

Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra

An Innovation on Bedhaya Choreography

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Abstract

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra was a new choreography form of the *Bedhaya* dance genre. This research was conducted to create a choreography developed from *Bedhaya*. The basic assumption of this research was that *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was based on the *Bedhaya* dance form which was processed through development research. This research was a study of innovations for *Bedhaya* choreography. *Bedhaya* was a form of palace classic choreography that had had standard patterns as a form of noble dance. This dance had a high artistic level, not only from its historical factor but also from its current position in the Palace. The problems examined in this study were: What was the shape of *Sarpo Rodra's* choreography? What was the expression of innovation from the *Bedhaya* choreography in *Bedaya Sarpo Rodra*? The specific objective to be achieved was to provide knowledge and understanding of the wider community about the motion patterns that formed *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* choreography as an innovation in *Bedhaya* choreography. The target of this research output was to produce a written study of *Bedhaya* choreography innovations, which were *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra's* choreographic motion patterns. This study used the ethnochoreology approach, as a form of analysis of dance creation work.

Keywords: Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra, motion pattern, choreography

DOI: 10.7176/ADS/79-02

Publication date: December 31st 2019

1. Heading 1

Introduction

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra was a dance model as an innovation of *Bedhaya* choreography. This *Bedhaya* was arranged in 2007 and was performed at the Teater Kecil ISI Sutakarta. *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* dance was composed using *rias* (makeup) *paes* and *dodot* style costume. The choreography in this dance used Javanese choreography whose structure consisted of *maju beksan*, *beksan*, and *mundur beksan*. The accompaniment music for this dance used Javanese *gamelan* equipped with violin, *jimbe*, *bedug*, and *kenthongan* instruments.

The first structure was *maju beksan*, four dancers moved forward from the four corners of the stage with vocals using Indonesian, then followed by three dancers lined up to enter the stage from the right corner of the stage. The motion used was *kapang-kapang* motion, interspersed with rotating motion in place with the *mayuk* body position.

The fact proved that *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* dance had a novelty. This could be seen in the dance choreography and music. However, *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* dance choreography was still thick with the content of *bedhaya* dance choreography rules. *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was different from classic *Bedhaya* because of the choice of dancers, the choice of motion patterns, and the music. The choreography composition looked different from the classic *bedhaya*. *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* motion pattern was seen as the development of Surakarta traditional female dance patterns. This could be seen in the motion of the hips, facial expressions, hand movements, and the height of *penthangan astha*.

Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra dance performance was a phenomenon of innovation and choreography development existence in the *Bedhaya* dance. *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* dance was a creation of a *Bedhaya* model that was different from the other *Bedhaya* especially the court *Bedhaya*. This phenomenon became a form of *Bedhaya* outside the palace walls. This was a fact that caught my attention as a choreographer. I wanted to make innovations in the form of *bedhaya* choreography variations. But the question was whether after experiencing choreographic expansion, *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was included in the *Bedhaya* region.

Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra as a form of *Bedhaya* outside the palace was unique in its presentation, for example movements that had fast, strong, rough, large (*rowa*) tempos, hips wiggling, and shoulders shaking. Besides, its uniqueness was also due to the unstable tempo and *gojegan* (jokes) among dancers. Those were things that were not usually seen in classic *Bedhaya* dance. The music in *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was not in tune with the dance moves. Sometimes music was just an illustration. This was an important note in a work creation study, as an effort to analyze *Bedhaya's* development and innovation. The main problem of this research was why *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* used the name "*Bedhaya*", given that the presentation was clearly different from the classic *Bedhaya*. If *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was proven to be a form of *Bedhaya* dance, how would the choreography development innovate?

Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra was a classic dance innovation, because *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* was based on the *Bedhaya* choreography. But in its overall composition, *Bedhaya Sarpo Rodra* had experienced movement, dance

music, makeup, and costume adjustments.

The information above was an interesting material to be used as an object of research, with the aim to uncover some of the following problems. a. How did the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* pattern of motion form? b. How did *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*'s innovation develop as *Bedhaya* choreography? The purpose of this research was to provide knowledge and understanding to the public about *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* and its innovation and development as one of *Bedhaya* choreographies. The specific purpose of this research was to provide knowledge and understanding of the wider community regarding the innovation in the development of the *Bedhaya* choreography.

Research and writing on the *Bedhaya* dance from the perspective of the text and its context had been widely discussed. I also used other writings about *Bedhaya* in working on *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*'s research was an analysis of dance that I composed myself. Various sources of literature were used to review and ensure the existence of this study in order to avoid plagiarism (imitation). This research used written sources that were almost the same or related to the topic to be studied. But this research was also used as an analysis of the work that I did. The thesis was "Hubungan Ekspresi Penuangan *Bedhaya* dengan Koreografi *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* Susunan Saryuni Padminingsih".

"Tari *Bedhaya Ketawang*: Reaktualisasi Hubungan Mistis Panembahan Senopoati dengan Kanjeng Ratu Kencana Sari dan Perkembangannya" was a thesis by Nora Kustantina Dewi compiled in 1994. This work discussed the historical side, the form of performance, and the symbolic meaning of the *Bedhaya* dance in palace. In addition, it was written that *Bedhaya Ketawang* was considered a master for other *Bedhaya* dances so that it was certain that the choreographic form of *Bedhaya Ketawang* was still very original.

The book written by K.G.P.H. Hadiwidjojo with the title "*Bedhaya Ketawang* Tarian Sakral di Candi-candi" in 1981 discussed everything about *Bedhaya* which originated from dances in temples before the Mataram era. The discussion in the book focused on *Bedhaya Ketawang* dance in terms of its creation, the form of the dance, and the features that the dance had. Besides being used as a reference for the production of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, this book was also used to position this research as original research because its form was an art work analysis.

Sunarno Purwolelono's thesis was titled "Garap Susunan Tari Tradisi Surakarta Sebuah Studi Kasus *Bedhaya Ela-Ela*", released in 2007. This thesis revealed the creation of a classic dance in *Bedhaya Ela-Ela*. The essence of the thesis was that jaged *Bedhaya Ela-Ela* was considered to have contributed to the development of dance in particular *Bedhaya* and *Srimpi* and *Bedhayan* dance in general. *Bedhaya Ela-Ela* dance was an example of the development of *Bedhaya* dance work which was born and grew outside the Surakarta Palace.

Suraji's thesis titled "*Bedhaya Suryasumirat* di Pura Mangkunegaran" in 2001. This thesis examined *Bedhaya Suryasumirat* in Pura Mangkunegaran which had the distinctive characteristics of the *Bedhaya* dance in the palace.

Bedhaya Purnama Jati Karya K.R.T. Sasmintadipura: Ekspresi Seni Jagad Tari Keraton Yogyakarta tahun 2009, compiled by Y. Murdiyati. This book discussed the techniques and the process of creating *Bedhaya Purnama Jati*, in which it reviewed the philosophical and aesthetic values of the *Bedhaya Purnama Jati*. The discussion was used as a reference in the creation of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* and at the same time as an overview in positioning this original research as an art work analysis.

Some of the books had discussed various forms of classic *Bedhaya* dance, *Bedhaya* dance which still used standard rules applied in the palace even though it had undergone a change in choreography. Research on the form of dance *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* which discussed the innovation of this dance had never been disclosed or researched in previous studies, so it could be said that this *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* research was an original study.

This research was a type of qualitative research with descriptive data. The focus of this choreography research study was the science of dance. Dance research began with the recording process in composing dance which in turn became a record in finding dance creation methods. Starting from this process the choreographer could make an analysis of his work (Slamet MG: 20016, 183).

The method used in this research was interactive and descriptive analytical interpretative methods. This was a way of researching the creation process to the point of reviewing the work and analyzing the work done by the researcher as a choreographer. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance research applied the stages of dance research as stated by Slamet including: 1) Observation. Field research by observation, by describing, and recording; 2) Exploration, as a step in searching; 3) Experiment, as a step to try to match the motion obtained; 4) Contemplation, steps to get the results of conformity with the desired pattern of work, 5) Formation, steps in the preparation of choreography; 6) Compile the combination of formations, steps, music, and words obtained to become complete dances; 7) Making conclusions (Slamet MD, 2016: 40-44).

The data collection included:

The observation was the first step made in this study. Observations were carried out by reviewing the record of the process of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*'s dance work as well as making indirect observations through video, by observing some recorded video of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance as in 2007, when it was staged at the Teater Kecil ISI Surakarta, in 2008 when it was staged at the Teater Besar ISI Surakarta, in 2010 when staged at the Pendopo ISI Surakarta, and direct observations when the dance was staged at the wedding reception of the daughter of the composer of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance at the Pendopo ISI Surakarta in 2014, and observed the performance at

the Teater Besar ISI Surakarta as a bachelor degree final project by Fajar Prasetyani in 2015.

On this initial stage, I examined the notes and videos that recorded the dance creating process. The activity helped me recalled the process of composing a pattern of motion that had its own uniqueness. Then I began to look at other elements of choreography such as dancers, make-up, costume, and floor patterns. Through these observations, I found a different form of performance in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance when compared to classic *Bedhaya* dance. This was indicated by the variation of choreographic elements that were not commonly used in *Bedhaya* dance. The results of these observations were all used as a process of reviewing the work of researchers in an effort to analyze the process of the work and the results displayed, as an analysis of the work of the concepts and methods found.

I conducted an interview by searching for sources that provided inspiration for the preparation of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*. Selected interviewees consisted of people who were competent in the field of dance, especially those who could provide information about the object of this research. The main interviewee was the composer of the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance, S. Pamardi. S. Pamardi was chosen as the main interviewee based on his knowledge and experience in the preparation of the Surakarta classic dance. The information obtained covered all aspects related to the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance.

Supporting interviewees: Didik Bambang Wahyudi, the person in charge of implementing the activity as well as the writer of the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance script. This interviewee was chosen based on his artistic ability in making dances. Didik was a dance lecturer at ISI Surakarta who was often involved in dance creation. An interview with Didik successfully revealed information about the idea of dance creation and the dance form of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*. The next interviewee was Wahyudi Sutrisno, composer of music. This interviewee revealed information about the composing music idea, the musical presentation form, and the dance music notation. The interviewee from the dancer's side was Surni, one of the dancers of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* and *Bedhaya Ketawang*. The dancer was chosen based on experience and dancing techniques. This dancer revealed information about her involvement in the making of the dance. In addition, this dancer would describe dance moves as a graphic presentation tool, because dancers memorized the counts and movements of the dance so that it would be more easily written into the dance notation. Supriyadi was a lighting-man for *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance. He gave information about lighting in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance performance. Wahyu Santoso Prabowo, one of the dance lecturers at ISI Surakarta who was involved in the preparation of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance script. Wahyu Santoso Prabowo provided data on the creation of the *Bedhaya* dance and its concept. Literature study was conducted to obtain references related to *bedhaya* and the rules of *Bedhaya* choreography.

Discussion

a. Motion Pattern

The sequences of motion and the arrangement of the gending for *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*'s choreography were different from those of palace *Bedhaya*. The motion form or motion pattern was seen from the structure of body movement patterns. Motion pattern as the smallest link arrangement of the motion elements that already has meaning (Hadi: 2011, 39). The series of movements at *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* were arranged to convey the meaning of the dance theme. This was what distinguished *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* from palace *Bedhaya*. Although both had themes, palace *Bedhaya* still used classic female dance moves. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* had developed in an effort to display characters on dance themes. The dancer's body and experience provided a pattern in the motion pattern of this dance. Motion patterns that tended to be rough, strong, fast, and *rowa* (had large volume).

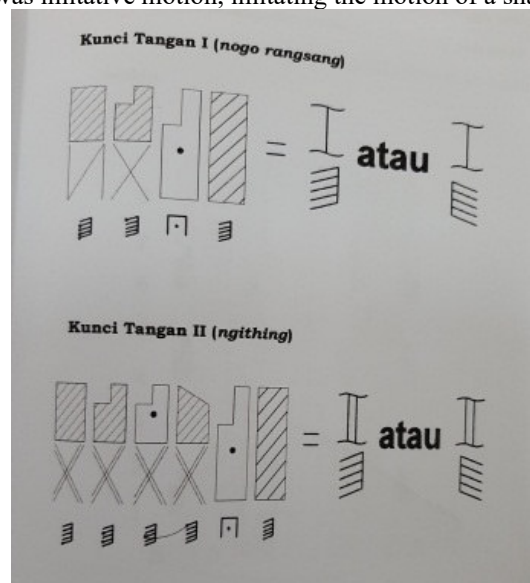
Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra's choreography presented a different motion pattern from female classic dance. At *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, I deliberately widened the volume of female classic dance moves, to bring up the Sarpakenaka concept. This work also left vocabulary of female classic dance moves such as *lumaksana*, *kembang pepe*, *sekarsuwun*, and *pendhapan*. An example was *kembang pepe* motion pattern. The *kembang pepe* motion pattern was to rotate the body to the position of less than 90°. In *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* choreography, the movement was developed to 90° with a curved movement position, to get the impression of erotic motion.

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra dance motion featured Sarpakenaka concept, a figure known for being passionate about love. Based on Sarpakenaka concept, new patterns were arranged that were different from the patterns of classic female dance moves. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* began and ended with the *kapang-kapang* motion. Formation of motion patterns in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was an innovative model of classic female motion. The motion patterns that were formed described Sarpakenaka figure. These motion patterns actually existed in the female dance character *lanyap*, but in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, they were shown more realistic with various character movements which tended to not exist in female dance.

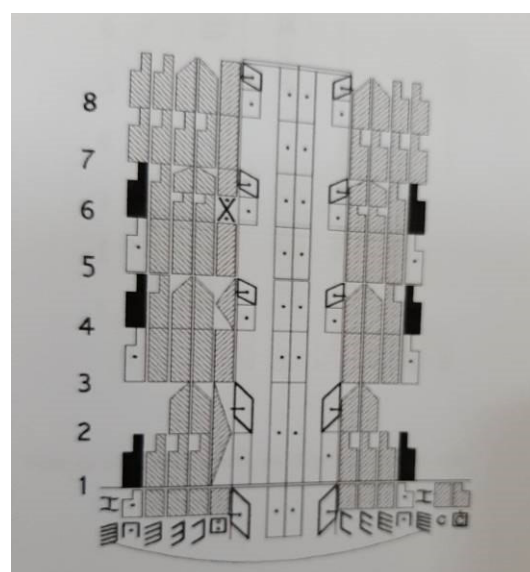
Innovations in the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* movement also appeared in the motion patterns that were connecting and transitioning, such as the *sindheth* and *srising*. In principle, the formation of the *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* motion pattern was still based on classic female dance patterns. The creation of new motion patterns because the characters and techniques of motion needed to display the concept of Sarpakenaka on *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*. The motion patterns in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* were grouped into four categories, namely: gesture, pure motion, Baton signal

motion, displacement movement (Slamet: 2014, 28).

1. *Maknawai* motion or gesture. Motion that was formed as an imitation and had symbolic meaning. This motion pattern was formed from the Sarpakenaka concept as a snake then the motion pattern that was formed was imitative motion, imitating the motion of a snake.

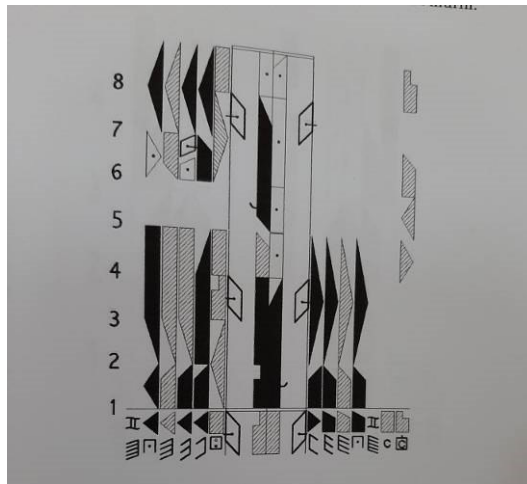


Pic. 1. Laban notation fot fingers key



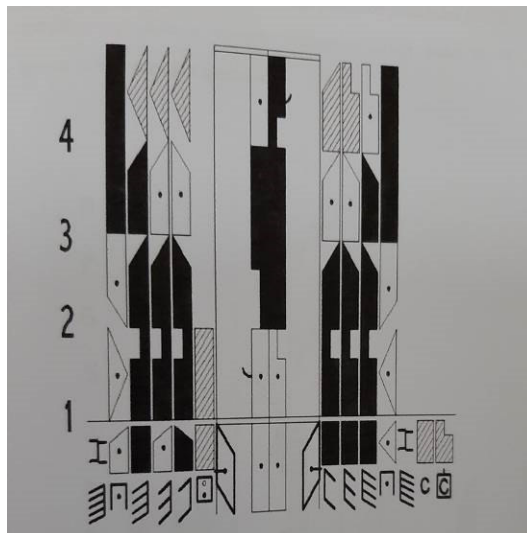
Pic. 2. Dance Notation for *Maknawai* Motion/Gesture, Twisting Motion Pattern

2. Pure motion, The motion pattern that was formed due to aesthetic needs, did not have any message. In *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, the motion pattern which was categorized into pure motion, for example, was *kembang pepe* ptttern motion.



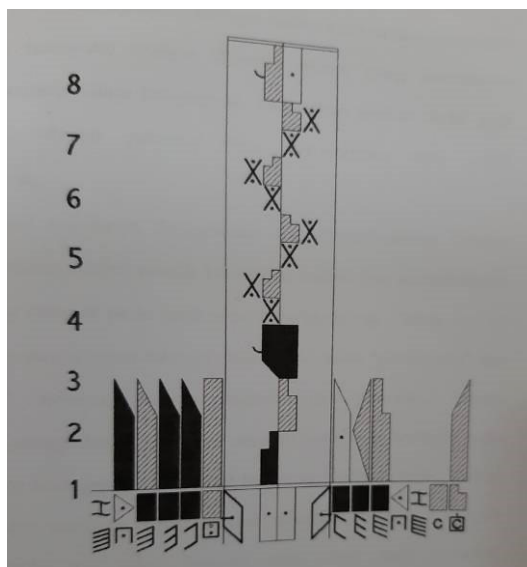
Pic. 3. Pure Motion Dance Notation, *Kembang Pepe* Motion Pattern

3. Baton Signal Motion, motion that was carried out as an expression enhancer. This motion pattern was formed to strengthen the expression of a motion pattern. In *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, the the baton signal motion was manifested in a twisting motion with variations in the hand stretching.



Pic. 4. Baton Signal Motion, Twisting Motion Pattern

4. Locomotion motion or movement to move places, this was the motion used to change places as a change in position for dancers. Motion to change position like this, in classic dance was usually called by srisig motion.



Pic. 5. Dance Notation, Locomotion Motion, Slrisig Motion Pattern

b. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* choreography innovation

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra choreography compilation was based on classic female dance and *Bedhaya keraton* that was rooted in *Bedhaya Pitu*. The set of dancers was still using *Bedhaya Pitu* concept which consisted of: *batak*, *endhel ajeg*, *apit meneng*, *apit mburi*, *gulu*, *dhadh*, and *buncit*. The function of these dancers was not like that of *Bedhaya Sanga*. The number of dancers with only seven people led to the loss of *endhel weton* dan *apit ngarep* roles. These two parts of the body were represented by only one, such as the arms and legs. In this case, *endhel weton* as the leg and *apit ngarep* as the arm.

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra was compiled based on the classic female motion patterns. Choreographers innovated in this motion arrangement by enlarging the motion volume such as the stretch which initially *trap cethik* was changed into a straight arm, even at a high level of straightened arm that was not normally done in female classic dances.



Pic. 6. High Level of Left-arm Straightened Motion

Motion innovations were also carried out on *jengkeng* motion by mayuk forward to 60° , thus, new motion patterns were formed due to dance needs. In addition, volume innovation was also carried out on the *hoyogan*, *sindheth*, and *leyekan* motion pattern,. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was a dance form of *Bedhayan* which was different from the palace *Bedhaya*. The motion volume of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was dominant. This was shown in the stretch of the hand to get the impression of great motion. Meanwhile twisting *mayuk* motion was developed to get a depiction of snakes in addition to showing erotic motion.



Pic. 7. Wider Arms Volume by Raising the Arms Higher Like Agem in Balinese Dance (Photo: Rindhu, 2015)



Pic. 8. Motion Volume by Spreading Both Arms (Photo: Rindhu, 2015)



Pic. 9. Fingers position, Mimicking Snake (Photo: Rindhu, 2015)



Pic. 10. *Shindet* Motion Pattern with Wider Volume (Photo: Saryuni, 2007)



Pic. 11. *Kapang-kapang* Motion, Higher (and wider) *Penthangan* of the Arms (Photo: Saryuni, 2007)

Innovation in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* motion was a demand in its choreography because of the chosen theme. On this occasion I deliberately worked on *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra*, in the form of *Bedhayan* with the intention of displaying an innovation in the *Bedhaya* choreography, which was usually bound by the classic court dance rules. The applied motion innovation was an attempt to get newness in choreography. Changes in a motion pattern could be varied with the motion development, such as *kapang-kapang* motion was interspersed with rotating *srising* motion that was performed with different tempo. Likewise, the development of *srising*, carried out with the Yogyakarta style *srising*, that was the arm *ngrayung*, then began *mancat madal* then *mendak*, and walked.

Innovation was also done by giving variations to the *sembahan* motion. While *sembahan jengkeng* performed with the body *mayuk* forward.



Pic. 12. *Sembahan* Motion Pattern, Body Position in *Mayuk* Forward (Photo: Saryuni, 2007)

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra was not only developed based on Javanese classic female dance, but also based on Balinese dance, for example in variations of arms raised upwards like *agem*, Malay dance with crossed footsteps and tiptoe. Motion variations were made to give the feel of a coreography, arranged in the form of *Bedhayan*. The purpose of this dance innovation was to provide a variation for *Bedhaya* coreography, especially Javanese choreography.

Conclusion

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra as a choreography form of the *Bedhayan* dance, its form was different from the Palace *Bedhaya*. The form of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was an innovative movement from the classic *Bedhaya*. The formation of this motion became a new form of motion patterns and new dance from *Bedhaya* choreography. *Bedhaya* dance was a female group dance with nine dancers while being danced at the Palace (*Kraton*) and seven in the duchy (*Pura*).

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra was different from other *Bedhaya* dances. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance motions were arranged to realize Sarpakenaka character, which was manifested in the imitative motion of the snake. This form of motions presented a new motion pattern that tended to twist, and the arm became an imitation of a snake's head. The motion arrangement of this *Bedhaya* was not bound by the rules of the *Bedhaya* dance.

The preparation of *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance moves was inseparable from the considerations of the dancer's body work, motion techniques, motion forms, and content. The dancer's body was an important consideration in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance, because this dance movement was an exploration movement that required dancer experience and bodily flexibility. The motion technique in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* motion pattern required flexibility and mastery of the technique. The motion form became important when needed as an expression that embodies the dance theme. Through the motion form, variations in motion could be seen in each motion pattern. In addition, the motion form was also useful for viewing the motion track, floor track, motion volume and level.

Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra's choreography innovation produced a dance that was different from other *Bedhaya*. This could be seen in the motion patterns which were innovations from classic patterns and other dances such as Balinese and Malay dance. This innovation was done to get a new motion pattern according to the dance theme. In addition, the motion pattern in *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* did not have to have the same rhythm and tempo as in the other *Bedhaya*. So it could be seen that sometimes the movement rhythm and the count were not in tune with the dance accompaniment. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was a form of *Bedhaya* dance that did not strictly follow the patterns of *Bedhaya* rules, such as makeup, costume, dance moves, floor patterns, and dance music. *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* was a form of *Bedhayan*, but not a *Bedhaya*. Then it could be concluded that *Bedhaya Sarpa Rodra* dance was a *Bedhayan*, and was a classic choreographic innovation.

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