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“Perini” - Nṛttaratnāvaḷi

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Abstract:

In the seventh chapter of Nṛttaratnāvaḷi treatise the author Jayana explained about all Desi art forms which were highly prevalent in those days. Coming to Perini, he explained about Perini Lakshanam, Perini Naipadhyam, and its five parts. One interesting thing I came to notice is in Perini quality he told this art form used to be performed in single or double or in a group. And four, six or eight dancers have to wear the same dress and one by one they have to enter on the stage which means it is not a solo art form and it is related to men and in Tāṇḍava Paddhati. Compare to Sārṅgadēva Sangītaratnākara he explained all the Perini and Perini pañcāngas which are similar to Bharatārṇava text without stating Bharatārṇava or Sapta Lāsya. Coming to Nṛttaratnāvaḷi in this text Jāyana also explained these things same as how it was done by Sārṅgadēva.

Introduction:

Nṛttaratnāvaḷi of Jayapa consists of eight chapters which can be classified into two sections. The former four chapters as one, dealing with Marga dances on the lines of Bharata and other treatises. The later four deals with the Desi tradition.

He was the first person who elucidated Mārga and Desi types of definitions and also given a clear clarification about Bharata's Nāṭya Śāstra which are in elusive state. He has given a clear statement of Desi in the 5th chapter, 4th Śloka which is, -

*bhavanti dharanīpālāh prāyeṇābhinaya priyāh
ata statprītaye dyāpi yadyadutpādyate navam
Nṛttam tatah smṛtam deśī tattaddeśānusāratah*

‘According to the taste of kings, they introduced new Dance forms (Nṛtta) which are favorite to them, therefore the new art forms which evolve according to their provincial status is known the Desi’ type of art forms.

Jayapa's Nṛttaratnāvalī (1253 AD):**Perini Lakshnam: (Qualities of Perini) slokas 34 – 37:-**

*ranjako rūpasampannah prakhyātah khyātavamśajah|
bhāvuko rasikastālavedīgamakakovidah||34
dhvani śarīrasampanno rāgāngādivicakṣaṇah/
pancāngakuśalovyangah sarvabhāshāviśāradah||35
surekhovādyavit prauḍhah prastāvocitabhāshaṇah/
gātāgīta prabandhānām lāsya tāṇḍavapaddhateh||36
vidhyānutplutipūrveshu karaṇeshu saḷaghavah/
bhramarīpādavit nānāla stignah preranī matah||37*

A Perini is one who is capable of taking the audience/ spectators to the heights of aesthetic pleasure, one of the attractive personalities, reputation and commendable pedigree, capable of feelings, connoisseur, expert at rhythm and nuances of music master of the various limbs of the tune, well versed in the science of astronomy, devoid of aberrations in the body, an expert at language, of good body line, knowledgeable in instrumental music, efficient, eloquent, conversant in singing songs from the classical texts acquainted with both Lasya and Tandava, executes karanas and involves leaps, wheeling movements and circle with ease and can converse in different ways.

Perini Naipadhyam: Arrangements of Perini) slokas 38 – 42:-

*varāṭakamayairjātarūparatnamayairapi|
bhūshaṇai rbhūshitobhāsvadbhasmoddhūlitavigrah||38
śikhāvān munditaśirah dadhat pustaphaṇādharam|
ekena rangayashṭivākareṇanyena cāmaram||39
Bibhrat ghargharikājāle janghayordruḍhasamyute/
ekaśodvandvaśovāpi kramātpūrvapraveśitai||40
caturbhīrathavāshaḍbhīh aṣṭābhīrvā sahāyakaiḥ|
abhītasahitah svasyadadhanai stulyaveshatām||41
samapāḍena vā tishṭhān bhujangatrāsītena vā|
kṛte yavanikākṣhepe sati rangabhūvam viśet||42*

The Perini decorates himself with ornaments made of shells and precious diamonds and gold; with ash smeared all over his body, the hair is spiked or clean shaven. He holds a rangayasti or stuff in one hand and a fly-whisk in the other. The ankle bells are tied firmly around the shanks. Four, six or eight dancers dressed like him first enter the stage either singly or in couples sequentially and place themselves on stage. After the curtain is raised, he is introduced in their midst in Samapada or Bhujangatrasita pada.

Pancha preranangani: (Five parts of Preranas) sloka 43:-

*preraṅgāni pancasyuh nṛttakaivāra ghargharāḥ|
vikaṭam gītamityeshāmkramāllakshmapracakshmahe||43*

Prerana is of five parts:

1. Nrittam
2. Kaivaram
3. Ghargharam
4. Vikatam and
5. Gitam

Nrittam:

Tanṛttam yat dvidhācoktam lāsya tāṇḍava bhedatah/

Nritta is that which has Lasya and Tandava as its divisions.

Kaivaram:

Itivṛtta pravikhyāta cakravarti dharādhipān||44

gunaih śauryādibhih stutvātaistaireva sabhāpateh|

stutirvitanyateyasmin kaivāro trasakīrtitāh||45

Praise on the celebrated emperors, also addressed to the President of the people, is Kaivaram

Ghargharam:

atālam tālayuktamca ghargharīvādanam karmāt |

atroktoghargharstasya prakārāh saptakīrtitāh||46

To sound the ankle bells in and out of beat alternately is Gharghara. These are seven kinds.

cāvaḍah paḍivāḍakhyo rundhah siribhirābhidah|

tatah khaluhulālagnapātau siripiṭi tatah||47

kramallakshaṇameteshām kathayāmodhunāvayam|

a) **Chavada**

saśabdham cāvaḍah pādatalābhyām tāḍanam bhuvah||48

To tap the ground with the sole to produce sound is chavada.

b) **Paḍivada**

pādāgraślishṭabhūrbhūmim pārshṇibhyām pārshṇināthavā|

paryāyāt kuṭṭayedhyasmin paḍivāḍah kīrtitah||49

If the edges of the feet are struck on the ground and then the heels are struck together or alternately is Paḍivada.

c) **Rundha**

Rundhah syāt yugavat nṛtvā purah pādātālāgrayoh|

dushkaroyuh prayogah syātviralO hāsya sādhanāh||50

To slide the edges of both feet simultaneously is Rundha. This is difficult act. When performed occasionally, it evokes laughter.

d) **Siribhira**

svabhāvāt bhūsthayoramgryoh janghābhyām kampanam muhuh|

prasṛta syāmbaredikshu yadvā siribiromatah||51

Keeping the foot on the ground in their natural position, the shanks are shaken repeatedly. Alternatively one foot is raised, stretched and shaken in different directions. This is Siribhira.

e) **Kuluhula**

bhūślishṭāgratalasyāmghreh pārshṇyāghaṭṭayati kshitim|

Ekasya tādrūśasyaiva pārshṇinānyasyarecakam||

bāhyābhyantaratah syāścettatha khaluhulo matah||52

While the edge of one foot is on the ground, the heel is tapped. While the other foot is kept in the same position, the heel is moved outward and inward. This is Khuluhula.

f) Alagnapāta

*ūrdhvādah kshepakampābhyām vyomnighargharavādanam|
karamāccaraṇayoryatra sa matolagna pāṭakah||53*

Raising and bringing the legs down while making them tremble to produce the sound of ankle bells towards the sky is Alagnapata.

g) Siripiti

*Puratah prushṭhatah parśvadvayeca saraṇam yadā|
bhūmilagna talasyāmgreh bhavet siripiti tatha||54*

The sole moving forward, backward and to the sides while losing contact with the ground is Siripiti.

*pārśvagam ghaṭṭitam sūcīm angulīprushṭhagam vinā|
shaḍanyepādabhedah syuratra ghargharavādane||55*

When the ankle bells are sounded, of the ten movements of foot, all manifest except Parsvagam, Gattitam, Suchi and Anguliprushtam.

Vikatam:

*piśāca vānarādīnām veshaceshṭānukāratah|
vikṛtairānanoshṭhākshi kushidoścaraṇādibhih||56
vitālam vikṛtam nṛtam **hāsyakṛd** vikaṭam vidhuh|
kaischit vāgaḍamityuktam bhāṇḍikānām prasiddhitah||57*

The attire and gestures of spirits and monkeys are imitated through a disfigured face, lips, eyes, stomach, shoulders, legs, etc, in movements out of beat and weirdly altered dance. This is Vikatam. It is opined by a few that it follows the movements of the bird Bhandika, and so called it Vigadam.

Gītam:

*Suddhaih chāyālagairyadvā rāgai rālāpti samyutāh|
prabandhā yatragāyam te gītam tadabhidhīyate||58*

To sing the song from the classical texts in either the pure form or the lighter form along with variation in the elaboration of tune is Gitam.

Atah Prerani paddhati/ The Pattern of Prerani:

*samahastābhi dhe vādye samanantaram|
Śushkāvādyam bhavedyatyā rigavaṇyā padenaca||59
paisārā paranāmnnyāthatyopaśamanakhyaya|
praviśya prerānīrtyet tatah kaivāramālāpet||60*

After Samahasta is played, mnemonic patterns are played on the Rigavam, Pada, Paisāra and Anuyathi. Then the Prerani enters on Upasamana yathi and dances. There after Kaivaram is sung.

*cālayeccaraṇam tālarahitam ghargharaih tatah/
dviṭiyam tālamārbhya mārgadeśīgatairath||61
kr̥ttvānte vādanam tālairekayāntarayāpicha|
yojayetsakalātodyanādaih praharaṇaissaḥ||62
lagnapraharaṇepāṭambhramarīkaraṇanvitam/
vishamam tāṇḍavam nṛtyedvikaṭāḍgamataḥ param||63*

The foot, adorned with ankle bells must first be made to move out of beat. Then, beginning with the second rhythmic cycle (medium tempo), the classical and provincial patterns are played, culminating in praharanas spun with ēka and anthara kriyas. In Lagnaparaharana the Pata with Bharamarikarana is to be woven to the music of all instruments. Then a vigorous Tandava is performed with Comic Movements.

*sarāga mālaped yenjanah sarvonurajyate|
suḍasyādyamatogāyet prabandham vādayeccitam||64
muhurdhruvapade gīte tattulyām vādayedyatim|
vidhāya preraṇīṭhāyān samān dvitriḡuṇānapi||65
yatyante yojayettadvad ghargharīvādanānyapi|
ābhogam gāpayitvānte yatyā praharaṇenava||66
gajarevādyamānetaih nṛtyedvikaṭamuccakaih/
takāreṇa samam kuryācchaṇḍanam preraṇī punah||67*

Therefore, he must croon a tune to the joy of the audience followed by singing the first section of sūḍa, playing the same. While the Dhruva pada is being sung repeatedly, the yathi, or rhythmic pattern appropriate to it must be played. Prerani must perform the Thayas equally and in multiples of two or three, winding up the rhythmic pattern with sounds of ankle bells. Abhoga is rendered and in the closure while ghargharam is being played to the accompaniment of yathi or praharanam, comic and virulent dances are performed consecutively with the co-artistes. The Prerani must then do chandanam with Takaram.

*sūḍasthitadvitīyādi prabhandhānevamevachet|
prayunjīta tathapuktā budhaīh preraṇī paddhatih||68*

If the second and other sections of sūḍa are executed in the same manner, the wise say it is Prerani paddhati.

In the last chapter i.e, the eighth, he deals with the president, audience, qualities of main dancer and components of music and musical instruments. He finally concludes with a beautiful verse

Jayana mentions in the 5th chapter, last sloka 109, that he also authored a treatise on music entitled ‘Gītaratnāvalī’.

Sloka: *sā cāsmābhīh sphutam gītaratnāvalyām prapancitah||*

That has been explained by Jayana in his work Gitaratnavali.

In fact there are number of terms like, **sūḍa**, Charyaparabandha, Marjanam, Hudukka, Desi pataha, Karata, outukara used by the author in Nṛttaratnāvalī with the presumption that the meaning is known to the reader. It is to be understood that they have been defined in the Gitaratnavali and the definitions remain elusive.

Jayana explained all Desi art forms which were highly prevalent in those days. Coming to Perini, he explained about Perini Lakshanam, Perini Naipadhyam, and its five parts. In Perini quality the author Jayana elucidated about Perini performers will perform in single or double or in a group. And four, six or eight dancers have to wear the same dress and one by one they have to enter on the stage. As per Jayana it is a group dance and it is not a solo art form.

Conclusion:

According to Dr. V. Raghavan, Parsva deva is former to Jayana. He already knew the treatise Sangīta samaya sara of Parsva deva and also Raghavan assumed that, while writing the Dēśi Lāsyangas in Nṛttaratnavi treatise Jaya might have kept sangītasamayasara treatise in front of him.

The main constituent parts of a Pēriṇi dance are five, referred by all writers as Pancāngas. They are Nṛtta, Kaivara, Garghara, Vikāṭa and gīta. The same five, given by jaya, are also given by Parsvadeva, with only a minor difference in that the latter gives the fourth, vikata in its prākṛt form Vāgaḍa (Veḍayāṭa which is vikaṭa nartana, mentioned in Palkurki somanathas telugu poem). The definitions of these in these two texts are almost the same. The Sangitharatnakara makes a difference by omitting the opening anga of Nṛtta, as it is something which goes without saying, and makes up the five of the pancangas by splitting the single Vikāṭa of Nṛttaratnāvaḷi and sangītasamayasara into Vishama and Bhavasraya.

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