

# GURU LAYATHVAM THEORY



## Guru Layathvam

Academy of fine arts

### TALA DASA PRANAS PART I

**1.Kaalam: (TIME )** Kalam consists of 10 stages again. They are,  
(A). Kanam (B). Lavam (C). Kaashtam (D). Nimisham (E) Kala (F)  
Chaturbhagam (G) Thudi (H). Dhrutham (I). Lagu (J). Guru (K). Plutham (L).  
Kaakapaadham.

**Kanam:** Time is normally understood in terms of seconds, minutes and hours.  
Now let us take the "seconds". Let us assume that we divide a second into 8  
sub-divisions. Each of this is subdivided by 8 again and this small sub-divided  
unit is further sub divided into 8 divisions. This part of sub divided unit can  
only be perceived mentally and physical sign of this time cannot be shown. This  
minutest time is said to be "Kanam".

Kanam is further understood by the following experiment.

100 Lotus petals are taken together and a needle is pierced through the petals.  
The time taken for the needle to pass through one petal to the other is known as  
"kanam". When kanam is understood, the other 10 stages can be tabled as  
below:

8 such kanam = 1 Lavam

8 such Lavam = 1Kaashtam

8 such Kaashtam = 1Nimisham

8 such Nimishams = 1Kala

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8 such kalas = 1 Chathurbaagam

2 such Chaturbaagam = 1 Thudi or anudrutam

2 such Thudis = 1 Dhrutham

2 such Dhruthams = 1 Laghu

2 such Laghu = 1 Guru

3 such Laghus = 1 Plutham

4 such Laghus = 1 Kaakapadham

Only from "Nimisham" onwards one can physically recon the tala parts. The first three time units shown in the table can only be imagined and understood by going beyond our five senses. The First 5 Kaalas are called as Sukshma Kaalas and the rest are called Stula Kaalas. Kaalam in general refers to the duration of angas.

**2. Maargam:** The way tala is put into applications is called Maargam.

There are six ways that determine the tempo or speed of the music. They are,

(a) Dakshinam: For one Akshara main count or tala unit, there are 8 minor units or seconds. The 8 minor units make the speed 'Kalai', that is, 8 Kalai in one tala unit having 32 syllables / akshara.

(b). Vaarthikam: 4 Kalai for one Akshara having 16 syllables / akshara

(c). Chithram: 2 Kalai for one akshara having 8 syllables / Akshara

(d). Chitra Tharam: 1 kalai for one Akshara having 4 syllables / Akshara

(e). Chithra Thamam: 1/2 Kalai for one Akshara having 2 syllables / Akshara

(f). Athi Chithra Thamam: 1/4 Kalai for one Akshara having 1 syllable / Akshara.

The above calculations are given based on the chathurasra gathi.

**3.Kriya :** Kriya is a physical action that is sub divided into two. One is "Maargam" (another kind) and the other is "Desiyam". This maarkam is of two kinds. One is "Shabdha kriya" and the other is "Nishabdha kriya ". Shabdha

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**kriya** is further divided into four types. They are,

- (a) Dhruva - produce sound by Thumb and Middle finger (Chitigai).
- (b) Samya - Beat over the right palm with the left palm.
- (c) Tala - Beat over the left palm with the right palm.
- (d) Sannipata - Both palms strike together facing each other.

These kinds of talas are also used in "Kummiaattam".

**Nishabdha kriyas** are also of four kinds. They are,

- (a). Avapa - Folding the fingers
- (b). Nishkrama - Opening the folded fingers.
- (c). Vikshepa - Moving hand to the right side.
- (d). Pravesa - Bringing it back

In Nishabdha kriyas, all the tala actions mentioned above are performed without producing any sound.

**Desiyam:** Desiyam is of 8 kinds. They are,

- (a). Dhruvaka - Beat of hand
- (b). Sarpini - Waveing hand to the right(Waving the right palm from the above left to the right)
- (c). Krushya (also spelt as Krishya) - Waving right palm to the Left.
- (d). Padmini - Turn hand, palm downwards
- (e). Visarjita - Waving the hand outwards turning the Palm upwards
- (f). Vikshiptham - Closing the fingers and bringing the hand towards Self
- (g) Pathaka - Raise hand with hand upwards
- (h). Patitta - Bring the hand downwards(back to horizontal position)







These varieties of tala are used in Folk dances called "Koothu Natanam".

Except Druvaka, all the 7 kriyas from Sarpini to Pathitham (Also spelled as Patita) do not produce any sound (nisabda kriyas) and so they are also known as

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"Baava Samignya Talas". These do not have practical relevance now. These are explained only for the purpose of preservation of ancient works on talas.

**4.Anga:** Anga is nothing but practical application of perceptible tala mentioned in the category "kaalam" that is, from Nimisham to Kaakapatham. Angam means "limb" or "Parts" of Tala. These limbs or parts constitute a Tala. Angams ( **also spelled as Angas**) are basically six. See the table below.

Anga	Symbol	Name	Explanation
Thudi or Anudruta		Pirai (Crescent Moon)	A beat(Dhruvaka)
Druta		Mathi (Full Moon)	One beat and a turn of hand (Dhruvakam and Visarjita)
Laghu		Kanai	Beat (Druvaka) followed by counting fingers according to different units of jaathi
Guru		Villu(Bow)	A Beat (Dhruvakam) Aavapa , vikshepa and pravesha in clockwise rotation.
Plutham		Aravam	A beat (Dhruvakam),Sarpini and Krishya each followed by counting fingers.
Kaakapaadham +		Pulladi	A beat (Druvakam ) without sound followed by Sarpini, Krishya, Pataka, Pathitham

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each followed by counting fingers

Kaakapaadham is rendered

without sound (NiSabda Anga)

Note that, only the first three Angas are used in "**Sooladi Sapta Talas**" (Commonly known as "Sapta Talas") Combinations totaling 35 Talas, read topic "Saptha Talas". The other Angas namely Guru, Pluta and kakapata are used in talas known as "**108 Talas**" and other complicated talas that include "**Simhanadhana Tala**" which is the longest tala having 128 Aksharas. The first 5 Talas of 108 talas are known as "**Maarga Talas**" and also known as "**Pancha Talas**". The remaining 103 talas are known as "**Desi Talas**". There are 72 **Melakartha Talas** other than these talas. There were numerous combinations and varieties of talas in ancient days. All these talas have become obsolete and only Sapta Tala with jaathis combinations that give rise to 35 talas and Ghathi Bedha of 35 talas that give rise to 175 talas are in vogue today. Other talas are listed in this site just for the purpose of demonstration. There are other talas known as "**Nava Talas**", "**Nava Saandhi Talas**", "**Aparoopaa Talas**". The "**Chanda Talas**" are used in "**Thiruppugazh**" and the specialty of this tala is that, the talas are made to fit the lyrics, rhyme and stress of the song. In other words, the lyrics and rhyme are given importance which form different talas. Sage Arunagirinadhar is believed to have composed over 16000 songs and only 1365 songs have so far been traced. Coming back to Angam, let us see the combinations of Angams as listed in the table below.

The 6 Angams (shown in the table above) in combination with themselves give rise to 10 Angams, totaling to 16 Angams. **The Ten Angas are shown, just for the purpose of history and demonstration. According to Talaprapastara and its rules, it is said that these 10 Angas should not be rendered at all as tala.** The other ten Angams are tabled in the next page.



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## Ten Angas Chart

Serial	Ten Angas	Explanation	Aksharas
1	Dhrutha Viraama	Anudhrutham and Dhrutham	3
2	Laghu Viraama	Anudhrutham and Laghu	5
3	Laghu Dhrutha	Dhrutham and Laghu	6
4	Lagu Dhrutha Viraama	Anudhrutham,Dhrutham and lagu	7
5	Guru viraama	Anudhrutham and Guru	9
6	Guru Dhrutha	Dhrutham and Guru	10
7	Guru Dhrutha Viraama	Anudhrutham,Dhrutham and Guru	11
8	Plutha Viraama	Anudhrutham and Plutham	13
9	Plutha Dhrutha	Dhrutham and Plutham	14
10	Plutha Dhrutha Viraama	Anudhrutham, Dhrutham and Plutham	15

The Aksharas shown in the last column for the last 9 angas, is in accordance with "chatusra lagu". The total aksharas vary with the other kinds of laghus.

**Please Note: Technical name Viraama is also spelled as "Viraamam".**

**Alternate spelling is "Viramam". There are two rhythmical forms in the universe. 1. The rhythmical forms which could be rendered. 2. The rhythmical forms which should not be rendered. This is based on**

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**Talaprastara and its rules.** For example, Talas like 7 Talas giving rise to 35 and 175 Talas and Simhanandana tala can be rendered. Talas like 72 Melakarta Talas and Sharabhanandana Talas with Samyuktangas should not be rendered.

**5.Graham:** The place in a tala where the song begins is called "Graham". This is also known as "Eduppu". Eduppu means "starting Point". Eduppu can be two ways. One is "Samam" and the other is "Vishamam". When a song begins at the first beat of a tala, it is Samam. When song begins either before or after the stroke of tala, it is Vishamam. So, Vishamam can further be classified into two. They are,

(a).Athitham: When the song begins first and that is followed by tala beat later, it is called "**Athitha Eduppu**".

(b) Anaagatham: When a tala begins first and the song follows it later, it is called "**Anaagatha Eduppu**". In a song there can be both Athitham and Anaagatham, where it is called "Usi".