Tandava

(Names of 7 Tandava with Detailed Stories)

Tāṇḍava: Meaning, Forms, and Classical Terms



Tāṇḍava is a vigorous and energetic mode of dance associated with Lord Śiva. It uses powerful movements and rhythms and is often contrasted with Lāsya, which is generally graceful and gentle. Tāṇḍava should not be understood as a dance performed only by men; classical dance traditions include both masculine and feminine expressions of movement.

Two classifications to keep distinct

The Sapta Tāṇḍava list names seven forms of Śiva's dance. A separate classification, attributed to the *Bhāvaprakāśana* tradition, describes Tāṇḍava varieties such as Uccaṇḍa, Chaṇḍa, Prachaṇḍa, Prapanna, and Preraṇa. These are not the same list. Spellings and descriptions may vary across teaching traditions.

Seven forms of Tāṇḍava

A commonly taught Sapta Tāṇḍava list is Ānanda, Sandhyā, Umā, Gaurī, Kālikā, Tripura, and Saṃhāra Tāṇḍava. Stories, meanings, and rasa associations may vary by source; the descriptions below are presented as traditional interpretations rather than one definitive account.

Form	Traditional description	Significance	Rasa often associated
Ānanda Tāṇḍava	**Śiva dances as Naṭarāja, with the dwarf Apasmāra beneath his foot. A popular story links the dance to Śiva's triumph over the sages' magical forces in the Dāruka forest.**	**Represents bliss and the cosmic acts of creation, preservation, dissolution, concealment, and grace.**	**Adbhuta** (wonder); **Śānta** (peace)
Sandhyā Tāṇḍava	**Śiva's twilight dance, accompanied by the gods and their music.**	**Suggests cosmic harmony and the transition between times.**	**Śānta**
Umā Tāṇḍava	**Śiva dances with Umā (Pārvatī) beside him.**	**Portrays divine companionship and harmony.**	**Śṛṅgāra** (love); **Adbhuta**
Gaurī Tāṇḍava	**A form of Śiva's dance associated with Gaurī,**	**May be interpreted as the harmony of Śiva and Śakti.**	**Śṛṅgāra**; **Adbhuta**

	another name		
Kālikā Tāṇḍava	A fierce form associated in some traditions with Śiva and the power of Kālī.	Represents the force that overcomes destructive powers.	**Raudra** (fury); **Vīra** (heroism)
Tripura Tāṇḍava	Associated with Śiva's destruction of the three cities of the asuras, Tripura.	Signifies the defeat of arrogance and the restoration of cosmic order.	Vīra
Saṃhāra Tāṇḍava	Śiva's dance of cosmic dissolution.	Represents the dissolution that precedes renewal.	**Raudra**; **Bhayānaka** (fear or awe)

Common story of Tripura

The three asura brothers—Tārakākṣa, Kamalākṣa, and Vidyunmālī—were granted three flying cities made of gold, silver, and iron. When the cities aligned, Śiva destroyed them with a single arrow. Some dance accounts associate a Tāṇḍava with this victory. The details of the divine chariot and its components differ across tellings.

Tāṇḍava varieties in the *Bhāvaprakāśana* tradition

These terms describe varieties of Tāṇḍava through movement vocabulary and dramatic quality. They should not be treated as another list of seven Tāṇḍavas.

Variety	Classical movement vocabulary commonly given	Rasa commonly associated
Uccaṇḍa	**Ākāśacārī**, forceful **aṅgahāras**, and **bhramaris**	**Raudra, Bībhatsa, Bhayānaka**
Chaṇḍa	**Bhūmicārī**, **karaṇas**, and **aṅgahāras**	**Vīra, Raudra**
Prachaṇḍa	**Forceful utplavanas (leaps), karaṇas, and bhramaris**	**Raudra, Bībhatsa**
Prapanna	**Included among the less forceful or deśī varieties in some summaries; its specific movement vocabulary is not consistently stated**	**A fixed rasa is not consistently specified**
Preraṇa	**Also grouped with the less forceful or deśī varieties in some summaries**	**A fixed rasa is not consistently specified**

Classical-term note: Ākāśa-bhramarī and Ekapāda-bhramarī are distinct bhramarī types listed in the *Abhinaya Darpaṇa*. The descriptions above say bhramarī generally; they do not establish that Uccaṇḍa or Prachaṇḍa specifically requires either of those two turns. Similarly, Bhūmicārī means a ground-based chārī and should not be called "Bhūmi-bhramarī."