

## The Dramatic Art

by F.G. Natesa Iyer

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*In this unedited reprint of a paper read before the All-India Oriental Conference - Hyderabad Session (date unknown), Natesa Iyer highlights the importance of Drama in human civilization and the India's rich theatre traditions with special reference to Kalidasa and Sakuntala. He pleads for drama to be recognised as an essential curriculum in education at the University level. A footnote to the book states, 'Since this was written, India has attained Independence, and it is a matter for gratification that the Central Government are alive to their responsibility for the development of art and have established an institution called the academy of Dance, Drama and Music through which they are making endeavors to revive, and maintain and further the cause of Indian Renaissance in all desirable ways and directions.'*

Drama is one of the most ancient of arts, in the civilized world. It is a primitive instinct in man, to express outwardly, by action and representation, the impressions he has received from a study and observation of the life around him, the emotions he has felt and his own reaction to them. Man is imitative by nature and nothing gives him greater pleasure than the exercise of this faculty. The child is at its best when it imitates the animals with which it comes in contact—the dog, the monkey, the cow, the calf, the elephant, the parrot, the crow, the cock, and so forth. It enjoys playing the papa, the mama, grandpa, granny, the priest or the soldier and it entertains those around by its mimicry. The adult and the grown-up folk continue the work, only in a more solid and serious manner. Aristotle has said, "Imitation is natural to man from childhood one of the advantages being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation." Thus out of this crude material, drama has arisen and taken shape and grown from low beginnings to the highest form of action and entertainment embracing in its scope the whole field of art-music, dance, painting and decoration. Drama is thus the art of expression by action.

Drama holds the attention of the multitude by its fascinating charm as no other art does. It draws to it not only the cultured, the educated and the man of taste, but also everyone, lettered and unlettered, the man with education and of no education. The educated man gets better education. He finds in the Drama a treasure-house from which he can draw riches of the greatest variety such as he has not dreamt before, new ideas, new interpretations, new ways of approach, elucidation of doubtful points, enlargement of the scope of human possibilities, the unfolding of the mysteries of cause and effect, the general plan of life as it was laid out in actual life and grim working of the Hand of Destiny-clear, precise, and pitiless in its operation. The unlettered masses and uneducated classes find in Drama the sole means of obtaining entertainment combined with instruction. Through the Drama, they learn without the medium of books, classes, teachers

and long years of toil, all that they should know about religion, about morals, about men and women, about religion, about the motives that betray most of them into actions which, in the end, drown them into abysmal depths of misery, they also learn about the ways of those others who hold aloft the banner of right conduct (Dharma) under all circumstances, regardless of the taunts and persecutions to which they are subjected, and they learn about the secret of their strength, and the slow but sure reward that awaits the just.

All enjoy the drama. It can truly be said of this art that, like mercy,

“.....it is twice blessed,”

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes

“Tis mightiest in the mightiest”.

He who plays his part in the Drama is blessed, because it enriches his knowledge, enlarges his vision, broadens his mind and sharpens his intellect. It initiates him into the mysteries of life, of creation, of nature, and of the deep emotions and passions that stir humanity and make and unmake the world, year after year, period after period; century after century; and it enables him to live all those events in his own stage-life and experience their thrills. He learns the lessons they convey, and has a grand opportunity to benefit by them, in his own life. The actor is forced, if he is to succeed in his part, to dive into the literature of the piece in which he is to act, study the history, the usage, habits and customs, the costumes, the architecture, and other distinguishing features of the age or period, in which the play is cast. This makes him versatile. He gains an all-round knowledge such as a mere student can never hope to get by the study of the class lessons.

The “Drama”, gives him an intimate and inside knowledge of humanity, and makes him stand on his guard. This knowledge gives him courage and instills self-confidence in him. He is no more a shy, hesitant, confused and dependent soul. He can face anybody, and any situation. He can be a leader of thought and society. The player is therefore truly blessed. The public, who form the audience, are equally blessed because, with less trouble they also gain in knowledge, and share with the player, the several benefits that Drama bestows on him. Drama, is thus all-comprehensive.

#### ***Wilson on Dramatic Art***

That great oriental scholar and savant, H.H. Wilson, in his monumental work “Theatre of the Hindus” published from the original Sanskrit, says:

“Particular branches of composition may be preferably cultivated for the due understanding of each of the varied subjects like, Philology, literature, arts and sciences, but there is no one species which will be found to embrace as many purposes as the Dramatic. The dialogue varies from simple to elaborate, from the conversation of ordinary life, to the highest refinement of poetical taste.

The illustrations are drawn from every known product of art, as well as every observable phenomenon of nature. The manners and feelings of the people are

delineated, living and breathing before use, and history and religion furnish the most and interesting topics to the bard. Wherever, therefore, there exists dramatic literature, it must be pre-eminently entitled to, the attention of the philosopher as well as the philologist, of the man of general literary taste, as well as the professional scholar”.

The theatre of the Hindus-Rangabhumi, is held as a sacred institution, and worshipped by the devotees of the Dramatic art; so great it is by reason of its character, its power and its capacity to educate, entertain and instruct. The actors tread the stage, with fear and respect, trembling with fear lest, they should prove unworthy of the great part, they are to play. The director, before the beginning of each performance, recites benefactory verses (Nandi Sloka), invoking the blessings of God and prays to Him, to remove all obstacles and grant a smooth passage to the play, and also prays for a good audience (Sadas), discriminating and wise, who will eschew the bad and take in the good only, even as the proverbial “Hamsa’ bird which, when it has placed before it a bowl containing milk mixed with water, will separate the milk from the water drink the milk only, and leave the water untouched! The greatest star, in the European Dramatic firmament of the 16th Century, Shakespeare, of whom it is truly said, “he was the greatest and best interpreter of human nature, the Poet of the widest sympathies, of the most delicate perception, of the profoundest knowledge of mankind, a greater sculptor than the Phidias, a truer painter than Raphael,” and, “who twines round our affections and satisfies our souls and lives in our hearts, in a manner that cannot be said of, even Homer, Dante, and Milton” — has, in his magnificent analysis of human life, compared the world to the stage:

“All the world’s a stage.  
And all the men and women only players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

He says, that the players are “the abstract and brief chronicles of the time”, whose noble function is “to hold as it were the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image and the very age and body of the time and pressure.

***Bhartrihari the first to say so***

Before him, Bhartrihar, the renowned Royal-saint, Scholar and poet of the Vikramadityan Era, has said:

Kshanam Baalo Bhruthvaa Kshanamapi Yuvo Kaama Rasikah:  
Kshanam Virthehe: Heenah Kshamapi cha Sampoorana Vibhavah:  
    Jaraa Jeennai Rangaihi: Nata Iva Vali Mandita Tanuhu  
    Nara: Samsaaraante Vishati Yamadhaani Yavanikaam!!

Trans: “Now a child, and then a youth of erotic ways, a destitute now for a while and then in abundance, just like an actor man, at the end of his rule-when

diseased in all limbs by age and wrinkled all over the body-makes his exit from behind the scene that veils the abode of Yama (death)”

### *The Drama in India, China, Greece and Rome*

From time immemorial, down to the present day, inspite of many vicisstitudes, Drama, in some form or another, has held undisputed sway over the minds of people, in all parts of the world. Especially so, it is the case in India, whose glorious past goes beyond the deep impenetrable Yugas, and whose culture and civilization and achievements in regions of Philosophy, religion, art, literature, drama, dance and music, reached the height of perfection, long before the rest of the world rose, out of their barbaric existence and egan their infancy in civilization. The Chinese rank, as the next great people in the East in the dramatic field with a tradition tracing back to the 18th Century B.C.

In ancient Greece, the dramatic form of entertainment began to develop only about 650 B.C. And Rome followed Greece. But there was no real European Drama, in the strict sense before the 14th or 15th Century A.D., a time which synchronises with the beginning of the decline of the Hindu Drama after reaching the Himalayan heights. The Persians, Arabs and Egyptians did not develop any Drama worth the name; and Mohammedan literature has eschewed all theatricals as perhaps, foreign to the religion of the prophet.

But as far as one can see, Drama in any part of the world has had its origin in the celebrations connected with the rituals of religion. The community as a whole took part in these celebrations and selected persons, interpreted the various forms of the ritual by personification with dance and music. At first such action was unaccompanied by word or dialogue. It was pantomime. Then words came in. There was a stage created afterwards, a theatre and so on. In the beginning, there was not any attempt at make-up, and men and women appeared as they were, later masks came into use, and then painting to faces came in and costumes designed and worn. There was then a gradual progress towards perfection in make-up and disguise. In India, the great temples which had large audience-halls with broad open spaces in front served as theatres, and during festive occasions, dramatic performances with music, dancing and acting combined, were given before huge gatherings of the people for practically all the hours of the night. There were no gate-fees. Everything was free, but the community paid indirectly for all the expenses of such temple celebrations of which Drama, Dance and Music formed an integral part. In villages, what are called community - dramas were in vogue. After the harvest was over and the people had leisure and the produce had made them care-free and gave them the means of enjoying themselves, they celebrated a serial drama lasting some seven or eight days, touching the Avatars of God, like Sri Rama and Sri Krishna or the lives of great upholders of Dharma like Prahlada, Harischandra, Draupadi and Savitri, or the tales of local warriors and chieftains. These were attended by all the village-folk men, women and children with religious punctuality. In fact, it was felt by every villager that once the festival began, he must not go out of the village or if he did, owing to some special unavoidable contingency, he held it a sacred

duty to return to the village before the end of the festival if he hoped to ward off the anger of the gods! Such dramas, are even today acted in several villages and temples in India in the old traditional manner. They have helped to unite all the inhabitants of the village in an atmosphere of peace, love, amity and good-will. It is an opportunity for removing old scores. The tribal folk in India are still devoted to their dance dramas; in their camps, they sit in a large circle round a blazing well-fed fire, the actors monopolising a segment for their performances.

In Europe too, these community dramas have been in vogue from remote times and exist even today, especially in villages on the continent. Some of them have reached a high standard of perfection, the most notable example of which being the passing play, on the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which was being performed at the village of Oberammergau, Upper Bavaria, periodically since the 17th Century, attracting millions of visitors from all over the world and praised universally for the fervour of the actors and the high excellence of their acting. In Greece, the drama developed from the rituals connected with the worship of Dionysius, the God of wild vegetation and fruits, especially the vine, in which music, dance and story-recitals with action formed a part. In Rome, it is said, drama took its rise from the performances the Etruscan ludii who were summoned to Rome in 363 BC to avert by their dancing and playing, the wrath of the gods who had sent a plague.

In all places, in olden times, Rajas and Maharajas, Emperors and Kings, Nobles and Aristocrats were the chief patrons of drama and whether they gave their patronage out of love for the art or as a gesture of their interest in cultural matters or as a matter of routine-royal, the fact must be recognised, but for such patronage, the dramatic art could never have flourished. Next come the masses in the villages who have kept up the dramatic tradition at all times with a religious fervour and if, today, in spite of the onslaught of the cheap mechanical instruments of entertainment, the gramophone, the radio and the cinema, Drama is still a living force in the world, it is due to that natural and indestructible love for the art, deeply imprinted in the minds of ordinary men and women.

### ***Giants of art-time magic of their names***

A Kalidasa, a Shakespeare, a Moliere, an Ibsen, Garrick, an Irving, a Sarah Bernhardt, a Rabindranath Tagore are names which have held the world under the magic spell and will continue to hold as long as there is a vestige of emotion in humanity. Hosts of other great artists, dramatists and players have continued to this day in the wake of these great giants and have enriched the dramatic art-like George Bernard Shaw and others of his kind, giving it a fresh tone, a modern aspect and an analytical interpretation, revolutionising the thoughts of humanity through it.

It is, however, a sad thing to contemplate that the dramatic Art to-day, stands on a brink of a dangerous precipice. The cinema has come in as its most powerful enemy and unless the art is rescued in time, it is bound to have a fall, over the precipice and no one can say when it will rise, if at all, from the abyss, and be on its feet again.

### *The drama has fallen on evil days*

England is forgetting its Shakespeare and seeking after light shows. In Europe except in Russia, Drama has woefully declined. It is the same in America also - America, which had almost taken the first rank in the dramatic field a few years ago and alone among the nations of the world had the unique honour of having the largest number of schools for the study of and training in the art, the largest number of theatres for dramatic performances. Hollywood has now replaced them all and devoured them, root and branch.

Coming to the Orient, Japan has gone the way of America. China is in the throes of agony, and has no time to think of art, and there remains India, the cradle of all culture and art. And how is it here? It is a sad tale. Drama, which in ancient days ranked as one of the greatest of arts in the land, has now sunk almost into insignificance. Except in Bengal, where, it is pleasing to note, it is still holding its head high inspite of hundreds of cinema theatres in all the rest of the country, Drama is in a state almost of suspended animation. The Cinema and the radio have killed the drama practically and with it, all that the noble art stood for; and but for the enthusiasm of amateurs and some professionals, and the interest evinced in the art by some of the ruling princes, especially, the Maharajahs of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, it can be said that drama is in its last stages of existence. What a pity! India, which produced a Kalidasa whose "Sakuntala", (through a poor English translation), evoked the admiration of an astonished Europe and wrung the unstinted praise of savants all over the world-India, which long before the rest of the world ever knew the art produced drama of a super excellent kind, all its own, unmixedly its own, which produced a perfect code of Dramatic representation, and reduced it to a science - an India, which produced a Sudraka (author of Mrichakatika), a Bhasa (author of Swapna Vasavadatta), a Bhatta Narayana, (author of Veni Samhara), a Bhava Bhuti (author of Malati Madhava, and Uttara Rama Charita), a Krishna Mishra (author of Prabhoda Chandrodaya) a Vedanta Desika, (author of Sankalpa Suryodaya), Sri Harsha (author of Ratnavali, Priyadarsika and Nagananda), an Elangovadigal (author of the great Tamil Classic Silappadikaram), that this India should, at the present day, stand in the unenviable situation of showing no record of any great dramatic achievement to its credit in a matter for deep humiliation and regret.

It is related in the books of ancient Indian Dramatic literature, that the dramatic art was initiated by the Gods themselves and it was given high place as a part of the great Vedas (Natya Veda). It is stated that, under the inspiration of Brahma, the lord of Creation, Sage Bharata produced the first Drama before God Siva, the lord of the Cosmic Universe, in the presence of an audience of Devas. God Siva, finding a number of faults in that Drama commissioned his attendant and master artiste, Nandi to teach sage Bharata the "Nataka Kala" or Dramatic art. Bharata thus instructed, composed the drama "Tripura Dahan" and had it performed by Devas before the Lord Siva, who was very much pleased with it and gave it his approval. The art then went on and progressed and the result was the production of plays of the highest merit till it culminated in Kalidasa's "Sakuntala" of which Goethe said in immortal words:-

“Wouldst thou the young years blossom and the fruits of its decline.  
And all by which the soul is enraptured feasted, fed?  
Wouldst thou the heaven and earth in one soul name combine?  
I name thee, O Sakuntala! And all at once is said”

According to Indian conceptions and codes, the purpose to be aimed in a Drama, is the conveying of instruction through amusement and for this the players “must affect the minds of the spectators with the sentiments (rasas) they express”. These sentiments (rasas) are the effects of bhava, (condition of the mind or body and corresponding expression).

***The aim of drama-instruction through amusement the rasas and bhavas***

It is enjoined that drama should be intended to depict love or heroism, the plots should be simple, incidents consistent, business should spring direct from the story, as a plant from its seed, should be free from episodic and prolix interruptions time should not be protracted, duration should be a day or two to a year generally, diction should be polished and the piece confined to not less than five acts, and not more than ten.

There is no such thing as a tragedy, differentiated and classed apart as such, in Hindu dramas. The tragic element is not separated from it, but is mixed in the drama and interwoven as a web or fabric which life really is. It is a rule of Hindu dramatic art that a drama should never leave a painful impression on the mind of the audience. Vice must not be allowed to triumph over virtue otherwise there is no moral taught, which is the main object of a dramatic performance. Virtue must triumph in the end over evil must be made to realise that the “mills of God grind slowly, but exceeding-small”. Drama being a medium of entertainment as well as of instruction, the Hindu Dramaturgy is against the crude representation, in actual form, of such disgusting things as gruesome deaths, imprecation, biting, scratching, eating, sleeping, bathing sexual embrace and so forth. They can only be shown by suggestion. The subject of a drama should be celebrated and important, whether mythological or historical and should contain all the elements of dramatic composition and construction.

The place where dramatic performances held was called the “Ranga Bhumi”. It included “Nepadhya”, corresponding to the modern green room, where all conveniences for dressing, make-up and places for keeping costumes and other equipment, for accommodating musicians and their instruments and other artistes were provided. The stage-proper was in front of it, screened off by curtains. The auditorium was separated from the stage and the actors faced the audience while performing and their aim was to please them, the Parishad and earn their appreciation.

There are clear directions for the provision of seats for the audience, the designing of appropriate costumes for the actors, of weapons, of conveyances (Rathas and Vimanas) and all that. Male characters were impersonated by males and females by females, though it was allowed for suitable males, especially boys with good looks to impersonate females. They are meticulous directions to be observed by

the stage-manager, the conductor (Sutradhara), and others in charge of the production. All plays should begin with "Nandi Slokam" which is both a prayer and a recital of the synopsis of the plot, the authorship of the drama and the season (time of the plot). There should be a prologue (Prasthavana) at the beginning and an epilogue (Bharata Vakyam) in the end. The actors and actresses chosen for the representation of dramas should be persons of upright conduct and learned in the art.

### ***The high excellence of the Hindu Drama***

Such was the glorious foundation, progress and excellence of the Dramatic Art in the world and in ancient India in particular. Of the Indian Drama, the Encyclopedia Britannica says :

"From the point of view of purely literary excellence, it holds its own against all except the very foremost dramas of the world. It exhibits many of the noblest as well as the most characteristic features of Hinduism. Its ethics are lofty and it contains the highest of moral efforts. It shows that self-sacrifice is the supreme condition both of individual protection and of the progress of the world. The affections and the passions forming part of self, it delineates with fidelity. Indian Dramatists are past masters of many of the truest forms of pathos, above all of that which blends with resignation. In humour of a delicate kind, they are by no means deficient to its lower forms, they are generally strangers"

Indian Drama, weaves the wreaths of idyllic fancies in an unbroken chain of ever fresh beauties from an inexhaustible garden. The poetic beauty of the Indian drama reveals itself in the mysterious charm of its outline, even to the untrained".

Indian is passing through its period of renaissance. Great efforts are being made to preserve the ancient landmarks of civilization, as found in the caves of Ajanta, of Ellora, of Chittannavasal (Pudukkottai); of Sigiria (Ceylon), in the ruins of Hampi, in the Pagodas of Mahabalipuram and others. Old masterpieces of art in frescos, pictures, paintings, statuary and architectural structures are being brought to life. Archeologists are busy everywhere; buried cities are excavated and reconstructed; inscriptions and engravings are being deciphered; rare gems of old literature are rescued from decay and are studied with care and fresh light thrown on art, science, and the life of ancient India. Music and dance have been revived. New schools of painting and sculpture are coming up. The Indian renaissance, may be said to be in full swing. Drama alone, has been left to its fate. That is a matter for deep concern, and it behoves all those interested in art to come to the rescue of this noble art of Drama, which has proved itself to be a great national asset and an indispensable aid, to its culture and civilisation and its social, moral and spiritual uplift.

### ***The actor's profession once held low, is now in high esteem***

Time was, when the role of the player was considered *infra dig* and the player was assigned a lower scale in society. It was so in ancient India, in China, in Greece, in England, and on the continent. Even today, it is held un-orthodox to act on the stage,

however nice and correct it may be to read dramatic works and witness performances; just as many love to see a fine dance exposition, but a few would introduce the practice of the art in their homes! In ancient Greece it was originally considered not respectable to act, but to view changed later. In Rome, the early Christian Era, which was puritanic in its influence, regarded dramatic presentations anathema. In England, in the olden days, the actor's profession was not dignified and so it was, in Europe. But all that has changed. The labours of Shakespeare and other great dramatists. The eminence reached by great actors like Garrick and Irving, the veneration with which Rabindranath Tagore - Poet, Dramatist, and Player was held by the whole world of Dramatic criticisms on men and matters of the most modern Dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, have had their well-merited reward. Today, the player is given an honourable place in society, and the Dramatic art and profession are considered as noble as any other. In this connection, it is a matter of profound satisfaction, genuine pleasure and pride, to read the spirited influence of Indian art and Literature, put up by Her Highness of Berer (Hyderabad) - a Muslim lady of high culture and learning - in her recent speech as President of the Women's Tagore Memorial at Hyderabad (Deccan). Her Highness said:- "It is a fact that hurts deeply and wounds my national pride that the beauty and the all-enriching culture of India, which was in the full vigour and pride of its manhood, while western civilisations were either non-existent or in their cradles needing scores of years of careful of nurturing even to reach their adolescence, should have passed into lethargic slumber; that ugly and poisonous superstition, should have been substituted for truth, that imitations should have replaced the dignified, simple traditions and that we should have forgotten to remember our past, our history and our culture".

Proceeding, Her Highness said that "it was not Socrates or Plato, however great their right to near perfection, who gave the world its first lessons in philosophy; the first teachers came from the burning plains, the dense jungles and the blue hill-tops of their Peninsula. In the words of Sir Charles Elliot "a greater poem Illiad was the Mahabharata - a truly supreme contribution of Asia to the literature of the world." However unsurpassable and magnificent their inspiration and technique, it was not Aeschylus, Sophochles or Euripedes, who introduced drama to the world, but Kalidasa who was its creator. It was not in the churches of Florence or of Venice that the first great symphonies of colour were composed, but may centuries before, in the dark and lonely caves hewn into the rocks of the Deccan in colours made out of clay and leaves. It was this idea, concluded her Highness, that Tagore wanted to give to his world, to his country and to his generation. It was, however not his generation alone, but all generations to come, who would take up the banner he put into their hands and march towards a bright future, that would redeem the present and excel the past. It was modern Indian renaissance Tagore must have dreamt of; as in the case of masters of the old western Renaissance, his worked accompanied a vast field; it had branches that stretched in every direction; he was a true Da Vinci"

A better plea cannot be put in than is contained in these memorable words of Her Highness to revive the Dramatic art, the art of Kalidasa.

## *Rangshree Trust*



A pioneer of theatre in the South, FGN made his debut in theatre as goddess Saraswati in a play.

He is seen here in a female role. Among the plays he wrote, 'Gyanasundari' achieved great popularity.



FGN as Hiranayakashipu in 'Pahlada'. He had a powerful personality and a tall athletic body, and excelled in roles like Manohara, Raja Harishchandra, Hamlet, and Othello.



FGN was District Commissioner for Boy Scouts and had the honour of being presented to the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) at the World Scout Jamboree at Madras in 1922. He was a prominent figure in the political, social and cultural scene.

*(Photos courtesy Padma Swaminathan)*



FGN as Arjuna disguised as a sanyasi. Music was an essential aspect in the dramas of those days and FGN was an expert singer. He was also adept in the rare musical instrument called the Swarbat.

The schools and colleges in India and the Universities must examine the question and give the Drama a proper place in the school and college curriculum just as important as, if not more, than other subjects and afford opportunities to those who desire to do to specialise in the Dramatic Art, by instituting a course for Histrionics, Drama and Dramaturgy along with music and dancing. Apart from the contribution to the advancement of the cultural progress of the individual and the country, this will help to reduce unemployment of the educated to the certain measure. There are many students who have an aptitude for the art but for want of the necessary training and opportunities to exhibit their talents, they never see the light but sink into oblivion. In Madras, due to the praiseworthy efforts of the Annamalai University and its Music College, year after year a number of graduates and under graduates and others have taken to the study and practice of music and have become successful in the musical profession, earning decent incomes. If, similarly, there was a college of Histrionics, there is no doubt that many students will take to the profession and do credit to it. The theatre will then come into its own. With properly trained actors and actresses, the stage will be able to render performances of a high Order - high in every sense, in acting in presentation, in make-up, in costumes and in stage technique of the most up-to-date kind with proper scenery and lighting - performances which will entertain, educate and instruct. The revival of the theatre, will mean employment also to a number of technicians, painters, designers and mechanics, authors, musicians and composers. There is money in the business too. For, however glamorous the cinema may be, it is a fact that people do not feel in it a sense of satisfaction.



FGN was an orator in English and Tamil. As journalist and art critic he contributed under his pen name 'Hamsa'. A patron of arts, he started the first formal sabha, 'Rasika Ranjani Sabha' in Trichy. The Tamil Nadu State Government honoured him with Sangeeth Natak award just before he passed away in 1963.

The Cinema is unreal. You cannot touch it, cannot feel it. People want to come in contact with real life, in flesh and blood and it is the Drama alone, that can satisfy that want. But, even if the material gain is not there, India cannot allow the grand heritage in the Dramatic art to die and if only for this reason, and not any other, it behoves all those interested in the Indian Renaissance, to work for the preservation of this great art, by reviving it and developing it in every possible way. The Government of the Country, constituted as it is at present in British India, cannot be expected to do anything tangible, in this direction. The Indian States however, are in a different position. Their rulers are Indians with pride in its great inheritance in Art, and they can naturally be expected to take a prominent part in the Renaissance; \* Conference like the All-India Oriental Conference and other and cultural associations, have a duty in this respect. The index to the civilisation of a people is their Theatre, and let the Renaissance Theatre of Hinduism, be the index of resurgent India!