

Golden Rule

You may ask: Why is it called "The Golden Rule"?

Bharata Natayam dance dates back to ancient Vedic rituals from approx. 3000 BC considered to be a "Golden Age when art, science, mathematics, astronomy, architecture and religion were not separate fields, but were oriented to one Universal cosmos." Hence, this principle. Golden (age) + rule = Golden Rule, a universal truth of dance and drama technical procedure. So titled by Mimi Janislowski (among other America dance instructors) because it is THE basic expression of technique, emotional and spiritual procedure [1] for a dancer and/or actor/actress.

As explained to me by Mimi, the technical comes out of you as the vehicle and becomes emotional quality (bhava) as it goes out from you. It becomes the spiritual/ethereal quality (rasa) as it received. The rasa is the exchange between artist and audience, and/or, for example when practicing alone, between artist and the Universe.

She went on to explain from this Golden age come three methods of rules for any/all procedures ~ including, for example, architectural procedures, dance, meditation, love-making, etc. The sanskrit meter in which the procedure was written determines whether it is a shastra, sutra (as in KamaSutra), or trantra. The shastras are more conducive to chant.

The "Golden Rule" is the first sanskrit shloka (poetic meter ~ e.g. couplet, poetry) of the Nataya [2] Shastra (c.600-800 BC) codified/written by Bharata Muni [3]. Bharata Muni wrote entire treatise of procedures on dance and the "Golden Rule" is the first chant (shloka) in the treatise on dance.

'Namaskaram' = salutations/greetings and *most definitely* means "to bow" (as in our meaning of curtsy and "reverance" (as in French as opposed to being reverent in prayer). Best translation of meaning: To Bow in Salutaion/Greetings." [4] The sequence of gestures we do at the beginning of the dance is a 'Namaskaram' honoring/greeting Mother Earth upon whom we dance, also acknowledging Divinity, lineage of teachers and each other.

Namasté is an abbreviated, colloquial version of Namaskaram, which is generally accepted as transmitting a feeling of "Hail to the Divine within you."

[1] Technique (trained body ~ hand to eyes), emotional (mind and emotions), spiritual (heart and spirit)

[2] 'Nataya' = dance

[3] 'Muni' = sage and 'Bharata' is also old world word = India. Hence Bharata Nataya is not only dance (written down by Bharata) but also 'Indian dance.'

[4]direct quote from letter written by my guru Mimi Janislowski dated 10/2006

One of the very first lessons I present in my classes refers to a sequence of hand gestures from classical South Indian dance known as Bharata Natyam or Bharatanatyam referred to as "The Golden Rule". I teach it as it was taught to me by my guru, Mimi Janislowski, PhD, master of classical eastern dance traditions. (and) due to our current culture's high speed lifestyle and the dis-connect of the heart and mind... we are so very computer and cell-phone oriented and operating so very heavily from the head, we have not only made a dis-connect from the heart but also the body in general. -Tahya

THE GOLDEN RULE



Pataka

Where the hand goes....

*Arms out at shoulder level
hands in Pataka mudra*

There goes the eye

Head Slide, eyes to right; head slide, eyes to left



Kartarimukha
Scissor Face

Where the eyes go

*Kartarimukha mudra, fingers closed covering eyes
rotate wrist out "pull" hands away from one another
at same time open fingers and eyes*



Kathakamukha

There goes the mind

*Both hands in Kathakamukha mudra
R hand at forehead; L hand at heart*

Where the mind goes

L hand circling at heart



Alapadma
full Bloom
Lotus

*There goes
the emotion*

*L hand goes behind back
R hand alapadma
around face*

Where emotion goes

L hand circles around face



Mukula
Lotus Bud

There goes

*Mukula mudra
at solar plexus*



The 'rasa' *Extend arms out
and to sides*

Alapadma