

The fundamental cadences of dance are classified in the *Natya Sastra* as *Karana* and *Angahara*. A *Karana* is the rhythmic movement of the body in which gesture, step and attitude are co-ordinated in a harmonious movement. A sequence of these movements in the changing patterns of the dance, is called an *Angahara*, or combination of *Karanas*. *Anga* refers to the body and *Hara* is a name of Siva, 'Lord of the Dance' who created the thirty-two *Angaharas* described in detail in the *Natya Sastra*. One hundred and eight *Karanas* are sculptured in the great Chidambaram Temple of Nataraja. Theoretically they are a forgotten art, though fragmentary sequences of *Karanas* are to be seen in the South Indian dance and dance-drama, including Kathakali.

The *Adavu* is the basic unit of dance in Tamil tradition. A cadence of the hands, a rhythmic movement of the feet, combined with movements of the body in precise co-ordination, is called an *Adavu*. There are ten different classes of *Adavus*, and in each class twelve varieties. They form the alphabet of dance composition, which the student must perfect first of all. The practise of *Adavus* is accompanied by the recitation of syllables and each *Adavu* combination is danced to three timings, *viz.* slow, medium, and fast, (*Vilamba Kala*, *Madhya Kala*, *Druta Kala*) under the direction of the Nattuvanar.

The basis of rhythm in the dance is the *jati*—a combination of several syllables of long and short duration. There are five kinds of *jatis* or time-units of 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 beats. They are called *Tisra* (3), *Chaturasra* (4), *Khands* (5), *Misra* (7), and *Sankirna*. (9). *Jatis* are the foundation of South Indian *talas*, drum rhythms and dance rhythms. Examples of *jati* syllables for dance are, (in simple form):

Tisra jati :	ta-ki-ta
Chaturasra :	ta-ka dhi-mi
Khanda jati :	ta-ka ta-ki-ta
Misra jati :	ta-ka dhi-ni ta-ki-ta
Sankirna jati :	ta-ka dhi-mi ta-ka ta-ki-ta

The combination of *adavus* with *jati* syllables is called *adavu-jati*. A sequence of *adavus* strung together in the *tala avarta* (section of time measure) and culminating in a dance finale, is a *tiramana*.

Nritta hastas articulate rhythms in formalized gesture patterns of the hands. The outspread *Pataka hastas*, the vertical or inverted *Sikhara hastas*, alternating *Allapadma* and *Hamsasya hastas*, and lateral and diagonal *Tripataka hastas* describe beautiful patterns and contours in space.

Perfection of style is the aim of the dancer. She does not create her dances. The masters have done that to perfection.