

Proceedings of
the 15th World Sanskrit Conference

General Editor: **Radhavallabh Tripathi**

Vol. III : Special Panel on Nāṭyaśāstra

Nāṭyaśāstra

in the Modern World



Editor

Radhavallabh Tripathi

Foreword

THE 15th World Sanskrit Conference (WSC) was organized by Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, in collaboration with the International Association of Sanskrit Studies (IASS) during 5-10 January 2012. The Conference was conducted through twenty sections including Veda; Linguistics; Epics and Purāṇas; Tantra and Āgamas; Vyākaraṇa; Poetry, Drama and Aesthetics; Sanskrit and Asian Languages and Literatures; Sanskrit and Science; Buddhist Studies; Jain Studies; Philosophies; Religious Studies; Ritual Studies; Epigraphy; Sanskrit in Technological World; Modern Sanskrit Literature; Law and Society; and Manuscriptology along with Paṇḍitaparīṣad and Kavisamavāya. Apart from these sections, the event was marked with some panels on specific themes, viz. Models and Theories in Sanskrit Grammar and Linguistics; Electronic Concordance of the Great Epics; Re-interpreting Pāṇini; New Perspectives on Scientific Literature in Sanskrit; Boundaries of Yoga in Indian Philosophical Literature; Śaiva Philosophy; Innovations in Sanskrit Pedagogy; Manuscripts and Their Intellectual Preservation; and Sanskrit in Global Perspectives, etc.

In the glorious history of this Conference encompassing more than four decades, a special panel on Nāṭyaśāstra in Modern World (as far as my understanding goes) was added for the first time on the occasion of the 15th WSC with myself as its convener.

Discussions were carried out under this panel on various issues related to textual studies in *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the deliberations covered a wide range of topics uncovering the significance that the text has

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The paper by Natalia Lidova in this volume has assumed an added significance in this context. Lidova relocates *vṛtti* as a central concept in the realm of Indian theatric universe. She rightly views linkages between *vṛtta*, *itivṛtta* and *vṛtti* not only linguistically but also semantically and understands *vṛtti* as a key category of the Nāṭyaśāstra. She has made an analysis of the historical and mythological aspects of *vṛtti* tracing its transformation at various developmental stages of the ancient Indian theatre. *Vṛtta* – the all-embracing rotation of the world – is transformed into *itivṛtta*. The cosmic order finds a limited expression on the performance arena and is ruled by the specific laws of the theatre, rather than universal laws. Tracing the divine origin of *vṛttis*, Lidova rightly points out how the aesthetics of sublimity – the divine game – was recreated on the stage.

Origin of Nāṭya

The possibilities of Greek influence over Sanskrit theatre were first discussed by orientalist like A. Weber and E. Windisch. Weber opined that the dramas performed in the court of the Greek princes in Bactria were reproduced in Punjab and Gujarat in India and they initiated beginnings of Indian theatre (*Ind. Litteratúre Geschichte*, Berlin, 1876, p. 224 refer in De and Dasgupta, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 650). Jacobi, Pischel and Schroeder criticized them and proved the weakness of their arguments (De and Dasgupta, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 650). In his *History of Mimic*, Hermann Reich tried to prove that mimic came to India from Greece. Max Lindenau in 1913 discussed the relation between Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra and Aristotle's *Poetics* in *Beiträge zur Altindischen Rasalehre*, Lipzig, 1913 (De and Dasgupta, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 53).

Before this, Indian theatre by Lévi had been published in 1890 and Keith's well-known works on the history of Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit drama came out in 1920 and 1924, respectively. Keith examined the Indian and Greek dramatic theories. These attempts

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