

Issue 5 | January - April 2025 | ₹ 25

Renaissance

Exploring threads of society and culture



❧ 'Pablo Picasso's Blue Dove of Peace' ❧



Centre for Cultural Studies & Development

presents

A 4 Day Workshop on the 'Ethics of Odissi Dance'

By Paulami Guha

Odissi Danseuse & Founder Member Secretary, CCSD, India



13th May to 16th May 2025

at Royal Academy of Performing Arts, Thimphu, Bhutan

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Renaissance

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The Editor's Note



When we think of 'art', we associate it with aesthetics, beauty, and maybe skill. But is that all that there is to art? Be it visual or performing arts, what makes it so impactful and beautiful is the artists' ability to touch our hearts, make us think, open up new worlds. Art speaks to us in a way no plain words ever can.

In this issue of RENAISSANCE, we explore how various forms of art moves us, what role it plays especially during tough times, and how it acts as a medium of expression and catharsis. While keeping the recent attack at Pahalgam and its aftermath in mind, we delve into how creative articulation blends with resistance, and becomes a catalyst for change. Even more so during such moments of terror and uncertainty, when this mere expression can wake people and give them hope.

With many of our pieces touching upon him in different ways, Rabindranath Tagore naturally found his way into this issue. A poet, writer, composer, social reformer, and painter to name a few—Tagore contributed immensely to the world of art and literature, and was always vocal about his ideas. He believed not in glorifying political and economic power at the cost of human values, but in upholding ideals of spiritual unity, moral clarity, and inclusiveness. He did not approve of freedom that rested on the quicksand of social division. He argued that love, understanding, and a shared sense of humanity is what must guide a nation – not hatred or dominance.

Through the different voices and perspectives in this issue, we hope to reflect some part of that spirit—where art doesn't just exist for beauty's sake, but becomes a way to feel, to question, to connect, and to imagine something better.

- Paulami Guha



Decoding the Vinci-Tagore 'Masterpiece' on a Sports Canvas

-Suman Ray

A 'breaking' news stunned both worlds. The sporting & dancing communities were at sea when break-dance broke loose into Paris Olympics 2024. It generated much hype & curiosity among people as they wondered how could a dance form be construed as a sport. The Olympic committee was quick with an explanation. And it came in the form of acceptance and endorsement. IOC explained that Breaking or break dance involved quick movements, pace, energy, speed, endurance and skill sets - all that were required to qualify it as a sport at the mega event. Interestingly Breaking was included in the Games not as an exhibition sport but a full-fledged medal event, generating wide scale acceptance and interest among people. This was, after all, for the first time that a dance form - a part of modern day performing arts - was officially recognised as a sport at the highest pedestal internationally.

The 'Breaking' or break dance event - a combination of quick steps dance movements, elements of gymnastics including floors exercises like scissors, vaults, one hand stand, simply captivated and mesmerized the audience at an open-air stadium at Place de la Concorde in Paris and not in a classic stadium, a nod to the origins of 'breaking.'

But the question arises what are the commonality between Performing Arts & Sports and when was this first discovered and by whom? The need to recognise the relation and similarity between performing art and sports had its origin in the works and efforts of arguably the two greatest 'Renaissance' polymaths - Leonardo da Vinci in the West (in the 15th & 16th centuries) and Rabindranath Tagore in the East (in the 19th & 20th centuries).

Both the multi-faceted intellectual genius knew that Art and Sports the two seemingly pole apart human faculties had one common thread -- similar yet not binding

them, but remaining distinct based on man's high performance endeavours. While no one was in a hurry for any conscious amalgamation between the two, but striking similarities were observed, cherished and promoted. Both greats of their eras understood that Sports was also an art form - vigorous & high octane -- & the vice versa and there was a need to have 'sporting culture' in modern day societies along with arts & culture. Leonardo may be best known as an artist and the renowned creator of iconic paintings such as the 'Mona Lisa' and 'The Last Supper' but his creativity and talent seemed boundless.

Not many know that Leonardo was an active and athletic young man aside from his fame as an artist, engineer, and inventor, he was renowned for his physical strength, grace, athleticism, and attractive appearance. In fact, Leonardo was known in his days as the “strongest man in Florence.”

He would impress visitors to his studio with acts of impressive physical strength, like bending horseshoes with his bare hands. As a young man, he learned and excelled at the typical physical pursuits of males at that time and place — horsemanship and fencing. Throughout his life, he was fond of walking and hiking, and unlike most men of his age, he stayed in prime physical condition well into his later years.

The correlation of Leonardo's creativity to physical activity is simply one example of the emerging scientific evidence that links exercise to creativity or what's more scientifically referred to as cognitive flexibility. The work of neuroscience researchers continues to demonstrate exciting connections between exercise and creativity.

Leonardo was interested in various physical activities and excelled in



Vinci's Sporting Masterpiece

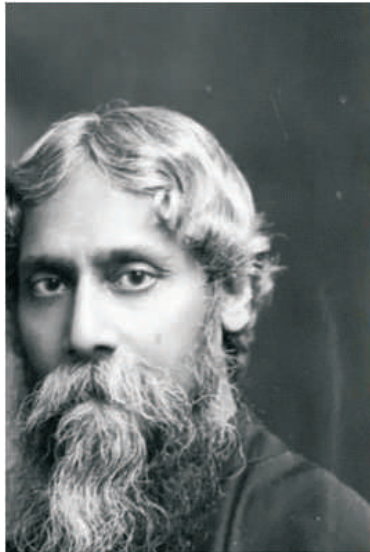
some. He valued physical fitness and maintained a healthy lifestyle well into his later years. He valued maintaining his physical condition and was in good shape at his age, which was unusual for men of his

time. Leonardo's obsession for sports was an endorsement from heavens that there existed a strong bond between Sports and Arts and both complement each other.

In the East, three centuries later, Rabindranath Tagore rose from the ashes like a Phoenix, to chart out the course of modern day art, poetry, literature, drama, music and yes, a few sports too. He was fond of wrestling and swimming and he himself practiced them not only to keep

himself physically fit but also to mentally be ready to churn out one masterpiece after another.

Tagore was always a physically fit personality, courtesy his fondness for sports and his keen interest in competitive games. Though not a great fond of colonial sports like cricket - the Imperial game or football - the game of the working class, Tagore was more interested in the faculty sports - like athletics, swimming and wrestling - three original sports of the Olympic movement. He was not much into 'Games which were played' like



tennis, badminton, basketball or volleyball etc. but in Sports like athletics, swimming, gymnastics and wrestling which were competed and with it human excellence attained.

Tagore left his mark in every sphere of life. Be it romanticism, culture, politics, or nationalism, it was impossible to find any topic under the sky that remained untouched by him. He remains the only personality in the world to have written national anthems of two nations -India and

Bangladesh. His contribution in the field of literature earned him Nobel prize in the year 1913.

As an educationist, he had developed thoughts on physical culture as no

education is complete without physical education. And yet Tagore's quest for the physical culture that he found compatible with his educational philosophy remains still unknown to many.

The Indian Polymath, to everyone's amazement, was solely responsible for introducing Judo in India. In his autobiographical work 'Chelebelaa',

Tagore reminisces his childhood experiences of taking lessons of wrestling from a wrestler, whom he refers to as 'Kana Palowan'. He was also made to learn gymnastics under the guidance of an instructor during his boyhood years.

Tagore, who was fond of traditional Japanese culture, had always been an ardent admirer of Jiu-jitsu. What evokes wonder is Gurudev's endeavour to transplant it into alien soil. He had invited Judo instructors to his school in Shantiniketan. The history of the introduction of Jiu-jitsu in Shantiniketan dates back to 1902, the year which marks a historic meeting of two minds, Tagore and Tenshin in Kolkata.

Tagore had also requested eminent Japanese writer and art critic Tenshin Okakura to send a Jiu-jitsu teacher to his school. Responding to his invitation, Jinnotsuke Sano, who had been a student of Keio University, was sent to Tagore's Ashram by Fukazawa of Keio University. In 1934, Subimal Ray, Satyajit Ray's youngest uncle, decided to learn Judo and took his nephew along with him to meet the great sensei Shinzo Takagaki, who came to Shantiniketan upon the invitation of Tagore.

During his three-year-long stay at Shantiniketan, Jinnotsuke Sano taught Jiu-jitsu to the students. Interestingly, Tagore and his generation's Jiu-jitsu became an important symbol of Japanese nationalism. Tagore while primarily known as a poet and philosopher, also emphasized the importance of physical activities like climbing trees, dancing, and jumping in education. Tagore believed in learning through activity and included physical exercises in his educational programs.

The two greatest minds of the modern history -- Vinci and Tagore -- found the symbiosis between the two finest human faculties-- arts and sports. If fencing had the Italic & French artistic exuberance, judo - a martial art sports from Japan had its similarity with various traditional martial art forms in India. No wonder, Judo is a martial art sports - an art and sports combined together. The finest of intellect could understand the similarities and co-relation between the two distinct sides of the same 'human faculty' coin, tossing up new challenges and excellence each passing day.

The author is a senior sports journalist with an experience of more than 25 years mainstream journalism involving extensive sports reportage in India & abroad



Rabindranath Tagore and the Canonization of Baul Tradition

- Dr. Indranil Acharya

Continued from Sep-Dec 2024 issue:

The Babu culture of Kolkata was blindly imitative of European culture in all its good and evil manifestations. The ape culture of Kolkata also spilled to the suburban areas and blind mimicry of the West continued unabated. Therefore, the villages were totally neglected during the British rule. The miserable plight of hapless villagers became very apparent from Tagore's lecture in 'Pabna Pradeshik Sammilani' (The Provincial Conference at Pabna).

The twin repressive systems of Zamindari and colonial rule gradually compelled the oppressed country-men to cling to some miraculous power and agency. Some specially gifted community leaders wanted to highlight the pointlessness of urban consumerist culture and inspired common villagers to embrace transcendental divinities. These people engaged deeply with religious fervor as an antidote to the failures and disappointments of personal life. In the social history of the period one

finds the acutely painful social status and economic constraints of poor millions. Thus, a spirit of renunciation entered into the social psyche of rural population. It gained momentum in some specific regions and led to the formation of many folk religious sects- minor religious groups with variegated cultural practices in remote nook and corner of Bengal.

In his scholarly treatise entitled *Bratya Lokayata Lalan*, Sudhir Chakraborty has nicely summed up this formative process. He opines that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many minor religious sects flourished alongside Hinduism and Islam. Many parallel and alternative ideas emerged- Shudra leadership instead of Brahminical order, establishment of Guru Cult instead of scriptural supremacy, worship of human forms instead of idol worship, religion of body instead of religion of the spirit. These were common features of newly emerged little sects.

Chakraborty further infers that perhaps the liberal religious philosophy of Sree Chaitanya inspired them; perhaps the new ideas of Sufi saints brought a paradigm change; probably Islam provided the rationale to counter idol worship and in the mental universe Buddhism instilled a genuine sense of detachment (p.187).

In the context of diverse minor folk religions there is considerable influence of Baul songs. Nadia, the nerve centre of Bengali culture, also became the meeting point of many Aaul, Baul, Fakir and Vaisnavs. Hence, the Kustia region of greater Nadia district saw the maximum

spread of Baul ideas. The most representative Bauls were Gnosai Gopal, Pagla Kanai, Duddu Shah and many others. In this congenial environment Lalan Fakir appeared in the last years of the eighteenth century. He was instrumental in popularizing Baul songs particularly

amongst the upper caste gentlemen. Lalan Fakir heralded the advent of this very popular folk religious sect in Bangladesh.

In his 1927 article 'Baul Gaan' Rabindranath reminisced:

I remember the song of a Baul performer from Silaidaha region when I was quite young. Strumming on his ektara he sang- "Kothay pabo taarey/ Amar moner manush je re! /

Haraye sei manushe taar uddeshe/ Desh bidesh berai ghure." (Where shall I find him? / He who is my man of the heart/ Having lost that man of gold/ I wander through the nations.)

The words were utterly simple; yet the nice blending of tune lent an ethereal charm to these effulgent lines.



Together with his elder brother Jyotirindranath, Tagore travelled to the countryside and collected lyrics and tunes of folk song. This experience attracted him instantly to Baul songs. Tagore popularized the songs of low caste Bauls in the

urban upper caste Babu culture. The zamindari estates of Debendranath in Nadia, Pabna and Rajshahi districts required close supervision. As he lost interest in mundane affairs he decided to send Rabindranath to Silaidaha in 1890 and for the next ten years he had to stay there alone or with family. Despite having estates in Sajadpur, Patisar and Silaidaha Tagore spent maximum time in the last place in a luxury boat on Padma listening to Baul renderings too. Even before that he came in contact with Lalan's songs during his childhood days when he had visited Silaidaha along with Jyotirindranath.

In fact, Jyotidada drew a sketch of Lalan in 1889 and it became very popular at that time. Lalan Fakir passed away on 17th October 1890. In December 1888 Tagore visited Silaidaha along with the women relatives, could not meet Lalan but received a lot of information about him.

Historical records state that Tagore's niece Sarala Devi wrote about Lalan Fakir and the Baul tradition in the famous 'Bharati' magazine for the first time in the greater Bengali society and introduced this little tradition to the upper caste aristocratic society. They came to

know about Baul tradition when an article entitled 'Lalan Fakir o Gagan', eight songs of Lalan and four songs of Gagan were printed in 'Bharati' magazine in 1895. Regarding Tagore's intimate interaction with Bauls Abul Ahsan Chowdhury has made an observation in his book Lalan Shah:

Rabindranath met and interacted with Gagan Harkara, Kangal Harinath, Gnosai Ramlal, Gnosai Gopal, Sarbakhyepi Boshtami and other followers of Lalan at Silaidaha. He got an opportunity of listening to Baul songs of Lalan in these meetings with folk performers (p.82).

Paradoxically, the repressive British regime also marked the study of folklore in mid nineteenth century. Collection of proverbs by Reverend James, George Abraham Grierson's Manik Chandra Raja r Gaan and Reverend Lal Behari Dey's Banglar Upakatha were some of the major publications in the domain of folk literature.

When Bangiya Sahitya Parishad was established in 1894 documentation of folklore began in a big way. Later Tagore lectured in a Calcutta University student session and

advised them to preserve and promote folk culture. He practised this in his own life and documented as many as eighty one folk songs.

In the Indian Philosophy Congress of 1925 Rabindranath introduced this unknown rural tradition of Baul in his lecture. Besides, he documented and preserved handwritten copies of 290 Baul songs through his estate manager Bamacharan Bhattacharya. Later, these Lalan Fakir songs were preserved in Rabindra Bhavan at Santiniketan. When he received Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 his endorsement and patronage of Baul philosophy was more readily accepted by the urban intellectuals of Bengal. Even during Lalan's lifetime competing groups of performers ignored his profoundly philosophical song offerings- Harinath Majumdar and 'Fikirchand er Dal' completely avoided Lalan's tradition. Tagore bridged this gap and revived people's interest in Lalan Fakir. He

played a crucial role in canonizing low caste cultural practices in the upper caste cultural spaces. Many leading Baul artistes have gratefully acknowledged Tagore's contribution- Sanatan Das Baul, Biswanath Das Baul, Basudeb Das Baul, Debdas Baul, Ananda Das Baul, Gour Khyapa, Nityananda Das Baul and Golam Fakir of Bankura, Birbhum and Nadia have paid glowing tribute to Tagore for his great commitment to the cause of Baul philosophy. His initiative paid rich dividends and attracted American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg to learn this mystical tradition.

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Poet Jayadeva's Dasavatara

- Staff Reporter

Jayadeva was a well-known Sanskrit poet and lyricist who was born in Kenduli, Orissa in the 11th century AD. The works of Jayadeva have had a profound influence on Indian culture. It forms the basis of the East Indian classical dance form, Odissi, and has strong influence over Bharatanatyam

classical dance as well as Carnatic music. Jayadeva's composition has also been incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. Jayadeva has had a profound

influence on the religious practices of Hinduism. The classic Tribhangi (threefold) posture of Krishna playing the flute gained popularity due to him. Sri Jayadeva was the court poet of King Lakshmanasena who ruled in Bengal in the 12th century. His mastery of the Sanskrit language was matched by his proficiency in both music and dancing. He was a mystic and a devotee of Sri Krishna. Jayadeva's only known work, Gita Govindam,

embodies the great wealth of his devotion and mystical experience. It is a great poetical masterpiece in 12 cantos of mellifluous verses and songs in Sanskrit, set to music and adapted to representation through dance. The theme of it is the love of Radha and Krishna, symbolizing the longing and striving of the



individual, for communion with God, culminating in their blissful union. The language and the imagery express the most intense form of love in

all its moods and phases.

The First Ashtapadi

The first section sings of the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The text, trans-literation, and translation of it are discussed here. The Dasavatara Stotra is a hymn to Lord Vishnu. It is the first section in the Gita-Govindam of Sri Jayadeva.

Incarnation is a special manifestation of God for a specific purpose.

The scriptures tell us that the incarnations are innumerable. Some of these are described in detail and the others are left to the imagination of the devotee. The general principle is that wherever something grand, beautiful, or glorious is seen, it is to be understood as embodying a part of God's glory. In the Bhagavata, 24 incarnations are enumerated and described. These include Kapila, the great rishi a founder of the Sankhya school of philosophy, and Rishabha whom the Jains revere as their first prophet.

By extending the analogy, all the great sages, whose lives and teachings have reinforced spirituality should be considered as incarnations, descents, or embodiments of God's glory. All incarnations have a common purpose, the protection of the good, the destruction of evil and the establishment of dharma.

Jayadeva enumerates ten of them.

They are :

- (1) Matsya, the Fish;
- (2) Kurma, the Tortoise;
- (3) Varaha, the Boar;
- (4) Narasimha, the Man-lion;
- (5) Vamana, the Dwarf;
- (6) Parasurama;
- (7) Rama;
- (8) Balarama;
- (9) Buddha; and
- (10) Kalki.

In the Fish(Matsya) incarnation the primary purpose was the recovery of the Vedas, which has been stolen by a demon and hidden in the waters. This required the destruction of the demon. This symbolizes the restoration of true knowledge, subverted by egoism, which has to be destroyed in the process.

The second incarnation is the Tortoise (Kurma). The gods and demons undertook the Churning of the milk-ocean with the mount Meru as the churn to obtain the nectar of immortality. They found the churn sinking into the ocean and were unable to hold it up. Then Lord Vishnu appeared as the great Tortoise on whose back the mountain could rest and allow the process of churning to proceed, bringing up different products, and ultimately, the nectar of immortality. When we proceed to churn the ocean of experience with the churn of knowledge, in search of reality, we find that knowledge itself requires a base to prove its validity. The attempt to find an ultimate base on which to erect our structure of reasoning can end in an infinite regress, unless it reset on the immovable, all-sufficient, all-sustaining basis of self-evident truth symbolized by the Tortoise form of God.

The third is the Boar (Varaha). God incarnated this time to lift up the earth which had been taken away into the regions of darkness, under the waters, by Hiranyaksha, a demon. The demon was destroyed and the earth was retrieved. In the both Vishnupurana and the Bhagawatha, the Boar form of God is identified with sacrifice. And Sacrifice, in its turn is not different from God himself. This can be understood as illustrating that stability or order, as contrasted with instability or chaos, can be achieved only through sacrifice, which is again based on the absolute.

In the next, the Man-lion (Narasimha) incarnation, the emphasis is on devotion. This guarded the child devotee Prahlada. He was put to endless tortures by his father, Haranyakasipu, a demon, for repeating God's name instead of his own. But Prahlada withstood all the tortures with steadfast devotion. Finally Lord Vishnu appeared as Man-lion, of terrible form and killed the demon. This Man-lion incarnation indicates that God is incomprehensible, i.e. He is not limited by our knowledge. It also illustrates that the real devotee alone is truly fearless and even the terrible form has no terror for him.

The dwarf (Vamana) incarnation

shows us that valor finds fulfillment only in complete surrender to God. King Bali, the mighty, vanquished all gods, including Indra, the Lord of Heaven. But he found his true fulfillment when he surrendered himself completely to God. When the might of the ego is thus crushed under the holy foot of God, it is not annihilated but transformed to everlasting blissful existence in the awareness of His presence and protection and ultimate union with Him. Note the gradual change of form. The Divine appears first as aquatic fish, then as the amphibian tortoise, the land animal boar, and the half-animal-half-human Man-lion. Finally emerges the pygmy, Vamana. This transition for a wonder, anticipates the modern theory of evolution of species.

Next is Parasurama. When the power conferred for protection, grown mighty by its proper exercise, had however degenerated into an oppressive tyranny, it had to be crushed ruthlessly. The terrible Parasurama was the appropriate form for this need. Then came Sri Rama; perfect in his general dharma as man and in his particular dharma as king. This is a demonstration of how man can rise to divinity, by unswerving adherence to the law of his being, his dharma, in all its details.

In this text, the eighth incarnation is Balarama, the elder brother of Sri Krishna. To Jayadeva and the Vaishnavas, Sri Krishna is not an incarnation, He is God himself, here addressed as Hari and Kesava, the Entity who appeared in the ten forms.

Buddha the ninth incarnation is the embodiment of compassion. When a section of people was steeped in ignorance and the scripture had become inaccessible to them, when most of those

who had access to such knowledge were concerned more with the form than with the spirit of their teaching, there was, then an all-round

spiritual poverty. The consequent misery of the people stirred God's compassion and He appeared as Buddha to show men the way out of misery.

The last incarnation of the ten is known as Kalki, the mighty warrior, born in a pious family, to rid the world of the oppression of its unrighteous rulers. Thus, while the

general purpose of protecting the good, destroying evil and establishing the law is common to all the incarnations, it is possible to see an emphasis on a particular aspect in each incarnation. Can we say, then, that each incarnation was a manifestation suitable for a particular time and the conditions then prevailing? This would be only partially true, for the conditions that evoked the different manifestations never totally ceased to be. It would be more correct to understand

them as embodiments of an eternal message; an eternal response of God in His unlimited compassion, to the eternal need of His creatures, in

the infinite variety of their moods, temperaments and abilities, for guidance in their struggle for communion with Him.

Jayadeva's DASAVATARA STROTRA

*Pralaya-payodhijale dhrtavanasi
vedam vihitavahitra-charitra-
makhedamkesava dhrita mina
sarira jaya jagadisa hare.*



O God, in the form of a Fish! In the flood of dissolution you have held up the revealed knowledge of the Vedas, like a boat, without effort. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Ksitirati-vipulatare tava tisthati
pristhe dharani-dharanakina-
chakragaristhe kesava dhrita
kacchapa rupa jaya jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Tortoise! On the ample expanse of your back, calloused by the burden of the earth that it bears, securely stands the world. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Vasati dasanasikhare dharani tava
lagna sasini kalankakaleva
nimagna kesava dhrita sukara
rupa jaya jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Boar! The world rests in peace on the tip of your tusk, like the dark marking on the disc of the moon. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Tava kara kamalavare
nakhamadbhutasringam dalita
hiranyakasipu varabhringam
kesava dhrita narahari rupa jaya
jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of Man-lion! In your hand of lotus-like beauty, are

the finger nails with their wonderful tips which have torn the most powerful demon Hiranyakasipu, as if he was a huge insect. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Chalayasi vikramane balim
adbhuta vamana padanakha nira-
janita-janapavana kesava dhrita
vamana rupa jaya jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Dwarf! By planting your feet you have cheated Bali, the mighty. Ganga, the river which sanctifies the world, has come out of your toe-nails. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Ksatriyarudhramaye
jagadapagata papam snapayasi
payasi samitabhavatapam
kesavadhrita bhrigupati rupa jaya
jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Lord of the Bhrgus, you have bathed the world in the blood of the tyrannous rulers, thus cleansing it of sin and destroying the misery of its relative existence. Hail! Hari, God of the universe, Victory to Thee.

*Vitarasi diksu rane
dikpatikamaniyamdasamukha-
mauli-balim ramaniyam kesava
dhrita rama sarira jaya jagadisa
hare.*

O God, in the body of Sri Rama! You have made a beautiful offering of the ten heads of the demon Ravana in battle to the guardians of the cardinal directions. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Vahasi vapushi visade vasanam
jaladabham hala-hati-bhiti-milita-
yamunabham kesava dhrita-
haladhara rupa jaya jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Balarama, the bearer of the plough! You wear on your immaculate body a garment of the colour of the cloud, blue like the Yamuna, darkened by the fear of being dragged by your plough. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Nindasi yajnavidhe-rahaha
srutijatam sadaya-hrdaya
darsitapasughatam kesava dhrita
buddha sarira jaya jagadisa hare*

O God, in the body of Buddha, the enlightened! Out of compassion from your heart you have condemned the

ritualistic portion of the Vedas ordaining the killing of animals. Hail! Hari, God of the world, Victory to Thee!

*Mleccha-nivaha-nidhane kalayasi
karavalam dhumaketumiva kimapi
karalam kesava dhrita kalki sarira
jaya jagadisa hare.*

O God, in the form of the Kalki! For the destruction of the wicked, you carry a meteor-like sword in your hand, trailing a train of disaster to them. Hail! Hari, God of the World, Victory to Thee!

*Srijayadevakaverida-
muditamudaram srnu subhadam
sukhadam bhavasaram kesave
dhrita dasavidha rupa jaya jagadisa
hare.*

O God, who took ten forms! Please listen to this song of Jayadeva. It bestows goodness, and joy; it is the essence of life. Hail! Hari, God of the world, victory to Thee!

Confluence of Culture-Dance Workshop at University of Colombo- A Report

- Special Correspondent

When concourse met with curiosity bequeathing benevolence, a sumptuous sight was evident at Sree Palee Campus of University of Colombo with a select group of 80 enthusiastic students indulging in a five-day workshop themed 'Confluence of Culture Poetic Work of Tagore & Samarakoon through Odissi & Lankan Dance'.

Conceived, engineered and conducted by Odissi danseuse Paulami Guha, in capacity as Secretary of the Centre for Cultural Studies & Development (CCSD), the workshop primarily focussed on the convergence of two distinct cultures epitomized by the two finest of minds – Guru Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Ananda Samarakoon through Indian classical dance -- Odissi and Lankan traditional dance.

Funded by India-Sri Lanka Foundation, the five-day workshop was held at the Arundhathi Theatre of Sri Palee Campus in Horana, around 50 kms south from Colombo on the concluding days of January this year.

On the opening day, Paulami addressed the students briefing them about the programme after offering prayers to the statue of Guru Rabindranath Tagore in presence of Dr Amali Perera, Head of the Department of Performing Arts and Mr. Dileep Bandara, Assistant Lecturer of Dance.

Paulami emphasized the need to have inter-cultural dialogue with the young generation on global cultural



scenario to strengthen the bond of friendship, peace and solidarity.

The sessions explained at length and in minute details that dance is a form of communication that brings out the innermost feelings and at the same time depicts the cultural aspects of a civilization, that India &

Sri Lanka shared a common culture, that the evolution and development of both Indian & Sri Lankan dance are intrinsically connected to philosophy of life and spirituality. It was pointed out that artistic poetry, songs, lyrical verses complement a dance presentation and are an integral part of a cultural tradition of any nation.

It was explained that Odissi dance form is the temple dance tradition from Odisha an Eastern state of India which is composed of a rich variety of bhangi (the basic poses of nritya, the pure dance) found mostly in the Hindu sculptures.

The sessions of Odissi dance began with Batu Nritya which beautifully highlighted the four basic musical instruments played with Odissi Dance.

Paulami demonstrated the movements to the students who were quick to learn the rhythmic pattern of the Indian dance. Thereafter in separate groups students were taught the dance on the poetic compositions of Guru

Rabindranath Tagore. All the sessions were interactive and meaning of each songs were explained to them while demonstrating the choreographic dance movements.

Students learnt dance choreographies, orchestrated by Paulami on beautiful compositions of Gurudev - 'Mor Bina Othhe Kon Shure Baaje' from dance drama 'Shapmochan', another song was 'Aaju Sakhi Muhu Muhu'. This song is

from a volume of lyrical poems by Tagore, composed at only 16 years of his age under his pseudonym Bhanusimha, in Brajabuli language.



It was brought to the knowledge of the students that the Bhanusimha poems chronicled the romance between Radha and Krishna which is a traditional theme of Indian poetry.

The third song 'Momo Chitte Niti Nritye..' which means In My Consciousness, day and night, someone dances to the rhythm 'Ta ta thoi thoi'.

Similarly, Dr. Amali Perera too choreographed a Kandyan dance piece based on Rabindra Sangeet 'Sajani Sajani Radhika..' & taught this and two more Sri Lankan dance pieces to the students.

It was followed by the Kandyan dance of Sri Lanka, which is highly sophisticated and refined form



mainly associated with numerous rituals in Sri Lanka. It has been developed as the royal dance in the kingdom of Kandy and today it is the most popular & dominant dance form all over the island. Kandyan dance portrays its uniqueness with the complex, energetic, masculine & graceful movements.

When Tagore visited Kandy, he was fascinated by the Kandyan dance. He encouraged inmates of Shantiniketan to learn & imbibe the steps & movements of this beautiful dance & adapted some elements of Kandyan dance in his later choreographic

productions. Moreover his words of encouragement helped the Kandyan dance form emerge into the mainstream of Sri Lankan culture.

Tagore visited Sri Lanka three times. The third visit of Gurudev is remembered for the foundation of "Sri Palee." Mr. Wlimot A. Perera, who was a leading entrepreneur and social reformer had earlier visited Visva Bharati at Shantiniketan in West Bengal, and was so impressed by the works and thoughts of Gurudev as well as the values of the institution that he resolved to establish a similar institution in Sri Lanka. On his invitation, Gurudev visited Sri Lanka and laid the foundation of the institution on 20th May, 1934 and proposed that it should be named 'Sri Palee'- the place where the Goddess of Fine Arts resides.



Gurudev's visit to Sri Lanka had a deep and lasting impact on the art

and cultural life in Sri Lanka. His visits created an interest among the Lankan youth to study art, music, dance and drama at the great Academy of Arts Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan in Bengal founded by Tagore in 1921. Many Sri Lankan pioneer artists studied at Santiniketan in 1930's & 40's. Sri Ananda Samarakoon was one among them.

The sessions also highlighted the

works of Sri Ananda Samarakoon, initially inspired by Tagore to study art & music. A great National poet, creator of the

national anthem in Sri Lanka & a multifaceted artist Samarakoon's musical career was greatly influenced by Tagore's compositions. He sang to the accompaniment of esraj, flute and jaltarang, the most authentic instruments traditionally played with Rabindra Sangeet. After he returned

to Sri Lanka from Santiniketan he embraced Buddhism and introduced himself as Ananda Samarakoon.

With his experience he was able to create a different mode of Sinhala music based on folk poetry. He used simple themes close to nature which appealed to the young and old. The folk idiom helped him to compose melodies that became popular in Sri Lanka.



During the dance workshop sessions University students under the guidance of Dr Perera learnt Sri Lankan folk dance

based on the poetic composition of Sri Samarakoon namely 'Kellani Numbala Danne Natannai...' and on another song 'Siri Saru Sara Kete..' Paulami & Dr. Parera jointly choreographed Indian folk dance piece for the students that beautifully depicted the agrarian life of Sri Lankan people.

On the concluding day of the workshop, students staged the production in presence of Rector of Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo Dr. Prathibha Mahanamahewa and other Faculty members who were invited by the Department of Performing Arts to witness their performance. The audience highly praised the dance presentation & applauded the students for learning & performing the dance production at a short span of days.

The event received Sri Lankan media coverage. Derena TV covered the performance on the concluding day and print media DINAMINA published a news on the workshop sessions in one of

its editions. The programme came to an end with distribution of certificate of participation to each student and the supporting staff members for successfully completing the event followed by National Anthem of Sri Lanka & India.



These extensive sessions gave an opportunity and a platform to the dancing students of Sri Lanka to dive deep into the richness of the poetic works done by the great poets of the two nations, and they also experienced the cultural commonality of both the countries through the choreographic compositions on Indian & Sri Lankan dance styles.

When Silence Falls, Art Speaks

- Deeposri Choudhury



In the wake of war and terror—when voices are silenced, fear spreads, and lives are shattered

—people break, they lose their sense of safety, peace, and even freedom. In such times of anxiety, grief, and fractured trust, what people need most is hope. They need a reason to hold on, to

resist collapse, to come together instead of turning against one another. But how can a broken society unite? What can remind people they are more than their fear and hatred, that they can rise above terror and stand for what's right?

Art, in its many forms, can do exactly that. It awakens, it illuminates, it moves. An artist's expression becomes a



'Shamsia Hasani's Wall Art'

spark—offering perspective, evoking empathy for those who have suffered, and inspiring resistance. It gives people a seed for thought and a vision to follow. Through colors, words, music, and movement, art gives people a reason to feel, to think, and above all, to stand together.

Take, for instance, the graffiti art of Shamsia Hassani, an Afghan artist who paints burqa-clad women onto the broken walls left behind by explosions in the streets of Kabul. She paints them playing musical instruments, walking

freely, existing boldly. In a city scarred by war and terror, her work is more than aesthetic—it is a symbol of hope and defiance, a voice for the voiceless. Each figure she creates tells the story of countless women, reclaims spaces stolen by violence, and reminds people of women's resilience and the possibility of peace.

Hassani's art is just one example of how creativity becomes a form of resistance. Across cultures and eras, artists have turned to their canvas, pen, lens, or stage not just to express, but to process tragedy, build hope, and speak what words often cannot. Even during the recent attack in Pahalgam, we saw people turn to Instagram, sharing AI-generated images that captured the grief and chaos of the day. These

visuals hit hard—they stirred emotion, sparked outrage, and raised pressing questions about governance and security.

More than just evoking sympathy, they demanded attention. They called on viewers to look at Pahalgam, to see its pain, to confront the root of the violence. In a moment where fear could have created silence, these digital artworks created conversation. In the midst of terror, when the news often numbs and



9/11 Memorial, New York

fear divides, art reawakens empathy—and reminds us of our shared humanity.

This resistance through art however, does not come without cost. When artists dare to speak against terror, they often risk their safety. Their work may be censored, misinterpreted, or targeted by those in power.

Backlash from opposing groups, threats, and silencing are all too common. In some cases, their art is erased before it can even reach the public. Yet still, they persist. They create not just for beauty or to protest, but for the belief that expression can lead to understanding and that understanding can lead to change.

Such presentations of art not only seek to resist terror or reclaim agency, but also offer survivors and communities a way to express their

grief and heal through creative expression. They stand as proof of the enduring power that art holds in dark times. Art helps preserve memory—of lives lost, of resilience shown. Memorials and installations serve not just as symbols of mourning, but as acknowledgments that tragedy occurred and must not be forgotten.

In divided times, art becomes a bridge—it opens up conversations that speeches can't, touches hearts in ways numbers don't, and makes visible what might otherwise be ignored. In moments when silence is expected, art does the opposite—it speaks. It helps make sense of the chaos, reminds us of what makes us human, and offers a vision beyond violence. It speaks of loss, yes—but also of endurance, defiance, and hope. Because art is not just about what is created, it is about resilience.



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Rank 88
CSE 2024



Prachi Gupta
Rank 172
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Ayush Saxeni
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CSE 24



Himanshu Kadian
Rank 209
CSE 24



Anushari Sachan
Rank 220
CSE 24



Pawan Kumar Paniley
Rank 334
CSE 24



Garneet Singh
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CSE 24



Iqbal Misra
Rank 435
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Prateek Maindolia
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JEENU SRI
JASWANTI
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Prateek Mishra
Rank 16
IFOS 24



Abhinayan Khind
Rank 47
IFOS 24



Srinjay Kumar
Rank 67
IFOS 24



Rishabh Kumar
Rank 121
IFOS 24

COURSE DETAILS

1. Regular Classroom Programme (RCP):

RCP is comprehensive power pack 240 hours class room teaching program. this program will offer you right mix of lecture, notes making and writing approach. this will help you develop understanding of concept and their application along with writing approach. This course is supported by daily tutorial discussion, topic wise test and at the end of course full syllabus test is conducted. Overall this course is aimed to cover whole package of chemistry optional for CSE and IFOS.

2. Recorded lecture Programme (RLP)

RLP is comprehensive power pack recorded lecture program. this programme will offer you right mix of lecture through 140 pre recorded videos 70 in each paper. this will help you develop understanding of concept and their application along with writing approach. evaluation is done through 6 tests 3 in each paper. This course is supported by daily tutorial discussion, topic wise test and at the end of course full syllabus test is conducted. Overall this course is aimed to cover whole package of chemistry optional for CSE and IFOS.

3. All India Test Series (AITS)

The main objective of AITS is evaluation of students preparing for mains examination it includes 10 tests 6 sectional test and 4 full length each test is followed by evaluation, discussion and detailed solution this programme help student in developing their final writing skill to get 300+ marks.

4. Writing Approach Development Programme :

writing approach development through extended test series. In this course.

Topic wise question and answer will be done as

DPP thoroughly in comprehensive manner nearly 10-20 question taken from each topic of **paper 1** and **paper 2**. These question include all varieties, Direct question, Derivation, Numerical and Logical explanation in **Paper 1**. Similarly theoretical, Sequential reaction, Product writing and Mechanism in **paper 2**. The major Objective is to develop lucid way of answer writing in all types of questions.

At the end of course **6 Full syllabus Test** will be conducted the overall course will be weekend course.

Nature of course :- Weekend (Online & Offline mode)

Duration :- 5 Months (approx.)

Course material:- PDF short notes of Paper 1 & 2, DPP for answer writing, 6 full

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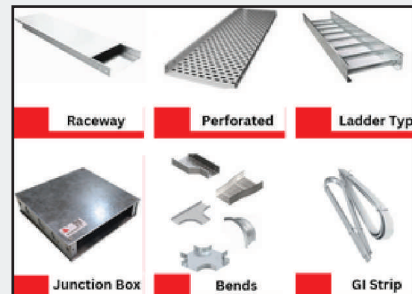
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