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Dramaturgy in ancient Sanskrit literatures

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Abstract

Whatever has been written in the classical texts on dramatization, it has been introduced or presented in the beginning under the "Natyā Sahitya". In Indian life, the impact of the use of theatrical art has also been highlighted in its place on the generality. From this point of view, the existence and importance of theatrical art is easily explained. If the vast volume of Sanskrit is cultivated from this point of view, then from the Vedic period to the present, the impression of theatrical art is inscribed on the representative compositions of all the ages. Along with being an important and independent form of literature, the theatre has entered various fields of literature and has presented an example of its popularity and greatness. The area of influence and spread of theatrical arts in literature is very wide.

It can be an independent subject in itself. Without going into that much detail, only some of the major works have been considered here. These works not only give knowledge of the vastness of theatrical arts, but it also shows how much utility it had in practical terms. So in my dissertation I have discussed the books in which many people are skeptical about the discussion of dramaturgy.

Keyword: Dramaturgy, bouddha, Jaina, Kamasutra, Sankhya

Introduction

We know that Dramaturgy is mainly related to Sanskrit poetry i.e. it has been specially discussed in various books of Sanskrit literature of which Bharatmuni was the guide. He was the first to record theatrical themes in his Natyashastra, but it is unknown to us that, apart from Sanskrit poetry, Dramaturgy was propagated in various ways in Vedas, theistic philosophy, Arthashastra, Kama Sutra and even atheistic philosophy. So in order to inspire future researchers, I have discussed here the texts that we do not usually think about having Dramaturgy.

Dramaturgy in Vedic Age

The widespread use of dramaturgy in the Vedic period is proved by the mention of three types of artists in that period. These three types of artists are - singers, musicians and dancers. These three artists were very skilled in their own learning.

So in this era special arrangements were made for music and dance. Ballerina also participates with the dancer there. In the Vedic age, a ceremony called "Sumon" was held at night as the night was considered suitable for music, dance, etc. In this festival, the virgins would decide their groom according to their wishes.

Due to this, the youth also participated in this program with great enthusiasm.

Instructors were appointed for the decoration of horse races and music-dances. Almost all the theories of dance exist in this example. From this it is clear that, if dramaturgy had not been in vogue in the Vedic age, then such an authentic and detailed discussion would not have been included in the Veda Mantra. It is also known from this mention that "Suta" and "Shailush" were used for dancing and singing during the Yajna. So in Vedic society, art and craftsmen were made into separate classes for them. The popularity of drama in the Vedic age is identified in a mantra of the Atharva Veda. Atharva Veda, rich in patriotic sentiments, mentions songs and dances in one of the verses of the world. In this hymn, the poet mentions the beautiful arrangement of dance-song by the people of the world and says –

‘Yasyāṃ gāyāntī nṛtyāntī bhūmyāṃ martyā vyailabāḥ
yudhyantē yasyāmākrāṇḍo yasyāṃ vadāti dundubhiḥ|

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sā no bhūmih pra nūdatām sapatnānasapatnam mā
prthivī kṛnotu' || (Atharva Veda -1/12/41)|.

That means, May the virtuous people find happiness in the earth on which men sing, dance and play instruments with high, low and medium voices. Thus "Kathakasanhita"(17/13) also mentions dance, music and dancers and singers. The Vedas, the Brahmans, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads and the Bedangs also contain material on drama and music. For example, in the Taittiriya Brahman texts (3/4/1/15), the names of artists like "Ayagu", Magadha (Bhat), Suta (actor), Shailush (singer), etc. are found. Thus the Katyayanaroutasutra (7/8/25) also mentions a small performance in the leisure of drinking "Somarasa". In this age drama was not only for entertainment but also as a means of religion, spirituality and salvation.

Dramaturgy in Astadhyayee (Panini)

In order to further nurture the earlier discussion on the existence of dramaturgy in the Vedic age, the Natasutra composed by Acharya Shilali is mentioned here. This Natsutra is mentioned by Grammarian Panini in his book Ashtadhyayee. Although this original text has been destroyed, it is clear from it that, in the Vedic age Shilali was also a scripture of these people as a community carrying knowledge and justice. This scripture was related to Rigveda and it was through this that the great genre of drama was started. Although the book is ruined, it reveals the history of the theatrical tradition of the Vedic period. There are also names of Sutras in the six Vedangas. Panini mentions the names of two types of sutras - Karmandak's 'Bhikshusutra' and Shilali's i.e. Krishasva's Natasutra (Ashtadhyayi-4/3 / 110-111). These two sutras are related to secular subjects but they have been given the same recognition as in the case of Vedic texts.

Parasarya and Shilali - these two communities were established in the Vedic period. Like other communities, studies and teaching were done by the Guru-Shishya tradition. These two communities were known as 'Krishswin' and 'Shailalin' or 'Shailali', respectively, but later, the use of the words "Krishsveen" and "Shailalik" for them was used for the purpose of actors in Natasutra.

In this way, in the Vedic age, the original origin of the Natyashastra, the Natyasutra was formed, the tradition got a lot of recognition, which was received by the Chhanda-books or Shakha-books. The mention of this effect is also seen in Kasika- "Bhikṣunaṭasūtrayo chandastvam". The grammarian Panini also admits in his Sutra No. 4/3/129 that, Natyashastra has also been established in those books of Vedic age. This is why, the name "Natyā" is applied in both the cases of the actor "Dharma" and "Amnaya"- "Nāṭānām dharmā āmnāyo va nāṭakam". The actors' genealogy is also called "Natyā" in the name of "Amnaya". Panini mentions the word 'Nata' in his 'Ashtadhyayee' with 'Chhandoga', 'Oukthik', 'Yajnik' and 'Bahrich'. All of them had their own vocabulary in the Vedic period. In this way, the application of "Nata" as "Natyā" is also perfected in the Vedic period. Thus, not only is there evidence of authentic history of dramaturgy in Panini's Astadhyayee, but their antiquity is also perfected in the Vedic period. After Panini, the commentator Patanjali mentions the living tradition of dramaturgy in his Mahabhasya. Adequate content of how Natya was developed till the time of Patanjali or how Natya was accepted in the society is also found in Patanjali's texts.

Dramaturgy in Arthashastra of Kautilya

Acharya Kautilya's Arthashastra is an encyclopaedia of Mauryan India. Among other things, the text contains evidence of the Maurya period and its earlier art and culture. From this description it is known that at the time of Kautilya, the state had complete system and freedom to study all kinds of arts. Kautilya's Arthashastra deserves the first credit for preserving this Maurya-era art in literature. The 41st chapter of this book, entitled Adhyakshaprachara, says that, there was a system of music halls, theatres and galleries for prostitutes, maids, actresses and singers to practice 64 types of art and culture which were conducted by the Acharyas. Acharya Kautilya "Nata" (actor), Dancer, Singer, Musician (Kushilab, the son born of Vaidehaka male and Ambastha female is called Kushilava.), Bagjib (those who tell stories), Plabak (those who show the game by jumping), Soumitra (magician) and Balladist are in the category of spies included. Artists made their living by singing, playing music and dancing. They also moved from one state to another. At that time there were certain limits on the promotion, dissemination and organization of art. Kautilya had a keen eye on the economic and social development of the state so that art would not be hindered and art would not become a luxury. Kautilya has clearly instructed that there should be no theatre and playground in the village. Because, he was of the opinion that actor, dancers, singers, musicians and artisans should not interfere in the work of agriculture etc. by coming to the village and showing the game etc. He wrote that if there was no theater in the village, then the villagers would cultivate properly which would increase the treasury and fill the whole state with wealth. (Arthashastra: -2/17/1/1).

The state regularly provided special scholarships and rewards to the artists so that the number of artists from the country would not decrease and their artistic tradition would remain alive. In this regard, Kautilya says, the king will give 250 paise (PANAM) to each of the actors, dancers, singers and 500 paise (PANAM) every year to the one who performs well. The appointment of such people has also been mentioned in the royal court. Kautilya said that those who are skilled in song, music, dance, drama, writing, painting, harp playing, flute playing, mridang playing, wreathing, and decoration should be employed in the royal court. Not only that, according to Kautilya, the king should also take care that the Acharya who teaches prostitutes, maids and dancers also gets due respect. Kautilya said that in order to maintain the respect of art and artists and not to turn it into business even in the temptation of money and respect, actors, dancers, singers, musicians etc. should stay in the same place during the rainy season. If someone gives them more rewards because they are happy with their art, then they should not accept them. If someone praises them too much, they should not listen. If any artist violates these rules, he will be punished with 12 paise (PANAM). Artists will not be able to show any play related to ridicule or slander of any particular country, race, tribe etc. and sex etc. Besides, they can watch any game as they wish. He said – "Kuśīlavā varṣārātrimekasyā vāseyu |kāmadānamanimānasyātivāda ca varjeyeyu. tasyātikrame dvādaśapaṇī daṇḍa |.kāmaṁ deśajātigotracaṇamaithunāpahāne narmayeyu". (Arthashastra: 4/36/1/5). Thus, Kautilya's Arthashastra identifies artists, and art lovers in Maurya India. From the city to the village, there was a spread of art, especially dance and acting.

Dramaturgy in Mahabhasya of Patanjali

I have already discussed that in Panini's 'Ashtadhyayee' there is a practice of theatrical content in the Natasutra. The commentary on Panini's book is the "Mahabhasya" by Patanjali which was written around 200 BC. In this book, Patanjali traces the social, cultural and religious instincts of the then India as well as the artistic tastes. In the time of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the arts of dance, song, music and painting have been recognized as art according to the opinion of Vedanga literatures. That is why the artists have been highly praised and glorified in those epics. By the time of the commentator Patanjali, dance and musical arts had become distinctly established. These were given a prominent place in the arts and the dance performed by the men and women was said to be a matter of great pleasure. (Mahābhāṣya -7/3/87). Commentator Patanjali acknowledges the etymology of the word "Nṛitya", "from the root 'Nrit'" which means diffusion of body. In this sense, the action of animals and birds can also be called "Nṛitya". The application of dance in this broad sense is a special achievement of Patanjali. In his text, he also said that, the peacock dances when he sees his beloved- "Tathā praiya mayūrah pranartatīti (Mahābhāṣya -7/3/87).

The Mahabhasya text contains a lot of material on actor, dancers, theatre and drama. According to the description in this book, the actor was a musician and he had big hair, beard and moustache. Sometimes they played the role of women and at that time they wore artificial hair and breasts. For this reason, Patanjali named them "Vrankush"-(Mahābhāṣya -2/4/77, 2/1/69).

Elsewhere in the book, Patanjali refers to the actor as "Shovani" as he can display the same facial expressions, makeup and expressions as the character he plays-(Mahābhāṣya -3/1/26). Although there is no difference between "knot" and "dancer", in ancient texts these two were included in different classes. In his book, Patanjali uses the word "knot" to denote an actor. Wife of "Nata" was called 'Nati. Their child was called Nater'. The "Nartaka-Nartakee" was of a different class from the 'Nat-Natee'-(Mahābhāṣya -6/3/42). Until the time of Patanjali, Nartaka-Nartakees were more important than 'Nata-Natee'. At that time 'Nata-Natee' their the establishment of 'Nata-Natee' began to decline in society. As for example we can say, after going to the stage, when people would ask the 'Natee', who are you? (Kasya yūyam, Kasya yūyam ?) Then they would answer, yours. (Tava, Taveti). It is clear from these quotations from the Mahabhasya and the provisions of the Dharmasutras and Smritigranthas that the actors did not hesitate to give their wives for the enjoyment of others. This is why Nat and Natees were looked down upon in society and lived as laborers, travellers, monks, nuns etc. In addition to these, various materials related to theatre and drama can also be seen in the Mahabhasya texts. In some parts of the Mahabhasya Granth (1/419,3 / 1 / 26,7 / 1/2) etc., there is a reference to the performance of plays in the theatre and on the stage. A study of these subjects reveals that the stage was well developed during the time of Patanjali. Not only this, in this book it is also mentioned that plays called 'Kangsabhadha' and 'Balibandha' will be performed. So it is clear from the example that the theater was still depicted with various artistic paintings for the decoration of the stage as it is today. Usually the pictures were drawn according to the events of the play to be performed. Nowadays, the way in which the actors enter the stage from behind the scenes or say something, the person who used to do that kind of work is called "Granthika" in this

book. He was given this name because he used to compose events played by different actors in the play. The commentator also used the word 'initiator', who was the sender of the play, and under his direction the performance began on the stage in front of the audience. In this sense, the 'initiator' acted as the instructor and the announcer. Thus it is clear from the discussion of the various contexts of the Mahabhasya that there was ample practice of acting on the stage till the time of Patanjali and the socialists used to entertain themselves with that performance as they do today.

Dramaturgy in Kamasutra of Vatsyayan

In the Kamasutra written by Acharya Vatsyayana, the practice of various theatrical arts can be seen. This book itself is a classical book on art. This is why this book contains a detailed discussion of the art, culture and folklore of India at that time. After the Buddhist text "Lalitabistara", the classical discussion on art is found in this text. This book discusses 64 types of art, including dance, music and music. It is written in the "Nagarika Prakarana" of this book that one should be mentally entertained by art in the daily routine of a jovial citizen - "Tastāśca kalākrīḍā". It has been said about the daily practice of a jovial citizen that he has to organize a meeting at the third beat every day in which he has to practice dance, song, musical instruments etc. as well as knowledgeable scriptures. Therefore, it has been asked to organize an art group called 'Mahanibandhan' to discuss all these issues. In this group, every month or twice a month, various works of art were exhibited on a pre-determined day by the artists employed in the Saraswati Bhavan and by the artisans brought from outside - " 'Paḥṣasya māṣasya vā prajñāte' hani sarasvastyā bhavane niyuktāyā nityasamājah" -(Kāmasutram-1/4/27). Actors, dancers, singers, etc., who came from outside, were bid farewell with prizes at this meeting - "Kuśilavāścāgantava preṣaṇakameyā dadyu"-(Kāmasutram-1/4/30). Any of them who was a suitable artist was requested to stay there for some time. Vatsyayan mentions more such groups which were held in the house of a prostitute or in a theatre or in the house of a well-known intellectual, and in those places' dances, music as well as various seasonal ceremony or sports or ceremonial dramas were performed. At that time there was a clown with the citizens as a companion who entertained the citizens with music, dance etc.

The Kama Sutra also instructs that prostitutes should be omnipotent in beauty and education etc. and those who come to their house should be greeted by drink, flowers, garlands etc. as well as by music, dance etc. That is why the Kama Sutra says -

Tāmbulāni srajaścaiva saṃskṛta cānulepanam |
āgatyaśyāharetpṛītyā kalāgoṣṭhīmśca yojayet ||
(Kāmasutram- 1/4/30).

In this context, while classifying prostitutes, Batsyayan wrote about a prostitute named Ganika that she was an expert in all disciplines like dance, music etc. Because, these two arts were necessary for her own business. They also trained their daughters in all the arts so that in the future they too could entertain everyone in this way. So at that time there was an institution called Gandharvasala where the daughters of prostitutes were taught the art.

Thus, it is known from the Kama Sutra that at that time, arts like drama, music etc. were established as a part of the society and they spread to every level of the society.

Dramaturgy in Jaina and Buddhist Texts

Jains and Buddhists made important contributions to the propagation of Indian art. Somewhere in the Jain scriptures there are references to 64 types and somewhere there are references to 72 types of art. References to this art are found in the two texts 'Samabayangasutra' and 'Aupapattika sutra'. In the first text, dance, song, instrument and rhythm have been included in the art and in the second, drama, rhythm and instrument have been discussed. In the commentary of Jains called Kalpasutra, these arts are called the virtues of women. The Jainagam texts describe the cities of Champa, Rajgriha, Sravasti and Mithila, which refer to the use of art for entertainment in the society of that time. It is written in the Ubayayisutra during the description of the city of Champa that there used to be dancers as well as artists who could play tanpura, veena etc. The Aupapattikasutra also mentions a place called Punabhadrā in the city of Champa, where actresses, dancers, various types of players and music experts used to gather. In the Jain texts called Rajpradaniya, it is said that dance drama will be performed based on the biography of Mahavira swamy. Jains also have depictions of different dance styles in various architectures, sculptures and paintings. Tirthankaras are holding dance coins like Abhaya, Barada etc. So from these examples we can say that Jains also had a keen interest in Indian art.

The role of Buddhists in the spread of art is more commendable than that of Jains. Buddhists have shown considerable interest in elevating art and promoting Indian culture in the diaspora.

Binayapitaka mentions that two beggars, Ashwajit and Punarbasu, were caught falling in love with a dancer after watching a performance on the Kotagiri stage and were expelled from the Buddhist monastery. It is clear from this incident that the theatre was built at that time and there were also performances for public entertainment. There is a great spread of art in the books of the ancient Mahayana community. There are 79 types of art, and it is said that Prince Siddhartha was an expert in all these arts. Besides, it was necessary for the royal family to be proficient in all the arts. The Buddhist scriptures are full of details about drama and theatre. Painting and sculpture are especially noted in this era. Propagation of religion and according to a story in Divyabdana, Rudradaman is playing the veena and his wife Chandrabati is dancing. However, in the eyes of religion, this act was considered inappropriate and beggars were not allowed to gather there. In all the ancient caves (Ajanta, Ellora, etc.) where Buddhist artefacts are preserved, it is clear that those zeitgeist artists were also fully experienced in acting because, in those caves, various concepts and coins of acting are depicted. All those hand-coins are pure in all respects according to the book 'Abhinayadarpanah'. Thus it is known from the evidence that the artists of Jainism and Buddhism had mastered the art of dramaturgy along with other arts.

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