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ANGIKA ABHINAYA IN NATYASHASTRA AND SANGITA RATNAKARA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Ms. Dhvani Shah

Assistant Professor

Department of Dance

Faculty of Performing Arts

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Abstract: The Natyashastra is the first text that comes to one's mind when dance is talked about. It is a mammoth treatise that elaborately specifies all the elements of not just dance, but drama and music as well. The Sangita Ratnakara is used by musicians as it provides detailed information on music, its structure, and musical instruments. It however contains a chapter on Angika Abhinaya related to dance. Most of the information in this chapter has been taken with reference to the Natyashastra, however there are some differences that mark the changes in traditions over a period of nearly 11 centuries.

Index terms: Natyashastra, Sangita Ratnakara, Nrutyadhyay, Angas, Pratyangas, Upangas, Karanas, Angaharas, Rechakas, Vritti, Abhinaya Darpanam.

Content:

Natyashastra and Sangita Ratnakara:

The Natyashastra (NS) was written by Bharata Muni somewhere between 200BC-200AD. The treatise is also known as Pancham Veda, the fifth Veda according to ancient lore. It is said that Lord Shiva and other deities requested Lord Brahma for a pastime that was simultaneously visual as well as auditory, and could be enjoyed by all. Thus lord Brahma Created the fifth Veda, the Natya Veda. He took essence from all the four vedas-pathvam (recitals) From the Rigveda, gitam (Music) from the Samaveda, abhinaya (Histrionic and gestural representation) from the Yajurveda and rasa (Sentiments) from the Atharva Veda. He then instructed Bharata in this Veda, who taught it to his hundred sons with its proper practical application. For the performance of the feminine Kaishiki vritti, Brahma created apsaras. Thus the knowledge of the Natyashastra reached common masses through Bharata 's sons and the apsaras. The Natya Veda composed by Brahma contained 36000 verses. The abridged version composed by Adibharata contained 12000 verses. Now it contains around 6000 verses distributed over 36 chapters.

The Sangita Ratnakara (SR) has a more defined origin and was written much later. It was written by Sharangdeva in the 13th century AD. Sharangdeva was a member of King Simhana's (Yadava dynasty) court at Devagiri, Maharashtra. He was born in Kashmir and later migrated to Maharashtra due to Islamic invasions in the north.

The NS is a voluminous treatise providing detailed information about material mainly drama, along with discussion on dance and music. It contains a total of 36 chapters. Out of these, chapters 15,16,17,18,28,29,30,31,32 and 33 are based on poetry, music and Vachika Abhinaya in general. The remaining chapters deal with both drama and dance.

The SR is a text on music that is used by both Hindustani and Carnatic musicians. However it also contains important description of dance and drama. It contains 7 chapters (adhyays): Swargatadhyay, Raagvivekadhyay, Prakirnakadhyay, Prabandhadhyay, Taaladhyay, Vadyadhyay and Nrutyadhyay.

The author, Sharangdeva talks about dance and the nine rasas in the last chapter, Nrutyadhyay.

The first chapter, Swargatadhyay is further divided into 8 sub-units: Padarthasangraha, pindotpatti, Nadasthana- Shruti- Svara- Jati- Kuladevatarshitchhandorasa, Gramamurcchanakramattaana, Sadharana, Varnalankara, Jaatiprakarana and Gatiprakarana.

In Ragavivekadhyaya, the author discusses qualities of a Raga. SR classifies Ragas into Margi and Desi. It states that there are 6 varieties of Margi Ragas- Grama raga, Uparaga, Raga, Bhasha, Vibhasha and Antarabhasha. There are illustrations and notations of various ragas. The author however focuses on Deshi ragas and its 4 types- Raganga, Kriyanga, Bhashanga and Upanga. The time theory of Ragas is also elaborated.

Prakirnakadhyay discusses merits and disqualifications of the Vaggeykaras, merits and demerits of male and female singers, articulation and resonance in voice, Gamaka, Sthayi, Aalapti and Vrunda.

Prabandhadhyay focuses on Prabandha music, that was popular during the time of Sharangdeva. He describes nearly 260 types of Prabandhas with their variations. He discusses the 4 dhatus of a prabandha and its 6 elements. He also describes class of prabandhas.

In Taaladhyay, Sharangdeva categorises Tala into Margi and Deshi. He mentions 5 types of Margi talas. He also explains the units of time measurement like Laghu, Guru and Pluta. He explains the aspects of Tala like the Kala, Kriya etc. He enlists 120 varieties of Desi talas used for Prabandhas.

Vadyadhyay contains description of different classes of instruments- string, hollow, drum and metal. He tells the method of making them and playing them.

In Nrutyadhyay, Sharangdeva elaborated on Nritta, Natya and Nritya techniques in both the Margi and Deshi styles. He mainly follows the NS in describing different foot movements, but differences also exist. He also discusses Rasa and Bhava.

Comparative study of Angika Abhinaya in Natyashastra and Sangita Ratnakara:

In both SR and NS, Angika Abhinaya is of three types: Shakha (poses of the hands), Ankura and Suchi (interpretation of the meaning of the previous and upcoming passages respectively) and Nritta (product of the Karanas and Angaharas). Of these, the usage of ankura and suchi is now obsolete.

The Angas (major limbs) are 6 in number and the same in both the texts- head, hands, chest, sides, hips and feet. Pratyangas (connectors of Angas and Upangas) are also six in number: the neck, the arms, the belly, the thighs, and the shanks. The SR states that other authors include wrists, knees and ornaments worn on the limbs as Pratyangas. Upangas (minor limbs) include the eyes, the eyebrows, the eyelashes, the pupils, the cheeks, the nose, the lips, the teeth, the tongue, the chin, and the mouth in the head. Other Upangas are the heels, the ankles, the fingers of the hand, and the toes and the soles of the feet.

Shira: The NS contains 13 types of head movements, while the SR contains 14 types. SR also mentions that other authors include 5 more- Tiryanna tonnata, Skandhanata, Sama, Aratrika and Parshvabhimukha.

Akampita, Kampita, Dhuta, Vidhuta, Parivahita, Udvahita, Avadhuta, Anchita, Nihanchita, Paravritta, Ukshipta and Lolita are common head movements in both the texts. Adhogata is a movement in the NS and Adhuta is a movement in the SR which are not common.

Rasa Drishtis: Glances expressing Rasa are 8 in number- Kanta, Bhayanaka, Hasya, Karuna, Adbhuta, Raudra, Vira and Bibhatsa.

Sthayibhava Drishtis: Glances expressing Sthayi bhava (permanent state of mind) are also 8 in number- Snigdha, Hrshta, Dina, Krudhha, Dripta, Bhayanvita, Jugupsita and Vismita.

Sancharibhava Drishtis: Glances expressing transitory states are 20 in number- Shunya, Malina, Shranta, Lajjanvita, Glana, Shankita, Vishanna, Mukula, Kunchita, Abhitapta, Jihma, Lalita, Vitarkita, Ardhamukula, Vibhranta, Vipluta, Akekara, Vikoshta, Trasta and Madira.

Bhruhu: Eyebrow movements are of 7 types- Utkshepa, Patana, Bhrukuti, Chatura, Kunchita, Rechita and Sahaja.

Netrapalkam: Eyelid movements are of 9 types- Unmesha, Nimesha, Prasrita, Kunchita, Sama, Vivartita, Sphurita, Pihita and Vitalita.

Netraputli: Pupil movements are classified into two types- those which depend on themselves and those which depend on objects.

The first type contains 9 movements- bhramana, Valana, Patah, Chalana, Sampravesanam, Nivartanam, Samudvritah, Nishkramah and Prakritam.

The second types contains 8 movements- Samam, Sachi, Anuvritta, Alokita, Vilokita, Pralokita, Ullokita and Avalokita.

Kapola or Ganda: Cheek movements are of 6 kinds- Kshama, Phulla, Purna, Kampita, Kunchita and Sama.

Nasika: Nasal gestures are of 6 types- Nata, Manda, Vikrishta, Socchvasa, Vighurnita and Svabhavika. SR also talks about 9 types of breathing, according to Kohala, which isn't present in the Natyashastra- Svastha, Chala, Pravridha, Nirasta, Ullasita, Vimukta, Vismita, Skhalita, and Prasrita. Sharangdeva says that other scholars also talk about 10 kinds of breaths- Sama, Bhranta,

Vilina, Andolita, Kampita, Stambhita, Uchvasa, Nihshvasa, Sutkrta, and Sitkrta.

Adharam: Lip movements are of 6 kinds in the NS- Vivartana, Kampana, Visarga, Viniguhana, Sandashtaka and Samudga. The same movements are mentioned in SR, however Visarga is replaced by Vishrishta.

Danta: The NS contains 7 types of teeth movements, while the SR contains 8. Of these, Kuttana, Khandana, Chinna, Chukshita, Sama and Dashtha are common. In the NS, Lehana is the 7th type while in the SR, Nishkarshana and Grahana are mentioned.

Jihva: Tongue movements are not present in the NS. The SR lists 6 types: Rijvi, Srikanuga, Vakra, Unnata, Lolata and Lehini.

Joda: In the NS, the activities of the teeth decide movements of the Chin, thus chin movements are not given separately. The SR states that the positions of the chin are dictated by tongue, lips and teeth. There are 8 positions- Vyadirna, Svasita, Vakra, Samhata, Chalasamhata, Sphurita, Chalita, and Lola.

Mukha: The NS mentions 6 types of mouth gestures: Vidhuta, Vinivritta, Nirbhugna, Bhugana-Vyabhughana, Vivrita and Udvahi. The SR doesn't contain Nirbhugna, instead it treats Bhugna and Vyabhugna separately.

Hastas: There are 24 asamyuta, 13 samyuta hastas and 30 Nritta hastas in NS and SR. These are-

Asamyuta: Pataka, Tripataka, Kartarimukha, Ardachandra, Arala, Shukatunda, Mushti, Shikhara, Kapittha, Katakamukha, Suchimukha, Padmakosha, Sarpasirsha, Mrigashirsha, Kangula, Alapadma (Alapallava), Chatura, Bhramara, Hamsasya, Hamsapaksha, Sandamsa, Mukula, Urnanabha and Tamrachuda.

Samyuta: Anjali, Kapota, Karkata, Svastika, Katakavardhamana, Utsanga, Nishadha, Pushpaputa, Makara, Gajadanta, Dola, Avahittha and Vardhamana.

Nritta: Chaturasra, Udvritta, Talamukha, svastika, Viprakirna, Aralakhatakamukha, Aviddhavakta, Suchyasya, Rechita, Ardharechita, Uttanavanchita, Pallava, Nitamba, Keshabandha, Lata, Karihasta, Pakshavanchitaka, Pakshapradhyotaka, Garudapakshaka, Dandapaksha, Urdhvamandali, Parshvamandali, Uronandali, Urhparshvardhamandali, Mushtika Svastika, Nalinipadmakosha, Alapallava, Ulbana, Lalita and Valita.

Uras: Chest gestures are 5 in number in both the NS and SR, and their uses are provided. The movements are- Abhugna, Nirbhugna, Prakampita, Udvahita and Sama.

Parshva: 5 types of waist gestures and their uses are given in both the texts. They are- Nata, Unnata, Prasarita, Vivartita and Apashrita.

Kati: 5 positions of the hips are- Chinna, Nivritta, Rechita, Kampita and Udvahita.

Pada: There are 5 foot positions in NS, but a sixth one, Suchi is also mentioned along with the other 5 in SR. The 5 common positions are- Udghattita, Sama, Agratala Sanchara, Anchita and Kunchita

Skandha: Shoulder movements are not mentioned in the NS. But there are 5 types given in the SR- Ekoccha, Karnalagna, Ucchrita, Shrashta and Lolita.

Greeva: Neck movements are of 9 kinds in both the texts- Sama, Nata, Unnata, Tryasra, Rechita, Kunchita, Anchita, Velita and Nivritta.

Bahu: Arm movements are of 10 types- Tiryak, Urdhvasamstha, Adhomukha, Anchita, Apavidha, Mandalagati, Svastika, Prishthanusari, Udveshita and Prasarita.

Jathara: 3 kinds of belly movements are given- Kshama, Khalva and Purna.

Uru: Thigh movements are of 5 types- Kampana, Valana, Stambhana, Udvartana and Vivartana.

Jangha: Shanks are of 5 types- Avartita, Nata, Kshipta, Udvahita and Parivritta.

Janu: The NS does not contain knee movements which are of 7 types in the SR- Samhata, Kuncita, Unnata, Vivrita, Ardhakunchita, Nata and Sama.

Parshnih: The NS doesn't mention heel positions. The SR explains 8 positions- Utksipta, Patita, Utksipta-patita, Antargata, Bahirgata, Mithoyukta, Viyukta, and Angulisangata.

Gulpha: The NS doesn't contain description of ankle positions. The SR describes 5 types- Angusthasamslista, Antaryata, Bahirmukha, Mithoyukta and Viyukta.

Anguli, padanguli and Talavah: The NS doesn't contain description of finger, toe and sole positions. The SR describes 7 kinds for fingers and 5 kinds for toes. It describes 6 types of sole positions.

Fingers- Samyuta, Viyuta, Vakra, Valita, Patita, Kunchannmūla and Prasarita.

Toes- Adhahksipta, Utksipta, Kunchita, Prasarita, and Samlagna.

Soles- Patitagra, Uddhritagra, Bhumilagna, Uddhrita, Kunchanmadhya, and Tiraschina.

Mukha Raga: Facial colour reveals the state of the mind and the dominant rasa. The NS explains that the Abhinaya using limbs will not be effective without the proper facial colouring. There are 4 types mentioned in both NS and SR- Svabhavika, Prasanna, Rakta and Shyama.

Positions of the Hand:

The NS mentions only 3 positions of the hands- Uttana, Parshvaga and Adhomukha.

The SR mentions 15 such positions- Uttana, Adhastala, Parshvagata, Agratastala, Svasammukhatala, Urdhvamukha, Adhavadana, Paranmukha, Sammukha, Parshvatomukha, Urdhvaga, Adhogata, Parshvagata, Agraga, and Sammukhagata.

Hasta Karanas:

Both the texts give 4 Karanas of the hand- Aveshtita, Udveshtita, Vyavartita and Parivartita.

Hand movements for revealing Rasa and Bhava:

There are 19 such movements in NS- Utkarshana, Vikarshana, Vyakarshana, Parigraha, Nigraha, Ahvana, Todana, Samshlesa, Viyoga, Rakshana, Mokshana, Vikshepa, Dhunana, Visarga, Chedana, Bhedana, Sphotana, Motana and Tadana.

In the SR, 20 movements are given- Dhunana, Shlesa, Vishlesa, Kshepa, Rakshana, Mokshana, Parigraha, Nigraha, Utkrishta, Akrishta, Vikrishta, Tadana, Tolana, Cheda, Bheda, Sphotana, Motana, Visarjana, Ahvana and Tarjana.

Places for the hands:

They are not given in the NS. There are 14 places for the hands specified in SR- The two sides, in front, behind, above, below, the head, the forehead, the ear, the shoulders, the chest, the navel, above the hips, and the two thighs.

Nritta Karanas:

The Tandava Lakshanadhyay of NS lists all the 108 Karanas. Karanas are defined in the NS as the simultaneous movements of hands and feet while dancing. Two Karanas make one Matrika; 2,3 or 4 Matrikas make one Angahara. 3 Karanas make one Kalapaka; 4 make a Mandaka; and five make a Samghataka. These are replicated in the SR.

Utplutikaranas:

Utplutikaranas are not listed in the NS. SR lists 36 such Karanas.

Angaharas:

The NS contains 32 Angaharas. SR classifies the Angaharas into two categories- one with those having even number of time units and the other with those having odd number of time units, Each category containing 16 Angaharas. The SR states that since Angaharas are combinations of Jaranas, there can be infinite Angaharas; however only the important ones are considered.

Rechakas:

The NS contains 4 Rechakas which are replicated by the SR. These are- Pada Rechaka, Kati Rechaka, Hasta Rechaka and Kantha Rechaka. Rechaka is defined by the NS as the movement of a limb round separately or drawing up separately.

Chari:

As per the NS, Chari is the coordinated movements of the hands, feet, calves, thighs and hips. The Chari can be called a Vyayama (exercise) as the movements are governed by rules. It also states that the word Chari connotes a single foot movement; movements of two feet are called a Karana; combination of 3 or more Karanas is termed a Khanda and 3 or 4 khandas make a Mandala. The word Chari is derived from the root Char (to move) and the suffix 'i'. The SR follows the NS in classifying Charis into two categories- Bhaumi (earthly) chari and Akashiki (aerial) chari. Each of these contain 16 charis.

Sthana:

Sthana is a static posture that comes at the beginning and end of a Chari movement. The SR follows NS in explaining the 6 Sthanas for men- Vaishnava, Samapada, Vaishakha, Mandala, Alidha and Pratyalidha. The SR also mentions 23 Deshi Sthanas, that are not found in the NS.

There are 3 sthanas for women- Ayata, Avahittha and Ashvakranta. There are 4 more suggested by Bharata, as mentioned in SR, by the name Athapi cha- Gataagata, Valita, Motita, and Vinivartita.

The sitting postures, Upavishthasthanakas are 9 in number as per Bharata, according to the SR. These are- Svastha, Madalasa, Kranta, Vishkambhita, Utkata, Srastalasa, Janugata, Muktajanu, and Vimukta. Sama, Akunchita, Prasarita, Vivartita, Udvahita and Nata are the six reclining postures, Suptasthanas as per SR.

Vritti:

Both the texts list four kinds of styles or Vrittis- Bharati (verbal style), Sattvati (grand style), Kaishiki (graceful style) and Arabhati (energetic style). Accordingly to the NS, Bharati came from Rigveda, Sattvati from Yajurveda, Kaishiki from Samaveda and Arabhati from Atharvaveda.

Nyaya (Acceptable means) of wielding weapons:

The movement of the body to defend oneself from the enemy's weapons or to discharge one's own weapons on the opponent is called Nyaya. There are 4 ways of discharging weapons- Bharata, Sattvata, Varshaganya and Kaishika. These are employed with the help of Pravicharis, that are movements meant for discharging weapons.

Mandalas:

The NS and then the SR classify Mandalas into two categories- Akashaga mandala (aerial mandala) and Bhumiga mandala (earthly mandala). Each category contains 10 mandalas.

Rekha:

The SR defines Rekha as that position of the body, where the Angas harmoniously combine. This is called Saushtava in the NS.

Rasa:

The Rasa theory of Bharata as enunciated in the NS is seen in the SR as well. However Shanta Rasa is an addition to the Rasas. Its Sthayi Bhava is Nirveda (detachment). The 9 Rasas and their Sthayi bhavas are explained in detail. Sharangdeva gives 33 Vyabhichari bhavas and 8 Sattvika bhavas like in the NS.

The SR talks about certain topics that do not appear in the NS, but can be seen in other texts like the Abhinaya Darpanam. These are -Procedure for Practice, Person fit for Dancing, Dancer's Merits, Dancer's Disqualifications, Decoration of the Dancer, The Teacher, The Dance Troupe, Merits and Demerits of a Dance Troupe, Pure Style, Gaundali Vidhi, Peranin, Perani Paddhati, Acharya, Nata, Nartaka, Vaitalika, Charana, Kohlatika, Sabha Lakshanam, Sabhapati Lakshanam and Seating of the Assembly.

Meanwhile, certain topics in the NS do not occur in the SR- Gati, Pundibandha, procedure of Tandava, occasions appropriate and inappropriate for dancing, deities and colours of Rasas, hastaprachara and performance of Vyayama.

Conclusion:

Analysis of Angika Abhinaya of both Natyashastra and Sangita Ratnakara shows that both texts complied to the trends prevalent during the era in which they were written. SR includes more inputs from other authors as well, apart from those of the NS and the knowledge of the author of SR, Sharangdeva himself. However the NS deals with a larger variety of aspects of a dramatic performance and attends to the smallest of details. The Nrutyadhyay contains information mainly suited for dancers and is limited, as explained by Sharangdeva, to avoid making his text too long.

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