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**SELINUS UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**The significance of body language in Indian  
Classical Dance forms with reference to  
Bharathanatyam and Mohiniyattom**

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## Declaration

I do here by attest that I am the sole author of this project/thesis and that its contents are only the result of the readings and research I have done.

## Acknowledgement

First and foremost I would like to thank god almighty for always being there for me and for granting me with the patience and perseverance required for the completion of my thesis. I would like to pay my deepest gratitude to my educators and close friends for helping and supporting to accomplish my task. I take immense pleasure in thanking the **SELINUSUNIVERSITY** educators and people of admin department for their guidance, encouragement and for replying within no time for all my queries. I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional love, countless prayers and lot of support. I want to express my gratitude to all my educators who have taught, trained and inspired me in my academic years and made me capable enough to undertake this research. Finally I would like to thank all my friends for sharing their ideas and lending a helping hand in time of need.



Pooja Vijayan.

## Abstract

This article contributes in understanding the significance of the body acting with reference to the Indian classical dance forms Bharathanatyam and Mohiniyattom. The body language plays a vital role in a dance performance as a medium of communication and entertainment by making use of the generalized moods or sentiments with the help of angas, pratyangas, upangas etc and makes the spectator experience the feeling of rasa. Rasa is the sentiment and no meaning proceeds from speech without any kind of sentiment. Now a sentiment is born from the combination of determinants (vibhava), consequents (anubhava) and complimentary psychological states (vyabhichari bhavas). As taste results from a combination of various spices, vegetables and other articles, so the psychological states when they come together with various other psychological states, attain the quality of sentiment. So first we will be beginning with an introduction on dance and then elaborate about the two dance forms Bharathanatyam and Mohiniyattom. And after we would be moving on to explore into the body movements by explaining comprehensively on uttamanga abhinaya, hasta abhinaya and sharira abhinaya. We will also be working on the rasa asvadhana (aesthetic pleasure) which a performer invokes in a spectator through a performance by using all the body expressions required, and through all the basic inner emotions, which is present there in all human beings.

An introduction on pre historic period has been added to get an image regarding the dance that how the living creatures like the plants, animals and human beings are connected to the movements and the natural way the movements took birth is also being highlighted. This thesis contains the detailed information on minor limbs which is considered one of the utmost significant and main aspect in Bharathanatyam and Mohiniyattom dance forms. The wordless communication is being delivered through the body to the audience by the dancer with the help of hand gestures and with the supportive limbs (pratyangas). The hand gestures are also being comprehensively explained with the pictures for the reference, and has been detailed that what all things and characters are being depicted by those mudras. Nritta hastas (decorative hand gestures) which is widely used for the dance, the dance which does not include any expressions but only the graceful body movements is also being elaborated with pictures in this section.

Short information based on the body language is included to get a glance of body behavior and how it is being understood. This section contains the general information on body language to just make the reader familiar with the topic so then later on when we explore deep into the subject the reader can well connect to the topic and can link the chapters very easily one by one discussed in this thesis.

This work imparts knowledge on the divine art called the Indian classical dance, its origin and mythology have been narrated abruptly to get a proper understanding of the past. Indian dance has its roots in the text known as Natyashastra by Bharathamuni. In this chapter it has been clearly explained that how the dancer uses her body according to the set rules in the book Natyashastra and follows it to practice the dance form to bring it upto the mark to make the spectator experience the artistic bliss.

This project also contains the collective information on pratyangas (supportive limbs) which is considered as the secondary part in dance after upangas (minor limbs) and hasta mudras (hand gestures). We will be discussing about the upangas (minor limbs) with perfect pictures for a better understanding. The related topics such as nritta, nritya and natya, the two modes of acting viz lokadharmi and natyadharmi, the four types of acting Angika, Vachika, Satvika and Aharya, and finally the four styles of theatrical representation which is called Vrittis has also been worked upon to bring a finishing touch to this thesis. The major and main aspect of the classical dance that is the creativity (Manodharama) is elaborated very comprehensively that how a performer embodies the other characters through the artiste's own improvisation.

## Hypothesis

In Indian classical dance forms the dancer moves her body according to some set rules and regulations based on the text Natyashastra. The ultimate entertainment will only be gleaned by the audience then. In this research it will be proved that how with the amalgamation of the inner emotions, psychological states, body movements, expressions and with various sentiments the performer invokes rasa in the spectator or we can also say that with proper trained body movements and all the knowledge acquired regarding the acting techniques, only then the aesthetic bliss can take birth inside the spectator. The process of invoking rasa (artistic rapture) by the performer inside the audience will be explained in detail to get a clear picture.

## Purpose of study

The desired aim of this thesis is to bring out every possibility of the communication and abhinaya through the body language in classical dance by combining all the inner emotions required for a performance so that it will be easier for the spectator to understand the meaning of the performance. We will also examine in detail that how the physical, mental, verbal and emotional acts of daily living are represented by the performer through an artistic process to gain rasa experience.

## Methodology

The data and the needed resources for this project is gathered from internet, reading books on related topics, collecting articles, resources collected from newspapers and magazines, dance based reviews, discussion with renowned performers etc...

Primary source:-Texts, reading books related to the topic, articles etc...

Secondary source:-Internet,resources collected from newspapers, magazines, danced based reviews, discussion with performers, educators, friends etc...

## Introduction

In the absence of the invention of linguistic symbols for writing, people could not leave behind any written record of information. This age is known as pre-historic age or the age of unrecorded history. This deals with how the people lived in the pre-historic age could have been involved in dance and music.

In the beginning of the world, birds and animals could have rhythmically moved or danced according to the conditions of nature. Cows must have moved in tune with the noise made by the breeze passing through the bamboos and peacocks must have danced pleased with the climatic changes.

In the same way in order to express his joy and sorrow man tried to shout or wail or clap his hands or show some gestures or stamp his feet. When man started to make noise in different pitches, it slowly led to the origin of music. Jumping, clapping hands, showing different gestures led to origin of dance.

Though man was a social animal, there was a social quality in the human race, even at that age. It became necessary for them to communicate with each other for their needs. When they tried to make noises for the purpose vocal cords became refined. Meaningful and clear noises were made. Rhythm and relevant music were born when they moved the body according to the work they did.

Even before language came into existence, dance was born from the symbols they showed through the movements of the body and hands. When man was living in groups, hunting was basically essential for his life.

Sometimes when he tried to imitate what he tried to do, for ex. Hunting, koothu or dance was born. When people wanted rain, they tried to show gestures to express the joining of clouds, lightning and thunder. Dance was born when man presented emotionally a real incident in a make believe way. The language that was spoken in the koothu is the basis for ancient songs. Hence scholars believe that koothu (dance) and music must have been born at the same time and that the rhythmic movements of those engaged in group work are the basis for the origin of these two. Thus man who was unknowingly imitated nature created music and dance. In the beginning he expressed his inner feelings and experiences through art form. Later he used it to entertain others. When villagers came into existence and grew as a social body, music and dance became refined as folk art forms. It is from these folk art forms that fine art forms or classical art forms developed.

Dance in its widest sense is the personalized human reaction to appeal of a general rhythm which marks not only human life but the universe. It is this rhythm which we call laya that

influence all the physical and spiritual manifestations of life. It is thus small wonder that man be taken up forever with the inquiry of the nature of rhythm and where it is in verity the sustaining principle of his life and continued well-being, it should assume magical spiritual qualities. And dancing based and woven around rhythm, then assumes a tremendous importance for man and also assumes spiritual qualities. Dancing is also an arrangement or patterns in space, as architecture, painting and sculpture are and employs spatial rhythm. Thus dance is the only art which can be called time space art, employing rhythm in both the spheres audible and visual.

It is said in Indian dance, the different parts of the human body are like notes of the music in a given raga. The movements of the minor limbs and their precise execution are the most essential aspects of the major limbs and their postures are essential elements of the nritta, pure dance. Then there are pratyangas, the subsidiary limbs which are used in the acting and also in the nritta, the pure dance only using the body movements.

Perfect poise and balance is the key to Indian dancing. Infact, all its dance movements emerge from this point of perfect stillness. All movements start from the samabhanga posture (equipoise of stance with an equal distribution of weight). And again all the movements return to the samabhanga.

The knee, pelvis, and the shoulder joints constitute the key points from which the movements emerge in the lower and upper limbs. The neck joint is the pivot around which the movements of the head and face revolve. The classification of body movements, in the Indian texts, is broadly categorized into those of the major and minor limbs and the second as the combination of the primary movements into small modulations known as charis and mandalas. Each of these is governed by its own set of rules. Dance is very intriguing to watch because it evokes an emotional response in people. People often feel relaxed listening to music and it seems that dance can have a similar effect on people, but the type of effect depends on the type of dance that the person is watching. It is also said that watching a dance performance can stimulate memories in brain. People may also conjure up visual images while watching dance. Studies have found that both the brain and muscles do respond to watching people dance. This is largely because people can empathize with others, so when we see sadness being exhibited we tend to feel sad and when we see joy being exhibited then we also feel joy.

## Table of contents

### **Description**

1. Title page
2. Declaration
3. Acknowledgement
4. Abstract
5. Introduction
6. Table of contents
- 6.1 Chapter 1 - **Silent communication and the divine art.**
- 6.2 Chapter 2 - **Expressing through face : Gestures of (upangas) minor limbs.**
- 6.3 Chapter 3 - **Hasta mudras : Understanding the language of hands.**
- 6.4 Chapter 4 - **How the physique conveys : Gesticulation of (pratyangas) subsidiary limbs.**
- 6.5 Chapter 5 – **Rasa :The aesthetic delight**
7. Conclusion
8. Glossary
9. Appendix
10. Bibliography

## Chapter 1

### SILENT COMMUNICATION AND THE DIVINE ART

Body language is a non-verbal communication that involves body movement. "Gesturing" can also be termed as body language which is absolutely non-verbal means of communication. People in the work place can convey a great deal of information without even speaking through non-verbal communication. Not all of our values, beliefs, thoughts and intentions are communicated verbally. In an ongoing communication, most of those are communicated verbally. In non-verbal communication, our human body expresses our feelings and intentions through conscious and unconscious movements and postures, accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts and touch. This collectively forms a separate language of the body within the ongoing communication. Our human body speaks through the conscious and unconscious movements and postures, hand gestures, facial expressions, eye movements and touch. Each of these physical movements of the body parts could be seen as separate words and can be interpreted differently by other human beings within a given context of communication. Since interpretations of body language differ from people to people and cultures to countries, it is important to learn about them. Body language alone comprises of 55% of total communication whereas spoken words comprise of 7% and tone of voice comprise 38%. Dancers are not just performing artistes their bodies are also the instruments through which the art is created. The quality of this art therefore, necessarily depends on the physical qualities and skills that dancers possess. The stronger and more flexible a dancer's body, the more capable it is of a wide range of movements. Nearly all professional dancers start training at a very young age in order to shape and develop their bodies correctly. Strength is built up in the right muscles, for example, and the bone connecting ligaments on which flexibility of the joints is so dependent are lengthened early before they begin to harden, as well as strength and mobility, a good dancer must also possess great coordination (the ability to work different parts of the body together) a highly developed kinesthetic awareness (in order to know and control the position and state of the body), control over weight and balance in motion, a developed awareness of space, a strong sense of rhythm, and an appreciation of music. Particularly in dramatic dance the dancer must be able to project movement clearly and make its expressive qualities intelligible to the audience. Grace, harmony and fidelity of the body are also frequently desired in the dancer, as its physical beauty, but these are subjective qualities that differ from one culture to another and change according to fashion. Body language plays a significant role in Bharathanatyam and as well as in Mohiniyattom. Than Bharathanatyam

Mohiniyattom include a major part of body movements and expressions. One of the most lyrical and expressive dance form.

Spoken language happened much later in our evolutionary history than non-verbal language and is therefore deeply rooted in our minds. Nonverbal language is primordial, primitive and therefore primary to speech. Our minds and bodies are tied together in language which is why we gesticulate while we talk. We might try to bury or ignore our body language but it still creeps out when we aren't paying attention. For most people who have done no reading about body language at all, it is their default mode and so they show us honest gestures.

Speech takes meaning from our actions and body positions, not just from resonance, frequencies and pitch carried through air molecules. When people speak, we can tell their emotions by how they use their hands, which words they emphasize, and where they pause in speech. On the other hand to become more effective speakers we also need to be better at delivering proper body language so again we need to understand the non-verbal channel.

Just like regular spoken language or written language, silent speech or non-verbal communication also has what is called flow. Body language has rhythm, syntax and all the other nuances associated with general communication and ignoring this flow is akin to throwing away valuable information. We will also see that body language is much more reliable than spoken words because people generally pay little attention to it and because of this, people will monitor it less readily allowing it to appear naturally and untainted. We will see that when body language and spoken language contradict one another, we should rely more heavily on what is happening non-verbally.

## [1:1 Indian classical dance](#)

Indian classical dance is one of the most comprehensive and oldest dance forms in the world. Most of the development of Indian dance is linked to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C treatise. This treatise Bharatha's Natyashastra, is the most important source for establishing the characteristics of Indian dance and drama. The natyashastra lays down two aspects of dance nritta- pure dance and nritya- interpretative dance. Nritta is the expression of rhythmic movement primarily through use of the hands and feet often in specific poses. Nritya uses gestures and facial expressions to show the poetic or emotional meaning while combining rhythmic gaits and postures. The Indian classical dances have two basic aspects and that is Tandava (movement & rhythm) and Lasya (grace, expression & rasa). The nine rasas or aesthetic rapture are – Love, Heroism, pathos, Humor, Anger, Fear, Disgust, Wonder and peace. The Natyashastra written by Bharathamuni is the most prominent source for the Indian aestheticians for establishing the

characteristics of the dances. The Abhinayadarpana by Nandikeshwara is one of the main sources of textual material, for the study of the technique and grammar of body movement in dance.

## Mythology

The Indian Dance has its origin deeply embedded in an inter-dependent combination of mythology, religion and art of the ancient distant past. The general belief is that the resources of the first sound and movement in dance were principally from the elemental vibrations that caused the creation of universe. This essence of all sound and movement is encompassed in Bharathanatyam.

Again the mythological origin of dance has reference to a story in which Indra, the king of devas and all devas appealed to brahma the creator, to conceive an aesthetic and pleasing recreation that could be accessible to all classes of society.

Brahma therefore took the four vedas, namely Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, Atharva veda and created a fifth veda the Natya veda, the Book of Drama. The Natya veda not only takes its essence from each of the four vedas, but represents an introduction to a new mode of expression, that of the performing arts.

The Natya veda derives its text for recitation from the Rigveda or the Book of knowledge. When this meter is hummed or sung in accompaniment to the dancer's movements it is believed that it can summon the gods to attend the worship of men. From the Samaveda or Book of Melodies, it has taken enchanting, bewitching music. From the Yajurveda or Book of Sacrifices, it has adopted the art of abhinaya or mime, through which the dancer can communicate with his audience, whether of gods or of men. From the Atharva veda or the Book of Spiritual craft, it has acquired rasa or the emotional appeal, both of which enable the dancer to communicate with all creation. Brahma blended the ingredients of the four vedas into a harmonious whole and added his own divine genius and thus created a new branch of learning for which he framed rules and regulations. This huge volume on the subject of dance came to be known as natya veda. This art of dance is believed to grant dutiful life (dharma), wealth (artha) and enjoyment (kama) as well as liberation (moksha).

This art also promotes fame, self-confidence, fortune and cleverness granting peace, patience, liberty and pleasure and doing away with misery, affliction, sorrow and despondency.

Brahma instructed a mortal sage Bharathamuni endowed with divine knowledge, to put his fifth veda into practice. Bharatha had an unusual advantage of having fathered 100 sons and with their help he set to work.

However, he soon realized that his projection would be a poor thing if figured only men. It needed women as well to make it fully representative. Brahma solved this problem by creating 23 apsaras (celestial women or nymphs) to assist Bharatha in his work.

Time came when Bharatha's efforts were to be judged. It was decided that "Indra Dhvajamahotsav", the festival of lord Indra's banner would provide an ideal opportunity for the debut.

On that day the art of Natya to be performed before lord shiva and an audience of devas (gods) and danavas (demons). For the performance the mandapa's (stage) architecture was done by Vishnu karma, the organizer was Indra, the preceptor was sage Bharatha, and sage Narada set the music. Sage Swathi conducted the orchestra, and Bharatha choreographed the play.

Bharatha having acquired the subtleties of dance, Brahma conceived the very first drama in which dance sequences were introduced, namely the "Amruthamanthana" or "churning of the ocean" and "Tripura Daha" or "Burning of the three Abodes"

Bharatha sought the help of lord shiva who is the fountain head of dance for dance instructions. Shiva pleased with the drama agreed to perform the tandava or the masculine form of dance.

Shiva danced the tandava accompanied by goddess saraswathi on the veena, lord Indra on the flute, lord brahma on the cymbals, lord Vishnu on the drum, and goddess Lakshmi rendered vocal music. After performing the pure dance (tandava) shiva felt that without the lasya (the soft expression) the dance was incomplete. He taught the soft lasya to parvathi, and thus lasya and tandava came to be the very basic components of dance.

Lord shiva as nataraja is the fountain head of dance and all various dance forms flowed from him to the other gods and devas and through them to the sages and seers who transmitted the natyaveda to the people. Lord shiva's wife parvathi was the first to receive his blessings in the shape of a full knowledge of tandava and lasya, including the nuances of bhava, raga and tala. Next in order to receive this knowledge from lord shiva were hari, brahma, indra, nandi, tandu and other devas.

Parvathi the wife of lord shiva presented the lasya dance consisting of facial expressions, hand gestures, body movements etc... and after getting lord shiva's blessings, she preached this to her sons lord Ganesha and lord subramanya and also to usha the wife of sun god.

Kshatriya women from north, vaishya from middle, musicians from south and gopikas from the place dwaraka derived this beautiful art from usha the wife of sun god.

Nandi classified the performing arts as nritta, nritya and natya into two divisions like uttama tandava and lasya tandava and also gave the nuances of the instruments to his sons, to brunga muni and to rudra kanyas.

Sage sukracharya systematized abhinaya shastras depicting mudras for gods, animals, aquatic creatures, birds, humans, kings, demons. The other sage called swedaka got the details of the musical instruments like Nadaswaram and other instruments of gods, sun and moon.

Sage valmiki recorded his knowledge on varieties of Rasa (the artistic bliss) and sage Bhanukavi collected the knowledge about the varieties of hero and heroine. In this manner the art of dance spread from devas (the human gods) to the people on earth. Thus from the very beginning even the gods, acknowledged dancing as an art invested with a supreme divinity.

### **Devadasis (Dancers employed in service of god)**

In India, most classical dances evolved as a temple art. Many Indian dynasties from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards have contributed to this art form. This interest in temple art was brought about by spurts of building temples in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Devadasis performed dance at the temples. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, four brothers known as the Tanjore Quartet defined dance tradition. Dance was one of the mediums of worship. The dancer performed facing the idol of the god. This is the reason Indian classical dance is primarily a solo based art. The mission of temple dancing was to take art to the people. Temples vied with one another in having the best dancers and musicians in their services. Thereafter, temple dancing was institutionalized and kings patronized the dancers.

There are four types of devadasis namely Devaradiar, Koothier, Pathiyilar and Viraliar. Devaradiar were those ladies who were in the service of god through the art of dance. Koothier ladies took art for their employment and pathiyilar were those who remained unmarried and dedicated themselves to the service of god, and viraliar were those who were famous in the art of dance. The names Devaradiar is in Tamil language and Devadasi is in Sanskrit is associated with those ladies who used to be addressed as servants of god. In Tamil Nadu this practice is prevalent from the sangam period. And their names sculpted in stones as devaradiar, pathiyilar, tallicheri pendungal. Sacred books named as narthagis, kanigais, dasis etc...their names as devadasis became widespread during the kingdom of vijayanagar. The practice of dedicating women in the sacred service of god was prevalent in many parts of India.

## Characteristics of a Dancer

A professional dancer must reveal a number of qualities. A true dancer must dance beautifully like bees. Some of them may have innate qualities which can be nurtured by a true teacher. But, even such individuals can attain mastery only through constant and meticulous practice.

### The major qualities of a dancer

In general, a dancer should be slender bodied, beautiful and young. With round breasts, be self-confident, witty, and pleasing. Know well when to begin and when to stop. Be able to perform in accompaniments of vocal and instrumental music. Have mastery on taala that is to observe the proper time beats. Have large glancing eyes. Have agility, steadiness and memory. Have devotion to the art form, clarity of speech and good singing power. Have graceful figure, have splendid dresses and possess a happy countenance.

### Bad qualities of a dancer

Itching hair in public, Yawning and stretching the body, anger, lack of reverence to teacher, movements similar to that of searching ornaments on ground etc., unpleasant movement. Briefly, the suggestion is that a performer must be a decent, neat and an adorable individual. A dancer must avoid the above or such a performer must be warded off.

## Characteristics of Audience

Audiences are inevitable part of any performance. Without a good audience the performance is completely meaningless. Here the audience is composed to the wishing tree shining with vedas as its branches, shastras as its flowers and the scholars as the bees adorning it. Thus, excellence of performers alone will not make a show successful. What they bring forth must be duly accepted, comprehended and enjoyed by the audience.

## 1:2BHARATHANATYAM

Bharathanatyam is one of the major classical dance forms of India. It has derived its base from the ancient text called Natyashastra by Bharathamuni. The old name of Bharathanatyam is sadir attam. In olden times devadasis used to perform this dance in temples and nowadays this dance is widely performed by men and women both. In Bharathanatyam performance Carnatic classical music is being used. Bharathanatyam is a mixture of Bha- Bhava (expression), Ra-Raga (music) and Ta-Tala (rhythm). Bharathanatyam includes the two main aspects and that is lasya

the graceful movement and Tandava the masculine style. This dance mostly has steep and steady movement or body language, combined with graceful movements. Lord shiva is considered as the king of dance and the lord of Bharathanatyam. In Indian mythology it has been said that he asked to teach his wife parvathy regarding the lasya style to other women and like this it happen to reach most of the people. Bharathanatyamhas 28 asamyuta hastas (single hand gestures) and 25 samyuta hastas (double hand gestures). Bharathanatyam consists of many items and they are as follows.

**1. Alarippu**:-This is performed by using most of the basic adavus (steps) and this is considered as an invocation to gods to bless the performance.

**2. Kautuvam** :- This is mostly sung in the praise of lord shiva. It is being performed in the beginning of the recital which includes rhythmic syllables sung for jathis.

**3. Ganapathi Vandana** :- This is in the praise of the elephant headed god ganesha who removes all the obstacles and blesses us with prosperity. This is performed in the beginning of the performance.

**4. Jathiswaram**:- This only consists of the basic dance steps and is based on rhythmic syllables. Jathiswaram is also one of lyrical item.

**5. Shabdham** :- This is performed on a devotional song.

**6. Varnam** :-The core piece of Bharathanatyam dance and also the longest section of dance which includes most complex movements.

**7. Padam** :-This is one of the most lyrical item of Bharathanatyam repertoire. Here the dancer narrates the aspect of love.

**8. Thillana** :-The final section and this includes the complex and intricate footwork and body movements.

Apart from these items, there are items such as swarajathi, slokam, krithi etc...

### **The training in Bharathanatyam**

Bharathanatyam requires a rigorous training and a lot of dedication in its part. The dancer has to go through all such stages of training and learning process to gain the ultimate performing ability. The dancer begins her training at a very young age starting with the Namaskara movement (praying to the goddess earth) and practices all the basic warming ups and initial level exercises which is one of the utmost herculean task to perform and to make the body

flexible to rise up to the level of learning Bharathanatyam basic level steps. After learning, practicing and becoming an expert in all these basic level exercises, the performer gets promoted to learn the next level steps being called "Tattadavu". Tatt means to strick or to tap your feet on the floor. These steps make your leg movement faster and moving according to the rhythm. The next level is "Nattadavu" in these the dancer starts using her hands as well combining with legs. Then comes the "Martita adavus" which is little bit advanced than Tattadavu and Nattadavu, like this the dancer begins and continues her journey lifetime. After learning all these basic, intermediate and advanced level steps she makes her body flexible and graceful enough to balance the body while even performing the toughest movement. Then after practicing all these, it is time to move on to learn the main items in Bharathanatyam, which begins with learning the first item "Alaripu". Abhinaya or Acting the most significant part of the dance has also to be learned by the dancer to lift her learning skills and techniques up to the mark.

### 1:3MOHINIYATTOM

Mohiniyattom is one of the most lyrical and graceful dance forms of Kerala. This dance also has its base attached to natyashastra. Natyashastra is written by the sage Bharathamuni. Mohini word is derived by the female guise of lord vishnu in Indian mythology. Mohiniyattom is also known as the dance of enchantress. In Mohiniyattom love related acting is seen and performed more by the performer. Mohiniyattom is female oriented dance and performed only by females. The older name of Mohiniyattom is vilasini natyam. It is also called as in olden times, Mudras or hand gestures in Mohiniyattom are taken from a book called "Hasthalakshanadipika". Mohiniyattom is a dance form exudes abundant grace. It is a lasya form full of feminist of the various classical styles mentioned by Bharatha in his Natyashastra, Mohiniyattom comes closest to Kaishiki vritti (graceful) which is most appropriate to express the erotic sentiment (sringara rasa). A movement never begins or ends abruptly but comprises unbroken chain of body movements, one movement merging into the next with remarkable ease, softness and delicacy. The hands and legs are never straightened fully or stretched into a straight line but always held in a curve. The body sways and swings rhythmically along with the hand gestures. The mild sway of the torso, from side to side (atibhanga movement) is a unique feature of Mohiniyattom, which distinguishes it from other dance styles of India. The expression of the wide span eyes is erotic.

The earliest tradition of feminine dance in Kerala has been recorded between the 3rd and 8th century A.D. Though one cannot pinpoint the exact period of origin, it can be reasonably concluded that Mohiniyattom is an ancient dance form. It is the Kerala version of dasiattom and is much older than the tandava style of kathakali. The reference to Mohiniyattom in literature

is to be found in vyavaharamala composed by mazhamangalam narayanan namboothiri, a sanskrit scholar, assigned to 1709 A.D. It speaks about the rules to be observed when sharing the fee received for this dance recital, among the concerned artistes. In another text, Goshayatra by the famous poet Kunjan nambiar, founder of thullal. Kunjan nambiar while mentioning the regional performing arts of Kerala also mentions Mohiniyattom besides kuthu, pathakam, pavakuthu, thiruvatirakali etc., Mohiniyattom came to be recognized one of the most classical dance forms, so much that in Balaramabharatham, the monumental treatise on natyashastra, Maharaja karthika thirunal, mentions mohini natanam among other reign of Maharaja swathi thirunal in the 19th century. Mohiniyattom received a considerable amount of royal patronage, during this period. Vocal music of this performance art incorporates different rhythms and lyrics of many of the compositions performed in this dance form are in Manipravala that is a mix of Sanskrit and Malayalam language while the music style in Carnatic or Sopanam. Instruments played during a Mohiniyattom performances usually comprise of Kuzhitalam or cymbals, veena, idakka (an hourglass shaped drum), Mridangam (a barrel shaped drum with two heads) and flute. Mohiniyattom's repertoire sequence includes an invocation or called Cholkettu, Jathiswaram, Varnam, Padam, Ashtapadi, Thillana, Shlokam and Saptam.

The items of Mohiniyattom are as follows :-

- 1) Cholkettu** :- This consists of pure dance movements at the end of which is tagged a poem that is in praise of a deity.
- 2) Jathiswaram** :- This is a pure dance presentation devoid of any abhinaya (emotions), in which intricate sequences are fused with repetitive musical notes.
- 3) Varnam** :- The most important item in Mohiniyattom. It tests the skill of the dancer. Varnam literally means colors. It is a joyous combination of all the three components of dance namely Nritta (pure dance devoid of any emotions), Nritya (dance including acting and body movements) and Natya (acting oriented).
- 4) Padam** :- A love poetry and the lyrical item which is devoid of intricate body movements but only uses emotions and shows only expressions to act.
- 5) Thillana** :- This includes the complex and intricate footwork and body movements.
- 6) Saptam** :- Saptam is characterized as a dance-drama. The dancers began their recital with a prayer to lord Ganapathy and goddess Bhagavathy.
- 7) Shlokam** :- This is the last item of the repertoire and includes only slow movement of actions and expressions.

## The training in Mohiniyattom

Being a lyrical and graceful dance form Mohiniyattom requires a lot of physical exercise in the initial stages of the training process. The exact name for the exercises is “chuzhipu” which means the circular movements. The circular kind of warming up is very necessary for Mohiniyattom. It makes the body of the dancer graceful to move according to the music of Mohiniyattom which is different from other dance forms. This dance form is also known as the lyrical dance form. After practicing all the basic exercises there are thirty different kinds of basic steps which is very much graceful and elegant to see. Once all these thirty steps are learned then it is time to move on to learning the main items of Mohiniyattom. The first item is known as “cholukettu”. Mohiniyattom requires a lot of scope for acting or abhinaya being a lyrical dance form. This dance form contains Lokadharmi kind of acting compared to other dance forms. Lokadharmi acting means not at all stylized movement which is normally seen in classical dance but it is the behavior of the common people and it is also said as worldly behavior kind of acting which shows acting in a very normal way.

## 1:4 The triad of classical dance

Nritta, Natya, Nritya in Indian classical dance are one of the most important triad. Let us begin first with Nritta in which the most intrinsic footwork and body movements are used. It is then Natya in which only acting oriented expressions of the body can be seen. Then finally comes Nritya which is a combination of body movements, emotions, expressions etc., Now let us begin to explain it in a comprehensive manner.

## Nritta

Nritta the rhythmic element is composed of only pure dance and with feature striking and elegant poses, but have no expressional meaning and symbolism. There is only physical creativity but no story, theme or narrative. Even the mudras (hand gestures) become just as a piece of decoration.

Nṛitta refers to “pure dance” as used within the classical tradition of Indian dance and performance. In Bharathanatyam, the use of nṛitta is found in basic movements and a few dance pieces; nritya is seen in expressional dancing pieces and natya is found in the dance-dramas of classical dances. According to the Abhinayadarpaṇa, “that (dance) which does not relate to any psychological state (bhāva) is called nṛitta”.

Nṛitta is that form of dance which does not have flavor (rasa) and mood (bhava). Even the gestures, rhythm and limb movements do not convey any specific mood, meaning or message.

It is a form of pure movement in dance, which does not express any mood or sentiment. It is full of poses, stances, leaps, turns, twists and intricate foot work. It is full of rhythm and motion that create joy and ecstasy in the dancer as well as the spectator. The expression of emotion in nṛitta is negligible. Nṛitta is movement in rhythm with the feet and the hands. In Bharatanatyam, the techniques of the aḍavus and the rhythmic dance patterns that are included in the items alarippu, jatisvaram, and tillana come under the category of nṛitta or pure dance.

Nṛitta is of three kinds: viṣama, vikaṭa and laghu. Viṣama consists of many acrobatic feats like rope dancing, and intricate foot work. Vikaṭa consists of movements of a person in dress that strikes awe and terror in the hearts of the viewers. Laghu consists of graceful upward tripping and movements.

## Natya

Natya is a Sanskrit technical term, referring to “dramatic art”. According to the natyashastra there is no exclusive representation of you or of the Gods, for the drama is a representation of the States of the three worlds. Also, mimicry of the exploits of gods, the Asuras, kings as well as of householders in the world, is called drama (naṭya).

Naṭya is dancing used in a drama (naṭaka) combined with the original plot. Natya and Nṛitya should be seen especially at festivals. Natya is the dramatic element. Natya is exhaustive. It includes both Nritta and Nritya and in addition, it has the element of drama, which is introduced through speech and song. The Vachika (voice) and Aharya (costume) aspects of Abhinaya are more pertinent to Natya than to Nritta and Nritya. When Natyashastra was arranged, no dance was independent of drama. The performer was compelled to present both dancer and actor.

Naṭya refers to “dramatic representation” as used within the classical tradition of Indian dance and performance. According to the Abhinayadarpaṇa, “naṭya or naṭaka” which has some traditional story for its theme, is an adorable art”. The word naṭya is derived from ‘naṭ’ meaning to move or to act. It is a presentation on the stage of a play full of ancient stories and is adorable with all the four elements of abhinaya (histrionic representation) angika, aharya, vachika and satvika. It also indicates a dance drama through the medium of any classical dance style. The use of speech makes naṭya the most comprehensive part of the three. Naṭya means dramatic representation with speech, music, and dancing. Naṭya has a two-fold division: taṇḍava and lasya.

## Nritya

Coming to the most important characteristic of Indian dances, that is Nritya; Nritya is the expository dancing whose basic purpose is to communicate the various signifying mental states, denoting the objects and to convey the fundamental and blended emotions in a symbolic manner. Nritya is filled with sentiment, emotion and the like. Regarding the expressions of Nritya once all the parts of the human body are at the disposal of the artiste, but there the gesture used and movement done have an essence of meaning to convey. The hastas (hand gestures) of the Indian dances serve the purpose to a large extent. Every hasta (hand gestures) mentioned in the text Natyashastra is followed by a series of usages or the meanings that can be conveyed. Apart from the hastas it is the other parts such as the eye, head, neck, lips, mouth and chin movements which contribute for the vocabulary of abhinaya. These in various combinations work-out as a unit of the facial acting as a whole. Nritya is that form of dance which possesses flavor, mood, and suggestion (rasa, bhava, vyanjanā etc.), and the like. Natya and Nritya should be seen especially at festivals. Nritya at coronations, celebrations, processions of men or gods, marriages, reunion of friends, entry into towns or houses, the birth of children, and all auspicious occasions, by those who desire fortune. Nritya should be seen by a royal audience in the courts of king. Nritya and Nritya constitute as a separate art. The ordinary performance of a dancer consists of alternate nritya , the former consisting of set dances with some special subject, and accompanied by varied gesture, the latter merely moving to and fro, marking time with the feet, and so forth.

Nritya is combination of rhythm with expression. Nritya identifies with theme, story and narrative. It makes fullest use of Abhinaya, especially in respect of Angika (physical) and Satvika (emotional) to achieve purpose. Nritya is basically an expressional dance. It is concerned with conveying the meaning of an idea or a subject. It is achieved through facial expressions, hands and other elements of body language known in Indian dance.

Nritya refers to “emotional dance” as used within the classical tradition of Indian dance and performance. In Bharatanatyam, the use of nritya is found in basic movements and a few dance pieces; nritya is seen in expressional dancing pieces and natya is found in the dance-dramas of classical dances. According to the Abhinayadarpaṇa, “that (dance) which relates to sentiment (rasa) and psychological state (bhava) is called nritya. This dance is always fit to find a place in the court of great kings”.

Nritya is that manifestation of dancing which possesses aesthetic flavor (rasa), mood or emotion (bhava) and suggestion (vyanjana). Nritya pleases all the five senses, makes one forget misery and provides pleasure at all times”. Nandikeshvara the author of the text “Abhinayadarpana” declared that the aesthetic pleasure experienced on witnessing Nritya is greater than the supreme bliss enjoyed by the sages; otherwise it could not have attracted sages like Narada. Nritya expresses bhavas and produces rasas. It is that aspect of dance performed with some special subject accompanied by varied gestures. To be precise, it brings out an idea, message or story through codified gestures of the hands and postures of the body.

Nṛitya is especially seen at coronations, celebrations, processions, marriages, the birth ceremonies, auspicious occasions and many other festivals. It used to be watched by a royal audience in the courts of kings. Nṛitya interprets a story in rhythmic movements. The theme may be erotic, epic, religious, philosophical, or secular. In nṛitya, the theme or the literary compositions are set to a particular musical pattern called melody (raga) and rhythmic pattern (tala), which are needed for the dance representations and are interpreted through the dance sequences.

Nṛitya is of two kinds: marga and desi. Margi is systematically composed of both music and dancing. Desi is more spontaneous and popular among people, and is performed before the public for entertainment at various social functions. Regarding the expression of nṛitya, once all the parts of the human body are at the disposal of the artiste, but there the gesture used and movement done have an essence of meaning to convey. The hand gestures of the Indian dances serve the purpose to a large extent. Every hastas (hand gestures) mentioned in the Natyashastra is followed by a series of usages or the meanings that can be conveyed. Apart from the hastas it is the other parts such as the eye, head, neck, lips and chin which contribute for the vocabulary of abhinaya (acting). Thus the Nṛitya acting is always discussed under the sub-heads of major, minor, subsidiary limbs and also hasta mudras (hand gestures).

## Chapter 2

### EXPRESSING THROUGH FACE : GESTURES OF (UPANGAS)MINOR LIMBS

Bharatamuni in his text Natyashastra mentions that the dramatic performance, in its whole completely, relates to the postures and movements of the limbs. The upanga or the minor limbs (expressions relating to the face) is subdivided into its parts here. In dance and dance-dramas, abhinaya or acting, the gestures reflected on the face are indeed, the principal means of expressing, portraying and conveying a range of varieties of states, emotions and suggestions, giving forth the appropriate rasa or the aesthetic rapture.

First let us begin with the **Anga** and here the main anga is head and the movements of head are as follows

- 1) Akampita :- Slowly up and down movement of head. It is considered giving a hint, teaching, questioning, addressing and also imparting instructions.
- 2) Kampita :- The first akampita movement done quickly becomes kampita. This suggests a brisk movement of the head with a vigorous shake. It is meant to indicate a range of moods and states, such as anger, argument, understanding, asserting, threatening, sickness and intolerance.
- 3) Dhuta :- Slow movement of head is dhuta. This movement is to indicate unwillingness, sadness etc.
- 4) Vidhuta :- Quick movement of head is vidhuta. This is the quick movement, as when one is attacked by cold and fever.
- 5) Parivahita :-Head turned alternatively to two sides. This demonstrates surprise, intolerance, concealing or in playful mood.
- 6) Udvahita :- Once the head turned upwards and is used to show pride.
- 7) Avadhuta :- Once the head turned downwards is avadhuta. This movement is used for communicating, beckoning one to come near or invoking a deity.
- 8) Anchita :-Head slightly bent to a side. Used in sickness, intoxication etc.
- 9) Nihanchita :- Shoulders raised with neck bent and is used as by women in pride or play or jest.

10) Paravritta :- Face turned round is paravritta.Used for looking back etc.

11) Utkshipta :- Face is slightly raised. Used for looking at lofty objects.

12) Adhogata :- Looking downwards is adhogata.

13) Parilolita :- Head moving on all sides. Used to show fainting, sickness, drowsiness or possessed.

These movements of the head should be supported by the appropriate expressions of the minor limbs in order to enhance the overall impact.

**Upangas :-** They are as follows :-

(1) eyes (drishti) (2) eyebrows (bhru)(3) cheeks (kapola) (4) Nose (nasika)(5) lips (adhara)

(6) chin (chibukam) , (4) neck (greeva)

**Eyes (drishti) :-** Drishti in Sanskrit meaning “vision”. In relation to our eyes it means “sight” or “to see”. The classifications of these eye movements are based on how we move the eye balls. Infact we use each of them in our everyday routine. There are eight types of movements. And they are as follows...

**Sama :-**Eye kept still without any movement.



Sama drishti is used in performances during when the characters are thinking orrecollecting something. It is also used to point out to one particular direction as if dancers are imitating showing something to someone. Hero and heroine use this eye movement when they look at each other during the love related circumstances

1) **Alokita :-**Rolling your eye balls in a circular pattern.

This is one of the graceful movement used extensively in only body movement oriented dance (Nritta) as well as acting plus movement oriented dance (Nritya). To show the whole world, to show fear, to show the places around, to show worriedness etc... these eye movement is used.

2) **Saachi :-**Looking through the corner of the eye.



Saachi drishti is used to depict to look at someone, it is mostly used in the beginning of the dance performances.

3) **Pralokita** :-Moving your eyes side to side.



This is very commonly used to show fear, thinking or recollecting something, to say go out, to say here and there etc...

4) **Nimilita** : It looks like a half shut eye. Here one tries to focus the eye ball towards the heart.



While sitting in meditation this is used to concentrate. This is used to show shanta rasa and also to depict Buddha

5) **Ullokita** :- Looking upwards.



Ullokita is normally used to pray god, to think, to remember etc...

6) **Anuvritta** :- Rapid movement of the eyes up and down.



In a performance this is used to show sky and earth, to show up and down etc...

7) **Avalokita** :- Looking down.



To show shy, to show embarrassment, to depict public fear etc...

**Eyebrow (bhroo)** :- Eyebrow movements are very useful to convey love related emotions in a dance performance. The higher pleasure of love which is also called kamam or kama. Eyebrow plays a significant part. When Sringara rasa is performed in a performance it has the maximum movements of eyebrows. There are seven types of eyebrow movements they are as follows :-

- 1) **Utkshepam** :- Both the eyebrow raised up together or one by one.  
To act love sequences, to act like hearing,
- 2) **Patanam** :- Both the eyebrow brought down together or one by one.  
To think, to show fear, to remember, crying, sad feeling, indicates disgust, astonishment, jealousy etc...
- 3) **Bhrokoti** :- Both the eyebrows lifted from the edge.  
To show feeling of proud on face, attitude of king, to depict surprise etc...
- 4) **Chaturam** :- Slightly moving the eyebrows and stretching it gracefully.  
To depict happiness, excitement, to denote touching another's face, heart's bliss etc...
- 5) **Kunchitam** :- Both the eyebrows together or only one eyebrow bending down.  
Doubting someone, selfish character, to show jealous, to denote anger, pleased by something etc...
- 6) **Rechitam** :- Only one eyebrow raising upwards gracefully.  
Show attitude, to show jealous, listening to a secret, saying in appreciation, looking at a particular place etc...

7) Sahajam :- The normal position of the eyebrows.

To look at someone normally, to gaze, to think etc...

**Cheeks (kapola)** :-The movements of cheeks is widely used in acting oriented dance. Mostly in Mohiniyattom dance performances these movements are seen a lot. Apart from mohiniyattom dance, the traditional theatre art form “kudiyattom”also utilizes these movements in varied item performances. It takes immense effort on the part of the performer to practice those movements and bring it alive before the audience.

- 1) Kshamam :- When the cheeks are pulled inside.
- 2) Phulam :- Enlarged cheeks is phulam.
- 3) Poornam :- When the cheeks are blown.
- 4) Kampitam :- shivering of the cheeks is called kampitam.
- 5) Kunchitam :- sharpened cheeks are kunchitam.
- 6) Samam :- Normal position of the cheeks.

**Nose (nasa)** :- The nose movements are mainly used in a performance whenever there is the sequence of happiness, crying, sorrow etc., the nose enlarges and shrinks automatically when the performer cries out and also sticks or pulls inside in between. The nose movements are there in a performance when there is inhaling and exhaling of the breath.

- 1) Nata :- The nose which shrinks again and again.  
In adance performance while crying sequences the nose will be in nata.
- 2) Manda :- Nose that does not move.  
This position will be seen in the beginning of the performance etc...
- 3) Vikrishta :- The enlarged nose.  
Show hate and while crying also this can be seen.
- 4) Socchassa :- When we inhale.  
The performer when depicts of smelling a flower etc., this nose position is used.
- 5) Vikunita :-Nose twisted to one side.
- 6) Swabhavika :- Normal position of the nose.  
This can be seen in the starting of the performance. When standing still etc...

**Lips (adhara)** :-The lip movements are being used in a performance when the fearful moments are shown, smiling enlarges the lips, anger sharpens it and biting of the lips when shyness is depicted and lips pulled inside when severe pain is acted by the performer.

- 1) Vivartanam :-Moving lower part of the lip forward is vivartanam.
- 2) Kampanam :- Shivering of the lips is Kampanam.
- 3) Visargam :- Lower lip stretched and bending towards front.
- 4) Viniguhanam :- Lips pulled inside.

- 5) Sandashtakam :- Biting the lips.
- 6) Samudgam :- Sharpening the lips.

**Chin (chibukam) :-**The chin movement happens whenever the lip, teeth or mouth movement occurs as all of them are combined. Chin moves when the performer depicts the expressions of anger, surprise, biting the teeth in a continuous manner, opening of the mouth etc.

- 1) Kuttanam :-Joining both upper and lower part of the teeth together is kuttanam.
- 2) Khandanam :- Teeth biting again and again.
- 3) Chinnam :- Biting the teeth very hard.
- 4) Chakritam :- Keeping the mouth open.
- 5) Lehitam :-Licking the chin with tongue
- 6) Samam :- Joining both the upper and lower level teeth slightly together.
- 7) Dashtam :- Biting the lips.

**Mouth :-**The movement of mouth is seen mostly when the Adbhuta rasa is acted the surprising one.

- 1) Vidhuta :- The mouth obliquely open.
- 2) Vinivritta :- Spread out.
- 3) Nirbhugna :- Lowered mouth.
- 4) Bhugna :- Slightly spread out.
- 5) Vivatra :- Lips apart.
- 6) Udvahi :- Turned out.

### **Greeva Bheda (Neck movements)**

Neck movements are an integral part of most Indian classical dance forms. If performed in a smooth and delicate manner it increases the quality of both Nritya and Abhinaya. The grace emerging out of Attami's plays a very important role in communicating an idea in abhinaya pieces or as an ornament in Nritya. Like Gamakas are to carnatic music, neck movements are to Bharatanatyam.

The four types of neck movements mentioned in AbhinayaDarpanam are:-

1. **Sundari** : Here the neck is moved from side to side. It is also called as Attami.
2. **Tirashchina**: Here neck is moved in a V-shape.

3. **Prarivartita**: Here the neck is moved in a Semicircle or moonlike shape.

4. **Prakampita**: Here the neck is moved forward and back.

## 2:2The fourfold acting (chaturvidha abhinaya)

### **Acting with body (angika abhinaya)**

Angika abhinaya is the art of physical expression. The entire human body has been analyzed in the Natyashastra as angas (major limbs) and pratyangas (minor limbs) based on kinetic principles. Physical expression is a part of human nature and the connection between the psych and the physic is so intrinsic, that even the minutest vibration of the mind gets easily reflected through the body in daily life itself. Hence the art of physical expression is beautifully conceived, classified and codified by Bharatha to artistically suit a dramatic representation. While the concept of beauty is a matter of opinion, these opinions get crystallized due to a habituation over several centuries and result in giving a specific national character.

In Bharathanatyam the body plays a significant role. In Bharathanatyam repertoire the expression of face, hand gestures, major and minor limbs are considered as one of the main aspects for the representation of a performance. With the face expression the dancer uses to show the feelings and sentiments and at the same time makes use of the hand gestures to depict the different characters with the combination of major as well as minor limbs. With the perfect blend of all these upangas (major limbs), pratyangas (minor limbs) and hasta mudras (hand gestures) plus chaturvidha abhinaya (fourfold acting) gives birth to a mind-blowing performance. And by all these a performer evokes the feeling of rasa inside the spectator.

Dance has primarily to do with the movements of the body and thus it is but natural that the concept of body acting would receive greater importance.

Facial expressions combined with the hand gestures is most relevant to the conveying of ideas and the creation of rasas. This does not mean that others have no part to play. The body functions as a whole and so the other parts of the body have to follow suit. It only means that the other parts play a secondary role. The physical representation consists of the use of various gestures and postures. Different limbs have been named and their manifold gestures and movements described, with various significance attached to each one of them.

A physical movement with a hidden meaning in it when followed by the essence in the heart through the glances conveys it to its spectators the unsaid hidden meaning. This is the procedure of dance. The outer accessories of the danseuse are the drum, cymbals of a good

tone, the flute, the chores, the drone, the veena, the bells and a singer. The ten factors of inner life of the danseuse are swiftness, composure, symmetry, versatility, glances, ease, intelligence, confidence speech and song. While the outer life of the danseuse being the orchestration, the inner life is the qualities from within oneself. Thus the congregation of physical and mental manifestations of not just an individual but also a group of individuals makes a form which is a feast for the eyes of the spectators, called "the Dance".

### **Vachika abhinaya (verbal acting)**

This abhinaya deals with the use of speech in theatrical representation. This would include the svaras which is the musical notes used in the songs, playing of instruments etc. This relates to how expression is carried out through speech. It is obviously therefore more overtly used in drama, but also in music, in how the singer expresses the emotion through his or her singing. Vachika abhinaya is preserved in kuchipudi dance and Melattur style of Bharathanatyam where the dancers often mouth the words of the songs to support padartha abhinaya. Kerala still has on stage art forms (natya) which have Vachika abhinaya as dominant component like Koodiyattom, Nangiar kootu etc...

### **Satvika abhinaya (emotional abhinaya)**

Satvika abhinaya is often confused with facial expressions, which belong to angika abhinaya. Satvika abhinaya is the mental message, emotion or image communicated to the spectators through eyes. The dancer or actor has to bring of their own experiences something which will be authentic and capture the audience and elicit an empathetic response in them. The satvika serves as the element of identification and universalization, thus laying a common platform for the communion of the artiste and the audience.

### **Understanding Satvika abhinaya**

The ancient Indian idea of 'drama' varied from the present-day perception of the same. As per the ancient concept, drama did not consist of speech alone but also included mime, song and body movements including dance. And 'natya', as it was termed, was, meant to evoke rasa - the divine aesthetic pleasure in the spectator. Rasa, being, the relish of human emotions happens only if the artiste's performance effectively engrosses the spectator's mind away from mundane things to a world of aesthetic beauty and bliss. According to Bharata in his Natyasastra, the 'birth of rasa' is said to be the ultimate aim of the natya. This is to be

achieved by the artiste by conveying intended emotions with the tool of abhinaya and other important constituents of drama. The Sanskrit word 'abhinaya' is made up of the prefix abhi 'towards' and the root ni 'to carry'. It can be understood as "disclosing the various aspects of the theme to the spectator by means of words, gestures, costumes etc." It is a suggestive imitation of the various psychological states of characters in the theme. Abhinaya is classified into four types by Bharata as follows:

Angika (suggestion through hand gestures, facial expressions and body movements)

Vachika (suggestion through verbal expressions like dialogues etc.)

Aharya (suggestion through costumes, make-up etc.) and

Satvika (suggestion through psycho-somatic expressions).

At the onset of Abhinayadarpaṇa, the author Nandikesvara invokes Siva in a solemn verse. The verse not only states the four types of abhinaya but is also impregnated with many meanings. The significance of Satvika abhinaya can be gauged from the fact that while the first three types of abhinaya have been referred to as the manifestations of Siva, Satvika abhinaya has been, on the other hand, equated to the eternal cosmic dancer himself.

Although each type of abhinaya is exclusive in its own way, owing to its uniqueness, Satvikaabhinaya has been discussed here in detail. An attempt has been made to understand the concept in a better way. The word Satvika is derived from the Sanskrit root *Sath*, which means 'being', 'truth' or 'existence'. The meaning of Sattva as an aspect of dramatics can be gathered from two different explanations that have been provided in the Nāṭyashastra. In the section on Samanya abhinaya, Bharata says that Sattva is in essence human body. The emotional states (bhava) which humans experience arises from Sattva, are due to the association of the body. They find a suitable expression 'through' the body. A simple and natural expression of an emotional state is called hava; and when an expression acquires a charming quality by way of a flourish of movement or a gesture, it is called hela. Thus bhava, hava and hela are connected to one another and they are only different aspects of Sattva.

As such they too belong to the body and rest in the physical nature of man. The emotional state (bhava) can be understood in this sense. Bhava can be understood as a mental state, which when expressed through the body and with Sattva, makes the spectator aware of the poet's intent and emotion. This intrinsic relation between Sattva and bhava forms the base for understanding the second meaning of the word Sattva as explained by Bharata. Sattva finds

expression for an emotional state through the body. Sattva, by itself, is invisible in nature; but it forms the main basis for the bhava or the emotion to be displayed. Bharata explains that Sattva originates from the mind. It is caused through concentration of pure mind. Only when the mind attains perfect concentration, Sattva is produced; this is so because the physical expression like tears, horripilation and the like of an emotional state cannot be simply acted out. It cannot be represented by one whose mind is distracted. Owing to the above two explanations which gives a dual aspect to Sattva (mental / emotional state and physical expression), Sāttvika abhinaya may be understood as a psycho-somatic representation.

Sattvika bhavas are mentioned to be eight in number, viz.

- i. Stambha (motionlessness)
  - ii. Sveda (perspiration)
  - iii. Romancha (horripilation)
  - iv. Svarabheda (change in the tonal quality of voice)
  - v. Vepathu (trembling of the body)
  - vi. Vaivarṇya (change in colour of body)
  - vii. Ashru (tears)
  - viii. Pralaya (loss of sense or swooning)
- Representation of these is Satvika abhinaya.

The following points can be noted about 'Satvikas':

1. The importance of Sattva for drama cannot be underestimated. This is considered to be an important aspect of abhinaya. Bharata states that naṭya is the imitation of life. But various human emotions have to be dramatically glorified so as the spectator is able to savor the portrayed pleasure and pain as naṭya-rasa. It is said that even when celestial characters figure in the play, they have to appear, act and feel like human beings. If drama is to imitate human life and character, then the emotional states and their physical manifestations can't just be ignored. Our own emotional states and their physical expression is a real and valid experience for us. Hence a great responsibility is placed on the artiste at the time of portraying a dramatic role. The show of emotions in abhinaya can be a joint effort of training, practice of skill and theatrical aids. However, a heart-rending performance demands a full concentration of mind on the part of the artiste. This is Sattva and the abhinaya where it exists is the Satvika abhinaya.
2. It is easy to experience Satvika bhavas like tears; horripilation etc. in real life but to produce them in the make-believe world of naṭya requires tremendous concentration, knowledge of human mind and technical skill.

3. Although the states like perspiration or tears are physical in nature, they are not termed *angika abhinaya*, since these are not a result of physical representations. On the other hand, these are completely involuntary arising at the height of an emotional experience. *Satvikas* are indeed bodily reactions; yet this is where *Satvika bhaava* differs from mere *angika*. The difference between mere *angika*, and *angika* instigated by *Satvika*, can be clearly felt by an experienced spectator. Similarly, the *Satvika* states like *Svarabheda* are different from verbal gesticulation as this does not form any speech.

4. It should also be noted that these *Satvika bhavas* do not pertain to a particular emotion; for instance, tears start rolling not only with extreme sorrow but also with extreme joy. The hair on body will stand not only with fear but also with any so called 'touching' experience. So, it can be seen that the same *satvika bhava* can occur in absolutely contrasting emotions.

5. To understand the full connotation of *abhinaya*, one must remember that the four classes of *abhinaya* do not exist in isolation but are interdependent. While *Satvika* is the apex of an emotion, it is dependent on *angika* and *vachika* aided by *aharya* to heighten its effect. It is probably, with this idea that it is also described in connection with the *Samanya abhinaya*.

6. Bharata refers to *Sattva* as the basis of drama. According to Bharata, 'that *abhinaya* where there is exuberance of *Sattva* is superior and that where there *Sattva* is non-existent is inferior'.

7. There are also the *naṭyadharmi* and *lokadharmi* modes of representation which are important constituents of drama. *Satvika abhinaya* acts as leverage between the two modes. In *naṭyadharmi*, a particular emotion is dramatically portrayed whereas, in *lokadharmi* mode, there is a more casual (i.e. real life kind) approach in the presentation. Indian classical dances are more *naṭyadharmi* in their approach because of their developed technique. These two elements of *dharmi* exist in every Indian classical dance. However, when there is more *Satvikabhava* in the representation, more the *Satvika abhinaya* becomes pronounced thereby taking it towards *lokadharmi* mode of representation. When there is an aesthetic portrayal of an emotion, it inclines towards *naṭyadharmi* representation. The *Satvika abhinaya* will make the performance more realistic; yet the dramatic presentation gives scope to imagination and beautifies the presentation making it more appealing to the spectator at the same time. In the words of scholar M. Ghosh, "Even if *Sattva* brings realization, the highest aesthetic enjoyment is not possible without giving the greatest possible scope to imagination."

Thus *Satvika abhinaya* is a physical representation stirred by acute emotions, the process which requires the absolute involvement of the actor with the character. This intense state of concentration can only be compared to meditation. Such a superior performance enables the birth of a divine aesthetic experience. Summing up with the verse from the *Bhagvad Gita*,

where Arjuna sees his kinsmen ready for the battle and says: "My limbs quiver, my mouth parched, my whole body is trembling, my hair standing on ends in horror, my bow slips from my hand and my skin burns all over. I am unable to stand any longer; my mind is reeling." This gives an excellent description of the physical condition which arises from the quality of Sattva and the Satvika bhāva becoming a natural expression of the emotions, in this case, of desolation and distress."

### **Aharya abhinaya (acting with costumes)**

This abhinaya deals with the use of costumes, jewellery, makeup etc. in theatrical representation. It is but natural that in theatrical presentation different types of characters coming from different walks of life or different provinces etc. would use stylized and specialized costumes suited to the character. From time immemorial Indians have been noted for their great love for ornaments. Infact the art of wearing jewellery and personal decorations was developed to a very fine standard. There are definite rules binding the specifications of jewellery, clothing etc. worn by different characters even among the gods and the sculptures and icons are more often than not identified by these. As apparent from Natyashastra that specific colors are prescribed to denote specific rasa (artistic bliss) an aspect exemplifying a deep knowledge of color psychology in ancient India. Another factor that played a very important role in determining the Aharya was provincial tradition. India was teeming with different racial and ethnic group, each having its own traditions in customs, speech, dressing, religious beliefs etc. the aharya not only helps the audience to recognize the characters portrayed by the artistes but also gives an enhancement to the movements and gestures done by the dancer and as a result the performance gains an appealing outlook.

### **2:3Upanga abhinaya in Mohiniyattom**

Through the use of cheeks, lips, eyes etc., varieties of expressions can be produced with the help of hand gestures. In the traditional items of Mohiniyattom the stayi bhavas viz rati, shokam, vatsalyam and bhakti are considered of great importance. The rest of the bhavas are used with mudras when the actor is enacting or communicating through performance. Using hasta mudras the performer can depict and show different types of characters, but without the facial expressions the feelings cannot be explained to the audience. In uttamanga (facial expressions) abhinaya upangas is the most significant aspect. Upangas are of six types and that are eyes, nose, eyebrows, chin, cheeks and lips. When heroine is looking at her hero during that situation how the performer should use her lips, cheeks etc., has to work according to the situational behavior. Upangas has a prominent place in Mohiniyattom dance form. By the use of eyes, lips, cheeks etc., different kinds of actions or abhinayas can be produced. Even though

with help of mudras or hand gestures meaning can be conveyed but to show actions through facial expressions upangas play a vital role. In Mohiniyattom items rati-love, shokam-sorrow, vatsalyam- motherly love all these expressions has a significant role. Other bhavas are included as travelling emotions in between the abhinaya or with hand gestures. The art forms which are somewhat different from the normal life body acting techniques are used according to the set rules and regulations. When the heroine sees her lover how she is supposed to use her eyes, eyebrows, lips etc., has the set rules. According to the stambh bhava all these actions differs. Eyes, nose, eyebrows, cheeks etc., are used in dance according to the prevailing situation. And according to that eye expression is being used. That means according to the bhavas eye movement are to be used. There are also rules set that together with eye movement how other upangas are used.

### 2:4 Upanga abhinaya in Bharathanatyam

These are six in numbers and they are as follows :-

Eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, nose, lips, chin. some scholars also add heels, ankles, fingers and soles.

**(internet)** The movements of pratyangas and upangas depend upon the movement of the angas. Mostly, the ones useful in Bharathanatyam are described in detail in the classification of the siro bhedas, drishti bhedas, greeva bhedas and hastas. As seen in any form of dance, the movement of the body is one of the most important tools of communication and expression. The hands depict multiple meanings through the mudras, both in nritya as well the natya aspect of a dancer's performance. The footwork adds rhythm and technique to the rendition of jathis and adavus, which involves the movements of all the other limbs of the body too. In all non-narrative dances, for example, alaripu, jatiswaram or thillana, they play the most important role along with the use of some upangas such as the eyes and face. When performing narrative sequences which involve rasa and bhava and demand emotional appeal, the upangas again prove very useful along with the movements of the angas and pratyangas. Whether, it be the representation of people gods, demons, nature or animals, a combination of all aspects of angika abhinaya help in creating realistic interpretations of the ideas or episodes that need to be expressed in front of the audiences. It is therefore an undeniable fact that angika abhinaya is one of the strongest modes of expression in Bharathanatyam.

**(internet)** Humans are meant to move. To be more specific existence of life means body movement. Every living being seen or unseen is in movement. As a human our body contributes to our life through movements of eyes, hands, legs etc. as well as our heart. When the heart stops beating, there is death. Long ago, when there was no language, humans used to communicate and interact with each other through body movements or gestures. Precisely body movements are known as body language.

## Chapter 3

### HASTA MUDRAS : UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF HANDS

Mudras or Hastas plays the most important role in angika abhinaya. It has the place of alphabets in a language. Mudras convey the meaning of a song, helps in expressing an emotion better through gestures according to the situation and hence making it a visual treat for the rasikas or the audience. The mudras or the hand gestures are portrayed by one hand or both hands at various positions depicting characters, words, describing the lyrics. The placement position of each mudra is very important as each mudra held at different positions has a meaning of its own. These hasta mudras are the main element of communication to the audience in a dance performance. Apart from Samyuta, Asamyuta and Nritta hastas in Nandikeshvara's Abhinayadarpan book the different types of hastas are also being added and that are Devata, Dikpala, Dasavatara, Vriksha, Mriga, Pakshi, Jalajantu, Varna, Jati, Bandhavya, Graha, Sapta, Samudra, Nadis, Prasiddha rajas, Chaturdasa lokas, Adho lokas. But here to limit the thesis we have only discussed about the Samyuta, Asamyuta and Nritta hastas which are the main hastas of Indian classical dance and these hastas are also elaborated in Natyashastra book of Bharathamuni.

#### 3:1 Hasta mudras in Mohiniyattom

The hasta mudras in Mohiniyattom is derived from the text "Hastalakshanadeepika" the most popular treatise on hasta mudras by an anonymous author is in Sanskrit language. It is not available in its full form only first two chapters of this manual exist today. The independent and combined usages of twenty four hand gestures are dealt with in the treatise. The hastalakshanadeepika begins with a hymn in praise of lord sreekrishna. It has scientifically codified the hand gestures to form the technical base of the highly stylized classical performing arts of Kerala.

The angas and pratyangas are widely used to show emotions or feelings in dance performance. But hasta mudras (hand gestures) are also of similar importance. It is also considered as one of the main aspect to communicate in a dance performance. During conversation how we are using the words and vocabularies the hand gestures are considered similar in Mohiniyattom. Combining the hasta mudras and the movements of angas and pratyangas a dancer communicates to the general audience through the performance. There are 24 basic hand gestures in Mohiniyattom. To show all these 24 hand gestures if we are only using one hand then it is called asamyuta hastas and if we use to show this 24 mudras by both the hands then it

is called samyuta hastas. The usages of Samyuta (double hand) and Asamyuta (single hand) hand gestures and how they are used are detailed below

- 1) **Patakam** :- Holding all the fingers together and bending only the ring finger half inside is pataka.



**Samyuta hastas** :- When we hold pataka mudra in both the hands then it is samyuta or double hand gestures. Double hand gestures are used to depict sun, king, elephant, lion, ox etc...

**Asamyuta hastas** :-when we hold pataka mudra in one hand then it is asamyuta or single hand gesture. Single hand gestures are used to depict tongue, body, sound, messenger etc...

- 2) **Mudrakhyam** :-Tip of the index finger and thumb joined together and rest of the fingers held straight is mudrakhyam.



**Samyutashastas** :-This is used to depict movement, heaven, forgetting, sea, death, meditation etc...

**Asamyuta hastas** :-This depicts knowledge, desire, wondering, creation etc...

- 3) **Katakam**:- Tip of the index finger and thumb should be joined and middle finger should be bent. Then it is katakam.



**Samyuta hasta** :-To show lord krishna, gold, silver, demoness, sleep, stars, clown etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :-To depict flowers, mirror, sweat, lady etc...

- 4) **Mushti** :-All the fingers should be bent inside and thumb should be on the fingers, it is then mushti.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Boon, curse, swing, attraction, medicine, beauty etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :-To attack, tolerate, to agree, old age, food, donate etc...

- 5) **Kartarimukham** :-Smallfinger raised and rest of the three fingers bent towards the front and the thumb should touch the centre of the first finger then it is called kartarimukha.



**Samyuta hasta** :- House, elephant, head, hunger, to hear, to say, pregnancy, to end, hunting etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :-Human being, mangoose, child, face, words, you, we etc...

- 6) **Shukatundam** :-The fore finger released from the mushti hand and slightly bent.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Elephant, bird etc...

- 7) **Kapitham** :-Theforefinger and the middle finger released from the mushti mudra.



**Samyuta hasta** :-To drink, doubt, to stop, stepping forward.

8) **Hamsapaksham** :- Hold all the fingers straight.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Air, relatives, mountains, bed, to sleep, to fall, hugging, bathing etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- You, sword, anger, to call, to stop, etc

...

9) **Shikharam** :- Similar to kapitha mudra hold the middle finger forward and index finger backward.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Legs, walking, eyes, way, to search, to drink, ears etc...

10) **Hamsasyam** :-Hold the index finger, middle finger and thumb to the tip.



**Samyuta hasta** :-White colour, red colour, look etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :-Hair, starting of year etc...

11) **Anjali** :- Extend your fingers and dig in the palm.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Horse, vomiting, light, hair, loud sound etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :-Trunk of a tree, anger etc...

12) **Ardhachandram** :-keep the index finger and thumb straight and fold the rest inward.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Sky, grass, to remember etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- To smile, to start etc...

13) **Mukhuram** :- The middle finger and ring finger bent, but without touching the thumb.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Brother, waste, dammit, devil etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- honey bee, rays, anger, neck etc...

14) **Bhramaram** :- The forefinger bent and others released.



**Samyuta hasta** :- wings, song, water, elephant ears etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- Fear, birth, crying etc...

15) **Suchimukham** :- The forefinger released from the mushti hand.



**Samyuta hasta** :- To depict the world, jumping up, month, eyebrows etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- Ear, a little, country, to say no, etc...

**16) Pallavam** :- The forefingers released with thumb bent, touching the bottom of the ring finger.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Horns of animals, length of the eye etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- Distance, money, smoke etc...

**17) Tripataka** :- The four fingers released with thumb bent.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Body, to call, sunset, touch etc...

**18) Mrigashirasam** :-The middle finger and the ring finger touching the thumb.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Animal, god etc...

**19) sarpashirasa** :- All the fingers are held close together with its tip slightly bent on top.



**Asamyuta hasta** :-Sandal, elephant ears, slowly, growing, snake etc...

20) **Vardhamanakam** :- The fingers bent one behind the other on the thumb.



**Samyuta hasta** :-Diamond necklace, earrings, breast etc...

**Asamyuta hasta** :- Well, lips etc...

21) **Aralam** :- From vardhamanakam the fore finger is released with thumb bent.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Fate, cruelty, demon, teeth etc...

22) **Urnanabham** :- All the fingers released and slightly bent.



**Samyuta hasta** :- Money, fire, curly locks etc...

23) **Mukula** :- All the fingers tips joined.



**Asamyuta hasta** :- Bud, decrease, monkey etc...

**24) Katakamukham :-** The thumb in the Mushti hand brought in the centre of the palm.

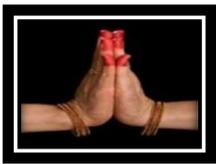


**Samyuta hasta :-** War, pull, ride on horse etc...

### 3:2Hasta mudras in Bharathanatyam

The most important aspect of Bharathanatyam is the dancer's use of expressive hand gestures to communicate a story to the audience. The name hastamudras are given to these specific gestures. There are two types of gestures, Asamyuta which use one hand and Samyuta which combines both hands. These hasta mudras are used to clearly communicate specific, ideas, events, actions and creatures. Now let us begin first with Samyuta hastas.

**[1]Anjali [Salutation]**



Used for the salutation to God, Teacher and the Learned. We hold the Anjali hasta above the head for the Gods, in front of the face for the teachers and in front of chest for the learned.

**[2]Kapotha [Pigeon]**



To show respectful salutation to the teachers, as a mark of acceptance and to show politeness (vinayam).

**[3]Karkata [Crab]**



To show the arrival of a crowd, showing the belly, blowing the shanku (couch), twisting & stretching the limbs and bending branch of a tree.

**[4]Swastika [Cross]**



To show an Alligator (a crocodile), talking with fear, to show an argument and to praise.

**[5]Dola [Swing]**



Used in the beginning of a dance.

**[6]Pushpaputa [Holding Flowers]**



To show Lamp Offering, Children, Accept Fruits, Offering to the Sun in the evenings and Chant Holy prayers.

**[7]Utsanga [Holding Flowers]**



To show embracing someone, shyness, show one's body and to show teaching discipline to children.

**[8]Shivalinga [Shivalingam]**



To show Shivalinga (Lord Shiva).

**[9]Katakavardhana [Pair of bracelets]**



To show Coronation, to worship and to show weddings.

[10]Kartaree swastika [Crossing two scissors]



To show the branches of a tree, tip of Mountains and Trees.

[11]Shakatam [Chariot Wheel]



To show Demons.

[12]Shankha [Conch]



To show shanku (Conch).

[13]Chakra [wheel]



To show Chakra, the weapon of Lord Vishnu.

[14]Samputa [Containers]



To cover things and to show the sacred box in which the idols are placed.

[15]Paasha [Rope / bond]



To show Playful, Quarrel, Rope and Chains.

[16]Keelaka [Axle]



To show friendly talk.

**[17]Matsya [Fish]**



To show Fish.

**[18]Koorma [Tortoise]**



To show Turtle, Tortoise.

**[19]Varaha [Wild Boar]**



To show Boar (Wild Pig).

**[20]Garuda [Eagle]**



To show a bird called Garuda.

**[21]Nagabanda[Coiled Serpent]**



To show Snakes, Creeper, Chamber and Atharva Veda Slokas.

**[22]Khatva [Cot]**



To show Bed.

**[23]Bherundha [Heavenly Bird]**



To show a bird couple.

[24]Avahittha[To hide (secret in heart)]



To show Love, Catching the ball and Breasts.

### Asamyuta hastas in Bharathanatyam

1) Pataka– flag



To show rain clouds, forest, night, river, heaven, horse, cutting, wind, sleeping, walking, to bless, beginning of the dance, show power, moon light, waves, entering a street, equality, oneself, take an oath, silence, secret act, shield, touching things address someone, to move forward, sword, form, to wear, to sweep, ocean, powerful king etc...

2) Tripataka – a flag with three



To depict crown, tree, flames, pigeon, shooting arrow, circling, a kind of flower, lord Indra, thunderbolt.

3) Ardhapataka – half flag



To show leaves, writing pad, bank of a river, knife, horns, flag, entrance of a temple,

4) Kartarimukha – scissors



To depict death, creeper, disagreement, corner of the eye, separation of man and women, stealing or rolling, lightening, to fall down, separation of men and women.

5) Mayura – peacock



To show peacock, vomiting, moving the hair, decorating forehead, holy bathing, very famous, putting tilak mark on forehead.

6) Ardhachandra – half moon



To depict moon, plate, waist, contemplation, meditation, prayers, thinking offering to god, greeting common people, worrying,

7) Arala – bent



To show drinking, strong winds.

8) Shukatunda – parrot's head



To depict shooting an arrow, a spear, mystic feeling, angry mood, remembering the past.

9) Mushti – fist



To show steadiness, grasping one's hair, courage, holding things, fighting mood of wrestlers.

10) shikhara – peak



To depict teeth, lips, questioning, to pour liquid, embracing, sounding a bell.

11) Kapitha – elephant and Apple



To depict goddess Lakshmi, goddess saraswati, holding the cymbals, milking the cows, holding flowers.

12) Katakamukha – opening in a bracelet



To show plucking flowers, speak, glancing, to smell, offering betel leaves.

13) Suchi - needle



To depict sun, to show, scaring, city, universe, thin or skinny, umbrella, capable, room, excitement wheel of chariot, thinking, evening, a group of people etc.,

14) Chandrakala



To show moon.

15) Padmakosha



To depict ball, bowl, food, flower garland, mango, circular movement, showering flowers, ant hill, lotus, egg.

16) Sarpashirasa



To show sandalwood paste, snake, slow sprinkling, caring, holy water, elephant's forehead.

17) Mrigashirasa



To depict women, meeting of people, cheeks, way of doing things, forehead, scare, argument, back stage, the place of living, stairs.

18) Simhamukha



To show coral, pearl, fragrance, curls, hearing, point, salvation, heart, sacred fire, rabbit, elephant, sacred grass.

19) Kangula



To show lemon, beetle nut, jingles, tablets, bird called chataka and chakora.

20) Alapadma



To depict a fully blossomed lotus, wood apple, circular movement, breast, yearning to the beloved, mirror, full moon, beautiful form, hair knot, village, great anger, pond or lake, praise, murmuring sound.

21) Chatura



To show fragrance from kastoori, show small quantity, gold and other metals, wetness, sadness, taste, eye, promise, romance, differentiate color, slow movement, breaking, seated, molten butter, oil

22) Bhramara



To depict honeybee, parrot, meditation, birds.

23) Hamsasya



To show tying the sacred thread of marriage, advice, decision, excitement, pearls and other precious stones, drawing, fly, drop of water, wick of the lamp, polishing, searching, jasmine and other flowers, drawing a line, holding garland, saying "no".

24 )Hamsapaksha



To depict number six, bridge, impression of the nails, way of doing things.

25) Samdamsham



To show generosity, sacrificial offering, wound, insects, fear, offering, showing number five.

26) Mukula



To depict flower lily, eating, cupid, angel, belly button, banana flower, smearing sacred marks on the body.

27) Tamrachuda



To show rooster, crow, camel, calf, to show letters, a bird called baka.

## 28) Trishoola



To depict a leaf called bilwa, to show number three.

## 3:3 Nritta hastas : The decorative gestures of hands

These hastas are used only in Nritta (pure dance only using body movements without showing any kind of expressions or acting). The great Bharathamuni in his book Natyashastra mentions about thirty Nritta hastas. These nritta hastas are common for both Bharathanatyam and Mohiniyattom dance forms.

### 1.CHATURASRA



When elbows are held in line with shoulders and hands in the Katakamukha position are stretched out in front of the chest with the palms facing away from the body, this is the Chaturasra hasta.



### 2. UDVRTTA

If at first both hands in the Hamsapaksha position are in front of the chest and then each hand moves up and down to its original position alternately thus resembling the swaying movement of a palm leaf in the wind, this is the Udvrtta hasta.

### 3. TALAMUKHA



This hand gesture is similar to the Chaturasra hasta. The only difference is that the palms of two hands in the Katakamukha position must face each other. Then it is the Talamukha hasta.

### 4. SWASTIKA



When the hands in the Talamukha hasta are crossed at wrists, this gesture becomes the Swastika hasta.

### 5. VIPRAKIRNA



When the Swastika hasta turns into the Talamukha hasta, it becomes the Viprakirna hasta.

### 6. ARALA KATAKAMUKHA



If palms of two hands are turned upwards from the Allapallava (Alapadma) position and through the Padmakosha position and the right hand transforms into the Katakamukha hasta and the left

hand transforms into the Arala hasta, then this is the Arala Katakamukha hasta.



### 7. AVIDDHAVAKRA

When two hands with palms downwards are in the Pataka position, shoulders, elbows and hands are in one level, then hands make graceful movements (palms are raised a little and turned forward and again downwards), then this is the Aviddhavakra hasta.



### 8. SUCHIMUKHA

When two hands are in the Sarpasirsha position with the thumbs and middle fingers touching each other, then hands draw a circle and now little fingers of both hands in the Saprashirsha position touch each other, this is the Suchimukha hasta.



### 9. RECHITA

If two hands in the Hamsapaksha position move alternately up and down with palms looking upwards, this is the Rechita hasta.



**10. ARDHARECHITA**

If the left hand is in the Chaturasra position and the right hand is in the Rechita position, this is the Ardharechita hasta.



**11. UTTANAVANCHITA**

If two hands in the Tripataka position are slightly bent in elbows, and shoulders and elbows move gently up and down in swaying movements, this is the Uttanavanchita hasta.



**12. PALLAVA**

If two hands in the Pataka position are held in front of the chest and crossed at wrists, this is the Pallava hasta.



**13. NITAMBA**

When two hands in the Pataka position move from shoulders to hips, this is the Nitamba hasta



#### 14. KESHABANDHU

If hands are in the Pataka position and move constantly top-down from the top of the head to be found on both sides of face, this is the Keshabandhu hasta.



#### 15. LATA

If two hands in the Pataka position are stretched sideways and elbows are in line with shoulders, this is the Lata hasta.



#### 16. KARIHASTA

When the left hand is held near the ear in the Tripataka position and the right hand is stretched out in the Pataka position and moves from side to side, this is the Karihasta hasta. The similar movement should be done in the reverse order i.e. with the right hand held near the ear.

### 17. PAKSHAVANCHITAKA



If the right hand in the Tripataka position is about six inches away from the waist with the palm facing the floor and the left hand is six inches above the head with the palm turned to the right, this is the Pakshavanchitaka hasta.

### 18. PAKSHAPRADHOTAKA



When hands in the Pakshavanchita position are reversed i.e. the right hand is above the head and the left hand is near the waist, this is the Pakshapradhotaka hasta.

### 19. GARUDAPAKSHA



If both hands in the Tripataka position are placed on both sides of the body with the palms facing the hips and then they are lifted up and positioned at least a foot away from either side of the head with the palms facing up, this is the Garudapaksha hasta.

### 20. DANDAPAKSHA



If both hands in the Hamsapaksha position in front of the chest are moved alternately sideways until each hand is one level with shoulder, this is the Dandapaksha hasta.



### 21. URDHVAMANDALI

When two hands in the Pataka position are fully extended upwards with the palms facing each other and fingers pointing towards the sky, this is the Urdhvamandali hasta.



### 22. PARSHVAMANDALI

When two hands in the Pataka position are stretched out sideways with the palms facing each other, this is the Parshvamandali hasta.



### 23. UROMANDALI

If two hands in the Pataka position are held in front of the chest with palms facing up and then the palms with stretched fingers are lifted up and make circular motions so that the left hand is above the head with fingers facing up and the right hand with the palm facing down and fingers pointing to the right is stretched sideways simultaneously with the left hand, this is the Uromandali hasta.



### 24. URAHPARSHVADHAMANDALI

If at first both hands are held close to the chest, the right hand being in the Alapallava position and the left hand in the Arala position being stretched out to the left as much as possible and then both hands start moving simultaneously from side to side, this is the Urahparshvadhama mandali hasta.



### 25. MUSHTIKASWASTIKA

If at first both hands are held close to each other in the Arala position with fingers facing down and palms facing the body so that elbows are in one level with shoulders and then hands are lifted slightly, palms are turned upwards and hands move first into the Allapallava position (Alapadma) and then into the Katakamukha position and after that they cross at wrists on the waist level, this is the Mushtikaswastika hasta.



### 26. NALINIPADMAKOSHA

When two hands in the Padmakosha position move in front of the chest up and down with fingers running, this is the Nalinipadmakosha hasta.



### 27. ALAPALLAVA

If two hands in the Pataka position in front of the chest with palms facing down move upwards with fingers running delicately so that they rise to the shoulders level and palms start facing each other, this is the Alapallava hasta.



### 28. ULBANA

If hands in the Alapallava position shift from the in-front-of-the-chest position into the shoulders position and transform into the Pataka position, this is the Ulbana hasta.



**29 . LALITA**

When both hands move from the Ulbana position to the top of the head, this is the Lalita hasta.



**30. VALITA**

When both hands in the Pataka position are crossed on the chest level in elbows, this is the Valita hasta.

## Chapter 4

### How the physique conveys :Gesticulation of (pratyangas) subsidiary limbs.

In the medium of dance, the human body serves as an instrument which transforms itself from the realm of movement to the realm of meaning. This process of transformation invokes every limb and organ of the body. The emphasis of the movement of arm, leg, palm, feet and face are used as per the demand of the theme. It is by the rhythmically motivated and intentionally specific movement of all these parts of the human body that the dancer creates a visual image for an otherwise abstract thought. Thus dance choreography begins as a thought or an idea and ends in a productive spectacle before the eyes of the audience.

Here the Anga is chest and the movements of chest are as follows

- 1) Abhugna :- The movement which is slightly bent is in abhugna.
- 2) Nirbhugna :- The unbent or erect position.
- 3) Prakampita :- Then shaken movement is prakampita.
- 4) Udvahita :- The raised position is udvahita.
- 5) Sama :- The natural or normal position is sama.

#### 4:1Pratyangas

Total pratangas and how they are used :-

The two shoulders, the two arms, back (prishtam),sides (parshwa), stomach (udaram),thighs (uroo), shanks (jangha), waist (kati), foot (pada bhedas). According to some scholars the wrists, knees and elbows are also pratyangas.

#### **Sides (parshwa)**

- 1) Natam :- Shoulder and waist bending towards one side.
- 2) Unnatam :- When one shoulder and waist will be bending like in natam then the other side will be stretched then that straight part is called unnatam.
- 3) Prasaritha :- Both the ribs part stretching to both the sides.
- 4) Vivartitam :-Turning the waist just below the backbone is vivartitam
- 5) Apasritam :- The movement which is drawn away is apasritam.

#### **Stomach (udaram)**

- 1) Kshamam :- While during laughing, crying, exhaling and yawning when the stomach gets pulled inside is kshamam.

- 2) Khallam :- When we are sick or during illness and when we are hungry then that position of stomach is khallam.
- 3) Poornam :- When our stomach is full and is bulged outside then this position is poornam.

### **Waist (kati)**

- 1) Chinna :- Waist turning towards back is china.
- 2) Nivritta :- When turned behind and waist bending towards front is nivritta.
- 3) Rechita :- Waist turning towards all the sides is in this rechita position.
- 4) Kampitha :- When waist moving horizontally then it is in this position.
- 5) Udvahita :-When the waist is raised up together with back of the body then it is udvahitam.

### **Thighs (uroo)**

- 1) Kabanam :-When we raise up and bring down our leg heels alternatively then the thighs will be in the kabanam position.
- 2) Valanam :- When we turn or raise our knees up then it is valanam.
- 3) Stambhanam :- The thighs which does not move is in the stambhanam position.
- 4) Udvartanam :- The thighs raised up is udvartanam.
- 5) Nivartanam :- When the heels of the legs is pulled inside then this position of the thigh is nivartanam.

### **Shanks (jhangha)**

- 1) Avarthitam :-Left leg slowly touching the right leg and right leg slowly touching the left leg while moving forward is in this position.
- 2) Natam :- When the knee is bended it is the natam position of the thighs.
- 3) Kshiptam :- When the foot is moved in the circular movement following natam then it is kshiptam.
- 4) Udvahitam :- The position of the foot raising up then position of thighs is udvahitam.
- 5) Parivrittam :- Keeping the foot apart and moving it alternatively to right and left is parivrittam.

### **Foot movements(pada bhedas)**

- 1) Udghattitam :-Standing on fore part and touching the ground with the heels.
- 2) Samam :- The normal position of the feet is samam.
- 3) Agrathalasancharam :- The feet moving on heels.
- 4) Anchitam :- Raising on heel is anchitam.
- 5) Kunchitam :- Movement on the toes is kunchitam.



**Udghattita** – the heel rises



**Kunchita** – fingertips touch the ground



**Kunchita** –fingertips touch the ground



**Agratalasanchara** – toe touches the ground



**Anchita** – leg is on heel



**Sama** – feet on the ground

## **4:2The two Dharmis**

Natyadharmi and Lokadharmi are two divisions of acting as per Natyashastra. Natyadharmi means theatre oriented and Lokadharmi means life oriented.

### **Lokadharmi**

Lokadharmi acting refers to that mode of representation in traditional Indian performance that deals with the worldly activity of people. Lokadharmi is often set in opposition to the Natyadharmi (stylized) mode of representation. While Lokadharmi does not draw on a prescribed codification of gestures (hastas) and walks (gatis), among other aspects of stylized acting, it draws on its own modes of exaggeration, emphasis improvisation, and play which are non-realistic in their own right.

In Natyashastra Lokadharmi is the way of the world and the activity of common people, where one speaks, gesticulations and acts in the natural manner, as in one's daily life. The characters behave and speak naturally as common people normally do, according to their professions and their standing in the society, without playful flourish of the limbs or stylized postures. It also means the ordinary presentation of objects on the stage.

Lokadharmi manifests natural behavior of characters, depicting various professions and activities of the people as observed in our world, and is enacted without playful flourish of the limbs, various conventional gaits and postures. On the contrary, if a play contains speech, activity, beings and states of extra ordinary kind, and requires conventional enunciation, and is dependent on emotionally carried persons, it can be said to have been composed and enacted by "natyadharmi" or the conventional practice. Lokadharmi consists of the basic or raw material in a performance.

### **Natyadharmi**

Natyadharmi pertains to the conventions of the stage. According to the natyashastra, Natyadharmi is theatrical representation larger than life and considerably conventionalized. It is stylized and the artist's imagination has a free hand in this mode, contrasted with Lokadharmi. This stimulates the natural way of life. Natyadharmi is poetic and stylized in nature, following a codified manner of presenting emotion and expression which pertains to the conventions of

the stage, which appear to have greater artistic quality by virtue of taking something from natural life and rendering it in a suitably stylized way.

In Natyashastra book it is said that Natyadharmi which follows the theatrical conventions, is the idealistic, stylized mode of acting through traditional gestures and symbolisms, considered more artistic than realistic. One could say that Natyadharmi is poetic and imaginative in its nature, following a codified manner of presenting actions, expressions and emotions, as per the time honored conventions of the theatre. Here in this mode, the artist enjoys a greater degree of freedom to display her or his virtuosity and in taking something from natural life and rendering it in an elegant ingenious stylized way. The Natyadharmi encourages innovations, endowing the play with beauty associated with the performing arts.

Natyadharmi is a theatrical representation that is decisively deviated from realism. Bharatha gives instances of Natyadharmi mode in a play. If it contains speech activity, beings and states of extraordinary kind and if it requires acting with playful flourish of limbs and if it possesses characteristics of dance, where the delivery of speech follows the theatrical conventions and if it is dependent on emotions, it is then called Natyadharmi. If a character instead of simply walking, dances or moves with graceful steps and deliberate swing of the limbs, it is then in Natyadharmi style. If the ordinary human joys and sorrows are represented by special or exaggerated gestures, it is then Natyadharmi. If after appearing in a role one assumes a different role in the same play on account of his being an expert in both the cases or being the sole actor available for both the roles, it is known as an instance of Natyadharmi.

A dance performance is dominated by Natyadharmi. It is in the aspect of abhinaya that Natyadharmi is abundant dance. The poetry, lyrical or narrative elements, set to music and rhythm, are interpreted by the dancer in varieties of manners, employing various shades of travelling emotions of the basic emotions that is on display. This is achieved through a series of variations of the bodily acting where each word of the poetry is interpreted in as many different ways as possible.

Here a dancer assumes the roles of several characters without change of dress or costume giving expressions to their actions, emotions and their state of being. Natyadharmi does not mean imitation. No attempt is made to present things as they are instead the dancer endows her performance with creative, innovative and artistic suggestions. The dancer attempts to represent the entire range of human emotions and experiences through stylized gestures. Even the tears have to be shown through the characteristics suggestive gesticulations, as per the Natyadharmi mode.

#### 4:3Vrittis( styles of presentation )

Bharathamuni the author of Natyashastra regards vritti or the styles as one among the most important constituent elements of the play. Infact, he considers the vrittis as the mother of all poetic works. In a performance, the vritti stands for the ways of rendering a scene or the acting styles and the use of language, diction that different characters adopt in a scene, depending upon the nature or the bhava that is peculiar to the character.

The vrittis are said to be of four kinds (Kaishiki, Sattvati, Arabhati and Bharathi).

The **Kaishiki Vritti** (graceful style) which characteristics the tender Lasyanga associated with expressions of love, dance, song as also with charming costumes and delicate actions portrayed with care, mostly by women, is most suited to sringara rasa.

The **Sattavati Vritti** (flamboyant style) is a rather gaudy style of expressing ones emotions with excessive body movements, exuberant expressions of joy and underplaying mellow or sorrow moods. It is a way of expressing ones emotions through too many words.

The **Arabhati Vritti** is a loud, rather noisy and energetic style. It is a powerful exhibition of one's anger, valour, bordering on false pride by screaming, shouting, particularly in tumultuous scenes with overwhelming tension, disturbance and violence. It involves furious physical movements.

The **Bharathi Vritti** is mainly related to a scene where the speech or dialogue delivery is its prominent feature. But, generally, the Bharathi Vritti is related to eloquence is of importance in all the situations.

In regard to dance and dance-dramas the vritti that is most suitable for its depiction is the kaishiki vritti. It is used both in the nritta and nritya portions of a dance performance. Kaishiki vritti is most appropriate to dance and to the dance-dramas on account of the attractive costumes worn by the performers particularly by the women and also because of the Lasya and Sringara aspects that permeate its theme. It is also suitable for Hasya Rasa for display of humor.

#### [4:4Manodharma : The art of Embodying \( the performer's own creativity \)](#)

“Playing a character brings us closer to who we are not and who we could be”. Manodharma is all about creating through your own improvisation. A performer has to dedicate herself to learn how to be creative, how to think, how to move in action etc... The movement of air, birds flying etc., later on we see how these movements translate into a sense of spirit or feeling or sensation. For example if a performer wants to move like air the eyes will soften so would the jaws, the facial muscles and from air if want to move like water the body of the performer start to harden, to freeze and muscles of the face and body start to change. The gaze changes, the breath changes, the quality of the movement changes and even the voice can be affected and that the idea the things transform, materials can transform and so can the human beings. The ability to embody what we see is not just for performers it's for all human beings. In most of the time we find it easy to embody what is closest to us. We embodyour parents, their ideas, their beliefs, their values. We embody our father's laugh, mother's aesthetics, we quiet freely embody these. We can embody the ideals of the group

which is closest to us, friend's community a religion that is handed down to us. We really get good at embodying the things which is closest us. Things we agree which we get comfortable with and things we find safe. And then comes the classical dance school where the educators push and force to embody the different to be something very different from who we experienced in life and we began to wear and take on the character and then you began to embody their fragility and their loneliness and in those moments of embodying one began to glimpse who we are not and who we could be. Sometimes the actor embodying someone we think who is so different yields so many surprises that we are actually quiet close and we feel quiet closely for those who we think are really different from us the human abilities to embody people across boundaries beyond the barriers of our homes, our borders, our lands, our minds our hearts it is this ability that keeps us understanding, it keeps us self-reflecting and keeps us self-transforming. If we can embody the river we may keep it purer, if we can embody the sunshine we might be able to spill a little on us and if we can embody the other we may be able to have a symphony of co-existence. "Acting is living briefly with a high charge of human connectivity.

To display manodharma, a dancer has to finely balance personal interpretation of emotion with the structure prescribed in classical dance treatises. Aesthetic creativity in art that goes by the name "Manodharma" (that which rises out of your consciousness subject to certain principles) or "improvisation" is an endangered facet of dance.

Indian dance imbibes a highly stylized, codified language of gestures where the language of the lyric is interpreted through dance in three categories, viz. Kavyartha (meaning of the composition as a whole) followed by vakhyartha (interpreting each line of the song) and padartha (word by word in the lyric). The dominant mood (stayi bahva) is first projected to the audience; then the complimentary and transitory moods are presented through vakhyartha and padhartha. The padhartha gives ample scope for sanchari bhava (emotive expression while moving to rhythm and song) where word to word interpretation where relevance to the situation is presented by the dancer through as many gestural meanings as possible, showcasing the artist's skill at emotive output to the hilt. These stylized, conventional gestures in dance have a universal appeal across linguistic and geographical barriers. Hence, it is classical dance! "It should be clear from the beginning that manodharma is an active process wherein the artist is able to create an illusory world through sheer expression and emotion in a structured manner. Creativity does not mean the dancer takes to her own innovation beyond the realms of reason and shastra; that would make it entirely Lokadharmi; it should actually be a fine balance of Natyadharmi and improvisation. My grandmother would always insist that the technique of dance as mentioned in the treatises is the backbone of manodharma. Once on the stage, the artist has to be self-centered, equipped with multi-conscious approach to the audience, the accompanists, the technique the composition and all the extraneous aspects while the thinking process is on, in recreating an emotion in myriad ways. This is not learnt, it is absorbed but how? Only by watching the teacher doing it; other stalwarts do it in their own expressive manner. Again imitating them is not manodharma. The creative process within your mind gets churned as you keep watching the doyens who walked the dance floor before you, generations ago and one day, you would be able to do it yourself with your own stamp to it. There is no learning manodharma in the strictest sense of the term.

But there is a lot of grasping of what a particular line of the lyric conveys how best it could be interpreted through the means of gestural dance.

The physical manifestation or concretization of the mental picture created by the performer through the studied movements of her entire body that is of the *angas*, *upangas* and *pratyangas* as prescribed in the *Natyashastra* literature Bharata's *dicta* which form the foundation of this tradition have not been really surpassed. Succeeding authors or commentators have simplified or elaborated upon or added to these *dicta*, further enriching the tradition and characterization according to the type of the character, age, temperament, condition and sex.

For creating a major and supportive situation and incidents and their interpretation in the language of dance based upon poetic conventions which are many a time symbolic, the teacher knows these norms and teaches the student, the student studies these norms, understands them and projects them in her performance. The choreographer knows them, utilizes them and perhaps re-interprets them in her creation for greater impact and creative expression. So in the conventionalized terminology of the *Natyashastra* tradition the dancer fixes the *stayi bhava* (central predominant emotion), selects the situation as per either mythology or fables or history and the poetic conventions and symbolism, fixes the *vyabhichari bhavas* (the supportive emotions) for each situation and as per the *bhavas* sets the actual movements of the different limbs of her body and matches the synchronized movements of her body with the words of the poem – their actual conventional meaning or the suggestive meaning. Creates a visual poetry of dance by imagining and concretizing poetic and theatrical plot and sets her creation to the musical mode and its rhythmic cycle embellishes it with decorative but apt physical flourishes which convey the impression that she is dancing. All this is done with her deeply concentrated mind to reach out to the audience and carry to them the intent and content of the poet.

The body becomes an instrument in the hand of a performer. Knowledge is transmitted through the practical mastery of the practice of the body; the performer disengages the body, keeping the same engagement with the processes, at the same time during the performance through motion trajectories and mental maneuvers. The body remembers and repeats all the limb movements and their numbers mechanically while taking the body out of its restrictive principles of practice. Academic disciplines and artistic practices in theatre and performance studies, in the recent past, have integrated, adapted, transformed and put to new uses of the concepts and practices of Indian bodily traditions in general and the *Natyashastra* in particular.

## Chapter 5

### RASA : THE AESTHETIC DELIGHT

We must start the theory of rasa or aesthetic emotion with Bharatha's maxim, vibhavanubhava-vyabhichari-samyogad rasa-nishpattih, that the rasa is accomplished as a result of the conjunction of vibhava, Anubhava and vyabhicharibhava.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to explain a few of the technical terms that are continually associated with any discussion of Rasa :- (1) Vibhava is the objective condition producing an emotion. Vibhava may be of two kinds : (i) Alambana and (ii) Uddipana.

Alambana vibhava means a person or persons with reference to whom the emotion is manifested. Uddipana vibhava means the circumstances that have excited the emotion. A man may feel attracted to a woman if the circumstances are cooperating with it. It is easier for a man to be attracted towards a woman of young age if they are thrown alone and there is a beautiful atmosphere before them, the moon peeping through the clouds, the fragrant breeze blowing, and the like. Anyone of such circumstances may be regarded as uddipana vibhava, whereas both the man and the woman are Alambana vibhavas to each other. (2) Anubhava means bodily expression by which the emotion is expressed. Thus the arch glances of a lady, her inviting smile may be regarded as Anubhava. (3) Vyabhichari means a series of diverse emotions that feed the dominant emotion. A woman in love anxiously waiting at the rendezvous to meet her lover may feel disappointed that he is not coming, may be anxious that something might have happened to him, may be jealous that he might have been courted by another woman, may feel delight in remembering the coaxing words that he had whispered into her ears, and on. Like pictures in a cinematograph, emotions of diverse sorts may be passing in quick succession, and may all at the same time be continuing the constitution of the same emotion.

The real discussion of rasa was started by Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharatha's maxim on Rasa-nishpattih (manifestation of Rasa or completion of Rasa). Before proceeding further it is necessary to say few words about the foundation of Rasa. It is based on the particular view of psychology which holds that our personality is constituted, both towards its motivation and intellection, of a few primary emotions which lie deep in the subconscious or unconscious strata of our being. These primary emotions are the amorous, the ludicrous, the pathetic, the heroic, the passionate, the fearful, the nauseating and wondrous. Other aesthetic psychologists have in later times added to it the peaceful or intellectual, the devotional and the filial. These emotions are running through all natures in a permanent manner and may in that sense be called dominant emotions (stayibhava). These dominant states that determine the particular internal temperaments are regarded as the dominant characteristics of those emotional states. Emotional states such as the amorous, the heroic and the others, show in their expressions the appearance of atomic formations, that is each emotion in its manifestation shows a composition of diverse sentiments constantly shooting out and changing like the kinetic atoms and gases, like the flame jets that continually come

and go and thereby produce the appearance of the permanent, undivided whole of a flame, there are continually passing little flames of diverse sentiments that give expression to the permanent emotion of love or hate, heroism or anger. It should however be noted that no emotion is called Rasa unless it is aesthetically excited. When a young man falls in love with a young woman and his whole frame is shaken, we cannot speak of him as being the subject of srīngara Rasa, or when his son is dead and he is crying in tears, we cannot speak of him that he is in the Karuna Rasa. Rasa is an emotion excited by artistic circumstances or situations.

Now let us examine how can our dominant emotions be roused by artistic means? Some writers like Bhaṭṭa Lollata held that while the vibhava, Anubhava and vyabhichari are either ingeniously described or set forth vividly by mime, they cooperate together and in their conjunction Rasa is produced.

There cannot be any rasa unless there is also the vibhava and the anubhava. The vibhava's etc... cannot also be regarded as a communicative agent, for a communicative agent presupposes the existence of the thing to be communicated, but the rasa does not exist before. It can be lived through only when it is suggested by the vibhavas and the rasa has no other existence than being lived through and enjoyed, for it should be remembered that the dominant emotions existing in the sub-conscious strata of the person are not themselves rasas. They acquire that designation only when they are aesthetically presentable and enjoyable.

Poet Sri Shankuka introduced the similitude of painting to explain the enlightenment of aesthetic emotion. He said that just as of a painted horse it can be said that it is not a horse and that it is a horse, so of an aesthetic experience we can say that it is both real and unreal.

poet Abhinavagupta holds that in the case of a truly poetic composition, after having grasped the full significance of the words and their meanings, there is a mental intuition as a result of which the actual temporal and spatial character of the situation is withdrawn from the mental field and the emotion suggested therein loses its individual character and also becomes dissociated from such conditions as might have led us to any motivation. The emotion is apprehended and intuited in a purely universal character and in consequence thereof the ordinary pathological symptoms of emotion lose their significance and through all the different emotions bereft of their pathological characters we have one enjoyment of joy. It is for this reason that in the experience of a tragedy we find as much enjoyment as in that of a comedy, for the experience of a grief have been unpalatable if it was associated with its pathological consequences. These pathological consequences are always due to a sense of self-struggle, self-motivation, loss, and the like. But in the intuition of the rasa we live through the experience of a pure sentiment bereft of all its local characters.

In the subconscious and unconscious regions there are always lying dormant various types of emotion-motive complexes. When through artistic creation a purely universal emotional fear, amour, etc., are projected in the mind they become affiliated to those types of emotio-

motive complexes and this mutual affiliation or implicit recognition of identity immediately transforms the presented artistic universal into artistic joy or Rasa. It is for this reason that in experiencing artistic joy there is a kinship and identity among all art enjoyers.

Poet Bhatta Tauta, in his work "kavya-kautuka" says that performance is not a physical occurrence. In witnessing a performance we forget the actual perceptual experience of the individuals on the stage playing their different parts or manifesting their individuality as associated with their local names and habitations. The man who is playing the part of lord srirama does not appear to us in his actual individual character and it does not also appear to us that he cannot be the original lord Srirama. He stands somewhere midway between the pure actuality and the pure ideality. This together with all the scenic associations and those of music produces an experience which vibrates with exhilaration, and as a result of thereof the whole presentation of actuality becomes veiled as it were, in so far as it is an actual occurrence of representative character. The past impressions, memories, associations and the like, which were lying deeply buried in the mind, became connected with the present experience and thereby the present experience became affiliated and perceived in a new manner resulting in a dimension of new experience, revealing new types of pleasures and pains, unlike the pleasure and pains associated with our egoistic instincts and the success and failures of their strivings. This is technically called "Rasavadana" which literally means the experiencing of a transcendent exhilaration from the enjoyment of the roused emotions inherent in our own personality. A dance performance is an objective content of such an experience. A performance is not a physical occurrence, but it is a pure spiritual enlightenment, a spiritual expression throbbing and pulsating with a new type of music, joyous and pensive. As a result of this experience, a unity is affected between the individual's own experience and the expression of the art. It may also rather be said that it is a new creation involving the personality of the individual and the objective dramatic content as constituents, a new appearance, a revelation different from all other experience and all external objects.

On the other hand all the equipment of the stage together with the music release from our mind the hold of the impression that such and such a person has taken a particular part, and it also makes us indifferent to the suggestion of impossibility that the performer before us cannot be lord Rama. Being cut off from its connection of two sides, namely, the positive connection of the play with the present actor as a known individual with the actuality of all his bearings, and on the other hand the impossibility of connecting the actor with the realized lord Rama's character having lost its force, the suggestive influence can very naturally surcharge the mind with new exhilarations and feelings which can, without any relation to anything else, modify the state of mind. In this state the previous experiences existing in the mind of the audience as impressions work up independently in association with the suggestion of the dramatic performance. The affiliation and integration of these roused impressions and expectations produce new joys and new intuitions. The aesthetic content of a drama is all that is illuminated in such a process. Here we find that the universalization of poetic art is of two kinds. First of all, the aesthetic composition by nature of its special suggestive force presents before our minds an aesthetic situation and an

emotion that is devoid of all its local character. Secondly, the expression of this artistic enlightenment has a universal character in manifestation in different minds. In the next stage this presented whole becomes co-mingled with various types of subconscious and unconscious feelings or emotion-motive complexes which are lying dormant in the minds of various people.

It is easy to see that so far as these later are concerned they are naturally different in different persons in accordance with the nature and diversity of experience. It is for this reason that the same artistic whole, though it be presented in the same manner in different minds, their artistic apperception of it would be different in accordance with the difference of diverse emotio-motive complexes, but neither in the universal whole presented to the mind nor in the motive complexes do we find any trace of any local character that is associated with the ego or the self in its practical commerce with the real objective world around it.

Rasa is about human state of mind. It's about what the mind feels and the expression of the feeling thereafter. In the Bharata's Natyashastra, Rasa is an emotion experienced by the audience created by the facial expression or the Bhava of the actor. In Indian classical dance it is referred to as Rasa-abhinaya. Every Rasa corresponds to a particular Bhava. The Natyashastra has carefully described the Bhavas used to create Rasa. Below we have stated the nine moods (Navarasa) and the corresponding Bhava. Every Rasa is identified with a specific color for the use in performing arts.

The nine types of rasas with pictures are as follows

**Sringara** :- Rati is the stayibhava for sringara, color is green and is used in love related emotions. This has two division sambhoga sringara and vipralambha sringara.

**Sambhoga sringara** :-sambhoga sringara is the state when the hero and the heroine are together or united. The intense desire for lover is also conveyed through this.

**Vipralambha sringara** :-This refers to erotic sentiment in separation. The sentiment of love in separation is of two types. The first type is originated from the apprehension of future separation and the second type arises from the actual separation.

**Hasyam** :- Hasa is the stayibhava, color is white and is used for humor. Hasya is broadly classified into two types. Atmasta is the self-laughter where one is laughing oneself while parasta is making others laugh. This emotion is expressed when witnessing objects or events that evoke amusement.

**Karunam** :- Shoka is the stayibahava and is used in sorrow. This represents grief and compassion. The feelings of unspeakable tragedy and despair, hopelessness and heartbreak, the sorrow caused by parting with a lover, the pain caused by the death of a loved one.

**Raudram** :-Anger is the stayibhava, color is red and this rasa is evoked when one is greatly humiliated. The base emotion is rage, and is manifested through a readiness to protest and resist, through verbal aggression, and through violence and war.

**Veeram** :-Veera is the passion and eagerness evoked in the heart while the person engages in fighting for good over evil, protecting a just cause and safeguarding the interests of the helpless and have-nots. This rasa is of four types **Dharma veera, Daya veera, Dana veera, Yudha veera**. **Dharma veera** is when reacting proactively to the urgings of the conscience or the call of duty. **Daya veera** rasa is feeling evoked when responding to a call for protection. **Dana veera** is the eagerness to help a person reaching out to you in his need. **Yudha veera** is the valour and fervor of a warrior who calls his enemy out for a fight.

**Beebhatsam** :-This rasa represents the revulsion that the character feels, on seeing unpleasant sights or things. Color of this rasa is blue and jugupsa or disgust is the basic emotion here. While portraying this rasa, the character stoops his neck forward slightly, pulls his eyes inward to make them smaller, lowers his eyebrows, blinks his eyes, and pushes his cheeks and lips downward, all in a highly exaggerated fashion.

**Bhayanaka** :- Bhayanaka is the feeling of panic and dread brought on by the anticipation of danger. Color is black and it denotes a weakness of heart and a want of strength in character. Fear is the base emotion of the Bhayanaka rasa.

To portray this rasa the actor widens his pupils and pushes them forcefully outwards. With eyes quivering, he raises his eyebrow one at a time and then together, pulls his lips inward, flares his nostrils, and looks from side to side like a deer that has caught the scent of danger. The darkly reddened face conveys the adrenaline rush of extreme fear felt by the character.

**Atbhutam** :-This rasa is the manifestation of the wonder and amazement felt at witnessing unusual or incomparable objects and events. When the eyebrows are raised, the gaze is slowly directed outwards, the eyelids are stretched to the sides, chin and neck are slightly thrust forward and the face displays an expression of delight.

**Santha**:- This rasa is the emotion experienced by a content mind filled with peace and with an absence of desire for material comforts.

Detachment is the emotion that best expresses this rasa. The state of santha is brought about by liberation from desires and detachment from the material world in combination with strong faith in god. To portray santha, the actor focuses his eyes on the tip of his nose, keeps his eyelids still and half closed and maintains an expression of realistic calm.



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Sringaram**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Hasyam**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Karuna**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Veeram**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Raudram**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Bhibhatasam**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Bhayanakam**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meleth.

**Adbhutam**



PHOTO BY : Diamond Paul Meeth

**Shantam**

## Conclusion

Let us begin with the conclusion now, here we conclude that in Indian classical dance forms it is only **the body** which is the central part and which plays a very significant role in communicating the thread of the story which a performer brilliantly makes it happen by using all the required major, minor and subsidiary limbs of her body so that the message would reach to the beholder in a quite perfect way. Through the content of this thesis it is clear that it also depends on the performer, the style of performance and also the nature of the spectator that how it is being conveyed and how it is understood by the audience. Dance training which starts at a very young age proves to be the utmost important learning process through which an artiste transforms herself into a dedicated, observant and creative performer. Creativity never happens in one day it is the result of dedicated learning and rigorous training process which an artist has gone through. By explaining about the different styles of acting, the triad in classical dance, styles of representation and the pivotal aesthetic rapture (Rasa), have proved that how with the variety of contrivance in dance a performer reaches to her ultimate aim that is to entertain the audience through all the body gesticulations and with all the stunning facial expressions. Combining all the inner feelings, emotions and by explaining in detail regarding the hand gestures, body movements, the possibilities of communication is also been proved here. This thesis would definitely will be a worth reference for the upcoming generation to get a clear glance regarding the body behavior of Indian classical dance. An artiste has to follow not only the techniques and the rules set in the traditional texts, but also her own improvisation has to be worked according to the timely learning. Visual imagination of an artiste is the most powerful and significant element for exuberant choreographic skills. The single ladder to the world of spectacular body movements, expressions, communication expertise and grace is completely dependent on the performer's visual and creative imaginary capabilities. It is also been proved that the aesthetic bliss happens not only in the spectator but also the performer enjoys that divine bliss inside her own body and mind while moving in rhythm. Rasa is the only extreme enjoyment which is experienced by both the performer and the audience. The contribution of rhythm and beat plays a lead role in gaining rasa experience as the performer follows the suit while balancing the time, space and action during the performance. I would like to conclude my thesis by reminding the sacred lines of Indian classical dance that **“YATHO HASTA TATHO DRISHTI, YATHO DRISHTI TATHO MANAH, YATHO MANAH TATHO BHAVA, YATHO BHAVA TATHO RASAH”**the English translation for this Sanskrit language sloka is like this **“WHERE THE HAND GOES EYES SHOULD FOLLOW, WHERE THE EYES GOES MIND SHOULD FOLLOW, WHERE THE MIND IS EMOTION ARISES, WHERE THE EMOTION ARISES RASA IS BORN”**.

## Glossary

Pre-historic period	The time before civilization and writing.
Divine art	This is usually considered a rhetorical device to express society's admiration for the inexplicable talents of a great master.
Koothu	Koothu means when the artists play songs with dance and music in storytelling the epics, performed in Tamil language.
Classical	Representing an exemplary standard within a traditional and long-established form or style.
Laya	Meaning musical rhythm.
Beholder	A person who sees or observes someone or something.
Futile	Incapable of producing any useful result; pointless.
Raga	In Indian classical music each of the six basic musical modes which express different moods in certain characteristics progression, with more emphasis placed on some notes than others.
Charis	Used specifically for going back pattern. Pulled up in order to cross the foot.
Mandalas	These are the basic leg postures in Indian classical dance.
Mudras	The hand gestures in Indian classical dance.
Abhinayadarpana	The text based on performing arts written by Nandikeshwara.
Angas	The major limbs of the human body like head, chest etc.,
Rasikas	An expert able to appreciate a field; especially in the fine arts.
Upangas	The minor limbs of a human body like eyes, nose, eyebrows etc.,
Pratyngas	The secondary limbs of the human body like stomach, waist, sides etc.,
Syntax	The arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language.
Nuances	A subtle difference in or shade of meaning, expression, or sound.
Akin	Of similar character.
Untainted	Not contaminated or polluted.
Aestheticians	One versed in the theory of beauty and artistic expression.
Encompassed	Surround and have or hold within.
Brahma	The creator god in Hindu religion. He is also known as (svayambhu) self-born.
Summon	Order someone to be present.
Affliction	A cause of pain or harm.
Despondency	Low spirits from loss of hope or courage.
Enlightenment	Greater knowledge and understanding to.
Concretization	Something specific which results of a process of concretizing a general principal or idea.
Dominant	Most important or influential.
Conventionalized	Cause to become conventional.

Subtleties	A quality or state of being subtle.
Nandi	Nandi was an ox and the vehicle and charioteer of lord Shiva.
Tandu	Tandu is the name of a sage.
Meticulous	Careful and precise.
Countenance	A person's face of expression.
Exudes	Display a quality clearly.
Gleaned	Obtained or collect from various sources.
Gesticulation	Gesture in place or to emphasize speech.
Erotic	Sexual desire or excitement.
Trajectories	The path of an object moving through the air.
Maneuvers	A skillful or careful movement.
Rendezvous	An arranged meeting or meeting place.
Filial	Of a son or daughter.
Pathological	Caused by a disease.
Unpalatable	Not pleasant to taste
Lasyanga	Means a tender or graceful Dance.
Apperception	The mental process by which a person makes sense of an idea by assimilating it to the body of ideas he or she already possesses.
Transcendent	Beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience.
Kinship	Blood relationship.

Appendix











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