

CLASSICAL AND FOLK DANCES IN INDIAN CULTURE

Palkalai Chemmal Dr ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI

Chairman: Yoganjali Natyalayam, Pondicherry.

INTRODUCTION:

Dance in India comprises the varied styles of dances and as with other aspects of Indian culture, different forms of dances originated in different parts of India, developed according to the local traditions and also imbibed elements from other parts of the country. These dance forms emerged from Indian traditions, epics and mythology. Sangeet Natak Akademi, the national academy for performing arts, recognizes eight distinctive traditional dances as Indian classical dances, which might have origin in religious activities of distant past. These are:

- ❖ Bharatanatyam- Tamil Nadu
- ❖ Kathak- Uttar Pradesh
- ❖ Kathakali- Kerala
- ❖ Kuchipudi- Andhra Pradesh
- ❖ Manipuri-Manipur
- ❖ Mohiniyattam-Kerala
- ❖ Odissi-Odisha
- ❖ Sattriya-Assam

Folk dances are numerous in number and style, and vary according to the local tradition of the respective state, ethnic or geographic regions. Contemporary dances include refined and experimental fusions of classical, folk and Western forms. Dancing traditions of India have influence not only over the dances in the whole of South Asia, but on the dancing forms of South East Asia as well. In modern times, the presentation of Indian dance styles in films (Bollywood dancing) has exposed the range of dance in India to a global audience.

In ancient India, dance was usually a functional activity dedicated to worship, entertainment or leisure. Dancers usually performed in temples, on festive occasions and seasonal harvests. Dance was performed on a regular basis before deities as a form of worship. Even in modern India, deities are invoked through religious folk dance forms from ancient times. Classical dance forms use mudras or hand gestures to retell episodes of mythological tales. Gradually dancers, moved from temples to houses of royal families where they performed exclusively for royalty. Important influences in modern times like Rukhmani Devi Arundale and others led the renaissance of dance forms that had fallen into disrepute in the Devadasi tradition.

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY:

Indian dance traces its roots to Sanathana Dharma and Lord Shiva is held to be its manifesting principle. Dance, music and theatre are an enduring part of Indian culture. In India all forms of art have a sacred origin and the inner experience of the soul finds its highest expression in music and dance. The Indian cultural attitude towards art as an expression of the Inner beauty or Divine in man brought it into close connection with spirituality and religion. Using the body as a medium of communication, the expression of dance is perhaps the most intricate and developed, yet easily understood art form.

Ancient Indian Civilisation prospered on all fronts, leading to the compilation of epics like the four Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Puranas etc., which serve as the basis for all streams of learning. The Vedas (Sama, Yajur, Rig and Atharva) are said to be Divine spiritual knowledge derived from the supreme. Elaborate and eloquent references to the art of dancing abound in the Rig Veda, substantiating that dance was one of the oldest forms of art in India. The Natya Shastra is the earliest Indian text in the history of performing arts. Over time many classical dance forms emerged in India including Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohini Attam, Kathak, Odissi, Sattriya and Manipuri, as well as numerous vigorous folk dances.

According to Natya Shastra and Abhinaya Darpana, Lord Brahma created the art of dance upon the request of the Gods as a form of entertainment and it became known as the fifth Veda, and was open to all, irrespective of caste and creed. Prior to the creation of the Natya Veda, Brahma entered a Yogic trance in which he recalled the four Vedas. He drew literature from the Rig Veda, song from the Sama Veda, Abhinaya or expression from the Yajur Veda and Rasa or aesthetic experience from the Atharva Veda. These aspects are the four main constituents of the Natya Veda. Lord Brahma passed on this Natya Veda to his son, sage Bharata, who passed it on to his 100 sons. Thus this divine art descended from the heavens to Earth. Lord Shiva took up the Tandava (masculine form of dance), whereas Goddess Parvati, his consort, took up the Lasya (feminine form). Bharata staged the first play with his hundred sons and Apsaras in the amphitheatre of the Himalayas. Lord Shiva, the ultimate dancer, was so enchanted that he sent his disciple Tandu to Bharata, to teach him the true elements of dance. These are depicted in the Natya Shastra, in its chapters collectively named the Tandava Lakshana.

Lord Nataraja is considered to be the God of dance in Hindu mythology. His dancing image, in the Tandava form, is the starting point of all creation. To the dancer the four arms of the Nataraja are a depiction of dance movement in an immovable and static medium. The mystique of the arms and legs of the figure has a cosmological significance as the dance is taken as merely a human representation of a cosmic fact. In the Nataraja image the frontal palm of the right hand, which is lifted and slightly bent, represents security (Abhaya) to devotees. The left hand, which is thrown across the body with the fingers pointing downwards, indicates the feet of the Lord as the refuge of devotees. The upraised left foot represents the blessing bestowed by the Lord. In the right upper hand Shiva carries a small drum representing the creative sound, which began the universe, and in the other hand he has a fire, which is symbolic of light and therefore destruction of ignorance. Under the right foot is a dwarf, which signifies triumph over evil. Encapsulated in this figure of the Dancing Lord is the entire function of Shiva as the creator, preserver and destroyer. This dance is a metaphor for the belief that life is essentially a dynamic balancing of good and bad, where opposites are interdependent. The dance of Shiva is the dance of life.

Each Indian classical dance form draws inspiration from stories depicting the life, ethics and beliefs of the Indian people. The genesis of the contemporary styles of classical dances can be traced to a period around 1000-1500 years ago. India offers a number of classical dance forms, each of which can be traced to different parts of the country. Each form represents the culture and ethos of a particular region or a group of people. Bharatanatyam flourished in areas of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Kuchipudi is another famous classical dance of South India, from Andhra Pradesh. Kathakali is a theatrical dance form of Kerala. Mohini Attam is the feminine counterpart of Kathakali. Kathak is the classical dance form of North India and has two main Gharanas or schools - the Jaipur Gharana and the Lucknow Gharana. Odissi is the classical dance of Orissa and was mainly centered around Puri and Bhubaneswar. Manipuri is the classical dance of the Northeastern state of Manipur and Sattriya belongs to Assam. Besides these, there are several semi-classical dances that contribute to the plethora of Indian dances.

In India, classical dance and music pervade all aspects of life and bring color, joy and gaiety to a number of festivals and ceremonies. In fact, dance and music in India are tied inextricably to festivity of any kind.

Out of the recognized dance forms, the only two temple dance styles that have their origin in Natya Shastra and are prescribed by the Agamas are Bharatanatyam and Odissi. These two most faithfully adhere to the Natya Shastra but currently do not include Vaachikaabhinaya (dialog acts), although some styles of Bharatanatyam, such as Melattur style, prescribe the lip and eye movements indicating Vaachikaabhinaya.

Kuchipudi, which also prescribes the lip movements indicating Vaachikaabhinaya, and Mohiniyattam are relatively recent Darbari Aatam forms, just as Kathakali, and two eastern Indian styles, Manipuri and Sattriya, that are quite similar.

Kathak originated as a court dance. Some believe it evolved from Lord Krishna's raas lilas, forms of which have also evolved into the popular Garba-style dances popular in North India and Gujarat. The style gradually changed during the Mughal period under the influence of Persian dance, a major change being straight knees instead of the bent knees used in most other Indian classical forms. Intricate footwork and spins, as well as abhinaya, are the highlights of Kathak.

FOLK AND TRIBAL DANCE FORMS:

Folk dances and plays in India retain significance rural areas as the expression of the daily work and rituals of village communities. These dances have their roots in religious and seasonal festivals that have become a background for such celebrations. They are mostly performed in groups. Folk dances can be located according to the regions of their origin. Every state has its own folk dance forms like Kolattam, Khummi, Pambattam, Puliattam, Karagattam, Oyilattam, Poikal Kudirai Attam, Bommalattam and Theru Koothu in Tamil Nadu; Bedara Vasha, Dollu Kunitha in Karnataka; Garba, Gagari, Ghodakhund in Gujarat; Kalbelia, Ghoomar, Rasiya in Rajasthan; Neyopa, Bacha Nagma in Jammu and Kashmir; Bhangra & Giddha in Punjab; Bihu dance in Assam; Chau, Goti pua and Ghumura in Odisha; Lavani in Maharashtra and likewise for each state and smaller regions in it.

Indian folk and tribal dances are simple dances, and are performed to express joy. Folk and tribal dances are performed for every possible occasion, to celebrate the arrival of seasons, birth of a child, a wedding and festivals. The dances are extremely simple with minimum of steps or movement. The dances burst with verve and vitality. Men and women perform some dances exclusively, while in some performances men and women dance together. On most occasions, the dancers sing themselves, while being accompanied by artists on the instruments. Each form of dance has a specific costume. Most costumes are flamboyant with extensive jewels. While there are numerous ancient folk and tribal dances, many are constantly being improved. The skill and the imagination of the dances influence the performance.

Yakshagana is a classical dance drama popular in the state of Karnataka. This theater art involves music, songs, dance, acting, dialogue, story and unique costumes. While songs and dance adhere to well-established talas very similar to classical Indian dance forms, acting and dialogues are created spontaneously on stage depending on the ability of artists. This combination of classical and folk elements makes yakshagana unique from any other Indian art. It would be considered a form of opera in western eyes. Traditionally, yakshaganas use to start late in the night and run all night.

BHARATANATYAM

Bharatanatyam and Yoga are two ways that exist to help us understand the manifestation of the Divine in the human form. Both of these wonderful arts are products of Sanathana Dharma, which is the bedrock of Indian culture. The Natya Shastra of Bharata Muni lays emphasis on not merely the physical aspects of Bharatanatyam, but also on the spiritual and esoteric nature of this art form. Both of these arts are also evolutionary sciences for the spiritual evolution of the human being to the state of the super human and finally the Divine.

The spiritual and Yogic nature of Bharatanatyam, is very well explained in the following comment by our Guru Yogamani, Yogacharini, Pudukkottai Kalaimamani Smt Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani who is eminently qualified to talk on this subject being both an eminent world famous Yogini and a distinguished Bharatanatyam artist, rolled into one dynamic being.

“Bharatanatyam is Yoga, if Yoga means union. For surely this ancient art is one of the most beautiful and satisfying ways of expressing the human longing for union with the Divine. As an art form, Bharatanatyam demands conscious understanding of body, mind and emotions. The sincere dancer must understand the nature of Bhakti and Jnana and the innate longing in all living creatures for Samadhi or cosmic consciousness. The ‘Divine dance of energy’ in the universe, so graphically and beautifully represented by Lord Nataraja, the lord of dance is the source of inspiration for all Bharatanatyam artists who understand the deeper aspects of their art. Especially for the youth, this Divine art is a boon for it shapes the body into graceful controlled beauty, the mind into alertness and sensitivity and the emotions into controlled and purified receptors for the deepest inner longings of humankind. Lord Shiva himself blesses those young people, who take to this art, offering their profound interest, their love and their discipline as Dakshina. Such true Sadhaks then find that Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram – truth, goodness and beauty do flower in their lives, boons granted gladly by the lord of dance to his ardent devotees.”

In modern time, both of these elevating spiritual arts have been the victim of degeneration to such an extent that Bharatanatyam is only treated as a decorative performing art and Yoga as a ‘Keep fit’ exercise thus negating the very soul of these art forms. The depths of the spiritual concepts of these arts have been by far and large lost and they are being practised only at a very superficial and mundane level. However, there exists a ray of hope at the end of this dark tunnel, as slowly and steadily many of the practitioners of these arts are awakening to their real inner meaning. Many of them are taking concrete steps to bring back the real meaning into the practice of these arts, which are actually ‘lifestyles’ in their true nature.

KEY ASPECTS OF BHARATANATYAM:

Bharatanatyam is a seamless blend of Nritta (rhythmic elements), Nritya (combination of rhythm with expression) and Natya (dramatic element). Nritta is the rhythmic movement of the body in dance. It does not express any emotion. Nritya is usually expressed through the eyes, hands and facial movements. Nritya combined with Nritta makes up the usual dance programs. Nritya comprises Abhinaya, depicting Rasa (sentimental) and Bhava (mood).

To appreciate Natya or dance drama, one has to understand and appreciate Indian legends. Most Indian dances take their themes from India's rich mythology and folk legends. Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Shiva and Parvati, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Rama and Sita, Krishna and Radha are all depicted in classical Indian dances.

Classical dance is a combination of Bhava, Raga and Tala (mood, melody and rhythm). The Gati or gait is stylized for each classical dance form. The Gati is also called Chaal in Kathak, Chali in Odissi and Nadai in Bharatanatyam.

ABHINAYA: Abhinaya is the rhythmic expression of moods, emotions and a narrative through the use of Mudra (hand gestures), Bhanga (postures of the body) and Rasa (facial expressions). Abhinaya has been vividly described in Abhinaya Darpana, a medieval work on histrionics that was codified by Nandikeswara. “Abhinaya” literally means the “representation or exposition of a certain theme”. The basic root meaning is from the Sanskrit “Abhi” which means “to or towards” – with the root “Ni” – “to lead”. Abhinaya thus means, “to lead (the audience and performer) towards a particular state of being or feeling.” “Abhinaya ” has four aspects namely: Aangika, Vachika, Aahaarya and Saathvika. Aangika is the language of expression through the medium of the body (Sharira), the face (Mukha) and movement (Cheshta). Vachika Abhinaya is the expression through words, literature and drama; Aahaarya, the expression through decoration such as make-up, jewellery and costumes; Saathvika, the expression through acting out and manifesting the different state of the mind and feelings.

Lord Shiva is praised as the embodiment of the above four types of Abhinaya in this following Shloka that is recited by all dancers in the initial part of their training in an effort to make them realise the divine nature of this art form. “*Angikam bhuvanam yasya vachicam sarva vangmayam aharyam chandra taradi tam vande satvikam shivam*” (We bow to Him the benevolent One, Whose limbs are the world, whose song and poetry are the essence of all language, whose costume is the moon and the stars).

POSTURES: The ideal postures of the body are depicted in the Shilpa Shastra and there are four types of Bhangas (postures), the deviations of the body from the central erect position. These four Bhangas are: Abhanga, Samabhanga, Atibhanga and Tribhanga. Abhanga signifies "off-center", an iconographic term for a slightly askew standing position. Samabhanga is the equal distribution of the body limbs on a central line, whether standing or sitting. Atibhanga is the great bend with the torso diagonally inclined and the knees bent. Tribhanga is the triple bend with one hip raised, the torso curved to the opposite side and the head tilted at an angle.

MUDRAS: Mudras are found in both Yoga and dance and while they are used for communicating externally in dance there are used for internal communication in Yoga. The Hastha Mudras or hand gestures of Bharatanatyam are a very highly developed aspect of the art and are a science of communication with the Divine. They are used for a variety of reasons such as to mime the meaning of the song, convey deeper feelings, bring out inherent qualities, invoke the myriad forms of the Divine as in Navagraha and Dashavathara Hasthas or in some cases they may be simple aesthetic ornamentation. Some have very limited meanings, and some are used as catch-alls for miming a variety of ideas.

The Natya Shastra lists numerous Mudras along with their meanings. Many others have been developed in the time since, whose histories are harder to trace. In the cases where an idea is being conveyed, it is more important to communicate clearly with hand gestures - adapting them if necessary - than it is to perform them with rigid correctness. Hand gestures of Bharatanatyam are classified as *Asamyutha Hastha* (single hand gestures) and *Samyutha Hastha* (double hand gestures). There are 28 *Asamyutha Hasthas* and 24 *Samyutha Hasthas*. Each Hastha has a defined usage called *Viniyoga* that are Sanskrit Shlokas codified in the *Natyashastra*.

Asamyutha Hastha (Single Hand Gestures)

pataka tripatakordhapataka kartareemukhaha mayurakyordhachandrashcha arala
shukatundakaha mushtishta shikarakyashcha kapitha katakamukhaha suchee chandrakala
padmakosham sarpashirastata mrugasheersha simhamukho langulasolapadmakaha chaturo
bramarashchiva hamsasyo hamsapakshakaha samdamsho mukulashchiva tamrachooda
trishoolakaha ashtavimshatihastha naam evam naamaanivikramat.

Samyutha Hastha (Double Hand Gestures)

anjalishcha kapotashcha karkata swastikastatha dolahastha pushpaputaha utsanga
shivalingakaha katakavardhanashchiva kartaree swatikastata shakata shankha chakrecha
samputa pasha keelakau matsya koorma varahashcha garudonagabandakaha khatwa
bherundakakhyashcha avahitastathivacha chaturvimshatisankhyakaha samyuta katithakaraha

Different schools and styles of dance use different hand gestures and different terms for the same hand gestures. Most have a fairly similar set of terms that largely overlap with this list, but many may be different in the details. It is largely a case of individual style, and the important thing is to communicate the ideas clearly.

NAVA RASA: Nritya is that manifestation of dancing that includes both Rasa (aesthetic flavour) and Bhava (human emotions), as in the dance with Abhinaya, the art of expression. There are nine major classical categories of emotions or Rasa, called Nava Rasas that are depicted in the Abhinaya of Bharatanatyam. These are Shringara (erotic love), Haasya (humour and laughter), Karuna (compassion), Roudra (anger), Veera (heroism), Bhaya (fearful terror), Bheebatsa (disgust), Adbhuta (wonder-awe) and Shanta (peacefulness).

The Nava Rasas are a major form of emotional catharsis and Natya (dance) helps cleanse the negative aspects of human emotions and sublimate them for higher emotions of Divine Bhakti. They are also a great means of psychological preventive therapy as most modern societies give little or no scope for expression of these emotions in the proper manner. The Nava Rasas also help youngsters to learn about these emotions in a positive manner. They can then produce a balanced wholesome personality who embodies Sama Bhava or equal mindedness.

NATYA KARANAS: Acrobatic Natya Karanas are very much a part of the traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire. 108 Natya Karanas have been described in the Natya Shastra. Natya Karanas are not only particular poses as is commonly believed, but also are cadences of movements. It is necessary for an understanding of the Karanas that the dancer masters the movements of the separate parts of the body like the neck, head, feet, thighs, waist and hands, and understands how geometric shapes can be created with the Angas (limbs), Evidence of Natya Karanas is very clear in studying sculptures and paintings in Gopuram walls, ceilings and courtyards of our ancient Dravidian temples, especially in Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur and Tiruvannamalai, where dancers are depicted in acrobatic stances. These stances are very similar to Yoga Asanas. On the Gopuram walls at Chidambaram there are many classical dance poses, which are also Yoga Asanas.

Tandava, the classical dance, takes its name from Tanduvu, the celestial attendant of Lord Shiva who instructed the sage Bharata in the use of the Angaharas and Karanas, the plastic modes of Tandava at Lord Shiva's behest. A Karana is a unit of dance in which gesture, step and attitude are coordinated in a harmonious rhythmic movement. A sequence of six or more Karanas is called an Angahara. Anga refers to the body and Hara is a name of Lord Shiva, creator of the Tandava, comprising 32 Angaharas composed of 108 Karanas. The Nataraja temple of Chidambaram is sculpted with these 108 Karanas on the inner walls of the 4 gateways leading to the temple. These lovely sculptures vividly depict the Tandava dance form.

According to experts of dance therapy, each of these 108 positions corresponds to one of the different human emotions. Holding a posture enhances the emotion it corresponds to. The length of time that the posture needs to be held will depend on how quickly you wish your energy sphere to become contented. You will need to perform the two or three postures for the counteracting emotion to the one you suffer from for a maximum total of 30 minutes per week for one year in order to get cured, and become contented in this respect. In practicing the opposing Karana, only the body, leg and arm movements need to be considered - not the

detailed head, hand and foot gestures. Also, one does not need to be concerned with the movement into or out of the posture; nor with the actual emotion being represented - the mind needs to remain calm.

The Natya Karanas give us a static element to offset the dynamic movements of the dance. This is important, for a pause is as important as a movement in classical dance. Natya Karanas have not found prominence in the modern repertoire and one of the major reasons may be the physical inability of modern dancers to perform them. Most dancers today are overweight and inflexible due to the effects of modern lifestyle and diet. Unless a person has tremendous dedication and determination it will be very difficult to be able to perform most of the acrobatic Natya Karanas. We often see dancers struggle to stand even on one leg in a feeble attempt to recreate the masterly Karanas.

Under the dynamic leadership of Kalaimamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, Yoganjali Natyalayam, Pondicherry's premier institute of Yoga, Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music has tried to restore the acrobatic Karanas to the Bharat Natyam repertoire. Acrobatic Natya Karanas are very much a part of the traditional Bharat Natyam repertoire, but have been practically lost in today's performances. These stances are very similar to Yoga Asanas, and in the Gopuram walls at Chidambaram, at least twenty different classical Yoga Asanas are depicted by the dancers, including Dhanurasana, Chakrasana, Vrikshasana, Natarajasana, Trivikramasana, Ananda Tandavasana, Padmasana, Siddhasana, Kaka Asana, Vrishchikasana and others. Yoganjali Natyalayam has as one of its aims the restoration of these acrobatic Karanas to the classical Bharatanatyam performance and this is possible only by combining sustained Yogic discipline with dance training from an early age. The sincere and regular practice of Yoga from early childhood helps to re-create the Karanas efficiently and many of the students of Yoganjali Natyalayam have become experts in the artistic presentation of these Karanas.

BHARATANATYAM: A PLAY OF THE SUBTLE ENERGIES:

In Bharatanatyam we say, "yatho hastastato dristhihi, yatho drishthasthato manaha, yatho manasthato bhaavo, yatho bhavasthato rasaha" meaning thereby, "Where the hands (Hasta) go, the eyes follow (Drishti); where the eyes go the mind follows (Mana); where the mind goes, there is created an aesthetic expression of emotion (Bhava) and where there is Bhava, the essence of the spirit (Rasa) is evoked in both performer and the attentive and sensitive audience (Rasika)". Where the hands go, the eyes go and where the eyes go, the mind goes. This is how we humans live our lives! We only pay attention to those things that matter to us and usually those that can be 'reached' for with our Karmendriya/ Jnanendriya. In this case hand (Pani) as the Karmendriya and the eyes (Chakshu/ Drishti) as the Jnanendriya. Yoga teaches us that, "Where the mind goes, the Prana flows"! When Prana flows, life manifests and emotion comes alive. This is indeed the intricate, inner link between the Pranamaya Kosha and our emotions!! No wonder Ammaji is right when she says, "Bharatanatyam is a play of the subtle energies of the Mandalas and Chakras."

IN CONCLUSION:

The Upanishads say, "Devo Bhutva Devam Yajet" meaning – "Become a God in order to worship God." India has always embodied this eternal principle in its culture and has spread it across the seas. Dancing was considered the religious ceremony most pleasing to the Gods and dedication of all activity to the Divine was the highest form of worship.

According to the Natya Shastra, "There is no wisdom, nor knowledge; no art nor craft; no device, nor action that is not to be found in Natya". Brahma, created the fifth Scripture, Natya

Veda, the scripture of the Dance, presenting moral and spiritual truths in a form, which is easy to understand, even for the masses. Brahma then said to the people, “This art is not merely for your pleasure, but exhibits Bhava (emotion) for all the three worlds. I made this art to reflect this world, whether in work or play, profit, peace, laughter, battle or slaughter. This art shall teach men that the fruit of righteousness will be given to those who follow Dharma, the Moral Law. The spirituality of this art shall be a restraint for the unruly, a discipline for the followers of rule. It will create wisdom in the ignorant, learning in scholars, afford sport to kings and endurance to the sorrow-stricken. Replete with the diverse moods, informed with varying passions of the soul, linked to the deeds of all mankind, the best, the middling and the low, affording excellent counsel, and all else, this great art shall console and elevate the world”.

May the artistic community of this great nation of Bharat strive to keep the purity of its great cultural heritage intact, inspiring people in all times to follow the advice of the great Rishi Veda Vyasa, who exclaimed at the end of his great epic, the Mahabharatha: “Oh man know this! Do your Dharma (Ordained virtuous duty)! Then Artha (wealth) and Kama (fulfillment of desire) shall automatically come to you. Having fulfilled yourself in Artha and Kama, you will then seek and obtain Moksha! Hence I say, “Do your Dharma and all else shall come automatically to you.”

The great art of Bharatnatyam surely shows us how we may fulfill our Dharma in a most refined, pleasing, enjoyable, dignified, beautiful and joyful manner and attain that final union with the Supreme Self.

REFERENCES:

1. Bhavanani Meenakshi Devi. Yoga: One woman’s view. Satya Press, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry. 1985
2. Coomaraswamy Ananda. The Mirror of Gesture: Being the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikeswara. Munshiram Manoharlal. New Delhi.1997.
3. Gitananda Giri Swami. Mudras. Satya Press, Ananda Ashram, Pondichery.1975
4. Hinduism Today July 1992.Yogi Playwright Infusing Indian Theatre With More Atma and Altruism
5. Kothari Sunil. Bharata Natyam: Indian classical dance art. Marg Publications. 1979.
6. Ramanathan Leela. Moving sculpture, frozen dance. Sunday Herald, Deccan Herald, Sundays, January 18 and 25, 2004
7. Sudhakar Kanaka. Indian classical dancing: The therapeutic advantages. Sterling Publishers, New Delhi.1994
8. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_classical_dance
9. www.ignca.nic.in/ks_14_cn.htm#KARANA
10. www.kanakasabha.com/hastas/index
11. www.nadanam.com/bharatnatyam
12. www.pir.net/~beth/main
13. www.shilpkalamart.com/classicaldances