

Navarasa: An Introduction to Odissi through Emotions

Odissi is one of the eight classical dances of India, its origin dating back to 2000 BCE. There are two main components of Odissi: *nritya* (pure dance or movement) and *abhinaya* (expressing moods and emotions). *Abhinaya* in Odissi is based on the 9 *rasa*-s or aesthetic flavors that have been mentioned in the ancient Indian treatise: *The Natyashashtra*. With no particular translation of the word, *rasa* might be loosely translated as 'emotion' and might be equated with the Greek concept of 'catharsis'. The primary component of a *rasa* is that through the portrayal of a *rasa*, the performer is able to instigate an emotion to the audience. These *rasa*-s are :

- *Shringaram* (love)
- *Hasyam* (laughter)
- *Veer* (Courage)
- *Roudram* (Fury)
- *Bibhatsham* (Disgust)
- *Bhayanakam* (Fear)
- *Karunam* (Kindness)
- *Adbhutam* (Wonder)
- *Shantam* (Peace)



Odissi dancers use these *rasa*-s coupled with movements of the upper body to express moods and emotion through their dance. The dancers use eye movements, head movements, specific body stances and breathing techniques to express *rasa*-s and add depth to their dance.

Head Movements: <https://youtu.be/s5MlnnTMeyc>

Neck Movements: <https://youtu.be/xHk1xHfVfSg>

Eye movements: <https://youtu.be/LiF0oOXLNcc>

Example of an abhinaya: <https://youtu.be/qF1z9CzkKaY>