Music or Samāta remains incomplete if it is not wedded to dance. Dance adds beauty and grace to music. Indian dance involves three elements, viz., nṛtta, nṛtya and nātya. The nṛtta indicates the rhythmic movement of body for its own sake.

But it does not express bhāva, i.e., state by means of abhinaya. The nṛtya suggests rasas (sentiments) and bhāva (states). The nātya or nātaka suggests some traditional story context itself.

No dance is said to be completed without having these three elements. This shows that the dance has a certain theme and purpose which it tries to reveal through movements and expressions. Mere movements of the body have no significance, however rhythmic and balanced poses may be. Like the musical notes the movements themselves become potential and dynamic to express the theme of the dance. But yet music forms an important

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1. "Abhinayadarpana, S.N. 15
   S. Sharma: The Aesthetics of Indian Music and Dance (Readings on Music and Dance), p. 34
2. Ibid., S.N. 15
element in the dance. The purport of the theme is provided by the word-body of the song to which the dance corresponds."

Dance in general is evolved out of a religious urge. The very spirit of the ojapali dance is religion. Dance performed by the ojapali is certainly a ritualistic dance.

Dances of the ojapali music in general are always accompanied by song, but are performed to the rhythms of the cymbals or the cymbals and the drums. Dances attached to the ojapali music express both the situation and the emotion as well as the state (bhāva). The essence of the biyāh-gowa-ojapali dance is confined to the movement, the beat of the cymbals and the pervading and persistent rhythm of the ojā's anklets. In a sense, dances are the visual expression of the songs that are sung by both the ojā and the pāli. The ojapali dance is exclusively a ballet form.

According to the tradition, the biyāh-gowa-ojapali performs five kinds of dances. These are known as pak and ghūrana both among the active bearers as well as the masses. The following are the dances or paks or ghūranas current in the tradition of biyāh-gowa ojapali music viz. (i) mayura nāc, i.e. peacock-dance; (ii) hamsini-nāc i.e. goose-dance, (iii) dhupuni-nāc i.e. wagtail-dance; (iv) natuwa-nāc i.e. actor's dance and (v) pārova-ghūrani nāc, i.e. pigeon's turning dance.

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3. S. Sharma, op. cit., p. 34
4. M. Sastri, op. cit., p. 83
N. C. Sarma: Tradition and Innovation of Vyāsa's Sangita of Assam, pp. 12-13
Vyāsa Sangita Parampara, p. 38
Informants: Sri Mareswar Barua Barua, Dipila, data collected on 18.9.81
Sri Durgeswar Nath Oja, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.84
The sattrīya ojāpālis of the Saṅkaradeva school and the Damodaradeva school perform dances in accordance with the bhāvas, i.e., states of the theme that they are sung. As for example if they sing the theme of kāliya–damana, the ojā shows dance-movements of Lord Kṛṣṇa or kāliya nāga and the pālis follow him. The term pāk i.e. turning movement is also current amongst the sattrīya ojāpāli, e.g. oakovā pāk i.e. oakravāka's turning.

The suknāni ojāpāli of Darrang also performs some dance movement along with the singing. Dances performed by the suknāni ojāpāli are also known as ghūran(movement) among the ojāpālis. The names of a few dances that are danced by the ojāpāli in the midst of singing are given below:

(i) mayūra or mairā nācan, i.e., peacock-dance;
(ii)pārowā ghūran, i.e. pigeon's turning dance
(iii)rūpālī-nācan; (iv) kharkā or kanniya nācan;
(v) beng nāc, i.e. frog's dance; (vi) lechari-nāc;
(vii) ughā-ghūran, i.e. reel's dance; and (viii) kākal nāc (waist's dance).

5. M. Neog: Tradition and style, p.22
6. Informant: Sri Lalit Chandra Nath oja, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
Dances of the sukhani ojapali of Kamrup are more or less akin to the dances of the sukhani ojapali of Darrang district. The mare-gan-gowa ojapali of Goalpara performs the following dances in connection with their act of singing, viz.

(i) digala nācan, i.e. dance performs in length-wise;
(ii) pathāli nācan, i.e. dance performs in horizontal form;
(iii) dui pāika nācan, i.e. dance having two turns;
(iv) sakai beranī nācan i.e. dance that obstructs by a bamboo laid across a stream to cross-over;
(v) dali bhāngā nāc, (vi) oja bulani nāc, i.e. oja's moving dance; (vii) sagun nācan; i.e. vulture-dance; (viii) neul nācan; i.e., mongoose's dance; (ix) ghurani nācan, i.e. dance of turning; (x) calani-sarakā-nācan; (xi) jākāi māra nācan (xii) thela nācan etc. 7

The bisharīr-gan-gowa-ojapali does not perform any dance movement since this form of ojapali performs exclusively in a sitting position.

B. Gati(gait) used by the ojapali

The existence of gati (feet movement) cannot be ruled out from the ojapali institution as a whole. It is also correct that gati is known as bulan (feet movement) or bulani or calana

(feet movement) and khoja (feet movement) as well. The movements of the feet are known as bulan. Sometimes gati is called gamana. Sukavi Narayana deva uses the term gamana instead of 'gati', viz.

\[\text{mairar gamane kalare he - e- e - e}\]
\[\text{yay a-r-e yaya - yaya} /\]
\[\text{Yasodara kole chawala yadurai} //^{10}\]

Kāla (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) moves and moves in the manner of the peacock, Yadurāi (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) is in Yasodā's lap.

The Abhinayadarpaṇa enumerates four varieties of gati, e.g. (i) mandala, i.e. standing posture, (ii) utplavana, i.e., leaping movement or jumping, (iii) bhramarī, i.e., flight movement; and (iv) padacāri or cāri i.e. gait, According to the Natya-Śāstra mandalas are twenty in number and are divided into two classes: (i) earthly (bhāuma) and (ii) heavenly (ākāsika). On the other hand, the Abhinayadarpaṇa enumerates

9. M. Neog, op.cit., p. 22
10. Padma-purāṇa MS
only ten of them and does not classify them at all. The ten kinds of mandala mentioned by the Abhinayadarpana are (i) sthānaka, (ii) ayata, (iii) alidha, (iv) pratyāliḍha, (v) preṇkhana (vi) prerita, (vii) svastika, (viii) moṭita, (ix) samasūci and (x) pārśvasūci. 12

Utplavana, i.e., different types of leaps are of five kinds, viz., (i) alaga, (ii) kartarı, (iii) sva, (iv) moṭita and (v) kṛpaḷaga. 13 Bhramari i.e. various flights are seven kinds. These are (i) utpluta, (ii) oṣaka, (iii) garuda, (iv) ekapāda, (v) kuṇoita, (vi) aksa and (vii) aṅga. 14 Cāris, i.e., movements of single foot, according to the Nāṭya-sastra, are thirty-two only. Of the thirty two, sixteen are bhaumi cāris and the remaining sixteen are aksāiki cāris. 15 The Abhinayadarpana enumerates only eight kinds of cāris, viz., (i) calaṇa, (ii) caṅkramaṇa, (iii) saraṇa, (iv) vegini (v) kuṭtana, (vi) luṭhita (vii) lolita and (viii) Visama. 16

The term cāri is not current amongst the active bearers of the biyah-gowā ojāpāli or amongst the connoisseurs of the art.

11. M. Ghosh (ed) : Abhinayadarpana, Intro., p. 29
12. Ibid., slokas, 260-61
13. Ibid., slokas, 262-83
14. Ibid., slokas, 289-91
15. M. Ghosh (ed) Nāṭya-sastra, XI.2, 7-12
16. (ed) Abhinayadarpana, slokas, 298-300
form. The popular term that is used instead of the term cari is calana.  

Oalana is defined by the Abhinayadarpana as 

svasthānāt svasya pādasya calanacalanaṁ bhavet,  

"advancing a foot from its natural place will be calana, i.e. walking."  

So, the term calana of the Abhinayadarpana and that current in the tradition of biyah-gowa-ojāpāli art form are similar and they suggest the same connotation as well as the same function.

Characteristics of the classical dances, such as mandala, utplavana, bhramari and cari mentioned by the Nātya-sastra and the Abhinayadarpana are found more or less in the ojāpāli art form, particularly in the biyah-gowa variety and sattriya form as well as the sukraṇi ojāpāli of Darrang.

The Abhinayadarpana enumerates ten kinds of gatis, viz.

(i) hamsini (goose-step), mayūri (peacock step), (iii) mṛgā (deer-step), (iv) gajalī (elephant-step), (v) turangini (horse-step), (vi) simhī (lion-step), (vii) bhujā (snake-step)

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17. N.C.Sarma : Vyasa Sangītār Pampārā, p. 28
18. M. Ghosh ed, op. cit., ślokās, 301
(viii) manduki (frog-step), (ix) vīrā (heroic-step) and (x) manavi (human-step). 21

Of the ten gatis mentioned above the following are still to be found in currency in the biyah-gowa ojāpāli art form:

(1) baṃsini, i.e. goose step, (ii) māra (mayūra), i.e. peacock-step, (iii) mrga (mrgi), i.e. deer-step, (iv) gaja (gajalīla), i.e. elephant-step; (v) sarpīl (bhujangini) i.e. snake-step.

The sukānā ojāpāli prevalent in the district of Darrang uses the following gatis which have similarities with the gatis mentioned in the Abhinayadarpana viz., (i) māra-bulan (mayūrī); (ii) hātī bulan (gajalīla); (iii) ghorābulan (turangini); (iv) bèng bulan (manduki) and (v) dhupani bulan ( ? ) 22

C. Asana used by ojāpāli:

Asana or drsti (glance) according to the Natya-sastra are of thirty-six kinds. The function of these glances is to express both rasa (sentiment) and sthānyābhava (dominant state) as well as asthānyābhava (transitory state). The glances expressing the rasas are kānta, bhayanaka, hāsya, karuṇā, adbhuta, raudra, vīra and bibhatsa. The glances to be used in the sthānyābhavas are snigdha, hrata dīna, kruddha, drpta, bhavanvita, jucupsita and vismita. The glances to be used in the asthānyābhavas are sunya, malaṇa, śranta, lajjānvita and so on. 23

22. Informant: Sri Lalit Chandra Nath Ojā, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
darpana enumerates eight kinds of drsti, such as, sama, alokita, saci, pralokita, nimilita, ullokita, anuvratta and avolokita. Some active bearers of the biya-gowa art form are of opinions that they use different asanas or glances to express the different rasas such as srngara, vīra, raudra, karuna, hāsyā and so on. Secondly, they assert that the glances have close connection with the calana or gati. Of the glances used by the ojāpāli art form the following are worthmentioning:

(i) neula cāvan, i.e. mongoose-glance; (ii) bagulā-čāvan, i.e., paddy bird glance; (iii) madan-cākhu, i.e. cupid's eye and (iv) gbītā-cākhu (?) According to M. Neog these glances are simple but significant names, but have no correspondence in Natya works.

Mudrā used by ojāpāli:

Mudrā, i.e., hand-pose or gesticulation of hand is one of the important elements of Indian music. Mudrās are necessary to express the ideas of the dancers. The tradition of the uses of mudrās goes back to the beginning of the classical period (600-500 B.C.) Gestures in general and hands in particular

25. Informants: (a) Acarya Manoranjan Saistri, Gauhati data collected on 9.12.83
   (ii) Sri Nareswar Sarma Barua, Dipila, data collected on 18.9.81
   (iii) Durgeswar Nath Oja, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
26. M. Neog: Sankaradeva and His Times, p.293
are necessary to achieve the perfection of the angika-abhinaya. Further more, these can be studied from the sociological point of view. Observes M. Ghosh: "Gestures are first met with in the languages of primitive people. It is sure that they played an important role in the evolution of human speech. A gesture is used by mutes and even by others when they meet persons speaking a language unintelligible to them. And often it so happens that some ideas cannot be adequately expressed or explained without some gesticulation accompanying words spoken. This clearly shows the power of suggestion that is inherent in gesture. It is no wonder, therefore, that they were combined with dance - the first born among the arts of mankind and have been endowed with rhythm to call forth rasa in persons witnessing dance." 

The Nāṭya-sastra enumerates sixty seven gestures of the hand both asamvuta hasta (single hands) and samvuta-hasta (combined hands), as well as nṛtta-hasta (dance-hands)\textsuperscript{29}. The Abhinaya-darpana mentions fifty-one hand-gestures including asamvuta and samvuta as well as nṛtta-hastas.\textsuperscript{30} The Kālika-purāṇa enumerates hundred and eight kinds of mudrās.\textsuperscript{31} M. Neog thinks

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} M. Ghosh (ed): Abhinayadarpana, Intro. pp. 24-25
\item \textsuperscript{29} M. Ghosh (ed): Nāṭya-sastra, Intro. pp. 24-25
\item \textsuperscript{30} Abhinayadarpana, S.N. 87-203
\item \textsuperscript{31} Kālika-purāṇa: LXVI/32
\end{itemize}
that the mudras of biyah-gowa o japali may have been derived from some tantric text like the Kalika-purana. But M. Ghosh bears different views in this respect. Writes M. Ghosh: "The ritualistic use of gestures known as mudras is an instance of it. Sadhakas (devotees) of the Tantrik school use them. According to some they are meant to emphasize and intensify their thought and thus giving them the bliss (mud) of meditation. But gestures used in abhinaya and nrttya differ from mudra."

From the above conflicting interpretations we may come to the conclusion that the mudras used by ojapali have not been derived from any tantric school, but may derive from some other sources like the Natyasastra or Nandikesvara's Abhinayadarpana. The ojas or the palis of both the biyah-gowa and the suknani varieties do not know wherefrom they derive the mudras, but are using them traditionally. According to some active bearers of the biyah-gowa-ojapali and suknani-ojapali of Darrang the mudras used by them may come from works like the Natyasastra and the Abhinayadarpana or from the Sri hastamuktavali.

34. N.C.Sarma: Tradition and Innovation of Vyasa sangita of Assam, p.12
35. Informants: (i) Sri Bhadra Kanta Sarma,Baladevapara,Darrang data collected on 13.5.84 (ii) Sri Nareswar Sarma Barua,Dipila,data collected on 18.9.81 (iii) Sri Durgeswar Nath Oja,Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
That the biyah-gowa-ojapali circle gives emphasis on the learning of the mudra may be assumed from the Assamese rendering of the Srihastamuktavali (Sanskrit) of Subhankara Kavi by an oja of the biyah-gowa from the western part of the state of Assam. Writes M. Neog: "The Sattradhihara of the Auniati-sattra tells me that Sucanda was not possibly an oja of his or, for that matter, any other sattra, but a vyah-gowa oja of the western part of the state of Assam. A tradition in the Kamalabari-sattra believes that the oja lived in the cloisters of that sattra within living memory." 36

The mudra is known as mudura or mocana particularly amongst the active bearers of both the biyah-gowa and the sukhmani forms of ojapali of Darrang and Kamrup. The word mudra/mudra by svarbhakti (anaptyxis). The term mocana does not come from English 'motion' but comes from early Assamese and Bengali verbroot mocara, meaning pāk, i.e. twist or turn.

The sattriya ojapali of Sankaradeva school uses the Assamese word hat (= hasta) as a synonym of mudra. Though the use of the term mudra is not found in the sattras of the Sankaradeva school, it is still to be found in the sattras of the Dāmodaradeva school.

Although the active bearers of the ojāpāli particularly the biyah-gova and the satātrīya forms as well as suknāni of Darrang do not know the names in detail of the mudrās used by them nevertheless they learn the mudrās traditionally and in the same manner, display the mudrās traditionally.37

The ojas of both the biyah-gova as well as the suknāni ojāpāli art forms have continued to display the following mudrās: dhvaja, hamsini, musthī, ardha candra sikhara, bhramari puṣpa, mrgamukha (mrugasira?) simha mukha, triśula, amkuśa, mayūra, asimukha, vina, dhanu, śvāṭika, añjali, padma, mukula, kapota, Sivalinga maṁrāchāli, venu, dambaru, Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, sakra, śāṅkha, gada, nari, Gadura, dasāvatāra and so on.38

The nomenclature of some mudrās is being made viewing the similarities with the mudrās mentioned by the works dealing with music. A saying goes amongst the ojāpāli circle: The oja finds it essential to be proficient in dance and costume as well as hand-gestures and dialogue:

nācan kācan mocan āru bacana /

el cāri bastu ojār proyojana //39

37. N. C. Sarma, op. cit., p. 12
38. Informants: (1) Shri Bhadra Kanta Sarma, Baladevapara, data collected on 13.5.84
(2) Sri Nareswar Sarma Barua, Dipila, data collected on 18.9.81
(3) Sri Durgeswar Nath Oja, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
(4) Sri Lalit Chandra Nath Oja, Sipajhar, data collected on 18.9.81
(5) Sri Prafulla Chandra Nath Oja, Garukhuti, Darrang, data collected on 3.10.85
39. Informant: Late Soneswar Barman, oja, Kamrupa, data collected on 9.4.83
The Nature of Assimilation of Mārgī and Desī elements in Ojaḷāli Music:

The Sangitaratnākara, enumerates two schools of music: (i) mārgī and (ii) desī.  Mārgī or classical is supposed to be a tradition of the elite class it is a high degree of sophistication and systematisation as well as stylization. The desī tradition includes both the folk and the tribal traditions. It is not a high degree of sophistication and systematisation as well as stylization. Both the folk and the elite traditions are not opposite to each other but are complementary to each other, since they are the two substructures of Indian culture.

In the same way, between the mārgī and the desī art forms also there is the living tendency of interaction which is always playing a dominant role in respect of assimilation between these two. It would be wrong to think that culture only filters down to the folk from the elite. It is a circular process and it is just as the folk-sub-structure borrows some elements from the elite culture and imbibes them through a process of reworking. In the same way the elite sub-structure borrows elements from the folk culture and integrates them in its own system after necessary refinement. Thus, many folk melodies have been assimilated into the classical tradition.

40. Sangitaratnākara, I/22
41. S.L. Srivastava: Folk culture and Oral Tradition, p. 286
re-worked and included among the classical ragas. According to A.H. Popley the Indian ragas and rāginīs may come from the following sources:

(i) Local tribal songs, (ii) poetical creation, (iii) devotional song, and (iv) composition of scientific musicians.

The music of India as well as the music of Assam — their beginnings, migrations and evolution — particularly the contributions of various cultural groups to the general pool, has then to be studied with this back ground of multi-cultural textures of India.

Although the music of biyāh-gowa-ojāpāli is originally a mārgi art form nevertheless the performers and the connoisseurs are mostly the rural people or the folk. Hence, the desi elements pervade it to some extent. K. Bardaloi observes that the ojāpāli music of biyāh-gowa variety is a unique conglomeration of the Aryan, i.e. mārgi and the Bādo, i.e. desi. The sattrīyā ojāpāli dances of both the Saṅkaradeva school and the Damodaradeva school are influenced by the tribal dances to some extent. The suknāni ojāpāli of Darrang is originally a folk art form but have been heavily influenced by the biyāh-gowa-ojāpāli music. The suknāni ojāpāli music current in Kamrup is invariably a folk music. The māre-gan-gowa-ojāpāli prevalent among the Pāti Rabbās is an ideal testimony of the tribal music. Of course, it is influenced by the suknāni ojāpāli music to some extent.

43. D.P. Mukharjee: Indian Music, pp.9-12
44. A.H. Popley: The Music of India, p.40
45. B. Chaitanya Deva: Musical Instruments of India, p.14
46. K. Bardaloi: Sura-paricaya, p.13