

ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE
GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE WORLD DANCE FESTIVAL
AT THILLAI NATYANJALI TRUST, CHIDAMBARAM ON 17.02.2018
AT 08.00 P.M.

Anaivarukum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru S.V. Navamani Deekshithar
President

Thiru S. Rajaganapathi Deekshithar
Sabanayagar Koil Secretary

Thiru Jaya. Natraja Murthy Deekshithar
Treasurer

Thiru R. Thangaraju Deekshithar

Thiru S.Sivasankara Deekshithar
Vice President

Dignitaries on the Dais

Distinguished Invitees

Friends from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me joy and great inner satisfaction to be here as a devotee of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram and to utilize the occasion of my visit for presiding over the Valedictory Function of the Natyanjali Festival.

The Natyanjali Festival is celebrated on the occasion of Maha Sivarathri every year at this temple of Thillai Nataraja, where Lord Siva is seen performing the cosmic dance. The offering being made to him ^{at this festival} is also in the form of dance and hence the name Natyanjali. It is therefore no wonder that dancers from all over the world ^{who practise} [redacted]

various classical Indian dance forms gather at Chidambaram to make their offering to the deity on this auspicious occasion.

Life in Chidambaram revolves around the temple. The name of the town Chidambaram is derived from the word 'chit', which means consciousness and the word 'ambaram', which means ether. Devotees of Lord Siva believe that Nataraja is the manifestation of Lord Siva representing the element of ether. Similarly there are other special locations where Lord Siva manifests himself to represent a particular element of nature such as

Thiruvannamalai for the fire element, Sri
Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh for the wind
element, Thiruvaanaikkaval in Trichy District
for the element of water and
Ekambareswarar Temple in Kancheepuram
District for the element of earth.

The present temple was built in the 10th
century by the Chola dynasty and even by
conservative calculations it is more than
1000 years old. The temple has been
designed to represent the human system in
a scientific manner. The main shrine is
covered by 21600 tiles of golden hue, which
is equal to the number of times a human

being inhales and exhales in a day. The 'viman' of the temple has 9 'kalash' which stand for the 'navadwaras', the nine openings of the human body. The 'kanaka sabha' represents the important systems of the human body such as the respiratory system, nervous system, circulatory system, etc. and the cosmic dance represents the heartbeat of the living organism. In a capsule, the temple represents the universe as a whole.

Lord Nataraja is also known in Tamil as the 'Sabesan', which means 'sabaiyil aadum eesan'. Thus dance takes centre-stage as

far as the Chidambaram Temple is concerned. It is therefore most apt and appropriate that the various dance forms are dedicated to the Lord during the Natyanjali festival.

Bharatanatyam traces its origins to the Natya Shastra of Bharata Muni and also finds a mention in the ancient Tamil epic Silappathikaram. This dance form is generally used as a medium for narration of legends and ideas from the Hindu texts and scriptures.

Kuchipudi derives its name from the village named Kuchipudi and has its roots

again in the Natya Shastra. It is believed that Tirtha Narayana Yati, a sanyasi of the ~~Advaita~~ Advaita persuasion and his disciple systematised the modern version of Kuchipudi in the 17th century.

Kathakali is a dance form which is in the "story play" genre of art. It is specially known for the elaborate and colourful costumes and face masks. It has its roots in the religious drama tradition of Kerala. But it also incorporates movements from the martial arts and athletic traditions.

Kathak is derived from the Sanskrit word katha, which means story and is meant to

communicate stories from the epics and Hindu texts through dance, songs and music. The Kathak tradition evolved in Jaipur, Banaras and Lucknow and the dance form emphasises rhythmic foot movements.

Odissi is a classical dance that originated in Odisha and expresses stories and ideas of Vaishnavism, particularly of Lord Jagannath. The roots of Odissi can also be traced to the Natya Shastra. The art form is generally in the dance-drama genre. The special feature of Odissi is that the performance repertoire includes nritta,

nritya and natya like Bharathanatyam
and
↳ also moksha, which talks about spiritual
release.

Manipuri originated in Manipur and it is also known as Jagoi. It is particularly known for its Vaishnavite themes focused on Radha Krishna. The roots of Manipuri can also be traced to Natya Shastra, but it has influences from South East Asia, Central Asia and Siberia. The Manipuri dance is generally a team performance and is accompanied by devotional music.

All the six dance forms that I have mentioned have the central theme of

propagating spiritual ideas and stories from the ancient texts. The music is divine and all the performers are intimately linked with the Creator.

The offering of all these dance forms at the altar of the supreme deity in Chidambaram is the purpose of the Natyanjali festival. Lord Nataraja, who balances the universe through his cosmic dance is the ultimate guru for all the dancers and artists. Hence he is propitiated at the beginning of every dance performance.

Indian dance forms are a treat to watch. They benefit the dancer and the audience

and bring both close to ~~the~~ God. The greatness of Indian culture lies in its ability to draw the people away from the mundane interests and towards elevated thought processes. Hence we have ^{had} thinkers, philosophers and spiritual leaders ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ Indian society, ~~who~~ who served as beacons of light for the whole world.

Every part of the world has its own special characteristics and greatness. Punctuality for the Germans, teamwork for the Japanese, etiquette for the British, salesmanship for the Americans are special ^{qualities} that are ~~attributed~~ ^{attributed} to people of these

regions. Similarly, spirituality is a special virtue for India. Spirituality is based on tolerance. Spirituality is based on acceptance of other people's ideas. Spirituality is based on moving society towards a goal that goes beyond the self.

When a society thinks of its people in general and their wellbeing, that is when a civilisation flourishes. No wonder the Indian civilisation has flourished for thousands and thousands of years.

I am happy to be a part of this festival which enriches and promotes Indian culture and I am thankful to the organisers for

having taken special efforts for staging the Natyanjali festival at the Thillai Nataraja Temple unflinching every year. They deserve my highest appreciation and praise. I wish them all success in their endeavours.

Nandri

Vanakkam

Jai Hind

Jai Tamil Nadu