

Making of Shriradha

Yes, you can say it as a perfect coincidence. I don't believe myself when we are performing the odissi dance ballet "Shriradha" at Dwarika, my dream project. It is organized by the state youth and cultural department, govt. of Gujarat.

I want to share my journey with this dance drama. 4th feb 2005, Dr Urmila Jani , wife of Shri Balvant bhai Jani had presented this book " Shriradha " , when I have gone to their house to gift my first book " Bharatiya nrutya". That time I did not realize that something great will happen with this book. I just put that book in my library and forgot it.

In 2006 Dec-23 I am yet to start my travel to Odisha to attend the 3rd Odissi International Festival at Bhubaneswar organized by IPAP USA. I was searching for a book to take it with me to read during the travel. Suddenly this book "Shriradha" was in my hand. During the entire travel I read this Gujarati version of "Shriradha" which is translated from original Odiya book by Shri Ramakant Ratha. I read it several times and then at last cried when my train about to reach at Bhubaneswar.

After reaching Bhubaneswar I first tried to find out the Tel no of Shri Ramakanta Ratha and finally called him. I gave my introduction and had a brief conversation with him about this book. He told me to read the Odiya Version. Yes. I got both theodiya and Hindi Version and read it.

After returning to Rajkot I tried to compose this Gujarati poems to fit in Odissi Music. All are in vain. I approached so many musicians in Rajkot. Someone told me to rewrite it in meter of music.

In 2009 I shifted to Ahmedabad. There also I approached to some musicians. In Jan 2012 I gave the X-rox copy of the poems to Shri Kirit bhai Rajpara. 6 months passed. Suddenly I got one Idea. The poem can be recited as it is. Then some songs can be fit into it with same bhavas of the poem. I had some sittings with Kirit Bhai at Porbander and finally the music is done in Dec 2013.

During these long period I have read Shriradha so many (countless) times. I really engrossed with the feeling of Radha. Sometimes I called Shri Ramakant Ratha to discuss about Shriradha. By this time I feel the book Shriradha and the author close to my heart.

Almost 8 years with this book and it is always my bedside. So you can understand how much love with this book I have. Recently I had a talk with Shri Rath. He told me that he had actually not written this book, he feel that someone detected the whole book. He had just done the work of a stenographer. It is a long journey with Radha. Sometimes I feel like Radha and cried. It is a book with 61 poems. I choose only eight poems. It was a difficult task rather impossible task to choose because I like each and every poems so much. Somehow I managed to do the script work. I have also met Dr Balvant bhai Jani and take his inputs.

After the script work the work of music composition begins. I want to add some touch of haveli Sangeet. So two songs are taken, one for the sequence of Birth of Krishna and another for Maharasa., in Rag Bhairavi. For the " Nauka Vihar" Prasang the song is ' Radha Madhav Bhet Bhai ' which is in Rag Khamaj. For the sequence that Gopis are coming to Krishna on hearing the flute music, the song is "madhubaname" set in Raga Madhuvanti. The poem no 42 in Odiya version is set to traditional tune of Odissi Music. One odiya song "Dekha saho rahi go" in sequence of Kansa. From Geetagovinda "Sakhihe" in the sequence of first meeting of Krishna and Radha. So all total I have tried to blend the music of Odissi, Haveli and Hindusthani music.

Shri Vikash parikh, the student of Pandit Yashraj sang 4 songs where as Smt Saswati sang the Odiya song. Flute by Sanjeev Dhareya, violin by Prem Kiran, Sitar by Mehmood Khan Saheb, precussion by Jobi and Pravin bhai. All over music is arranged by Shri Kirit Rajpara. I owe to all of them for the great music. I also extend my thanks to Prathmesh bhai for the sound recording.

Then start the phase of character selection. I had in my mind "Archita" for the Krishna character. She has the face of Krishna, most important she is a very sincere and devoted student. There are 3 Sakhis which Satyapriya, kundani and Shivali plays. Other characters like Gopas and Gopis are played by Sucharita, Kokila, Paulami and Mahek. The choreograph work is done within 10 days. I feel bit relaxed because it was a challenge for me. The songs are not pure Odissi. I have to set the dance in pure odissi form. Somehow I managed to do this simultaneously with the choreography the students are also learning the steps. The most important thing the voice over of all poems are done by Falguni Shah. It is a great work. We have done all the announcements in Hindi and all the poems in Gujarati, basically for the Guju public.

By 15th January everything is completed and the dance ballet is ready. Then the work of Anga Sudhi and facial expression i.e, Bhaba and Rasa begin. I told to the students, they should lift themselves beyond my instruction and engrossed with the characters, they are playing. All are matured. So they understand and perfectly do all these corrections.

The D-day come. We reached Dwarika, the land of lord Krishna early morning on 30th Jan. After finishing our breakfast we directly reached the stage. It is really marvelous. Everybody were so happy on seeing the stage. Our light person Vimal bhai also reached their earlier. So our first work is to rehearsal and make the technical person understood the whole script.

After that work over, we had visited Dwarika temple and have a nice Darshan of Dwarakadhish. Then we have visited 'Nageswar" one of Dwadash Jyotirlinga. Then we took lunch and rest. After that everybody started make up. Our item started at 9.50 pm. When we are performing on stage some divine power is there. We all are totally engrossed with "Shriradha". Appreciation comes but most important we enjoyed a lot. So my dream project is performed at a huge stage.

My heartfelt thanks to all my students, Youth and cultural department govt of Gujarat, Padmabhusan Ramakanta Ratha, Dr Urmila jani and all my dear and near one. *Jay Dwarkadhish.*

Guru Smt Suprava Mishra