Folk Dances of India: Raas Leela

Raas Leela, commonly referred to as Krishna dance, is a folk dance form that predates ancient history and is part of the traditional stories of Krishna in which he dances with his lover, Radha. Raas means aesthetics, and Leela means to act or play, which translates to “play of aesthetics”.[1]

The Raas Leela takes place when the Gopis of Vrindavana sneak away from their families to the forest to dance with Krishna throughout the night after hearing Krishna’s flute’s sound.[2] Raas Leela is considered to be an expression of passion and love for our special person. Raas Leela is a popular dance form in Mathura and Vrindavana’s regions in Uttar Pradesh, especially during the festivals of Janmashtami and Holi. It is observed as one of the State Festivals of Assam, which usually is celebrated during Late November.[3]

Swami Sri Uddhavaghamanda Devacharya, a prominent saint and a disciple of the world-renowned Swami Sri Harivyasa Devacarya in the early 15th Century, started this whole idea of performances of Raas Leela in Vrindavan, Mathura.[1] Swami Uddavaghamanda trained his students, the Brahmachari, to play the parts that appeared in the songs like “The Vani literature of Vraja” to get a visual representation of the Leela that was being described. Many people were sceptical of this idea of the enactment of Raas Leela on stage.[3] However, traditions say that Lord Krishna himself appeared to empower the actors to represents the love between Krishna and Radha and remind people of the core values behind Raas Leela. This popular dance form has been performed worldwide and is enjoyed by people at festivals, celebrations and get-togethers.

Independent Project by Sezal Chug
Guide: Prof. Manohar Khushalani

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2. 2.

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