

France too has a rightful claim to Natyashastra: Padma Subrahmanyam

The Bharatanatyam exponent says that Natyashastra, which codified the visual language of performing arts, is a common cultural heritage for a larger geographical region. Natya encompasses not just dance but music, theatre, and poetry

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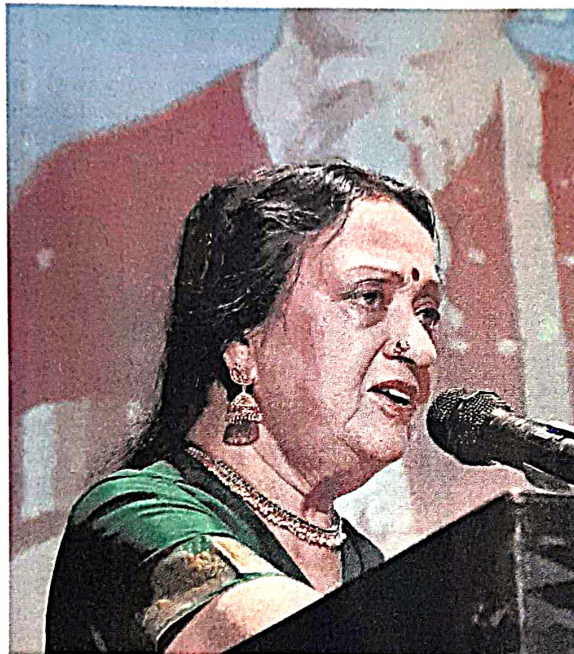
As the big screen played an excerpt of a younger Padma Subrahmanyam performing an experimental choreography, 'Jatayu Moksham', synchronised with Tchaikovsky's fantasy overture Romeo and Juliet, the silence in the hall was of the kind when an audience soaks in the brilliance of a tour de force before breaking into applause.

And, what could exceed a two-dimensional appreciation of her artistic feat than to have the multi-faceted Bharatanatyam doyenne and Padma Vibhushan awardee in their midst?

Ms. Subrahmanyam was at the Alliance Francaise recently for a lecture-demonstration, "Natyashastra for Bharathiya Aesthetics" under the auspices of the regional centre of the Indira Gandhi Centre for The Arts (IGNCA).

The Bharatanatyam-Tchaikovsky synthesis was one of the examples that Ms. Subrahmanyam laid out to postulate that the Natyashastra, which codified the visual language of performing arts, was something of a cultural common for a vaster geography.

The Bharatanatyam dancer-choreographer,



Padma Subrahmanyam delivering a lecture at Alliance Francaise in Puducherry. S.S. KUMAR

who is also a scholar and author, felt that as the earliest treatise on music, dance, drama and poetics, sage Bharatha's Natyashastra was conceptualised for the whole Indian sub-continent and beyond.

'Global art'

It is perhaps because of the grand scale on which the foundational text, regarded as the fifth Veda, is envisioned that a dance form with origins in Tamil Nadu like Bharatanatyam, has transcended boundaries to become global art, she added.

It took over a century of research by several scholars across the world, including in France, to determine that the Sanskrit treatise comprised 36/37 chapters. However, in the lack of consensus on its antiquity, scholars have assigned for its origin a date range of a thousand years, from 500 BCE to 500 AD, Ms. Subrahmanyam said.

Treta Yuga

Referring to her own extensive research, and book, "Natyashastra & National Unity", Ms. Subrahmanyam hypothesised that

the Natyashastra may have been written in the early phase of the Treta Yuga--the second in the construct of four ages in Hindu philosophy--and could be contemporaneous to the period of the Ramayana and its author Valmiki.

This, she reasoned, was because the non-inclusion of Rama or Krishna anywhere in the treatise suggested that its conception predated their manifestation. Moreover, her research led to the discovery that the last chapter of the Natyashastra, which is structured in a poser-response form, mentions Valmiki in the group of rishis who sought answers from Bharatha.

"If the Ramayana is a shared legacy for the whole of Indian sub-continent, perhaps even Asia, awareness should be created that the Natyashastra, too, is a common cultural heritage for a larger geographical region".

In fact, Bharatha's reference to the "jumbudweepa" (a puranic geographical outlay) led her to conclude that the Natyashastra was conceived for the continental span of Eurasia. "Seen in this light, France too has a rightful claim to the legacy of Natyashastra."

Turning to the concept of aesthetics, demonstrated by her students Mahati Kannan (dance) and Gayatri Kannan (recital), she

pointed out that "natya" encompassed not just dance, but music, theatre and poetry.

The angika pedagogy that she had reconstructed from 103 karanas (depiction of dance movement in temple sculptures) gives a sense of the challenge of mastering any, or all, of the abhinaya aspects.

The influence of the "karanas"-- not postures but movements frozen in a given moment--in dances, from classical Koodiyattam and Kathakali to folk art forms like Therukoothu, illustrates that the Natyashastra is a living tradition and a common technical-aesthetic fount for the performing arts. In fact, the Indian theatre tradition demands that the artists act and dance to communicate, Ms. Subrahmanyam noted.

Bharatha classified the art of abhinaya into four domains-- angika (physical), vachika (verbal), aaharya (external such as costume/makeup) and sattvika (bhava), while "rasa", in its quintessence, can be understood as the experience of aesthetics, she said.

"Aesthetics, in the Bharathiya philosophical tradition, is not the assimilation of beauty at the intellectual or emotional level, but experiencing it on a transcendent spiritual plane," she added.

இந்திராகாந்தி தேசிய கலை மையத்தில் நடன நிகழ்ச்சி

புதுச்சேரி, மே 27- இந்திராகாந்தி தேசிய கலை மையத்தின் புதுச்சேரி மண்டல மையம் மற்றும் அலியன்ஸ் பிரான்சிஸ் நிறுவனமும் இணைந்து, 'பாரதிய கலை உணர்விற்கு நாட்டிய சாஸ்திரம்' என்ற தலைப்பில், சொற்பொழிவு மற்றும் நடன நிகழ்ச்சி நடந்தது.

இதில் பரதநாட்டிய கலைஞர் பத்மா சுப்ரமணியன் சிறப்பு விருந்தினராக பங்கேற்றார்.

அலியன்ஸ் பிரான்சிஸ் நிறுவனத்தின் தலைவர்

சதீஷ் நல்லாம் வரவேற்றார். நிறுவன இயக்குநர் லாரன்ஸ் ஜோலிகோஸ் வாழ்த்துரை வழங்கினார். கலைஞர் கோபால் சொற்பொழிவாற்றினார்.

பத்மா சுப்ரமணியன் பேசுகையில், கலை என்பது இந்தியாவின் உயிர் நாடி என்பதையும், அதை அனுபவிப்பதற்கு கலை ரசனை எவ்வளவு முக்கியம் என்பதையும் அதன் அழகியலின் விதிகையும் பல்வேறு மேற்கோள்களுடன் கூறினார்.

மேலும் இசை, நாட்டியம், தொல்பொருள்



பத்மா சுப்ரமணியம்

ஆய்வு, கட்டடம், ஓவியம், சிற்பம், வாஸ்து என அனைத்து கலை

யையும் மேற்கோள் காட்டி எல்லா கலைகளிலும் உள்ள அழகியலை புராண காவியங்களுடன் ஒப்பிட்டு பேசினார்.

நிகழ்ச்சியில், நாட்டிய கலைஞர் மெகதி நடனம் நடந்தது. கலை விமர்சகர் ஆஷிஷ் கோக்கர் பங்கேற்றார். ஆய்வாளர்கள், கலைஞர்கள், மாணவர்கள், பெற்றோர்கள் என பலர் கலந்து கொண்டனர்.

இந்திரா காந்தி தேசிய கலை மையத்தின் மண்டல இயக்குநர் கோபால் நன்றி கூறினார்.