

CHAPTER IV

DANCE AND MUSIC

4.1 Dance

4.2 Court Dancers

4.3 Dancers

4.4 Temple Dancers

4.5 Different Types of Dances represented in Hoysala Sculptures

4.6 Music

4.7 Dance and Music Represented in Epigraphs and Literature in the Hoysala period

4.8 Musical Instrument Represented in Hoysala Sculptures

4.1 Dance

It is no longer a matter of doubt that Indian classical dance had enormous impact upon all the other arts of India, from sculpture to literature. Apart from the overwhelming sculptural evidence there is a mass of other material, dating from early as the 2nd century B.C. and continuing upto at least the 19th of the present era, which illustrates that the dance has deeply affected both sculptural and literacy tradition.

India's pre-history and proto-history also provide sufficient evidence of this fact, for example there is the dancing girl from Mohonjo-daro and the broken torso of the Harappan period.

There are beautiful metaphors and similes in the Vedas based on the art of dance. The most beautiful of these are the description of Ushas, the Dawn.

Epithets of dance have been used for the Gods, Indra, Marut, the Asvins, and the Apsaras, all have been broken off as well initiated in the art.

Dance as a profession, and as a social activity has been associated with all significant moments of the life cycle.

In the epics and puranas the princes are taught the art of dancing, both Rama and Arjuna were adepts and of course Krishna is the supreme dancer.

Roughly speaking, one may divide the history of dance into two periods. One from the 2nd century B.C. to the 9th century A.D. and the other from the 10th to the 18th century A.D. during the first period, Sanskrit exercised a firm hold on the intellectual life of the people and its rich literature endowed the development of all arts in the country with unity and continuity. In the second period there was a marked development of regional styles.

The available evidence suggests that the sculptors who produced the remarkable specimens of plastic art at Sanchi, Mathura, Amaravati, Nagarjakonda and finally at Ellora were well-versed in the Natya-sastra traditions.

Medieval temples also provide ample evidence that sculptors had considerable technical knowledge of the art of dance. The Brihadesvara temple in Tanjore was built in the 11th century A.D. it was here that the Karanas were first illustrated. The Charis (Movements) and the Sthanas (Position) described in the Natyasastra are elaborately depicted in the sculptures on the outer wall of these temples. These temples have captured in stone what the chronicles could not

record in words. Each temple portrays a variety of dance poses and movements which are accurate illustrations of either the original style or of texts which were followed by regional artists.¹

There is no limitations of theme or content of dance since it depicts the exploits of the gods, as was and kings as well as or ordinary human beings. The sculptural evidence can be supplemented amply by the sastras textual criticisms, historical chronicles and creative literature. One can easily conclude that the dance was a vigorous and living art.

In Hoysala dancing panels the female dancers outnumbered the male dancers. The style of dance in Hoysala times indicates a marked distinction between classical and regional (Margi and Desi) forms. The development of regional language led to the domination of desi style in the Hoysala period and the same is reflected in the contemporary schools.²

The Hoysala dancers incorporated desi Karanas, Charis, Sthanakas and other techniques along with the classical form. They were successful in formulating their own style and identified as the Belur school of dance.³

The Hoysala bracket figures are known for their triflexion bendings. This style stressed on the bendings of waist and

limbs. These poses although fundamentally based on Natyasastra in their presentation they convey continuous movement and interesting theme coated with erotic sentiments.⁴

The Hoysalas were great lovers of music and dance as is evident from the innumerable sculptural representations. A combination of music and dance recitals gets its lithic representation in the sculpture. Thus, the scene represented on the wall fragment of the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid reveals one such combination of music and dance recital. As the dancer played Lasya, the music accompanied it. The dancer, is shown in a dress (nepatava) which includes ardhjanghia, bordered with beads. She is holding her hands upwards as the right leg of her is kept akcimbo. The musicians playing on Mardala and Kamsya tala are seen in rapt attention to keep themselves in tune with the dance recital.⁵ **Pl.No.1**

An excellent example of a dance scene can be perceived from some of the bracket figures in the Chennakesava temple at Belur. On the eve of the southern entrance of the Chennakesava temple, a Madanika seen in a dancing pose. The Madanika emerging into action displays the virtuosity of the sculptor in catching one movement of awareness in our unawareness by fixing the pose in Bharatanatyam in which

the hand gestures become flowers. The sway of the body like the flow of the water, the stamp of the feet, the echo of the spirit of the dance all fuse to make a rare impersonification of mood showing the perfection that dance had achieved at this time. The expression of Bharatanatyam were attuned. **Pl.No.2**

Another lively dance pose of Bharatanatyam can be seen in the bracket figure of Madanika on eaves of northern entrance of the Chennakesava temple Belur. Madanika is seen in bhasma Mohini pose with two musicians, one playing on the flute and other on the Mardala. The rhythm of the dance was conceived as a total expression of life by Bharata.⁷

Pl.No.1A

Bharata in his Natyasastra has given detailed analysis of angika, abhinaya, karanas tandavalakshana along with the theoretical performance. Interestingly some of the angika, abhinaya, rasa, karanas, and tandavalakshana, enjoyed in Bharata Natyasastra get immortalized in the lithographic delineations of the Hoysala sculptures.⁸

Dance were used as a convenient means for revealing physical expression of emotions, the human body itself being used as the medium just as words in poetry owing its inspiration largely to religious feelings and influenced by the environment. Every social function of a festive character was

accompanied by some kind of musical performance. Dancing had an equally important role and there were special classes of people who were trained in this art. Both music and dance received the patronage of kings and noblemen. The art dancing must have attained a high state of perfection. Some of the carved pictures represent Hoysala dancing girls in preaches¹⁰ which were perhaps necessary for the free movement of the body.

Dancing became an intelligent and culturally enjoyable art. The ramifications of foot work, the poses involving graceful bends of the body and arms, the delicate and subtle ideas underlying sahityas conveyed through the abhinayas of the dancer all lifted up. Dancing from the stage of an applied art to pure art. The honoured place given to ritualistic dance in temples served as stimuli for the development of sacred dance.

Many Hoysala Queens were great dancers and musicians number of Hoysala epigraphs best on lavish praise on them. 'Santaladevi' the renowned queen of Hoysala ruler Vishnuvardhana was entitled with various epithets like Natya Saraswathi, Vichitra Nartana Pravartana Patra Shikamani, Sangita Saraswathi,¹¹ Geetha Vadya Nritya Sutradhare.¹² These titles eulogized very greatly her artistic skills and scholarship. She has described as a jeweled lamp in the

house of Bharatagama, a hand jewel in all manner of dancing, a Saraswathi in singing and scholarship.¹³

A record of Alisandra refers to the title patrajagadale and states that the queen of Ballaladeva namely Padumale, Chamale and Boppadevi were famous accomplished dancers of the said period.¹⁴

Abinava Ketaladevi was highly enlogised 'as Sahaja Sidda Saraswathi' in one of the inscriptions of Bandalike during the time of Ballala II.¹⁵ similarly in one of the literary sources, Neminatha Puranam the poet Nemichandra has referred to a number of well accomplished dancers. Mariyane is three daughters whose proficiency in these arts had won the love of Ballala I were given in marriage to him in A.D. 1103.¹⁶

Dancing girls and the art of dancing were inseparable in the cultural life of Hoysalas, dancers were found in large numbers in temples. They were highly respected in society.

4.2 Court Dancers

Generally, the women of the courtesan class were from time immemorial the custodians of the twin art of dance and music. The temples played a prominent part in the encouragement of these arts.

4.3 Dancers

All the temples, big or small maintained a number of temple dancers. Musicians and instrumentalists who lived on vrittis of land granted to them by kings, nobles, generals and wealthy citizens.¹⁷ An insp. of 1064 A.D. records the grants given by Vishnuvardhana, not only for the offering to God Rameswara of the Balgoditirtha, but also for the pleasure giving dancing girls.¹⁸

A record from Bowringpet in the Kolar dated 1280 A.D. informs that a grant of land was made for the maintenance of 52 families of servants who had to perform various duties in the temple.¹⁹

Dance is indispensable for celebrating the birth of a son, marriage, or for the attainment of desired objects, during the festivals and functions. Dancing is charming, auspicious and it is liked by all people especially by kings.

Natyamandapa is variously called as Nrityamantapa and Rangamantapa. Nrityamantapa refers for the performing of dance recitals.²¹

Even men were also proficient in fine-arts, for instance, Hoysala Vira Ballala II has been described as a Bharata in the arts of music and dance.²²

An excellent example of the dress of a musician comes from the panel revealing a female dancer. The dress of the female dancer comprises of a piece of cloth worn round her waist in lungi fashion. Similarly, a male drummer also appears with similar type of dress revealing thereby no difference in their mode of dresses.²³ **Pl.No.4**

Sculptures depicting dance forms on the walls of Chennakesava temple at Belur:

The different dance forms are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1) Adbuta dance | 5) Vijana dance |
| 2) Durga dance | 6) Lasya dance |
| 3) Davane dance | 7) Damaruga dance |
| 4) Mohini dance | |

Adbuta Dance²⁴: A maiden is beating the davane with bend stick. Her upper half of the body is turned front. The entire weight is laid on her right leg, her left leg is held in the air, Chitakarshini. **Pl.No.5**

Durga Dance²⁵: Durga with each hand is holding a Kapala and a Trishula. Two musicians are beating the Mridnuga, Dairiyakarashini. **Pl.No.6**

Davane Dance²⁶: A maiden dancing beating a davane, Smrthaykarshini. **Pl.No.7**

Mohini Dance²⁷: Mohini, the destroyer of Bhasmasura, enticed the asura by her charm and induced him to dance with her. The images of a dancer, with her right palm held above the head may be identified with this goddess. **Pl.No.1A**

Vaijana Dance²⁸: A maiden is dancing with a fan in her right hand and betel leaves in the left hand. **Pl.No.9** refer musical instruments.

Lasya Dance²⁹: Maiden dancing to the rhythm of Mrudunga, Davane, flute players and to the tala at the same time. **Pl.No.8**

Damaruga Dance³⁰: A maiden dancing with a damaruga. The lower half of her body is in profile, while the upper portion is frontal. The entire weight is laid on her right leg, her left leg is held in air, her hips thrust to the side and her torso set straight on the slanting waist.

Every one of these figures (dancers) is dressed and decorated appropriately, through conventionally. They are adorned with elaborate coiffures. The hairs are curled in the front, parted in the middle and decked with pearl chignon at the back. Almost all wear ratnakundalas, haras, multipleharas, necklaces of beads and pendants, armlets, anklets, girdles, fingerings etc. **Pl.No.9**

Music

Muraja type of drum occurs on the temple wall of the Hoysalesvara at Halebid. A female musician is shown playing on muraja in accompaniment to the dance. The praces of the drum are quite extant³¹. **Pl.No.9**

Kolata

Clappers are understood to be those simplest percussion sticks generally held in each hand and struck against each other thereby producing sound. These clappers are played 'Solo' or in groups, while dancing mythmically and such plays are known by the name, 'Kolata' in Kanarese and Kolatam in Telugu. The sound produced by the clappers would be melodious and in tune with the steppings.³²

Cymbals are seen played in accompaniment of dancing. An excellent example of cymbals being played by musicians in tune to the dancing. Can be seen in the sculptures representing Madanika³³. **Pl.No.3 Musical Instruments**

The people of the Hoysala period had gay and merry time. An indoor game, stick-play kolata essentially of women folk seemed to have been in prevalence among the Hoysalas. Each person carried a pair of sticks and the players formed a group striking the sticks to those of adjacent player. As they played, they sang traditional kolata songs in tune to the music and

beat sticks in order to produce rhythmic sound. The Hoysala sculptor carved some of such stick-plays in the sculptures.

Dancers were highly respected in society. The devadasi called Mrugasena has been appreciated as sakala sastra praveene, she was also familiar with reading and writing along with music.

References

- 1) Manasollasa by Someshwara III p.40
- 2) Ibid
- 3) Indian classical dance by Kabila Vatsyayan 1974, Delhi
p.25
- 4) Ibid
- 5) Hoysala Sc, A cultural study by K.Padmanabha
- 6) Ibid
- 7) Ibid
- 8) Ibid
- 9) Ibid
- 10) Mar, 1910-11 p.8
- 11) E.C.V. B1 VV 1122 No.116
- 12) EC. 11 SB VV 1123 Bo 176
- 13) Bid II 132 B1
- 14) Ibid Hanthur No.22
- 15) Ibid VII Nag No.32
- 16) Ibid VII SK 235
- 17) S.I.I. Vol. VI No.797
- 18) E.C. XI MK 29. P.95
- 19) S.I.I. No.1118
- 20) MAR 1929 No.63
- 21) EC Vol XII CH 2
- 22) EC Vol 13 No.4
- 23) Padmanaba p.43

- 24) Dr. S.Srikantasastri, Hoysala Architecture p.29.
- 25) Ibid p.29
- 26) Ibid p.30
- 27) Ibid p.30
- 28) Ibid p.32
- 29) Ibid p.33
- 30) Padmanabha p.44
- 31) Ibid
- 32) Ibid
- 33) Ibid P.Sambamoorthy

4.4 Temple Dancers

An attempt is made in this paper to trace the Temple Dancers during Hoysala period. The temples of South India from early Medieval onwards became great centers of cultural activities. The life of the town or a village revolved the local temple, however, small it might have been. They became the hub of social, economic and cultural activities can there be social life without the fine temples at Belur, Halebid or Somanathapura. In smaller places also the same was the position. Even today the cultural life of either Basaral or Hosaholalu revolves round the Hoysala temples located there in. They were the repositories of music and dance on the one side and centers of education on the other. In fact many of the temples undertook economic activities like controlling the land belonging to the temple and arrange for the building of tanks and other irrigational facilities.

Basically the temples were a repository of fine arts like music and dance. Among the various services that were offered to the deity, angabhoga and rangabhoga and important. Practically the deity in the temples is treated like a human being and was given all the services from the early morning till the night Sayanotsava was performed. Naturally for the recreation of the deity music and dance were also provided many times during the puja.

On special occasions, the performance of music and dance assumes greater importance. The services of musicians and dancers were required to fulfill this duty. Hence the temples had appointed male and female singers as permanent employees in the temples. As most of the Hoysala queens were highly interested in music and dance, it is natural that they took initiative in the appointment of musicians to the temples so that good and melodious music could be rendered to the main deity. It was also possible that on many occasions kings and queens were present in the temples for worshipping and elaborate arrangements for music performance should have been made. This is illustrated from an inscription at Marale of the time of Vishnuvardhana dated 1130 A.D.¹ It states that the king visited the temple, sat there, offered the worship and made grants for among others, provision for the appointment of a singer in the temple, by pouring water with his own hands in the presence of the god. A reference has already been made to the singing of Javalis in the temples.

The singing in the temples was accompanied by instrumentalists among whom the Vina players, drum beaters, flute players and gong beaters are important. In fact even in the Hoysala sculptures, these various instruments are depicted in plenty. Thus vocal as well as instrumental music formed a part of the services in the temples of the period.

Dance occupies a better place than music. Even the architectural components of a Hoysala temple attests to this. Navaranga whether closed or open was the place where dancers used to dance as an offering to the deity. The provision of jalandhars in the closed navarangas of the temples allowed sufficient light and air so that people could watch the performance of dance. In some of the open navarangas, kakshasanas are provided on the two opening sides so that people could sit and watch the dance programmes.

Though the word devadasi does not occur in the Hoysala inscription, their duty was performed by degulada sule to whom a reference has been made already.

They were also called as patra or patrapaguda the main job of these patras was to perform dances in the temple as an offering to the deity daily twice as the case may be and also to dance on special occasions². In fact they were the regular employees of a temple and were paid remuneration either by way of land gifts or in cash in addition to other facilities offered by the temples.

The dancers of the period were given the positions as well as the stipulated work as known from Mada, Chamara, Patra, Kamba, Olaga, etc³. That every woman appointed for this

purpose could not discharge her duties properly and hence even training was provided called nagavasa, where they were given training.

Madavve, Lakkavve, Chandavve⁴, Kallavve⁵, Malavve⁶, Nagavve⁷, Chandavve⁸, Gopavve⁹ and Vissavve¹⁰ are important temple dancers.

Court courtesans, an inscription of 1019 A.D. of temples by name sule Hammakka, Holeyobbe, Rajambe, Kadambe only to perform temple duties.

The dancer in temples received great encouragement and inspiration from most of the Hoysala queens who were proficient in this art. The sculptures of Madanikai figure that are found in the Chennakesava temple at Belur, Brahmesvara temple at Kikkeri and other places suggest the flourishing state of dance in Hoysala temple.

References

- 1) E.C. VI Cm 237
- 2) E.C. V B1. 107, lines 21-22
- 3) Ibid 106 lines 11, 12
- 4) Ibid 108 lines 24, 25
- 5) Ibid 109 lines 1, 2, 3
- 6) Ibid 110 lines p 168
- 7) Ibid
- 8) Ibid
- 9) Ibid
- 10) E.C. VI cm 237

4.5 Different types of Dances represented in Hoysala

Sculptures:

Mohini

Mohini from the interior of Belur Chennakesvara temple is the model of a perfect woman, when compared to the bracket figures, anatomically she possesses a more proportionate figure. The girdles and ornamentation are not crowded. She appears to be very proud of her charming person. It is natural a stance, except the bending of Kati (waist) and turned feet which make her look like a dancer. She is depicting lasya mode of dance. **Pl.No.1**

A group dance Nuggehalli

This is a true representation of a collective dance indicated by the term 'Pindbandha' in Natyasastra out of four varieties of pindis (dance composition) these figures in the photograph illustrate Srnkhala. The second type of compositions, the chain, where the partners hold their hands and form a chain in a line and continue to dance in various forward, backward and sideward movements. A male and female figures are visible alternately holding their hands and have taken to a movement. They are all sliding slightly towards left and have kept two latas of distance between their feet. The bending of the knee is prominently brought out. They are all ready to take up a side ward movement. **Pl.No.2**

Halebid bracket figure

This eye catching bracket figure from Halebid is more natural in its movement. We can notice the continuity and life in the movement. Her left leg is casual and the thigh is twisted and the feet are dropped back. The Ksipta of left knee is not clear. The dancer is supported by a Mardala and Mrdanga. The girdles and the anklets are prominently carved.

Pl.No.3

Belur Nayikas

On the top of the basement friezes around Chennakesava temple, Belur, there are panels representing miniature Salabhanjakas playing musical instruments, dressing themselves and dancing casually. When we notice them they appear like the Nayikas or heroines exhibiting various state of love as described in Natyasastra. The Salabhanjakas here represent the Nayikas such as

- 1) Vasakajikas (expecting her lover)
- 2) Virhotkhatita (distressed by separation)
- 3) Kalahantarita (separated by quarrel). The middle figure (first line), she is showing intolerance on her face as her lover has not come to her due to her jealousy and quarrelsome nature.
- 4) Prositabhartrika (whose husband is on travel) the third figure from right is the heroine representing the Nayika, whose husband is on journey and she is not interested in

her head dress and she has let hair flowing down. The rest of the figures in photographs are playing on drums and are standing casually. **Pl.No.4**

Dancer Nuggehalli

This is yet another pose of the same theme as above. The dancer is holding a decorative tassel. This is a well drawn stance with smooth curving in the mid-riff region. The entire figure has been gracefully brought out. The hands are held in Parsvadvaya (shoulder level) position in Sukatunda hastas. The legs are crossed and in the final position of Aksipta Cari (Akasacari). This figure is the best example of sewn dress of a Hoysala dancer. Even the textile design of the dress is clearly noticeable. The over sized ear-ring resting on the shoulder matches with head dress. But such earnings cause inconvenience to the movements of a dancer. **Pl.No.5**

Dancer (Belur)

Another small figure is illustrating a beautiful Cari. The dancer is performing Addita Cari where she is touching the Agratalasankara foot with lifted for. The Ksipta knee is very clear. Over bending is not there and pose is more proportionate. Her right hand is held high and turned in Alapallava hasta indicating something great and the left hand is let down in lata hasta. **Pl.No.6**

Dancer Nuggehalli

The dancer of Nuggehalli is a specialist in exhibiting her dance by manipulating her two long plaits in a charming manner. The present Kuchipudi dance recital is in complete without the item, Bhamakalapam. (The theme is around satyabhama, the proud queen of lord Krishna, she enters the stage by holding her decorated plait in the hand and dances in various patterns) probably a dance from similar to this kind was also popular among the Hoysala dancers. The crown also supports the idea that she is exhibiting the character of Bhama or a proud queen. It appears that she entered the stage holding plait. Her hands are held naturally. The Ksipta position on the knee is seen clearly in the figure. The sculpture illustrates final position of the Karana Aksipta Rechita. **Pl.No.7**

Darpana Sundari Hosaholalu

Here Nayika is getting ready to receive her lover. She is adjusting her earring carefully looking with side glances into the large sized mirror she has arranged her pullova artistically and is proud of her own decoration and jewelery. The right leg has crossed the left leg in Svastika form, and the pose is very much balanced.

There are many incarnations of the female form. The sculptor takes the delight in the mohinis the enchantress who is recreated in several panels. **Pl.No.8**

Dancer, Hosaholalu

The tiny figures on the pillars represent finer poses of very good quality. The two poses are similar in opposite sides. The figures are in Urdhvajanu Karava with upturned Alapallava Hastas indicating great joy. **Pl.No.9**

Halebid Dancer

This rare pose appears on the outer walls of the Hoysalesvara temple, Halebid. This dancer signifies wonder, joy and energy. This pose is a true representation of Suci Karana. One Kuncita foot is raised and placed on the ground in front and the hands are in harmony with the foot movement. The left hand is turned upward in Allapallava near the head region and the right hand is in Ardhachandra near bosom. This Karana and movement are performed to express wonder. A well developed Mrdanga and Mardala are associated with her dance. The glance is vismita and the eyes are wide opened with curved eyebrows and steady pupils indicating the marvelous sequence. **Pl.No.10**

Bracket Figure (Kikkeri)

Here the dancer is in a very aggressive movement and has moved her twisted hip and thighs. This indicating the extra force put by her to acquire this particular position. The sculptor has taken great pains to depict the startling movement of the dancer. The sculpture represents accurately the Parsvakranta Karana where the right foot has to be lifted and hit on the ground hard with a head ornament i.e. Udghatita. The hands are extended in lata and downward in pataka. The text prescribes that this movement should be used in the situations of fury and valour. It appears that the dancer was portraying the volourous character. The facial expression also speaks of valour. Even the drummers at her sides are in dynamic movement in the act of encouragement. Thought he Gandharva Kanya from Belur is in similar pose, it differs portrays a Lasya movement evoking Srngara, the Kikkeri figure portrays Vira, the sentiment of valour. **Pl.No.11**

Beauty and the Monkey

The figure may not come directly under the class of dance, yet the posture draws the attention of a dancer. The crossing of the shanks caused a neat flexion in the region of waist (Kati) forming a beautiful Tribhanga. The raised hand driving the monkey away is a Sukatunda hasta and the other hand is held naturally holding the end of the sari. The legs do not have the Mandala position. Thus, it cannot be treated as

Svastika Karana. The pose is more of desi (regional) than margi (classical). It corresponds to Uruveni Cari, one of the desi Bhuma Cari. The hair is neatly tuffed but due to the sudden movement it is loosened. The forefront of the head is made up with tiny ringlets. The pose accurately depicts this cari. The figure evokes erotic sentiment. **Pl.No.12**

A Nayika

A royal lady is getting a ring put on her toe by an attendant. Her attempt to balance herself on one leg forms a graceful pose. This appears to be a pose of a dancing sequence of a Nayika (heroine) getting ready, dressed up in a presentable manner in expectation of her beloved. Her jewellery would be complete by adding the last piece of ornament i.e. the toe ring. The right hand is let down in lata hasta. The left hand is holding a branch in Sukatunda hasta. The Ksipta knee of the lifted leg, the smooth curve of the waist make the stance strikingly attractive. The Vitrakita glance and visarga lip clearly indicate the attempt of recollecting sweet moments. **Pl.No.13**

Belur Natya Mohini

This sculpture of Mohini is a typical example of delicacy in style. It is a bracket figure in true sense. The bending of the leg, waist and placement of hands make a flower bracket. The figure is a real representation of all the characteristics of a

dancing Mohini. The right hand is turned down in Alpllava and the left hand is held in upward Alapallava. The distance between the hands is proportionate. Although the foot is in the usual Urdhvajanu Cari, the extreme bending of the Kati makes this pose an extraordinary one. The left leg is rooted firmly to balance the tribhanga pose of the entire body. The figure is overpowered with erotic sentiment depicting the Lasya gesticulation. She is smiling gracefully obviously proud of her enchanting poise. **Pl.No.14**

Belur Danceuse

This Madanika is in the final position of Cinna Karana. The turned Kati is clearly visible. The hands are placed on hip and waist as described in Natyasastra. The stance and the lowered face indicate a situation, where she is looking with sympathy. The two drummers by her side have just ended their syllable with her. **Pl.No.15**

Dancer

A charming dancer from Belur with an elegant gait is just entering the stage. She is in Avahitta gait (one of the three gifts of female characters, entering the stage in erotic sentiments). She started with the right leg and changed to left leg movement. The pose is an intermediary one as it depicts a clear continuous movement. The right foot is rooted firmly with flexion of the waist. The movement when reaches final

pose would lead to Racita Nikutta Karana. One hand is already in lata and the other may be extended to dola hasta. The Udghaltita foot position is accurate as mentioned in Natyasastra.

The dancer is portraying lasya theme. She appears very dignified indicating utsaha characteristics such as steadiness, boldness, slightly blown up cheeks and the head held high with pride. The eye lids are in vikosa gesture. The broken left hand must have been either in Mayura indicating the peacock, signifying beauty and pride of Kapitha indicating a bird. The dancer is associated with Mrdanga, Mardale, Natacarya playing on cymbals and flute. **Pl.No.16**

Mohini Dancing

Mohini (Belur) is in the final pose after ending the danced of destroying the demon Bhasmasura. She has just placed her right on her head. In the process of imitating the dance of Mohini Bhasmasura also stood in the similar pose and was burnt to ashes. The hand placed on the head is the Alata and the left hand folded in Ardhaacandra she is lifting her left leg to the knee level of the right leg. Actually this pose does not coordinate with any of the Karanas. But it is in a Desi Sthanaka known as Ekapada. It is a rare bracket figure where kati bending is not stressed. The slightly bent head preserves the balance in the total pose. Mohinis bearing with the smile

of victory. She is associated with a small Mrdanga player, a flutist and a Natyacarya with the cymbals. **Pl.No.17**

Beauty and Parrot

The damsel is in Abhanga. The Kati (waist) flexion is the centre of attraction of the figure. The beautiful Sukatunda and Latahasta add poise to the figure.

One of the attractive stances of a woman while speaking or cajoling her pets is depicted in this bracket figure. She is Sukabhasini speaking sweet memories to her parrot. She has raised her hand to face level to have a closer association with her pet. The left leg has crossed behind in a clear Svastika position. The left leg is not in Samapada but is twisted and the foot turned purposely to give the waist a twisted bending. Standing in this position for long time rather difficult because the entire force of the body is let on the twisted legs. The right hand is held naturally in latahasta following the curve of the body. The turned face expressive eyes bring serene beauty to the pose. **Pl.No.18**

Bracket Figures Santala

This is a complete piece of sculpturistic beauty representing a charming pose. 'Narya Saraswathi', was the title bestowed on the queen consort of king Vishnuvardhana. On the pedestal of the sculpture the title 'Natya Saraswathi' is

engraved. The two hands in Alapallava symbolically indicate the difference between infinite and finite. The feet position of the image is the Urdhvajanu Cari with a clear Ksipta knees. At the pose, the hands on the Mardala, the singer's expression and cymbals indicate codification of particular rhythm and stance. The expression on the face shows the serene emotion combined with dignity and maturity. **Pl.No.19**

Gandharva Kanya

Gandharva Kanya is one of the four bracket figures of Navaranga. She is an apsara came down to earth to witness the dancing Mohinis around her. It appears that instead of witnessing, she unconsciously is lost among madanikas. The hasta is fral and one extended to the right in Lata. Only the feet position is in recitanikutta with left foot turned and bent naturally. The flexion of the waist add to the style of the dancer. The heavy crown, bracelets and girdles and a lace hanging attached to the crown behind makes this Gandharva Kanya look entirely different from the rest of Madanikas.

Pl.No.20

Visakanya

Visakanya serpent in her hand and serpent around her thighs is standing casually in sampada with curved waist. Her half opened eyes, curves and lifted eye speak of srngara bhava.

Poisoned and immunized at birth, this lady grew up to be a spy, she was sent to foreign enemy countries, where her duty was to make love to the enemy and inflict the kiss of death. The snake is an apt companion. **Pl.No.21**

Huntress

When observed closely these three pieces of sculptures narrate the entire theme and character of a huntress. Here the dance might have chosen the character of parvati as a Kirati (in the context of 'Kiratarjuna' sequence). In the first picture the huntress is equipped for hunting a big haul, confidently entering the forest. She has held her bow firmly and the otherhand is extended in lata hasta. She is an Avahitta gait (started with right leg and continuing with left leg). We can see the continuity in her movement as she has not firmly rooted her toes of the leg kept in the front. Her hair style and face make up sit her character. While moving briskly in the forest barefooted she has stepped on a thorn and suffered unbearable pain. Her companion comes to her rescue and removes very carefully the thorn. She comes and rests herself in a beautiful pose with one folded leg (in the small figure to the right side).

The dancer makes it clear with her meaningful gestures and movements, that hunting is not an easy job. In a forest she has to undergo all difficulties. The image in **Pl.No.23** is

also in the moving posture. She has selected an arrow and is examining it. Her head dress and the skirt made of leaves give a realistic appearance of a Kirati. In **Pl.No.23** the huntress is in action. She is highly dynamic and is full of force. Her face also indicates the purpose of her action. Her maid is supplying fresh arrows to her lady. The huntress has stretched herself to aim her prey, holding the bow in *musti hasta* and the arrow in *Sukatunda hasta*. Her feet position is in *Alidha sthana*. She has bent backward proportionately. Even today our dancers while depicting the sequence of fighting with bow and arrow adopt a similar pose.

After a successful hunting with the movements narrating her victory, she dances in various patterns and rhythms holding the bags containing the animals. She is going back home after a hard task with a handful of animals as her prey. The entire dance sequence can be imagined with these three figures of the huntress. **Pl.No.22**

4.6 Music

South India is justly famous for her mighty achievements in the realm of music and other performing arts during the Hoysala period are varied, spectacular and enduring longest single composition of Indian music, the 108 *Ragatala Malika* of Ramaswamy Dikshitar¹ was composed here. Splendid specimens of musical iconography and dance iconography are

enshrined in the temples of Belur. In the temple of Belur, of the 42 sculptures, thirty eight adorn the pilasters of the outer wall, the other four are attached to the central pillars of the navaranga of the dancer musicians, some beat different types of drums, keeping in step with the rhythm, one beats a damaruga holding it above her head, while the others beat davanies in various other ways. One is beating the damaruga holding it above her head, while the others beat davanies in various other ways. One is beating the damaruga and the tala at the same time and dancing to their rhythm. Similarly others are dancing while playing on different types of Vina².

The series of sculptures depicting music, give us details relating to the number that constituted a concert party, their standing plan or sitting plan, the accompaniments used, the number of strings in the stringed instruments, the postures in which the instruments were held and played and many other factors relating to instrumentation and musicology. The Vina having frets for only the left half of the finger board is depicted in the temples at Halebid and Belur. The right half of the finger board is left free. These sculptures depict one of the stages in the evolution of the Vina and hence are of historical interest. The earliest sculptures where in we find frets for the entire-board is seen in the temple of patti svaram nar Kumbakonam.³

Madanika with Vina another lady musician playing on cymbals, all bracket figures on the Chennakesava temple at Belur, testify. The popularity of the instrumental music in vogue during the Hoysala period.⁴

Music and Dance played very significant role in the temple life of the Hoysala and a large number of secular and religious figures including Mahanata Siva Create an atmosphere of dance and music in all their temples.

But the most remarkable Madanikas in large number at Belur, Halebid, Somanathpur, especially under the direction of queen Shantala devi, who was herself a famous dancer and singer had some abiding influence on her husband. Vishnuvardhana for the figurization of the Madanikas on the above said temple.

Interestingly, many of the contemporary inscriptions refer to the musical instruments, dancers, dancing halls, etc. giving thereby a fair idea of the knowledge of the music and musical instruments of the Hoysala period.

An inscription from Basralu in Mandya district mentions a drum beater known as Davasigasdavigna and also mentions the gifts made to dances – patrapavula. An epigraph from Alisandra in Nagamangala taluk avers to music and dance.

Likewise an epigraph from Hosakote in pandavapura taluk refers to the beating of victorious drums. In the inscription from Tonnuru, a reference is made to the construction of ologasale (Navarangamantapa) used for dancing purposes.⁵

An audience hall (tiruvoloekka mandapa). Constituted a component of the building for musical conferences can be known from the records of Kunduru in Heggadadevanakote taluk, similarly, an inscription from Hullahalli from Nanjangud taluk, refers to the dancers. All these will testify amply the prevalence of musical concerts during the Hoysala period.⁶

The contemporary Kannada works also go a long way in giving information regarding musical instruments known to the Hoysala period. Innumerable reference to vina can be seen in the Kannada literature. In Ananthanatha purana, a reference is made to a group of women who played on vina.⁷

Ekatantri Vina its representation in the sculpture revealing Parijata Saraswathi on the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid. It has a narrow string and the string has stretched the centre length of the flute. She is seen holding across the chest and playing it with her fingers.⁸ **Pl.No.10**

Rudravina is represented on the Chennakesava temple at Belur. A madanika is shown playing on it. While her knees

are slightly bent in graceful exposition by dance of the mode she has played. The veena has a straight board and two guards attached to it, eleven frets probably permanently fixed are clearly sculptured.⁹ she is playing with her left hand fingers. A fine combination of instrumental as well as vocal music, in dance is realistically sculptured. **Pl.No.1** refer musical instruments.

Naga Vina occurs in the hands of a bracket figure. Mohini on Navaranga of the Chennakesava temple at Belur.¹⁰ Mohini is seen dancing while playing a naga vina. The instrument has a number of teeth on its lower end which emit different sounds when struck with a special stick. Its head which is curved up is like that of a parrot with hood of a cobra. Both rod and stick are ornamented with tassels. **Pl.No.11**

Perhaps a hallow tapering bronze rod would emit different sounds and serve the purpose of musical instrument. Mohini is marking time with the left toe, while a man drumming to her right on the Mrudanga and another is fanning her and holding ready for her use, a cup full of drink. **Pl.No.12**

References

- 1) History of Indian Music
- 2) Ibid
- 3) Padmanaba p.70
- 4) E.C. Vol. VII Ng. 72
- 5) Ibid Vol. XIII Hg 82
- 6) Ibid Vol.III Nj 138
- 7) Neminathapurana, p.18
- 8) Maity, p.51
- 9) Ibid p.62
- 10)Ibid p.125

4.7 Dance and Music Depicted in Epigraphs and Literature in the Hoysala period

Dance and music in epigraphs and literature of Hoysala period is marked by high achievements in the field of fine-arts. The art works of Hoysala times have occupied a prominent place in the historical monuments of India. Many inscriptions related to dance are available in the temples of Belur, Halebid, Sravanabelagola and other places. Many inscriptions are in praise of king Vishnuvardhana as the exponent of and scholar in Natyasastra. Santala, the queen consort of Vishnuvardhana is praised as the personification of fine-arts.

An inscription of Bharmesvar temple, Sindagi village dated 1120 A.D. gives the information that the learning of art for girls was necessary accomplishment to seek the marital relationship, with royal family. This is a very elaborate inscription giving genealogical references of Vinayaditya, Erayanga and his officer Mariyane Dandanayaka and Chamavve. Their daughter padmaladevi, Chamaladevi and Boppadevi are described as skilled in singing and dancing. They are considered worthy to be the queens of three separate royal capitals. It appears that they were mature dancers in the traditional style.¹

Belur inscription dated 1117 A.D. on the inner wall of the treasury of Chennakesava temple describes Vishnuvardhana

in a glorious way. A very lengthy inscription, it praises Vishnuvardhana's valour, victory, genealogy and calls him.

An inscription dated 1120 A.D. in Belur temple was set up during the ceremony of coronation of king Vishnuvardhana. The inscription praises Vishnuvardhana and Santaladevi in beautiful terms. The titles borne by Santaladevi are worth noting. Santala, the queen consort of Vishnuvardhana, while looking into the mirror appears like a Saraswatidevi, the goddess of learning corresponding to the sculpture contributed by Chavana, the sculptor. The inscription continues with the details of her excellency in fine arts. In rhythm philosophy, histrionic expressions she is the main stream of Bharatagama. She is graceful in both the forms of dancing. The two forms appear to be Tandava and Lasya or Nritya and Nrtya or Marga and Desi the eleventh incarnation of lord Mahavishnu. The inscription has two parts. The first part is dedicated to Vishnuvardhana extolling him as an expert in the scholarly discussions, entertainment and specially in the discipline of Bharata. The other part of the inscription glorifies Santala's expertise in the field of dance and music praising the queen consort of Vishnuvardhana as a Kamala (Lotus) born in the milk ocean of Balipura receiver of a boon from the god Dharmesvara, having erected Ramesvara temple of Isapura, a jeweled lamp in the house of Bharatagama (Science of Music) the cluster of the nails of

whose feet were revered by crowds of beautiful girls with long hanging tresses, a head jewel in all manner of dancing, a Saraswathi in singing the senior queen, the crowned consort Santaladevi.²

In Sruti in melody, in lyrical music, in various tunes Santaladevi is charming. Her knowledge is sentimental and emotional aspects of dance and in Kaisika Vruti, the delicate expression in dance is unparalleled to anybody. Before closing the inscription, in the last few lines she is described as “Vichitra Nartana Sikhmani” and “Sangita Sangata Saraswathi”.³

A very lengthy and figurative inscription appears at the side of the Savati Gandhavarana Basadi, dated 1112 A.D. It describes all characteristic features of Santaladevi she is described as an expert in singing, instrumental music and dancing.⁴

On a pillar to the right entrance of Kattale Basadi of Sravanabelagola there is an inscription describing Jinachandra, Jina Chandra is praised at whose feet were worshipped by groups of ascetics and the pure fame of whose skill in vocal instrumental music and dancing spread to all the points of the compass. May he continue long.⁵

At Marale on a stone to the left of the Mukhamantapa of Chennakesava temple, there is a lengthy inscription dated 1130 A.D. describing the genealogy of Hoysalas. This inscription records the personal visit of Vishnuvardhana to the temple and his grants to the development of the temple. The concluding lines of the inscription describe Vishnuvardhana coming to worship the god, sat down in the temple, and with pleasure made, for the decoration of the god for singing, drums and dancing and for temple repairs, a grant of lands, pouring water with his own hands made an offering of them in the presence of the feet of god Kesava.⁶

An inscription from Nagamangala reminds of the Belur inscription of Vishnuvardhana in describing him as a exponent in the art forms. The inscription is in Bhuvanewari temple, dated 1135 A.D. while describing the activities of the court of Vishnuvardhana and the participants in court session, it states that there were representatives from all the learned fields in the court. The court was a great centre for scholarly activities. He is described as very well versed and intelligent including music, logic and education. He was a real Bharata in the field of performing arts.⁷

At Halebidu Hoysalesvara temple, on the west there is a record of grants made by the dancers of that place. Among the civilians who have given grants to the god Hoysalesvara

the names of some of the dancers are mentioned. The dancer Mallava donated three golden coins and regular grants every year. Another lady by name Manigara Madavve donated some jewels to Hoysalesvara.⁸

At Bhandari Basadi, a lengthy inscription dated 1150 A.D. gives genealogy of Hoysala king Narasimha I his general Hulla built Jina temple with a huge dancing hall.⁹

At Attihalli, Chennarayapattana taluk, on a stone near, the Mallesvara temple, east of the village, there is an inscription dated 1184 A.D. in praise of Bommaladevi the queen consort of Vira Ballala.¹⁰ Bommaladevi was second to Santala in the field of fine arts. In the inscription it is stated that Vira Ballala's wife Bommaladevi said to be a lion to the haughty co-wives, excelled mistress in singing, playing music and dancing, she is known as Gita, Vadya, Natya, Sutradhare. This gives an idea that she was the director and organizer of dance and music recitals.

An inscription from Belur of the time of the reign of Narasimha gives the information that the grants were made to singers by the head of the village.¹¹ The singers were known as Javali Haduvaru. Javali in dance and music is a lyrical composition specifically composed for a particular Nayaki, a type of heroine, either in expectation of her lover or suffering

the separation of the lover or rejected by her lover or in search of her lover and so on. Javali is an erotic composition, which only a matured dancer and a singer could perform. From this it appears that Javalis were popular in dance and music of the Hoysala times.

Two inscriptions from the Chennigaraya temple, Talaluru of Arasikere taluk gives an impression that this temple was a center of fine arts. The first inscription is dated 1200 A.D. It is on a stone near the left wall stating Govinda made a spire to the temple of Murahara and fixed a Kalasa, and further he enlarged it and had it decorated with paintings.¹² The second inscription is dated 1369 A.D. stating that all the Brahmin of the Agrahara Madhusudanapura, made a grant for the support of the dancing girls to the god Madhusudana.¹³

At Asandi in front of the Virabhadra temple there is an inscription dated 1205 A.D. connected to the reign of Narasimha.¹⁴ This inscription gives an account of charitable activities of the great minister of Narsimha I. the great minister Haraha Sahani set up the Trimurti Ballesvara, and for the decorations, the spring festivals offering of food, singing, playing musical instruments and dancing, made a grant of Tandaigere living it the name of Ballesvarapura.¹⁵

The above survey of epigraphical sources shows that dance, drama and music formed a part of temple rituals. The kings, queens, ministers and rich people vied with each other in granting gifts and endowments so that the ritualistic music, dance and drama were played at the temple for the sake of the deity in the temple. In conclusion it can be said that the epigraphical references confirm what we get from literary and other sources regarding dance music and drama.

Next to inscription literary work form a very good source in evaluating the existing style in the field of fine-arts of the period, we are fortunate to have writers of great merit and their detailed narration helps us to reconstruct Karnataka and culture. Careful study of these works may bring out the techniques in the field of art and may help to differentiate the styles of those days from the present times in the art forms.

Harihara is great poet known for a different style in Kannada poetry. He introduced a new wave in Kannada, literature. His work is known as “Hariharana Ragalegalu” (the blank verses of Harihara).

In about 1165 A.D. he wrote this work. In connection with dance and music there are references to classical art in Bhrngisvarana Ragakle. The spontaneous movements and

music is found in the dance of a hunter Kannappa and a polter kumbara Gundayya.

In Bhrngisvarana Ragale, Bhrngi is dressed for the purpose of performing a dance sequence. He used shake shaped ear-ring, pearl pendants, finger rings studded with precious gems, ornament of shoulders, new diamond bracelets on the wrists. He expressed new movements through his hands and new rhythmic patterns with his feet.

Harihara's Kumbara Gundayyana Ragale, Kumbara Gundayya was a great devotee of Siva. Using the pots he made, musical instrument to produce rhythm he started dancing in his own way.

Nemichandra, Jaina poet flourished in the court of Hoysala Ballala II Neminathapurana and Lilavati are his important works. He has described the dance of Magadha Sundari. The poet describes the dance techniques.

Nagachandra II was the court poet of Ballala II and was known as Abinava Pampa. In his Mallinathapurana he has codified the existing dance traditions in Karnataka.

Palkurike Somanatha and other writers of this period also furnish some details regarding the art forms of those days.

Poet Parsvanatha wrote Parisvanathapuran. In the 14th chapter of his work he has given detail description of the dance of Indra.

References

- 1) E.C. VI.Ch.160 pp 231-32
- 2) Ibid V Hassan Taluk
- 3) Ibid
- 4) Ibid II Sravanabelagola 132
- 5) Ibid No.69 Sravanabelagola
- 6) Ibid Vol.VI No.137 Chikkamangalore
- 7) Ibid IV Ng. No.3
- 8) Ibid Vol.V Belur Taluk No.104
- 9) Ibid No.106
- 10) Ibid II No.476
- 11) Ibid Vol.V No.254
- 12) Ibid Belur 220
- 13) Ibid V Arasikere No.131
- 14) Ibid No.134
- 15) Ibid Vol.VI No.149

4.8 Musical Instruments Represented in Hoysala Sculptures

According to ancient Indian texts the musical instruments fall into four categories namely Tata (stringed), Susira (windblown) Ghana (cymbals) Avanaddha (drum) but the sculptural representation are more useful as one can readily get a glimpse into their nature, shape and size without any imagination.

The epigraphical sources are rich in providing information regarding musical system, musicians, musical instruments, royal patrons of music and so on many members of the royal family were great musicians.

Queens like Santaladevi, Bommaladevi were all good musicians. Queen santaladevi is praised as an expert in dance, instrumental music and as a real Saraswathi in the field of music.

An inscription of 1158 A.D. states that on chaitra Mahapuja a chariot procession was accompanied with mirrors, kettle drums, festival trumpets, conches, songs and dances. Another inscription of 1193 A.D. mentions that drums were bound to the waists of the musicians.

Pl.No.25 refer ornaments is a dancer cum musician from Belur playing on an instrument with great confidence. The instrument she is holding a Nagavina which is now absolute. In the right hand she is holding a Kona and tapering the strings while plucking on her left, her posture of bent knees and waist gives a total balance to her stature.

Freted vina with two gourds and a resonator at bottom is in the hands of a Madanika of Belur as in **Pl.No.1**. A well built instrument is very handy as she is holding with one hand and giving a graceful exposition of the song by showing hand movements and slightly bent neck tilted to side. She has kept her leg forward to support her vina by placing on her thigh. She is supported by other musicians playing on Mrdanga, mardale and cymbals. The freted vina has come into existence from the Hoysala period and continued upto Vijayanagara times.

A taladhari from Belur **Pl.No.2** is supported by small figures of musicians playing on Mrdanga Mardala another cymbal player and flutist. The Madanikai is holding the cymbal in Sukatunda Hasta and she is a singer too. Her lips are parted as though she is singing, her face is glowing with a charming smile. This is one of the best among the bracket figures **Pl.No.3**. An inscription at the foot of the image gives the details of the sculptor. Macchari Girl Vajra Danda and his

patron Hoysaladeva. This is one of the few inscriptions which mentions king Vishnuvardhana.

On the walls of Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, by the side of Varaha Panel, there is a sculpture of a taladhari **P1.No.4**. Her elongated and elaborately decorated crown with a halo, her well groomed face, the jewels and dress she has worn gives an outlook of a celestial musician. She is playing on the cymbals while singing and dancing. Her feet position is in contrast to Belur Taladhari **P1.No.5** she is in a movement by keeping her one foot a tala forward are turned outwardly. The close-up of the celestial taladhari **P1.No.6** shows her teeth clearly as if she is still singing the eternal song.

Hoysala sculptures exhibit a large varieties of drums, mrdanga, damaru **P1.No.7** is a female drummer from Belur Channakesava temple. She is holding a small mardala in a comfortable position with the support of her thigh and beating the drum with a stick. She is representing Cinna Karana. She is supported by a marangist and cymbal player on her sides.

The Hoysala drummer is an extremely bent position **P1.No.8** is enchantingly graceful she has not hung her instrument on her shoulder or tied to her waist which was common with all drummers in standing or moving positions.

Her mardala is very handy and she has pushed her left wrist through the loop supporting the instrument in a stretched palm. She is holding a small carved stick sukatunda hasta. From her head to toe every limb is carved artistically.

A row of musicians on the out walls of Halebid temple by the side of dancing Siva. A cymbal player, a dhamani player, are lost themselves in accompanying the great dancer **Pl.No.9**

Musician is having veena in his hand and lady with a fan **Pl.No.10**. A lady is playing a drum. The drum is hanged on her neck, she is beating the drum in from her right hand and holding the drum in her left hand **Pl.No.11**. A lady is playing mridanga in her left hand and she is singing and dancing. Her left knee is bent and her right hand is lifted up **Pl.No.12**. She is a mridanga player, she has hanged the mridanga, she is playing mridanga from both her hands **Pl.No.13**. Sushira Vadyas – Wind Instruments **Pl.No.14**. Tata Vadyas-Stringed Instruments **Pl.No.11A**, Avanaddha-Percussion Instruments **Pl.No.10A**, Tata Vadyas-stringed Instruments **Pl.No.12A**, Mudras **Pl.No.15**.