

Holding on to the Reins of Art-connectivity

Guidance Under

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The Vishnudharmottara Purana or the Vishnudharmottara (as it has been alluded) is a later addition or a supplement to the Vishnu-purana. The general idea of it being a later inclusion into Vishnu Purana is basically accepted by the today's population. Vishnudharmottara Purana, one of the most established known text on arts, is dated around 6th century AD. This was said to be the age of the Guptas, frequently depicted as the "Golden Age of Indian Arts". Nonetheless, its author remains ambiguous as is the case with most of the Indian texts whose writers are unknown to the world. It follows the customary example of approaching the different components of a subject through discussions that occur between a learned Master and a fervent aspirant who is anxious to learn and comprehend.

The Second Chapter of the Third Khanda of the VDP expounds the subject of inter-connection of the Fine Arts and strikingly makes sense of its synergistic nature. It explains about the topics of architecture, sculpture, painting, dancing and music, the fundamental subjects of Fine Arts in an extremely far reaching and deliberate way that one can call it an end product or work of Fine Arts of the India of yore.

Chitrasutra is that piece of the Vishnudharmottara which details about the art of painting. Its compiler described it as "the legacy of the collective wisdom of the finest minds". Making sense of why he took up the aggregation, he said he was incited by his anxiety for the people in the future; for their edification, pleasure and personal satisfaction. He said it was his firm conviction that paintings are the best fortunes of human kind as they have the potential and competency to impact the personalities and lives of the watchers usefully.

The view that the arts belong to the domain of the sacred and that there is a connection between them is given most clearly in Chitrasutra which employs the pretext of a conversation between Sage Markandeya and King Vajra who seeks knowledge about image making (shilpa). A quasi-Socratic dialogue between the two follows which stresses on the fact that to master the art of sculpting one must first learn painting, dance, playing of instruments and vocal music.

At the point when Vajra seeks help from Markandeya about how to make the portrayal of a Supreme Being who is sense structure, smell and feeling; and deprived of any sound and touch, so the picture may inevitably represent the God, the latter replies that he who doesn't have the foggiest idea about the standards of Chitrasutra can't grasp Sculpture and Iconography (Pratima Lakshanam).

**चित्रसूत्रं न जानाति यस्तु सम्य नराधिप।
प्रतिमालक्षणां वेत्तुं न शक्यं तेन कर्हिचि॥**

(VDP, III.2.2)

Markandeya articulates that the whole universe ought to be perceived as the modification (vikriti) of the formless (prakriti). The veneration and reflection of the preeminent is workable for a common man just when the undefined is blessed with a structure; and that structure needs to be brimming with importance. Remembering and meditating the Supreme Being with eyes closed in prayer is considered to be one of the best form of worshipping him.

This leads us to be inspired through every phase of life; whatever circumstances we deal with, it results in being motivated for our well-being to bring out creative expressions in full measure. In some other reference, Chitrasutra delineates that an artist should take the help of his surroundings and nature to seek inspiration and gain insight. Furthermore, in order to communicate our feelings and emotions properly on a canvas, the message proposes that painter ought to take the guide of Natya, on the grounds that comprehension of natya is mandatory to become a great artist.

Hence, Markandeya states that without proper understanding of Nritta-Shastra (Theory of Dance), Chitra-Sutra cannot be understood as in both these Fine Arts worldly phenomena are imitated; one does it through colour and the other does it through movement.

**विना तु नृत्तशास्त्रेणा चित्रसूत्रं सुदुर्विदम्।
जगतोऽनुक्रिया कार्या द्वयोरपि यतो नृपा॥**

(VDP, III.2.4)

Moving further, Markandeya states that it is necessary to acquaint with Instrumental Music (Atodya) in order to understand Nritya, and to learn Gita (Theory of Musical Composition) i.e. singing to understand Instrumental Music. One who knows Gita-Shastra is the best of the men who knows everything.

Substantially, Vajra questions about the basic constituents of vocal music to which he is suggested to recite the prose and verse, of poetry and lyrics. Thereafter, begins the King's first lecture in the artistry of words.

What's more, gradually, it occurs to him that to dominate one fine art is to develop mindfulness in regards to another work of art, thus developing the skills of yet another art form and so forth. At its breaking point, says Markandeya, that cultivating skills for painting definitely leads to gaining knack and expertise for developing inclination and ability for 'sculpture, dance, instrumental and vocal music, song composition, prose, poetry, literature, language, grammar, logic, aesthetics, theatrical arts and even theatre-architecture'.

This discussion, presently to a great extent neglected, discusses a disposition towards aesthetics that was less keen on heading to look for the pith of art sustainability. And on second thought it tried to polish the interconnectedness of all these artistic fields. Going with this idea any art form, then, at its initial point, contains not only itself, yet it additionally subsumes, stows away and uncovers in its entirety the expressive conceivable outcomes contained in all other creative articulations.

To put it in simple words, it can be said that:

- One not knowing the laws of painting (Chitra) can never succeed in comprehending the laws of image-making (Shilpa).
- Not having knowledge of the technique of dance (Nritya) renders one unable to grasp the canons of painting.
- Without a thorough knowledge of the laws of instrumental music (Vadya) it is not possible to learn the skills of dance.
- Last but not the least, a deep knowledge of the art of vocal music (Gana) is indeed needed to grasp the essence of playing instruments.

Highlighting the inter-relationship of all these art forms plausibly leads to the conclusion that Music (Singing) is the base of all of them. Harnessing the skills of vocal music is a must to master the above mentioned arts.

Subsequently, the VDP underlines the inter-connectivity or the association between two artistic expressions: Nritya and Chitra. Dance, the Performing Art, is implied by Nritya. By Chitra, both the Plastic Arts (the two-layered craft of Painting and the three-layered speciality of Sculpture) are signified.

Whatever is endorsed for Nritya is similarly material to Chitra as both mimic the rhythm or Chhandas or the universal aspects in our nature. Both the art forms showcase the movement of eyes, lips and our various limbs; portray Bhava and Rasa (feelings) and the different Mudras (stances) in their creation. Similar rules are used in administering the practice of both these disciplines of Fine Arts. They cooperate to introduce an incomparable picture - the parama chitra. In fact, Nritya is said to be Chitra, par excellence.

The major point of difference between them is marked by the usage of time and space in their presentation. While the former, i.e. Nritya is counted through Tala and Laya because of its relation to Kala (time), the latter i.e. Chitra is measured through Rupa and Mana-Pramana because of its relation to Dik (space).

The sculptures that go into a temple, the dance and music performed there, and the paintings that hang on its walls are all works of art in their own right. You never know, but it's possible that dancing, painting, and sculpture are the visual equivalents of every element that makes up poetry and, by extension, music, including metre, rhyme, rhythm, tune, and melody.

The Arts work as a unit. Like humans should, they collaborate with one another in their work. In actuality, they enhance each other and each aesthetic experience.

A sculptress needs to have drawing skills. To give life to the canvas, a sketch artist must be inspired by dance movements. To add structure to her steps and pauses, a dancer needs to sing and be familiar with her music. Additionally, a performing artist needs to understand the fundamentals of literature because words are used to create meaning in compositions.

When you start to take them all in, you'll see that their combined ability to stir and inspire goes beyond what is actually possible.

The goal of the Indian arts is first identified by the nature of their relationships with one another. Indian sculpture and painting encapsulate in plastic form the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads, the fables of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and other works of literature, as well as the visual presentation of Indian

theatre (natya) and dancing. The figures of Indian sculpture and painting are the gods of Indian literature and dance. They are cosmic creatures, manifestations of an abstract concept with deep psychic meaning, and the human form is the means by which this soul condition is communicated. The human form serves as the vehicle for expression in both sculpture and dance, and everything about the figure—the face, the hands, the position of the limbs, the pose and turn of the body—must be imbued with inner meaning. This allows the basic idea to be expressed while suppressing anything that would place too much emphasis on the purely physical or sensual aspect.

The aim of the arts is not merely physical or emotional beauty; rather, it presents the human form as a symbol capable of conjuring up states of being. The canons establish the laws and guidelines by which each component of the human form can be used to conjure up these states using the plastic medium and the language of movement. Every figure in Indian sculpture is therefore very significant, just as every position and motion in Indian dancing, and each figure has a unique evocative character. It provides forth the guidelines by which the universal and cosmic might be portrayed through an individual representation, which can in turn imply the divine and the cosmic. Technique is the methodology by which the artist can express this spirit in form, the soul in body.

The link between sculpting, painting, dance, and singing may thus be examined from a variety of perspectives. It can be analysed from the standpoint of their shared use of the same strategy, similarity of content, parallelism of approach, or unity of aim harbouring stronger relations.

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