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SOLO CLASSICAL DANCE WITH RESPECT TO SANSKRIT TREATIES THE BEGINNINGS

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References to dancing and dancers appear in the earliest literature of the vast Indian sub-continent, stretching from Afghanistan to Burma, even before dance attracted attention as a serious subject of study. The study of the thesis begins with my trying to trace the beginning and continuity of dancing and that too of solo dancing in India through the literary sources, specially the Sanskrit treatises of Dramaturgy and Dance.

From Bharatamuni's *Natyashastra*, also known as the fifth Veda, we come across a very graphic description of a dance performance as it begins. (NS Chap 4 Shloka 273-287)¹ It proves conclusively that Dance was already an evolved performance form practiced often and popularly in the public domain. In the practical tradition of theory following praxis, Bharatamuni was putting it in a structured format, identifying the correct grammar of the dance language. The Hindu epics also have numerous references to courtesans and women dancers, as normal and necessary adjunct to both palace and temple. The gods in heaven were entertained by the dances, the apsaras. Rambha, Menaka, Urvashi and others performed extensively in the darbar of Indra. Their dancing was both solo and in groups. These nymphs danced to the music of the gandharvas. They danced to please Devas.

Often, kings were invited by Indra to judge the dance contest of the apsaras. They were the court dancers, those who entertained the king and his guests. Vishnu danced as Mohini. Mohini insisted that the asura, match her in dancing step for step if he wished to marry her. We know what happened then. Thus existence of solo dancing has ample examples in our mythology!

The *Natyashastra* (chapter 4, Tandav Lakshan is devoted entirely to Dance) therefore becomes the earliest known comprehensive literature in Sanskrit on the subject of dramaturgy. Dance was seen by Bharatamuni as an introduction and ancillary to dramatic performance, placed there by Lord Shiva who prescribed it to enhance the beauty of such a dramatic performance. The *Natyashastra* focuses on the performance of Dance, expanding its presentation, content and context. It combines theory and practice carefully and seamlessly, formulating the concepts of dance as it describes the techniques. These concepts introduced and discussed in the *Natyashastra* continue, even today, to remain central to all discussions on Indian Dance.

Bharatamuni uses two terms for dance – *tandava* and *nritta* (Chap 4, Shloka. 259-61). It is explained in the following way – *rechakas*, *angaharas* and the *pindibandhas* were created by Shiva and then given to sage Tandu. The method of dancing which was then created by him (Tandu), accompanied by appropriate songs and drums, was known as *Tandava*. Taken as a *karmadharayasamasa*, the compound *nrittapra yoga* in the last line of this passage equates *tandava* with *nritta*.² *Nritta* is described as an art form which is beautified with *angaharas* made of various *karanas*. He describes these *karanas* and *angaharas* in detail, with a combination of 6 to 9 *karanas* making one *angahara* as a basic dance sequence. He then describes the *rechaka*, a basic circular movement of the feet, hips, hands and neck, as fundamental to a dance

performance. He goes on to describe the practise of pindis as of four types of group formations – pindi, shranakhalika, latabandha, bhedyaka. Pindibandha is a roundish mass, shranakhalika is a cluster, lata is entwined in a net and bhedyaka is performed with nritta.

Though the precise nature of the formations is not easy to understand from this passage, later scholars have tried to explain and interpret it in simpler ways. V Raghavan, in his introduction to Nritta Ratnavali has suggested an improved reading of the edited version of the commentary on pindibandhas and explains it thus: The employment of female dancers, joining with one another (in a dance figure) is pindibandha, the symmetrical form of a figure like a pair of lotuses joined in one stalk, the asymmetric form of a lotus stalk held in the beak of a swan. Gulma is expressed by the word chain as performed by three Nayikas. Through its capacity for diversity, latabandha of symmetrical and asymmetrical nature as demonstrated by four female dancers becomes entertaining.³

It is generally believed that Bharatamuni's Natyashastra was such an authoritative text that even if there were any other written literature on Dance before that, they would not have survived or would have become redundant. Written between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD⁴, Natyashastra's powerful influence was exerted over subsequent works as well. This was not just because of its chronological advantage but because of the vast range of dramaturgy including dance topics it brought under its scanner, from stage architecture to the most complex of body movements. However, it must be acknowledged that there were other authors who wrote about dance before the Natyashastra. Extensive references to these works are made by later authors such as Abhinavagupta, Sarangadeva, Kallinatha, Maharana Kumbha, Vedaśuri, and one of the most quoted sources is a work by Kohala, believed to be lost.

Most of the Sanskrit manuals on Dance after the Natyashastra were written between the 11th and 17th centuries. While they do follow the Natyashastra in their main accounts, one can see strong efforts made to document regional varieties and variations as well in these books. Amongst the most important books to do so is the Samgitaratnakara of Sarangadeva. In fact the Samgitaratnakara encouraged this so persuasively that many of the books written between the 16th and 18th centuries not only documented a vast number of regional dance forms but also began to incorporate more and more regional terms in the dance language.

After Natyashastra: Abhinavabharati of Abhinavagupta

Dance literature is classified according to three time periods. The first period begins from before Bharatamuni and ends with Abhinavagupta in the 10th century. Though few works from this period are available, the overwhelming presence of Natyashastra in this period, makes up for its significance to a scholarly study of dance practice in the Indian sub-continent. Abhinavagupta's commentary (Abhinavabharati) on the Natyashastra, towards the close of this period, is also very important. Many scholars believe that Kohala wrote an equally authoritative text⁴ during this period. This is evident from the fact that almost every important Sanskrit scholar-writer on Dance quotes from it or refers to it. Unfortunately it is lost as have treatises by writers such as Bhattatota, Bhattatandu, Sankuka, Lollata, Dattila, Matanga.

In Abhinavagupta's commentary we find more terms representing concepts and categories of dancing than there are in the Natyashastra. This shows that such terms and what they represented had by this time passed into general use, as is also attested by their use in other kinds of literature of the time. It is evident that by Abhinavagupta's time dance had proliferated into many more forms than known

by Bharata. But it is also clear that Abhinavagupta views them as embodiments of the basic concepts stated by Bharata, for he often cites instances of such new categories of dancing to elucidate Bharata's concepts. The proliferation of concepts and categories after Bharata's time revealed by Abhinavagupta's commentary, is especially seen in his classification and interpretation of nritya. For him, tandava and nritya were synonymous. He has laid out the seven stages for the development of nritya. He classifies it into seven categories: shuddha (pure or abstract dance), gita-kavya-abhinayonmukha (a dance that expresses the meaning of a song), uddhata (vigorous dance), sukumura (a delicate dance), uddhata-misrita-masrannritya (a delicate dance mixed with vigorous movements), masranamis roddhata (a vigorous dance mixed with delicate movements), and vadya-talanusari (dance following instrumental music and rhythm).

SAMGITARATNAKARA, NRITRATNAVALI AND OTHER TEXTS

The second period extends from the 11th to the 15th century.⁵ This period is important because new trends in dancing were recorded and the distinctions between the margi and desi became pronounced. Dance began to be discussed in its own right rather than as a part of dramatic performance. Vocal and instrumental music also began to be accorded independent status. Nritratnavali by Jaya Senapati is an important work from this period wholly devoted to dance alone.

It is believed to be a part of a much larger treatise in which music is also covered, under a sub-heading Gitaratnavali.⁶ According to Raghavan, "The [Samgitaratnakara follows Abhinavagupta so closely that in many places it forms merely a metrical recast of the Abhinavabharati.⁷ Jaya Senapati does the same in the discussion of the marga dance in his Nritratnavali. So what is often taken today as the influence of the Nattyashastra in these texts

is in reality the influence of Abhinavagupta. Being from Kashmir, where the study of natya had at that time (of the ruler Jayapida, a patron of natya) seen a kind of renaissance, the importance of natya and sangita were emphasised by Abhinavagupta. This is also borne out by Kalhana who refers to natya presentations by courtesans in his book, Rajatarangini.

Nritratnavali has eight chapters devoted entirely to dancing, four to the margi and four to the desi traditions. One of the few treatises that deals exclusively with dance, scholar V Raghavan has also critically edited the text Nritratnavali with a detailed introduction. He compares the work with other contemporary writings.

Manasollasa is a treatise from the 12th century by Someshvara, also known as Abhilashitarthacintamani.⁸ It describes six varieties of dancing and six types of Nayikas (nartakas). Nartaka stands for performers in general and includes nartaki (female dancer), nata (actor), nartaka (male dancer), vaitalika (bard), carana (wandering performer), and kollatika (acrobat).

One of the most important treatises that included detailed discussions on the regional or desi styles is the Samgitaratnakara. Samgitaratnakara is divided into seven chapters dealing with Svara, Raga, Prakirnaka, Prabandha, Tala, Vadhya, and Nritya. This is a very important text and this is evident from the fact that many commentaries were written on it.

In Samgitaratnakara we find the delineation of guidelines for dance practise. Since it was the tradition to find the auspicious time during the day for wholesome pursuits, the dancer also has to begin practise at an auspicious hour, starting with prayers to Ganesha (Vighneshwara) to ward off obstacles, to Sarasvati, the goddess of all learning, to the Holy Trinity, to the deity installed on the stage, to the cymbals and other musical instruments that will be used in the practise/performance.

After that, the dancer pays obeisance to the teacher, other participants in the dance, the two pillars and the bar. Flowers, musk, sandal paste, pan leaves, incense, the traditional oil lamps, Naivedhya, etc., were the customary paraphernalia that the dancer must make sure are available.

The dancer's credentials were also very sharply described indicating that there was a clear understanding of the dancer's physical attributes that would help in expressing the content of the text. The Nayika's age corresponds to her physical and mental state. The mugadha Nayika, in the glow of adolescence, will exhibit a predisposition for love play but is shy and holds back, concealing limbs believed to be seats of erotic sensitiveness — rosy lips, heaving breasts, sparkling cheeks, delicate hips and shapely thighs. The youthful Madhya Nayika embodies attractiveness, with her full hips, rounded thighs and high and firm breasts. The adult pragalbha Nayika is voluptuous with intoxicating charm, adept in amorous sport and a protege of cupid himself. These three are the ideal Nayikas. Neither a atipragalbha nor a bala was believed to make for a good or attractive Nayika — one would be at an age when swift movement might be difficult and there would be a certain lack of spirit and charm; and the other would be too young to portray feelings with confidence. (Samgitaratna kara, Vol- IV, Chap- 7, Shloka 1224-1230)

Whether one agrees with this or not in this day and age, in olden times, the primary attribute for a Nayika was physical attractiveness as well as the mental and emotional strength. This was also elaborately described in the texts — well-proportioned, shapely limbs, a beautiful face that exudes charm, wide, large eyes, full, lush lips, sparkling teeth, slender wrists, a delicate neck, clear complexion, and so on. The Nayika also had to have a good temperament, courage and generosity - these were traits indispensable for

a Nayika. This is important because dancing is a delicate art, focussing on highly symbolic visual presentation that centers around beauty of form, clean-cut movements, and a certain genuineness of purpose. (Samgitaratnakara, Vol - IV, Chap -7, Shloka no.1231-1236)

Nartananirnaya and other texts

The third period extends from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The 16th century work, Nartananirnaya by Pundarika Vitthala mentions that gharghara was a distinctive feature of the desi dances of southern India.⁹ Nartananirnaya has four prakaranas namely, Taladharir Prakaranas, Mrdangi Prakaranas, Gayaka Prakranas – Ragadhikarana, and Nartaka Prakaranas – Nartanadhikaranas. The final chapter in the book is devoted to dance and subdivided into two adhikaranas – nartana and nritta. In certain manuscripts of the book, it appears that the author defines nartana, natya, etc. somewhat differently (1-9). There is superiority of verbal representation (Vachikabhinaya) over others (11,12), there is exemption of pusta in Aharyabhinaya for nritta, and (4) details differentiating cittavrttyapika from Bahyavas tava nukarini in dharma (40-57) are novel features of this adhikarana.

The desi dance has been classified into five types in Charyalankarnatanm and Perunya dikalashant nartanani in text Bhartarnava by Nandikeshvara. These look more like the popular forms prevalent in those times. (Chap : 13, Shloka no: 729-730 & Chap : 14 , Shloka 863-64)

Sangit (Dance) texts like Sangita damodara, Nartananirnaya, Sangitadarpana, etc. which were prevalent during this time in the neighbouring states of Tamilnadu gave two broad divisions of desi style of dancing. They were baddha nritya and anibaddhanritya. Baddha nritya has eleven varieties — Mukhachali, urupa (twelve varieties), dhuvada (twelve varieties), vidhutagava (twelve varieties), brahmari (five), sabdanritya, svaramantanritya, gitanritya, cindunritya (six),

daru (two) and dhruvapada.

Movement in Dance: Tandava, Lasya, Nritya, Lasyanga

Bharatamuni did not make the distinction of tandava and lasya according to what males or females do. He uses the word lasya in the context of lasyanga-s which are fully interpretative, and where the heroine who is in love expresses her state of mind and emotions. But in the later treatises, lasyanga was linked to a female dancer. It was more related to the angika and nritya performed by a female dancer. Saradatanaya in Bhavaprakashana states that nritya is one which is executed by karana-s and angahara-s. He doesn't explicitly state that tandava and lasya are a part of nritya. The gita which contains uddhata karana, angahara with the ara bhativritti is "tandava". No other treatise tries to include the vritti-s while explaining the elements of nritya. He divides the tandava into chanda, uchanda and prachanda. He defines lasya as the gita which contains lalitangahara in lalitlaya infused with the Kaishikivritti.

Sarangdeva is very clear as to what nritya is and what could be its divisions and its types. He says nritya is movement of various parts of the body which is not suggestive of any particular meaning. He divides this into two elements, tandava and lasya.

Lasyanga as Nritya

From this we understand that when a dance is performed with lusciousness and delicateness, and is visually presented beautifully, then it can be called as lasya or lasyanga. The delicate movements of female performers make the dance glamorous and elegant, with the shringara rasa as the predominant mood. It is also used in nritya, nritya and natya.

The Natyashastra mentions twelve types of Lasyanga. The dasharupaka mentions ten types of lasyanga, viz. geyapada, sthit-paathaya, aasina, pushpagandika, prachhedaka, trishula,

saindhyavakhyā, dvighudhaka, uttamottaka, ukt-prayukta. Natyashastra describes two more types apart from the above ten, viz. Vichitrapada and bhavita. Apart from this, in Nrityaratnavali of JayaSenapati mentions 12 types of lasyanga. The seventh section of Samgitaratnakara and Sangitaratnavali also describes Lasyang-s. These appear to have been selected from among the 12 types listed in the Natyashastra and the 47 listed by Ashokmalla in Nrityaadhyaya. The Nrityadhyay of Ashokmalla and the Nrityaratnakosa of Maharana Kumbha also describes lasyanga in a lot of detail. There are 12 Maargasthitalasyanga and 36 desi lasyanga according to Ashokmalla.¹⁰ (Shloka 1487-1512) and Maharana Kumbha.

It is believed that components of dance in a theatrical performance were appreciated and enjoyed by the public as a separate art form. Bharatamuni took cognisance of this when he wrote down the tenets of dramaturgy in the Natyashastra. Bharatamuni's extensive exposition on this topic, wherein he describes Lasya in great detail, contextualises it in three ways— firstly, Lasyanga, its Nritya part, involving only pure dance, without any Abhinaya, is described in connection with the stage preliminaries called Purvaranga (Ch.5). In the chapter devoted to the ten varieties of drama, he says that it is to be danced by a single danseuse, Ekaharya or Ekaprayojya, and that the performance comprises a series of emotional pieces which may be interlinked into a continuous theme (ekartha) or each standing separately (Prthagartha) as in a Bharata Natyam recital today.

Thus we get the serious, theoretical reference to the practice of a single dancer performing several pieces one after the other, and the seeds of the evolution of the 'Solo (single performer) Margam' appears to have been sown here.

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DIFFERENT TRADITIONS OF YOGA

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"Yoga is a systematic discipline which includes a technique for the mastery of the bodily organism and for rendering it healthy....and various methods or techniques of mind training for the sake of gaining the final knowledge and liberation. According to the Hindu religious tradition it was revealed to humanity by The Lord and even gods gained immortality and their supreme powers by its practice." (Werner, Karel)

The above definition of Yoga provides the rationale for this paper: the search of knowledge through Yoga. This paper makes a study of various traditions of Yoga, their goals and their practices so as to put forward the inherent basis of all – 'gaining the final knowledge.' (Werner, Karel)

According to Basavaraddi, the term 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'YUJ', meaning 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature. The aim of Yoga is Self-Realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation'. This is one of the oldest sciences of the world, originated in India, which is very useful for preserving and maintaining one's physical and mental health and also for 'spiritual evolution'. (Basavaraddi, Ishwar) Right from the Pre-Vedic time till today in the 21st century, Yoga is able to maintain its fascination among the people of the globe.

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The Growth Of The Mimetic Art- Bharatanatyam- During The 18th Cen. The Tanjavur Maratha Rulers From The Prevailing Contemporary Theatre Traditions

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Mimetic Art form normally uses mime. Bharatanatyam uses the angika, vachika, aharya and satvika abhinaya. Angika abhinaya may not be equated to mime though in certain area people do same mime too but abhinaya has different sensibility then mime so in this paper I have tried briefly to trace the development of Bharatanatyam in 18th century by Maratha rulers and that to coming from prevailing the theatre tradition Yakshagana and Geya prabandha-s.

The two Maratha rulers of Tanjavur, 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, the content and context therefore 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 of Prabandha (Shahaji II) and Nirupana (Serfoji II).

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 (gayana 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. 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. Texts like Brihaddeshi, Sangitaratnakara and Sangeeta Saramruta belonging to 9th, 13th and 17th centuries respectively, contain chapters dedicated to the topic of prabandha-s. 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 nritya and nritya aspects.

Shahaji's prabandha-s were typically a compilation of various types of daru-s. These daru-s were based on a variety of themes, of a purely devotional or philosophical nature, which were depicted by the nayikas. They had no thematic link, a feature which made the prabandha different from the nataka of Yakshagana prabandha which was expected to have a single theme. Each of these daru-s was mentioned with the appropriate names of raga-s and tala-s and in many instances with swarajati-s and swarasollu-s as well. A single prabandha included about 50 different raga-s. Shahaji's two main works were Tyaga Vinoda Chitra Prabandha and Pancharatna Prabandha.

The following offers a brief description of dance compositions included in these prabandha-s.

Vinayaka daru or Vighneswarachi daru is a depiction of Lord Gajanan, 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 Nawabs 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.

Sapta sagara sooladi prabandha lila daru is a composition of seven verses in praise of Siva Tyagesa Pancha tala lila daru is a composition that includes a passage of sollu-s (pata), words in praise of Shiva.

Sringara 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. This composition seems to be the forerunner of later sollu-s, finally emerging as what we now perform as jatiswaram.

Swara sabdartha tala trinsannavaratna prabandha daru is a type of prabandha that incorporates swara-s, sahitya and sollu-s.

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. 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.

Abhinaya daru is a novel composition depicting the divine dance of Nataraja and meant to be performed as nritya. It seems to have paved the way for the later-day varnam.

The four famous prabandas of Shahaji are Vishnu Pallaki Seva Prabandam, Sankara Pallaki Seva Prabandam, Pancharatna Prabandam and Tyagaraja Vinodha Chitra Prabandam². These are prabanda natakas with beautiful padas in bhakti 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. 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 prabandhas (Sankara Pallaki Seva, Vishnu Pallaki Seva, Pancharatna, Tyagaraja Vinoda Chitra) 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 nritya and nritya aspects are found in these drishya kavyas. Shahaji conveys a dramatic story through song, dialogue, abhinaya and nritya in these dramas.

The Pallaki seva prabandha is one of the earliest geyanatakas in Telugu. The opera is

developed around Tyageswara, the presiding deity of Thiruvavur. Facing the north-east direction and praying for the union with the lord, Shahaji had witnessed the Pallaki Seva of the Lord Vitanka Tyagesa. The Vishnu pallaki seva prabanda has Goddess Lakshmi as nayaki.

On the other hand, Sarfoji II introduced a new form of dance that went by the name of Nirupana-s. 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 keertan, popularly known as katha kala kshepam. Sarfoji'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. Swarajothi	14. Prabanda
3. Alaru	9. Abhinayapada	15. Tripata
4. Sollu	10. Tillana	16. Sloka varna
5. Sabda	11. Arjitapada	17. Kautta
6. Varnam	12. Jakkini	18. Mangala.

Sarfoji 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'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. All the Nirupanas are compiled in a book by the name of Korvayanche Sahityache Jinnah. This contains sixteen varieties of Nirupana compositions based on a puranic epic and kalpitha kathas.

All the Nirupanas begin with the invocatory item jayajaya and end with mangalam. This can be danced as a solo performance. The performance conveys all features, emotions and moods of different

characters. The compositions end with saranudaru. What is to be noted in this work, is the existence of seven different types of allarippus in different talas. The seven sets are of the nature of Ekartha i. e. particularisation of a subject. 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 abhinayas.

Each of Sarfoji's nirupana-s presents a single theme woven into a series of 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.

This format was applied successfully in the development of the theme through the choreography and performance of Kirata Arjuneeyam. 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 of todaya mandalam. Alaru is akin to alarippu. Sollu is the transition point of Shahaji's srngara daru leela and the present-day jatishwaram. His sabda, varna, pada and tillana are similar to the present-day sabdam, varnam, padam and tillana. Jakkini is similar to Shahaji's jakkini daru while geeta, prabandha and tripata 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.

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 Tanjavur 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 Tanjavur, especially during the Nayaka and Maratha periods. 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 Tanjavur Quartet.

A study of these brings to light the gradual development of the Bharatanatyam repertoire and also suggests that the single theme focus of Serfoji's nirupana (with the Ekartha concept) if properly utilized, could perhaps even rejuvenate contemporary Bharatanatyam recitals.

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