

Introduction

Nāṭyaśāstra and its Regional Manifestations

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Nāṭyaśāstra (NS) was compiled to set models and standards for the performers and playwrights. Being *ākaraṅgrantha* – the sourcebook -- as well as the most voluminous authentic ancient text on the art of drama, it naturally cast an everlasting impact on Indian theatric traditions including the regional traditions of performance. The philosophy and vision for theatre spelled out by the NS have percolated so deeply in forms of dance and drama in India that despite all the geographical, social and anthropological differences, this single unique text of Bharatamuni has paved the way for the sustenance of and synchronization between diverse regional theatric traditions of India. The tenets of NS in some way or other are reflected in the regional theatre-forms like --

North - *Bhand Pather* and *Bhand* of Kashmir

North East - *Ankiya Nat*, *Lai Haroaba*, *Bare Chaharia Bhaona* (all from Assam), *Manipuri Rasa*.etc.

Northern India - *Rāmālīlā*, *Rasalīlā*, *Svāṅga*, *Nauṭāṅkī* etc.

Central India - *Mānch* (in Malwa), *Nācā* (in Chattisgarh),

Rajasthan – *Khayal*

Gujrat - *Bhavāi*

Andhra Pradesh - *Harikathā*, *Yakṣagāna*, *Kuchipuri* etc.

Kerala and Tamilnadu - *Kriṣṇāṭṭam*, *Rāmāṭṭam*, *Therukuttu*, *Kathakali*, *Vīthīnāṭakam*, *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*, *Bhāgavatamelā Yakṣagāna* etc.

There are certain features that all regional theatres share with each other, and these characteristics have been by and large borrowed by these regional theatres directly or indirectly from Bharata's NS. These features are-(i) The preliminaries or *Pūrvaraṅga*, (ii) Rasa-oriented aesthetics, (iii) Non-linear concept of time and space and (iv) philosophy and techniques of *abhinaya* – specially the āṅgika abhinaya (physical gesticulation) including the *karaṇas* and the *aṅgahāras*. Besides, a number of theatrical conventions like *Kakṣyāvibhāga* (division of the stage in imaginary zones) *Bhūmikāvikalpa* (distribution of roles) etc. - required for visualising such concepts were reflected in diverse regional traditions of performance through Bharata's vision of theatre.

Interaction between Veda and loka, *mārga* and *deśī*, classic and folk, has been a mark of Indian tradition. NS defines *loka* (society) as one of the three *pramāṇas* (parameters) for *nāṭya*, the other two being *veda* (the Nāṭyaveda or *śāstra*) and *adhyātma* (listening to the inner voice -- actor's own discretion). Bharatamuni himself created a scope for an approach to the regional practices and regional forms for the performers by the way of recommending that if an actor cannot decide his course of action for the performance either through *śāstra* or through his own discretion, he should approach *loka*. This apart, some of the fundamental elements of theatre that have been enumerated by him (VI.10)*, are also indirectly linked to regional practices. They are *Lokadharmī* (the natural mode, under *dharmī* the *modus operandi*), *vṛttis* (styles), *pravṛttis* (tendencies), and *mānuṣīsiddhi* (the human success) under *siddhi* (the success).

Lokadharmī is the practice of theatre in conformity to the behaviour of people in actual life. It hardly has any connection with folk-theatre as sometimes it is supposed to have, neither does it mean adaptation of the practices of regional theatres. However, the terms used by Bharata to define *lokadharmī* imbibe a consideration for regional forms of theatre. *Lokadharmī* is said to be the form of theatre that is enjoined with *lokavārtakriyā* (the activities belonging to life of people at empirical level) and devoid of

any playful display of various parts of the body of the performer, devoid of any decor that is added out of imagination by the performer. It is true that most of traditional forms of theatre as prevailing in different regions adopt the *nāṭyadharmī* (the conventional mode) in a greater degree than the *lokadharmī*, but the very inclusive nature of the latter as spelled out by Bharata has scope for introducing regional theatrical practices.

The concept of *pravṛtti* is very much linked to the theory of *lokadharmī*. *Pravṛtti* means studying the actual tendencies of human behaviour as prevailing in different regions. To illustrate *pravṛttis*, Bharata divides the Indian sub-continent into four regions, and on the basis of this division four types of *pravṛttis* are defined. An actor is supposed to study the behavioural patterns of diverse regions of this country as well as regional theatre practices.

Bharata was aware of diverse regional theatre practices represented by the minor forms of drama which were later on termed as *uparūpakas*. In the last chap. of NS, he informs that his sons, trained by him in *Nāṭyaveda* later on began to perform the *Śilpakas* of rustic nature (*grāmyadharmaka*). *Śilpaka* is one of the *uparūpakas*. The sons of Bharata, in the *Śilpakas* performed by them, presented the life and deeds of the sages residing in the vicinity of Himālayas by the way of *viḍambana* (caricature) and *vyañgyakaraṇa* (satire). The sages being laughed at in this way, got infuriated and cursed the actors to be expelled from the divine region of the Himālayas and to become *sūdras*. Ultimately, Bharatamuni asked them to go towards south and continue with their performances.

This episode from the NS suggests that Bharata was sympathetic to those who experimented with regional forms of theatre. He has been not only studying these forms closely, he also adopted the motifs and techniques from the regional forms of theatre in formulating his system for classical theatre. The very concept of *prayoga* or the types of the theatrical performance confirms the tendency in the NS for allowances to regional forms. *Prayoga* is mainly of two types *ābhyañtara* (internal) and *bāhya* (external). The *ābhyañtara prayoga* is performed by trained artists and stands in total commitment to *śāstra*. The performers of *bāhya prayoga* on the other hand, might be completely ignorant of the *śāstra*, or might have studied *śāstra* with the masters or *nāṭyācāryas*, but guided by their own intuition or skill, they can transgress the norms of the *śāstra* or take liberty with its dicta due to their contact with the regional theatre-forms. Bharata says that such actors should be allowed to go on with their performances (that might be following regional variations) (XXII.77-80). The *bāhya prayoga* is thus a theatre of the people. The NS in this way makes room for the inclusion of regional forms and local colors in its classical mould.

Siddhi (success) is of two types - *Daivī* (divine) and *Mānuṣī* (human). In the former, the audience transcend their own time-space frame to reach a different level of time and space, they are in complete harmony with the sentiments projected through the performance and quite attuned to the world created there. With a perfect sense of belonging to this another level of time and space, they are not even in a position to react to the performance as an art. The trio of the actor, audience and the poetic world is merged in a harmony. In *Mānuṣī siddhi* however, the situation is quite different. The contents of the play in performance are communicated by the actor to the spectator through an interpretative method. The actor and the spectator both are aware of the process of communication and the method of interpretation that the performer employs. The latter visualises the performance remaining rooted in his own frame of time and space and is able to appreciate the performance unfolding a different level of time and space. The actor stands as an interpreter between this level and the historic present of the spectator. He is a medium leading them to the vision of the world as conceived by the dramatist or the poet. The spectator can perceive this world and at the same time he can also appreciate the quality of the performance by the actor. He remains in the state of flux - between involvement and detachment. The state of awareness is maintained throughout. The application of the *mānuṣī siddhi* would bring theatre close to the regional theatrical practices. The *Sūtradhāra* addresses the audience

in many regional theatre forms to create an 'alienation effect.' The audience can enjoy the play in performance and appreciate it in various ways, they can even exhibit their appreciation for an actor by immediately showering gifts etc. on him or her.(XXVII.2-14)

In his discourse on *Bhūmikāvikalpa* (ascribing roles), Bharata has classified the Bhūmikā or assumption of roles by the actors in three types – *anurūpā* (congruous), *virūpā* (incongruous) and *rūpānusārīnī* (tending to become similar), depending on the aptitude of the performer, i.e. whether he or she is alike to the role, he is unlike to it, or he or she tends to become alike with it. Bharata would prefer the *anurūpā* type only, but at the same time, he allows the other two types also, depending on the circumstances. This brings out the multiplicity of theatric traditions that have influenced the Nāṭyaśāstra. Many regional forms of theatre, take recourse to *virūpā* and *rūpānusārīnī* types of *bhūmikās*, i.e. female characters being enacted by the male actors, the role of a young man being done by an actor quite old in age-- etc.

Nātyāyita is one of the six types of *śārīra abhinaya* under *sāmānya abhinaya* as described in NS Chap. XXII. In *nātyāyita* an actor performing a character joins the song being sung about that very particular character, which he or she is rendering. Alternately, the actors form an audience to watch the play within the play.on the stage.

Bharata also discusses the concept of *līlā* in his treatment of *sāmānya abhinaya*. *Līlā* evinces the typical practice prevailing in various forms of folk theatres and the element of alienation in the performance. In *līlā* the heroine narrates or performs the character or deeds of her lover before her friends. She thus distances herself from her own role to assume another role. The performance of *Śrīgadita*, a precursor to *Līlā* theatre, is characterised by *līlā*.

Bharata has not dealt with any one of these minor forms of drama - or the regional forms of theatre, except *Nāṭikā*, and *Nāṭikā* in no way can be adjusted or identified as any regional form of theatre, it is created by blending and shortening of *Nāṭaka* and *Prakarana* for the purpose of performance in a royal court.

The NS is a text on the *mārga* (classic) tradition of our theatre and its author left the exposition of the *deśī* (the regional traditions) to his successors. He proclaims at the end of NS that whatever has been left out by me will be taken up by Kohala in his *Uttaratantra* (XXXVII.18). In the first chap. of NS, Kohala's name is mentioned in the list of one hundred disciples of Bharata that were present when Bharata delivered his discourse on NS before Ātreya and other sages in reply to their five queries. Mahendra Suri, Hemacandra's student, has referred to Kohala as a muni (sage) and one of the disciples of Bharatamuni. From references by Abhinavagupta, Hemcandra, Rāmacandra-Guṇacandra Sāgaranandin and a host of other authors, we gather that Kohala did compose his own NS, but this work - sometimes referred as *Kohaliyanāṭyaśāstra*, is no more extant. There are a number of later texts on *nāṭya* (theatre), *nṛtya* (dance) or *saṅgīta* (music) dealing with regional theatre forms. The text of Kohala was available to the authors of some of these texts- and also most probably to Abhinavagupta, Rāmacandra-Guṇacandra and Hemacandra.

Nṛttaratnāvalī (NR)of Jāyasenāpati is one of the most comprehensive texts on dance, and it provides most extensive treatment of the subject with definitions of regional varieties of various categories – *deśīnṛtta*, *deśīpāda*, *deśīcārīs*, *deśīkaraṇas* etc. In fact *Nṛttaratnāvalī* and Someśvara's stupendous work on arts – *Mānasollāsa* or *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi* are two of the most authentic texts providing extensive treatment on the regional theatre forms. At the very outset of *Mānasollāsa* Someśvara says that he was enamored seeing the folk dances of the community of *śabaras* (a tribe) and he wanted to adopt such dances for the presentations in his court.

Deśī as been defined as the gamut of variations resulting due to regional practices in dance, drama and music. Śārṅgadeva in his *Samgītaratnākara* (SR) defines *deśī* as the way of performance prevalent in diverse regions (SR, I.23). Śāradātanaya in his *Bhāvaprakāśa* (BP) says that *deśī* is a musical composition in regional language.(BP, chap. 10, p. 390). Sudhākalaśa, in his *Samgītasāroddhāra* (I.8) rightly expands the idea of *deśī* to *gīta* (songs), *vādya* (percussions) and *nāṭya*. *Nāṭyasarvasvadīpikā* (NSD) attributed

to Ādibharata describes the special feature of *deśī*-traditions of dance, songs and music in respect of their quality of appeasement to local masses and their receptivity for change according to popular taste (NSD, II.2.26). Śārṅgadeva in SR and Mataṅga in *Bṛhaddeśī* provide extensive treatment to *deśī*-traditions of music and dance. A text *Deśinṛttasamudra* has been referred by Dr. V. Raghavan that is no longer available.

Other texts that refer to or provide definitions of minor or regional forms of drama are *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* (ND) of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (SP), Hemacandra's *Kāvyañuśāsana* (KS), Sāgaranandin's *Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa* (NLRK) Amṛtānandayogin's *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha* (AS), Vipradāsa's *Saṅgītacandra* (SC), *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha (SD), Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala's *Nartananirṇaya* (NN), Kumbhakarna's *Nṛttaratnakośa* and *Saṅgītarāja* (SR), Śubhaṅkara's *Saṅgītaḍāmodara* (SaṅD), Raghunātha's *Nāṭyamanoramā* (NM) and *Nṛttasaṅgraha* (NṛS) by anonymous author.

As we are not in possession of the text of Kohala or *Kohaliyanāṭyaśāstra*, it is not possible to say what term he had used to denote the regional forms of theatre. Abhinavagupta seems to have gone through the text of Kohala and he very often cites or refers to Kohala. *Nṛttaprabandha* - the term used by Abhinavagupta for regional theatric forms or minor forms of drama may have been borrowed from Kohala. Abhinava quotes the definitions of some of the *Nṛttaprabandhas* attributing them to *cirantanas* (the ancients or some ancient master). In all probability, these definitions are from the text of Kohala that is now lost to us.

As the regional forms have been constantly growing, and were constantly being defined and redefined by the ācāryas in Bharata's tradition, several optional terms are used for these so-called *Nṛttaprabandhas*. *Nṛtya*, *saṅkīrṇa rūpaka* and *anya rūpaka* are the terms that can be applied to these minor forms of drama according to Dhanañjaya and Dhanika (Daśarūpaka, vṛtti on I.8 & III.43); Hemacandra uses the term *geyarūpaka* for them; Śubhaṅkara, Dattila and Sāgaranandin call them *gauṇarūpakas* (minor plays), while authors of ND use the term *anya rūpaka* (other plays) for them. It is in AS and SD that these forms of drama find the nomenclature of the *uparūpaka*. They are also called *deśī rūpakas* or *deśya prabandhas*. In fact, they are prototypes of a variety of regional forms of theatre in this vast peninsula.

There can be no limit to the number of these *deśī* forms of drama. Considering the multiplicity of traditions that these minor forms belong to, we find that the number is constantly increasing, and contrary to the limit of ten that is mostly accepted in case of the number of *rūpakas*, any attempt to prescribe a limit of number for these regional forms could be futile. We find that the ācāryas had been observing the process of emergence of new forms of theatre in different regions and their growth in relation to regional variations and they were also trying to define and standardize the emerging new forms.

Abhinavagupta has quoted the definitions of the following regional forms of theatre named as *nṛttaprabandhas*, as given by some ancient ācārya or ācāryas. - *Rāsaka*, *Ḍombī*, *Prasthāna*, *Bhāṅikā*, *Bhāṅa*, *Śidgaka*, *Hallīsaka* and *Rāmākrīḍa*. Elsewhere, he has given a detailed description of *Ḍombīkā* or *Ḍombī*. Dhanika has enumerated *Ḍombī*, *Śṛīgadita*, *Bhāṅa*, *Bhāṅī*, *Prasthāna*, *Rāsaka* and *kāvya* as seven varieties of *nṛtya* like *Bhāṅa* (*Bhāṅa* here is different from the rūpaka named *Bhāṅa*). Amṛtānandayogin in his AS (IX.2-3) has defined sixteen uparūpakas - *Nāṭikā*, *Saṭṭaka*, *Troṭaka*, *Goṣṭhī*, *Prekṣṇaka*, *Bhāṅikā*, *Samllāpaka*, *Prasthāna*, *Kāvya*, *Hallīsa*, *Rāsaka*, *Śṛīgadita*, *Lāsikā*, *Durmali*, *Nāṭyarāsaka* and *Ullāpya*. Viśvanātha adds *Prakaraṇī* and *Śīlpaka*, in this list, and makes them eighteen (SD VI.5). Viśvanātha and some other authors talk of eighteen uparūpakas, which are - *Nāṭikā*, *Troṭaka*, *Goṣṭhī*, *Saṭṭaka*, *Nāṭyarāsaka*, *Prasthāna*, *Ullāpyaka*, *Kāvya*, *Citrakāvya*, *preṅkhana*, *Rāsaka*, *Saṅlāpaka*, *Śṛīgadita*, *Śīlpaka*, *Vilāsikā*, *Durmali*, *Prakaraṇī*, *Hallīsa* and *Bhāṅikā*. AP and SP count twenty seven and twenty four types of Rūpakas and they include the regional forms also in their treatment. Śāradātanaya raises the number to thirty by adding *Mallikā*, *Kalpavallī* and

Pārijātaka (BP, chap. VIII, p.221). Out of the thirty *Rūpakas* that he has cited, ten are *Rasātmaka* and remaining twenty are *Bhāvātmaka* according to him.

It is Jāyasenāpati who introduces a number of local forms of dance - drama and even dances belonging to the tribes and rural areas in south in this gamut of *uparūpakas* or *nṛttaprabandhas*, such as - *Daṇḍarāsaka*, *Carcarīnāṭyam Śābaranṛtyam Kaivāra*, *Gharghara*, *Vāgaḍanṛttam prerāṇipaddhati*, *Śivapriyanṛttam*, *Cintunṛttam*, *Kandukanṛttam*, *bhāṇḍikanṛttam*, *cāraṇanṛttam*, *dohakanṛttam*, *bahurūpanṛttam* and, *kollāṭanṛttam*.

The NM and NṛS define *Jakkaḍī* - a dance form accompanied with songs in *mlechcha bhāṣā* or Persian languages. It is performed by the the yavanas. *Kavikāmadhenu* a text quoted in *Bharatakośa* by Ramakrishna Kavi deals with a form of drama called *deśya* - (BK. 284) It is composed in a regional language, has three *samdhis*, and consists of descriptions of spring festivals and beauties of this earth. It also presents descriptions of war, the rogues as characters and has either *Śṛṅgāra* or *Vīra* as dominant Rasas.

The number of these so-called *uparūpakas* went on increasing from one (in Bharata's NS) to more than forty. Many of these were dance-dramas prevailing in different regions. Some of them are mere songs or dances, they are included in the gamut of these regional theatre-forms as combined with narration of an episode or presentation of a theme, they also assumed dramatic proportions.

Considering the nomenclatures and characteristics of these *nṛttaprabandhas*, *nṛtyas*, *deśirūpakas*, *geyarūpakas* or *uparūpakas*, we can identify many of them as regional forms of theatre that are still being practiced today in some part or the other of this vast peninsula. For example *Prekṣaṇaka* is defined by the authors of SP and ND as a play that has many special characters and is performed in the streets, *samājas* (social gatherings or fares) and pubs etc. (SP, XI.311, ND, IV.218). *Prekṣaṇaka* was thus a folk form confined to the Madhyadeśa and Gujrat. The Southern regions had different traditions of *Prekṣaṇaka*, as BP and AS (IX.122-25) define it as a play full of robust actions and involving characters of low status (*hīnanāyaka*) to be performed without a *Sūtradhāra* (the stage manager). *Nartanaka* seems to be graceful form of *Prekṣaṇaka* and is characterised by *Padārthābhinaya* (BP, chap. IX, p.263) *Saṭṭaka* can be taken to be regional variation of *Nāṭikā*. If we take into account the geographical area in which most of the *saṭṭakas* were composed and performed, it is *madhyadeśa* (central part of the country). In the same way, a *Nāṭaka* becomes *Toṭaka* or *Troṭaka* when dances and songs in local languages are introduced within its texture *Vikramorvaśīyam* of Kālidāsa, the sole available specimen of *Toṭaka* or *Troṭaka* has become a unique specimen of folk forms or regional forms of ancient Indian theatre.

Ḍombī is feminine of *Ḍomba*, *Ḍombikā* is its synonym. Like *Śṛṅgadita*, it belongs to the theatre of female. *Ḍomba* was a tribe in ancient India, The word *ḍoma* derived from it, is used in languages of North India for sweepers and scavengers. The female dancer performing *Ḍombī* is also called *Ḍombī* or *Ḍombikā*. *Ḍombī* was a form abounding in songs, music and dances. The songs accompanying its performance were also called *Ḍombī*-songs and the accompanying dance was also called *Ḍombī* dance. (Abh.pt.I,p.181). Abhinavagupta suggests that the dancer called *Ḍombī* sings the *gāthās* and also performs on them. This singing and performance is accompanied with her narration. This feature of narration in accompaniment to dance and singing is a precursor of *Hue arikathā* as practiced by Andhra, and Karnataka and also brings *Ḍombī* very close to the minor forms like *Bhāṇa* and *Bhāṇikā*, so that the later theorists have even confused between *Ḍombī*, *Bhāṇa* and *Bhāṇikā*. From the description of *Ḍombikā* or *Ḍombī*, provided by Abhinavagupta and Kalhaṇa it is also clear that it was a regional form of theatre practiced in the locality of Kashmir. Hemacandra thinks that it might have originated from the *deśī nṛtya*. Abhinavagupta says that *Ḍombī* is full of grace and rasa and the poets have been composing new *Ḍombīs* in *jātibhāṣā* or local dialects. (Abh. pt IV, p. 280)

Goṣṭhī, *Rāsaka*, *Daṇḍarāsaka*, *Nāṭyarāsaka* and *Hallīsaka* - all these forms are dances or dance dramas that have been in vogue in agrarian society. They basically belonged to Kṛṣṇa-cult and introduction of secular themes in their performances might have occurred at a later stage. The definitions of *Goṣṭhī* given in BP and SD establish it as a proto-type of Rāsālīlā. Basically, it must have been a small play or dance representing the deeds of Kṛṣṇa performed by the gopa community (Shepherds) in the vicinity of a goṣṭha (pan) (SP, 11. 308) BP, however, allows the possibility of other themes also for *Goṣṭhī* by the way of prescribing the plot of *Goṣṭhī* as *utpādyā* (imaginary). (BP, chap. VIII, p, 256).

Rāsaka is a circular dance involving various items in *latā*, *bhedyaka*, *piṇḍī* etc. by as many as sixty four performers. (Abh. in NS chap. IV). On the other hand, AS (IX.148-51), SanD (p. 95.), NLRK (p. 304) and SD (VI.290) define Rāsaka as a farce with a fool as a hero, given to rustic ways. SanD retains both alternatives - Rāsaka as a play depicting the deeds of the boy Kṛṣṇa and Rāsaka as a secular farce. In *Nāṭyarāsaka*, some female characters re-enact the acts of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is a play full of love and romance, set in the mood of spring season. Later ācāryas however give an alternate set of definitions identifying *Nāṭyarāsaka* as a play with a great hero and a pīthamarda as his assistant, and a lady in love waiting for the hero. (BP, chap. IX, p. 264, SD, VI.285, AS, IX.159-161). *Rāsaka* and *Nāṭyarāsaka* assume the form of *Daṇḍarāsaka* if the dancers are holding sticks for beating and they become *Hallīsaka* if the dance movements are circular. (SP, XI.309) BP (chap. IX, p. 266-67), AS (IX.146-148) and SD (VI.298) define *Hallīsaka* as a play with secular themes. *Hallīsaka* has close resemblance with *Carcarī* and *Chalīta* also. (Vema, BK.,p.203)

As per definitions given in SP.(XI.280-81), BP, (chap. IX, p.258), SD, VI.292-93 and (AS chap. IX.151b-153a). *Śrīgadīta* is similar to *Nāṭyarāsaka* in respect of its theme.. *Śīdgaka* is a counter-part of *Nāṭyarāsaka* or *Śrīgadīta*. A representation of the mischief of the husband by a lady becomes *Śīdgaka* (Abh chap. IV) *Prasthāna* is a dance or a dance-drama based on the theme of departure. In the definition as quoted by Abhinava, it is a graceful form where the dance movements are based on the march of elephants and other animals. Other ācāryas define it as a play with based amorous sentiments and delineating the theme of separation. AS prescribes that characters of low community - the dāsas and dāsīs as its protagonists, and depiction of scenes of drinking etc as its theme. SP visualises the use of four *apasārakas* (songs) in it. (Abh. chap. IV, SP, XI.284-85, BP chap. IX p. 262, AS IX.141-43, SD, VI. 286). *Ullopyaka* and *Śīlpaka* are closely related. The Twenty seven components of *Śīlpaka* are used in *Ullopyaka*, it has tableau of gods or heroes profusely adorned with bright costumes. (BP, Chap. IX, p.266, AS, IX.161-62,). SD VI.287). *Sallāpaka* (*Sarīlāpaka* or *sallāpa*) resembles the *rūpakas* like *Samavakāra* and *Ḍīma*, depicting scenes like attack and surrounding a city SD, VI. 291, BP chap. VIII.p.256, AS IX.134b-136a, AS, IX.136b-141a). *Mattallikā*, *Mallikā*, *Pārijātakam/ Pārijātalatā* and *Kalpavallī* - these forms are based on narration and singing of *gāthās*. *Preṅkhaṇam*, *Durmallikā/ Durmilitā/Durmallī*, and *Śīlpakam* -- all these are plays depicting people of low caste and characters of lower strata of society, or viṭas, pīthamardas etc. (SD, VI.289 and VI.294, ND p. 191, SP XI.282-83, BP, chap. IX, p.267 and chap. VIII, p. 257, AS, IX.155-158). *Vilāsikā* or *Lāsikā* is described only in two texts - AS and SD,81 is similar to these SD,VI.295).

From the foregoing account of *uparūpakas*, it is clear that they are closely related to regional theatre forms. Sometimes the ācāryas like Bhoja, Someśvara and others define an *uparūpaka* itself as a regional form of theatre. Some of the *uparūpakas* can be identified with particular regional theatre forms that are still in practice with slight variations, for example *Nāṭyarāsaka* and *Daṇḍarāsaka* have manifested as the *Garabā* in Gujrat and the *Rāsaka* and *Hallīsaka* have become *Rāsālīlā* in northern parts of the country as well as *Bhāgavatamelā* or *Vīthīnāṭakam* in southern parts. *Ḍombī*, *Bhāṇa*, *Bhāṇī* or *Bhāṇikā* have evolved in various forms like Paṇḍavānī in central parts of the country; *Harīkathā* or *Kīrtanīyānāṭa* in north-east and southern regions.

The interaction between the performance traditions of the *rūpakas* and the *uparūpakas* paved the way for emergence of regional theatre forms. Some of the

uparūpakas or regional forms that were basically community dances or folk-dances got enriched by drawing elements from the performance traditions of the *rūpakas* and the *uparūpakas* and assumed larger dramatic proportions.

The enactment of particular themes or episodes in *uparūpakas* has shaped the regional theatre-forms to a great extent. The performance of the animals in *Prasthāna* led to enactment of *daśāvatāra* (Viṣṇu's ten incarnations) in many regional theatre forms.

It is the way of blending the *lāsyāṅgas* that gives a local habitation to many forms of drama. The *lāsyāṅgas* are used in some of the major forms of drama (*daśarūpakas*) also as per definitions in Bharata's text. They are employed in *Vīthī* and *Bhāṇa* (rūpaka). Some of the *lāsyāṅgas* assume the characteristics of regional theatres. For example, the tenth *lāsyāṅga* is *uktapratyukta*, consisting of interesting repartees and rejoinders in the dialogues. This *uktapratyukta* and *trimūdhaka* together with *nāndī*, *prarocanā* and *bharatavākya* are used in some form or the other in various regional forms of theatres.

The narration by *Sūtradhāra* is a feature that distinguishes the two performance traditions of *rūpakas* and the *uparūpakas*. *Sūtradhāra* has various names in different regional theatre-forms. In *Kūṭiyāttam* of Kerala, the *Vidūṣaka* performs the functions of a *Sūtradhāra*. *Sūtradhāra* in *Terukuttu* or *Vīthīnācakam* is called *kattiyakaran*, and he goes on addressing the audience and also having exchange of words with other characters. His interference on the stage when the drama is being performed is called *pottuvacanam*.

The authors in the field of NS have always been re-adjusting various categories or enlarging them in view of the developments in the performance traditions. Sometimes such amendments come due to impact of regional forms of theatre also, especially the multiplication in the number of *hastas*, *Sthānakas* etc. and the addition of *deśī* forms of *cārīs*, *hastas*, *pādas* etc. must owe their origin to the regional forms of theatres. In fact there is a growing tendency amongst the followers of Bharata to search the counterparts of various categories described by the great master in regional theatre forms.

Kerala has provided the most vibrant stage for correspondences with the NS and the dialogue between the classic and the regional traditions of theatre. The theatre of *Kūṭiyāttam* thrived for centuries and continued to enthrall the audiences with its authentic exposition of Bharata's texts combined with improvisations. Kerala has also given us some of the most fascinating texts on actual performance of Sanskrit plays. Professor K.G. Paulose, one of the most renowned specialists of the theory and practice of Sanskrit theatre amongst us, has done a yeoman's service by his critical edition and translation of *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* – a rare and valuable text providing insights into the dramatic world of Kulaśekhara Varman from the view point of performance. I am confident that this work by Professor Paulose will go a long way for establishing Indian theatre at global level.

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* Unless otherwise specified, references in brackets here are from the NS, Vadodara Edition.