Chapter No. 3.

The Rāsa-Dance and It's Interpretations.

The important inroad by which art has entered the daily life of people is through the domain of folk music and folk dancing. In all cultures and civilizations of the world, human movement has worked as a vehicle of expression of joy and sorrow. The urge of outward expression through body movement has assumed many shapes and forms at different periods of history and in different parts of the world. These forms of human movement or dancing are different in content, theme and style. But they are similar in the spirit of spontaneity, magico-ritual significance, audience participation and so on. They cut down the economical and social barriers, bringing people of various communities and economic classes together.

The folk dances of different parts of the world have common links. Usually they portray the functions of daily life, rites and rituals, beliefs of performers in spirits and the like. There is total absence of self-consciousness and sophisticated stylisation in the folk forms. They are ever renewing, dynamic, at the same time keeping up with the tradition. There is recreation and repetition going hand in hand.
Every dance is and give ecstasy. Primitive man danced for every occasion. The goal was to acquire power, abundance, health, life. He found rhythmic expression in repetition of the same movement. The movement, the motor reflex of intense excitement and of increased activity is dance. Adopting a definite form, the emotions are released through such reflexes and activities. In this sense, dance as an art form may be purely formal, that is, devoid of symbolic meaning. The enjoyment of body movement along with the excitement released by dance movement gives the aesthetic effect. The more formal the dance, the stronger will be the purely aesthetic enjoyment, as against the emotional element. The formal dance serves an idea, a definite religious goal, without imitating in pantomime the events, forms and gestures of life and nature. But in many formal dances, it is difficult to detect the intention to represent anything. Many times in dance, gestures and movements are performed for fun or have symbolic meaning as part of a religious or social ceremony.

From very beginning the unorganized individual dance stood next to the group dance, which represented the organized reflex of a community. The oldest form of group dance is a circle. Even the chimpanzees and apes do it. The formation and development of the circular dance form coincided with the discovery of agriculture and that of the circular hut, during the millennia preceding the Christian era. The cycle
of agriculturist-seed, frutification, harvesting—is a circle. It later acquired spiritual significance but did not originate in a spiritual conception as chimpanzees possess it. Before all spiritualization was clearly felt need of traversing and molding space with body. The use of space changed in different ages according to culture it evolved through and changes in means of production. The primitive mind found rhythmic expression in repetition of the same movement. There was an effort to achieve quality through quantitative repetition which resulted in vitalist patterns.

The formal dance aims at ecstatic and is bound to no special form. But in most of the cases its movement is circular or it takes over the form of the mystic circling in which power jumps across from those on the outside to one inside or vice versa. The circle may be without a central point or may have a person or an object at the center whose power would radiate to those on the circle or vice versa. In circling the incorporating, giving and receiving power is achieved.

The circle or Mandala symbolises wholeness and is an outer visualization of cosmic energy. When drawn or created on earth, on walls, on paper, on cloth, in air, engraved on metal as a symbol of mysterious power, it was man's earliest attempt to communicate concentrated non-verbal meaning. It was born of primitive man's perception of the cosmos, the movements of sun, moon and the stars and changing of seasons
and processes of birth, death and existance which always continued. The imponderable that could only be explained or revealed non-verbally through geometry and the magical abstractions of mathematical form and through physical movements. The circle later on took a spiritual significance. It was not a result of development but rather of connection between an idea and its motor reflex. To encircle an object is to take it into possession, to incorporate it, to chain it, to banish it. The circular space expresses the mystery and innocence of the emptiness within the full. According to the magical conception of the universe held by primitive man, the circle constituted a sacred area inaccessible to evil spirits, whether it was carved by magician's staff in earth or delineated by stones or plants set all around. The circle implies a circular hallowed space with the Divinity or His direct representative erected in the very centre.

We read in the early christian Gnostic text, the Apocryphal Acts of St. John, that Jesus led the Apostles in a hymn to the Father; its extraordinary rhythm and hypnotic quality vibrate through the words of St. John:

"And we all circled round him and responded to him;
Amen.............
The twelth of the numbers paces the round loaf;
Amen.............
To each and all it is given to dance; Amen........."
That this was an circular movement, a progressive attainment of knowledge, is clear in the words of Jesus, who says: "Even the passion that I revealed to thee and the others in the round dance, I would have it called mystery".

The primeval urge for auspicious, for protection against the unseen and the malevolent had demanded from earliest times some tools, to guard against the unknown. The magical diagram of a circle, made operative by incantation and ritual gesture, which could creat, enclose, protect and destroy energy was the answer. The spatial tensions created by concentrating objects charged with magical powers, with in a clearly specified enclosed area are the Mandalas, the tools to guard against the unknown. The enclosed space is the womb, the vessel of energy from which life becomes manifest.

The universe and man's consiousness (the macrocosm and microcosm) consists in a continuum and a dynamic whole. Man actively incorporates the creative vibrations and orderly movements of the cosmos in the circular dance, as seen in the whirling of the planets or the dance of the atoms. His body becomes the universe, his movements its movements, and when these are harmonious, then he is not only in harmony with himself, but with the universe which he has become. The harmony is in the circular form, the movements of the body, the rhythm and the music.
As noted earlier the innermost essence of the dance is to carry the dancer with passion and exhilaration, even with intoxication into the state of ecstasy. The melodic and rhythmic accompaniment activates and enhances the process. The dance and the song remain very close as they spring from the same force, the impulse to motion. The singing and rhythmic accompaniment create a spiritual connection between the dance theme and the magic purpose of the movement. The words of such songs need not have any relation to the meaning or occasion of dance. As the formal dance does not express the meaning of the activity through mimetic gestures, the words could be any; the group join the leader in the refrain. The rhythm in the dance is dominated by the dance. Originally the time beater was the stamping of the foot. Then to produce different sound effects different parts of the body were struck. But in higher cultures the body was covered by clothing which did not carry the sound. And so the rhythm was provided by clapping, which is used by all cultures at all periods of history. The quality of sound could be distinguished between clapping the hollow hand and the flat hand. The stick dances which are intensifications of the rhythmical and to a certain extent skill element are the outgrowths of clapping hands. The beginnings of stick dances belong to the protoneolithic stage. The dancer holds one stick in each of his hands or only one stick and either strikes himself or the next person. Both sticks held by one person is the older form because of its greater diffusion and its attachment to lower cultures. Each holding one stick is the younger. Also this might give an
impression of fighting games which is a gross disillusion. The weapon—sword, spear, knife etc. is a substitute for the wooden stick when the latter is not at hand or when one looks for a stronger effect from it because it is of metal. It is very clear that the wooden stick and the sword may be interchanged at will. But they could also be part of the weapon games. It is not only a dance stylization of the battle, but it unites the two powers of furthering growth, the negative (defensive) and the positive (phallic). For man, the battle impulses and sex impulses are closely intertwined. The ecstasy of blood and of love flow together in life as well as in dance. So almost every fertility charm is at the same time a defence charm. A twofold analogy is apparent; first, if weapons and blows chase away hostile men, they will surely have the same effect upon hostile spirits; second, if noise puts fear into men, it will do the same to demons.

Apart from these sound producing rhythmic instruments of the formal dance there are others. More than producing sound, they have magic power in their shape, in the material which they are made of or the manner in which they are played. They add this power to the dance for the achievement of religious goals. e.g. Flute—more than any other instrument, the flute is the symbol of phallus and fertility. In this magic sense it is used to accompany countless dances in which the fertility idea is obvious. It is used especially in animal, harvest and love dances. The form of circular dancing by men, women and
both together acquired various meanings in different cultures and societies at different periods of history. The movements executed of crossing, going towards the centre or coming back, holding hands and arms and the like became parts of fertility rite, symbolising the movements of sun and moon and astral bodies and so on.

To leave the circumference for the centre is equivalent to moving from the exterior to the interior, from form to contemplation, from multiplicity to unity, from space to spacelessness, from time to timelessness. (Dictionary of symbols, J.E. Cirlot p. 39). The dances performed with linked arms symbolise cosmic matrimony, or the union of heaven and earth, the chain symbol], and in this way they facilitate the union of man and wife. The cyclical dance (seed-plant-fruit-seed) is executed by dancers, both men and women, participating in the invocation, hand in hand or arm in arm, in order to strengthen the activating forces of prayer made by each person individually. Every time we turn or circle, we are activating the inner energies and their cosmic counter parts. The fertility rites of the ecstatic formal dance strive rather after a mystic taking possession of one sex by the enclosing and circling of the other. An early example of this type is the Miolithic rock painting in the province of Lerida in eastern Spain. It shows nine dressed women dancing around a naked boy with a large but not ithyphallic membra. From this group of nine women we glance
across thousands of years to the ceremonial round dances of
the nine shepherd girls around Krishna and of the nine muses
around Apollo. (Curt Sachs, World history of dance p. 67).

"And ere it turned full circle, a new throng within
a second circle closed it round, And motion matched
with motion, song with song".

Dante, Paradiso XII 4-6.

Here is the splendid vision of Dante of the round dance of the
sun where we see the choreography of concentric circles. They
were created to solve a practical problem. With limited area or
space and more number of dancers, one had to have a number of
concentric circles so that everyone could join. When men
dance in the inner circles, women timidly join the outer
circles but in the reverse condition, when men enclosed the
women there is an idea of magic enclosure. Mixing of sexes in
the same circle in essentially a much later development.
Even here usually it is men on one side and women in the
other part of the circle.

In India the circular dance has existed from those times
whose evidences are not available. A pot-sherd found at Nāvda-
Toḷī (Maheswara) of circa 1600 B.C. has a painted group of
dancers. The girls are dancing with holding hands. A cave
painting from Bimbetka has a group dancing with interlocked
arms and a drummer. The Rgvedic references of women moving
around the sacrificial fire with pots also point to the
circular dance.
The early man worshipped earth as the life giving, tranquil, fragrant mother. The worship of Earth mother epitomised a complex rhythm of life, death and sacrifices. The Mantra, created the sensitive field, Mudra as energy generating gestures, action or ritual, as manifest in the sun and earth, trees and animals, evoked the act of protection and destruction and Mandala was the enclosed sacred space that held the surcharge energy and power. The mandala-s are magical circles created by the ritual act, when awakened and made operative by incantation and ritual gesture, could create, enclose, protect and destroy energy. The women and the craftsmen who created form, who performed the magical act, that transformed inert clay into numinous images, operated in this magico-religious domain. With singing songs, they moved around an earthen pot Kumbha or Ghaṭa, symbolising the womb, or golden corn sprouts planted in a pot of basket symbol of agricultural cycles, with holding hands, shoulders, clapping whirling and so on in the circle, for the nine nights of the bright half of moon or Navarāṭrā, sacred to the goddess.

Coming of the Aryans, the fair skin nomadic herdsman who worshipped the male sun divinities, made the man supreme. The mother goddess was worshipped by women in rites, rituals and Vratas, and was prominent in the pre-Aryan Indus Valley as seen from the terracotta figurines. The mother-goddess cult was assimilated to that of a pastoral god. The annual
The marriage of Tulsi-Vriṣṇī to Kṛṣṇa-nārāyana is one of the rituals showing the merger.

The earliest literary references associating the circular dance to the pastoral God Kṛṣṇa is the 'Balacarita' of poet Bāṣa. The Harivāmaṇa Purāṇa calls the same dance Rāsā. With spread of Jainism and Buddhism, their obsession with the annihilation of desire, Kāma became synonymous with the dark forces. But his presence and image could not be annihilated. Kāma fused with Kṛṣṇa. The arrows of Kāma transformed into the piercing sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. Kṛṣṇa emerged as ravishing God of romantic love, passion and ecstasy. The dance, the Rāsā, Kṛṣṇa shared with the gopīs is a simplest and greatest symbol. The simplicity makes it accessible to all, at the same time most difficult. In visual terms it is a circle, and nothing on its periphery anchors it to any fixed point, so it rotates freely. In narrative terms also it is simple. In the middle of the night, Kṛṣṇa plays the flute out in the woods calling the women of Braj. He calls them away from their homes and families, their loyalties and occupations. He pulls them away from the attachments that fix each in a particular social location and integrates them into a single dance of which he is the leader, the sole focus. None of the women has a position preferential to or distinguishable from that of any of the others. Kṛṣṇa multiply himself in such a way that each of the gopīs feels his presence as intimate and encompassing.
true circle, it is purposeless, it points nowhere but to itself, it produces nothing, it is a dance of pure pleasure; love and nothing else. In the great circle dance Kṛṣṇa's opponent is Kāma, the desire. Kṛṣṇa stands for love that is "prem," which is eternal and has most mystical relation to time. The poison of Kāma pollutes only by itself, but original liquid of love remains pure. It is called just that, liquid-Rasa- or the liquid of love - "prem rasa." But the word has manifold association - flavour, taste, aesthetic sensitivity, emotion itself - and at some point in the growth of tradition, it was supposed that the name of dance itself 'Rasa' is but a permutation of this more encompassing term. Grammatically this is possible. One word can be derived, from another by a process called 'increase' (Vṛddhi) and Rāsa (with a long a) is grammatically the 'increase' of Rasa, its concentrated form. In the Taittariya Upaniṣada Brahman is identified with Rasa i.e. sentiment, aesthetic experience. In the same text it is said Brahman is Ananda Thus Rasa, Ananda and Brahman are all synonyms and the Rasa is the Brahman itself. Kṛṣṇa is connected with every Rasa mentioned in Bhāgavata Purāṇa and all the Rasa-s have as their end S'ri Kṛṣṇa himself. The one which is created from Rasa-s is Rāṣa. Dr. Dasharath Oza, Hindi Nāṭak-Udhhava & Vikas, P.73).
Dr. Mankad believes that the origin of the word Rāsa is not from Rāsa but Rās, which means in course of dance performance, express the ecstasy in loud and joyous manner, a glad noisy celebration. (Types of Sanskrit drama P. 143) This may refer to the very primitive form of Rāsa dance when the proportion of music and artistic movements may not have been realistic and when it must have been practiced as a wild dance.

Dr. Oza, believes that the word Rāsa does not belong to Sanskrit but to Desī, which has been Sanskritised. The fact that words like Rāsa and Rasak are still used in regional languages and Rāsa being the associated with Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd community, leads him to believe so. The Desī art of Nāṭya, popularly known as Rāṣa, was recognised with the same in the theory of Sanskrit drama. (Hindi nāṭaka, Udbhava aur Vikas, P. 75-78) Some scholars believe that Rāsa is allegorical to Rāgilā, the dance of the sun, moon and stars and plannets. The Bhāgavata purāṇa supports the theory. (Bha. Pu. Chap. Sh.) The Jain text Rāyapasaṇeśa sutta describes thirty two types of dance-dramas. The tenth variety suggests circle formations and dance compositions to represent planets and supernatural beings. Kṛṣṇa and gopī-s enthralled by the autumn moon, imitated the rising and setting of the moon by crossing and forming concentric circles which, in the primitive, circular dances did represent the movements of the astral
bodies. In the Gujarātī literature of middle ages many poets have now and again referred to the circular dance for Rāsa and Garbha the cosmic dances. (Gagan mandal-nī gāgārdī guna garabā re, emā rame Bhavānī rāsa, gauh gūpa garabā re" - Bhāmakāsa, 17th cen. poet)

Rāsa also stands for the collection of five Vaiṣṇava rasa-s, dāsya, Sākhy, Vātsalya, mādhurya and Ṣaṇta, which are beautifully conveyed in the Rāsalīlā, as it illustrates a spiritual truth. The very first verse of Rāsa paṅcadhyāyi makes it clear that the Rāsa was possible through the Yogamāya of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (Bha.Pu. X29, V.1) Kṛṣṇa sported with those lovely women as an infant playing with his own shadow. (ibid X33, V.17) All gopī-s met in Kṛṣṇa and through him they discovered the mutual relations between themselves. Thus they illustrated the independant persuit of individual souls in search of God and their discovery that there is a fundamental relationship and fellowship between those various souls who try to meet and reach god through love. The presence of Kṛṣṇa between two gopī-s is symbolic of the relatedness of two devotees or human beings through god. His persence on both the sides of the gopī-s indicate that he provides constant protection to the devotees in the various situations of ānā life. The gopī-s as a group of devotees and Kṛṣṇa as their leader symbolise the ideal of primary society in which interpersonal relationship and intimacy of
of love and knowledge between the members would be possible with a common bond and value binding them together. The aesthetic circle in which Kṛṣṇa leads the gopī-s is the wheel of life, the eternal revolving of appearances. Everyone dancing separately in the circle, moving in the same direction is being in the same stream, the dancer has an individuality. The closer the contact between the dancers by holding hands, shoulders etc. the stronger is the social character of the group.

"The beloved is radiant like the sun. The lovers are turning around him like atoms. When the spring breeze of love begins to blow, every branch which is not dry, begins to dance".

- Jala-Ud-din-Rumi
13th Cen. poet from Konya in Anatolia.

One of the eleven paintings in the Illustrated Khamša of Amir Khusru in Dublin has the above mentioned couplet, showing the dancing Dervishes. The dance of the Dervishes is comparable to the Rāsa of Kṛṣṇa. The dance in the circle is supposed to integrate, in the rhythm of going round and round, the need for men and women to remain together and not get lost in the infinity of space. The merger of sufi and bhakti influences in medieaval period remind us that the world is but a play, a rather tender, exquisite and laughing play. In this play
Krsna, the Absolute himself takes part. The God becomes the rasika: the supreme taster of his own creation. He dances the magic Rāsa: the circular dance of life under a autumn moon, one god but multiple; a dancer to each partner who dances with him.

Episodes from Kṛṣṇa legend are endlessly enacted, recited, sung and danced in every available medium of cultural expression. He is omnipresent in the art, literature and culture of this country. Kṛṣṇa cult and familiarity with Kṛṣṇa legend have an all India spread, beyond the boundaries of any particular sect, caste or region.

The settling of Yādava-s and Abhira-s in Gujarāta gave prominence to the Rāsa varieties of circular dances which were definately existing as part of the Mother goddess worship earlier. The word 'Garbo' 'Garbī' were used for such dances by the regional poets from around 15th Cen. A.D. onwards, when the regional languages developed from Apabhṛṣṭa. The Jaina monks used the popular Sankrit terminology and referred to the circular dances as Rāsa. There were three main varieties of Rāsas, the Tāla-rāsa (clap-dance) the Danda rāsa (sticks or any other instrument like knife, flying whisk, lotus stems etc.) and the Lālī-rāsa (the intertwining of dancers or interlocking of hands etc. forming a creeper like formation) to be performed in circle. The joyous dance of men and women moving in circle with interlocked hands is Rāsa
according to Śrīdhara Swāmī (श्रीधर श्रवणे संयोगी अनि-ब्रह्माञ्जनिनी अज्ञात अज्ञात्रूपे भाषानुसार: रासो नाम)

- Streejivan, Oct. 46, K.M. Zaveri

The prerequisites of such dance are:

1. Songs and musical compositions.
2. Rhythm.
3. Individual and group movements in the circle creating various significant patterns which all could be put under the circular choreography.

More than words of the songs, it is the musical composition or dhāla or desī which is essential for a Rāsa (the word Rāsa will pertain to all its variations unless specified). At the end of the chapter I have listed a few popular dhala-s and their tunes in terms of classical notes. Not that the Rāsa-s are classical songs but the tunes can be written in a systematic notation. Also the same song could often be sung with slight variation of words in different manner in some other parts of the state. But many Rāsa songs do have a touch of certain classical rāga-s like Soratha, Kāfī, Khamāśa, Mahād, Pilu, Kalyāṇa, Sāraṅga etc. There is no force to compose music for a particular song and vice-versa. There is a natural phenomenon between the two. The tunes are simple and plain with a lilting and forceful quality, without much up and down, as they are to be sung by all and one while dancing. The
Dhruvpada or the repetative line is very attractive, expressing the main theme of the song and is usually sung by the group. It is indeed a unique experience to hear fifty women singing a Rāsa or Garbā with same pitch/style. Since last thirty to forty years, when these dances have been presented on the stage, various musical compositions have been employed to make them more melodious and attractive.

The tāla or rhythm in the Rāsa is not simply an embellishment but is the guiding principle, its very crux, as the Desā music is entirely governed by the tāla and laya (tempo) and not necessarily by the melody. The movements of the body govern the rhythmic patterns. There are two varieties of movements usually found in circular dances, (1) which is continuous, the same movement whether forward or backward, right or left is maintained (2) which comprises few steps, a few steps forward, then return to the starting point. In both these forms, contrasting impulses and creative powers are seen. In one there is restless movement onward, a rolling and flowing ahead which could be described as dynamic; in the other a 'static' swinging, which nullifies every movement and tension, as in all human activities and processess the harmonious, satisfying, restful norm. In the planters culture, which give evidence of their sense for a static and symmetrical arrangement, the multiples of two, 2 x 2, 2 x 3, 2 x 4 dominate both the rhythm of the steps and that of the music.
Apart from claps, sticks and at times cymbals, the rhythm in the Rāsa dances is provided by the percussion instruments like Dhol; Tabalā, Nāla, Zāpa, Māndal and so on. They are extensively utilized by different communities and ethnic groups with individuality. These are the Ghana Vadya or idiophones, and could be of different types like clashed types, struck type, cylindrical shaped drums, two headed drums and so on.

We have noted earlier that the wooden sticks are one of the elementary and earliest forms of musical instruments. The music is created by the use of sticks of sonorous timbre, which produce sounds of indefinite pitch, which accentuate and supplement the given rhythmic pattern in dance and music. Besides keeping the rhythm, the use of sticks in dance also has an ornamental function and is purposive in movement and choreography. These sticks are made of different types of wood, cane and bamboo. In present times, even hollow steel pipes are used as sticks. The sword is also a substitute for the stick. The wooden sticks are available in different sizes, but generally about 32 cms long and about 3-4 cms in diameter. They are plain, lacquer painted and lathe finished with different designs and colours. At times small bells, for fun are attached at the end to enhance the sound and visual effect. Some of the communities like Bhāndās in Saurāstra cover the whole Dāndiā with bead work. The Dāndiā-s in Gujarāta not only provide rhythmic accompaniment but are
The Jhanja or metal clappers are large size discs (about 25 cm diameter) of Bell metal, with graded central depression, frontally struck and held by independent cotton cords. Dhol is a cylindrical wooden drum, with hoops on either side and tightened with ropes. Iron rings are inserted in the braces for tuning the drum head. The right side is struck by a stick and left by the hand. Held with cotton string around the neck, it is extensively used for community dancing. The dholi, one who plays the dhol, is very much in demand during the festivals and dancing. He is popular amongst the women as well and there are popular folk tales like 'Vrajawani no dholi' where a hundred women committed sati for a dholi. The sound of his drumming is the unavoidable call to the women, like the flute of Krsna, and they eagerly run. In the Tarnetar fair, we and all the village women who wanted to dance, had to pay a token money first to the dholi. The Nala is a dhola shaped drum with long cylindrical frame, tapering on one side. The right head parchment, pasted with iron fitting, is mounted on the body and held by hoops at both ends and fastened by rope. The left hand drum head is also low pitched and is pasted from inside. The narrow drum head and method of holding the parchment gives the drum its bright and clear note. It is extensively used in urban community for Ras dancing. The Tabla which provides rhythmic accompaniment to the north Indian classical
music are now being used for the Rasa-s dancing in the cities and in some village communities. They are two drums, one large, one small, the parchment held by hoops and laced to the bodies. The drum heads are pegged in the centre with black Vaţ and are tuned by pulling the ropes. They are played by hand. The Pāvo or the double flute is one of the most popular types of flutes among the cattle grazers of rural India. The size and material differs from region to region. The Pāvo of Gujarāta is a whistle blown, vertically played double flute made of cylindrical tubes of wood of equal length, measuring about 25 cm each. The drone flute has one finger hole and the main flute has seven and one in the rare. It used to accompany the Rasa dancing in villages but now modern instruments are slowly taking its place.

In Gujarāta, the Rāsa, Rāsadā, Garbā, and Garbī have rhythms mainly of $3+3=6$, $2+3=5$, $3+4=7$, $4$, $4+8=8$, $4 \times 4 = 16$ divisions with Khaṇḍa, Miśra, Tiśra, Catuṣra jāti-s. Two and multiples of two, or three and its multiples are preferred in the group singing. The popular tala-s based on the number of beats are Hinch,$^{17}$ Khemto,$^{17}$ Maniāro,$^{17}$ Dādā,$^{19}$ khemto$^{17}$ Dipacandi. The first three could be called Desī-s or regional, used in Gujarāta only, the other two are Mārgi, used extensively in north Indian classical music. The most extensive and popularly used tāla is Hinch, which is also
a kind of swinging movement performed in Rāsa dances. Though Hinch has a set format, it is unknown outside Gujarāṭa and finds no mention in the classical texts of music. Hinch could have 3+3 composition, going close to Dādra and Ek-tāla of Tiṣṭra jāti anā or 4+4 like Ādi-tāla, Rāsātāla or Ekatālī of catusṭra jāti anā. Similar is the case of Khemto. Along with I have put variations of Hinch and Khemto, their relationship to other tala and how they are used in the Rāsa songs. One can surmise that Hinch, which is a swaying, swinging body movement has later entered the sphere of tāla or rhythm accompanying such movement. The turning point in dancing movement is emphasised by the rhythmic accompaniment of such a tāla. This is called 'loca' meaning the sway, the bend, the swing in the rhythm.

The musical composition of the song has to suit the rhythm and not vice-versa. This does not mean that each Rāsa or garbī could be sung in one particular way only and in one rhythm. The variations in singing are brought about by different ways of pronunciations of the words, the flow, the weightage, the rhythm and so on. That is how one particular song sounds different in two communities or regions, or even individuals. Same pada could be sung in Dādra, Tritāla or Dipacavidī. Similarly all songs sung in Hinch-tāla or Khemto are not Rāsa, garbā, garbī, Rāsadāsāg. Such changes brought about without having the knowledge of intonations of words, movements etc. are catastrophic and bring un-natural flavour. Another interesting tāla is Maniaro, of
beats, used by Mers, Jatasin Dandia and Talawār Rāsa-s. It has a slow motion, extremely difficult 'Theko' even for an expert percussanist. Compared to Garbā, the movements, in Rāse and Rāsā dancing are faster and forceful, so the musical and rhythmic compositions have to match.

Almost all the authors, M.R. Majmudar (Gujarātī Sāhitya mā Swarūpo, P. 518, 19, Gujarāta and its Art Heritage P. 105,106) Shanti Barfiwala (Rasakunja P. 1, 2, 3) and others have surmised that the Lāsya-dance of Pārvati, which came to Saurāstra through Uśā and Uttarā, was the predecessor of the Rāsa and Garbā varieties of dances. The traditions of Lāsya has been mentioned in Abhinaya-darpāṇa, Sarīgita-Patnākara of Saravīlgađeva, Sangītasārodhara of Sudhakalas'a and some others.

The Lāsya is a graceful style of dancing, which is totally classical. The movements of Lāsya are based on the Karana-s and Anghāra-s of the Nātyaśāstra tradition. Though the classical styles were popular, they were not learnt by one and all. Also they need specific training for at least five to seven years. How could the Rāsa dances, which are so spontaneous, which are performed by men and women on religious and festive occasions, which could be termed as 'folk or popular' be classical? One needs to explore the social and cultural changes in Gujarāta which have prompted the disappearance of the Lāsya here.
The actual dance part comprises individual body movements, its relation to the group and movement of the whole group which has been basicity in a circle. The individual movements would depend on the ethnic group of the dancer, his or her way of life and working conditions, the involvement in the dance, social patterns and so on. The group will have various choreographic patterns in circle signifying a magico-religious rite. The Rāsa dances being folk or popular dances, most of the classical treaties of dance refer to them in passing as we shall later see. There are no mentions of individual body movements of Rāsa but there are references of circular group compositions used in Rāsa by various authors. The Nātyaśāstra defines these Pīndībarīdha-s though not in the context of Rāsa dances. The word Pīndī literally means the cavity in the plinth of an idol into which the latter's lower portion fits snugly for stability. Pīndī-barīdha meant at first the concrete symbol which was created in the course of a deity's dance and there after it came to be associated with and to signify the Deity e.g. The form of Liṅga, to emphasise the unified masculine-feminine nature of the supreme God. Siva is formless and the Liṅga which is the nearest approach to the formlessness represents this masculine aspect, and the pedestal which receives this Liṅga represents the feminine aspect. The Pīndī may also mean the Ṭāṅka and Karana-s introduced in the dance to signify a particular deity. It also means the favourite Karana of a deity with which he is appeased. Thus the Pīndī-s were
intended to represent symbolically different deities, and this representation was done by presenting the pose of the vehicle (Vāhana) or the weapon (Astra) or banner-emblem (Dhvaja) of the deity.

The entry of women-dancers is taken up again after a few verses denoted to the setting of orchetra in the NS. Sl 286 ff. Chap.4) Here the women dancers are said to display the Pīndī-Bandha-s. Bhārata speaks of four varieties of Pīndīs. (NS. Chap.4, Sh. 287, 288, 289) The Pīndī is a formation by two dancers; Gulma or Srāṅkalika-chain is formed by three; Lataa, creeper, is by four, Bhediyaka obviously by marga. Abhinavagupta explains further that the combinations may be homogeneous or heterogeneous i.e. in the first, in the combination of two, the two dancers might form a pattern in which both of them hang like two lotuses from one stalk; this is homogeneous or Saṣṭiya. When one possess like swam and another hangs from her like a lotus stalk, the two are not in uniform pose and hence this is Viṣṭiya. Gulma is to be done in the slowest tempo, Srāṅkhalā in the slightly quickened pace; Lata in medium tempo; and Bhedyaka in the fast or fastest. (N.S. Chap.4, Sh 289-290).

A clearer description of these is given by Sāradātanaya when he says that, in Gulma the dancers come together, in Srāṅkhalā they join their hands together and dance in round with a chain, in Lata their bodies intertwine and in Bhedyaka,
one is steadfast while outside his or her figure, others dance in a group. (Bhavaprakasa, Chap 10 Sh.112-113) Jaya in Nṛttaratnāvali mentions the expert male dancers also participating in this. These are performed in Rāsak dances, which is also similarly mentioned by Bhoja in his Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa.

The Pindī-bandha are perhaps the most important group compositions given by Bharata. The first stands for a group dance (Gulma) where a close cluster would be made by the dancers. Śrīkhaṭṭa suggests a chain formation where the partners hold hands, in Latabandha the dancers put their arms around each other and in Bhedyaka the dancers break away from the group and perform individual movements. The tradition of Nātyasāstra of such group compositions has survived in the living traditions of Rāsa-dances in Gujarāta and such similar forms are all over India.
The Dictionary meanings of Rāsa.

Rāsa : (sā) हः (chātu) : to make noise, shout, scream, groan.

1. Pu. The front of a ship चिंतामणि हरिन.
2. Pu. A matramela chanda, in which end of each Casara has 22 matraas. The rhythmic beat comes at 1, 5, 9, 13, 17 and 21 matraas.

3. Pu. The head of different Nigro communities of Abyssinia.
4. Pu. The name of a Hindu festival celebrated in the month of Kartāk with music and dancing in honour of Krishna-Gopīs.
5. Pu. Khitāba
6. Pu. A heap of grains in the field with shells on;
7. Pu. A song which could be sung while dancing around in a circle; the dance while going in phudadī; to sing and dance with Dānthā in the circle.
Reśa Ramva - to dance.
8. Pu. A Varṇamāla Chanda similar to Tājī Chanda.
9. Pu. The handle of Jamālya (a kind of knife) with intricate gold and silver work.
11. Pu. The ceremony to adopt a child.
12. Pu. The location of adoption.
13. Pu. A group of animals.
15. Pu. Rāṣṭ - heap
16. Pu. A group or Mandal who sing the Rāṣa.
17. Pu. Noise, resonant sound.
18. Pu. Śāṅkhala, chain.
20. Similarity - used in the context of caste, and qualities, style etc.
22. Vi. Suitable, alright.
— Bhāṣavata Ānaṁḍala
The Dictionary meanings of Garba.

Garba 1. strī. A surname in Jata community.
   2. na. A person with that surname.
   3. vi. the surname of that name.

Garbā party. strī. The group of female Garbā singers.

Garbhi 1. strī. name of a Balanical plant used for medicinal purpose.
   2. strī. A metal c. e. square disc (ढग) made for the mother goddess to be used in Navarātari.
   3. strī. Desī. A poda of Mothegode to be sung in Navarātari with melody.
   4. strī. A style of melody popular amongst the women.

Garbhi Bhat. 1. pu. A Garbhi singer, Brahmien singing in a female voice.
   2. pu. A Brahmien writing Abhali poems for livelihood.

Garbo 1. (29. Garbhadāp)
   Pu. A metal perforated metal earthen pot with a lamp inside. It is put in the house during Navarātari for Devi Prasādana.
   2. Pu. To sing, along with clapping while going around a Diva or Mandavat (canopy).
   3. Pu. The longer Garbo is a shifting melody - kālsa.

Shāh, Indra. Commentary.
REFERENCES

1. The 'Crane' dance vase (Cretan) from about 560 B.C. by Citias and Argotimos.
2. Cave painting at Bimbetka. "A group of dancers and a drummer."
3. "Iboid"
5. A few popular Rasa-Garba tunes or Dhūlās as sung by the people.

A bha jā jā bāgi ātā hai, pūrvārā bārāvā bāti jāātā fir.
B hā ma phālā nārābā hērā nāni bātī hā bātā hērā.
C hā rājāsā tōā. kabārā tēērā gōsā bātā hērā jāātā bātā hērā.
D bē hērā bārāvā bāti jāātā bātā.
E bē hērā bārāvā bāti jāātā bātā.
(2) Tāla - Khemto.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{AI } & \text{AI } & \text{AI } & \text{AI } \\
\hline
\text{27} & \text{27} & \text{27} & \text{27} \\
\text{8} & \text{8} & \text{8} & \text{8} \\
\text{3} & \text{3} & \text{3} & \text{3} \\
\end{array}
\]

(3) Uśabho or Hamer.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{AI } & \text{AI } & \text{AI } & \text{AI } \\
\hline
\text{27} & \text{27} & \text{27} & \text{27} \\
\text{8} & \text{8} & \text{8} & \text{8} \\
\text{3} & \text{3} & \text{3} & \text{3} \\
\end{array}
\]

(6) शेषगहेनस्तरत्: श्रीवत्सा द्वितीय अख्यातात्मकर्मोऽकारितम्

- Sangīṭa Ratnākara, Chap. 7, Śloka 5 to 8

- Abhinavagupta, Sloka 5, 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>शेषगहेनस्तरत्</th>
<th>श्रीवत्सा द्वितीय अख्यातात्मकर्मोऽकारितम्</th>
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- Rasakaumudi, Chap. 6. Nyāyaśāstra

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<th>शेषगहेनस्तरत्</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Sangīṭa Sudhākara of Haripāda.
7. The Variations of Hinca Tala.

According to musicologist Barve [Pataunka 1937]

The relation between Dada and Hinca.
The central circle

Dādra

Dhā Dhīn nā
Dhā Tin nā

The middle circle with little variation has the same Dādra

Dhā Dhīn nāk
Dhā Tin nāk

The outer circle showing Hinca is

Dhīn Nāk Dhā
Tīn nāk Dhā

According to well-known tabla player Parasara Desai, the popular Hindu tāla employed in folk music and Rāsa, Gāṅgā etc. is

3) Dhīn nā Dhi na ka
Tīn nā Tī na ka

X 0 0 0 0

[Partial note: "P. 12"]

4) According to Bhimārao Sastri and Yashwantrao Parshet, usually what is known as Hinca is Khemto. Tāla Hinca (Khemto)

Dhī, Ng, Dhinaka, Tīd, Ng, Tīnaka

5) The open or 'Khulla bol' of Khemto is considered Hinca in Gujaraṭa. [Dhodhagariga

Arnavari system]

Dhī, Tīnā, Tīnā, Tīnā, Tīnā

X 0

[Partial note: "Matra 6, 2 khanda, Sam - Ḍhī"]
6. 'Sangita Vidyasara' of Dr. Bhimabhai has Hina as a separate tala. [P.97]

Tala - Hina, mātra 6, Tisra Jati.

A

Dhin Dhi Dha Tiṃ Dhi Dha

B

Dhin Dhāge gin | Tin Tak Kin

Tala - Khemto, mātra 6, Tisra Jati. [Dugun of Hina]

Dhāg Dinā Dinā Tak Tin Tin

7. 'Koornam ni Rāta' of Jagdishandra Vimm.

Hina mātra - 6.

Dhi - nna | Dhī na ka | Ti - nna | Ti naka

8.

Hīna, mātra 6, 2, khaṇḍa, Tāli-klāli.

Dhā Dhi nna k | Ta Ti nna k.

9. Hīna in Tisra-Jati \( \frac{3}{3}  \times \frac{2}{2} = 6 \)

A

Dhin - Nākādā Tiṃ Tāke Tīrückī

B

Dhīna Dhāge Ṛge Tiṃ Dhāge Ṛge.
Catusra. Tāti aṅga $\frac{4}{4} \times \frac{4}{2} = 8$

\[
\begin{array}{l}
A. \quad \text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Dhāge} \quad \text{Tīkīt} \quad \text{Tīn} \quad \text{Tāti} \quad \text{Tīn}\text{īkīt} \\
B. \quad \text{Dhāge} \quad \text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Gīnā} \quad \text{Tīkīt} \quad \text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Dhāge} \quad \text{Vudhā} \quad \text{Tīkīt}
\end{array}
\]

10. According to Vikeam Patil, an up-coming percussionist the Hinca either could hack Tīsāa or Catusra aṅga.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{A.} \quad \frac{\text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Ta}}{\text{Tītā}} \quad \frac{\text{Kītā}}{\text{Tītā}} \\
\text{B.} \quad \frac{\text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Ta} \quad \text{Tītā}}{\text{Tītā}} \quad \frac{\text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Ta} \quad \text{Tītā}}{\text{Tītā}} \quad \frac{\text{Dhīn} \quad \text{Ta} \quad \text{Tītā}}{\text{Tītā}} \quad \frac{\text{Kītā} \quad \text{Tītā}}{\text{Tītā}}
\end{array}
\]

eg.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{A.} \quad \text{Vatī} \quad \text{Nīva} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Jīva} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Nīva} \quad \text{Vatī} \\
\text{B.} \quad \text{Vatī} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Vatī} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Dīva} \quad \text{Nīva} \quad \text{Nīva}
\end{array}
\]
The same rhythm when played in the very slow (Ati VILamkita) becomes the Maniaro Tala, which is often used in Rasa-s.

Hinta with 16th variation.

\[
\text{Dhin Ta Tita} \quad \text{kad ta Tita}
\]

E.g.

\[
\text{धाँधा धाँधा तिन} \quad \text{तां धाँधा तिन}
\]

\[
\text{धाँधा धाँधा तिन} \quad \text{धाँधा तिन ना}
\]

\[
\text{धाँधा तिन ना} \quad \text{धाँधा तिन ना}
\]

\[
\text{धाँधा तिन ना} \quad \text{धाँधा तिन ना}
\]

\[
\text{धाँधा तिन ना} \quad \text{धाँधा तिन ना}
\]
Maniava region. as played by the Mer-s of Parbandar

\[
\begin{align*}
1 & \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \\
1 & \quad 2
\end{align*}
\]

or

\[
\begin{align*}
1 & \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5 \\
1 & \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5
\end{align*}
\]

which could also be written as

Takit Takit Takit Tak, Tak, Tak, Takit

e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{HIN} & \quad \text{Dh. U. I. } \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad - \quad \text{U. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \\
\text{Har} & \quad \text{P. I.} \quad \text{I. D.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{Dh. I.} \quad \text{H. A.}
\end{align*}
\]