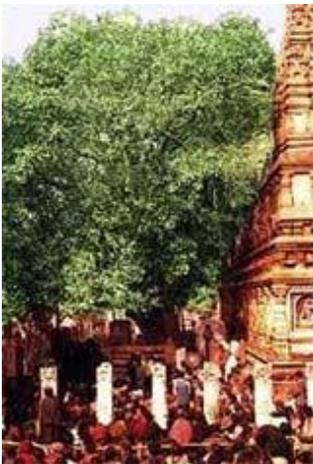


Panamāmi Buddham



The ancient temples of Konark, Puri, Khajuraho, Lingaraj and hundreds of others bear the most beautiful depiction of postures and gestures of Odissi dance. Under its aesthetic veneer lies its essence of spirituality and the quest for realization of the Divine. Odissi, a two-thousand year old Indian classical dance adopts concepts from Buddhism in a celebration of devotion, tolerance and harmony. This traditional Odissi repertoire has four parts: *Mangalācharan* (invocatory), *Pallavi* (pure dance), *Abhinaya* (expressional dance) and *Moksha* (dance of emancipation). Pāli chants are used to invoke the Bodhi tree while traditional Odissi bols (rhythms) are used to bring to life the sculptures of ancient Buddhist monasteries of Ratnagiri and Udaygiri.

Mangalacharan: Bodhi Vandana – Invocation of the Bodhi tree (8 mins)



The Mangalacharan is the traditional invocatory item of Odissi. It offers of salutation to God, the Guru (or master) and to the audience. The Holy Bodhi Tree is deified in this *Mangalācharan*. The recital starts with the chanting of *namo tassa bhagavato arāhato sammāsambuddhassa* thrice just as the worship of Lord Buddha commences in every monastery. The evening melody *Bheempallasri* evokes the emotions of devotion and bliss and sets a perfect mood of the evening. This is followed by a grateful remembrance of the Seven Holy Sites at Bodhi Gaya where the Buddha attained enlightenment. The majestic Bodhi Tree is glorified in a beautiful Pali Shloka: the dancer worships the Bodhi Tree that has been watered by the grateful teardrops of the Great Sage Himself. It is the Tree that had been the constant companion of the Lord while He was absorbed in His hard penance. The

dancer bows down at the feet of the Holy Tree. It concludes with a trikhandi pranam in which the dancer offers salutation to God, the Guru and to the audience.

Pallavi: Pure dance on melody Kamodi (12 mins)

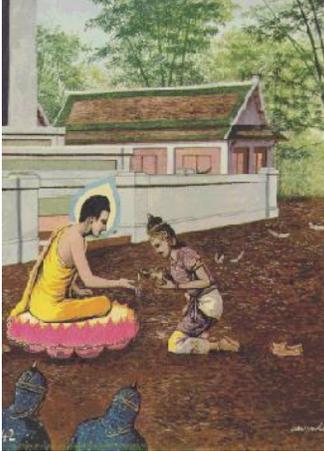


Pallavi literally means “blossoming”. This is applicable not only to the dance, but also to the music, which accompanies it. Pallavi starts with slow, graceful & lyrical movements of the eyes, neck, torso & feet & slowly builds in a crescendo to climax in a fast tempo at the end, evoking spiritual ecstasy attained through art. Both the dance and the music evolve in complexity as the dancer traces multiple patterns in space, interpreting the music dexterously in the multilayered dimensions of taal (rhythm) and laya

(speed). This pallavi is on the melody *Kamodi*. The figure shows few of the hundreds of

sculptures on the Buddhist temples of Ratnagiri, Udaygiri and Lalitgiri that depict poses of Odissi. This pure dance piece embodies these sculptures in this celebration of aesthetic expression of devotion through art.

Abhinaya: Dāsi Shrimati – Expressional Dance (14 mins)



Avadāna Literature is the oldest of the Buddhist Texts. The tales of the *Avadānashataka* say how one is unchained from the cycle of births and deaths through complete surrender and faith. The inspiration for the *abhinaya* or mimesis has been derived from the tale of steadfast devotion and sacrifice by of a maid, *Shrimati*.

The story is set in Medieval Indian kingdom of Magadha (now north-west Bihar). The Buddhist King Vimbisāra sets up a Stupa in his palace where royal ladies come every evening to pray to the Lord. But things change when Ajatshatru usurps his father's throne. A Hindu rajah himself, he threatens to kill anyone worshipping Buddha. Shrimati, a maid in the royal household, refuses to pay heed to any warning and offers her prayers at the Stupa. Her defiance leads to her slaughter in the hands of the Guard. But the firmness of her faith, her courage elevates her to the stature of a spiritual martyr.

In this expression piece or *abhinaya*, attempts to explore with the various facets of human mood. The collage of musical melodies used in the composition brings to life a myriad of emotions of the various characters portrayed by the dancer.

***Nibbāna*: Dance of Imancipation (6 min)**

This dance represents a spiritual culmination for the dancer who soars into the realm of pure aesthetic delight. The verses for Moksha are based on the chant of *Nibbāna* set to *raaga Bhairavi*. It goes, "I want to do good work, not keep bad company, always be in the company of noble-hearted people till I achieve Enlightenment."

Credits

Total duration of the dance: 40 mins

Project Patron: The Mahabodhi Society of India, Bodh Gaya (India)

Choreography/Concept/Performance: Shreelina Ghosh

Sitar/ Music composition: Sukhamay Bhattacharya

Pakhawa (Percussion):j: Guru Giridhari Nayak

Vocals: Biswajit Ghosh

Keyboards: Amiyo Ghosh

Flute: Jayanta Chatterjee