

“A Study of Sankaradeva’s ‘Parijat Harana Nat’ and uses of songs, Bhatimas and Slokas”

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ABSTRACT:

Sankaradeva created six ‘Ankiya Nat’ as a tool for propagating New-Vaishnavism in Assam. He took ‘Bhagavata Purana’ as a main root for developing it. He included dance, drama and music elements in these plays. The illiterate Assamese people of 15th century found knowledge of spirituality through his dance-drama centric creations. He created these plays with his own originality. Some elements for his plays were collected from his two pilgrimages, some were taken from local elements run in Assam in that time and also some were taken from Sankrit dramas. These plays have lots of characteristics, like Language, Rasa, Story, Dance-Music etc. enriched the plays of the saint. He tried to give the people to enjoy every rasas described in Bharata’s Natyashastra. But through these rasas he took the people to the devotion of extreme Deity Lord Krishna or Rama. Under his six plays describe Krishna or Vishnu’s greatness in five plays and in one play describe one of the incarnation of Vishnu called Rama. In ‘Parijat Harana’ play of him describe Krishna’s activities. In this study has to discuss the story and some characteristics of ‘Parijat Harana’ play.

Keywords: Ankiya Nat, Vaishnavism, Sankaradeva.

0.00 INTRODUCTION

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva created New-Vaishnavite Bhakti movement in Assam in 15th century. In that time Assamese people were faced many problems and to recover the people from those problems he tried with different medium. He showed ‘Krishna Bhakti’ to the illiterate people of Assam and tried to distinct them from misdeed. To publish the New-Vaishnavism he took ‘Bhagavata Purana’ as root and call upon the people to ‘Ek Harana Nam Dharma’ or ‘Ek Harana Bhagavati Dharma’ (devotion to one God), where people got ‘Moksha’ or demise through ‘Sravana-Kirtana’ of Almighty.

In the very first time he faced many problems to publish it because Sakta cult was very strong in that time. The Saint tried to shape this Bhakti movement with the local elements of Assam and also some took from the experience collected from his visit to pilgrimage. The saint also used elements of Natyashastra in his creations.¹

He tried to give them Bhakti faith through creating Dance, Drama, music, sculpture and almost every element of Art. So, the importance of this Bhakti movement was not only limited to religious site, but also it contributed to the socio-cultural development of Assamese people. Moreover, it united the tight bind of racialism.

Saint Sankaradeva started this movement with a play named 'Cihna-Yatra'. This play was played with symbol, so it was called as 'Cihna-yatra'. According to Ramcharan Thakur, in his 19 years he gave this play a dramatic shape. Mahaswar Neog also accepted this that after the first pilgrimage the saint created this play.² He drew seven heavens and performs the play in front of the people. Different character like, Sutradhara, Vishnu, Natuwa, Bayana etc. were also acted by him. After the success of this play he was created some another type of six plays called 'Ankiya Nat'. The performance of these plays is called as 'Bhaona'. Sankaradeva was not called this Nat as 'Ankiya,' he called his plays as Nat, Jatra, Natak etc. Like, in his 'Parijata Harana' nat he says,

'SriParijataHarana Jatra Hampati Pasyata|'³

In Guru Charita 'Anka' word used for Ankiya Nat.⁴ In later days of him from the word 'Anka' it was named as 'Ankiya Nat'.

His six plays are, Patni Prasad, Kaliya Daman, Keli Gopal, Rukmini Haran, Parijat Haran and Rama Vijaya. His disciple Madhavadeva also created some plays following him. His plays were called as 'Jhumura'. This study is based on Sankaradeva's 'Parijata Harana' Nat.

0.01 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are,

- I. To describe about the story of 'Parijat harana' Nat.
- II. To discuss the main characteristics of this play like, Songs, Bhatimas and Slokas.

0.02 METHODOLOGY

To prepare this paper analytical method and performance method is used and data are collected from performance, media and topic related books etc.

0.03 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Sankaradeva's Ankiya Nats are full of dance-drama centric elements. Use of song, Bhatimas and Slokas are an important characteristic of this play. It can be know about the story to see the songs only. To take the Slokas also know about the story of the play. Like the other Ankiya Nat in this Nat also have lots of Music elements. So, it is an important subject for study.

1.00 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.01 ABOUT THE STORY OF 'PARIJAT HARANA' NAT:

The story of Parijat Harana is found in Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana and Harivamsha. But Sankaradeva took 'Bhagavata Purana' as main root and details are taken from Harivamsha⁵. According to the story, Krishna was dancing with his wife Rukmini. In that time Narada was reached there. Narada tell Krishna that he bring a 'Parijata' flower from heaven with him and described the characteristics of the flower narrating in front of Rukmini. Narada gave the flower to Krishna and also said that which woman wear this flower she will be very fortunate. After hearing about the heavenly flower Rukmini prayed Krishna to give her the flower. Krishna pleased with her prayer and put the flower in her bun. Then Krishna asked Narada about his visit. Narada replied that King Narakasura tortured the Deities with different way and also said that Indra and Sachi also come there. Indra and Sachi said to Krishna about their reason of coming after salutation. Indra says that Narakasura defeated the deities and umbrella Baruna, Maniparvata and also earring of Aditi carried with them and created apprehension in heaven. So, Krishna has to kill Narakasura and save the deities. Krishna promised to kill Narakasura and adieu them.

Elsewhere, backbiter Narada goes near Satyabhama who is the wife of Krishna and describe about how he carried a Parijata flower from heaven and also describe the importance of the flower. Quarrelsome Narada also not forget to say how Krishna gave this flower to Rukmini. He tried to highlight her that Krishna loves Rukmini more than her. Satyabhama feels disgraced and fainted in pain. Then Narada came again near Krishna and said about Satyabhama's situation. Hearing the pain of his loving wife, he immediately goes to Satyabhama and tried to console her with his miscellaneous love words. But she didn't calm down. At last when Krishna promised her to bring whole the 'Parijata tree' from heaven then she calm down. She request Krishna to bring it as soon as possible. Krishna said to her that in the first time he will execute the work of deities killing Narakasura and then he will bring the 'Parijata tree'. Satyabhama request him to go with him. Krishna tried to explain her that it is not right to go woman in time of war. But Satyabhama thought that she will remain deprived from 'Parijata' in this time also from another wife of Krishna. So, she didn't left Krishna and he took her with him and travelled to Kamarupa lifting in the surface of Garura. Reaching Kamarupa, Krishna fights with Narakasura and killed him and also makes Bhagadutta as king of Kamarupa. The mother of Naraka prayed to Krishna. Then Krishna rescued the goods of Indra and returned in heaven. After ending his work he was ready to return but Satyabhama insult him for not taking the Parijata. Then Krishna sent Narada to bring the tree from Indra. When Narada went there and asked for the tree, then the wife of Indra refused to give the flower. Narada returned from there and said the word of sachi. Satyabhama got angry and requested Krishna to bring it at any way. Then Krishna bring Parijata tree and gave to Satyabhama. Sachi knows about the tree from the guards then she got angry and

also said Indra to fight with Krishna. Then Indra fights with Krishna. Indra defeated in the war and confesses the greatness of Krishna. Returning home Satyabhama showed the tree proudly to Rukmini. But she tried to console her about the divine power of Krishna. At last Satyabhama planted the Parijata tree by Krishna in front of her doorstep.

1.02 CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PLAY:

The main characteristics of this play are-

1. Preference of Sutradhara.
2. Use of Git, Sloka and Bhatima.
3. Use of Brajvali language.
4. Use of Prose.
5. Use of Rasa.
6. Use of Character.
7. Use of Masks.

1.03 USES OF SONG IN THIS PLAY:

The main element of this play is use of songs. The songs gave the play a dramatic way. Like this play, another play of Sankaradeva also the combination of songs and dance. The songs of the plays are similar to another type of song Borgita, but these songs are used in 'Ankiya nat', thus it is called as 'Ankiya Git'. The songs are similar with the 'Dhruva' described in Bharata's Natyashastra⁶. There are total 119 numbers of songs available in his six 'Ankiya Nat'. In 'Parijata Harana' nat 19 songs are run with 11 ragas. Ragas are like, Sindhura, Kanara, Dhanashree, Beluwar, Akhuwari, Sri Gandhar, Kalyan, Tur, Gauri, Basanta and Purvi. The Bhatima, Payar and Slokas are also included in this play.

In the beginning of the play main character Krishna entered with song called 'Pravesar Git' or entry song in Hindhura raga. This song is like 'Praveshiki Dhruva' of Natyashastra. Basically the raga of entry song of main character is in Hindhura or Nat raga. The entry song of Krishna in Parijata harana play is,

'Awe Garura Ketu Kayu Paravesa.'⁷

Like the male character of the play main female character also entered in 'Pravesar Git'. In this play Satyabhama, Rukmini and their friends are entered with this song. They entered with Krishna in this play so; their entry song is same in this play.

The entry of another character also has entry song. If the entry song is not prescribed for some character, they entered with the Bhariman or chari and the beats of Khol instrument.

The characters also exit with song from stage after ending their dramatic work. This song is called 'Prasthanar git' or Naishkramiki Dhruva of Natyashatra. According to the thought and emotion of the song, Raga and Tala are different. In this play Narada exit from the stage is like,

“Salali Narada Hari Guna Gai”⁸

'Antara' songs are used in changing the position of the actor. Here presented anger, exhaustion etc⁹. In this song used Mahur, Dhanashre, Sri-gandhar, Kanara, Gauri etc. ragas and Parital, Ektal, Jati tal etc. talas. 'Antara' song of 'Parijata harana' nat is, when Krishna theft 'Parijata tree' and gave to Satyabhama, Sachi known about this from the guards, then she got angry and rebuke Satyabhama like this,

“Manukhi, Hahakha Aisana Tuhari”¹⁰

'Prasadiki' songs are composed in the relief of an incident. It pointed satisfaction of a character. This type of song used in this play is like, when Krishna permitted Satyabhama to go with him to kill Narakasura, she felt very happy and travelled with Krishna.

“Kayali Payana Jadurai
Kare Saranga Sange Priya Soli Jai.”¹¹

'Akshepiki' songs are used in the development of the story. The song which is sung by the dramatic character or sing with characters thought. It plays an important role in Rasanispatti. Priority of avinaya is more in this type of songs. Abhinayas are done with hand gestures and also Bhabas. Pure dance is danced in the Ghat or Bhangani of the last part of every single line of the song. In the middle of some Akshepiki song, Bhangi Bajanas has played and the characters danced pure dance or acting oriented dance based on this. Akshepiki song used in this Nat is like,

“Kesavahe Bujalahu Ore Janalahu Tuhu Bevahara”¹²

In this song describe about Satyabhamas pride to Krishna, when she knows that Krishna gave a heavenly flower to Rukmini.

Except these songs there are some other types of songs in Ankiya Nat. These are Nandi Git and Kharmanar git. Sometimes in the time of war also used song, like 'War of Krishna and Indra' and the song is,

“Garaji Basave Bana Prahara”¹³

'Nandi git' or song is the first song of Ankiya Nat. The main carrier of the play Sutradhara performed this song with Huhai Raga and ek-tala. In this song, hints of the story are given by him. Avinaya with hand gestures are performed in every line of the song and pure dance is performed in the Ghat or Bhangani part of the tala. Nandi Git is not used in this play.

The last song of Ankiya Nat is called 'Kharmanar Git'. The song is sing in Kharman Tala so, the song is called as Kharmanr Git and the dance of this song is called Kharmanar Nas. Generally

Kalyan and Purbi ragas are used in this type of songs. But in 'Keli gopala nat' 'Ahir raga' and in 'Patni Prasad nat' 'Syam raga' is used. In this Nat 'Purvi raga' is used in Kharmanar git. Avinayas are not done here, only Bhangir nas is done in the talas. Every character of the play has to dance in this song. The song is,

“Jaya jaya jiwana Modhai
Karu Kautuka Keli Kamini Milai.”¹⁴

1.04 USES OF BHATIMA:

Bhatima is another type of song included in Ankiya nat, it is the song of Bhat, who was expert in songs and acting. Bhatima means prayer song and basically bhatimas are three types¹⁵. 'Nat Bhatima', 'Dev Bhatima' and 'Raj Bhatima'. In addition to this, another type of Bhatima also found. That is Guru Bhatima and it was written by Madhavadeva describe about the specialty of Sankaradeva.

Dev Bhatima and Nat Bhatima have some similarities but it is not used in the plays of Sankaradeva. Raj Bhatima is sing in the praise of King and it was created for the praise of King Naranarayana¹⁶.

Nat Bhatima is that used in Ankiya nat. These are also different types, like Starting Bhatima, Muktimangal Bhatima or ending Bhatima, different characters Bhatima like, Bhat and Bhatima or Payar of Sutradhara in the middle of the play. Sometimes to describe the mental statement of the characters used Song, word or Payar or Bhatima.

The starting Bhatima is the description of the story and also in the praise of Krishna or Rama. The Bhatima performed by Sutradhara is,

“Jaya jaya Krishnadeva Nija Ansha
Lila Nakhita Kamsha Habansha||”¹⁷

The last Bhatima also performed by Sutradhara. This Bhatima is like the 'Bharatabakya' of Natyashastra. Here wish the liberation to everyone including the audience present there.

“Jaya Jaya jaga Jiwana Murari|
Kamsha keshi Baka Agha Antakari||”¹⁸

Bhatima of Bhat is not used in this play, but in 'Rama-Vijaya' play it is used.

Payars are also same as song. But Payars are usually descriptive and Karuna Rasa got preference here. In this play Krishna's commitment to Satyabhama is discuss through Payar of Sutradhara. When Krishna saw that Satyabhama was in pain, he was not tolerate this and tried to console her with his love words like,

“Piyuka Dukha Dekhi Nahahe Sarira|
Kamala Nayana Bhari Jhuri Bahe Nira||”¹⁹

1.05 USES OF SLOK:

The use of Sanskrit Sloka is another characteristic of Ankiya Nat. To see the use of sloka in this type of plays, it can say that it has also impacts of Sanskrit play. Two types of slokas are present in Ankiya Nat. These are Nandi sloka and story base sloka. In this play two Nandi slokas and 43 story base Slokas are there. In different time of the story like, to describe the mental statement of a character and imply the entry of a character Slokas are used. Sutradhara performed Nandi sloka. In the first sloka, praise the almighty Krishna and in the second Nandi sloka describe briefly about the play, which is going to perform. In these Nandi sloka, Sutradhara has to show dance gestures (Nritya-Hastas) with every word. Next slokas are used in the dramatic necessity and there is no compulsion to show Nritya Hastas. First Nandi sloka of the play is,

“Namah Krishna Vishnu Achutananta Sakte
Namu Rama Rajiva Netra Pravute.
Namu Brahmamurte Murare Paresha
Namu Viswavasha Prasida Prasida ||”²⁰

In this Sloka says, most powerful Krishna who is also Vishnu salutation to him, Lord Rama who is Lotus eye also salutaion to him, bowed to Abosolute being and who is Almighty praise to him.

2.00 CONCLUSION

Saint sankaradeva’s main aim was to write the play was to propagate New-Vaishnavism in Assam. It was a successful Bhakti movement in that time, because he created the elements like Ankiya Nat including Dance, drama, Music, sculpture etc. to publish it. It created as entertainment and gave the people to enjoy a high standard play. He also gave the people to enjoy every Rasas mentioned in Natyashastra. Though he focuses on ‘Bhaktirasa’ in this play, but there is not available this rasa in Sastra. So, Bhakti rasa is created through the ‘Santa rasa’ of Nava-rasa in the end of the story. In this Nat mainly Sringer, Raudra and Bir Rasas are reflected²¹, but sometimes Karuna rasa and Hasya rasa also reflected. Though eight or nine Rasas are mentioned in Bharata’s Natyashastra, in Ankiya nat has seven rasas, like “Sapta rase Natakaka Rasana Karaya”²². To see the characters of the story, the writer used his own originality in this play i.e. Narada is obstemious in the original story, but here he is a backbiter and quarrelsome. In the same way Satyabhama character is quarrelsome, jealous and proud here. Almighty Krishna also acted as a general man and he is the lover of Rukmini and Satyabhama. Like these elements other elements like, language, dance, literature also enriched the play. A huge element of dance unit included here. So, this play is a prosperous play of Saint Sankaradeva written in the adult time of his life.

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