

Unique Features of Ankia Nata

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1. Introduction

Sankardeva was an Assamese icon in the medieval period. He was a saint who established the Neo-Vaishnavite movement or EkaSaranaHariNama Dharma in Assam. To establish his religious doctrine he had created so many unique literary and culturally important equipment which makes Assamese culture rich and unique. He created a new Assamese dramatic tradition in fifteenth century A.D. Before his dramatic creation there was no any witness of dramatic work in Assam. There are many folk-drama like putalaNach (dance of puppet), ojalali etc before him. He also travelled many places of Northern India in middle period of his life. From this tour Sankardeva earned many experience to developed his doctrine through literary and culturally.

With his pilgrimage experience and collected resource from folk-drama which are already performs in Assam, he generated the theatre form of his own. He named his theatre form like leela, leela-yatra, nata, anka. But he never ever used AnkiaNata to introduce his theatre form. He composed six play namely PatniPrasada, Kali Damana, KeliGopala, RukminiHarana, ParijataHarana. All are full-fledge plays which are mention above. Besides this six plays he performed another drama where no any dramatic dialogue. It is like a modern dance-drama. The name of the drama is Chihna-yatra. Chihna-yatra is placed as canvas where he drawn seven place of God (seven vaikuntha). The canvas which is made by him it is known as vrindabanivastra which is now preserved in British museum of London.

2. Characteristics of Sankari Theatre

Some unique characteristic have Sankari theatre or AnkiaBhaona. They can be mentioned as follows:

- 1) There is no any act division in Sankari plays.
- 2) It is performed generally in night in Namghar (traditional institution which is designed by Sankardeva). It is an open dice. Actor and actress are performed their activity between two sides of audience.
- 3) Vital role is played by Sutradhara. Sutradhara is the narrator of the drama. There is no any permission to any actor to be entrance or exit or throwing dialogue in acting place or dice (Mancha) without narrating by the Sutradhara. Sutradhara is the all in all in AnkiaBhaona.
- 4) Use of Brajawali language: Sankardeva use Brajawali language in his plays. He uses it in character's dialogue and songs. Brajawali is a language which is made by him. Somebody says that the Brajawali language is use in Northern India.
- 5) Use of rhythmic prose in dialogue and narrating.
- 6) Available uses of songs and sloka (Sanskrit verse).
- 7) Use of dance.
- 8) Use of traditional musical instruments like khol, tal, doba etc.

- 9) Use of traditional light system. Nine lights (lights made by soil and put mustard oil as fuel) are used in gate where the actor and actress are enters to the dice. It is the sign of nine main types of Bhakti (devotion).

Function of Sutradhara: There are many function of Sutradhara. They are –

- a) Conveyer devotion to lord Krishna with dance and music,
- b) announce of the name of theatre,
- c) Sutradhar introduce the dramatic characters and there function,
- d) explain the additional story which are not performed by actor/actress,
- e) lastly, he performed the good-salvation ode(Mukti-mangalBhatima),
- f) during the play he take a chance to motivate the audience (savasada) to chanting the name of God.

3. Conclusion

Sankardeva wrote and performed drama to published and established his religious doctrine though literary and culturally. AnkiaNata is a result of his religious thought. In his drama he experiments his various idea to dramatic literature. And it made difference among his drama. To motivates chanting the name of almighty by the audience. And they get the Mokshya (like catharsis). From this discussion we can find the uniqueness of Sankari drama and its procedure of perform than other dramatic creation like Shakespearian and other.

References

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