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Acharyulu, Chilakamarti Rama (1919): Acharyulu hails from a family of Nuzvidu (Krishna Dist.), with an illustrious traditional background of Nattuvunars and gurus of Temple dancers; received early training from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; heads the divisions of Kuchipudi and Puppetry in Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, Ahmedabad; established Abhinaya Darpana at Hyderabad (1980) and Nataraja Nilayam at Ahmedabad (1985); credited with the introduction and popularisation of Kuchipudi art form in Gujarat; choreographed dance dramas such as Alamelumanga Vilasam, Srinivasa Ramayana, Deva Nartaki, Parvati Parinayam and Gangavataram and innovated a unique technique of drawing a form while dancing on flour spread on the ground, which he calls Prekhani/Natyam, in which he choreographed Sirhannahandini, Mayura Kautam, Ganesha Kautam and Mahalakshmi Vaibhava ; recipient of several awards including the Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1978) and Sarangadeva Fellowship (1981); authored Kuchipudi Aradhana Nrittyamulu (1968), and co-authored Understanding Kuchipudi (1993) with Mallika Sarabhai.

Chinna Satyam, Vempati (1929): Disciple of Tadepally Perayya, Pasumarti Kondalarayudu, Vempati Chinna Satyam developed his skills under Vempati Peda Satyam and was deeply influenced by Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; founded Kuchipudi Art Academy (1963) at Madras with an objective of reviving the lost glory of Kuchipudi form and provide it with a respectable place in the world of Indian dances; his notable contribution is to the dance dramas of Kuchipudi, which commenced with Ksheerasagara Madhanam (1961) and continued with Chandalika (1961), Padnavati Srinivasam (1975), Kalyana Rukmini (1984), Haravilasam (1985) and Sivadhanurbhangam (1992); performed extensively in India and abroad; nominated as Asthana Natyacharya of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (1978); recipient of several awards and titles like Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Sri Venkateshwara University, Raja Lakshmi Foundation award (1981), Kalidas Samman (1992) to mention only a few; a blend of his creative genius and scholarship are best reflected in his dance dramas as well as solo numbers; a living embodiment of the quintessence of Kuchipudi dance traditions, he emerged as a colossus of Kuchipudi art.

Jagannadha Sarma, Vedantam (1922-1982): Son of Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry, the grand sire of Kuchipudi, Jagannadha Sarma was trained and chiselled by his father; known for an excellent portrayal of characters like Satyabhama, Usha and Gollabhamma; widely toured with his father in 1940s, and was instrumental in rejuvenating and popularising Kuchipudi which was then in need of a filip; entered the world of cinema and was dance director for nearly fifty films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Oriya languages; settled in Hyderabad and established Kuchipudi Kalakshetram (1965); choreographed the dance dramas, Mohini Bhasmasura, Usha Parinayam and Bhamakalapam; conferred with many honours and titles of which a note should be made of Bharatakala Prapoorna by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy (1980), and Nritya Vidwanmani by Tyagaraja Government Music and Dance College, Hyderabad (1977).
Krishna Murthy, Chinta (1912-1969): Initiated into dance by his father, Venkataramayya, under whose guidance he grasped all the intricacies of dance; participated in all the dance dramas of Kuchipudi and was particularly popular for the roles of Harischandra, Pamulavadu (snake charmer), Singadu and Chakali (washerman); he led Venkatarama Natyamandali as its sutradhara; adept in all the traditional dance dramas, Krishna Murthy played an important role in the Yakshaganas recorded by All India Radio, Vijayawada (1959); with meticulous care and expertise he abridged Bhakta Prahlada from the original duration of three nights to six hours with out sacrificing either quality or the context; Krishna Murthy is one of the persons who played a crucial role along with Banda Kanakalingeswara Rao in establishing Siddhendra Kalakshetra at Kuchipudi, at the very site where Bhagavatula Vissayya started a small school of dance under a thatched roof; worked as the Principal of Kalakshetra; his brilliance as teacher, performer and musician merited recognition from several organisations; Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1968) and Bharatakala Prapoorna (1968) were conferred on him.

Krishna Murthy, Pasumarti (1927): Known for his abhinaya, Krishna Murthy was trained by Chinta Venkataramayya and Chinta Rama Murthy; popular for female impersonation, he is one of the earliest artistes to perform the special solo numbers of Kuchipudi in the dance dramas; entered the cinema field as dance director and worked for nearly 200 films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi; highly imaginative in choreography which had a perfect blend of classical and folk; credited with popularising Kuchipudi dance form through the media of cinema by incorporating the regular traditional numbers like Javalis, Padas and Tillanas, at appropriate sequences.

Lakshminarayana Sastry, Vedantam (1886-1956): Disciple of Vempati Venkatanarayana, Lakshminarayana Sastry performed Bhamakalapa and Gollakalapa with great ease; master of both theoretical and practical aspects of dance; credited for introducing solo system of dance in the otherwise traditional dance drama form of Kuchipudi; an original thinker right from his younger days, he choreographed innumerable Javalis, Padas, Astapadis and Slokas, which provide an ample scope for Sattvikabhinaya; his teaching method was unique and produced many a great dancers and gurus of the next generation; in the early 1930s when the form was facing a crisis, he along with Jagannadha Sarma and Ayyanki Tandava Krishna toured extensively giving performances and in the process took the form out of its traditional precincts; brought a sea change in the form by introducing women into it for the first time; a superb performer, guru and choreographer, Sri Sastry unfortunately did not get due recognition in his time, though received a few honours like the honour at Gudivada by Andhra Nataka Kala Parishad (1945) and Simhatalata presented by P.V. Rajamannar at Madras (1948).

Madhavayya Hari (late 18th and mid 19th Centuries): Trained by his father Sriramulu, Madhavayya was always concerned with bringing out innovations in Kuchipudi form at a time when only Kalapas formed the core of Kuchipudi performance; visited Tanjore and was fascinated by the sabdas of Melattur Kasinadhayya; adopted them into Kuchipudi style; a great teacher as well, Madhavayya should be credited for enriching the repertoire of Kuchipudi.
Narasimha Rao, Korada (1936): One of the first generation artistes from the non-traditional families of Kuchipudi to take it up as vocation; disciple of Vedantam Lakshminarayan Sastry and C.R. Acharyulu; won laurels both at National and International levels as a solo performer; established *Nritya Bharathi* at Eluru (1953); experimented with themes of social relevance such as *Chinese Aggression* (1964), *War with Pakistan* (1964), *Kutumba Samkshemam* and *Navajivanam* (1976) apart from traditional themes; associated with several academic bodies as adviser and member.

Nataraj Ramakrishna (1933): Learnt Kuchipudi from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; adept in Bharatanatyam and temple dance tradition of Andhra; established *Nritya Niketan* at Hyderabad (1955); choreographed dance dramas like *Padmavati Srinivasa Kalyanam*, *Kumarasambhavam* and *Meghasandesam*; won *Swarnakalasa* in Kalidas Samaroh at Ujjain (1962); travelled extensively giving performances, lectures and demonstrations; played a pivotal role as the convener of the seminar organised to establish the classical status of Kuchipudi (1959); a prolific writer, his books on dances number to more than forty, a rare contribution which no other artiste-scholar has made; six of them won state and national awards; revived and recreated the long forgotten dance forms of Andhra such as Andhranatyam and Perini; honoured with *Kalaprapoorna* (1981), Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1984), Raja Lakshmi award (1991) and *Padmashri* (1992), to mention only a few.

Parvatisam, Vedantam (1920): Disciple of Chinta Venkataramayya, Vedantam Ramakrishnayya and Vedantam Raghavayya; one of the founder members of *Siddhendra Kalakshetra*, Kuchipudi (1957); worked and retired as its Principal; besides being a performer and teacher, contributed several articles to various journals; published works on the technique and repertoire of Kuchipudi which includes *Bhamakalapam* (1964), *Prabha Natakam* (1981), *Kuchipudi Melakartalu* (1981), besides publishing his own compositions; known for his singular contribution in preparing and compiling the basics of Kuchipudi dance and documentation of traditional dance dramas and *Pagativeshas*, won many awards including Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1995).

Peda Satyanarayana, Vempati (1922 - 1982): Received training from Chinta Venkataramayya and Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; associated with the field of cinema initially as a dancer and then as a dance director; played a vital role in popularising Kuchipudi during a time when it was almost going into oblivion; partnered Raghavayya and experimented with new numbers like *Radhakrishna* etc.; had an insatiable thirst for exploring new horizons of knowledge in dance and wrote many research articles on Kuchipudi; honoured by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy with their special membership for the services rendered to Kuchipudi dance as a performer, teacher and director, which spanned for half a century.

Perayya, Tadepalli (1886 - 1942): Belonging to pre-independent India, Perayya is one of the first to make attempts to take Kuchipudi art form into the wider world; an expert in performing drama and *Gollakalapas*, he is also known as an expert teacher; trained *Devadasis* of Meduru and Nangigedda; developed a style of his own as *sutradhara*, establishing rapport with the audience; besides imparting training to the dancing girls, played a reformatory role in moulding their lives.
Prahlada Sarma, Vedantam (1929-1991): Initiated into dance by his father Rattayya, he continued with Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry and Vempati Venkatarayana; actively associated as performer with the four major melams of Kuchipudi namely, Chinta, Pasumarti, Vedantam and Mahankali; joined as Principal of Kalakshetram, Eluru (1964); a great teacher and vocalist, he was an expert in the traditional Yakshaganas of Kuchipudi; associated as visiting Professor in dance with University of Hyderabad and Telugu University; his efforts to combine the theoretical aspects of Natya Sastra with the practical technique of Kuchipudi dance form won him Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy award (1985) and the President's award (1985).

Radhakrishna Murthy, Chinta (1910-1988): After initially learning dance from his father Narayana Murthy, Radhakrishna Murthy continued with Chinta Venkataramayya and Vempati Venkatarayana; admired for both male and female characters; adept in Kalapas (both Bhama and Gollakalapas); strove hard to spread Kuchipudi by giving performances with Chintavari melam; an excellent teacher, who unfortunately did not get due recognition.

Raghavayya, Vedantam (1919-1971): Raghavayya, a disciple of Chinta Venkataramayya, known for his artistic excellence, particularly the portrayal of female roles like Usha; associated with Peda Satyam and Tandava Krishna sometime in 1941 and performed extensively all over the country; his first break in cinema was as a performer in Raitubidda (1942); later worked as a dance director and is the first Kuchipudi artiste to become a professional director of feature films; his innate urge to develop Kuchipudi dance made him the President of Akhila Bharata Natyotsavas (1964) sponsored by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy and fetched him the title Bharatkalaprapoorna (1964).

Ramakrishnayya, Vedantam (1886-1971): Disciple of Chinta Venkataramayya, Ramakrishnayya had his initial training under his brothers Venkatachalapati, Venkateswars Sastry and Lakshminarayana; endowed with good voice, he brought an ease and originality to the hero roles which were popular during his time; as the head of Vedantamvari melam for a long time, he tried to bring in appropriate costumes and decor in his dance dramas; in recognition of his services to Kuchipudi, special honour was conferred on him by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy (1964).

Ramakotayya, Bhagavatula (1924-1980): Disciple of Bhagavatula Vissayya, Ramakotayya continued his training under Chinta Venkataramayya and Vedantam Raghavayya; donned female roles and particularly popular for the role of Kalakahanti; popular for presenting independent pieces in between the dance dramas; one of the first to propogate Kuchipudi dance in Hyderabad and Telangana regions; established Kuchipudi Nritya Nilaya at Hyderabad (1961); systematically designed a four year course in dance; produced several traditional dance dramas; honoured by the title Gurukulapati by Andhra Pradesh Sangeeta Nataka Academy (1964); invited as a guest faculty in Indian Arts and Culture, Osmania University (1977-79); published the Pagativeshas, Kalapas and Kritis in their original form in Natyakala, in the early 1970s.
**Ramayya, Bhagavatula** (early 18th Century): A renowned scholar, thinker, Ramayya was also a remarkable performer and teacher; trained the dancing girls of Ghantasala and conducted their performances as sutradhara; author of Gollakalapa, which paved a new path with social and secular theme consisting of spiritual and biological aspects depicting vedic sacrifices such as Yagna and the process of human birth; in terms of popularity and literary excellence Ramayya’s Gollakalapa stands only second to Bhamakalapa.

**Satyanarayana Sarma, Vedantam** (1934) : Received training from Prahlada Sarma and mentored under the tutelage of Chinta Krishna Murthy; admired for his portrayal of female roles, he was instrumental in popularising Kuchipudi worldwide through his performances; associated with Venkatarama Natya Mandal since 1969 and served as Principal of Siddhendra Kalakshetra, Kuchipudi (1969 - 1974); his virtuosity in the technique of sattvikabhinayam and female impersonation fetched him several honours including Sangeet Natak Akademi fellowship (1968), Padamashri (1970), Kalidas Samman (1987), to mention only a few; perhaps the greatest female impersonator in this century.

**Tandava Krishna, Ayyanki** (1915 - 1991) : Versatile artiste, Tandava Krishna learnt Kuchipudi under Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; developed a style of his own in the presentation of solo numbers such as, Lasya Nrittyam, Tandava etc.; in recognition of his talent, he was honoured with the title Tandava by Nawab Zaheer Uddin Khan Bahadur, Amir-e-Paigah (1941) at Basheer Bagh Palace, Hyderabad; presented a number of research papers on dance and authored books like *The History and Technique of South Indian Dance*; Tandava Krishna deserves a special place in the history of Kuchipudi dance for his total commitment and timely services he rendered to it when Kuchipudi art form was going through the most critical period of its existence.

**Venkataramayya, Chinta** (1860 - 1949) : Disciple of Venkataratnam; well-known performer and preceptor; excellent as sutradhara in Kuchipudi dance dramas; founder, Venkatarama Natya Mandal which played a pivotal role in training and propagating traditional Kuchipudi Yakshaganas; gave a systematic form to Kuchipudi Yakshaganas, in their presentation technique; first to introduce solo pieces like Nritta Pallavi and Jatividhanam into Yakshaganas; one of the famous trio who dedicated their lives for the popularisation of Kuchipudi and aptly called as Kuchipudi Yakshagana Pitamaha.

**Venkateswarulu Darbha** (1913 - 1993) : Disciple of Chinta Narayan Murthy and Adinarayana; received many laurels for his portrayal of Nakshatraka and Madhavi into which he successfully brought a subtle humour; one of the founder members of Chintavari melam and Mahankalivari melam; person of versatile talents, he collaborated with Koganti Gopalakrishnayya (Indian People's Theatre Association) in writing dramas, Hitler Patanam and Simla Bhagavatam (1943) and showed how a traditional form could be used for contemporary needs.
Venugopala Krishna Sarma, Pasumarti (1929): Initiated into dance by Chinta Venkataramayya, Krishna Sarma also learnt from Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastry; a well-known performer, he formed a troupe, Balatripura Sundari Natyamandali along with Parvatisam (1942-1946); actively associated with Venkatarama Natyamandali (1964-1968), Principal of Siddhendra Kalakshetram since 1972, till his retirement; played a major role in documenting Bhakta Prahlada and Bhamakalapam (1972); of several honours he received, mention should be made Sangeet Natak Akademi award (1987).

Vissayya, Bhagavatula (approx. 1880 - 1959): Contemporary of Tadepalli Perayya, Vissayya was well versed in the performance of Kalapas and Yakshaganas; trained many dancing girls of Nangigedda and Ghantasala; perhaps the only person to perform the rare Pagativesham of Daninamma and Balintavesham; Kuchipudi repertoire lost these unique Veshakathas with his demise.