Chapter III
Chapter 3

Principles and Techniques in the Bharata System

3.1.1 Biographical Background

Along with the contribution of SS to actor preparation in contemporary Indian theatre, Bharata has a mythological or historical status of authority in the teaching of the art of acting, as seeing in *Natyasastra* (1.24-25, XXXVI.49). He, as a preceptor or guru, understood the need of a scientific training system for his one hundred sons or disciples, and imbibed already existing sciences of drama (poetry), dance, music and architecture for the benefit of actor preparation. Consistent with his practical and phenomenological quest on relation between day-to-day existences and theatrical innovations made conscious efforts to evolve BS.

The teaching of Bharata is articulated in full in *Natyasastra* (I.1-XXXVI.83). It contains, as a monumental encyclopedia, almost all the aspects of Indian theatre traditions from the mythical origin to the type and structure of theatre, preliminary ritual, technique of theatrical expression, type of dramatic text (play), style of presentation, musical technique, theatre criticism, condition of success in performance, application of property, significance of audience and so on. The origin of *Natyasastra* is traced back to as early as 5th century BC, authenticated in its philosophical contents, following the dating of division in the Hindu mythology - “the close of the Brahmanic period and the beginning of the epic period” (Macdonnell 1962:233). Manomohan Ghosh also examined several assumptions of its dates inclusive of “a period between 500 and 300 BC” on the basis of characteristics of the Sanskrit vocabulary and the metre used in the text (1995:xxxix). Most scholars today prefer to recognize that it had been compiled somewhere between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD, but not later (Gupta 1987:18-22 and Kale 1974:7-9).

Many answers have been suggested about the authorship, i.e. the identity of Bharata, whether it indicates a single sage-author or a group of scholars or a school of thought or a community of actors (Vatsyayan 1996:6-9). In the preface of the second revised edition of the Gaekwad Oriental
Series (vol. I, 1956), M. Ramakrishna Kavi regards Bharata as a single author due to the structure of *Natyasastra* organized into a single integrated vision and a unity of purpose. V. S. Agarawala attributed it to the dramatic school of Silalini who has been also believed to be the author of *Nata-Sutra* as mentioned in Panini’s *Astdhyayi* or “Brahmana work called Sailali Brahmana” cited in the *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* VI. 4.7” (Byrski 1974:38). The name of Bharata was, according to Agarawala, given by co-authors of the treatise for representing and sharing the specific school of thought. Bharata is not only the name of the author but also the word signifying Nata (actor). In *Natyasastra* itself the word is used in the sense of actor (XXXV.91). Whether or not the treatise was completed by several authors over a long period, whether or not Bharata is a historical person, it is clear that *Natyasastra* has been handed down and enlarged as a comprehensive handbook of the actor. This is indeed the acting manual that signifies “a voluminous collection of observations and rules concerned in the main with the production of drama and training of the actors” (Gnoli 1968:xiv).

The framework of BS has been to guide the philosophical position and its practices of actor preparation for two millennia. The System is still in evolvement like everything else that exists. Bharata probably intended in *Natyasastra* to stimulate his actors to make their own contribution to completeness of BS. The extant manuscripts of *Natyasastra* and several regionalized scripts on concerned subjects, such as *Abhinavabharati*, *Abhinayahdarpana*, *Bharatarnava*, *Nrttaratnavali*, *Nartananirnaya*, *Hastamuktavali*, *Hastalaksanadipika* and *Sangitaratnakara*, reveal the fact that an uninterrupted school of BS tradition has been preserved by 18th century. Its continuity based on the textual evidences have also reflected and lasted in the multiple performative forms of theatre tradition, such as Ankia-Nat Baona, Kuchipudi and especially Kutiyattam, after ancient Sanskrit play-production degenerated somewhere around 10th century. From the late 1950s onwards, both purely academic studies on [re]interpretation of *Natyasastra* and practical reconstructive creations of Sanskrit theatre based on BS, have flourished in earnest. In the meanwhile, unceasing attempts to adapt the teaching of Bharata and characteristics of the traditional theatre form to the domain of
contemporary theatre have been vigorously encouraged by the quest for a "national-self" identity and the search for its roots of Indian theatre. Modern theatre practitioners have embarked on the notion of bringing contemporary sensitivity and sensibility to bear on the traditional theatre and it became a lively discourse on situating Natyasastra since the 1960s.

Today much of Knowledge on the value of BS relies upon the edited and translated versions of the manuscripts of Natyasastra written in the much later period between 12th century and 18th century. There is no written evidence for more than one-thousand years after composition of the 'original' or its initial oral-aural transmission, i.e. telling, reciting, singing, or intoning. Bharata's aesthetics of acting has circulated in the original language of composition as well as in several languages in translation, both as textual formation and in performative creation. A possibility of interpolation exists as seeing Sloka (verse) of Shantarasa (sentimental experience of tranquility or quiet without activity). Some manuscripts demonstrate only eight sentiments (Rasa-s) without Shantarasa while others nine in number including it (Raghavan 1975: 15). Another possibility of adulteration by Bharata's followers may or may not involve in the manuscripts. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted in today's educational circle that the fundamental frame of Bharata's minute exposition is virtually kept in them with its unique integrity of vision.

Because of two reasons that it is quite impracticable to secure physical evidence supporting the 'authentic' style of acting described by Bharata, and also that today's need of the actor training intends to pursue more a complicated purpose, it is necessary to extract certain 'fresh' principles and techniques from re-interpretation of Natyasastra. The work should be based on identification and outlining of Prayoga Sastra (performance discipline) in Natyasamgraha (the digest of theatre) (VI.10) of which Padartha-s (grammars) in the chain lead to the System of actor preparation. Bharata emphasized that Natyasamgraha is "the condensed summary of all the topics explained in detail into Sutras [or ready-reference manuals or aphorism in prose form] and their Bhasya-s (glosses)" (VI.10, A Board of Scholars, [ ] mine). In order to draw definite boundaries to limit to and focus on the purpose of study, the six components, i.e. Rasa (ultimate aesthetic, sentimental
and imaginative experience), Bhava (emotion or feelings), Abhinaya (technique for expressing Bhava and for evoking Rasa), Dharmi (highly innovated, stylized or the lesser), Vrtti (verbal, physical and psychological behavior), and Pravrtti (regional variation), are essentially examined as an indivisible bond. Other five components, i.e. Siddi (condition of success), Gana (song), Svara (musical accent), Atodya (instrumental music), and Ranga (stage or auditorium), have no direct concerns in a sense so that they are somewhat evaded from main investigation and referred to as the supplement. A harmonious integration of these components forms the subject matter of the whole System of acting.

Not only a concrete acting style but also an actual exercise for each technique are absent in Natyasastra. The alternative is obviously the teaching method of Kutiyattam. Kutiyattam gains academic recognition as the only surviving form of Sanskrit theatre tradition. As per testimonies of the Chakiyar (traditional acting community of Kerala), Kutiyattam has the history of at least a thousand years (Nair 1975:xix-xx). Even though it is a ‘regionalized’ Sanskrit theatre in Kerala, the necessity and value of Kutiyattam lies in the fact that it has distinct features connecting to envisagement of Bharata. Kutiyattam is tied to BS through an umbilical chord. The style of acting in Kutiyattam is based on a regionalized manuscript of BS, Hastalaksanadipika that is largely based on Natyasastra with slight modifications. This is the reason that three stenographic notes taken by the present writer from the Kutiyattam training at Margi Kutiyattam Sangham (school), from July 2002 to May 2003, are referred to in this chapter. The teaching method of Kutiyattam may provide the student of acting practical and useful exercises corresponding to BS, in essence.

3.2.0. Cardinal Principle

Bharata’s attempts to be closer to nature of the actor and the creative expression are apparent in Natyasastra. On the basis of a conscious analysis of the intrinsic inter-relatedness of each chapter as well as its autonomy, three Principles and six Techniques are newly formulated for this study. While the cardinal Principles deal with Bharata’s methodological approaches to the art of acting,
encircling all varieties of the interpretation to actor preparation, the infrastructural Techniques originating in the very Principles explore the practical solution to master the techniques he drafted. Changes of time may diversify a range of its interpretations, as also Bharata himself allowed both for unbroken continuity and constant modification of his teaching (XXXVI.83). Although some Techniques are in movement and possibly personalized in various ways, the three Principles keep unchangeable as the substratum of BS and the fundamental feature of his thought.

3.2.1 Cardinal Principle I

A close reading of Natyasastra reveals that Bharata exerted to transmit ‘how’ to observe and learn rather than ‘what’ to learn. The door of mastering the art of acting is in this text and the key is always in an actor’s hand, repeatedly implied Bharata. Nobody can give the key to open the door except the actor himself. His system is an invisible seed (Bija) of creativity for the actor. It suggests how to take the initiative in doing for the overall stage of actor preparation step by step “just as a tree grows from a seed, and flowers and fruits from a tree” (VI.38, Ghosh).

Bharata is a conscious investigator of the phenomenology of acting and its effectiveness on the consciousness (Samvit) of the audience. The definition (I.117-120) of Natya (theatre or dramatic performance) shows that he conceived Natya to be a mirror of life, customs, and manners of all sorts of people. Dhanamjaya introduces Natya as “Avastanukritir” in his treatise on dramaturgy, Dasarupa, which means “the [imaginative] imitating of situations [or of beings]” (I.7, Hass, [ ] mine). This efficiency obviously lies in the practice (Prayoga) of the actor (I.121) because the externalized form of Natya is Prayoga to be visualized for the audience. Bharata considered his philosophical position of acting and its relevant practices to be the essence of existence that can lead the actor to understand the relationship with people and involvement in life. BS is the very product of a long-term investigation into this concern and thereby has methodological approaches, resorting to the experience of observation.

Bharata defined all the grammar of technique through his own factual experiences. The theory was used in his work only when it might help to solve a practical problem at hand, for instance, in
the case of Rasa in the chapter VI (Rasavikalpa). His general teaching methodology went beyond an abstract theory or philosophy. Rather, the direct experience (Saksatkara) was a foundation of his investigation and his discovery became more precise and verifiable through the process of practice. Bharata emphasized, “teach [the dramatic arts] to your disciples and others through its practice” (XXXVI.49, Ghosh) and give instruction therein “by demonstrating the same” of what they were trained in (XXXVI.43, A Board of Scholars). It seems his belief that perception is the direct experience and observation is a process of necessary preparation to experience a meeting with perceptible action or matter (Gnoli 1968:54). The tangible world (Loka) provides the actor any necessary information through the perception, termed as “Anuvyavasaya” by Abhinavagupta, the great successor of BS (Gnoli 1968:99). When the experience of observation is accumulated in a ‘conscious’ sense (Cetana) of the actor, it encourages him to stretch his perception tight and to increase his affectivity.

With the constant presence of plain rationalization for investigation, the actor is sometimes not able to directly experience truth of the event but only images of the event, created by his thought, such as the self-image. For Bharata, rationality was important and perception was fundamental. Most of principles and techniques in Natyasastra were probably discovered by a large part of theatre-practitioners’ observation on their contemporary dramatic or perfonnative practices. The particulars leaving an impact on Bharata’s perception were universalized (Sadharanikarana) in the actor’s point of view and gained a certain synoptic vision of acting by time being. In this process, the sensitive observation set up a cornerstone capable of constructing introspective dissection and speculative systematization in which the function of rationality was necessary. BS is, indeed, the compilation of perception recollected by the experience of observation on various practices of acting all over the subcontinent. Bharata emphasizes in the last verse of Natyasastra:

Thus many practices sanctioned by Sastras have been described in connection with the performance of dramas. Whatever remains unmentioned should be included into practice by experts from an observation (lit. imitative) of people (i.e. their usage). (XXXVI.83. Ghosh)
There are simultaneously two kinds of objects to be observed by the actor: one is the inner; and the other is the phenomenal. The former is the invisible world of the actor himself as a part of the environment, indicating the self-observation. This process requires a certain degree of spiritual consolidation, courage and total freedom, closely relating to realization of ultimate truth of acting or entire nature of the actor-being. The notion of self-observation is a profound, discreet insight in Bharata’s teaching. Relatively, the latter is generally concerned with the visible world of people and matter around the actor. Natya is a socio-cultural practice describing “day to day activities” (I.120-121, A Board of Scholars) and “human nature with its joys and sorrows” by a means of “representation through Gestures and the like (i.e. Word, Costume and Sattva)” (I.121, Ghosh). The actor training therefore evolves out of total acceptance of the life of emotion (Bhava), mind (Manas), and sense perception embodied in the actor’s own environment.

The actor may be, like anyone else, unaware of existence of people and things near to him due to conventional relationship in a solid mould of life. He must not lose sensitive observation on not only himself but also them who have an intimate association with his nature and social disposition. In order to gain good achievement in performative expectation, Bharata taught the actor to apply the technique of acting only “after observing human nature completely [and] after taking into consideration the strength and weakness of human beings as well as their ways of seasoning and enjoyment of pleasures” (XXI.125, A Board of Scholars). Nandikesvara mentions the matter at the end of his treatise, Abhinayadarpana, apparently the shorter version of Natyasastra (VIII-XI):

Mandalas. Utplavanas, Bhamaris, Caris, Gatis according to their relation to one another are endless in number and variety. Uses of these in dance and drama are to be learnt from the Sastra tradition and through observation of the wise people. (Verse. 323-324, Ghosh)

This quotation of Nandikesvara implies Bharata’s teaching philosophy that there are two major approaches to learn the art of acting: one is re-examination through correct understanding of the Sastra (discipline of theatre) where all the available data are compiled by many generations of the
actor; and the other is the practice through the direct experience of observation. It is to be noted that they are the significant teaching methodology of BS presented in *Natyasastra* (XXIV.74-80). The actor first has to drill himself in all the instructions of the acting manual (Abhyantara). After observing the master’s interpretation of the manual or Sastra in demonstration, he should practice (Anukarana) and innovate it by himself. This leaning process effectively reveals the function of human anatomy and the application of voice and speech, fundamentally interconnecting with the psychological response. The sensitive observation on a limitless variety of life is required because “rules regarding the feelings and activities of the world, movable as well as immovable, can not be formulated (lit. ascertained) exhaustively by the Sastra” (XXVI.125-126, Ghosh). Even though Sastra is available to the actor as a ‘proven’ source on good authority, it is impossible to enlist in the Sastra all kinds of attitude and manner of people.

When the actor reaches a certain level of proficiency, multiple interpretation and modification from a paradigmatic model, whether it is the manual or the master, were allowed in accordance with “their place and time of action, birth and the region of the earth dwell in” (XXIII.103-104, Ghosh) and “all their different conditions” (XXVI.123-124). It has the possibility of encouraging the actor to discover by himself all capable techniques of acting in given circumstances. Not only hard, refined rules to be kept strictly but also open, flexible applications to be innovated distinctly exist in BS. The exemplary, yet detailed indications of each technique in BS were designed to be suitable for the both cases. It is the reason why Bharata repeated to add the sentence, “whatever has been omitted [here] should be gathered by [observation of] the wise [people] from the popular usage”, after regulations and diverse rules are demonstrated in several verses (XVIII.61, XXI.123, XXVI.118 and others).

The actor should be a disciple of life and people’s behaviour. Growth of the actor is a constant process of exploring physical, psychological and emotional complexities of the behaviour as well as understanding “Sastra, laws, arts and activities [that] are connected with the human practice” (XXVI.124-125, Ghosh). He must understand a whole process involved in the direct experience
of observation at any object and people. Questions of what and how to observe are suggested case by case in the thirty-six chapters of Natyasastra. Bharata asked his actors to learn from their own process of observation and use the discovery in their creative works. If the sensitive observation is consciously made to be habitual, the actor is able to isolate and analyze people’s behaviours in ordinary life and defines their origins for another life on the stage. By the disciplined experiences of observation, he becomes the expert in identifying various techniques of acting. Therefore, the first cardinal principle is formulated like, *The actor has to know the process involved in the direct experience of observation so as to define the origin of people’s behaviour and to create challenge of innovation and improvisation.*

### 3.2.2 Cardinal Principle II

BS is not a theory or mere philosophy. It is rather a sort of aesthetical practice or meditation to achieve the ultimate reality of acting and entire nature of actor. Bharata concentrated on not only total acceptance of the life of emotion, mind and sense, but also that of spirit. His aim is to bring the actor to a well-coordinated management of the creative state, comprising all joys and sorrows of the spirit, the secular and the sensuous. It does not signify a mystique of ideological fantasy but a concrete methodology of actor preparation that contains a meditative and contemplative quality. Bharata pointed out three primary sources of his methodology supporting the actor to concentrate all attention on the harmonious state (Samanya) of body, mind and spirit.

The people, the Vedas and the spiritual faculty (adhyatma) are known as the three authorities (Pramanas). The drama is mostly based on objects relates to the last two (the Vedas and the adhyatma). The drama which has its origin in the Vedas, and the spiritual faculty (adhyatma) and includes [proper] words and metre succeeds when it is approved of by the people. ... (XXVI.119-121, Ghosh)

The core of the experience of life is reflected into the Veda and its philosophical discourse, religious practice, and aesthetical observance deal with the issues of every-day significance. The
composition of Veda is originally based on knowledge of Loka (tangible world or ordinary life), which makes a direct appeal to the conscious sense of personal experience (Adhyatma) in actual life. Natyasastra has been viewed as the fifth Veda (Sarvavarnika Pancama Veda), a compilation from the recitation of Rgveda, the song of Samaveda, the performance process of Yajurveda, and the aesthetics of Atharvaveda (I.17-18). Bharata probably mastered the methodology of the ritual (Viniyoga) of Veda-s and its effectiveness to people. The practice of theatre arts was considered identical with the practice of Yajna (Vedic ritual) (I.126). While describing the myth on the origin of theatre in the chapter I (Natyasastropatti), it is clearly asserted that theatre was created in order to lead people to a realm where they can experience a state of being beyond a realm of peripheral pleasure, which is by and large akin to the experience of bliss (I.7-12). Abhinavagupta interpreted this experience as a spontaneous generation of the state of Ananda (beatitude or aesthetic rapture) that is “similar to the tasting (asvada) of the supreme Brahman” or the Ultimate Reality (Gnoli 1968:47-48).

Both Bharata and Abhinavagupta believed that the cosmic creativity in ritual altar can be also regained through the experience of bliss in theatre. They saw the art of acting as a way of life and the actor’s ultimate work as a search for Mukti or Moksha (total liberation from attachment to the transient being). Bharata comments on it in the first chapter, “The actor (Nataka) who will offer the Puja according to the rules and the observed practice, will attain auspicious wealth and will go to heaven [in the end]” (128, Ghosh). Rangadevatapujana (III) and Purvarangavidhi (V) chapters imply that if the actor fully gives himself, with confidence, in his deepest intimacy, all his acting become pure, sincere, sacred and true. It is the moment when he is managing the character of the play as a means to uncover and give to the audience a catalyst operation for evoking a state of bliss. Bharata and his one-hundred actors are described to be suitable for carrying the great work, who are “conversant with the esoteric mystery of the Vedas and perfect in the observation of holy vows” (I.23, A Board of Scholars). Rather, the gods are unable to perform face to face with the audience and “unfit[ed] to do anything with theatre” (I.24).
Brahma or the Creator allowed the actors to master the culmination of graduated series of all sorts of people's experiences in *Natyasastra*, which "teaches duty to those who go against duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfilment, and it chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self-restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to heroic persons, enlightens men of poor intellect and gives wisdom to the learned" (I.108-109, Ghosh).

The present and the past were treated altogether and thereby extended to "give guidance to people of the future as well" (I.14-15, Ghosh). It reveals the shape of things to come beyond other Vedas that BS has to open necessarily to all without any discrimination of caste, colour or creed. About value of learning the art of acting with *Natyasastra* and its effectiveness to the audience, Bharata clearly claimed:

> He who always hears the reading of that [Sastra] which is auspicious, sportful, originating from Brahma's mouth, very holy, pure, good, destructive of sins, and who puts into practice and witnesses carefully the performance [of the drama], will attain the same blessed goal which masters of Vedic knowledge and performers of sacrifices of givers of gifts will attain [in the end] (XXXVI.77-79, Ghosh)

The verses (7-12) of *Natyastrotpati* (I) chapter show that any revolutionary change in society comes with the inner change of the individual. In order to solve large social problems, the change has to start with the self awakening to his own ignorance of identity between the individual and the whole. Bharata seemed to believe that theatre contains an intrinsic attribute to stir people to this individual revolution because it is a sequence of 'acting' "which must be audible as well as visible" (Drshyakavya) (I.11), and functions as an attractive holy rite of visual depiction (Kntam Aratum Chakshusham). Theatre is necessary not only for living sensible in a profound way and for living spontaneously in freedom and peace, but also for solving various problems in society.

Bharata granted the actor a possibility of changing people (audience) and thereby the society. A certain quality of attention, characterized by full presence in the moment, empowers the actor to access its achievement. The actor as a creative activity of man should be constantly aware of and
alert to current events in life. The statement by Bharata at the prose passage of Sattvikabhava (VII) is the clear indication of his approach to that he suggested. That is the very self-observation. His emphasis on full attention and complete concentration in the actor’s work is related to the organic process of self-observation and self-awareness. To him, the self-observation is the key to open the door of total awareness of the actor-being. It is not merely an intellectual discipline but a way of life to encounter ‘existential’ questions. It is not a matter of intellectual exercises. Rather, the actor may go beyond thought and intellect, and allows himself to experience direct perception of ‘who is’ so as to have a complete understanding of the self. Attainment of the direct perception accelerates self-observation, consequently extending to self-awareness. Through self-observation, the actor is able to step into entire nature of his being and thereby reborn not only as an actor but also as human being.

Theatre derives its power largely from the actor’s ability to take precautions against something that threaten to annihilate his creativity in life. Any requirement of the self-observation is primary and fundamental for the actor who has the power, knowledge, and technique of creating another reality of life. One of the most dangerous enemies in the actor’s work is obviously to incorporate his personal idiosyncrasy or ego into the creative moment. Bharata emphasized at the last chapter that there is no space of the ego in the art of acting. After the actors of Bharata made a full misuse of their capability to ridicule the sages, they were cursed:

As due to pride in your knowledge [of drama] you have taken to arrogance (avinaya), your evil knowledge will get destroyed. In the community of sages and Brahmans or in meeting them, you will appear as being no followers of the Vedas and will attain the character of Sudras. You will become mere Sudras and attain their functions, and those to be born in your line, will be impure. (XXXVI.38-40, Ghosh)

When the actors came to Bharata in despair, he encouraged them to keep on practicing the art of acting and “to undergo a purificatory ceremony (pray ascitta)” (XXXVI.51, Ghosh). It does not mean a mere execution of formality of the ritual. He was in reality advising that the actors need to
sacrifice themselves in order to restore a state of ‘purity’ in the inner. To sacrifice the self is, as it were, to sacrifice its ego, preconditioned mind and ignorance. The mind-consciousness (Manas) is the capacity of awareness of the ego. There is no self without consciousness and no consciousness without the self (Gnoli 1968:47). While being aware of himself with complete attention, he is able to allow himself to be there as a ‘neutralized’ self with all that he has observed, sensed, known, experienced till the time.

In actor preparation of BS, there is no space for personal ego. Once the ego ceases to exist, a state of pure creativity comes into being. This state is not only something created by thought or intellect, but also discovered from valuable insights into nature of the self. It is the real meaning of the self-observation and self-awareness that interpenetrates into the core of the System as an archetypal spirit. The self-awareness requires life of the discipline. The actor must demand total awareness of him and be prepared to be absolutely sincere through his lifetime. This is, after all, the teaching of Bharata to access pure creativity. The second cardinal principle to be formulated for BS is so: *Through a rigorous search for total awareness of the actor himself, a state of the pure creativity is made accessible.*

### 3.2.3 Cardinal Principle III

The story of the First performance in the Banner Festival of Indra in *Natyasastra* (I.53-97) has an implicit meaning that theatre, in essence, carries within itself the risk of failure. As long as the presence of a human being (actor) surrounded by a human being (audience) is a theoretical and practical prerequisite of any theatre, a sudden disruption is always possible. Bharata may be the first, in those times, to realize the great necessity of an organized training system, innately fraught with uncertainty. The First performance presented, dealt with the history of the conflict between gods and demons. The demons were depicted one-sidedly as the tumultuary loser and the ultimate victory of the gods was celebrated. This unequal treatment made the demons in the audience so
angry that they disordered the performance by their magical power. The attack was nothing but to "paralyse the speech, movement as well as memory of the actors" (1.66, A Board of Scholar).

Bharata disposed the story in the first part of *Natyasastra* and then began to teach his system of acting as a means of minifying the risk of failure or keeping the best condition preventing the actor from certain disruption. He explains in the chapter XXVII of the determination of success in case of performance (Natyasiddhinirupuna) that “no play can be devoid of any merit or totally free from faults. Hence faults in production of a play should not be made much of” (47, Ghosh). The actor is just advised in the very next verse to follow therefore the techniques “about Words, Gestures and Costumes of minor important (lit. non-essential) as well as about representing the Sentiments [or Rasa] and Psychological States [or Bhava], dance, vocal and instrumental music and popular usages of the same kind [relating to the performance]” (48).

One of the most important and distinguished principles in BS is the work towards the unity of Rasa and the technique. Bharata’s approach to Rasa distinguishes his metaphysical concept from mere ‘descriptive’ metaphysics. His metaphysics is a ‘practical’ philosophy, bringing attention to coordination of the abstract theory of Rasa with the practical action for its realization. Instead of as an isolated phenomenon to be analysed and described, he viewed Rasa as an active process to be realized at the moment when it is taking place. To Bharata, Rasa can be perceived only, and not understood. If one has never perceived it directly, any narrative description and elaboration on Rasa do not appeal to him concretely.

The spontaneity of Rasa results from not an indeterminate, static manner of examination, but a conscious, dynamic experience of execution. All the techniques of the System including the four schemes of Abhinaya were so practically designed as to help the audience to evoke or create Rasa. It is possible, in BS, for the actor to find stimuli of the ‘immediate-sentiment-spring’ and to guide the audience to experience Rasa through systematization of actor preparation. The achievement of the ultimate aim requires him to intensify a backbreaking discipline of mastering the techniques
on the basis of profound knowledge of the relations between mind and body, thought and emotion, and inner life and outer circumstances.

There are several definitions of Rasa by those who have had aesthetical experiences and those who have attempted to analyze, without the direct experience, a meaning and components of such a state (Krishnamoorthy 1983). The aesthetical experience is highly personal and there can be a number of definitions depending on various approaches. It was not until Bharata’s emergence that an attempt to theorize Rasa took hold in the field of actor preparation. Techniques of the general application for evoking Rasa were introduced objectively with him. It is to be noted that Bharata, for the first time, succeeded in explaining systematically the process of realization of Rasa as a lived experience aroused by the technique and discipline.

Rasa is able to neither exist nor be experienced by itself but along with other ten components of Natyasamgraha, which are condensed into Bhava, Vibhava and Anubhava. Evocation of Rasa is attributed to the integrated union of them (vibhanubhava-vyabhicari-samyogad rasanispatthe). Bhava, indicating a psychological activity relating to nature of emotion or feelings, has the double etymological significances in Natyasasstra: one is which comes into existence (Bhavanti); and the other is which leads to aesthetical rapture (Bhavayabti) (VII.0). In the Sanskrit usage, it connotes the sentiment, intention, and a way of thinking as well. Bharata used the word primarily to denote the emotion, and other connotations justly get involved in his word of Bhava. He enumerated total forty-nine kinds of Bhava and classified them into eight Sthayi Bhava-s (dominant or permanent), thirty-three Vyabhicari or Sancari Bhava-s (transitory or transferable), and eight Sattvika Bhava-s (involuntary or temperament) (VII.9-99). Vibhava means the cause of Bhava or the circumstances in which Bhava places (VII.4). In the post-Bharata period, it developed into Alambana Vibhava and Uddipana Vibhava, in earnest. The former designates dramatis personae on whom Bhava rest and the latter, the circumstances surrounding the dramatis personae. A specific Bhava stimulated by Vibhava is to be understood in its clear perspective by suitable gesticulation of the consequent action that is called, Anubhava (VII.5-7).
A dominant emotion is naturally interwoven with various fleeting emotions. After it is initiated from Vibhava, Sthayi Bhava is elaborated by Vyabhicari Bhava and made visible to the audience through Anubhava. Bharata provided the technique of Abhinaya for Anubhava. Abhinaya consists of the four schemes, i.e. Vacika (verbal), Angika (physical), Sattvika (psychological, mental, or emotional), and Aharya (makeup, costume, properties). Abhinaya transfers Bhava to the audience and leads them to infer Rasa. Realisation of Rasa manifests itself in the heart of the responsive audience (Rasika) when Bhava is accurately generated from the combination of four schemes of Abhinaya in accordance with Dharmi (highly innovated, stylised or the lesser), Vrtti (verbal, physical and psychological behaviours), and Pravrtti (regional variation). Through this continuous cyclic process of interdependence, the union of various Bhava-s ultimately culminates in Rasa: “Just as the dry wood is pervaded by fire as also the physical body is pervaded by Rasa which is congenial to the heart, and Bhava thus gives rise to Rasa” (VII.7, A Board of Scholars). As a good instance, Bharata compares Rasanispattih (relish of Rasa) to the aftertaste of a delicious food with various flavours in which a specific flavour already melts and a sense of ‘total’ relish remains.

The combination [or samyoga] of Vibhavas (Determinants) and Anubhavas (consequents) together with Vyabhicari Bhavas (Transitory states) produces Rasa. ...as taste (rasa) result from a combination of various spices, vegetables and other articles, and as six tastes are produced by articles, such as raw sugar or spices or vegetables, so the Durable Psychological States, attain the quality of a Sentiment (i.e. become Sentiment). ... Just as there is the production of good taste through the juice produced when different spices, herbs and other articles are pressed together so also Rasa (Sentiment) is produced when various Bhavas get together. ... Just as noble minded persons consuming cooked food seasoned with various kinds of spices relish the tastes thereof and become excessively delighted so also sophisticated onlookers (theatre goers) relish the Sthayi Bhavas indicated through the gesticulation of the Bhavas through Verbal, Physical and temperamentental activities and become delighted. (VI. the first prose after the 31st verse. Rangacharya)

The totality is a metaphysical base for interpretation of Rasa and the practical condition for its evocation. To gain an integrated union of all forms of life and matter, of the individual and the
whole, whether this whole is the ultimate self, nature, god, or the unknown, was Bharata’s major practice in his search for Rasa. This practice is, as it were, a pursuit of the organic wholeness. In any artificial boundary of division, for instance, between mind and body, thought and emotion, the actor can not help suffering from a dichotomy of thinking and doing. A lack of totality leads the actor to misunderstand his responsibility to the whole and he is constantly at war with himself on stage. When the conflict ends or when the actor overcomes such a ‘duality’ of dividing himself into different fragments, there is peace and harmony in the actor’s consciousness. The totality of acting emerges from the most intrinsic layers of the organism, which is a conscious sense of the actor-being. Within this specific state of totality, he is able to perceive, act with complete clarity and without any sense of contradiction. The ultimate aim that Bharata concerned to pursue is the achievement of the totality.

If the actor moves beyond the ordinary duality and begins with an awareness of the integration of all the physical, psychological, and even the spiritual aspects of acting, it is possible to access the real process of Rasa. After each four schemes of Abhinaya are distinct and clearly identifiable, they must transcend each individual identity and merge into a state of the totality. Once it comes into the actor’s creative work, to move, to sound, and to act are not separable any more. Rather, they become all one operation in a higher cognition and it may be, by and large, “the compact (ekaghana) experience of one’s own beatitude, which is proper to yogins [or disciplinants] of higher orders (the perception is immaculate, free from all impressions [uparaga] deriving from external things)” (Gnoli 1968:82). Through one oft-quoted verse (Sloka) of the salutation to Siva or the god in the Abhinayadarpana, Nandikesvara describes Siva as the actor of the totality who fully charges the world (Universe) with unification of body and mind or of the four schemes of Abhinaya.

We bow to Lord Siva, the actor accomplished in all emotions whose movements are the world, whose perfect speech is the entire language and whose vestments are the moon and the stars etc. (1)
The definition of Nata (actor) is apparent in Natyasastra that “the root Nat means to act, [and] since this member acts again and again the stories of people with Rasa, Bhava and Sattva he is called by the name Nata” (XXXV.95). The Sanskrit root, ‘Nrt’ or its dialect form of Prakrit, ‘Nat’ accordingly developed into the words of Nrtta (abstract movement or pure dance), Natya (theatre or dramatic performance), and Nrtya (narrative and thematic gesticulation). Seen in the chapter I and IV, Natya was created by Brahma while Nrtta was brought into being by Parameswara (Siva). Bharata got revelation of the god to incorporate Nrtta into Natya. The term of Nrtya is separately not mentioned in Natyasastra, even though distinct characteristics of Nrtya are discerned in the chapter IV and XXVI (Citrabhinaya). Dhanamjaya distinguished these three in Dasarupa (I.10-13): Natya is based on the sentimental and imaginative experience (Rasasrayam); Nrtya on the emotional states (Bhavasrayam); and Nrtta on rhythm and time (Talalayasrayam). While Nrtta “is occasioned by no specific need [and] it has come into use simply because it creates beauty [and splendor]” (IV.267, Ghosh), the success of Natya obviously lies in evocation of Rasa.

Natya gave the distinct privilege of creation of Rasa to the actor (Nata). The direct experience of observation, complete attention, self-awareness and total preciseness, which Bharata was very much eager to emphasize implicitly in the System are, after all, all various means for the ultimate state of being. The actor has to involve his entire being in acting moment by moment and live the whole of his being in life. When he, as “the means of the tasting” (Gnoli 1968:xxxvi), goes by the aesthetical process of Rasa, life has a new meaning and everything that has beauty becomes Rasa. Formulated here is the third cardinal principle of BS: The union of all disciplines (techniques) of the physical, the psychological and the metaphysical is certainly required for the actor who must incorporate his entire being into every moment of acting.

3.3.0 Infrastructural Technique

While the chapter I (Natyasastrottpatti), VI (Rasavikalpa) and VII (Bhavavyanjaka) contain the metaphysical idea or theory of BS including the mythical origin of the theatre, abstract execution
of Rasa, description and classification of Bhava, the chapter VIII onwards prescribes mainly the practical technique for realization of the idea. If the actor has requisite qualities of "intelligence, strength, physical beauty, knowledge of time and tempo, appreciation of the Psychological States and the Sentiments, proper age, curiosity, acquisition of knowledge and arts, their retention, vocal music prompted by dance, suppression of stage-fright, and enthusiasm" (XXVII.99-101, Ghosh), Bharata believed that the technique helps the actor to achieve artistic inspiration so as to make competent for communication and response, and finally to evoke Rasa in the audience.

From the treatment of Bhava to the projection of Pravrtti, Vrtti and Dharmi, Bharata mapped the whole process of actor preparation in the employment of sequence of the technique. Each of his technique has multiple regulations in accordance with different conditions of the character’s birth, sex, age, etc. The possibility of its applications exists suitable for requirements of modern actor training. The following six infrastructural Techniques are expected to guide the actor to use BS or Natyasastra as a pragmatic manual of acting in class. There is obviously no shortcut to perfecting the Technique. The efficiency lies in a certain level of proficiency, which is attained and retained through an arduous practice only. It is the actor’s responsibility to make the practice part of his life-long routine.

3.3.1 Infrastructural Technique I – Reorganization of the Body

Any emotional experience arises out of a psycho-physical process in BS. Different degrees of the actor’s intensity to body, mind, sense and emotion, as well as spirit is all together operated as inextricably linked toward the evocation of Rasa. As the priority technique of the System, Bharata suggested to the actor to master the basic sequential exercise of the body, determined by Karana and Angahara in the chapter IV (Tandavalaksana).

Bharata primarily uses in Natyasastra the word of Karana for the smallest unit of the combined movement of hands, feet, neck, eyes and head. (It should be distinguished from another definition of Karana in the 3rd verse of the chapter XI: “The movement with a single foot is called the Cari
and two feet moving [together] is called the Karana"). Karana is divided into two categories, i.e.
Gati and Sthana. In Gati, various movements of limbs, hand-gestures and eye-movements come
into the exercise, while Sthana denotes six kinds of the standing posture for man (XI.51-72) and
the three for woman (XIII.159-171), which characterize immobility. Karana generates Angahara.
Angahara has its origin in Karana as seeing the verse cited: "two Karanas make one Matrika, three
Karanas make a Kalapaka, four Karanas make a Sandaka, five Karanas make a Samghataka and
Karanas exceeding five make an Angahara" (Ghosh, IV.30-34). He continues to teach in the same
chapter that "the Sthanas, the Caris [or harmonized and coordinated movements of the foot, calf,
thigh and waist], the Nrtta-hastas [or movements of hands or hand-gestures] are known as the
Matrikas, the variations of which are called the Karanas" (58, Ghosh, [ ] mine).

The central position in sitting (Asana) (XIII.195-206), standing (Sthana) and reclining (Sayana)
(XIII.221-227) as well as the standard unit of movement possibility (XI-XIII) all emerge from the
control of Karana and Angahara. Even though Bharata limits in Natyasastra the variety of Karana
to one-hundred eight in number, a correlative bonding between the mobile formation of Gati and
the immobile of Sthana produces, in reality, numerous Karana-s. Moreover, the combination of
thirty-two Angahara-s with the multiple number of Karana-s can cover every kind and description
of the physical framework in Natyasastra, relating to its specific manipulation of static positions,
kinetic gestures, and languages of the face and hands. The practice of Karana and Angahara thus
encourages the actor to explore all the anatomical possibility and limitation of the body.

The chapter IV of Tandavalaksana introduces articulation of the movement through an analysis
of the skeletal constitution. Each part of the body and the functions were investigated as the bone-
joint structure oriented rather than the musculature, "for the muscles could not suggest absolute
form or create abstract geometrical patterns" (Vatsyayan 1977:28). In order to achieve a correct
geometrical form and a moment of perfect balance with the vertical median, Bharata stressed the
importance of the particular joints of knees, pelvis and shoulder in this chapter. Each joint of the
body is examined in detail through the six chapters (VIII to XIII) on Angikabhijnaya (technique of
physical expression or body-language). Bharata started by breaking up the body into two parts, i.e. limbs (Anga) and facial gesture (Upanga): "The six major limbs (anga) are the head [pivoting on neck], hands, breast, sides, waist [connecting with hip], and the feet, and the (six) minor limbs (upanga) are the eyes, eyebrows, nose, lips, cheeks and the chin" (VIII.13, Ghosh, [ ] mine). This classification probably resulted from a general observation that the actor treats as a main concern "the different gestures of the head, which are included in facial gestures and which support many Sentiments (Rasa) and Psychological States (Bhava)" (VIII.16, Ghosh). The respective functions of the joint of neck, elbows, knees and the adjoining parts (Pratyanga-s) were investigated for both the postural and gestural application.

The basic sequential exercise for each individual part of the body and in concern with the other parts in movement is explained in the chapter of Tandavalaksana. The coordination of eyes, head and neck with the hands registers in the exercise of Angahara. The actor learns expansion of the body while using a full size of the limbs in practices of Karana, which indicate the spreading of Anga and Upanga in extremity. These basic exercises help the actor to develop flexibility, quick-reflex action, stamina, and a sense of space, and thereby to build a balanced structure of the visual in physicality.

All movements essentially emerge from the point of stable balance and return back to it. For Bharata, the balance is a state to relax and the readiness to move. This is the reason why Karana and Angahara were designed for providing the limbs necessary weights and counterweights. The balanced body or its harmonization is suggested through two seminal terms, Sausthava and Sama, in the chapter XI:

Those performance exercise [in Angaharas] should take care of the Sausthava, for the limbs without it (Sausthava) create no beauty (lit. do not shine) in drama or dance. The Sausthava of limbs is to be presented by being still unbent, at ease, neither too upright nor bent much. When the waist and arms as well as the elbows, the shoulder and the head are in their natural positions (Sama) and the breast is raised, it will be the Sausthava [of the body]. (89-92, Ghosh)
All of the posture, gesture and movement must be on the basis of Sausthava. Bharata believed that the moment of balance of the body creates the beauty.

The position in which the chest is not bent [and should be kept raised], the two hands are Caturasra [or moving about at the waist and the navel together with Sausthava] and Ayata [or spread out] and Vaisnava Sthana [or one foot in the natural posture and another obliquely placed with toes pointing sideways] and the neck is Ancita [or slightly bent] gives rise to Angamadhurya (charm of limbs). (XXXVII.85, A Board of Scholars, [ ] mine)

It is largely accepted in the academic circle that the treatise on the science of Yoga was collated, coordinated and systematized by Patanjali somewhere between 2nd century BC and 3rd century AD (Kenghe 1975:145-165). It indicates that Yoga Sutras is nearly contemporaneous to the times of Natyasastra. Patanjali claims in Yoga Sutra that the universal body (Purusa) of Yogakriya (Yoga activity) consists of the eight limbs (Anga-s), i.e. “self-restraints, fixed observances, regulation of breath, posture, abstraction, concentration, contemplation and trance” (II.29). The posture (Asana) practice should go at first so as to “make the physical body perfectly healthy and fit for the influx and manipulation of [certain kinds of subtler] forces”, including “Prana and Kundalini” (higher states of consciousness or fundamental psycho-physical energy) (Yoga Sutra II.46 and Taimni 1961:252). The great importance is given to the body and its relevant basic exercises, for “Control of nervous and vital energy produces control of mental functions” (Chaudhuri 1965:53).

Bharata nowhere in Natyasastra directly refers to Yogakriya. However, a comparative analysis of Karana-s reveals that the exercise of Tandavalaksana is closely related to Yogasana. Durvas Asana of Yoga is, for instance, instructed to “pull the waist and chest up, fold the hands in front of the chest and balance the body on the right leg. The left leg lies across the back of the neck. Try to breathe normally”(Iyengar 1965:178). Bharata’s description on Nisumbhita Karana, which “the leg is bent from behind, the chest is elevated, and the palm is placed in the Tilaka pose” (Ghosh, IV.125), is nothing but the slight modification of Durvas Asana. If the actor knows this Yogasana, he can easily access several variations of Vrscika Karana, like Nikuncita (Bent), Vrscika Kuttita
(Scorpion in Nikutta), Lalata Tilaka (Forehead Mark) and Suci (Needle), commonly prescribed as that “the hands are bent towards the elevations of the shoulders, the right leg is bent towards the back and kept at some distance from it” (IV.108, Ghosh). For another instance, the 107th Karana, Sakatasya (or Cart wheel) is described in Natyasastra like that “the body is curved and the leg is stretched in Talasancara [that the heels are thrown up while the big toe put forward and the other toes bent], and the chest is Udvahita [or opened up such as a bent bow]” (IV.168, Ghosh, [ ] mine). Comparably, it is illustrated as Dhanur Asana of Yoga that “stretch the arms back and hold the left ankle with the left hand and the right ankle with the right hand. Now exhale completely and pull the legs up by raising the knees above the floor, and simultaneously lift the chest off the floor” (Iyengar 1965:81).

Yogasana was carefully designed to stimulate the glands, to strengthen the motor-sensory nerve, and to vitalize the body. Iyengar claims that the body gains “agility, balance, endurance and great vitality” by the accurate practice (1965:42). These qualities are possibly applicable to the items of Tandavalaksana in so far as Karana and its variation of Angahara are, by and large, “a yoga” itself (Vatsyayan 1977:28). As Asana serves for the most pre-requisite of Yogakriya, so does Karana for BS.

The sufficient and long-term practice of Karana and Angahara helps the actor to sharpen and strengthen the ‘subtle’ body, too. The proficient treatment of those exercises evokes the tangible body to be reconstituted as a ‘repositioned’ body. A regularly repeated practice to construct the posture and gesture in perfection implants a higher level of the concentration into each part of the body. While the motor-sensory nerve system operating on a whole body awakens innate senses of the movement, originating from experiences of the perception, the movement becomes the actor’s consciousness itself. According to K.N. Panikkar’s interpretation, “The body is now transformed into one-thousand eyes” (the interview, Jan. 13th 2003).

In this optimal state of awareness and readiness, the actor is able to carry all conscious senses of performance in his body ‘unconsciously’. His body is now ready to respond spontaneously to
any need in any circumstances of the play. This is nothing but the ‘repositioned’ body enabling the actor to take spontaneity and thereby to register strong presence in performance. If he does not realize its implicit meanings implanted by Bharata in the Tandavalaksana chapter, other following chapters, especially XII and XIII, can not be completely understood where the physical aspect of acting is prescribed corresponding to the emotional state. Noticeably, Bharata in the chapter IV (Tandavalaksana) teaches his actors a significant initiation to access BS with the introduction of psycho-physical or psycho-physiological or psychosomatic foundation of the art of acting.

The necessity and value of the basic sequential exercise of the body set out in Natyasastra and has followed quite closely in Kutiyattam. In the preliminary body exercise (Kriya Sadhakam) of Kutiyattam, the most basic, essential and useful is the practice of the specific stance, called Tanu Nikkuka. The feature of Tanu Nikkuka has direct connection to Natyasastra. The position of two legs in stance is same with one of the six Sthana-s, i.e. Vaisakhashthana described in the chapter XI (61-63). Bharata actually prescribed this Sthana suitable for using “in exercise” (63-65). Prior to anything in the Kutiyattam training (Sadhakam), the beginner-actor has to adapt his body to Tanu Nikkuka that builds a foundation for applying the advanced technique. A senior actor and teacher of Margi Kutiyattam Sangham in Kerala, Margi Narayana Chakiyar repeatedly emphasized in the training session of July, 2002 – May, 2003: “Kutiyattam training without Tanu Nikkuka is alike the house setting up on a sandy place”.

Tanu Nikkuka develops the stamina, balance, flexibility and the ability of concentration. The correct and precise practice of Tanu Nikkuka guides the actor to make his spinal column straight, to throw out his chest naturally, and to concentrate his whole strength on the hypogastric center. This state is no more than what Bharata expected in the actor’s body in his term of Caturasra. The exercise of Tanu Nikkuka allows him to rediscover the genuine structure of his body and to cure himself of a bad habit. The hands-rotation prevents his shoulder from unnecessary tensions and in the same time avoids insufficient relaxation by preserving the dynamic posture. The concentration is naturally evolved while maintaining the posture of this exercise over more than thirty minutes.
Margi Narayana Chakiyar instructed Tanu Nikkuka in the training session (16th July 2002, Margi Kutiyattam Sangham):

The body should be poised straight and naturally with taking care that the hips are not thrust backwards. The front parts of the feet are kept open to sideward and the heels are pushed into forwards as much as possible. A distance between one heel and another is about one span. When the upper part of body keeps straight, the knees bend down to make a half sitting posture. A three-span-lengthened stick is placed in between the two knees. It forbids them to become closer each other and to be lift up. The hands are clenched (Musti-mudra) and rotated in front of the pit of stomach. The shoulder should relax although the fists rotate with all his force. The elbows are hooked and their location should be upper than the fists. Chin down and chest out naturally. Make a frontal gaze. Feel a tight or belted sensation around your waist especially after breathing in. Avoid any upward and downward movement of the shoulder while breathing in and out. At least for thirty minutes are the posture kept up and the duration should be gradually increased up to one hour. This posture has to be practiced every day. (the stenographic note I)

Apart from this preliminary exercise of Kutiyattam, an actress and teacher of the Sangham, Margi Sathi recommended her students to hold Yogakriya concurrently: “Yoga training helps your body more dynamic. It supplies a vital energy in your Sariram (body complex)” (28th July 2002, the stenographic note I). Her teacher and one of the great Kutiyattam actors, Ammanur Madhav Chakiyar also witnesses in his autobiographical essay, My Training, My Gurus: “in order to keep the body in good health I used to perform about three hundred Surya-Namaskaras in the morning” (146), which is a basic sequence of Yogakriya.

Bharata even taught his actors to “smear his body with gingerly oil or Yavagu (gruel) for proper massage” and then “[stretch] his limbs over the Bhatti [or wall or ground]” prior to “practicing Angaharas and Caris” (XI.95-96, A Board of Scholars). This kind of oil massage treatment is still implemented in the teaching methodology of Kutiyattam. It is very applicable to render the body flexible and elastic and to preserve the body from the injury in exercise as well. The treatment is usually conducted during the monsoon and called Uzhichil. Along with it, Bharata gave a useful
tip about the preventive health care and diet control of the actor who needs to rigorously undergo the basic sequential exercise.

For the sake of vitality the actor undergoes the treatment of Nasya and Bastividhi (sternutatory and diulectic) mentioned in medical treatises. He shall take delicious and nutritious food, gravy, beverages etc. The vital breaths are dependent upon nutrition and ability is based on vitality. Hence for the sake of maintaining the ability one should be scrupulous about ones diet. The instructor shall not make the pupil perform the exercise if his body is defiled, if he is tired, if he is excessively hungry or thirsty, if he has drunk (water, liquor etc.) too much or if he has eaten profusely. The sensible instructor shall train a pupil with graceful body and square well shaped chest and steady limbs. (XI.97-99, A Board of Scholars)

BS is to befriend the body rather than to dominate it. The actor is constantly taught to explore a possibility of each part of the body and to awake an inherent sense of the posture and gesture in timelessness. Through the basic sequential exercise of Karana and Angahara, he may enjoy the fullest confidence of his body. As long as life concerns, the importance of reorganization of the body fit for the art of acting is never ceased to be. For reference, one-hundred eight Karana-s of Bharata’s description are chiseled and sculptured in relief on stone slabs on the four walls of the tower (Gopuram) of the Natraja temple at Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu. They are also documented well in photograph and illustration in B.V. Narayanasvamy and his associates’ book, Tandava Laksanam (1936). Next to the teacher’s guidance in practice, the visual materials will support the actor in interpretation and examination of Bharata’s description on Tandavalksana.

3.3.2 Infrastructural Technique II – Unified and Harmonious Communication

Bharata takes human figure as a basic instrument of expression in Natyasastra. Human activity manifests itself mainly in three forms that are the verbal, the physical, and the psychological or emotional. He put into the System all the possibility and capability of the forms of activity under his comprehensive concepts of the Abhinaya. It is broad enough to comprise Vacika, Angika, and
Sattvika and the fourth scheme, Aharya, dealing with the application of make-up, costume and property, is inherent in them. In the chapter XXVII where the review of fulfillment and condition of success in the play production is prescribed, he comes up with the first verse: “the descriptive narration, the relevant bodily action and the expressiveness of the inner feelings are the three aspects of Abhinaya which are instrumental to the cause of Rasa in conveying the idea of the drama” (Rangacharya).

Bharata was clearly aware of two factors: one is that efficiency of the actor’s work lies in his ability to communicate; and the other is that Abhinaya is capable of carrying performance toward the point where the audience realizes its intended meaning (VIII.6). The evocation of appropriate Bhava and its corresponding Rasa by Abhinaya is the primary formation of BS. The Rasa is never experienced without communication through Abhinaya. This may be the reason that exposition of the four schemes of Abhinaya occupies the largest part of Natyasastra extending over no less than fifteen chapters. Abhinaya “indeed, is nothing but a power of communication (avagamanasakti)” (Gnoli 1968:31). Bharata valued Abhinaya above any other techniques of the System:

The men who know in this order the art of Histrionic Representation [i.e., Abhinaya] and applies it on the stage, receive in this world the highest honor for putting into practice the theory of drama (natyatattva) as well as [the art of] acting. These are to be known as the modes of representation dependent on Words, Costumes, Make-up and Gestures. An expert in dramatic production (Prayoga) should adopt these for Success [in his undertaking]. (XXVI.128-129, Ghosh)

The meaning of Abhinaya has been variously translated in English as gesticulation, enactment, technique of histrionic expression, or stage representation. Each of these translations is yet true for only a limited aspect of the actual meaning that Bharata suggested. His fourfold Abhinaya has a multiple purport by maximizing or minimizing the application of each scheme. Abhinaya is not a mere imitation (Anukarana) of the character but the ‘imaginative’ and ‘explorative’ imitation (Anukirtana) of being (Avastha) of the character (Gnoli 1968:xix-xx and 41). When this imitation
or “re-telling” (41) limits its area to voice and speech of the character in performance, it becomes Vacikabhinaya. If physical actions of the character are primarily dominated, it is Angikabhinaya. Even so is Sattvikabhinaya when feelings of the character partake of these two Abhinaya-s.

Any style of acting and characterization never depends on just one scheme of Abhinaya. Each one, i.e. Vacika, Angika and Sattvika may function individually for elaborate presentation but subtle nuances of one scheme must blend with those of other schemes at last. To express the ultimate dramatic meaning embodied in Rasa, they are arranged by a flexible, corporate formation, offering numerable responses to various stimuli. A description on the harmonization of Abhinaya-s and its effectiveness to evoke Rasa is distinctively introduced in the verse of Nandikesvāra’s Abhinayadarpana:

The song should be sustained in the throat; its meaning must be shown by the hands; the mood (bhava) must be shown by the glances; rhythm (tala) is marked by the feet. For whatever the hand moves, there the glances follow; where the glances go, the mind follows; where the mind goes, the mood follows; where the mood goes, there is the flavour (rasa). (Coomaraswamy 1998:17)

There is the possibility of creating several paradigms of acting in the actor’s experimentation of selecting, mixing, and harmonizing the four schemes of Abhinaya. Bharata in the chapter XXIV (Samanyabhinaya) enumerates some synoptic models of Abhinaya as unified nature of acting. If the technique of voice and speech is simultaneously used with the physical action and meanwhile the verbal enactment indicates the meaning that evokes appropriate emotions, Bharata named this model Vakyabhinaya (42). Vakya means the spoken sentence and therefore primarily depends on Vacika and Sattvika. Another model is Suca that can be translated as a meaning of ‘indicative’ or ‘suggestive’. “When the meaning of a sentence or the sentence [itself] is indicated first by Sattva and Gestures, and then a Verbal Representation is made, it is called Sucabhinaya” (43, Ghosh). The physical expression of the character in performance generally paves the way for the spoken word so that it is called an advanced indication (Suca).
The next is Ankura that literally means ‘sprout’. It reveals “the feeling which one has in one’s heart” (44, Ghosh) by the subtle movement of limbs, mostly, facial expression (Mukhajabhinaya) and hand-gesture (Nrtta-Hasta or Mudra). When feelings show themselves above as ‘sprouts’ on parts of the face and in the same time Mudra indicates the meaning of a sentence of the play, the action of the face is called Ankurabhinaya. Bharata distinguished it as a higher level of acting that only the proficient actor is able to assimilate (44). Fourthly, Bharata suggested Sakhahinaya that “is made in due order by the head, the face, shanks, thighs, hands and feet in the manner of branches” (45, Ghosh). “When the limbs are moved and the action grows like the branches of a tree, one leading to another, and hence is called metaphorically, Sakha (Branch)” (Raghavan 1993:77). Kalidasa also defines Sakhahinaya in his play, *Malavikagnimitra*, as that the meaning in verbal enactment has been set forth with the limbs and the foot-movement follows the rhythm, and there is so Rasa: “angairantarnihita vacanaih padanyasolayamanugata stanmayatttvam rasesu” (8th verse in Act II).

All the models are based on harmonization of three schemes of Abhinaya, which are essentially residing in the actor’s integral work, but only discriminating themselves by different degrees of intensity to each Abhinaya. The actor needs to appreciate Vacika, Angika and Sattvika one by one and ultimately consider them as a whole. They are inseparable and transcendental. After each one is identifiably emphasized for a specific elaboration in different situations in which the character involves, it must transcend its individual identity and merge into the harmonization with others. Bharata in the Samanyabhinaya chapter (XXIV) teaches the actor to learn characteristics of each and every scheme of Abhinaya, so as to gain manipulation of proficiency in them, and to combine all schemes of Abhinaya harmoniously in accordance with different needs of characterization.

In Kutiyattam, even before a full-scale training of Abhinaya, there is a tendency to consider the raw material of Abhinaya as the unified one, i.e. Vac (voice and speech), Anga (body), and Sattva (emoting consciousness or inward concentrated mind). Once the actor gets Tanu Nikkuka into the stable shape, keeping the basic stance and rotating the clenched hands, he is demanded to recite
Ramayana Samksepam (Sloka-s of Ramayana) as Sabda-Sadhaka (voice training). The straight line from the lower abdomen to the pit of stomach along with relaxed shoulders, which correct practices of Tanu Nikkuka mechanically builds up, allow him to respire as comfortable and deep as possible. A proper control in respiration is gradually made by a firm pressure of the transverse abdominal muscles upon the flattened diaphragm. During the process of sustaining the ‘horse-riding’ posture (Vaisakha Sthana) of Tanu Nikkuka, the muscles in the anterior thigh and hip are developed naturally. Organic operations of these muscles thereby support the abdominal muscles to prepare a strong foundation for the vocalization.

The actor is, through the exercise, able to check on a natural tone of voice he innately possesses. The rhythmic recitation of Sloka, followed by his hands rotating appropriately to its tempo, gives the actor a basic sense of the coordination between speech and movement. Keeping Tanu Nikkuka firmly for some time and simultaneously to recite numerable sentences of Ramayana Samksepam are possible only for the actor who keeps a higher level of the concentration. The attention on the position of bones and muscles and on vocalization bears precision in gesture and in speech. When he wants to sustain extreme precision in gesticulation and in articulation for certain duration, total concentration of the body and voice is obviously required. The basic exercises of Kutiyattam are, indeed, based on a psycho-physical operation that Vac, Anga and Sattva are mutually interrelated and essentially inseparable.

A seed of Rasa is sowed by the playwright in the drama (Nataka). It then flowers in the actor and bears fruit in the audience. Audience is “the [ultimate] authority [as regards the rules of the art]” of acting (XXVI.126, Ghosh). As application of Abhinaya is the primary practice of BS for communication between actor and audience, the initiated, responsive audience, called Rasika, is necessarily required as well. During the performance, the audience should be ‘positively’ opened for accepting and receiving heart of the actor without resistance; otherwise, he may lose a chance of experiencing the moment of Rasa. Bharata emphasized that there must be a communication of each other at the same level and same intensity in order to succeed any kind of relationship or
Success of Rasa demands the audience who feel urgency of something. The inquiry of urgency and seriousness is capable of bringing a certain degree of intensity so that the audience “attains gladness on seeing a person glad, and sorrow on seeing him sorry, and feels miserable on seeing him miserable” (XXVII.55, Ghosh). Rasa is, after all, the refinement of sense and sensibility both for the actor and the audience.

Bharata repeatedly required the art of acting to be found on life of the actor and the audience. The actor has to understand a means of perception of the audience, as long as the art of acting is highly imaginative, communicative, and responsive to the audience.

### 3.3.3 Infrastructural Technique III – Power of Words and Correct Formation of Utterance

The vocal apparatus, particularly voice and speech, is a significant scheme of Abhinaya, which makes Natya separate from Nrtta. Bharata explained that “Great effort should be taken in regard to words since ‘word’ is remembered as the physical form of Natya” (XV.2, A Board of Scholars). Vacikabhinaya is equivalent to rendering of the spoken word that deals directly with the play. Its major aim is no doubt to convey the idea and emotion of the character or ‘what to say’ granted by the playwright (poet). “The gestures, the make up, and the dress as well as Sattvika Abhinaya are to reveal the inherent meaning of words” (ibid).

Bharata was aware of the power of word and its effectiveness to the listener: “Here in the world, words constitute Sastras and support them. Hence there is nothing greater than words. It is the word that is the basis of everything” (XV.3, A Board of Scholars). From the Vedic period, i.e. approximately 15th century BC to 5th century BC, the word has been considered to represent the psychological presence or energy and to produce something in mind: “according to Vedic poets, a sound or a certain secret set of vibrations tunes exactly with the vibrations which are appropriate to the vibrations of invisible psychological forces and entity” (Joshi 1991:7).

The integral aspect of the word and sound in the Vedic tradition is well apparent in the idea of Mantra, which means “a holy formula or magic spell for evoking or bringing to mind the vision
and inner presence of a god” (Zimmer 1946:140). This meditative form of words unites mind and matter, containing “the secret methods of art of action” (Joshi 1991:7). Through pronouncing the Mantra in a precise manner, the chanter is believed to force a god to bestow magical power on himself and a group of listener and ultimately to lead them both to the highest bliss. W. Norman Brown explained potency of the power that the word essentially possesses (Sabda Sakti):

For sound has in itself a metaphysical power. The hymns of the Rg Veda as recited by the trained priest have such power because they consist of the right sounds in the right combination uttered in the right sequence and with the right intonation; and when they are so recited and accompanied by the right manual acts, they are irresistible. They are sure to accomplish the reciter’s purpose. Demons and gods are subject to their power. (1959:36)

Natyasastra itself is sometimes considered as a direct product of the Vedic tradition (XXVI.79). Sincere contemplation of the phonetic sound reverberating on the ether in the sacred chant may be compared to contemplation of the most complete sense of utterance in performance. To Bharata, Vacikabhinaya is not a means for mere communication. Rather, it is probably a sacred ‘controller’ of the actor’s ‘Mantra’ for incanting, circulating the meaning and emotion embedded in the word of the play. A correct utterance of the word of the character, connoting the right application of Vacikabhinaya, creates the power or the ‘emotive resonance’. He asked the actor to master the exact formation of speech by examining, with an extreme care, intonation of the vowel (Svara), articulation of the consonant (Vyanjana), and pronunciation of the compound word (Samasa). A close reading of the seven chapters of Natyasastra (XV-XIX, XXIV and XXVI) reveals that only when the actor understands the vocabulary and grammar (Vyakarana), and delivers his words in a right register (Sthana), accent (Varna), intonation or modulation (Kaku), and tempo (Laya), Rasa is evoked in the listener (audience).

Each word has its own rhythm (Chanda). A various pattern of the rhythm indicates a various form of the syllabic metre (Vrtta) and it is “remembered as the body of words” (XV.15, A Board of Scholars). Bharata advises in the same verse that “there is no word devoid of rhythm and no
rhythm without word” (chandohino na sabdo asti nacchandassabda varjitam). The combination of Chanda and Vṛtta is therefore “the illuminator of the dramatic performance”. Pause (Virama) in the words is also one of the rhythmic patterns. The actor has to learn the application of Virama because it clarifies a flow of the rhythm and a meaning of the words: “In the course of the dance the eyes should be directed towards the spot where the hands are busily engaged in showing the Gestures and the Vacika Abhinaya is to be proceeded with [or] by observing the relevant Viramas that indicate the idea intended to be conveyed” (XIX.62, A Board of Scholars). He, in the chapter XVI (Chhandovichiti) chapter, teaches the actor to examine the rhythm in the words, to classify the information of various metrical patterns, and then to apply its results in a given situation so as to transfer to the audience powerfully the meaning and emotion the character conceives of.

The chapter XIX (Kakuvyanjaka) serves as an introduction to the inflection of voice in speech, the intonation in recitation, and the dramatic manner of addressing the character. After observing in ordinary life common patterns of modulation of the human voice, responding to the changing emotion and situation, Bharata formulated them in the technique based on two kinds of relation between seven melodic notes (Svara-s) and eight emotional states (Rasa-s) (XIX.38-40), and five accents (Varna-s) and eight emotional states (Rasa-s) (XIX.43).

The vocal organs from where voice is produced are obviously distinguishable from the speech organs from where word is uttered. BS has an enormous potentiality for developing the resonance and amplification of the primary note in multiple centres of the body. Three registers of the voice were identified by Bharata, i.e. low, middle and high, corresponding to different centres, i.e. the chest (Uras), throat (Kantha), and head (Siras) (XIX.40-41). They are concerned with the pitch of voice and the volume of speech (41-42). Also, their relative ascending and descending orders are indicated in the same chapter (44).

In relation to intonation or modulation of the voice (Kaku), Bharata enumerated six Alamkara-s (ornamentations), i.e. Ucca (of the high pitch), Dipta (excited or illuminated), Mandra (of the grave accent), Nica (low pitch), Druta (fast), and Vilambita (slow) (XIX. 45-59). Each one has its
potential for arousal of the emotion. For instances, when the character involves in the situations of reproach, quarrel, discussion, indignation, abusive speech, defiance, anger, valour, pride, sharp and harsh words, rebuke, lamentation and so on, the actor is taught to use the excited note (Dipta) from the head register (Siras). The pitch should be more than Tara Tara (extra high pitch). Dipta intonations are suggested in the emotional states of Vira (heroic), Raudra (furious), and Adbhuta (marvellous). In case of Vilambita (slow), the note should arise from the throat and is of slightly lower pitched (Tanu Mandra). It is used in the moods of love, deliberation, discrimination, anger, envy, bashfulness, anxiety, threatening, surprise, censuring, prolonged sickness, squeezing and saying something that can not be expressed adequately. The intonation to Vilambita is desired in the states of Hasya (comic), Srngara (erotic), and Karuna (pathetic).

Even though only the six Alamkara-s and its five sub-varieties were prescribed in Natyasastra, they later developed into one-hundred and twenty-four Alamkara-s in Dikshita’s Kuvalayananda, compiled around 16th century AD (Rao 2001:166-167). Alamkara virtually keeps a considerable number of variations. The standard pattern of voice and speech, followed by its customary usages in ordinary life, keeps changing through the passage of time and matter. It is a significant fact that Bharata’s classification is not a strict regulation the actor must obey but an archetypal model from which continuous investigation on the configuration of human voice should be evolved relating to the emotional states. The numerable Alamkara-s are possibly crystallized as the actor’s database reflecting from his experiences of contemporary perception. One-by-one modelling of Alamkara is necessary to implant in the voice and speech a total sense of correspondence between Sthana (register) and Varna (accent) and Kaku (modulation) and Laya (tempo). The regular practice of Alamkara encourages the actor to control Vacikabhinaya consciously under given circumstances of the play.

In Kutiyattam, the actor (Chakiyar) limits the verbal enactment to the specific technique of speech, known as the Pathya (reciting). The reciting verse is discriminated from the singing verse (Dhruva) as a matter of its distinctive function. These two techniques of vocalization are, however,
quite similar each other and appropriate to be viewed as “the chanting of the Vedas” (Rajagopalan 1968:13). Vacikabhinaya of Kutiyattam is believed to have initially twenty-four patterns of Pathya corresponding to the character, situation, emotion, but today only twenty or twenty-one patterns are identified. Margi Sathi distinguished characteristics of the twenty Pathya-s in training session (2nd Apr., 2003) while a great Kutiyattam actor, Painkulam Rama Chakiyar witnesses the twenty-one, inclusive of Virapanchamam, in his article, “Svaras in Kutiyattam” (90-100). There are three registers of the voice coinciding with BS and most of the verbal pattern in Kutiyattam is sustained in the throat, except “Veladuli, Artan arisen from the chest, and Viratarkan from the head” (The stenographic note III).

The technique of Pathya has generally come down in the oral-aural transmission between the master and the disciple. In this process, the potentiality of modification and individualization has been accepted, on the basis of the strict and rigid discipline. Painkulam Rama Chakiyar comments in the same article:

In Prabandha which gives emphasis to oral acting, each actor recites the gadya (prose) and padya (poetry) according to his own style; as far as I know, there is no universal standard for their recitation. The Southerners have their own style; the northerners have theirs. Moreover, there are differences between the styles of Kuttancherry, Potiyil, Ammannur [families of the Chakiyar],... the method of recitation of the guru and his sishya also might vary in prabandha, because there is no theoretical stipulation regarding this. (100. [ ] mine)

Bharata emphasized that the actor has to study knowledge of the word including the vocabulary, grammar and the customary usage. The actor also needs to keep a flexible muscular movement of jaw, lips and tongue in framing a rhythmic speech, as also the coordination of breath, phonation, resonation and pitch variation must be examined. Even the acoustic matter caused by the theatre architecture has to be considered in performance (II.80-82). Bharata’s method of Vacikabhinaya obviously helps the actor to increase sensibility to the voice and speech, and to work deeper than mere delivery of an explicit meaning of the word in the play.
3.3.4 Infrastructural Technique IV – The Living Mask and Eloquent Breathing

The mastery of Angika involves two factors: one is a keen perception of how the psychological motivation relates to a possible movement of the muscle and bone; and the other is a proficiency of the actual technique to make the actor’s inner activity visible and accessible. Everything to do with Bhava being conveyed must be externalized on the stage through an artistic, elaborate form of the body-language. Not only the facial expression but also the gesture of hands and head, the movement of chest, waist, pelvis and foot together create the body-language. “Just as the Garland maker wreathes garlands with various kinds of flowers, the Natya should be produced similarly by gestures of the different limbs in accordance with the Rasas and Bhavas” (XXVI.115-116, A Board of Scholar). To Bharata, Abhinaya of Anga introduces the actor to an organic relation of all parts of the body in accordance with the character’s nature, psychological condition, emotional state, and the social position.

Angikabhinaya is one of the most complex and intriguing techniques in BS. The application of Angika is distinctly spread over as wide as nine chapters in Natyasastra, i.e. Tandavalaksana (IV), Upangavidhana (VIII), Hastabhinaya (IX), Sarirabhinaya (X), Carividhana (XI), Mandalavidhana (XII), Gatipracara (XIII), Samanyabhinaya (XXIV) and Citrabhinaya (XXV). The name of each chapter indicates well its content and meaning. While examining a sensibly perceptive expression of the body, Bharata classified Angika into “three kinds, viz. that of limbs (sarira), that of the face (mukhaja) and that related to [different] movements of the entire body (cestakrta) including the Sakha, Anga and Upanga” (VIII.11, Ghosh). As already discussed in the previous Techniques, Sarirabhinaya consists of Anga, Upanga and Sakha. Mukhajabhinaya means just Upangabhinaya. These two Abhinaya-s are usually executed under the situation of non-movement such as standing (Sthana), sitting (Asana), or reclining (Sayana). Cestakrta is an Abhinaya, characterized by the mobility, such as Cari and Gati Pracara, in many cases presenting together with Anga, Upanga and Sakha.

It is to be that Bharata never intended to bind all these varieties of the physical enactment with
any rigid regulation. Instead, he generalized them and suggested his actors the ample scope for subjecting the regulation to modification as necessitated by requirements of the character. At the end of his major instructions about (VIII-XIII) Angika, Bharata repeatedly set forth as a premise that “whatever remains unsaid should be devised according to the demand of circumstances” (XIII.228, Ghosh).

After introductions of Bhava and Rasa, Bharata in Natyasastra immediately teaches Abhinaya and particularly, Mukhajabhinaya is the first subject. He treats the head (Siras) and the parts of face (Upanga) as a major source for the emotional expression. Mukhaja obviously plays a vital role in presentation of Anubhava and in external indication of Bhava pertaining to the character. Mukhaja is the best and most convincing Abhinaya to the audience, which reveals a subtle change of the actor’s psychological state. Even in the Preksagralaksana chapter where characteristics of the playhouse and the architectural engineering are explained, Bharata emphasizes that “when the playhouse is very big, the expression in the face [of actors] on which rests the Representation of Psychological States (Bhavas) and Sentiments (Rasas), will not be distinctively visible [to all the spectators]. Hence it is desirable that playhouses should be of medium size” (II.20-21, Ghosh).

The facial expression is intimately associated with a very intricate mechanism coordinating the articulation of different parts of the facial muscle. Thirteen kinds of head-articulation (Sirabheda), thirty-six directions of the glance (Drstis), nine movements of eyeball (Tarakas), nine activities of eyelids (Puta), seven patterns of eyebrows (Bhruka), six types of the nasal gesture (Nasika), six movements of cheeks (Ganda), six movements of lower lip (Adhara), seven movements of chin (Chibuka), and six gestures of mouth (Asya) are recommended in the chapter XIII as a series of the facial exercise. Even the thirty-six directions of glance are, for instance, subdivided into three categories: one is the eight glances related to Rasa; another is the eight to Sthayi Bhava (dominant emotion); and the other is the twenty to Vyabhicari Bhava (transitory emotion).

A part of the facial muscles is always activated with another. Articulation of the neck conforms to movement of the head. “The experts should also use the mouth in conformity with the varieties
of Glances” (VIII.156-157, Ghosh). Gestures of the chin relate to activities of the tongue (Jihva),
teeth (Danta), lips (Ostra), and the lower jaw (VIII.146-149). There is much about movements of
the cheek connecting to the lip. Articulations of the eyelid and the eyebrow interconnect with the
eyeball. “There are natures of eyeballs based on the popular practice. ... They are to be applied
[suitably] to all the different States [or Bhavas]” (VIII.102, Ghosh). The glances lastly accomplish
completion of supporting radiations of Rasa and Bhava when articulation of the eyebrow, eyelid
and eyelash are organically coordinated with the eyeball movement. Exemplary exercises of the
emotional expression through nine parts of the face are introduced in the Upangavidhana chapter.
On the basis of a synoptic model of the exercises, the actor needs to organize the facial muscles
into a concrete ‘living’ mask. The original structure of the mask in Natyasastra represents nothing
but the eight kinds of Sthayi Bhava. Through realization of a mechanism of the facial expression,
the actor may be able to create thousands of the ‘living’ masks embedded in Bhava and Rasa in
accordance with different situations of the character and the play.

Kutiyattam has preserved BS traditions in a sense of the actor training, particularly recognized
by the facial-expression exercise relating to nine emotional states (Rasa-s), i.e. Srngara (erotic),
Vira (heroic), Hasya (humorous), Karuna (pathos), Adbhuta (marvellous), Bhayanaka (terrific),
Bibhatsa (odious), Raudra (impetuous anger), and Santa (tranquil). Mukhajabhinaya is thus called
Rasabhinayam or Navarasa in Kutiyattam. This exercise contains two processes: one is for a basic
fitness of the facial muscle; and the other is for a combined movement of the facial muscle with
the corresponding Sthayi Bhava-s. The both are mostly executed in the part of eyeballs, eyebrows,
eyelids, cheeks and lips.

The eyeballs are believed to be the most effective and communicative instrument of emotion.
The greater part of effort in the actor training of Kutiyattam is dedicated to the exercise for the
eyes (Kannu Sadhakam). It aims first at perfection of articulation of the eyeballs. Margi Narayana
Chakiyar advised the practice of Kannu Sadhakam during the specified hour “between moonrise
and moonset” to prevent the eyes from a harmful influence of rays of the sun. The description of
Kannu Sadhakam during the training session in Margi Kutiyattam Sangham is:

Sit cross-legged with the hands folded on the chest. Apply vegetable oil to both upper and lower eyelids enough. Give the eyes a massage without omitting any part and stretch them sideward softly. Then try to open your eyes as wide as possible. If you feel difficulty to sustain, use the fingers for pushing up the upper eyelids as well as pushing down the lower eyelids. During a whole process of Kannusadhakam, you eyes must be kept like that.

Now, look straight. Focus your eyes on a near object and gradually on a distant object. Very strictly, even slight movement of the head is not allowed. Movements are limited to only the eyeball and, in case, to the dilation or contraction of the pupils of the eyes. Try to look an imaginary object one kilometre far away from you.

(The teacher sits in front of his student.) Follow the directions of my hand with your eyes. While doing, don’t lose your concentration. Otherwise, movements of the eyes are likely to skip one spot from another. They should move softly, without a single break, following to my hand’s indications and their speeds.

There are about the nineteen patterns of eye movements in this exercise. Each pattern of movement is done with varieties of the speed, normally extreme slow, slow, normal, fast, and extreme fast. The basic and essential patterns are …

First, look straight. Very slowly, follow my hand moving to the left and the right and again the left (←→). Second, drive your eyeballs along with the shape of a half-moon. Start from the left side, keep moving downward, and reaching the right side (U). This pattern should be modified with moving through upward (↑). The third pattern is circular. The eyeballs intend to draw with a big circle as much as possible (⊙). Fourthly, try to move your eyes imitating the line of this figure (Ⅹ). Now, Start from the left-up corner to the right-bottom and return back (↘ ↘). Modify it with the opposite direction (↙ ↘). The next pattern is to imitate this figure (Ⅴ). The movement of the eyes start from the left-up corner, coming down toward the center of the bottom, and going up to the right-up corner. Also, the opposite should be practiced (∧). Lastly, look straight. Move your eyes upward and downward (↑).

When your eyes feel tired, just close the eyes tightly for a while and then rotate the eye balls with your eyes shut soft.

(23rd July 2002, the stenographic note 1)
Once the actor achieves proficiency in articulation of the eyes, Sthayi Bhava corresponding to Rasa is expected to work in this exercise. It is an advanced level of the facial-expression exercise where the specific method of breathing (Pranayama or Vayuvidya) is emphasized as a catalyst to stimulate the emotion. It is not till this stage that Netrabhinaya (Abhinaya of the eyes) is evolved from Kannu Sadhakam (exercise of the eyes).

In Kutiyattam, all of the exercises relating to the facial expression (Mukhajabhinaya) must be concomitant with the breath-control. The arousal of Sthayi Bhava is promoted by the appropriate pattern of breathing: “The accurate breathing accelerates you to bring out Navarasa and your face muscles move more flexibly with proper inhalation and exhalation. If you know how to manage length and strength of the breathing, Rasa will sprout up spontaneously” (Margi Sathi, 28th Aug., 2002, the stenographic note II). Margi Sathi emphasizes in the training session of Rasabhinayam the relationship between breathing patterns and Sthayi Bhava’s:

(During the Kutiyattam training, both Margi Narayana Chakiyar and Margi Sathi used the word of Rasa for denoting Sthayi Bhava)

... The next Rasa is Karunam [or Karuna]. Open your eyes normally but tighten your upper eyelids slightly. The eyebrows will be accordingly pulled upward. Contract the pupils partly and look the front-upper part with tiredness. The eyes are slowly moving downward in the process. Spread out the lips and both sides throb. Inhalation through the nose initiates you to pick up some mood of Karunam. Inhale more, exhale lesser. During inhalation, breath should be vibrating. Maintain this [pattern of] breath entirely in the centre of the chest.

Adbhutam [or Adbhuta] requires Kampitam (subtle trembling). The eyes open wider. Raise the eyelids. Move and extend your eyebrows pleasingly in a gentle movement. Breathe in and out rapidly but softly. Bring air into the face and now your face is full of air. ...

Bhayanakam Rasa [or Bhayanaka] appears in your pupils fully opened. Keep the eyebrows normal and raise the eyelids from their roots. Move the eyeballs fast from side to side. Contract your lips slightly and gradually spread out sideward. Breathe in shortly, promptly and hold air in the chest for a while and exhale privately. Repeat this breathing. Concentrate your attention on the neck.

In case of Raudram (or Raudra), the eyebrow are raised up from their roots. Open the eyes with full energy. Extent the eyeballs forward. Look down Nilavilakku (the stage lamp)
[placed in front-bottom side]. This should be characterized by the movement of the lower eyelids trembling. Breathing is sprout out of the abdomen area. Inhale and exhale vigorously through the nose. By exhalation, the mood of Raudram is delivered. ... (ibid.)

As seeing the breathing method used in Rasabhinayam, sensitive inhalation helps the actor to improve inner attention and strength, while the exhalation to catch the right timing of response. Abhinavagupta similarly recognized this psycho-physiological complexity and fully agreed on the importance of the breathing in *Abhinavabharati*. Through the control of breathing pattern and concentration on a specific body-organ, he believed that the actor is able to ‘consciously’ achieve Sattvika Bhava (involuntary physical effect), mostly embodied on the face with subtle movements. For instances, Asru (shedding tears) can be quickened by intensive breath (Prana) while focusing on the point between the eyebrows, Romanca (horripilation) by another Prana toward the point on the throat, and Vaivarnya (changing countenance) by another Prana concentrating on the entire face (I:73). He was surely akin to investigate the effectiveness of breathing and attempted to plant its meditative, yet performative quality in the art of acting.

A conscious analysis of the techniques in Kutiyattam and in *Abhinavabharati* reveals that their methods of breathing are nothing but the objective result of a direct experience of observation on the physiological phenomenon of human being. It is not a secret process but a logical mechanism. In ordinary life, any emotional state always comes with a certain pattern of breathing. If the actor is aware of nature of the reciprocity between the two, he may control evocation of the emotion in performance. The student of Kutiyattam is noticeably allowed to practice the method of breathing (Vayuvidyā), only after attaining practical knowledge of “Yoga, Ayurveda [or traditional medical system of Kerala], physiology, anatomy” (Margi Sathi, the stenographic note II). D. Appukuttan Nair, the founder of Margi Kutiyattam Sangham, explains in his article, “Kutiyattam and Bhasa”:

The pranamaya kosa comes into play by the actor controlling life-breath by inhalation, exhalation and compression at various parts of the respiratory system for giving life to the expression of the various emotions, actions and speech. This is a very delicate and dangerous system of breathing which has to be practiced under very strict surveillance. (191)
All process of actor preparation in Kutiyattam is still carried on under a rigorous discipline. It is often assumed to be too rigid by a ‘modern’ standard. The teacher is not friendly but rather an authority figure. During the initial period of preparation, the student is to accept absolutely what is being transmitted in the lesson, and not to discuss with the teacher on any aspect of his training. As having him imitate what the teacher does, the student learns fundamental ideas and techniques as his teacher also did before in the same approach. It is only later when the student completes the debut performance (Arrangyatam) or much later when he has many years of acting experiences, the teacher is willing to accept his student’s own experiences of perception and arranges place for the student’s own discovery on stage. The teacher cares in a long-term process of preparation the strength and weakness his student hold, including his nature and disposition. It is not to insist that the apprenticeship model of actor preparation must be revived unqualified but to reconsider that the actor needs a ‘responsible’ teacher to help him to develop into a master of acting. The mastery of acting is the product of correct perceptions about the teaching philosophy, methodology and its practices.

3.3.5 Infrastructural Technique V – Inner Action of Pure Mind and Aesthetic Concentration

To explain the actor’s ‘inner’ action, Bharata made conceptual distinction between mind, sense perception and emotion and, first of all, directed his attention to the function of mind. The mind alluding to nature of consciousness (Cetana) was clearly identified in his statement: “A wise actor should represent the sense organs and their objectives such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell through the concerned Bhavas” (A Board of Scholars, XXIV.80); and also “when the object of a sense organ is contemplated in the mind it becomes represented outwardly. A person out of his mind can not know the object of the senses perceptible through five sources” (ibid., 86). In the same chapter, while prescribing various external signs of the character, the mind is recognized as the origin of inner actions: “an emotion arises from Sattva while an expression from the emotion
and a passion from the expression” (7). Emotion (Bhava), expression (Hava), and passion (Hela) arise from one another. They are virtually only different aspects of the Sattva that is born in mind-consciousness (Manas).

Sattva is the state of a pure, luminous and pleasant existence (Sat) of human being. According to ancient aesthetic schools of Samkhya and Yoga, Sattva is one of the three components (Guna-s) of the psychological substance (Buddhi), and always intermingles with other two components, i.e. Rajah (state of mobile, dynamic and painful existence) and Tamah (state of inert, obstructive and stupid existence) (Gnoli 1968:46). Any given circumstances in life stimulate Sattva to incorporate with Rajah and Tamah in different proportions. The multi-emotional state is created from various approaches of the contact between these three. Bharata considered Sattva as the origin of emotion (Bhava).

Sattva takes the neutral and balanced attitude. The actor is identified for the time being with a certain emotion arisen from the combination of Sattva, Rajah and Tamah and then immediately moves back to Sattva again for creation of another emotion required. By realizing nature of Sattva and blending it with Rajah and Tamah, the actor is effectively able to motivate multiple emotions responding to given circumstances of the character and the production. Abhinavagupta comments on this aesthetical concept in *Isvarapratyaabhihnavivrtivimarsini* (vol.1):

Sattva, which is made up of light and is like the immaculate ether, is completely enshrouded by Tamah, the principle of obstruction, as by a blanket of cloud, Rajah, which is made up of action and is, therefore, imbued with activity, serves as a wind, which, little by little, brushes away, dissipates, the cloud-bank of Tamah. (Gnoli 1968:46)

Sattva is defined for actor preparation as “an emoting consciousness which reacts to emotional stimuli exterior to oneself” (Rao 2001:116). Presence and absence of Sattva in performance is one of the significant conditions for its success. Sattva is the basis underlying evocation of Rasa and Rasa can not be experienced without emergence of Sattva. Bharata emphasizes the value of Sattva
in the chapter of Samanyabhinaya (homogeneous or basic Abhinaya):

Samanyabhinaya should be known as originating from the words, gestures, and Sattva (temperament). Out of these, the actor should take a special care about Sattva because the dramatic production has this as its basis. The Abhinaya in which there is exuberance of Sattva is superior, the one with level Sattva is middling and that with no Sattva is inferior. Sattva is something not manifest but [it] is the main basis for Bhava and Rasa through Romanca (horripilation), tears and other significant features displayed in proper places in harmony with the Rasas. (XXIV.1-3, A Board of Scholars)

The term of Sattva is interpreted for explanation of Sattvika Bhava and Sattvikabhinaya, which indicates Bhava from Sattva and Abhinaya with Sattva. The particularly influenced psychological state by understanding of the character’s inner depression and elation involves the definition of Sattvika Bhava. The physical and verbal manifestation (Bhavayan) of Sattvika Bhava is viewed as Sattvikabhinaya. It is to be noted that Bharata distinguished Sattvika Bhava from Sthayi Bhava and Vyabhicari Bhava, and Sattvikabhinaya was classified separately as one scheme of Abhinaya. Bharata describes the important quality of Sattvika Bhava in the chapter of Bhavavyanjaka:

The eight Sattvika Bhava-s are the following Stambha (paralysis), Sveda (perspiration), Romanca (horripilation), Vepathu (tremor), Vaivarnyam (changing countenance), Asru (shedding tears), Svarasada (changing voice), and Pralaya (sinking and fainting)” (VII.93, A board of Scholar).

Here some one may ask - “It is so that the other Bhavas are mentioned bereft of Sattva? Why do you call only these the Sattvika Bhavas?” Here it is replied thus - In this context Sattra means [something] originating in mind. It is caused by the mind when there is concentration. Through the mental concentration the Sattva is evolved. Its nature includes Stambha, Sveda, Romanca and other things. They cannot be properly portrayed by one with absent-mind. Hence Sattvika are desired in a play so that human nature can be properly imitated and not for any other purpose. … They should be portrayed in such a manner as to accord with the temperament behind them in order to become realistic [or Yathasvarupa]. What is called Dukha (misery) has crying for its basis. Sukham (happiness) has delight as its basis. How can sorrow be represented by one who is not sorry? How can happiness be presented by one who
is not happy? Hence the explanation is that tears and horripilation should be displayed by a person mentally sorry or happy. (VII. the prose after verse 92, ibid., italic and [ ] mine)

Sattvika Bhava is representative of a specific 'temperamental' inner-state that is excited by Sthayi Bhava and Vyabhicari Bhava. When Sattvika Bhava is arousing the actor into the action, a certain natural and involuntary reaction is presented as a recognizable sign on the body, which is Sattvikabhinaya Bharata named. For instance, in Natyasastra, “Romanca (horripilation) occurs as a result of touch, fear, chillness, delight, anger and ailments” (VII.98) and “should be represented on the stage by repeated excitement, hairs rising from the body, and touching the body” (VII.103). The techniques of Angika and Vacika used in the Natya must be based on the appropriate Sthayi, Vyabhicari and Sattvika Bhava. Especially, at the moment of emotional intensity, Sattvikabhinaya is probably the most effective and subtle technique among the fourfold Abhinaya. The audience is able to experience a deeper and stronger level of communication through this Abhinaya (Divyana manas srstir) (XXVII.16).

To Bharata, the inner discipline (Tapas), the concentration of mind (Samadhi), and the aesthetic contemplation (Avadhana) are of essence in the art of acting. The actor has to concentrate within Sattva so as to be able to project himself into his creative work or to identify himself with the character’s psychological aspect. If he dose not hold his character and its emotion in the state of Sattva, it is impossible for him to create Sattvika Bhava. When the actor is to immerse deeply into the character, Sattvikabhinaya is to be valid. About the necessity of relation between concentrated mind and characterization, Bharata explains in the following condensed verse.

No character shall enter the stage in his natural form or shape. The body should be covered with paints, decorations and embellishments. In the production of a drama, even persons in their natural forms can be employed provided the age, costume etc. do fit in. Just as a creature gives up its nature and body and assumes another body and another nature after entering the body concerned so also the sensible actor should think within himself, “I am that character”
and thereby try to represent the Bhavas of and the person by speech, made of walking gesture etc. (XXXV. 24-27, A Board of Scholars)

Bharata gives equal emphasis on a certain degree of ‘alienation’ from the character and a chain of emotion. Even though the actor is habituated to the movement of Angika and the articulation of Vacika through regular practice, he still has a risk suddenly missing the pattern of both Abhinayas. The self-consciousness is here obviously a must. If he gives himself up completely to emotions in performance, he is not able to communicate with others like music, light and co-actor, which are beyond his control. Bharata in Natyasastra advocated after all that the actor can neither keeps totally a distance from him, nor can he affords to identify himself completely with the character.

In the training session of Kutiyattam, the teacher strictly demands from the student silence of the mind and a cessation of disturbance in which Sattva sprouts up. A perception of Sattva is not possible with distraction. While the student sincerely involves his total consciousness into a subtle manipulation in practice, particularly for instance, for the facial-expression exercise (Navarasa) including eye-practice (Kannu Sadhakam), his mind must be absolutely quiet and concentrated. The inner action should be externalized only within a prescribed frame of the face. The student is sometimes trained intentionally to express the meaning and emotion only through movements of the eyes (Netrabhinaya). Absorption in a detailed process of this exercise and forgetfulness of his mundane prepossession enhance a higher degree of the concentration, and the presence of Sattva is indicated by the ability to resonate a conditioned reflex and intuitive cognition. Mani Madhav Chakyar, a great Kutiyattam actor defined, “when the mind has imbibed the happiness and sorrow of another with total empathy experiencing in imagination that state of mind is Satvikabhinaya” (1993).

The method of breathing (Pranayama) in Kutiyattam is intended to stimulate Sattvika Bhava as discussed in the Fourth Technique. When the actor needs to represent the moment of death, Margi Sathi instructed to “relax [or collapse] the body and leave it in Trivayus (three critical patterns of
breathing) - Chinnam, Mahan, and Urdhavan” (October 19th 2002, the stenographic note II). While slowly dying down, the register of breathing has to transfer from the abdominal region to the chest, and then to the neck. The tempo gradually declines and its length becomes shorter. Correct operations of Trivayus finally arrive at Sattvika Bhava such as Vepathu, Svarasada and Stambha. Even in stillness, the actor is able to charge space with the mood of death through the method of breathing and its psycho-physical result is called Sattvikabhinaya. The ‘conscious’ application of the method of breathing in a proper order, length and strength is one of the important techniques for ‘involuntary’ and natural response in Kutiyattam.

Bharata repeatedly pointed out that the best way to keep the right track of the actor’s work into the state of Sattva is to keep his inner maturity and its constant development through experiences of perception in ordinary life. The actor must be aware of how he feels about himself in various situations and also be honest with what he discovers. When he is able to access the inner process of consciousness in life, the self-realization stirs his mind to create an ‘inspirational’, ‘creative’ state of acting. The work on Sattva is a life-long practice.

3.3.6 Infrastructural Technique VI - Phenomenological Analysis

One of the actor’s primary tasks is to transform the playwright’s word truthfully into the action and to interpret the character as he understands what the playwright conceives of. Many of the acting method involve learning how to do it. Bharata demands in the Sandhyangavikalpa chapter the actor to confront his inner suffering germinating from heart of the playwright, to vitalize his pure-mind (Sattva) elaborating with Bhava, and finally to express it in a means of Anga and Vac (XXI.121). The practice of Abhinaya encourages the actor to re-evaluate himself through his past experiences of perception, as also Bharata considered Nataka (drama) as the collection of senses (XXI.122). The success of the play-production lies in the fact that the actor always wants to create aesthetical experiences from the play and the audience also desires to be challenged perceptively, emotionally through a performative mode of the play. Whether the theme of the play is political,
social, religious, or aesthetical, the realization of Rasa comes to the audience individually through not an illustrative fashion such as propaganda, but a perceptive cognition like the physical sense.

The ‘phenomenological’ approach may be one of the effective methods to use in analyzing the creation of the playwright’s perception. It refers to anything that can be experienced by the sense. The phenomenon is actually defined as the “fact or occurrence, esp. in nature or society that can be perceived by the senses” (Oxford Advanced, 1991). This approach deals with the event and fact that are mainly understood and known by sensibility and sensitivity. Bharata’s phenomenological perspective is well apparent in the invaluable cluster of technique to apply for analyzing the play, i.e. Pravrtti and Vrtti. They function to promote various ways of mixing and harmonizing the four schemes of Abhinaya (XXII.65) and to develop the actor into “an adept in adopting appropriate manner or style for each action …” (Keith 1992:326).

Pravrtti is a study on regional characteristics of people. The appropriate modes of behaviour, speech, gesture, costume, coiffure and other necessities are dictated corresponding to the fourfold Vrtti (XIV.37-49) in accordance with four cultural zones of the south (Daksinatya), central-west (Avanti), east (Odhri-Magadhi) and the north (Pancala-Madhyama) (Pande 1991:64-65). Bharata hypothetically divided Pravrtti into the four areas only. The outstanding feature in his description shows that he discovered commonalities in people’s desire of expression pertaining to all areas of the subcontinent and conceived a certain division of Pravrtti for particularizing their distinctive characteristics prominently in the group of model.

Pravrtti is not a regulation but description. It is not a fixed circle of technique for the feature of performance. Bharata seemed to investigate people in ordinary life in the geographical, ecological points of view and design Pravrtti to teach his one-hundred actors came from different areas how to observe and experience the temperament, habitual manner and the day-to-day life of people. The mould of behaviour had to be acceptable socially or collectively for a proper communication with the audience. It also contained not only characteristics of the appearance but also a metaphor.
of the way of existence. In the chapter XIV (Pravrtilaharmanavajaya), Bharata points out essence of Pravrtti in a consciously modelled classification:

Why is it termed Pravrtti? The answer is Pravrtti is so called because it gives the detailed information regarding dress types, languages used, manners and customs followed and professions engaged in the different regions of the land. Pravrtti is in the sense of Nivedana (making it known). How can there be only four Pravrttis when there are many countries in the world? For these Pravrttis have certain common characteristics prominently. The reply to this objection is as following: It is admitted that their common characteristics are patent. But since people hail from different countries, wear different kinds of dress, speak many languages and follow many customs I have projected the fourfold classification. As there are four different styles (Vrttis) such as Bharati, Sattvati, Kaisiki and Arabhati concerned with different sets of people and countries the Practical usages (Pravrttis) are also similarly dealt with. (The prose passage after the verse 36. A Board of Scholar)

If Pravrtti is the information (Nivedana) concerning the tendencies of people attached to their respective societies, the theatrical application of Pravrtti is encapsulated in the concept of Vrtti. Although Bharata does not clearly define the term of Vrtti in Natyasastra, it is apparently used for connoting the repository of dramatic composition. Just as the combination of Rasa, Vastu (story or plot), Neta (hero) constitutes ten kinds of drama (Dasarupa) (XX.2-3), Bharata’s fourfold Vrtti indicates four styles of the drama and “with respect to their production, Dasarupa are considered to have proceeded from these [Vrtti]” (XX.4, Ghosh).

People’s life is full of Vrtti according to Abhinavabharati. When action is done in life, a certain effort of the physical, verbal and the mental is always involved in it. This general effort has been developed in aesthetics so as to establish the fourfold Vrtti, emphasizes Abhinavagupta (II: 407-408). Bharata explains technically in the end of the chapter XXII that Abhinava of Vac, Anga and Sattva culminates in Vrtti and becomes a standard of discrimination of the four schemes of Vrtti, i.e. Bharati (verbal), Sattvati (sublime), Arabhati (energetic), and Kaisiki (graceful).
Although mostly intermixed together in the drama, each scheme of Vṛtti-s is characterized by a dominating component in it. One of the Vṛtti-s that gives a prominent position to speech is named Bharativṛtti (XXII.25). The speech is a major tool of expression for the group of Bharata (actor or minstrel) who seemed to call it after their own name (ibid). “The style which is endowed with the quality of the spirit (sattva), Nyayas [or justifiable means in welding weapons], [proper] meters and has exuberance of joy and suppression of the state of sorrow, is called Sattvati” (XXII.38, [ ] mine). The drama in Sattvativrṛtti is generally characterized by the theme of self-sacrifice, virtue, compassion, relating to the powerful and heroic action undertaken for uprightness. Arabhativrṛtti consists of Samksiptaka (compression), Avapata (commotion), Vastutthapana (elevation of the plot), and Sampheta (conflict), dealing with the vigorous physical movement such as “falling, jumping, crossing over, piercing, deeds of magic and conjuration, and varied ways of fighting” (XII.56, Ghosh). Bharata included Kaisikivrṛtti later as following the instruction of Brahma (I.41-43). Kaisiki is the most delicate and refined Vṛtti, “which is especially interesting on account of charming costumes worn [by dramatic personae] mostly women, and in which many kinds of dancing and sing are included, and the themes acted are practices of love and are connected with (lit. arising from) its enjoyments” (XXII.47, Ghosh). Bharata explains in the chapter I that Kaisiki is generally witnessed in the dance of Nilkantha (blue-throated god or Siva) comprising subtle elements of Mrdu (gentle) Angahara, Rasa, Bhava and Kriya (activity) as its soul (I.43-35).

In Bharata’s period, Kaisikivrṛtti was identified with characteristics of the southern part of the subcontinent (Daksinatya). The Sattvati and Arabhati were known to predominate in the northern region (XIV). He did not clarify any Vṛtti for the east. Bharata, Abhinavagupta and Dhanamjaya only accepted this fourfold Vṛtti but other aestheticians such as Udhata, Bhoja and Haripala felt necessities of appending one or more Vṛtti-s, according to Abhinavabharati (I. 451-452).

The Vṛtti denotes a line of action (Itikartavyata) as well in the word of Abhinavagupta. This is elaborated in Natyadarpana where Ramacandra and Gunacandra state that Vṛtti is “the mother of every action in Natya pertaining to Rasa, Bhava, and Abhinaya” (135). The actor must exert to
bring all his efforts of the physical, psychological, and even spiritual into actions of his character
drawn by the playwright who put appropriate manners (Vrtti-s) in position. The manners acquire
the attribute of visibility only through the actor’s efforts. A series of the efforts that Vrtti pertains
to forms a unit of the action. Vrtti is thus interpreted as the styles of acting in the actor’s point of
view.

Bharata categorized characteristics of the fourfold Pravrtti and fourfold Vrtti in a sense of the
times that he belonged to. It is to be noted today’s actor needs to make the study of psychology,
sociology and ecology of people’s behaviour on the basis of contemporary necessity and value.
When the actor understands how each style of Pravrtti functions in general life and how it can be
evolved to the theatrical elaboration (Vrtti), he is able to recognize a proper approach to analyze a
whole union of the action. The essential basis of Pravrtti and Vrtti is the very perception of nature
in life, in essence, which might cross different cultural boundaries.

Along with Vrtti and Pravrtti, BS introduces one more formation to classify two ways of the
performative behavior, i.e. Lokadharmi and Natyadharmi. If the former has the trait of people in
ordinary life, which means a kind of a raw and basic behavior, the latter has that of the theatrical
transformation, which is more stylized and innovated (XIV.61-65, XXIII.189). Every behavior on
the stage undergoes, in reality, a process of the stylization, whether a degree of the refinement is
high or lesser, because the character is created by a specific intention of the playwright and the
actor. In the art of acting, the so-called pure Lokadharmi is non-existent and Natyadharmi always
connects with a certain reality of life in which Lokadharmi resides. These two schemes of Dharmi
are virtually dependent on each other all the time. K.N. Panikkar emphasized that “Between two
Dharmis, there is just a subtle divergence of degree getting involved in the actor’s varying artistic
intensity to the production” (the interview, 9th Mar., 2003). While explaining characterization, he
elaborates the appreciation of Dharmi in the article, “Federation in Culture”:

The conflict begins at the inner plane of the performer’s mind when he assumes the role. It is
not merely external. It emanates from within, at the level of Bhava; then only is it physicalized. Even that physicalization is suggestive and symbolic, and not naturalistic. Again, in traditional performances, the same actor, once transformed into a particular character, transforms himself into an entirely different character in the course of the performance and later returns to the original character, or even to the actor. In the enactment of the external conflicts of life, too, the traditional actor makes it a conflict of the states of mind or Bhava. Thus is a kind of cyclic extension of the transformation of the ritualistic performer. In such physicalization of conflict, the means of physicalization naturally becomes aesthetics images created with the entire combination of the actor's psyche and body. This is the essence of the Lokadharma/Natyadharmi concepts of acting. (1995:111)

In addition, the ‘artificial’ division of Dharmi-s can be used in the class of acting as a means of disarming the actor of all his bad habits or everyday-behaviors behind which the actor hides his creativity. The exercise of Dharmi encourages the actor to break the daily-body, to afford space for inception of creativity, and thereby to arrive at a higher level of communication than the daily life.
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