## A STUDY ON ŚIROBHEDA IN NĀTYA LAKŚANAGRANTĀS

## Dr. VIJAY MADHAVAN

Guest Faculty, Department of Indian Music, University of Madras, Chennai, India

Movement has been the expression of humans from esoteric past. Even before the advancement of expression (sharing of thoughts) which formulated the concept of language, movement matured to be an art form that shaped up as dance. Dance has been the outpour of joy. Evidences of such a group activity can be substantiated with paintings from the caves such as Ellora and Ajanta. Human beings evolved to be social and established community dwelling which in turn developed civilizations. This in turn paved way of built structures that included common places of worship. Even in the Harappan civilization traces of such bath have been unearthed. The temples have always been the fostering ground for the art form to thrive. India appreciated sixty four art forms which were considered the essential life skills. These skills were to be mastered by an individual to be considered worthy. It is interesting to understand that the ability to string a garland of flowers too is an art. The art of dance was held in association with its inseparable due the vocal music and instrumental as <code>Saṅgūta</code>.

How many such dances have been associated to temples? These religious foundations have led them to be prominent forms either to be prevalent in temple activity or that being entertained in the royal court of patrons. Current classical Indian dance exists in several forms which is a result of one form diversified into many by several influences that could be termed as factors, for example the Kathak form was a development extensively due to establishment of foreign rule of the Persians and Mughals. The antiquity of classical dance forms can be finally categorised under the heads of Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Manipuri and Kathak. Kathakali is predominated with regional practices provisioning the grammatical form. Kathak as discussed earlier is a suited form entertained by the rulers. Manipuri was a form that gained prominence with the efforts of Sri Rabindranath Tagore and his establishment of Santiniketan. Manipuri presents a transcendental dance with diminished hasta abhinaya that reflects the Bhakti cult. Thus Smt Rukmini Devi Arundale opines that the form of dance that would have been prevalent across this nation would have been a close association to what prevails in the garb of Bharatanatyam today predominantly. This form amongst Tamil was popular in the names of Sadir, Dasiattam, and Chinnamelam.

Art dwells in a performer and let us consider what determines a performer in the past, however many of these could still be considered relevant. We try to understand the role of a performer as an individual entity, her role both in a family and the society. Let us remember that life indeed has challenging in the past. The political dilemma prevailed in every province. Primarily the life expectancy of an individual was limited due to absence of facilities. So the life span of individual was low and for a performer too. The non mechanized living had a bearing of task to be delivered by extensive physical labor. In a positive manner it could be thought their lifestyle itself was more engaging, however that lifestyle dominated their availability for the art form. Travel was painstaking and required extensive planning, and it would take enormous time to accomplish it. Communication was another daunting task, one would not forget neither the importance nor the hardship explained in Sundara Kanda of Ramayana that Hanuman subjects himself to. Next is task of accomplishing as a performer, and become recognized. After recognition soliciting continued patronage. A performer is

appreciated when she presents herself appealing with befitting clothes and ornaments. All of these were luxuries and had to be planned in advance. The musical troupe that accompanied the dancer was usually a knit of family members. The lineage that a daughter inherited an art of mother and the son being an accompanying artist was observed. In a nutshell it is complex with multitude factors and multiple levels that defined a performer. Such notable performers represent the successful performing tradition. The flip side is those who have not made it are the unsung heroines of the probable lost tradition.

The performers were the ones who kept the art flowing with their adaptations, creativity and relevance. This made the art form rich and delectable. The performers dictated certain modifications and stood with conviction for what they represented, and this sought them to prominence. It was also colloquially termed as 'Bani' or style. The practice was documented by both the poets and grammarians in the form of text. It should be noted that grammarians were themselves either trained or were well informed about the art form. In fact Professor Sambamoorthy rightly states that the performing aspect rules over the textual content, whenever there is a conflict the grammar is amended to suit the practice. So this reasons out for the number of texts in subsequent periods of time. Thus a study would help us to understand the advancements, developments and modifications that have happened across time.

The grammar texts that is available today which is of importance is considered to be created by Sage *Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra* (NS) dated between 2 BC and 2 AD. Prior to this many works have been referred by scholars but they are not available to us. This study is categorized into three timelines 1) From Bharatha onwards to Abhinavagupta, whose commentary on NS is the available source. 2) The next milestone is the period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> ending Śārṅgadeva's Saṅgītaratnākara (SR). 3) Modern period post SR.

The following texts were handled in the study with their geographical boundaries are mentioned below; Abhinayadarpana (AD) and Bharatārnava (BA) by Nandikeśvara (belonging to Dravida desa including current Andhra and Tamil Nadu representing South-East India), Śārngadeva's Sangītaratnākara (SR) (current day Maharashtra representing Western India but resonating the ideas of Kashmir as the author hailed from that place originally), Aśokamalla's Nrttādhyāya (NA) (parts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh representing Central India), Sangītamālikā (SK) of Mohammed Shah (Representing Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), Manasollasa (MS) of King Someśvara (parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra), Mahārāja Kumbha's Nṛttaratnakośa (NK) (parts of Rajasthan), Jayanna's Nrttaratnāvali (NV) (parts of Telangana, Chattisgarh and Odisha), Subhankara's Sangīta Dāmodara (SD) (parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal and Eastern India), Sudhākalaśa's Saṇgītopanisad sārodhāra (SO) (parts of Gujarat), Pārśvadeva's Saṅgītasamayasāra (SS) (parts of Karnataka), Devaṇācārya's (parts Saṅgītamuktāvali (SV) of Karnataka), and Bālarāmavarmā's Bālarāmabharatam (BB) (representing Kerala).

The study presents to you the reading from different texts from varied geographies and time period. A single text alone from each geographical location is considered, with the assumption that the regional practice of that area would have been inclusive in that text. This is done to ward off redundant information and channelize the study in a purposeful manner.

Bharata classifies abhinaya to be of four types, viz  $\bar{A}ngika$ ,  $V\bar{a}cika$ ,  $\bar{A}harya$  and  $S\bar{a}ttvika$ . The  $\bar{A}ngika$  is expression through the limbs and parts of the body. The others are  $V\bar{a}cika$  which is verbal or dialogue, and are scripted. The  $\bar{A}harya$  is observed by the costumes and jewellery. The  $S\bar{a}ttvika$  is the emotional representation or psychological state of being.  $\bar{A}ngika$  is held to be the fundamental and essential part in training of an artist. Art has been prevalent in the form of drama. The earlier texts did

present drama, poetics, music and dance all under a roof here it is a text. The isolation of dance as an art form happened during the medieval time since then the treatment of dance as an independent art can be observed in the later texts. The later texts like NV, AD, BA etc are devoted as to the technique of dance solely. So the subject that is dealt in these texts does lead us to an understanding that they should be texts of later period with no ambiguity. And the technique of drama  $(n\bar{a}tya)$  is treated as an aspect of the art form. Thus dance is divided into three distinct categories in the medieval treatises namely Nṛtta, Nṛtya and Nāṭya

एतच्चतुर्विधोपेतं नटनं त्रिविधं स्मृतम्॥

नाट्यं नृत्तं नृत्यमिति म्निभिर्भरतादिभिः। AD, 11-12

In NS the āṅgika is classified into three categories viz Śārīra, Mukhaja and Ceṣṭākṛta.

त्रिविधस्त्वाङ्गिको ज्ञेयः शारीरो मुखजस्तथा।

तथा चेष्टाकृतश्चैव शाखाङ्गोपाङ्गसंयुतः॥

NS, VIII.11

NS conceptualizes 'sadanga' or the six major classifications of Anga that is head, hands, waist, chest, sides and feet.

शिरोहस्तकटीवक्षः पार्श्वपादसमन्वितः।

अङ्गप्रत्यङ्गसंयुक्तः षडङ्गो नाट्यसङ्ग्रहः ॥

NS, VIII.12

Predominantly this has been widely accepted even in the later texts like SK, SS, BB, NV and NK. But texts like MS show remarked differences that draws influence of provincial practices so this phase in the migration to the subsequent time zone of our study. The consensus amongst all texts in *Anga* is the Śiras (Head) which shall remain the scope of this study. The study is limited to the definition provided for each of these names, the usages in each text is not taken up here.

आकम्पितं कम्पितं च धूतं विधुतमेव च।

परिवाहितमाधृतमवधृतं तथाञ्चितम्॥

निहञ्चितं परावृत्तमुत्क्षिप्तं चाप्यधोगतम्।

लोलितं चैव विज्ञेयं त्रयोदशविधं शिरः॥

NS, VIII.17-18

Bharata in NS lists thirteen head movements viz Ākampita, Kampita, Dhuta, Vidhuta, Parivāhita, Ādhūta, Avadūta, Añcita, Nihañcita, Parāvrtta, Utkṣipta, Adhogata, Lolita. Of these in particular Bharata advises Nihañcita to be performed by the female gender of performers only, this explicit mention is absent in the subsequent literary records. Either it has been widely accepted to be performed by female or it has been extended to the male too remains a question.

निहञ्चितं तु विज्ञेयं स्त्रीणामेतत् प्रयोजयेत्

NS, VIII.31

The NS edited by the board of editor's (1994) present  $Udv\bar{a}hitaka$  for  $\bar{A}dh\bar{u}ta$  in their study. NS reading states both these names in the couplet.

*Bharata* being the pioneer we find not mere adherence but reverence too to the text by subsequent authors across time. In fact *Bharata* also provisions the scope for the construction and subsequent additions to the existing list mentioned above. His opinion is unfolded here in this couplet below.

एभ्योऽन्ये बहवो भेदा लोकाभिनयसंश्रिताः।

ते च लोकस्वभावेन प्रयोक्तव्या प्रयोक्तभिः॥

NS, VIII.38

Following this discussion it is interesting to note that *Bharata* explicitly mentions that he has defined thirteen of the stated movements.

त्रयोदशविधं ह्येतच्छिरःकर्म मयोदितम्।

NS, VIII.39

However there is an anomaly by the subsequent authors who have stated, referring to *Bharata*, as to definition for fourteen of such movements, to which they add additional movements. It leads us to understand that there would have been other manuscripts of NS which is not available to us. It is interesting to note in the subsequent texts the name is retained and in fewer instances alone it is modified. In few the executions for that name has undergone transformed or strict guidelines are emphasized. Exceptions have been presented in this study and the redundant information is avoided i.e when both the name and execution have been intact.

NS unfolds the description of movements which forms the baseline of study upon which we compare the other texts to see the congruency and deviations.

शनैराकम्पनादुर्ध्वमधश्चाकम्पितं भवेत्।

द्रुतं तदेव बहुशः कम्पितं कम्पितं शिरः॥

NS, VIII.19

A slower movement up and down is *Akampita*. Faster and frequent movement (repetitively) is *Kampita*. The critical edition of NS presents an alternate reading shown below.

ऋजुस्थितस्य चोर्ध्वाधः क्षेपादाकम्पितं भवेतु ।

बहुशश्चलितं यच्च तत्किम्पितमिहोच्यते॥

NS, VIII.20

When the head is brought from the raised state to be dropped it is *Akampita*. Frequently when moved it is *Kampita*.

शिरसो रेचनं यत्तु शनैस्तद्धुतमिष्यते।

द्रुतमारेचनादेतद्विधुतं तु भवेच्छिरः॥

NS, VIII.23

When the head is moved sideways slowly it is *Dhuta*. When it is done faster it is called as *Vidhuta*.

पर्यायशः पार्श्वगतं शिरः स्यातु परिवाहितम् ।

आधूतमुच्यते तिर्यक् सकृदुद्वाहितं तु यत्॥

NS, VIII.26

When repetitively moved sideways it is called as *Parivāhita*. It is called as *Adhūta* when turned oppositely and raised.

यदधः सकुदाक्षिप्तमवधूतं तु तच्छिरः ॥

NS, VIII.29

When it is dropped down it is called as Avadhūta.

किञ्चित् पार्श्वनतग्रीवं शिरो विज्ञेयमञ्चितम्।

NS, VIII.30

When the head is titled to the side it is *Añcita*.

उत्क्षिपांसावसक्तं यत्कुञ्चितभूलतं शिरः।

निहञ्चितं त् विज्ञेयं स्त्रीणामेतत् प्रयोजयेत्॥

NS, VIII.31

The shoulders are raised, and the head is bent in Nihañcita. It is to be performed by females. Here Sage *Bharata* imposes a gender based deployment preference.

परावृत्तानुकरणात् परावृत्तमिहोच्यते ।

तत् स्यान्मुखापहरणे पृष्ठतः प्रेक्षणादिषु ॥

NS, VIII.33

When the face is turned away to see an object at the rear side, it is Parāvrtta.

उत्क्षिप्तं चापि विज्ञेयमुन्मुखावस्थितं शिरः।

NS, VIII.34

When the head is raised it is *Utkṣipta*.

अधोमुखं स्थितं चापि बुधाः प्राहुरधोगतम् ।

NS, VIII.35

The cast down face is known as Adhogata.

सर्वतो भ्रमणाच्चैव शिरः स्यातु परिलोलितम् ।

NS, VIII.36

When moved circularly or moved randomly it is called as Parilolita.

ऋजुस्वभावसंस्थानं प्राकृतं तु स्वभावजम्।

NS, VIII.37

When held straight and normally it is called as Prākṛta.

एभ्योऽन्ये बहवो भेदा लोकाभिनयसंश्रिताः।

ते च लोकस्वभावेन प्रयोक्तव्या प्रयोक्तभिः॥

NS, VIII.38

The head movements can be numerous and are incorporated replicating the walks of life; rather it can be adopted from the dynamic society time to time.

आकम्पितं कम्पितं च धुतं विधुतमेव च । परिवाहितमाधूतमवधूतं तथाञ्चितम् ॥ निहञ्चितं परावृत्तमुत्क्षिप्तं चाप्यधोगतम् । लोलितं चैव विज्ञेयं त्रयोदशविधं शिरः ॥

NS, VIII.17-18

Śārṅgadeva's SR authentically remarks (इति भरतोक्त चतुर्दशविधं शिरः) SR VII, 73-74. SR lists nineteen movements, apart from the fourteen movements that include both Ādhūta and Udvāhita. SR refers Adhomukha for Adhogata. The additions we find in this text are Tirya-natonnata, Skandhānata, Ārātrika, Sama, Pārśvābhimukha.

Nandi's BA completely submits to the list of SR with the fourteen (चेति विज्ञेयं चतुर्दशविधं शिरः) BA, IV.205 followed by the extension of five (इत्यन्योन्यभेदान् पञ्चपरे जगुः) BA, IV.206. *Devaṇācārya*'s SV submits to nineteen movements without any demarcation (एकोनविंशतिश्चापि शिरांसि मिलितानि च) SV, 4, pg 26 but while listing only sixteen have been mentioned, and *Nihañcita* is referred to *Nikuñcita*. Here the author mentions it is to be performed by the female.

एते हि स्त्रीकृता भावा श्रृङ्गाररसनिर्भराः॥

SV, 14, pg 27

Jayaṇṇa's NV submits to thirteen in number and expresses that this is laid down by the sage. Interesting to note the text also refers Adhomukha and the missing one is Udvāhita. Apart from this ten more are listed as Sama, Nairājita, Tiryaktata, Tiryaṅ-natonnata, Pārśvābhimukha, Unnīta, Sakampa-parivāhita, Sakampa-dhuta, Uddhuta, and Pārśvākampita. We have been introduced to the few of these additions earlier; we find here the seven more movements apart from the ones stated above.

कल्पिताः कतिचिद्भेदान् ब्रूमस्तानपरानपि ॥ समं नैराजितं तिर्यक्ततं तिर्यङ्नतोन्नतम् । पार्श्वाभिमुखमुन्नीतं सकम्पपरिवाहितम् ॥ सकम्पधुतनामान्यदुद्धुतं पार्श्वकम्पितम् । पार्श्वाकम्पितमित्येकादश भेदाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

NV, II.20-21

Mohammed Shah's SK is in congruence with the number thirteen listed by the sage (इति त्रयोदशविधं शिरः प्रोक्तं मनीषिभिः) SK, 14, pg 3. Adhomukha is the name followed in this text. The descriptive part is available till Avadhūta.

SD lists the names but does not detail the way it needs to be performed. The text lists fourteen movements.

Someśvara's MS instead of निहञ्चितं mentions it to be न्यञ्चितम्.

*Kumbharāja* is the first to introduce *Sama*. However the *Dhuta* by the description is deviated and we are unable to construct in a justified manner in absence of performing tradition.

 $P\bar{a}r\acute{s}vadeva$  SO details only nine movements. His  $\bar{A}kampita$  is to be performed only once.  $Sudh\bar{a}kala\acute{s}a$  SS details  $\bar{A}kampita$  result when kampita is done twice

BB is not in congruence with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The entire list elaborates movements totally thirty in number. On a superficial note the name appears the same but the closer look at the definition provided for that name is not identical. When routed through the definition we would be able to understand that the nomenclature has not been identical. It is interesting to note that further three sub headings have been laid down as *Sthira*, *Asthira* and *Khaṇḍana*.

एकादशाशिरो नाट्ये स्थिरं चेति प्रकीर्तितम् ॥	BB, 113, pg 20
त्रयोदशशिरो नाट्ये चास्थिरं परिकीर्तितम् ॥	BB, 116, pg 21
खण्डितं षड्विधं प्रोक्तं शिरस्रिंशदुदीरितम् ॥	BB, 117, pg 21

The various permutations either two or more are performed to arrive at the number provided in this text. The extensive local practice is what is reflected and few expressions where it states like the movement of elephant, riding of the boat etc confirms the same.

This study helps us to assimilate few points on tradition of dance as an art form. The performing tradition which has been predominantly oral tradition has been preserved to a larger extent with just a few amendments to the existing stock and inclusions are made. The content in the text also helps us to understand at which time period the text would have been created. The name of the head movement is modified in few texts reflecting the slang of the local language or dialect that dominated. The definitions in few texts have tried to capture the prevalent performing tradition with more certainty and bridge abstract interpretation. This can be viewed as standardization of definition. In the absence of visual tool it is these readings that help us to conceive the practice that existed during the period in those regions. Few deviations have been a mismatch of information and cannot be attributed for a genuine reconstruction. On the other hand certain deviations pave way for further research to understand what necessitated them. The evolution of head gestures and their additions mark the major milestone in dance becoming an independent discipline post  $13^{th}$  century. Dance when it became an independent art form it required further elaboration and head been a subset of  $\bar{A}nga$ , has itself had undergone tremendous inclusion. One could comprehend this being the example how the influx of growth would have been. Thus the dance art form itself has to be accepted as a dynamic process.

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