

comparison of the Phra Ariyanuwat version is made with other existing versions of the tale in the modern Thai and Lao scripts. Unfortunately Wajuppa was unable to locate earlier palm-leaf manuscripts that are supposed to exist and so there is no consideration of these in the commentary.

This publication is a worthwhile addition to the field of Isan and Lao studies. It will also be welcomed by those examining issues dealing with fertility rites and rain-calling rituals as well as those interested in comparative folklore and literature. *Phya Khanḁhaaḁ* is a logical progression from the translator's first work. The book concentrates on themes that typify the Isan region and helps us make inroads on understanding the literature and beliefs of this fascinating region of Thailand.

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## INDIA

BANSAT-BOUDON, LYNE. *Poétique du théâtre Indien: Lectures du Nāṭyaśāstra*. Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, volume 169. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1993. 519 pages. Plates, tables, figures, indices. Paper, n.p.; ISBN 2-85539-769-3. (In French)

So far, studies of Sanskrit drama have concentrated more on the texts of the plays than on aspects of their performance. Bansat-Boudon intends to remedy this situation by presenting a detailed study of the performance of a short "play within a play," found in *Mālavikāgnimitra* by Kālidāsa (fifth century A.D.). The play within the play is performed before the king, who is thus allowed an undisturbed view of the actress who had earlier caught his fancy but was kept from him by his first wife, the queen. The performance is to settle a quarrel between the two drama teachers living at the court about who is the better instructor. However, in the play itself the contest is broken off after the performance by only one of the two parties.

The material investigated is inevitably of a purely textual nature. It consists of the text of a verse sung and acted by the actress, and a set of terms used by the teacher that refers to parts of the curriculum of his instruction; another set of terms is found in the judgement of the performance delivered by a learned Buddhist nun. All this should, however, give us a more exact idea of what was important in an actual performance. Our oldest source on Sanskrit drama, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, typically does not enlighten us in this matter.

Bansat-Boudon starts with a study of the contents of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, since the protago-

nists in the play refer more than once to it as authoritative, and since they use several of the terms actually found in this text. Bansat-Bordon then gives a translation of the first two acts of Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra*, which contain the machinations leading to the performance of the play within the play, and its actual performance. This is followed by a detailed study of two items from *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *lāsyāṅga* and *sāvīrasāmānyābhinaya*. In the final part the author attempts, among other things, to identify the terms used in the judgement of the performance with those used by the teacher in describing his course of training.

*Nāṭyaśāstra* is a well-planned, coherent work. Its thirty-seven chapters can roughly be divided into several distinct groups dealing with more or less closely related topics. Chapters 6 and 7 treat two basic concepts of a quite unique aesthetic theory developed in the context of Sanskrit drama, which links the audience's fascination (*rasa* "juice, flavor") to the acting out on stage of emotions (*bhāva*). Chapters 8–13 concern "bodily" acting and related matters (e.g., the division of the stage in to different zones that the actors cross in order to indicate a change of scene). Chapters 14–20 are all related in some way to the text and plot. Chapters 28–34 deal with music and musical instruments. Finally, 35–37 treat of the troupe of actors and their descent from divine ancestors.

A problem in *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the relationship between the main part of the text and the first five chapters. The first five chapters describe the divine origin of drama, the construction of the theater, the consecration of the stage, the origin of the incorporation of dance in drama, and, the preliminary rituals of a performance. As chapter 6 begins with a table of contents of what follows, the authenticity of the first five chapters has in the past frequently been questioned. For Bansat-Boudon the treatment of the origin of drama and the preparations for a performance at the beginning is only logical (95–96). However, this does not explain the position of the table of contents at the beginning of chapter 6. In fact, the occurrence of the table of contents at that point forces us to consider all that follows as an elaboration of the matter presented in chapters 1–5. In this connection it should be noted that, while chapters 1–5 themselves do not go beyond the preparations and preliminaries, virtually all topics treated in full detail only later have somehow been mentioned in these chapters.

The vocabulary of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is of a highly technical nature. For its interpretation there is a tendency among scholars to rely on the commentary by Abhinavagupta. Bansat-Boudon is no exception in this respect. However, Abhinavagupta (ninth century) was not only centuries removed from the period of compilation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* at the beginning of the common era, but also was often highly biased in his interpretations by his preoccupation with philosophy. In many instances Bansat-Boudon presents and elaborates an interpretation that on closer reading belongs not to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* proper but to Abhinavagupta. A case in point is her discussion of the concepts *nātyadharmī* (the order of things in *nāṭya*, or drama) and *lokadharmī* (the order of things in the ordinary world). With Abhinavagupta the concept *nātyadharmī* received a wide application and it covers, for instance, the repertoire of the dramatic dialects and the so-called *lāsyāṅga*, or mini-scenes (157). In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, however, it is applied in particular to typically theatrical strategies such as asides and to the division of the stage in to zones that allows actors to remain invisible to other actors while they are on stage.

The author's dependence on Abhinavagupta is very great indeed, and at least in one case seriously affects her main conclusions. I refer here to her discussion of the *nātyāyīta*, that is, one of the subdivisions of the so-called *sāvīrasāmānyābhinaya*. According to Bansat-Boudon the definition of the *nātyāyīta* in *Nāṭyaśāstra* 22, verse 48, refers to a play within a play:

*nātyāyītam upacārair yaḥ kṛiyate 'bhinayasūcayā nāṭye  
kālaprakāraṣahetoḥ praveśtakāḥ saṅgamo yāvat.*

Instead of her French translation found on page 377, I quote the English one here, found in the author's article "Abhinavagupta, Exegete and Connoisseur of Theatrical Practice: An Essay on the Nāṭyāyita," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 38 (1995), 149–65:

The *nāṭyāyita* is, because of the expansion of time (*kālaprakarṣahetoḥ*), the whole duration of the union [of the other drama] with the [principal] drama, effected through entrances, [which are the] metaphors (*upacārair* H.T.) [of the real ones], thanks to this *abhinaya* which is the *sūcā*. (156)

On closer consideration the translation is merely a paraphrase of Abhinavagupta's commentary on it. The number of square brackets is indicative of the author's embarrassment with the text of the verse proper. The combination of *kālaprakarṣahetoḥ* (for the sake of biding time) with *yāvat* (during or till) suggests we read, with manuscript "ḍ," *praveśane saṅgamam*. The verse should then be translated as follows:

The *nāṭyāyita* is that *sūcā* acting that in the course of a play is done by servants [or minor characters, *upacārair*] in order to bide time during the meeting [with the chief characters] as they [the chief characters] are entering (*praveśane saṅgamam*).

The next verse (49) adds that the acting done by the actors on stage when a *dhruvā* song is sung is also known as *nāṭyāyita*. It should be noted that the singing of a *dhruvā* takes place, for instance, during the entrance of a character. As such it marks a lull in the action (note *kālaprakarṣahetoḥ* in verse 48). The *dhruvā* is not part of the playwright's text but is introduced at the initiative of the director or the actors themselves. When all is said and done *nāṭyāyita* is only a specialization of the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* (verse 50), the last item in the list of *sārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*, in which the actor does not act his own text but reacts to words spoken by some other person on stage that he overhears.

The *nāṭyāyita* (no text of one's own, only bodily acting) is diametrically opposed to *vākyaābhīnaya*, which is the plain "acting" (*abhinaya*) of one's lines given in the script, unaccompanied by any meaningful gestures. The three intervening subdivisions of *sārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*, that is, *sūcā* (the point of a new leaf), *aṅkura* (the new leaf), and *sākṣhā* (the branch), must somehow refer to situations lying in between these two extremes.

*Sāmānyābhīnaya* is a form of acting that involves all categories (*sāmānyā*), that is, the presentation of the emotions (*bhāva*), the movements of the limbs (*aṅga*), and the use of the voice (*vāc*). In the case of *sārīrasāmānyābhīnaya* the focus is on bodily acting as opposed to *sāttvikālamākāra*, in which the focus is instead on the emotions. Typically, makeup (*āhārya*), the fourth pillar of the dramatic art, is excluded from this, as it is not presented on stage. There is also no *sāmānyābhīnaya* corresponding to *vācīkābhīnaya*, that is, "acting of the voice." The diagram on page 357, in which Bansat-Boudon, in accordance with the phrase *vāgaṅgasattvaja*, distinguishes three subdivisions of *sāmānyābhīnaya*, namely *sāttvika* (of the heart), *sārvīra* (of the body), and *vācīka* (of the voice), is to be revised. Actually, the phrase *vāgaṅgasattvaja* does not refer to any subdivisions at all, but to the fact that *sāmānyābhīnaya* acting encompasses all three categories, namely words (*vāg*), limbs (*aṅga*), and emotions (*bhāva*).

All this has a direct bearing on the author's interpretation of verse 8 of act 2, in which the Buddhist nun sums up the qualities of Mālavikā's performance. Bansat-Boudon identifies four criteria in this verse, which agree more or less with subdivisions of the *sārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*. As the performance concerned a play within a play, she felt free to add *nāṭyāyita* as a fifth criterion.

Next, the author identifies these five criteria with the *pañcāṅgābhīnaya* (the five forms of acting with the limbs), a term the drama teacher had used earlier to describe the contents of his instruction to his pupil Mālavikā. While Bansat-Boudon's interpretation of verse 8 cannot be maintained, her suggestion that the term *pañcāṅgābhīnaya* refers to the five *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*, which, after deducting *nāṭyāyita*, consists of five subdivisions, may be right after all. In this connection it is interesting to note that the term *pañcāṅgābhīnaya* is not found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and became well known only later. Thus, the *Nāṭyalaṅkāra* (thirteenth century) dedicates a section to the so-called *pañcābhīnaya* (the word *āṅga* has been dropped). While its subdivisions agree exactly with the ones of the *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya* (minus the *nāṭyāyita*), the definitions seem to support the alternative interpretation given above. The relevant passage has been quoted in note 244 on pages 438 and 439.

A drama teacher, when asked by a servant about the progress of his pupil, replied that "in whatever *bhāvika* I instruct my pupil, she, in her turn, instructs me." Bansat-Boudon identifies the term *bhāvika* with the twelfth of the so-called *lāsyaṅga* or mini-scenes. Sources later than *Nāṭyaśāstra* mention only ten *lāsyaṅga*, and Bansat-Boudon argues that the *bhāvika*, in which a woman acts seeing her lover in her dream, is actually a specific scene exemplifying the tenth *lāsyaṅga*. However, in her attempt to fit this interpretation of *bhāvika* into the sentence (p. 442), she runs into problems. For, "whatever *bhāvika*" (*yad yad ... bhāvikaṃ*) implies that *bhāvika* would be a term for a group of scenes showing a particular form rather than one for a specific example. I think, though, that the line concerned should be translated simply as: "whatever I teach her in the matter of the acting of the *bhāvas* (emotions)." The teacher is apparently referring here to the so-called *sāttvikālamkāra* treated in chapter 22 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, that is, the same chapter that treats of the *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*. *Sāttvikālamkāra* is a form of *sāmānyābhīnaya* as well, that is, "acting (*abhinaya*) involving all categories (*sāmānya*)," but in this case focused on the *sattva*, alias *bhāvas*.

Finally, I would like to note that Bansat-Boudon is much too confident about her interpretation of the word *chalita* as the title of the play within the play. The evidence of the sources identifying the *chalita* as a term for a genre (see note 260 on p. 443) is dismissed all too easily. The author's main argument is that it would be impossible for Mālavikā to rehearse a certain dramatic genre (405). However, she is not very consistent here, as in the case of the *bhāvika* she does allow for this possibility.

It may be asked if the evidence of *Mālavikāgnimitra* itself has been fully exhausted. Admittedly, the first instance of the word *chalita* is equivocal: *c(h)aliām nāma naṭṭam andareṇa kīrisī mālaviā tī*. A servant is enquiring how Mālavikā, who is instructed in the performance of a short (type of) play called *chalita*, is doing. However, Bansat-Boudon does not comment on the word *naṭṭam*, that is, Sanskrit *nāṭya* followed by the diminutive suffix *-ka*. Furthermore, her translation of the second instance, *deva catuspadodbhavam c(h)alitam udāharanti* as "Sire, du *Chalita*, composé de quatrains, on fait grand bruit" (255), does not do justice to *udāharanti*. The sentence could, or rather should, be translated as follows: "Sir, the *chalita* (title or type?) is mentioned as an example of a work that is *catuspadodbhavam*, that is, consists of a *catuspadā*." Note also the following passage from the beginning of the second act: *deva śarmīsthāyāḥ kṛtīr layamadyā catuspadā. tasyāś caturthavastunaḥ prayogam* (v.l. *caturthavastukam*) *eṣamanāḥ śrotum arhati devaḥ* (quoted from *Mālavikāgnimitra*, ed. Shankar Pandurang Pandit, Bombay, 1889). Here the composition by a certain Śarmīsthā is mentioned, apparently, it might be argued, as a particular example of such a type of play, namely one in which the verses, or rather songs, are all in a moderate tempo (*layamadyā*). A comparison of the *catuspadā* (or *catuspadī*) with the *dvīpadī* in the first act of *Harṣa Ratnāvalī* would show that a *catuspadā* consists of four verses (*vastukas*) followed by a refrain (*dhruvaka*). Accordingly, *caturthavastunaḥ/ caturthavastukam* should be translated as "its fourth *vastuka*,"

not as “sa quatrième partie.”

As pointed out above, the book under review is basically a study of technical terms. I regret to say that in this respect its conclusions are not always felicitous. At the same time, the book is also a comprehensive study of the contents of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, correcting many interpretations and setting things in their proper perspective. In this connection I may refer to Bansat-Boudon’s treatment of the so-called *lāsyāṅga* as mini-scenes, or the preliminaries, as a theatrical spectacle in their own right.

Moreover, as a rare contribution to our understanding of the actual performance of Sanskrit plays, the book has the great merit of placing for the first time the *sāmānyābhinaya* at the center of our attention. Even if one need not agree with every aspect of the author’s interpretation of it—her relegation of the definition given in the *Nāṭakalakṣaṇakośa* to a mere note is, as far as I can see, a missed opportunity, as is her forced interpretation of the term *bhāvikā*—the importance of this all-encompassing mode of acting to the performance is made abundantly clear.

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EICHINGER FERRO-LUZZI, GABRIELLA. *The Taste of Laughter: Aspects of Tamil Humor*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992. xx + 218 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index, glossary. Paper DM76.00; ISBN 3-447-03195-6.

Gabriella Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi’s work is more than just a taste of Tamil humor: it is a many-course meal, the appreciation of which cannot be determined simply by the number of dishes offered. A great variety of humorous works in the southern Indian Tamil language have been considered and aspects of Tamil humor minutely categorized. Jokes have been differentiated in terms of their relationship with language, reason, and the subject matter. They are further broken into many subcategories, ranging in subject from double-meaning word-play to phonological jokes, from logic to absurdities of reason, and from food to cinema. Similarly, humorous works of Tamil literature are divided according to authors and themes, and are discussed under many subdivisions, reflecting the wide variety of themes and perspectives. Tamil folk humor is also discussed under comparable categories of language and subject matter, and under the unique category of “didactic intent.”

The author set out a threefold objective for the work: 1) to give an “ethnographic” study; 2) to establish a “polythetic-prototype” approach in opposition to essentialist theories of humor; 3) to offer a comparative study of Western and Tamil humor, and of Tamil folk and non-folk humor.

The author has fulfilled her first aim by documenting numerous jokes, tales, and other materials and by categorizing each one. However, as the author feared, the Introduction to the book and lengthy explanations did reduce the comic potential of the jokes. Innumerable instances are cited and explained, and yet the larger context of their genesis and existence remains unspecified. There is, for example, no way in which a reader can understand how popular the cited humorous works of literature are, or to what section of society they communicate with best, or even what makes them pleasurable for those who read and write them.

Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi is thorough in her discussion of the theories of humor and in elaborating her approach. Her obsessive involvement with theoretical formulation, however, reduces the material to a sheer elaboration of postulates. Instances are cited not to lead to fur-