara*

pada-s, *Vairagya pada-s*, *Neeti pada-s*, *Bhava pada-s* and so on. The first two types are the most appropriate for Bharatanatyam.

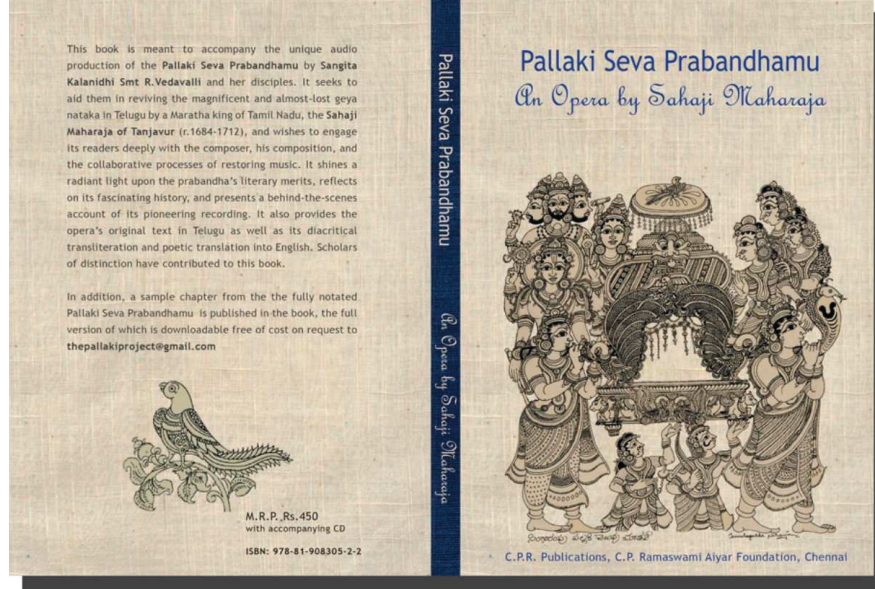


Fig.4 : Palaki Seva Prabandhamu

"Shahaji's two main works were *Tyagavinodachitra Prabandha* and *Pancharatna Prabandha*. The *raga-s*, *tala-s* and *swara-s* and the *sollu-s* used in them clearly indicated that these were intended to be rendered in Carnatic music and the classical dance-form prevalent at the time."⁵

A brief description of dance compositions included in these *Prabhandha-s*.

Vinayaka daru or *Vighneswarachi daru* is a depiction of Lord Gajanana, through a simple *sahitya* having a *pallavi* and two or three *charana-s* of two lines each. In the Yakshagana tradition popular in Telugu and Tamil speaking areas, a recital would traditionally begin with a song danced in praise of Lord Vigneshwara. A dancer, wearing the mask of Ganesa, would come dancing on the stage. The Dasavari plays of Maharashtra, as do other popular folk theatre traditions such as the Bhavai in Gujarat, also have the same feature.

Sallamu daru is a corrupt form of 'salaam', an Urdu equivalent for *namaste*, a manner of respectful greeting. It entered Telugu literature probably due to the

influence of the Muslim Nawab's of Golconda who ruled over Andhra in the late 17th century and patronized the local arts. The fact that words like 'sallamu', 'sallamure' occur at the end of every stanza is also believed to be one of the reasons for this name. It incorporates *swara-s*, *sollu-s* and *sahitya* of various deities. Shahaji composed a series of 30 *sallamu daru-s* for 30 different deities. Each *daru* is followed by a *pada* in the same raga and invoking the same deity. All these *sallamu daru-s* have the same structure as that mentioned above, and all of them contain the *Tyaga mudra* of Shahaji. Apart from displaying Shahaji's command over this form of music and dance composition, these *daru-s* also furnish information on *swara prayoga-s* of the *raga-s* popular in Shahaji's period, including those of some rare *raga-s* like *soratha*, *revagupti*, *ghantarava* and *lalitapanchama*. A detailed study of *sallamu daru-s* reveals that these dances were basically performed in temples as ritualistic dances and could have been the forerunner of the *sabda-s* of later times.

Saptasagarasooladi Prabandhalila daru is a composition of seven verses in praise of Siva as Tyagesha. It is a Ragamalika composition. The seven *sooladi tala-s* -- *dhruva*, *matya*, *roopaka*, *jhampa*, *triputa*, *ata* and *eka* are mentioned for each *charanam*. Particularly noteworthy is the specification of a different raga for each stanza. All the *raga-s* are of the *goula* variety, namely, *narayanagoula*, *kannadagoula*, *malavagoula*, *reetigoula*, *poorvigoula*, *chayagoula* and *kedaragoula*. Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835) also composed a series of *kriti-s* in these seven *raga-s* on goddess Neelotpalamba of Tiruvanur.

Panchatala lila daru is a composition that includes a passage of *sollu-s* (*pata*), words in praise of Shiva. The composition uses five different *tala-s* -- *roopaka*, *chatchatputa*, *chaachatputa*, *sampadvesta* and *ananta* are mentioned. Of these, except *roopaka*, the other *tala-s* are no longer in regular use.

Sringaralila daru is a composition of two passages, one consisting of *swara-s* and the other of *sollu-s*. A small verse of two lines addressing Tyagesa is incorporated in both the passages. The title *Sringara daru* seems rather odd for a composition which is obviously an item of pure dance. There is a *Sutradhara*'s instruction in between the two parts of this composition which says that, after performing the *swara-s*, the *jati-s* for the *swara sollu-s* should be performed. This composition seems to be the forerunner of later *sollu-s*, finally emerging as what we now perform as *Jatiswaram*.



Fig.5 : Tanjore Nautch Party

Swarasabdartha tala trinsannavaratna Prabandha daru is a type of *Prabandha* that incorporates *swara-s*, *sahitya* and *sollu-s*. It is in *todi raga* and three different *tala-s* are suggested for its three parts. Each part contains a passage of *swara-s*, followed by a verse and a passage of *sollu-s*. This type of *Prabandha* is also found in Serfoji's *Nirupana* where it is referred to as *triputa*.

Jakkini daru is a rhythmic composition, incorporating several *charanam-s* of *sollu-s*. It also includes wording like 'Yallila yalla lale' and 'Yallila yallam le'. Each composition begins with a verse in praise of a deity. It is followed by a *pallavi* which is to be repeated after every *charanam* of *sollu-s* and before the last *charanam* came a small verse of two lines. This *daru* is also found in Serfoji's *Nirupana* though with some structural variation. The later-day *Tillana* shows a lot of similarity to it

Ganapati Kautta is a composition similar to the *kavuthuvam* performed in present-day Bharatanatyam recitals. Beginning with *sollu-s*, it ends with a *teermanam*. No *raga* or *tala* is mentioned for it, since *kautta-s* are usually recited and not sung.

Abhinaya daru is a novel composition depicting the divine dance of Nataraja and meant to be performed as *nritya*. The *sollu-s* are incorporated in the text. The composition is in the form of a *padam* with a *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and three *charana-*

s, with a scope for interpretation in *nritta* as well as *nritya*. It seems to have paved the way for the later-day *varnam*.

The four famous *prabanda*'s of Shahaji *Vishnupallakiseva Prabandam*, *Sankarapallaki seva Prabandam*, *Pancharatna Prabandam* and *Tyagarajavinodhachitra Prabandam* are very special⁶. These are *prabanda natakas* with beautiful *padas* in *rakti ragas* and *gana ragas* - depicting *Bhakti*, *Sringara* and *Vairagya* themes. *Padas* of such themes, collectively called *Tyagesa Padas* are in Sanskrit, Marathi and Telugu languages. These collections of *padas* are classified as *bhakti*, *bhava*, *vairagya*, *sringara*, *hasva padas*, *neethi padamulu* and *mangalamulu*. The *padas* of Shahaji so far identified and available reveal his mastery over the languages and his deep scholarship in music and *sahitya*.

An important landmark cognizable during the reign of Shahaji was the development of a musical opera known as *Geyanatakas*. The birth of *Geyanatakas* spurred several other kinds of dance and musical forms and their combinations. For example, the four *Prabandha*-s are also very special (*Sankara Pallaki Seva*, *Vishnu Pallaki Seva*, *Pancharatna*, *Tyagaraja Vinoda Chitra*) and represent a new class where the dramatic, literary, musical and dance elements are happily blended. It is clearly evident that Shahaji was the innovator of a new variety of *Prabandha* compositions that focused on musical and dance significance. "Raghunatha Nayak's work like *Valmiki Charitram* and *Raghunatha Ramayana* were also examples of *Prabandha*-s. But Shahaji combined together the tradition of the literary *Prabandha* and the *Yakshagana* tradition. He created a fusion of the two and produced what are known as *drishya kavyas*. A harmonious blending of Sanskrit and Telugu with plenty of scope for dance both in its *nritta* and *nritya* aspects are found in these *drishya kavyas*. Shahaji conveys a dramatic story through song, dialogue, *abhinaya* and *nritta* in these dramas."⁷

"One of the earliest *geyanatakas* in Telugu is the *Pallakiseva Prabandha*. Tyageswara, is the presiding deity of Thiruvapur around whom the Opera is developed. Shahaji had witnessed the *Pallakiseva* of the Lord *Vitanka Tyagesa* praying for the union with the lord, facing the north-east direction."⁸The *Pancharatna Prabandha* gives a wonderful treatment of dance and music, in which a

band of five artistes consisting of two dancing girls, *nattuvanar*, *chenchu kuravas*, and a servant to help the artistes form the group. They visit the court of Parameswara and pleased with their talents in dancing, the Lord honors them. This work is noteworthy, because it consists of *ghananatya*. This dance is full of *jatis* and *korvais* in different *talas*. The sequence of *korvai*, *jati*, *ganapathi kautuvam*, *darna*, etc. present novelty to this production. It also shows a high degree of perfection of the art where *sahitya* is given secondary importance and the emphasis is on music and rhythm. *Pancharatna Prabandha* stands as a monumental evidence to Shahaji's proficiency in music and dance. The *Vishnu pallakiseva prabanda* has Goddess Lakshmi as *nayaki*. It consists of *sobhana*, *pavvalimbu*, *daru*, *dvipada*, *padva*, *dodhaka*, *davalambu* and *melukoluku*. *Pallakiseva* therefore is a kind of temple service, very much popular in the district of Tanjore. The deity is taken out in procession followed by music and dance. A remarkable point is the description of such processions is made in elegant Telugu. *Vinodachitra Prabandha* is a *manipravala Prabandha* in which the songs are composed in Sanskrit, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil.

In *Sankarakalinatana samvada natakam* the *daru-s* are very unique in nature. The *daru-s* with different types of flowers, birds, animals, society, people, etc. are composed by Shahaji and explained in detail. While choreographing the dancer can incorporate different *hastas* from the dance texts, or even create new *hastabhinayas*. Such dance compositions allow for improvement in *hastabhinayas*. Thirty varieties of *talas* and its usages are described in a *daru* in this *natakam*. A unique item called *Svara-sabdarta-taladinavarathna Prabanda* is filled with *jatis* and *svaras*, in *raga todi* and *dhruva tala* in this *nataka*. This *natakam* demand a great experience and knowledge of dance on the part of the composer and dancer for such songs. It speaks volumes of Shahaji's music and literary accomplishments.

It is very clear in the light of the textual knowledge that different types of *Prabandhas* were produced by omitting or including any of these six *dattus* or four *angas*. *Prabandha* is a poetical composition or *kavya*. In this sense The Mahabharata in Telugu and *Nalayira Divyaprabandam* in Tamil may also be referred to as *Prabandha*. It came to mean "a *kavya* of erotic type" in the beginning of the 16th century. It contain *dvarnana* (description) of a mountain, river, king, love, capital,

sunset, marriage and such. The *Prabandhas* are classified as 1. *Prakyata prabandha*, here the theme is from an epic or *purana*. 2. *Uttpadya Prabandha*, here the story is from the imagination of the author. 3. *Misra Prabandha*: the theme is born out of the authors' imagination and borrowed from epic or *puran* and mixed up with interesting incidences.



Fig.6 : Tanjavur Palace

During 16th century this variety of *Misra Prabandha* gained popularity. The old *Prabandha* form of musical compositions were replaced by the innovation of *kriti* and *keertana*. The *Prabandha* form was popular during the time of Shahaji as seen from the evidences. And it denotes a set form of rhythmic musical composition at this point of time. The *Prabandha* of Shahaji is a compilation of various types of *daru-s* is mentioned earlier. Example: *abhinaya daru*, *Vigneshwara daru*, *jakkini daru*, *sringara daru*, *leela daru* etc. what makes the *Prabandha* different from the *nataka* or *Yakshagana* which is expected to have a single theme that the *daru-s* have no thematic link. Each *daru* is mentioned with the appropriate names of *talas*, *svarajathis*, *ragas*, and *sollukattus*. Shahaji's *prabandha-s* have wide varieties of *daru-s* suitable for dance presentations.



Fig. 7 : Maharaja Serfoji Memorial Hall

On the other hand, Serfoji II introduced a new form of dance that went by the name of *Nirupana-s*. The term *Nirupana* refers to Sangeet Upanyasa.⁹ The text of *Natyaprabandha* or *Nirupana* compositions of Raja Sarfoji II have been incorporated in the text '*Korvayanche Sahityache Jinnah*' based on a *puranic* epic and *kalpitha kathas*.¹⁰ It is written by Shri Sarfoji II Raje Bhosale and contains seven *Nirupana-s* or narrative. The Original Manuscript has thirteen complete *Nirupanas* and few individual pieces. These are narration of a story with vivid themes possessing all the features of a dance repertoire. *Nirupana* literally means the amplification of a theme. The root seems to have been from the *Maharashtrian* kirtan, popularly known as *kathakalakshepam*. Serfoji's *Nirupanas* present a single theme woven into a series of eighteen different types of dance compositions.

The eighteen items that figure in one *Nirupana* are:

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Jayajaya | 7. Pada | 13. Geethi |
| 2. Saranu | 8. Swarajathi | 14. Prabanda |
| 3. Alaru | 9. Abhinayapada | 15. Triputa |
| 4. Sollu | 10. Tillana | 16. Sloka varna |
| 5. Sabda | 11. Arjitapada | 17. Kautta |
| 6. Varnam | 12. Jakkini | 18. Mangala. |



Fig. 8: Maharaja Serfoji Memorial Hall and Museum

Serfoji II was the first composer to introduce a single theme concept. All these original titles of the eighteen varieties are in Sanskrit and Devanagari manuscripts. Sarfoji II's *Nirupana*, in short, includes compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. An important aspect is that the composer has prescribed a single raga and *tala* for the whole series of eighteen compositions. This may or perhaps be impractical, judged from the point of view of the present day connoisseur. But this was definitely accepted by the audience of Serfoji's time since the performance went throughout the night."The thirteen varieties of *Nirupana* compositions written mostly in Marathi by Sarfoji II are as following:"¹¹

1. *Uma Mahesvara parinaya*
2. *Kumar Sambhava Nirupana*
3. *Kiratajuniya Nirupana*
4. *Mahadevace agaman Sakhine Parvatisa Parihasa Purvaka janate Karanyachi Kalpit Katha*
5. *Virahinikarta Manmathopalambha Kalpita Katha*
6. *Virapatni Samvad*
7. *Nirguna Svanubhav Pratipadana purvaka sagunapar upadesa*
8. *Parvatyopakhyana Nirupana*
9. *Mahadevaci Prarthana*
10. *Sakhtne nayakice Srama NayakasaKalavoona Sanghatanopaya Karane*

11. *Sakhine nayakisa Buddhivadha Sanganyachi Kalpitha Katha*
12. *Suladi Nirupana*
13. *Salamacha jinas Kalpita Katha*

All the *Nirupanas* begin with the invocatory item *jayajaya* and end with *mangalam*. These can be danced as a solo performance. The performance conveys all features, emotions and moods of different characters. What is to be noted in this work, is the existence of seven different types of *allarippus* in different *talas*. Several items in the programme are gradually introduced in due course of the performance, so as to enable the audience to understand the thematic subject and the succeeding sequence by excellent exposition through gestures and *abhinaya*.

Though these *Nirupanas* are in Marathi, they are set to Carnatic mode of *raga* and *tala*. This forms a good background for *sadir* dance. The dance items present in these *Nirupanas* are *alaru*, *sabdam*, *sollu*, *varnam*, *padam*, *tillana*, *kavutta*, *svara*, *jati*, *jakkini* and *mangalam*. This type of dance was called *bhedyaka* and performed by a solo dancer, depicted or dramatized as a complete play. Apart from these *Nirupanas*, Serfoji ii also composed a *suladi* in *ragamalika* and *talamalika* and *salamachi jinna kalpitha katha* in *raga attana* and *aditala*. This dance piece explains very colorfully the various kinds of *salams*, *salutations*, *ramram*, *namaskar*, *mujaras*, offered to Raja Serfoji II in his darbar. The method and practice of various communities and people of India and their respect to the king are vividly presented.



Fig.9 : Saravasti Mahal Library Entrance Open Air Book Store.

Each of Sarfoji II's *Nirupana*-s presents a single theme woven into a series of 18 different types of dance compositions. He seems to be the first composer of recent times to have introduced the *ekartha* -- single theme -- concept in dance compositions. Each *Nirupana* also has a title which is suggestive of the story-line of that particular *Nirupana*. For instance, the *Nirupana Kirata Arjuneeyam* is the story of the duel between Arjuna and Lord Shiva disguised as a hunter; *Uma Maheshwara Parinaya* describes Shiva and Parvati, while *Sakhine nayakis budhivad sanganyachi kalpit katha* tells the story of a mature lady giving advice to a newly-wed *nayika*. "Various features of the compositions which are part of Serfoji's *Nirupana*-s seem to be the precursors of most of the compositions of the compact series later delineated by the Tanjore Quartet. In Addition to the *Nirupanas*, his another work is '*Vividha Karnataka Raga Ragini*'"¹²The 18 components of each *Nirupana* listed earlier, are explained as below:

1. *Jayajaya*: This is a prayer song, a kind of invocation at the beginning of the performance. *Jayajaya* means 'victory to thee'. It is a benediction song in which the dancer seeks blessing of devi Parvati for the success of the programme. The song has a *pallavi* followed by an *anupallavi* and a *charanam*. These are on various deities. The words *jaya jaya* occur at the

beginning of every line. In today's South Indian Music, it is known as *Todyamangalam*.

2. *Sharanu* : This is prayer song wherein the devotee sought shelter of goddess Tripurasundari for the attainment of fame. This seems to be the second invocatory song, where instead of *jayajaya*, the word '*sharanu sharanu*' are repeated after each line. *Sharanu* means 'I surrender', a form of obeisance, a respectful bow. These two prayer songs are only sung, unaccompanied by any dance.
3. *Alaru*: *Alaru* is a Telugu word literally meaning ' Blossoming'. The danseuse, as a devotee makes obeisance with folded hands in reverence to the Deities, the Guru, the elders and the learned Assembly and seeks their blessings. This is a composition consisting entirely of *sollu-s* of mnemonic syllables. It begins with *sollu-s* called *tattakara*, and ends with a pattern of *sollu-s* called *aditya*. The in-between main portion is called *alaru*. The *tattakara sollu-s* are made of letters *ta, tha, da* only and it is the same in all the *alaru-s*. *Aditya* is a small *teermanam* of one line. The similarity of the *alaru* with the present day *alarippu* is obvious.
4. *Sholla*: *Shollu, Sorkattu* is a Tamil word for *Jati*, or *Bol*. This dance form is an excellent synthesis of *Sollu-s* (Time - measures) and *Swaras* (Melodic Notes). It is more elaborate form of *Nritta*. It Exhibits graceful hand gestures and rhythmic patterns of foot movements. In the context of dance, *sollu-s* are sound syllables used to accompany the dance. In this composition, the *sollu-s* are sung like *swara-s*. The composition consists of three *charana-s* of *sollu-s* and a *jati* pattern. Serfoji's *sollu-s* seem to be the precursors of *Jatiswaram*.
5. *Shabda*: *Shabda* means words. *Shabda* is an *Abhinaya item* with interpretation of a song through gesture and expression. This composition incorporates *sahitya* with the *sollu-s*. It begins with a passage of *sollu-s* followed by a stanza of song, a line of *sollu-s* and concludes with a short *teermanam*. *Sabda-s* in praise of various deities were performed in temples. As the song literature is very concise in this item, there is a great scope for

'*Sanchari Bhava*' in dance. The *sahitya* of each of Serfoji's *shabda-s* has a theme consistent with that of the *Nirupana* to which the *shabda* belongs.

6. *Varna*: It comprises four lines of *pallavi-anupallavi*. This is followed by a big passage of *swara-s* and its corresponding *sahitya* (called *chitta swara* and *chitta swarasahitya* respectively in the *sampradaya*). Then comes a line or *sahitya* (called *ettugada* in *sampradaya*) followed by 4-5 *charanaswara-s* and their corresponding *sahitya*. Only a few *varna-s* of Serfoji contain *sahitya* for the *chitta swara-s* and *charana swara-s*.
7. *Pada*: There are in all three *pada-s* in each of Serfoji's *Nirupana-s*. The one following the *varnam* is called *pada*, while the other two are called *abhinaya pada-s*. The *pada* has a *pallavi-anupallavi* followed by a *swara* passage and its corresponding *sahitya* and one *charanam*.
8. *Swarajati*: There is a beautiful fusion of different modes of *tala* and the vivid expansion of *raga* in this item. In Serfoji's *swarajati* after *pallavi* there are *swaras* and *sahitya* and no *solkattus* or *bol*. Traditional *swarajati* usually depicts devotional sentiment (*bhakti Rasa*), while in Serfoji's item various details of the narration are continued as a Story.
9. *Abhinaya pada -I*: *Abhinaya pada* is a song which expresses one predominant mood poignantly and the dancer depicts it with *abhinaya* of great intensity.
10. *Tillana*: This is a composition consisting of *sollu-s* and only a small verse is included in the last part. The patterns of *sollu-s* abound in sounds like *tan*, *tom*, *nam*, *jham*, *dhim* and also words like *tillana*, *dirina*, *tandirina*, etc. *Tillana* is similar to the song-form in Hindustani music called *tarana*, which commonly does not include meaningful poetry, though some rare compositions do include verse.
11. *Abhinaya pada II*: In the chronological order of Serfoji's *Nirupana*, *tillana* is followed by another *abhinaya pada*. The construction of this *pada* is same as

for the earlier *abhinaya pada*, except that this one has three *charana-s* while the earlier one has two.

12. *Jakkini*: This is a combination of *sollu-s*, *swara-s*, *sahitya* and the words sound like *yallam*, *yallilam*, and *lale*. The composition begins with *sollu-s*, followed by a line of *swara-s*. Then come a verse in praise of a deity, a verse incorporating ‘*yala lale*’, again some *sollu-s* and four lines of *swara-s* at the end. According to some scholars, this *daru* derives its form originally from the dance of *jakkulu*, the folk performers of Andhra. Some believe it to be a corrupt form of *yakshaini*, the celestial danseuse or musician. Other opinions suggest that *jakkini* is a vibrant rhythmic composition. *Jakkini daru-s* are also found in the traditional Telugu Yakshagana-s. Words like ‘*yalla, yallilla*’ seem to be the corrupt form of the Urdu word, ‘*Alla, Ya Alla*’. It is interesting to note that some of the old *tarana-s* of Hindustani music also include such wordings, which further confirm the later replacement of *jakkini* by *tillana*, influenced by the Hindustani form.

13. *Geeta*: *Geeta* is twofold - *Lakshana geeta* and *Laksha sanchari Geeta*. The latter is utilised for dancing. In this mode of dance, the composition of the item consists of ‘*swar-s*’, ‘*sahitya*’ (song) and ‘*tala*’. The *nritta* is performed on *swaras* first and the *abhinaya* accompanies the *sahitya*. This seems more of an exercise for vocal music than a dance composition. It comprises only *swara-s* and their corresponding *sahitya*.

14. *Prabandha*: Technically, this is a composition similar to *Geeta*. Along with *Swara* and *Sahitya*, it also incorporates *Swara- shollus*. With *Aalap* and *That* *Prabandha* forms or becomes a part of *Chaturdandi* compositions. it is a special musical mode in *gandharva* style of singing. It can notes an intact composition. The *abhinaya* accompanies *sahitya* and the *nritta* is performed on *paata*. Both are accompanied with *swara-s* which are followed by *Tana*. This item is now almost extinct.

15. *Tripata*: This is actually a part of *prabandha*. In *Samgitaratnakara* it is also known as *Tipatha*. Like the interwoven petals of a flowers, the three parts of a

dance, viz., *Patta (bol)*, *Biruda* (Benediction verse on which 'abhinaya' is performed) and *Swara-s* are intertwined and form a complete exposition. This is also a rare and novel dance composition of Serfoji.

16. *Shlokavarna*: This is a novel composition. It consists of a *sloka* (verse) and a *charanam* of *swara-s*. The *sloka-s* as performed in Bharatanatyam have parallels in old Telugu Literature called the *padyam-s* which are performed without *tala* interwoven in the

alapa-s. Serfoji's *shlokavarna-s* are supposed to be performed with *tala*, and they have *charanaswara-s*.

17. *Kautta*: *Kautta*, *kouta* or *koutuvam* all seem to be the corrupt forms of the Sanskrit word *koutukam* which literally means words of praise. "*Koutukam*" is defined in Nandikesvara's Bharatarnava as a dance composition set to rhythm, comprising drum syllables (para-s of *sollu-s*) intermixed with words in praise of a deity."¹³(*Anubandh 1. Shloka 11-14*) In older times this dance form was witnessed only in temples. Traditional *koutukam-s* in Tamil are available even today. Serfoji has termed it as *kauttam* in old Marathi language and for most of his *kauttams* he has fixed the Raga in which the song is to be sung. The traditional *koutukam-s* are not sung but only recited, set to a particular *tala*. It is an absorbing mode of prayer to god. In Serfoji's chronology this item is performed last. In Modern usage it comes at the start.

18. *Mangala*: This is a prayer sung by musician at the end of the performance. The danseuse only beats her feet in rhythm without dancing. This is a concluding prayer song, requesting god to pardon the dancer's mistakes and give his blessing. The purpose of ' *Mangal*' is to seek pardon for all shortcoming during the performance, both as regards dance and music. Serfoji has written several *mangala-s* different *raga-s* depending on the *raga* of the particular *Nirupana*. Today's Bharatanatyam performance also concludes with a prayer called *nitya mangalam* or simply *mangalam*.

This format was applied successfully in the development of the theme through the choreography and performance of '*Kirataarjuneeyam*'. The *Nirupana* begins with a prayer to Lord Shiva in *jaya jaya* and *sharanu sharanu*, followed by *alaru* and *sholla*. In *sabda*, the story begins and it is further developed in the *varna*. Different episodes from the story are then narrated through the different *pada-s*, while the summary or gist is presented after the *tillana* in the *shlokavarna*. A detailed study of these compositions also throws light on an important stage in the development of the Bharatanatyam *Margam* from a mere string of *daru-s* to the well-planned set of compositions. *Jaya jaya* and *Sharanu sharanu* are parallel to present-day *Stuti* and *Todaya mangalam*. *Alaru* is akin to *alarippu*. *Sollu* is the transition point of Shahaji's *Sringaraleela daru* and the present-day *Jatiswaram*. His *shabda*, *varna*, *pada* and *tillana* are similar to the present-day *shabdam*, *varnam*, *padam* and *tillana*. *Jakkini* is similar to Shahaji's *jakkini daru* while *geeta*, *Prabandha* and *triputa* seem to be the old-forms of *Prabandha-s*. *Swarajati* corresponds to the compositions of the same title composed by Purandaradasa. *Shlokavarna* comprises a single verse. However, it has been set to a *tala* and is not like *sloka* of the present-day repertoire which is presented without the bindings of *tala*.

Serfoji's *Nirupana* include compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. Another aspect of the *Nirupana* is that the composer had prescribed a single raga and *tala* for the whole series of the 18 compositions, lasting long hours.



Fig. 10 : Devadasi of Maratha Court

Serfoji's *Nirupana* include compositions which relate to the repertoire of the past as well as the present. Another aspect of the *Nirupana* is that the composer had prescribed a single raga and *tala* for the whole series of the 18 compositions, lasting long hours. It is quite likely that in Serfoji's period, the *Nirupana*-s were performed during all-night performances. Thus a comparative study of the of the repertoire contained in the *Prabandha*-s of Shahaji (17th century), the *Nirupana*-s of Serfoji II (18th century) and the dance *Margam* introduced by the Tanjore Quartet (19th century) points to a slow evolution of the Bharatanatyam recital format through centuries. It throws light on the fact that the earlier Dasi-attam performance was greatly influenced by the presentation of Bhagavata Mela. The traditions of dance drama as well as the solo dancing of the devadasi-s flourished simultaneously in Tanjore, especially during the Nayaka and Maratha periods. There were many dance varieties performed in group and solo by the court dancers specially to please the king. The *nautch* dance is one such variety which is the combination of classical and folk dances."During the period of Serfoji the following items were danced in the court under the name of *nautch*."14

1. *Jakkini*
2. *Perani*
3. *Gondal*
4. *Goph or Garba Dance*
5. *Dhrupadnautch*
6. *Sangitamelam Nautch*
7. *Kanchin Nautch*
8. *Desi Navpadh Nautch*
9. *Tippri*
10. *Chitra Natya*

The compositions of Bhagavatars were presented by *devadasi*-s and the Bhagavata Mela adopted the Dasi Attam dance techniques. Thus there was a great deal of exchange of ideas till Dasi Attam finally emerged in its Sadir form during the period of the Tanjore Quartet.

Through this chapter, the continuity of solo dance and dancer is seen clearly. And the shape and format of dance presentation which is the main hypothesis of the research are coming into focus.

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