

BHARATA'S NATYASHASTRA

(The recipe of Bharata for mind food)

A report

A public lecture titled **BHARATA'S NATYASHASTRA (The recipe of Bharata for mind food)** by Dr. B. V. Rajaram of Karnataka was organized by the IGNC A on **22nd July, 2016**. Dr. Bharat Gupt, Trustee IGNC A chaired the lecture.

Dr. Sudhir Lall of Kalakosa Division welcomed the speaker, the Chair and the guests and introduced the topic. Then Dr. Bharat Gupt as his opening remarks gave an overview of importance and significance of the Natyashastra as a performative or applicational text. Prof. Gupt said that the Natyashastra is the only treatise (or Shastra) in Indian tradition that has been accorded the high place as the fifth Veda. The traditions of Purana and Itihaasa have been kept alive by the Natyashastra. He also said that the Natyashastra is an inclusive text and encaptures our civilizational values. Then he invited the speaker to make his presentation.

Dr. B. V. Rajaram presented a lucid account of the background of Natyashastra, as “the legacy of India, which inherits the codified treasure of performing arts, a unique and great authoritative work of performing arts.” He further said, “The Natyashastra is preserved, and prevalent in Indian psyche - Indian culture, Sculpture, traditional art forms, Classical Schools.”

Dr. Rajaram also stated that “a Human being is a combination of mind and body. Mind is the fore runner and controller of all body movements, including the subject-object relationship of the five Indriyas (senses). Body needs six Rasas for its nourishment and continuance. These inputs give the body long-life, energy, happiness and strength. Similarly Bharatamuni says in his Natyashastra that eight rasas are necessary to enrich, entertain and enlighten the mind. The Thirty Six Chapters of Natyashastra enable one to understand and practice the art field. The eastern aesthetics is based on this principle Rasa of Natyasashastra.”

Then Dr. Rajaram enumerated the eleven important elements (rasa, bhava, dharmi, vritti, pravritti, siddhi, svara, aatodya, gaana, mandapa and rupaka) that contribute in making the performance possible. The learned speaker also exemplified all these eleven elements.

Towards conclusion, he asserted that “every art lover, art student, or art practitioner need to study Natyashastra which will help them to perfect their work of art.” He said, “In the present times, everyone is in turmoil, bubbling with the influence of one or the other eight rasas, but we need to contemplate on the ninth rasa - the Shanta rasa. The Theatre, Dance and Music students -- the modern youth need to know and study the Natyashastra.”

The lecture was duly followed by a lively interaction amongst the speaker, the chair and the audiences. Dr. Sheela Sridhar of Mysuru, Ms. Charu Uppal of Sweden, Ms. Anjana Rajan of Delhi and Mr. Priyadarshi Dutta (from I & B Ministry) raised several pertinent questions and made interesting observations. Dr. Sushma Jatoo of Kalakosa enquired about the continuity of traditional theatre forms such as, Bhand tradition of Kashmir in other parts of India.

Dr. N. D. Sharma, Head of Kalakosa division presented ceremonial stoles and IGNC A publications titled *Sangitopanisat Saroddhara* and *Krsnagiti* to the Chair and the speaker, respectively.

About the Speaker

Dr. B.V. Rajaram has done his Ph. D. on '**The Natyasashastra and its influence on Modern Indian Theatre**'. He is a famous television artist and has acted in over 40 television serials and in more than ten films. He is a graded artist of All India Radio and Doordarshan. He is the Founder Director of KALA GANGOTRI Theatre group from 1971. He is active in the field of theatre from last 50 years, as an actor, director, technician, organiser and teacher.

He has been awarded the prestigious Karnataka Nataka Academy Award in 1992, "Samsa Ranga Prashasti" in January 2001; along with numerous other awards and honours. He has served as the member of Karnataka Nataka Academy 1987-90. He went on to become the President of Karnataka Nataka Academy for the period 2008 to 2011. He has also been the Director of Rangayana, Mysore from 2011 to 2013. He has served as the Member of Film Censor Board Govt. of India and as the Member of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.

About the Chair

Prof. Bharat Gupt is an Indian classicist, theatre theorist, sitar and surbahar player, musicologist, cultural analyst, and newspaper columnist. He has been a Professor in English at the College of Vocational Studies of the University of Delhi. He went to school and college and studied English, Hindi, Sanskrit and philosophy and took a Master's degree from Toronto. He learnt to play the sitar and surbahar, training for eight years under the eminent musician Pandit Uma Shankar Mishra. He also studied ancient Indian musicological texts and modern Indian Music, yoga sutras and classics under Acharya K.C. Brihaspati and Swami Kripalvananda.

Trained both in modern European and traditional Indian educational systems, he has worked in classical studies, theatre, music, culture and media studies and researched as Senior Fellow of the Onassis Foundation in Greece on revival of ancient Greek theatre.

"Instead of being seen as Western and Eastern, Greek and Indian theatres should be seen rooted in the Indo-European cultural beliefs, myths and idolatory and the aesthetics of emotional arousal."

He speaks Sanskrit, Hindi, English and Greek with equal command. He retired as Associate Professor of English at College of Vocational Studies, University of Delhi and is on visiting faculty at the National School of Drama, Delhi. From 1995 to this day (2010) he has made numerous and extensive lecture tours, speaking on theatre and music at various Universities in India, North America and Greece, a country he loves deeply and visits at least once a year. He has also directed major lectures and directed seminars. As part of his research material he has made about 2000 photographs of amphitheatres and antiquities all over Greece as well as in Syracuse, Italy. He writes for research journals and national newspapers on cultural and educational issues. As a reviewer, he is a frequent contributor to Journal of Sangeet Natak Academy, Journal of Music Academy Madras, Indian Musicological Society, Baroda.