

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

The Nṛtya Vinoda of Mānasollāsa, the text of which has been presented with introduction, translation and notes in the preceding pages displays some interesting and noteworthy features on Indian dance. It is with the intention of drawing attention to them and to facilitate an easy appreciation of their significance that an interpretive summary of the Nṛtya Vinoda has been undertaken.

In the Nṛtya Vinoda, the first thing that attracts the attention is the methodical as well as logical approach in the unfolding of the subject. There is an orderliness and neat progression in the arrangement of topics, which will help to sustain uninterrepted interest to the reader. Secondly, the concise rendition makes it suitable for use as a handy reckoner to which the dancer can resort to, for a quick acquaintance with the techniques and rules of dance. Another striking feature is that in the Nṛtya Vinoda, prominence has been given to Sampradāya or laksya of dance which was prevalent in Karnāṭaka during 12th century A.D. Someśvara has shown no concern for restoring or preserving the elements such as the hundred and eight Karanas, the

Āṅghāras, Recakas and Mārgi Cāris and Sthānakas which were probably not intelligible to the people of his time, and therefore not practised. In this context it is worth mentioning that during the same period, in neighbouring Tamil Nāḍu, earnest attempts were being made to preserve the old tradition by even capturing the Karanas in temple gopurums, so that later generations could have a visual record. But, despite this display, none of the Karanas are found practised in the dance Śampradāya of this region. Only a few committed dancers have mastered them, and for the large number of other dancers only the matters contained in the Nṛtya Vinoda can be correlated with their existing practise. The portions relating to Āṅgika Abhinaya in this text can be found practised in the Bharata Nāṭyam style of today, which has extended beyond the frontiers of Karnāṭaka and Tamilnāḍu, whereas the portions relating to Deśi elements can be seen in the regional dances of Karnāṭaka like the Yaksagāna.

Soon after the Nṛtya Vinoda was written, it attained high esteem amongst scholars and writers on dance, as evidenced by the fact that Someśvara has been mentioned as a great authority on this subject in later works and also because these works have incorporated elements from the Nṛtya Vinoda. Specially Śārṅgadeva and Jāya Senāpati seem to have studied the Nṛtya Vinoda in depth and to have noted

its distinctive features, which they have included in their works as accretions to the subject of dance.

These features can be summed up as follows :

(i) The categorisation of Nartana - the terms Lāghava, Viṣama and Vikāṭa found in the Nr̥tya Vinoda in this context do not appear in earlier texts and these seem to have been regional styles of dancing, which were first included by Someśvara in the category of Nartana. The word lāga and vagada of Kannada language which frequently in Kannada works appear to be synonymous to Lāghava and Vikāṭa respectively. The Viṣama is known to be an integral feature of the Perani's dance. The description of Perani and his dance given by Śārṅgadeva and Jāya Senāpati indicate his Karnataka origin. The word Perani is itself a Kannada word.

(ii) A different classification of Aṅga, Upāṅga and Pratyāṅga :

This includes interchanging of limbs given by Bharata within these three categories. Besides this, additional limbs such as shoulders, wrists, knees, teeth and tongue have been included by Someśvara.

(iv) Additional movements :

Many extra movements or different nomenclatures have been indicated in the Nr̥tya Vinoda. They are in addition

to the movements given by Bharata. This is noticed in the case of belly movement called Riktapūrṇa, the lip movements namely Mukula, Kūṇita, Āyata, Recita and Vikāsi, the arm movements described as Sarala, Promnata, Nyañca, Kuñcita, Lalita, Lolita, Calita and Parāvṛtta and leg movements namely Ghatṭita, Ghatitosedha, Tādita, Mardita, Pārṣṇiga, Pārśvaga, and Agraga, as well as all the five toe movements.

(iv) Additional usages.

The practice of providing usages for glances based on transitory states can be traced to Nṛtya Vinoda. Then there are other usages given for various limbs, a study of which will enlarge the scope of presentation.

(v) Variations in the movements.

In the topic of hasta many variations are noticeable. This is most striking in the sphere of Nṛtta hastas.

(vi) Inclusion of the Deśī Material.

Deśī Sthānakas, Cāris and Karaṇas described in the Nṛtya Vinoda are an important contribution by Someśvara.

Based upon information gathered from extant texts, the Nṛtya Vinoda is the earliest work to which the above details can be first traced. It is quite possible that these additional matters may have been Someśvara's own ideas based

upon contemporary developments, or he may have culled them from an earlier source. Whatever may have inspired Someśvara to give these aspects, they are no doubt interesting and important features which have enriched the field of dance.

The other details given in the Nṛtya Vinoda need not be overlooked on the ground, that they are found in the Nāṭyaśāstra. Someśvara presents even these matters with few novel ideas and changes. For instance he describes simple variations of Muṣṭi and Karkatā hands, he affirms Abhinavagupta's version of Niṣadha, whereas he differs in opinion regarding Gajadanta, Utsaṅga and Vardhamāna.

Most of the material relating to Āṅgika Abhinaya in the Nṛtya Vinoda has the sanction of Nāṭyaśāstra and the rest of the material, as well as Deśi aspects have been acknowledged as authoritative by later writers. Certain lapses noticed in the text of the Nṛtya Vinoda can be filled in on the basis of works of later writers especially Śārṅgadeva, who has drawn extensively from the Nṛtya Vinoda. Therefore, the Nṛtya Vinoda can mainly be used as a supplement to Nāṭyaśāstra and Saṅgītaratnākara. Studying the Nṛtya Vinoda together with the Nāṭyaśāstra on one side and Saṅgītaratnākara on the other, gives a clear picture of the process of change that had taken place between the two monumental works. As such the primary value of the Nṛtya Vinoda lies in

its capacity of providing a link between two monumental and standard books, the Nāṭyaśāstra and Saṅgītaratnākara. Dancers will surely benefit from the Nṛtya Vinoda.

It will be befitting to end this discussion on Nṛtya Vinoda with the words of the author himself in the following verses.

केनचित्किञ्चिदभ्यस्तमीदृग्लक्षणत्वक्षितम् ॥
 पश्यैत्सभागतो भूयो नृत्यकौतुकहेतवे ।
 स्वयं वा नर्तनं कुर्याद्रसभावसमन्वितम् ॥
 सुरैश्वं विविधं रम्यं प्रेयसीदित्तरञ्जनम् ।