



## JAKKADI

---

**JAKKADI**, a dance style performed by Persian women, as documented in Sanskrit treatises of the 16th and 17th centuries. Jakkadi was introduced to the Mughal courts of India by Persian female dancers (Bose, 1970, p. 148).

The earliest source that refers to Jakkadi is the *Nartananirnaya*, the Sanskrit treatise written by Pandrika Vitthala, a scholar who described many styles of dance performed in Akbar's court in India between 1562 and 1576 (Sathyanarayana, I, p. 16). Vitthala describes Jakkadi as a dance performed by Persian female dancers while holding the edges of their garments and singing songs in Persian language accompanied by gestures. According to Vitthala, Jakkadi, an effortless dance with soft or no movements of the limbs, was beloved by the Persians (Sathyanarayana, III, pp. 165-67). Vitthala's description of Jakkadi is accompanied by technical terms that have not yet been deciphered by dance researchers and musicologists (Bose, 2001, p. 59).

*Sangitadarpana*, a 17th-century treatise on music and dance written by Damodara, also contains a description of Jakkadi, which is also mentioned as Jakkari (Bose, 1991, p. 90). Damodara was a poet at the court of Jahangir (1569-1627) and his description agrees with that of the *Nartananirnaya* (Bose, 1970, p. 163).

The influence of Persian arts on different art forms such as calligraphy, painting, music, and dance in Mughal India has been examined by various scholars (Bose, 1999; Walker 2004; Banerji; Soucek). Some researchers consider Jakkadi as the early ancestor of Kathak, an Indian style of dance



(Bose, 2001, p. 55) while others emphasize that Kathak in its early days was formed under Persian influence (Walker, p. 227). The arguments are based on Vitthala's statement and comparison of movements and gestures between Jakkadi and Kathak (Bose, 2001, pp. 60-61).

There are few sources and writings on the history of Persian dance (Āmeri; Shay; Dokā). Jakkadi is a rare example of a Persian dance style as recorded by a scholar at the time it was being performed more than four centuries ago.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Ā. Āmeri, "Raḡṣ-e āmiyāna-ye šahri va raḡṣ-e mowsum be kelāsik-e Irāni: barrasi-ye taṭbiqi dar ḡawza-ye Tehrān," *Mahoor Music Quarterly* 5/20, Summer 2003, pp. 51-74.

M. Bose, *Movement and Mimesis: The Idea of Dance in the Sanskritic Tradition*, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1991.

Idem, *Classical Indian Dancing: A Glossary*, Calcutta, 1970.

Idem, "Dance at the Crossroads: An Early Source of Kathak" in P. K. Mishra, ed., *Studies in Hindu and Buddhist Art*, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 261-75.

Idem, *Speaking of Dance: The Indian Critique*, New Delhi, 2001, esp. chapter 5, "Nartnanirnaya: An Early Textual Source of Kathak," pp. 51-63.

P. Banerji, *Kathak Dance Through the Ages*, New Delhi, 1982.

R. Sathyanarayana, ed., *Nartananirnaya of Pandarika Vitthala*, 3 vols, New Delhi, 1994.

A. Shay, "Raḡṣ-e Irāni: Moruri danešvarāna bar masā'el-e pajuheši," (tr. Natalie Choubinah), *Mahoor Music Quarterly* 7/28, Summer 2005, pp. 9-25.

P. Soucek, "Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformations,"

*Muqarnas* 4, 1987, pp. 166-81.

E. M. Walker, “Kathak Dance: A Critical History,” Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2004.

Y. D̄okā’, “Tāriḳ-e raq̄ṣ dar Irān,” *Honar va Mardom*, 1978, no. 188, pp. 2-12; nos. 189-90, pp. 2-7; nos. 191-92, pp. 38-41; no. 193, pp. 22-28.

Originally published July 24, 2010.