

PRAHASANA-S IN KOODIYATTAM

SRINIVASAN P.K

Research Scholar

PG and Research Department of Sanskrit,

Rajah's College of Sanskrit and Tamil Studies, Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur- 613204 TamilNadu, India

Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli – 620 024, Tamil Nadu, India

DR. S. LAKSHMI KUMAR

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Sanskrit,

Rajah's College of Sanskrit and Tamil Studies, Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur- 613204

Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli – 620 024, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract – The historical evidence of Sanskrit drama can be seen in the Vedic literature. But the prime theoretical analysis of the same can be seen in the Natyasastra of saint Bharata. Many of the plays in this tradition are no longer performed today. Very few metaphors are still being practiced today in the stages of Koodiyattam. This paper is meant to be a general study of the two farces that still exist in the Koodiyattam stages.

Keywords: Natyasastra, Bharatamuni, Dhananjaya, Dasharopaka, The Concept of Prahasana, Bhagavadajjuka Prahasana, Mattavilasa Prahasana, Koodiyattam, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

The dramaturgical tradition of India existed since the period of Indus Valley Civilization. It is conceivable that there was a non-Aryan dance tradition that developed in front of the remnant dancer statue of the Saindhava culture, which historians described as pre-Vedic [1]. Despite all the references in the Vedas and Epics, the Natyasastra of Bharatamuni is the first book to be scientifically written and available today that embodies the Principles of the Indian dramaturgy. Natyasastra is important as a serious initiative that examines the theatrical traditions that have been formed in different parts of

India under special circumstances and seeks to lay the foundations for a unified theatrical art form and theater in a scientifically directed manner.

In his book, Bharata mentioned about ten dramatical forms (Roopakas). They are Nataka, Prakaaranaa, Bhaana, Dima, Samavakaara, Vyaayoga, Veethi, Anga, Ihamriga, and Prahasana [2]. Natyacharya-s like Dhananjaya, Sharatatanaya, Vishvanaatha Kaviraja who came after Bharatamuni has interpreted these ten forms in their own way.

Of these ten metaphors classified by Bharata, Prahasana (Farce) is a category that emphasizes comedy. Bharata had given the feature of Prahasana in the twentieth chapter of Natyasatra. "The Prahasanas are of two types-the Shuddha and the Sankeerna. The difference between them lies only like characters introduced" [3]. Although many farces have been written in Sanskrit, only two of them are still performed on the Koodiyattam stages.

II. KOODIYATTAM

Koodiyattam is the traditional Kerala acting form of Sanskrit plays. Koodiyattam means the joined acting. Koodiyattam is traditionally performed in temples and temple theaters namely Koothambalam. Koodiyattam is officially recognized by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Usually, the Chakyar and Nampiyar clans of Kerala are performing this ritualistic art form. Koodiyattam didn't accept all Sanskrit plays. Three Keralite dramas (Subhadradhananjaya and Thapathisamvarana of Kulashekhara Varma, Ashcharyachoodamani of Shakthibhadra), thirteen plays of Bhasa, Nagananda of Sriharsha, and two farces Bhagavadajjuka of Bodhayana and Mattavilasa of King Mahendra Vikrama Varma are the main plays presented in Koodiyattam stage.

III. BHAGAVADAJJUKA PRAHASANA

Bhagavadajjuka is a famous farce in Sanskrit written by Bodhayana. The story leads with a Sanyasi and his disciple Shandilya. As the work is farcical its content is comical.

a) The Plot

The Prahasana starts with the debate between a Parivrachaka (Sanyasi) and his disciple Shandilya about the Hindu Dharmas. Shandilya was a Buddhist mendicant and he converted to Hinduism. For him food is everything. Food, dress, and sleep is the ultimate aim of Shandilya. When he was a Buddhist

monk, he only gets food once in a day from the Buddhist monastery. That is the reason he left Buddhism and joined Hinduism and joined the Sanyasi. Shandilya didn't trust the teachings of his master. He always debates with his master, the Sanyasi. He always says that food is most important for him. While the debate is going on, both of them entered a garden for taking some rest. There the Ganaika named Vasandasena and her friends came to meet Vasandasena's lover. At the same time, a Yamakinkara (A soldier from the place of Lord Yama) came to bring Vasandasena's soul to Yamaloka. Yamakingara took the form of a serpent and bit Vasandasena while she was plucking the flowers. Shandilya came near to the dead body of Vasandasena and he started crying. Sanyasi stopped him from crying and he scolded Shandilya and told him to stop crying. The Guru infused his soul into the body of the snake-bitten Vasandasena to convince his disciple Shandilya and to teach Yoga Vidya. While the Yamakingara came back with the soul of Vasandasena. The Yamakingara returned with the spirit he had taken by mistake and re-entered the same to the body of the Sanyasi. Both of them stood up and spoke to each other differently without changing their bodies. By seeing the same, all their companions were shocked. At last, Yamakingara came and requested the Sanyasi to re-enter into his own body. By hearing the request, the Sanyasi re-infused his soul into his own body and everyone departed happily.

IV. MATTAVILASA PRAHASANA

The book Mattavilasa is a Prahasana is another farce written in Sanskrit. The author of the Prahasana is King Mahendravarma I of the Pallava Dynasty.

b) The Plot of Mattavilasa Prahāsana

The plot of Mattavilasa Prahāsana takes place in the temple town Kanchipuram of Tamil Nadu. The story centers on the drunken frolics of Satyasoma a Kaapaalika panhandler and his damsel Devasoma. When Satyasoma likes to drink wine he recognized that his Kapaala is misplaced and both of them started searching the same. Since the skull-bowl had cooked meat, Satyasoma suspects that the Kapaala was taken by a canine or a Buddhist friar. Instantaneously the Buddhist hermit Naagasena arrives at the stage and Satyasoma immediately concludes that he is the one who had stolen the Kapaala. As the fight lasts, Babhrukalpa, (Paashupatha) another vagrant of a different Shaivite cult, a friend of Satyasoma arrives and adopts the role of arbitrator. And so the quarrel continues until, in total despair, the Buddhist

monk Naagasena is ready to submit his begging bowl which Satyasoma in his drunken misbelief trusts to be his own Kapaala.

Eventually, a madman enters and recuperates the real skull-bowl from a street dog. And, finally, the skull-bowl returned to its fair owner. There is thus a happy resolution and all the characters enjoyably take leave of one another.

V. BHAGAVADAJJUKA PRAHASANA IN KOODIYATTAM STAGE

Earlier, Bhagavadajjuka was performed in Koodiyattam stages for thirty-five days. Thirty-five days of acting can be divided into four parts.

- a) The entry of Sutradaara. This acting part of the entry of Sootradhara lasts from the first to the seventh day.
- b) The entrance of the Lord. Eighth to the fifteenth day.
- c) Nirvahana of Shandilya. Sixteen to thirty-one days.
- d) The next ten days (21-30) are visionary essays (Darshanopanyaasa). The acting of the play is from the thirty-second day to the thirty-fifth day.

Nowadays Bhagavadajjuka is not performed according to this order. In the Kerala Kalamandalam, in the seventies, there is a new style devised by Shri. Painkulam Ramachakyar. It contains only three scenes.

- a) The entry of Lord after usual Koodiyattam rituals.
- b) The entry of Shandilya.
- c) The Garden scene with Vasandasena and her friend [4].

Painkulam Ramachakyar arranged the play in such a way that the play could be completely saved and acted out within five hours. This is how the Bagavadajjuka Koodiyattam is performed now.

VI. MATTAVILASA PRAHASANA IN KOODIYATTAM STAGE

The performance of Mattavilasa Prahasana on the Koodiyattam stage takes place in three days.

- a) Day one – The entry of Sootradhaara and acting of the Mangala verse (Starting poem which praises Lord Shiva) of the Mattavilasa Prahasana.

- b) Day two- The Nirvahana of Sootradhaara with the acting of the story taken from the Mahakavya Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa up to the slaying of Tarakasura.
- c) Day three- The dance of Kapali Satyasoma [5].

VII. CONCLUSION

It is amazing that the performance of Sanskrit metaphors written by ancient Indian writers still exists today. Many of these works are confined to Koodiyattam venues. Koodiyattam has been acting with and without making changes from the original forms of these works. While the performance of Bagavadajjuka Prahasana is acting without much change from the story, a whole new part of the story is presented in Koodiyattam, replacing the whole story of Mattavilasa Prahasana. The cause and background of this change need to be further studied.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Dr. R Sreekumar, Koodiyattam, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Trivandrum, 2013, p. 2.*
- [2] *Bharatamuni, Natyasasthram, vol – 3 Choukhamba Samskrita Sansthan, Varanasi, 1983, p.3.*
- [3] *Ibid. p.34.*
- [4] *Bhodhayana's Bagavadajjuka, Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Thrissur, 2011 p.210-211.*
- [5] *Prof. K.P Narayana Pisharoti, Koothambalangalil, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Trivandrum, 2002, p. 144-145.*