

16

NAVARASA SADHANA

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In Indian art and literature, rasa has been portrayed as a visceral mood in which the observer experiences pleasure. The main objective of art is also considered to be - **'kam lati anande iti kala'** i.e. to achieve pleasure. That is art. Happiness can be experienced only when the passion arises. In such a situation, an attempt is made to cultivate this passion through art performance. In the context of theatre, passion is very essential. For an actor So cultivation of Rasa is vitally important.

How does the spectator experience beauty during a dramatic performance? This mental process has been discussed by Sanskrit mystics and scholars from time to time. They felt that this Saundarya Shastra should be deeply contemplated. Acharya Bharat has given a detailed explanation of Rasas and Bhavas in his 'Natyashastra' With time, scholars started experimenting on the behavior of rasas at the subtlest level. In this lesson, we will discuss 'Navaras Sadhana' created for actors to gain proficiency in the practical use of rasas.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, you-

- know about Navarasa Sadhana;
- understand about presentation of gestures in Navarasa Sadhana and drama performance; and
- know the importance of Navarasa Sadhana in drama performance;

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

16.1 RASA AND BHAVA

In the theater performance, permanent feelings like Parivartanjeel Rati etc. are awakened in the hearts of the audience through actor's talent, experience, communicative feelings and sattvika feelings and they are savored. This is the rasa. Acharya Bharata has discussed Rasa in detail in the sixth chapter of Natyashastra. The Rasa Siddhanta given by Bharata is a valuable contribution to Indian performing arts. However, it is also mentioned in Natyashastra that the tradition of Rasa existed even before Natyashastra. It is true that since the beginning, Rasa has been a constant consideration in relation to literature and performing arts. Underlining the importance of rasa, Acharya Bharat himself says- 'Nahi rasadrite kashchidpyrthah pravartaye' i.e. without the knowledge of rasa, it is difficult to know the feelings etc. described in any drama.



In fact, there have been only four main topics of discussion in Natyashastra. Rasa is extremely important in Bharat's view in enactment, music and dance. All these are just means for expression of rasa. Acharya Bharat has considered the number of Rasas to be eight. Some scholars accept their number as 9 which is as follows-

1. **Shringara-** The permanent feelings of Shringara Rasa is 'Rati' and it has two types - conjunction(Sanyoga) and separation (Viyoga). In this, the love affair between the hero and the heroine are displayed. The hero's life remains in sorrow due to the feeling of despair due to separation, but at the same time, due to being tied with hope, the feeling of love for the heroine also remains.
2. **Hasya-** The permanent feelings of hasya is hasa. It mainly contains communicable feelings like avahittha, laziness and drowsiness. There are two types of it - Atmatstha and Parastha. Humor is often sankramanashil. According to human nature, Acharya Bharat explained its 6 types.
3. **Karuna-** The permanent feeling of Karun Rasa is grief. The destruction of the relatives and wealth gives rise to a feeling of compassion. It has communicative feelings like Nirveda.
4. **Raudra-** The permanent emotion of Raudra Rasa is 'anger'. These are also of three types on the basis of organ, sentence and composition.
5. **Veera -** The permanent feeling of heroic spirit is 'enthusiasm'. Communicative feelings like dhriti and smriti are mainly present in it. Mainly three types have been described- Danvera, Dharamvera and Yudhvera.
6. **Bhayanaka -** The permanent emotion of Terrible Rasa is 'fear'. It contains vyabhichari expressions like 'Sthambha', 'Veda'. It is of two forms: natural and artificial. There is natural fear in adhama and young characters and artificial fear in people of good nature.
7. **Vibhatsa-** The permanent feeling of Vibhatsa rasa is 'Jugupsa'. It has communicative feelings like apsmara and anxiety. It is of two types, pure and impure.
8. **Adbhuta-** The permanent feeling of Adbhuta rasa is 'vismay'. It has communicative expressions like stambha, tears. There are two types of it - divine and arising from joy.
9. **Shanta-** Shanta Rasa has also been discussed in the sixth chapter of Natyashastra. Acharya Vamanbhatta, who was an interpreter of Natyashastra,

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

has accepted Shanta Rasa as the ninth Rasa. It is mentioned in Abhinav Bharati that Shanta Rasa is the root of all Rasas or the main Rasa. Acharya Bharat has accepted only 8 Rasas. He considers it impossible to perform Shanta Rasa on stage, that is why, he does not discuss it in Natyashastra, but later on, Shanta Rasa was accepted as the ninth Rasa. Thus, we find discussion of 9 types of Rasas in the world of literature and art.

Expressions (Bhava)

According to Acharya Bharat, when Vibhava, Anubhav and Sanchari Bhava combine with a permanent feeling, then Rasa is obtained. There is a deep connection between Rasa and Bhava. Without rasa, there is no justification for expressions and without expressions, rasa cannot be fulfilled. Emotions are like waves rising in the mind. Writers or actors express these feelings through their works. Acharya Bharat has mainly divided the emotions into four categories- permanent emotions, vibhava, anubhav and communicable emotions.

Permanent emotions are permanently present in the hearts of the audience sitting in the auditorium, that is why, they are called permanent emotions. Each Rasa has its own permanent feeling like- Rati (love) is of sringara, sadness of humor, anger of Raudra etc.

Vibhava is related to those reasons which result in the origin of permanent feeling. These are of two types- support (Alambhana) and stimulation (Uddipana). Alambhana means those characters, objects etc. on which the permanent feeling is completely concentrated. There are two types of it- one is shelter (Ashrya), the person in whose mind the feelings are awakening is sheltered. And the subject is the one seeing which emotions are awakening in the mind of Ashrya. Similarly, stimulation includes all the objects or chests which play an important role in enhancing or stimulating emotions.

Anubhava is related to the Anubhavana of external physical activities of shelter. Its four types have been described- physical (Kayika), mental (Manasika), Aharyua and satvika. Similarly, the unstable emotions that arise and disappear in the mind of the shelter as per the situation have been called communicative emotions. These feelings are always present in the sahritya. When they get the opportunity, they keep on forming and breaking like water bubbles. Their number is said to be 33.

In this way, when the spectator enjoys a theatrical performance, he has experienced the permanent feelings present in his heart, the emotions, feelings and communicable feelings present in the performance performed by the characters on the stage. In this way, this process of rasa is completed.

Enactment and Rasa in Natyashastra

Rasa is very important in the creation and realization of enactment. Any theatrical presentation is successful only when the actor is able to experience the rasa. Emotions have a special contribution in the process of Rasa. The actor often displays these expressions. Organs, appendages and sub-appendages are important in this expression of emotion. Especially- Enactment by eyes and hands. Bharata has described eight types of eyesight. In Natyashastra, these differences of eyesight have been called Darshan Bheda and it has also been instructed that they should be used according to different rasas and emotions. Acharya Bharat has described thirty-six types of Drishti Abhinaya including Rasa, Permanent and Sanchari feelings.

Acharya Bharata has considered the eyes as the carrier of emotions and feelings. For this, he has considered the number of Rasajna Drishti as 08, permanent Bhavjna Drishti as 08 and Sanchari Bhavjna Drishti as 20. There is mention of eight types of Rasjna eyesights- Kanta, bhayanaka, Hashya, Karuna, Adbhuta, Raudra, Veera and Vibhatsa. These eight eyesights express the eight Rasas. Among the expressive views of permanent emotions, there is discussion of Snigdha, Hristha, Deena, Dripta, Bhayanvita, Jugupsita, Kruddha and Vismita. Along with this, the symptoms of twenty types of Sanchari Bhavajna eyesights and their usage are described- Shunya, Malina, Bhranta, Lajjanvita, Glana, Shankita, Vishanya, Mukula, Kuchita, Abhitapta, Jihra, Sulalita, Vitarkita, Ardhamukula, Vibhranta, Vilupta, Akekara, Vikosha, Trasta and Madeera. In this way, the use of a total of 36 postures of eyesight has been discussed. Bharata has given definite instructions regarding when and how these eyesight should be applied practically.

Three parts of the eye are considered - pupil, eyelid and eyebrow. With the actions of these parts, it is possible to perform Drishti Abhinaya. Hence, Bharat has also described the actions of these Pratyangas in detail. The number of movements of the brow along with the movements of the pupils and eyelids is said to be seven. In this way, Drishti Abhinaya is accomplished with the simultaneous operation of the pupils, eyelids and eyebrows.

Apart from eyes, the appendages of our head also include nostrils, skull, lips, cheeks and mouth which are important mediums of mukhaja acting. Apart from eyes, the appendages of our head also include nostrils, skull, lips, cheeks and mouth which are important mediums of mukhajabhinaya. While describing the characteristics of nasal gestures, Bharat has also discussed their use in displaying various expressions. Further, while describing the characteristics of Kapol 'cheek' mudra, he has talked about the use of Kapol in the states of sadness, happiness, enthusiasm and pride, anger and

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

happiness, thrill, touch, coldness, fear and fever. Also, the characteristics of Oshtha Karma and their uses are given. In the context of teeth, lips and jaw, the characteristics of seven movements of the jaw have been described. After this, he explains the characteristics of facial expressions and their uses.

The color of the face should be used in the context of rasa bhavas because no matter how grand the acting done with the branches, limbs and limbs is, it does not become complete without the facial expressions. According to the condition, four colors of the face have been described- 1 natural, 2 happy, 3 Red and 4 Black. Acharya Bharat has mentioned the use of easy facial color in the performance of spontaneous state and passionlessness, wonderful, happy in the performance of Hasya and sringara rasa, bloody color in the performance of veera, Raudra and karuna rasa and black color of the face in the occasion of bhayanaka and vibhatsa.

While explaining the general methods of hand gestures, Acharya Bharat has said- The actor should use hand gestures after observing their shape, movement, symbol and caste from his own experience. There is no such work of hands in the world which does not convey any meaning, but I have described here only the form or function of the hand which has been seen many times. Apart from these, the common people's hands associated with other meanings should also be used as per their wish along with gestures indicative of rasa and emotions. These hand gestures should be used by men and especially women considering the region, time, usage and ability. Acharya Bharat has also mentioned in detail 20 hand movements in the context of rasa and emotions on the occasion of drama performance.

It is clear from the above description that an actor concentrates his physical acting (Angika), verbal acting (Vachika), Aharya and other acting elements by aiming at Rasa only. Acharya Bharat also discusses acting keeping this rasa in mind. Often all the acting exercises done by the actor are done keeping Navarasa in mind.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1

1. What are Rasas?
2. How many types of rasas have been discussed in Natyashastra?
3. How is rasa produced?
4. What is permanent feelings?

5. What is communicative emotion?
6. What is the main goal of acting?
7. What are the nine Rasas?

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

16.2 NAVRASA SADHANA

In fact, Navarasa Sadhana is related to a system of enactment developed for actors. Rasa is such a gift of Indian tradition that one can easily immerse the listeners in the process of aesthetic experience through their enactment and make them experience joy. Tolkappiyam, an early book on Tamil grammar and poetics, is believed to have been written by Tolkappiyar. Tolkappiyam actually consists of three books - Ezhuttadikaram, Soladikaram and Poruladikaram. The book divides the Sangam era society into four castes as Brahmins, kings, traders and farmers, its third book being Poruladikaram. It also divides the Tamil language into Sentamila and Koduntamil. Sentamila's ancient grammar text-'Tolkappiyam' also discusses the eight emotions of the mind as being expressed through the mippatu s, i.e. the body. Such as- Nakai (humor), Alukai (sadness), Ileveral (humility), Marulakai (surprise), Akkam (fear), Peruvitam (brave) etc.

In the theater tradition of Kerala for hundreds of years, there have been permanent expressions called 'Bhavaes' for training in enactment. These were used. Kudiyattam, which is considered to be the last vestige of Sanskrit theatre, has a long history of the training process of rasa. There has been a tradition of how to represent the eight Rasas, their use and their interpretation. The technique of enactment was developed keeping these in mind. Scholars associated with Kodungallur Kovilakam had also done experiments and discoveries regarding Navarasa. He often organized Kalari for Kudiyattam and Kathakali artistes. Through Navarasa Sadhana, actors honed their basic expressions through everyday practice.

The name of G. Venu is very important in relation to the technique of Navarasa Sadhana. He was born in the year 1956. He started his art practice at the age of 11. For more than a decade and a half, he prepared himself for the appropriate theatrical postures to perform. He spent the next thirty years in the revival of dying arts. He did special work on Kakkari Natakam, Kudiyattam, Mudiyaattu, Padayani, Tholapavakutthu. In the process he trained himself as a Koodiyattam actor, he worked as a Koodiyattam actor in his later years. As a Kudiyattam actor, he also visited many European countries.

G. Venu was introduced to Kodungallur Kalari thirty years ago. Bhagavathar Kunjuni Thampuran, a member of the royal family of Kodungallur, was a scholar of music and

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

acting. He used to call his acting technique Swaravayu. Taking this Swaravayu technique forward, a training center named 'Abhinaya Kalari' was started in Natankairali. G. Venu also went through this technique.

After 2010, he quit performing because he felt that with increasing age, he was no longer able to perform as well as before. It was during this period that he started performing the duties of a teacher. By conducting long workshops on eyes and hands and research in Kodungallur Kalari, he developed a new acting training method of Navarasa Sadhana.

Study and Application of Eye and Hand

In 2001, a workshop project of the Japan Foundation received approval through 'Cultural Flow,' a cultural organization in Delhi. It was led by scholar Premlata Puri and G. Venu was the director of the workshop. Guru Ammanur Madhava Chakyar was the dramatist of this project. Eminent Kathak exponent Shovana Narayanan and art critic and scholar Shanta Sarbjit Singh were on the advisory board.

Under this project, G. Venu studied 'Netra aur Hasta (eye and hand)' experiments for three years. He contacted all the living gurus of Kerala. Some gurus came to Natankairali to attend the workshop. Many classes were conducted by the Gurus during these three years. Sessions by Kathakali gurus, Keezhapadam Kumaran Nair, Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair and Kavungal Chatunni Panicker were conducted. Kathakali artists Sadanam Krishnankutty and VP Ramakrishnan Nair also conducted classes. Sessions on 'Kannezhuthu' (eye movement) of Theyyam were conducted in Kutiyattam by Lakshman Peruvannan under the leadership of Guru Ammanur Madhava Chakyar, Kidangoor Rama Chakyar and Ammanur Kuttan Chakyar. Introduction to Srividya by Acharya Girish Kumar, month long practical classes by Lakshmanan Gurukkal on Das Mudra of Srividya, classes on 'Netra and Mudras in Yoga Vidya' by Swami Hariom Anand and session on Eye Protection in Ayurveda by Swami Radhakrishna Chaitanya. All of them were part of this three-year long search.

The Asian symposium, held to mark the culmination of this three-year long project, was attended by Thailand's eminent dancer Jessie Fanko, artist Keon Yoshimura of the Japanese form Kamigata Mai and dancer Dr. Padma Subramaniam. Performances of Kutiyattam, Kathakali, Mudi yettu, Mohiniyattam and Nangiarkoothu were also organized along with the concluding ceremony.

This long-term workshop on Netra and Hasth (Eye and Hand) within Navarasa Sadhana and the discovery of G. Venu in Kodungallur Kalari played an important role

in the development of the actor training methodology of Navarasa Sadhana. In fact, Navarasa means not a system of training of actors that existed in Kodungallur Kalari. It is also not a part of Kutiyattam. However, it makes independent use of some techniques from Kutiyattam. It is not possible to practice Navarasa Sadhana while strictly following the principles of Kutiyattam.

The present system of sadhana was codified in a way so that artists of different disciplines could incorporate the practice of the nine rasas into their regular practice. Till now, no one had discussed Navarasa and whether artists of different genres would face any problem in maintaining the uniqueness of their individual forms by practicing Navarasa Sadhana. Artists from genres including Kutiyattam, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, theater and cinema have been part of the Navarasa Sadhana training so far.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2

1. In which ancient grammar of Sentamil, eight expressions are discussed?
2. What is 'Bhavaes'?
3. In which theater tradition is the practice of Rasa Sadhana found?
4. Why is Kodungallur Kovilakam important?
5. Why was Kalari organized?
6. Who is G. Venu?
7. What is Abhinaya Kalari?
8. On which body part is Navarasa Sadhana focused?
9. What is the relation of Navarasa Sadhana with the present system?



WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- In drama performance, permanent feelings like changeable Rati etc. are awakened in the hearts of the performers through actor's potential, experience, communicative feelings and satvika feelings and they are savored. This is the rasa.

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

- Body postures refer to those specific expressions of the body through which a certain feeling or meaning is communicated to the observer.
- In Natyashastra, keeping the Rasa in mind, the actions and postures of the main body parts have been discussed in detail under Angik Abhinaya.
- Without rasa, there is no justification for emotion and without emotion, rasa cannot be fulfilled.
- Emotions are like waves rising in the mind. Writers or actors express these feelings through their works. Acharya Bharat has mainly divided the emotions into four categories- permanent emotions, vibhava, anubhava and communicable emotions.
- The process of face acting is accomplished through various movements and postures of the facial organs- eyes, eyebrows, ears, nose, cheeks and chin etc. Under Rasa Sadhana, special exercises are done on the eyes.
- Eye is especially noteworthy in Navras Sadhana. Even in Natyashastra, these differences of eyesight have been called Darshan Bheda i.e. ways of seeing. They should be used according to different tastes and emotions. Under Drishti Abhinay, thirty-six types including Rasa, Permanent and Sanchari have been described.
- Sentamila's ancient grammar text Tolkappiyam also discusses the eight emotions of the mind as being expressed through mippatu s, i.e. the body.
- Kudiyattam, which is considered to be the last remnant of Sanskrit drama, has a long history of the training process of rasa.
- Scholars associated with Kodungallur Kovilakam had also done experiments and discoveries regarding Navarasa. He often organized Kalari for Kudiyattam and Kathakali artistes. Through Navarasa Sadhana, actors honed their basic expressions through everyday practice.
- The name of G. Venu is very important in relation to the technique of Navarasa Sadhana.
- This long-term workshop on Netra and Hasth (Eye and Hand) within Navarasa Sadhana and the discovery of Jee-Venu in Kodungallur Kalari played an important role in the development of the actor training methodology of Navarasa Sadhana.

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. What is meant by rasa?
2. Tell us about feelings?
3. Tell about the Navarasa Sadhana experiment done by G. Venu?
4. Discuss about eyes and hands in Navarasa Sadhana?

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****16.1**

1. Rasa is the joy that the audience feels after watching a theatrical performance.
2. Eight rasas have been discussed in Natyashastra.
3. When the permanent feeling situated in the heart of the listener is combined with the Vibhava, Anubhav and communicable feelings, then Rasa is obtained.
4. Those feelings which remain permanently present in the hearts of the audience.
5. The unstable emotions that arise and disappear in the mind of the person according to the situation are called communicative emotions. These feelings are always present in the heart. When they get the opportunity, they keep on forming and breaking like water bubbles.
6. The main objective of acting is to create rasa.
7. There are nine rasas - sringara, hasya, veera, karuna, bhayanak, vibhatsa, adbhut, shanta.

16.2

1. Sentamil's ancient grammar text Tolakappiyam also discusses the eight emotions of the mind.
2. In the theater tradition of Kerala, for hundreds of years, there were permanent expressions called Bhavas for training in acting.

Theatre: technique and design



Notes

Theatre: technique and design

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3. Rasa Sadhana is mentioned in the traditions of Kudiyaattam and Kathakali.
4. Scholars associated with Kodungallur Kovilakam had also done experiments and discoveries regarding Navarasa. He often organized Kalari for Kudiyaattam and Kathakali artistes.
5. Kodungallur Kovilakam often organized Kalari for Kudiyaattam and Kathakali artistes. Through Navarasa Sadhana, actors honed their basic expressions through everyday practice.
6. The name of G. Venu is very important in relation to the technique of Navarasa Sadhana.
7. A training center named 'Abhinay Kalari' was started in Natankairali to advance the Swarvayu technique.
8. Eye and hand have special contribution in Navras Sadhana.
9. The present system of Navarasa Sadhana has been planned in such a way that artists of different disciplines can include the practice of the nine Rasas in their regular practice.