

The Influence of Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra in Sri Lankan Rituals - Sabaragamuwa Pahan Madu

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ABSTRACT

From ancient times, rituals which have been held by the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, such as *bali*, *thovil* and *madu*, can be characterized under three regional dance traditions; namely, Up-country, Low-country and Sabaragamu. Although the practices adopted with regard to conducting these rituals differ from region to region and community to community, they are conducted as a clinical intervention or therapy. All these rituals include traditional drama or dramatic presentation. According to the literature a ritual "is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and performed according to set sequence. The aim of this research was to investigate the influence of Bharat Muni in Pahan madu curative rituals, i.e. Shanthikarma. The methodology involved in this research was qualitative. Data was gathered using primary and secondary evidence. Finally, based on the research, the following conclusions were yielded. It was identified that in the Sri Lankan Sabaragamu dance tradition the Pahan Madu curative ritual categorization which are similar to *Nrutha*, *Nruthya*, and *Naatya* as demonstrated in the Natya Shasthra written by the Indian theatrologist and musicologist Bharatha Muni during the first century. The Sabaragamuwa Pahan Madu performance arena preparations follow the same prerequisites for the theatre mentioned by Bharatha Muni in the Natya Shasthra. The four main parts of abhinaya presented in Natya Shasthra are also depicted by the actors performing in the Pahan Madu ritual. Even though the Pahan Madu ritual demonstrates influences of Bharathamuni's Natya Shasthra, some of its characteristics have been replaced due to the effects of Buddhist culture.

Keywords: - Bharatha Muni, Rituals, Sabaragamu Pahan Madu, Sri Lanka