



CHAPTER 10

THE *NRITYA (ABHINAYA) KRITIS* OF *MARGAM*



There are several items of the Bharatanatyam *Margam* that focus only on narrative and are with a story line. It is dance with *abhinaya* or *nritya*, a dance that conveys a story or an episode. It is interpretative and communicates to the audience stories. Such items generally use a short poem, or song that is performed by the dancer in an expressive manner using the varied techniques of *abhinaya*. Such a performance is not punctuated by *nritya* sequences. The dancer interprets a line or a couplet in different ways to express herself and demonstrate her skill in *abhinaya*. A dancer often intersperses an *abhinaya* item between two brisk *nritya*-based items in a *Margam* performance as a way to catch her breath and relax physically. Several senior dancers also opt to present a performance of an hour or so predominantly with *abhinaya* pieces where their maturity also helps in adding a sharp edge to a nuanced performance. All the *kritis* of the *Margam* are based on and use extensively the four *Abhinayas* as described by Bharatamuni in the *Natyashastra* namely *Angika*, *Vachika*, *Aharya* and *Satvika*. Also the teaching and creativity of Bharatanatyam practitioners follow two *shloka*-s extensively for both *Nritya* and *Nritya*.

'Yato Hasto Stato Drishti,
Yato Drishti Stato manaha,
Yato Manaha Stato Bhava,
Yato Bhava Stato RAsa'
' Kanthena Alambayet gitam hastena artham pradarsayet,
Chaksurabhyam darsayet bhavam padabhyam talamacharet'

PADAM

Padam comes from the Sanskrit word '*padhya*' which means 'poem', 'verse', or 'a line of poetry'. In literal terms, '*pada*' means a song. *Padams* are of three broad types: 1. The *Shringara Bhava Padam* which is full of love sentiments, 2. The *Bhakti Bhava Padam* whose focus is devotion, and 3. *Padams* that celebrate Gods and Goddesses, their descriptions, and their heroic actions.

"References to '*Padam*' are found in Telugu literature and it is believed that the '*ela prabandams*' were probably the earlier forms. '*Desa ela*' were '*Prabandams*' composed in several southern regional languages such as Kannada, Andhra, Dravida and Grantha. The '*ela*' in Telugu are known for their wonderful '*Gamaka Prayogas*'

which are phrases explaining the essence of *rasa* and *bhava* of the song. Numerous *Padams* are religious in nature, composed as in the tradition of *Bhakti Sangeet* by devotee-poets. All over the southern states, the theme of *Madhura bhakthi* was quite popular and the *Padams* they inspired were written in easy-to-understand colloquial languages and simply composed. *Padams* composed by *Manichkavasakar* (Tirukovai, Thiruvagasama), *Andal* (Tiruppavai). They often have a set *Pallavi*, *Anupallavi* and *Charanam angas*, and are set in a slow rhythm."¹



Fig. 1: Smt. Kalanidhi Narayan

There are several different kinds of *Padams*. When the Nayaka kings ruled Tanjavur, *Padams* by the name of *Padachalis*, *Chau Padam*, *Daru Padam*, *Guru Padam*, *Madana Padam*, *Nava Padam* were extremely popular. Muthuthandavar

was the first Tamil *Padam* composer of the Nayaka period. A great devotee of Nataraja of Chidambaram, he was the contemporary of Vijaya Raghava Nayaka. His Tamil compositions are spiked with an intense spiritual flavour. He composed nearly 60 *Keertanas* and 25 *Padams*, and these are popular even today with dancers over succeeding centuries.

The other composers of *Padam* in Tamil and Telugu are Muvanallur Sabhapathayya, Sarangapani, Ghanam Krishna Iyer, Mathru Bhuthayya, Kasturi Ranga and Muthu Thandavar to name a few. In Kerala some of the well-known *Padam* composers were Lrayimman Tampi Swathi Tirunal, and Kutty Kunju Thankachi. The devotional songs composed by Purandara Dasa and Talapakkam Annamacharya with Madhurabhava in Andhra came to be known as *Padam*. Since *Padam* has combination of devotion and the sentiment of love to God, it had special importance to Swathi Tirunal. In *Padam* both the musical and literary aspects have equal importance. Such melodious songs induces the sentiment of devotion in people and uplift them to the level of '*Sahridayas*'. Through *Madhura Bhakti* with *Antarika* and *Bahir Sringara Bhakti*, *Padam* can bring spiritual fervour. *Padams* are thus especially suitable for *Abhinaya*.

Kshetrajna, was a great *Padam* composer and court poet of the Tanjavur Nayakas. He was also in the court of the Madurai Nayakas before moving to Tanjavur court. He wrote *Padams* in Telugu on Lord Muvvagopala that were heavily laced with *madhura bhakti*. He had composed 4500 *Padams* of which unfortunately only 350 are available today. His style of *Padam* composition was quite popular and many amateur poets followed his style of *Padam* compositions in other languages too.

The 13th century poet Palkuriki Somantha offered more than 20 different names of *Padams*. Another poet of the 15th century, Namacharya, composed *Padams* that are known as *Tummeda Padams*, *Moonlight Padams*, and *Chilaka Padams*. There were other composers as well such as Muthu Veerappa III, Rani Mangamma and Vijayarange.

In structural terms, *Padams* are divided in three or more segments – *Pallavi*, *Anupallavi* and *Charanam*, or sometime *Anu Charanams*. They are often set to a

raga that is capable of plumbing the depths of the dancer's emotive strength and preparedness. A well-known *Raga* like Khambodi, Saveri, Bhairavi, Kalyani, and Vasanta are generally selected for the *Padam* which is generally danced in slow tempo. This is obvious because the *Padam* allows for the dancer to express deeper and complex sentiments as also for the dancer to explore each text syllable for its maximum musical and performance interpretation.



The *Padam* also offers greater freedom for melodic explorations and corresponding dance improvisations. The *Padam* is often described as a musical monologue. To understand its meaning, it is very essential to comprehend the relationship between the heroine (*Nayika*) and the hero (*Nayaka*). Often this is a spiritual relationship where the human soul is represented by the female lover (*Jeevatma*) yearning for union with Supreme Being (*Paramatma*), the '*Sringara-bhakti*' (devotion through love of the highest, dignified kind).

(Fig.2 : Smt. Malavika Sarukkai)

There are an equal amount of *Padams* that extol the mother-child relationship based on Yashoda and the child Krishna. The Very famous *Padam* of Bala Saraswati '*Krishna Ni Begane Baro*' is based on *Vatslya Bhava*. Here the 'love' theme is based on *bhakti* or devotion, philosophically interpreted as the human soul yearning for union with the divine.



Fig. 3: Smt. T Balasaraswati

In a dance recital, the *Padam*'s give the widest scope for the dancer to execute *abhinaya* the expression of sentiments, emotions, feelings, moods including all its possible combinations. Before performing a *Padam*, the dancer needs to understand the narrative of the *Padam* and its varied nuances. Dancer also needs to understand the emotional make-up of the hero and heroine, the history of their relationship and its current status, the mood and intentions of the heroine (or hero) depending upon from whose name the *Padam* is sung and the possible development of the situation between the lovers. The key to the beauty of the *Padam* is the suspense buried in its suggestiveness. It plays upon dual meanings, suggesting possibilities. It is understood that the theme of love is primary to the central subject of the *Padam*. This theme is explored through a variety of emotions that match the real situation around which the *Padam* is composed, and accordingly the mood of the *nayaka* /*nayika*. However care is always taken to make sure that the warm expression of love that links the *Padam* together never gets broken or disturbed. Even when the *nayika* /*nayaka* feign anger or a lover's quarrel, or estrangement of any kind, that real or pretended suffering is always happily tempered with hope and affection that true love engenders. It is said "In dancing to the *Padam*-s, one experiences the containment, cool and quite, of entering the Sanctum for its external precinct. Dancing to the *Padam* is akin to the juncture when the cascading lights of worship

are withdrawn and the drum beats die down to the simple and solemn chanting of sacred verses in the closeness of god."²



Fig.4 : Smt. Alarmel Valli

In the *Padam*, the *pallavi* forms one of the most significant lines. It is sung repeatedly so that the dancer can emote in many different ways and express gestural and facial *abhinaya* as well as explore the nuances of meanings hidden in that line of poetry. The *anupallavi* following the *pallavi* is also similarly interpreted.

In her book *Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts*, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan writes, "The *Padam* is a musical piece which belongs specifically to the sphere of Dance music even though the term is often used to signify any type of devotional composition. The musical composition is created with the dancer's mind and its theme treats mostly of *nayika* and *nayaka* of literature. The *bhakti* school of poetry found its finest expression in the *Padam* composed mainly during the medieval period, and the subtlest shades of *shringara rasa* are manifested in these compositions. The music determines the nature of the *Sanchari Bhava* which the dancers depict in endless ways and the chastity of the *abhinaya* technique at its best is seen in the execution of the *Padam*."³

Dance guru, S Sharada, has explained the *Padam* as follows: “Care should be taken when selecting the theme for a *Padam* which is a slow item and contains a lot of deep *rasa bhava*. The *rasa* is nearly always *Sringara*. An idea already presented in a *sanchari* should not be repeated. The best *charana-s* should be selected. The mood of the *nayika* should be correctly ascertained and portrayed.”⁴



Fig. 5 and 6 : Smt. Priyadarshini Govind

In present times, in musical terms, *Padams* are considered as highly descriptive pieces with music of a very high order embellished with complex musical phrases. There are certain differences in the way the *Padam* is approached in Telugu and Tamil. Telugu *Padams* are generally rendered in a very, very slow tempo while the Tamil *Padams* are sung in a faster tempo, often graduating to the intermediate speed as well. The *Padam* allows the raga to be explored in slow but definitive detail with the use of subtle nuances and variations in the music. Sometimes the many different sets of *sangatis*, found in the *kritis*, are absent in the *Padams* but these gaps in the literary content are made up with long *karvais* and intricate *gamakas*.

Popular Shringar Padams

- *Annamacharya – Alarulu – Sankarabharanam – Adi*
- *Amma ninney – Ragamalika – Adi*
- *Okapari kokopari – Kharaharapriya – Adi*
- *Ghanam Krishna Iyer – Niddirayll – Pantuvarali – Adi*
- *Yar poyl solluvar – Todi – Misra Chapu*
- *Ghanam Seenayya – Siva deeksha – Kurinji – Adi*
- *Govindaswamy – Reeti bondina- Todi – Tripura*
- *Kshetrappa – Ayyayyo – Nadanamakriya – Tripura*
- *Maguva tana kelika – Mohanam – Jhampa*
- *Manchidinamu – Anandabhairavi – Tripura*
- *Na manasu – Kalyani – Misra Chapu*
- *Ninnu joochi – Punnagavarali – Tripura*
- *Prana sakhi – Bhairavi – Adi*
- *Valapudacha – Varali – Misra Chapu*
- *Marimutha Pillai – Ethai kandu – Kalyani – Roopakam*
- *Muvanallur Sabhapati Ayya – Emataladina – Yadukulakambhaji – Tripura*
- *Sarangapani – Magadochchi – Sahana – Misra Chapu*
- *Swati Tirunal – Tarunl ngyana – Dwijavanti – Misra Chapu*
- *Vaitheeswarankoil Subbarama Iyer – Aduvum solluval – Sourashtram – Adi*
- *Anonymous (composer) (mudra Kasturi Ranga) – Endendu vachchitivira – Surati – Misra Chapu*

Select list of *Padam*-s from repertoire of T. Balasaraswati

- *Aduvum Solluval – Saurashtram*
- *Neelamayll Vahanano – Neelambari*
- *Emataladina – Yadukulakambho*
- *Neeponad – Kalyani*
- *Enneramum - Todi*
- *Netrandi Nerattiney – Husseini*
- *Ettanai Sonnalum – Saveri*
- *Niddiralyil – Pantuvarali*
- *Indendu – Surati*
- *Padarivarugudu – Kambhoji*
- *Ini Enna Pechchu Irukkudu – Sahana*
- *Sabha Patikku – Abhogi*
- *Jagadodharana – Kafi*
- *Siva Deeksha – Kuringi*
- *Kaalai Tooki Ninradum- Yadukulakambhoji*
- *Tamarasaksha – Yadukulakambhoji*
- *Krishna Nee Beganey – Yamunakalyani*
- *Taye Yasoda – Todi*
- *Madey Avar – Bhairavi*
- *Teruvil Varano – Khamas*
- *Madura Nagarilo – Anandabhai*
- *Tiruvotriyur Tyagaraja – Athana*
- *Mogadochchi – Sahana*
- *Unnal Toodanuppinen – Saveri*
- *Nadamadi Tirinda – Yadukulakambhoji*
- *Velavarey – Bhairavi*
- *Nanniney Dhyana – Kanada*
- *Yarukkagllum Bhayama – Begada*



Fig. 7 and 8 : Smt. T Balasaraswati



Many *Padams* are composed in identical *varnamettus* and this has led to the standardization of certain melodies in *Carnatic* music. These captivating melodies have often been adopted by several well-known composers in their own compositions of *Padams*. Some of these are Kshetragna's *Padam* "Evvadeo Bhama", Govindasamayya's "Malini Vinave", Sabhapathaya's "Darijuchu", Ghanam Krishna Iyer's "Tanakku Taane", Thyagaraja Swami's "Manasu svaadinamai", Muthuswami Dikshitar's "Akshaya linga vibho", and Papanasam Sivan's "Mahalakshmi

Jaganmaata", which are all composed in identical tunes. **Fig.9 : Smt. Leela Samson**

Padams form an important place even in the present-day Bharatanatyam recitals since the beautiful coordination of melody and *abhinaya* finds a fine consummation in this dance form. In the interpretation of the emotional content of the *sahitya*, *Padams* offer tremendous scope for imaginative *sanchari bhava* with attractive and extempore *hastabhinaya* and *mukhabhinaya*.

Kshetragna Padam

Kshetragna, a Telugu Brahmin lived in Muvvapuri, in Andhra. He was an ardent devotee of Muvva Gopala. From childhood he was trained in dance and music. As he lived near Kuchipudi, the centre of Bharatanatyam, he became an eminent dancer and he started composing. Many *Padam* composers or *Padakara-s* have written in Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu and composed in *Carnatic* music. The greatest of them all, Kshetragna, has composed about 4000 *Padams*. Sadly only about 450 of these are published. One or more principles of *Nayika-Nayaka bheda* and of *Alankara Sastra* and *Natyashastra* are illustrated in his *Padams*. Even today for

traditional Bharatanatyam performances, the dancers of Kuchipudi and Muvva use Kshetrajna *Padams*.

In the *Padams* of Kshetrajna the various types of *nayaka* and *nayikas* were very often found. His *Padams* are equally appreciated both in dance and music concerts. He used the apt ragas in appropriate situations for best results. His musical excellence gets greatly expressed through the vivid portrayal of different situations in the *sahitya*. The *sakhi*, *nayaka* or *nayika* singing the *Padam*, come alive in front of us in the exact psychological state of mind visualised by Kshetrajna when we listen to his *Padams*. The *Madhura bhakti* theme reached perfection in the hands of Kshetrajna. The music, *raga*, *bhava*, *tala*, and lyrics blended along with the spiritual fervour to each other in his compositions, making them unparalleled. He started a new era of a musical form - *Padam*, a special composition exclusively of Carnatic music with *Madhura Bhakthi* or *Nayika-Nayaka bhava*. The most noteworthy features of his *Padams* is his selection of the *Kaisiki Vritti* which is the most suited metre for *abhinaya* with the style diction of fluent, soft and seductive and a very slow tempo. Through facial expressions and *hastamudras* the *abhinaya* done by the *devadasis* in the temples was the offering to the Gods. Kshetrajna selected the *rakti* ragas, which powerfully portrayed the many aspects of expression.

Kshetrajna famous poet composer of the 17th century wrote many *padams* with *Shringar rasa* in Telugu. The main theme expressed his intense devotion to Muvva Gopala. The *Padams* are the outpourings of love with Krishna. His *Padams* were sung and performed by the *devadasis* in the temples. They had a great impact on the South Indian dance forms. These days, to show the depth and talent of the artist in *abhinaya*, *Padams* have become an integral part of the dance concerts.

Kshetrajna (1600-1680) *Padams*

- *Inka ninnu bOnittu na*
- *Aluka deeruna*
- *Valapu nilupa*
- *Rara sami rara*
- *Manchi dinamu*
- *Enta chakkani*

- *Eelagatave buddhi*
- *Aligithe*
- *Inta proddaye*

JAVALI

Javalis are amongst the most delightful *abhinaya* items in a modern *Margam*. They provide a much-needed break from the seriousness of *nayika-nayaka* conflicts, Rama-Krishna stories danced and the other usual culprits. Light-hearted and pleasing, the *Javali* brings about a carefree spirit in the performance, primarily due to the lilting melodies that put a spring in the dancer's step. Usually, the mood is *Shringara rasa*; but it often explores a light repartee between the *nayika-nayaka*, that highlights the 'fun' part of the relationship.



As pieces of music, *Javalis* are striking compositions of a pleasing nature, often sung in *Carnatic* music concerts. They are imbued with various human emotions which are explored explicitly to create the necessary '*rasotpatti*' or experience of aesthetic relish by becoming visual through dance. Hence, over a period of time, they became an integral part of Bharatanatyam repertoire.

Fig.10: Smt. Rama Vaidyanathan

Both the dancers and the audience would enjoy the change in presentation brought about by the briskness of the music and movement, the quick but subtle changes in facial expressions, the portrayal of 'tricky' situations, so typical in our routine life. It would thus establish an immediate rapport with the spectator "Dr. Arudra says that *Javali* was born in Travancore and brought up in Mysore. In the 19th century, the Maharajas of Travancore, Mysore and Vijayanagaram were the chief patrons of *Javali*. The rulers of other States had also encouraged its growth. Thus, *Javali-s* gained popularity in most parts of South India with a variety of composers from Andhra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Kerala, and yet 90 percent of *Javali-s* are in Telugu."⁵

The etymology of the word '*Javali*' seems to be shrouded in ambiguity. Here is briefly enlisted all possible claims made by scholars to derive the origin of the word. Dr. V. Raghavan in his preface to the collection of *Javalis* edited by T. Brinda writes, "Curiously, for a type which had come up in times so near to us, the *Javali* is really obscure in its origin. Its very name is intriguing. Kittel's Kannada dictionary notes *Javali* - a kind of lewd poetry. Maharashtra scholars assure us that it is not a Marathi word. Tamil lexicon(p.3874) mentions *Javali* as derived from the Urdu *Jhwali*, but no authority is cited. Persian and Urdu scholars are not able to confirm this" Curiously enough the word '*Jhawali*' in Marathi means an eye gesture in the context of 'love'.

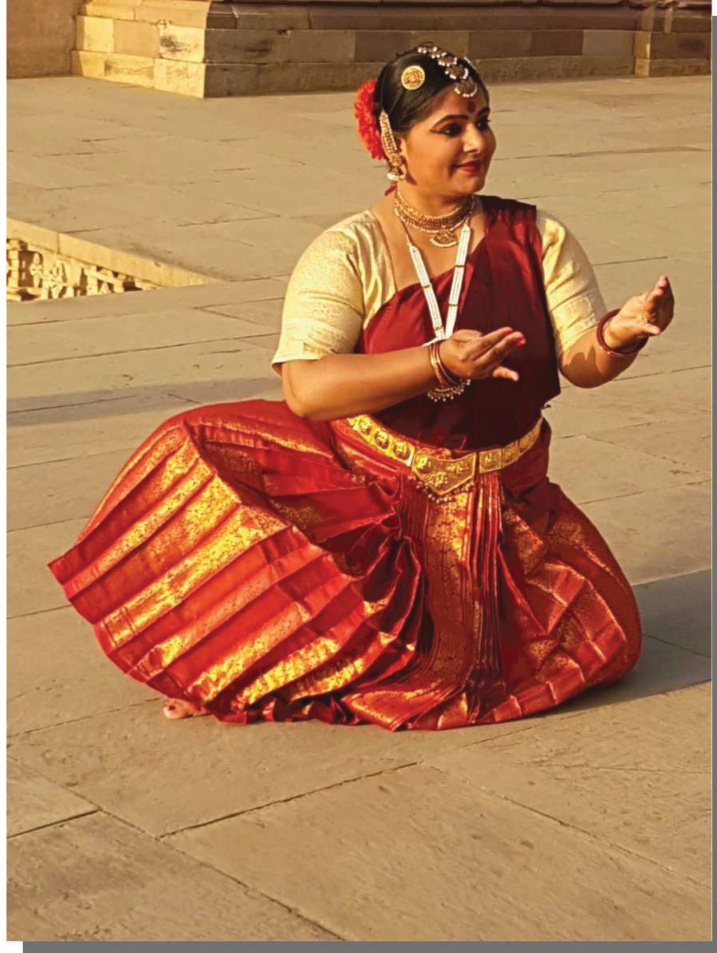
"According to Day's statements the *Javalis* were mostly sung only in the Telugu language in the deep south of India known then as Madras Presidency. It seems to be a common practice among most music composers of *Carnatic* music to use Telugu as best suited for musical compositions. Even Krishnadeva Raya, whose mother-tongue was Tulu wrote in Telugu claiming it to be the best language. Subramania Bharati sings '*sundara Telinginil paatu isaithu*' meaning composing music in beautiful Telugu!"⁶



Fig. 11 : Padmashree Geeta Chandran

Sivaramayya composed *Javali-s* in *manipravala* (mixed dialect) also. He even attempted, the rare Combination of language for composing a *Javali* using both Telugu and English words. The *Javali* starts like this “O! My lovely *lalana*! Elaney pommanti”. He also composed *Javali-s* in English. The *manipravala Javali-s* have lost their colonial relevance but deserve to be preserved in archives for academic purpose.

"*Javada* is a desi musical form and finds mention in many authoritative works on musicology. Subbarama Dikshitar says that according to Venkatamakhi's tradition every *Lakshya geetam* will have a *dhruvam*, *antari* and *javada*. Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sharma, who edited the *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini*, in a footnote, explains that *Javada* is a native word meaning half geetam."⁷



(Fig. 12 : Ms. Divya Patel -Researcher)

According to the renowned musicologist, Dr. Pappu Venugopal, there are almost 1,000 *Javali-s* extant today though only about 50 are popularly performed. He also says that "many of them are openly erotic with some even using obscene language accounting for their gradual disappearance from concert platforms as musicians probably felt squeamish about singing them".

By and large *Javali-s* are love songs, with their basis in '*Sringara rasa*'. Javalis are quick paced, songs with a highly erotic nature, compositions of a light nature. The quick flow of *svaras* bring out the vibrancy of certain ragas. Though in terms of poetic content, Javali-s are very much like *Padams*, but the lyrical depth of the poem does not have the impact and strength of great verse. Also the movement of dance are not so stately or the quality of the accompanying music high quality that one associates with serious *Padam* compositions. Often in *Javali*, *sakhi* becomes involved with the *nayika* and *nayaka* as in the *Padam*, but her role to a larger extent remains frivolous. Some scholars have often tried to attribute an allegory of devotee that is "*jeevatma*" and divine that is "*paramatma*" to the *Javali*. But mostly such tall claims are not made often. According to most dance scholars and musicologist it is considered prudish and hypocritical to attribute *bhakti bhaava* to *Javali-s*. The colloquial and lewd language used in *Javali* divests it of sublime *bhakti*. Most likely, the emergence of *Javali* as a musical form with simple language helped the common people understand very quickly certain aspects of the society prevalent at that time.

Popularly *Javalis* are rendered in *Desi* ragas like Khamas, Behag, Pharaz, Jhijnhoti, Hmir kalyani and Kapi which are a good match for the lyrics and the musical style. We find many *Javalis* that are also composed in ragas such as Athana, Darbar, Bilahari, Saveri, Kamboji, Bhairavi, Surutti, Kalyani and Mukhari. Sometimes there are instances of a *Javali* set in a particular ragas but with traces of other ragas flowing in as well. In fact, it was this kind of freedom that the *Javali* vaggeyakara-s enjoyed, and which allowed them vast creativity. The *kala pramanam* is usually brisk like "*Marubari talalenura*" in Khamaj ragam, "*Parulanna mata*" in Kapi ragam, "*Mutta vaddura*" in Saveri ragam, "*Adinipai marulukonnadi*" in Yamuna-Kalyani ragam and so on. There are also some *Javali-s* performed in slow tempo. An example is the "*Sakhiprana*" *Javali* in Jhijnhoti (also known as chenchuruti) and "*Charumati upacaramu*" in Kaanada, and the way the *nayaka* appeals to the *nayika* in "*Ososi namadi*" in Mukhari ragam. The popular *talams* used in *Javali-s* are

Roopakam and Misra chapu, particularly the *viloma* chapu. They are set in the *anagatagraham* or *eduppu*. while singing the *Javali-s* which makes it very interesting from the musical point of view, and this enhances the *sanchari bhava-s* used in the visual depiction of the lyrics through dance. The musical merit of the *Javali* is tremendous, according to Pappu Venugopala Rao, who says, “They are superbly-crafted; reveal great *raga-gyaana* illumining the grandeur, nuances, and beauty of the melody; their tempo and words are wonderfully evocative of *shringara-rasa*, and they offer much scope for *manodharma*”.

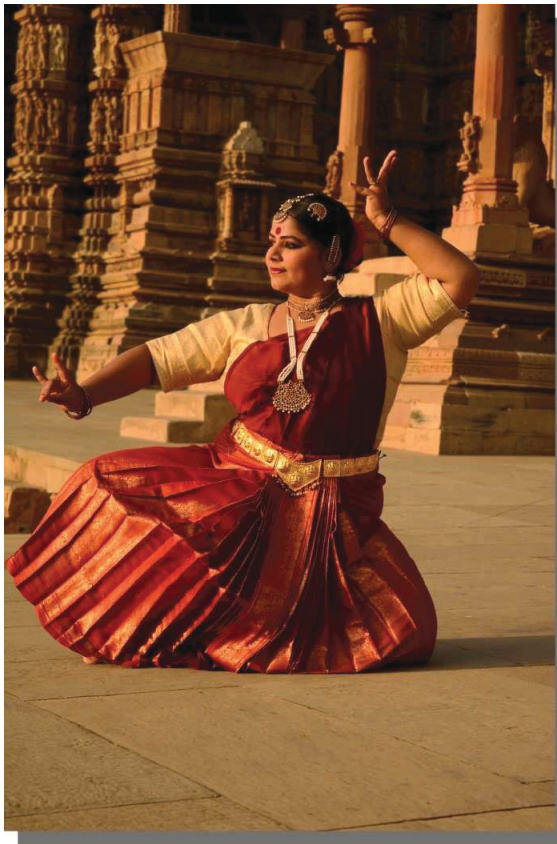


Fig.13 :Ms. Divya Patel (Researcher)

As a narrative, the chief characters in the *Javali* are the *nayaka* and *nayika*, with sometimes a third person – often the *sakhi*, making an appearance – for the main character to unburden themselves. The *nayika/nayaka* could be of the *uttama*, *madhyama* or *adhama* type. Of course, the interpretation of the *nayika* or *nayaka* will reflect the choreographer’s own understanding of the *sahitya* of the *Javali*. If, for example, the *nayika* has been interpreted as *madhyama* or *uttama*, the *sahitya* will reflect humour, even sarcasm.

However, the choreographer must be able to bring out that role of the character with consistency, clarity and truthfulness. The *nayika* may be ‘*sveekiya*’, ‘*parakeeya*’ or ‘*samanya*’. The *Javali* is a form that adapts quite well to the portrayal of the eight different ‘characters’ of the *ashtanayika* definition. On the other hand, the *nayaka* would often be the ‘*upapati*’ (married to one and seeking another woman), or a

‘vaisika’ (who may or may not be married, but seeks a woman for a price). He may also be a ‘shatha’ or a deceiver.

ASHTAPADI

The *Ashtapadi* is a 8-couplet poem (*Ashta* = 8, *Pada* = verse/couplet), and this form has been made immortal by the *bhakti* poet Jayadeva’s monumental literary work, *Geet Govinda*. Jayadeva, a great devotee of Krishna, wrote/composed the work in a series of *Ashtapadi-s*. It was composed by Jayadeva at the Jagannatha Kshetra of Puri, while his wife, Padmavati, is believed to have danced to its music. *Geet Govinda* is replete with *bhakti* rasa elements – both music and dance. Music and dance are among the sixty-four kinds of offerings made to Lord Krishna at the time of pooja or worship, and they have very intense, personal significance since the lord himself is seen as a form of music. The art of dance is the mingling of music with the ambient air. These offerings are believed to invoke the Lord’s *karuna* or compassion on the person who makes the offerings. The *Ashtapadi* was composed with these two texts as its source, with the Gokula story involving Shri Krishna, his wife, Viraja, Radha and Sudhama at its foundation. Jayadeva’s *Geet Govinda* is this story sung in 24 verses of the *Ashtapadi*. 24 is an auspicious number in traditional literary genres.

The *Geet Govinda* (song of Govinda) is composed in eight *padas* (in keeping with rhythms of dance). Several *shloka*s have been added to the songs in the beginning and in the end of every *pada* by other writers/choreographers/dancers. And sometimes they have even specified the *raga* and *tala* in which these verses are set. Since it is considered as *Kavya*, a work of poetry, it is divided into *sargas* or chapters, like other *kavya*s of that time. *Geet Govinda* has been composed in twelve *sargas*, bearing the *Dvadashakshari mantra* (twelve-syllable mantra) of Krishna. The names given by Jayadeva to each of these *sargas* are also unique and meaningful. These are:

1. *Samoda Damodaran*: He who gives joy to the mother who tied him to a mortar.
2. *Aklesha Keshavan*: He who protected Brahma and Shiva.

3. *Mukta Madhusudanan*: He who punished Madhu, the *asura* who was enslaved by *Moha*.
4. *Snigdha Madhusudanan*: He who revealed his beautiful form to Madhu and Kaitabha.
5. *Sakanksha Pundarikakshan*: He who awaits the arrival of his devotees with eyes wide open.
6. *Dhrishta Vaikuntan* or *Dhanya Vaikunthan*: He who reveals the bliss of *Vaikuntha* to everyone.
7. *Nagara Narayanan*: He who can appeal to people of a city, though He had lived in a village among the Gopis.
8. *Vilakshya Lakshmipati*: He who accepts everyone who seeks his Grace as Lakshmi herself.
9. *Mukta Mukundan*: The Guru who bestows a unique experience.
10. *Chatura Chaturbhujan*: He who has four arms which grant all the goals of human life.
11. *Sannada Govindan*: He who brings joy to cowherds and to everyone on earth.
12. *Supreeta Pitambaran*: He who, pleased by the devotion of his devotees, bestows upon them the *Pitambara* (the yellow garment worn by Him).



Fig. 14 : Prof. Dr. Parul Shah

From these suggestive names, one can understand the different kinds of content that the *Ashtapadi* deals with. As the basic and underlying idea is that of the coming together of the *Atma* and *Parmatma* and thus the *Atma* attaining *moksha* and thereby total bliss, the poet uses several similes to express this process. Mostly, these similes are rooted in *shringara rasa*, celebrating a harmonious and devoted union full of love and sweetness, sometimes bordering on the erotic as well.



Fig.15 : Ms. Bragha bessell

This aspect of *Prema-bhakti* is also fully expressed in the songs of the *Thevaram*, the *Divya Prabhandam* and other devotees too. Even the lyrics that are erotic are compounded by theological ideas from the scriptures such as the *Vedantas*, and therefore even sung by those who have renunciated the world. When the *jiva* or *atma* is away from the *parmatma*, it is believed to suffer human sorrows such as hunger, disease, old age, death. But the *jiva* can find a good teacher or *acharya*, who can guide it towards the *parmatma*. In the *Ashtapadi*, Krishna/Govind stand for the *parmatma*, Radha for *jivatma*, and the *sakhi* is the *acharya*. However, in *Geet Govinda*, Radha is not the wife or a forlorn village maid pining away for her divine lover. Jayadeva paints her as a strong *nayika*, proud, self-assured, complementing a passionate Krishna, a naughty but nice *nayaka*. She is his equal

in a secret and exclusive love, so even when Krishna takes many forms to dance the *Raasa* with the several gopis, he flits away quickly with Radha to indulge in love-play with her alone.



Fig.16 : Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai

The union of the Individual Self with the Universal Self is the central symbolic thread in the *Geet Govinda*. This is further interpreted multiple times through the ideas of *PremaBhakti* and *Madhura Bhakti*, both of which are central to the ideology of the *Vaishnava* cult. However, it is important to remember that the ideology expressed in the *Geet Govinda* is very different from standard religious texts. It is not centred around any single God, even though Krishna is thought of as one, but around the relationship of a human with a god, the story of two opposites sometimes coming together in a union that is punctuated by conflict and resolution.

Jon Higgins, in his book defines love as the "...Hindu conception of love as both passion and freedom from passion. When the tide of unfulfilled passion threatens to overwhelm her, the heroine seeks refuge in a state of spiritual tranquillity altogether free of distress. The implication seems to be that one may acquire real knowledge of god by first undertaking the tortuous search for human

love."Mutual ecstasy of impassioned lovers is the only experience comparable to final union with the God. "In the embrace of his beloved, a man forgets the whole world — everything both within and without". Thus, Krishna's sporting with Gopis has two sides. He appears as the one who experiences romantic love, "the most exalted experience in life", and who gives experience of romantic love in its highest and the most intense form." ⁸



Fig. 17 : Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayanta

Dr. Pappu Venugopal explains meaning of *Bhakti* in the context of *Geet Govinda* as follows:"Narada in his *bhakti* sutras defines *bhakti* as "the fear of being separated again" (*punarvisleshabheerutvamparama bhakti rucyate*). This means, that once you feel closer to God you don't want any distance from him that is *bhakti*.

In these three chapters that is 9th, 10th and 11th, I am examining the present structure of the Bharatanatyam *Margam* while classifying the items there in on the basis of their content of *nritya* or *nritya* or *nritya-nritya* combined.

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