



The Journal of The Music Academy Madras

Devoted to the Advancement of the Science and Art of Music

Vol. 94 • 2025

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे न योगिहृदये रवौ ।
मद्भक्तः यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

“I dwell not in Vaikunta, nor in the hearts of Yogins, not in
the Sun; (but) where my Bhaktas sing, there be I, Narada !”

Narada Bhakti Sutra

Editor
Sriram V.

THE MUSIC ACADEMY MADRAS

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THE MUSIC ACADEMY MADRAS

New No. 168 (Old No. 306), T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 014.

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இராமலிங்க வள்ளலாரின் சமரச சன்மார்க்கக் கீர்த்தனைகளும் வேதநாயகரின் சர்வ சமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனைகளும்	147
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Editor's Note

The 98th annual conference held in December 2024 broke with immediate past practice in the sense that it had an overarching theme as given by the Sangita Kalanidhi designate TM Krishna. Raga was the theme and this in turn defined the bulk of the lecture demonstrations held during the conference. The same has therefore defined the reports of course and also the collection of scholarly articles that largely to papers presented at the conference.

During the year, our library grew in numbers. The Music Academy TAG Archives is done with its digitisation and archiving exercise. We have since migrated from Enter Media, the digital asset management platform to our home-grown solution, which will soon be up on the Internet. Our sincere thanks to *The Hindu* for lending its resource Suresh Vijayaraghavan who spearheaded the effort, with help from Savita Narasimhan and Lashman. The decision on how to make it accessible remains owing to the Academy's concerns over copyright.

The conference reports in this Journal have been put together by S Kirthana, Dr TR Aravind and Lashman. I thank them all for their efforts. A large part of the credit for co-ordinating this task goes to S Janaki, veteran arts journalist who is now consultant at the Music Academy. The diacritic marks have all been painstakingly added by S Kirthana. I thank the members of the Editorial Board for their advice. And of course, a huge thanks to the ever-smiling AS Diwakar and his team at Compuprint for bringing out the Journal on time.

We at the Music Academy would be happy to receive feedback on this Journal at music@musicacademymadras.com

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2026 and before that , a wonderful December participating in the 99th Annual Conference and Concerts of the Music Academy, Madras.

Sriram V
Music Academy
December 15, 2025



Report on the Inauguration of the Music Academy's 98th Annual Conference and Concerts on December 15, 2024

The former Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, S. Muralidhar, on Sunday (December 15, 2024) observed that listening to music helps us discover the art within. He said that to discover the art “within each of us, we must be prepared to let the music unpeel the layers below which it lies hidden and allow our artistic self to introduce itself to us.”

“It can happen if the music is listened to, not just heard or watched. And it can happen if we don't let our knowledge of music come in the way of our enjoying it in the present moment,” he said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 98th annual Conference and Concerts of The Music Academy here, he said that the 2024 Sangita Kalanidhi-designate, Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna, had made his choices clear -- musically and politically. He was prepared to face the consequences of such choices. He had a precedent in “MS Amma, who also made clear and courageous choices,” Justice Muralidhar said.

“Her opting to sing Tamil Isai earned her a five-year ban from this Academy. Thankfully, it made amends and honoured her with the Sangita Kalanidhi in 1968,” he recalled.

Sabha culture

“With so much happening in the virtual universe,” T.M. Krishna said, “We have forgotten Carnatic music's sabha culture.”

“I was told by many prominent musicians that between June and September this year, there were hardly any sabha concerts. The sabha network is a unique feeder system that provides consistent opportunities to musicians who are at various stages in their musical career. The smaller sabhas help them gain experience, receive constructive feedback from rasikas and rise in the profession. This network has weakened and this should worry all of us,” he said.

N. Murali, President of the Music Academy, said that Justice Muralidhar was widely respected for his integrity, forthrightness, erudition, incisiveness, discipline and above all, a self-effacing nature.

He was a keen and ardent rasika and a connoisseur of Carnatic music and had made time to attend concerts during the season.

On Mr. Krishna, he said that the singer gave his first concert at the age of 12 in 1988 during the Academy's Spirit of Youth series.

His musical career had been truly a voyage of exploration and within the confines of the Carnatic tone, he added.

Carnatic vocalists and Sangita Kalanidhi-s Bombay Jayashri and S. Sowmya graced the occasion.

Extracted from The Hindu and edited for this Journal

The text of the presidential address delivered by Vidwan T.M. Krishna at the inauguration of the 98th Annual Conference and Concerts is available in the Music Academy Souvenir 2024.



The full recording of the inaugural function can be seen on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=inauguration+Season+15+December+2024+music+academy



Report on the 98th Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Madras

December 16, 2024

The first day's session began with devotional group singing by Gayatri Varenya, Mahati, Meenakshi, Nanda, Nandhika and Ragasudha (students of the I year of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music with Pantula Saketh (violin), and Rohith (mridangam). Convenor of the academic sessions Sriram V, Secretary of The Music Academy, welcomed and introduced the session and the presenters. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate TM Krishna presided over the two sessions.

The Rāga Ādhāra - Tambūra

Speaker: Vidvān RK Shriramkumar with Vidvān P Dakshinamurti - tambura maker

Śrī RK Shriramkumar, the speaker for the first LecDem of the conference, began his presentation with a brief history of the tambūra with reference to Carnatic music. He said that the tambūra seems to have gained prominence from the time the ṣaḍja became fixed as the ādhāra śruti. He went on to explain that the instrument is probably inspired by various cultures such as Turkish and Persian, which influenced our musical tradition. In Mughal art too it makes a frequent appearance.

Speaking of references in literature, the speaker said that in Kannada it is referred to as 'tambūri' and that the pada-s of Sripadaraya Swami mention the instrument, as do the works of the various dāsa-s. In Tyāgarāja kṛti-s such as kaddanu vāriki and koluva maragada there are beautiful descriptions of the tambūra.

Following a brief discussion of the structure and parts of the instrument, specimens of Miraj, Tanjore, Calcutta, Trivandrum and Mysore tambūra-s were brought out and the differences in terms of tone and structure pointed out. The role of the jīva was discussed and the change in the sound quality while adjusting it was demonstrated. The speaker observed that a well-tuned tambūra is one which is said to have an overtone of antara gāndhāra.

Some interesting anecdotes of legendary musicians were shared. Two musicians who were known for their regard for the instrument were Bharat Ratna Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Smt MS Subbulakshmi and Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Śrī KV Narayanaswamy. The former's two Trivandrum tambūra-s gifted by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer were called 'lakṣmī' and 'sarasvatī'. It is said that Smt MS Subbulakshmi always tuned 'sarasvatī' first, before 'lakṣmī'.

The speaker then introduced Śrī Udayakumar, tambūra-maker, who in turn spoke briefly about the making, care and maintenance of the instrument.

Śrī RK Shriramkumar concluded his presentation by offering thanks to the tambūra-makers on behalf of the music community.

Members of the Experts' Committee Dr Rama Kausalya and Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan offered their comments. The latter pointed out a 'Mathur' type of tambūra from Karnataka that was favoured by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Smt T Brinda. Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Smt Suguna Varadachari emphasised the need for teachers to teach students to tune and play the instrument from an early stage.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna in his summing up speculated whether the concept of rāga could have emerged at all had the ādhāra śruti never been fixed. He also observed that certain tambūra-s with a flatter base, such as the Mīraj, are designed to be placed on the ground and played. Ideally the tambūra ought to be tuned after the artists take the stage, involving the audience too in the tuning process. He pointed out that certain frequencies are lost in the electronic tambūra and therefore it can never fully take on the role of the actual one. He concluded by expressing a desire for a day-long seminar on the subject of the tambūra.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — LecDem 01 – The Raga adhara | Tambura by Vidvan RK Shriramkumar with Vidvan P Dakshinamurti

Rāga Unlimited: Nāgasvaram Bāṇi

**Presented by Chinnamannur Dr A Vijay Karthikeyan, Idumbavanam V
Prakash: Ilayaraja**

Each musical instrument, the human voice included, has its individuality. When one utters ‘Nāgasvaram’, the immediate evocation in the mind is of unbounded rāga elaborations through Ālāpana.

This is because of the setting in which the instrument finds its primary place. Since *Nādam* is just as important as *Vēdam* in temples, the Nāgasvaram playing began to be shaped by the requirements around it -- processions that lasted for hours meant that the Nāgasvaram music accompanying it also lasted several hours, and traditionally delineating only one rāga through the entire course of the procession.

What characterises the Nāgasvaram bāṇi is its depth, composure, capaciousness in space allotted to each note (*kārvai*), its fullness and its density, enhanced by the accompanying Taval playing which punctuates different sections of the Nāgasvaram Ālāpana.

To elucidate the point, the speakers played clips of Tiruvavadudurai Rajarathnam Pillai for the insubordinate spirit expressed in his Nāgasvaram playing, Vedaranyam Vedamurthy for the quality of his sound which he accomplished through fundamental modifications on his instrument, Kottur Rajarathnam Pillai and Vandikkara Teru Brothers for their dual exploration of each rāga, and Tiruppamburam Brothers for their unbroken chain of musical elaboration.

The presentation reached its crescendo with the two speakers playing Rāgamālikā in the performance tradition practised during the processions of Tiruvahindrapuram Devanatha Swami (who is celebrated as *Ēzīśai Nāthar* - The Lord of seven notes) in the following rāga-s – Nāṭṭakkuriṅji, Gaula, Raṅjani, Ānandabhairavi, Śaṅkarābharāṇam, Śaṅmukhapriyā, Kēdāragaula, Āhiri, Nīlāmbari, Bauli, Malayamārutam, Bilahari, Dhanyāsi, Sāvēri, Kēdāram, Surati, Kāpi, Asāvēri, Ārabhi, Darbār, Bahudāri, Bāgēśrī, Behāg, Husēni, Bēgaḍa, Kānaḍā, Varāli, Vasantā, Aṭhāṇa, Kalyāṇī, Bhairavi, Hamīrkalyāṇī, Sindhubhairavi, Nalinakānti, Kaṅṅaraṅjani, Kadanakutūhalam, Dharmavati, Yadukulakāmbhōji, Māṇḍ, Mandāri, Madhyamāvati.

(The day's lecdems were concluded with 2 minutes of silence to mark the departure of Ustad Zakir Hussain.)



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — LecDem 02 – Academic Session 2024 | Raga unlimited: Nadasvaram bani at The Music Academy Madras

December 17, 2024

Encapsulating a Rāga: Varṇamettu

Presented by Sangita Kala Acharya Dr Ritha Rajan

The second day's session began with group devotional singing by students of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music — Bharatraj, Kamakshi, Shruthika, Snigdha (II year) and Pavanetra and Uthara (III year), with Pantula Saketh (violin) and Rohith (mridangam).

The first lecture of the day on the above topic was presented by Viduṣī Dr Ritha Rajan. Convenor Sriram V introduced the proceedings. TM Krishna, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate, presided over the session.

Since the presenter has written a complete article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — LecDem 03 - Academic Session 2024 | Encapsulating a Raga: Varnamettu at The Music Academy Madras

Rāga descriptions in the Bṛhaddēśī of Matanga

Presented by Dr V Premalatha

The second lecture of the day was presented by Viduṣī Dr V Premalatha, on the above mentioned topic. Convenor Sriram V introduced the proceedings, TM Krishna, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate, presided over the session.

Since the presenter has written a complete article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem04 Academic Session 2024 | Raga descriptions in the Brhaddesi of Matanga Music Academy Madras

December 18, 2024

The third day's proceedings began with convenor Sriram V's opening remarks which was followed by Ragasudha (I year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music, rendering a ślōka on Budha – one of the Navagraha, in rāga-s Devagāndhāri and Saurāṣṭra with the similar phrases *sndNdp* to suit the theme of the lecdem.

Similar Phraseologies in Non-Allied Rāga-s

Presented by Dr R Hemalatha

Before going into the subject of non-allied rāga-s, the speaker Dr Hemalatha briefly examined allied rāga-s.

In general, allied rāga-s are

- rāga-s that share the same set of svāra-s or prayōga-s
- rāga-s that may be janya-s of one particular mēla (For e.g. śrīrañjanī, ābhōgi, jayamanōharī are all janya-s of kharaharapriya).
- rāga-s that may be janya-s of the same mēla and also share the same prayōga-s ('sa ga ri ga ma' in rītigaṭṭa and ānandabhairavī)

Therefore non-allied rāga-s are

- simply put, those which do not come under the above categories
- those sharing similar prayōga-s despite having different parent mēla-s (the rendering of such prayōga-s is also quite similar)

Similar Phraseologies in Non-Allied Rāga-s

Dr Hemalatha broadly classified similar phraseologies or prayōga-s in non-allied rāga-s into four categories -

1. prayōga-s present in both ārōha and avarōha
2. prayōga-s not present in ārōha-avarōha but seen in the rāga e.g. prayōga-s observed only in the compositions
3. Not seen in ārōha-avarōha or compositions but only in manōdharma aspects
4. Some prayōga-s that have come to a rāga from another rāga

The speaker first discussed the question of allyship among mēla rāga-s. The 72 mēlakarta-s share the 'sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa - sa ni dha pa ma ga ri sa' krama; only the svāra variety

changes for each rāga. She observed that these rāga-s cannot be considered non-allied rāga-s with similar phrases as the svara-s are indicative of the scale and not the rāga-svarūpa.

She considered tōḍi and kalyāṇī to be exceptions and went on to explain that a comparison of the two yields similarities in the treatment. To illustrate her point the speaker sang the svara portion of the pallavi of the tōḍi varṇam erānāpai and the kalyāṇī ādi tāla varṇam vanajākṣī, in both tōḍi and kalyāṇī. She observed that, although it may not hold good for the entire composition, the exercise does bring out similarities in some places. She also demonstrated other commonalities in terms of ṣaḍja pañcama varṇam, nyāsa svara, and vādi-samvādi handling, and felt that such a comparison cannot be made for the other rāga-s of the tōḍi or kalyāṇī cakras.

The four categories of phraseologies were next taken up for discussion.

1. Non-allied rāga-s that share the same set of svara-s or prayōga-s

Under this head the prayōga-s in three sets of rāga-s were discussed.

a). sāmā and dēvagāndhāri

- ‘pa ma dha ni sa’ is common to both.
- ‘sa ni dha ni dha pa’ in avarōha is also common.
- both are uttarāṅga prādhānam.

Here demonstrations of both dēvagāndhāri and sāmā versions of the same Narayana Tirtha taraṅgam ‘śaraṇam bhava’ were given. (The speaker also shared an AIR recording of the same by Smt Srirangam Gopalaratnam in ārabhi which interestingly featured a plain antara gāndhāra prayōga in the ‘krpālō’ portion of the sāhitya.)

b) gaula and pūrṇacandrikā

- They share the avarōha phrase ‘sa ni pa ma ri ga ma ri’
- The ṛṣabha ending the vakra prayōga is mostly dīrgha.
- In the case of gaula the vakra phrase is also sometimes skipped (pa ma ri sa) as seen in Tyāgarāja’s ‘duḍuku gala’, but that is not so for sārāṅga or pūrṇacandrikā. This difference was duly demonstrated.

c) bēgaḍa and pūrvikalyāṇī

- Both have the phrase ‘ga ma pa dha pa sa’ in ārōha.
- The speaker demonstrated the phrase for both and highlighted the differences in handling based on the madhyamam. In bēgaḍa the force of the phrase usually begins from the gāndhāra itself whereas in pūrvikalyāṇī there is a hint of the

pratimadhyamam (ma pa dha pa sa) or an inclusion of śuddha ṛṣabha (ma pa dha pa ri sa) or the usage of ‘ma dha sa’.

2. Non-allied rāga-s with similar prayōga-s that are not present in the ārōha-avarōha but in the compositions

Here the phraseologies common to the following two sets of rāga-s were demonstrated.

- a) aṭhāṇa and dhanyāsī
 - ‘pa pa ma ga ma pa’ is seen in kṛti-s such as bālakṛṣṇan and bālakanakamaya.
- b) ānandabhairavī and kēdāragauḷa
 - Both feature ‘sa ri ga ri ni sa ri sa ni dha pa’ in ālāpana as well as compositions -- the speaker showed how the same is handled for each.

3. Non-allied ragas with similar prayoga-s that are seen in the manōdharma aspects

The phraseologies of the following rāga-s were discussed.

- a) bhairavi and bēgaḍa
 - The speaker demonstrated the handling of ‘ni, ni sa ri, ri sa ni’ and pointed out the similar treatment of nyāsa around the upper sa region.
 - ‘pa sa ni, pa ri ri sa ni, sa ri ri sa ni’ phrases are also common to both.
- b) sāvērī and pūrvikalyāṇī
 - uttarāṅga of ārōha is ‘dha sa’ for both.
 - phrases like ‘dha sa ri ga, ri’ ‘dha sa ri sa ri ga, ri’ are seen. ‘ma dha sa’ area was also demonstrated for both to highlight similarity.

Similar phrases in the rendering of kalpana svāra-s

This subtopic was covered under the same category, and the rāga-s suruṭī and ārabhi were taken up for comparison.

- In singing svāra the ‘ma ga ri’ areas of both rāga-s are similar.
- gāndhāra is rendered close to madhyama in both -- when singing ṛṣabha nyāsa sañcāra svāra-s in suruṭī ‘ma, ga ri’ (with dīrgha ma) is observed.

4. Prayoga-s that have somehow come to a rāga from other rāga-s

Four sets of rāga-s were discussed here.

a) nāṭṭakkuriñḷī and rītigauḷa

- The speaker demonstrated the ‘ni dha pa dha ni dha ma’ phrases in both and observed that historically there was śuddha dhaivata in rītigauḷa. The 19th century work ‘Pallavi Svara Kalpavalli’ gives its lakṣaṇa with both dhaivata-s but today it has become a janya of kharaharapriya. These days even dhaivata graha sañcāra-s are being sung at times. This could have probably come from nāṭṭakkuriñḷī.

b) aṭhāṇa and kāṇaḍā

- ‘sa ni dha ni dha’ in mandhra sthāyi was demonstrated in both. The speaker noted here that according to Rangaramanuja Iyengar’s ‘Kṛtīmanimālā’ Tyāgarāja had composed without kākali niṣāda in kāṇaḍā.

c) bhairavi and kharaharapriya

- The speaker demonstrated how sañcāra around the upper sa (sa sa ni dha ni sa ri ga ri) is often rendered in a similar manner by musicians; in bhairavi compositions such as viribōṇi varṇam, there is always dīrgha niṣāda or jhaṅṭa niṣāda before the catuśruti dhaivata. She noted that it is more appropriate to sing without dhaivata in the ‘sa’ area for bhairavi.

d) bēgaḍa and hamīrkalyāṇī

- ‘ma-ga pa-ma dha-pa’ being sung in bēgaḍa is probably derived from hamīrkalyāṇī.
- the speaker also discussed the usage of kaiśiki niṣāda in hamīrkalyāṇī these days which is not observed in any of the compositions of the trinity. This is either taken from behāg or from the hindustāni rāga kēdār but wrongly attributed to hamīr which does not feature that note.

Concluding her presentation Dr Hemalatha observed that apart from the presence of similar phraseologies in non-allied rāga-s it is seen that different phrases have come into a rāga through the manōdharma aspects and have become integral to their identity over time.

Speaking for the Experts’ Committee, Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Smt Suguna Varadachari observed that when singing aṭhāṇa svara ‘ma pa ri ma pa’ is not sung but only ‘ga ma pa’. A small debate followed over whether ṛṣabha nyāsa for gāndhāra area was possible for pūrvikalyāṇī, which Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna demonstrated. Smt Varadachari also pointed out that although there are similar phrases in many rāga-s, the emphasis on the svara-s of a phrase changes according to the rāga in which it features. She demonstrated the phrase ‘ri ga ma pa dha ni’ in bēgaḍa and saḥāna to illustrate the point.

Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan pointed out that in sārāṅga there is ‘pa ma ri sa’ in Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita’s composition. Here Śrī TM Krishna observed that rāga-s with ‘ri

ga ma ri' phrase are most times allowed a 'pa ma ri sa' without dīrgha to break the conditionality. Dr Rajan referred to Harold Powers' comparison of adhāṇa and aṭhāṇa in which the author remarks that the differences are observed in terms of stylistic approach, despite the shared phrases.

Dr Abhiramasundari from the audience remarked on the importance of pāṭhāntara in preserving the rāga svarūpa. Her guru Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Smt R Vedavalli was very particular on the matter of avoiding kākali niṣāda in kānaḍā, she said.

Śrī TM Krishna, in summing up, mused on the basis for allyship among rāga-s, saying that tōḍi and kalyāṇī cannot be treated as allies simply on the basis of ārōha-avarōha. kalyāṇī and sāvēri feature pañcama varja prayōga-s only in avarōha in compositions, but in present times such a treatment is observed in ārōha too equally, he said. He pointed out the difference in rendering the 'ni dha ma' for nāṭṭakuriṇṇi and rītigaula, saying that there is no need to include the 'pa' each time in either. He concluded with a demonstration of the niṣāda in suruṭi and rītigaula, remarking that allyship, as in the case of these two rāga-s, can even occur in a single note.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 05 Academic Session 2024 | Similar Phraseologies in Non-Allied Raga-s | Music Academy Madras

இழப்பின் வலியும் வலியின் இழப்பும் – ஓப்பாரிப் பாடல்களை முன்வைத்து

Presented by Dr A Ramanathan

The second lecture-demonstration of the day was presented by Prof A Ramanathan, an expert on folk songs (nāṭṭupura pāḍalgaḷ) with 50 years of research experience and over 50 publications to his credit. He was assisted by Dr S Ramesh, Associate Professor at the Department of Tamil, AVC College, Mayiladuthurai.

Dr Ramanathan began by discussing the greatness of nāṭṭupura pāḍalgaḷ and recalled Mahakavi Subrahmanya Bharatiyar, who was greatly inspired by the folk songs of Tamil Nadu. His songs such as sudandira paḷḷu, accamillai accamillai, nallakālam porakkudu, etc., are just some of the many which reflect this influence.

The speaker then related his experiences in collecting folk songs during field work in the rural parts of Tamil Nadu, particularly the difficulties he faced in the case of oppāri pāḍalgaḷ. It was not always possible or appropriate to record oppāri-s at a funeral; instead he would approach the women who would gather in groups and perform the oppāri. Once one of them started singing, the others would start crying and joining in.

He then described the act of oppāri in the house of death, where the women would sit around the body, crying and singing, while the men would sit outside, with paid mourners to perform for them. This is referred to as kūlikku māraḍittal.

Moving on to the themes dealt with in oppāri, the speaker said that such songs usually mourn the loss of a loved one and its impact on the singer's life. For example, a married daughter's oppāri for her mother would describe all that she would now miss because her mother is no more -- the latter's hospitality towards her husband and children, the gifts she would shower on them, the manner in which she would celebrate them all, etc. Dr. Ramesh demonstrated a few oppāri-s, one sung by the speaker's grandmother, and another a oppāri version of the folk song 'kūḍayilē kal porukki'; the speaker had recorded it from an agricultural worker who had lost her only son, and the experience left him deeply affected, he said.

Talking about the structure, he said oppāri generally has multiple stanzas -- the tune of the first one forms the model for the rest. He observed that such a structure can also be seen in other songs such as kummi and naḍavu. The same songs are often sung under different circumstances with suitable changes in their tune and metre.

In conclusion, the speaker remarked on the power of oppāri to connect instantly with the listener, compelling them to empathise with the physical expression of grief. Justifying the choice of title ‘izappin valiyum valiyin izappum’, the speaker observed that the oppāri is about the pain of loss and the mitigation of it through its performance.

Experts’ committee member Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan and Śrī KSR Aniruddha offered their compliments to the speaker, following which questions from Dr Mahalingam and some members of the audience were answered.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna, in summing up, expressed appreciation for the presentation and ended by stressing on the universality of human emotions and the need to reimagine a collective approach to Art, not as folk or classical, but as a universal phenomenon.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s YouTube channel — <https://youtu.be/Brqfhn3Ha08?si=IUz7BCS9ltpEkMX>

December 19, 2024

The day's proceedings began with the singing of the Tyāgarāja kīrtana Rāgasudhārāsa in Āndōlika rāga, by Gayatri Varenya and Meenakshi (I year students) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sriram V did the introductions, and the session was presided over by TM Krishna.

Kūttu Rāga-s: Evoking the character

Presented by Vidvan P. Rajagopal and Dr Hanne M. de Bruin

The session commenced with Rajagopal's rendition of invocation, along with his team of musicians, introducing to the audience the fundamental sound of Kūttu. This artform is often described as loud, but since it is an open-air theatre form which does not use amplification, it relies solely on the open-throated renditions of the Kūttu artists and their ensemble.

Rajagopal's team appeared devoid of the traditional regalia (Kaṭṭai) of the Kūttu performance in order to capture the attention solely on the music of Kūttu.

Though Kūttu music and Carnatic music share in their similarity fundamental principles like śruti, layam, tālam and even a few common rāga-s, the way the artists use their voice to produce the music true to these forms is infinitely different. In Kūttu, the robust, high-pitched, unamplified voice of the singer, enhanced further by the stillness of the night, accompanied by the mukhavīṇā, provides Kūttu with its unmistakable sound. The music is inseparable from the text, the rāga from the rasa.

Rajagopal rendered a piece in rāga Mōhanam from the Hiraṇya Nāṭakam, revealing Vīra rasa through the rāga. Mōhanam is among the chiefly employed rāga-s here, alongside Nāṭṭai, Mukhāri, Dhanyāsi, Kāmbhōji, Kalyāṇī, Harikāmbhōji, Kēdāragaula and Bhairavi. Other than the rāga-s, the compositions are usually set to varṇameṭṭu-s.

The team then performed an excerpt from Mahabharata depicting an exchange between Krishna and Subhadra, followed by a different scene portraying Karna's entrance.

Hanne and Rajagopal were joined by Vijayan on the harmonium, Sasikumar on mukhavīṇā, Selvarasan on mṛdaṅgam and dhōlak, and Kumar, Devan, Doraisamy, Bharati and Tamilarasi as the supporting actors (pinnaṇi).

In the discussion following the lec-dem, Sasikumar also spoke about mukhavīṇā and the team's effort in sustaining this steadily disappearing instrument.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 07 Academic Session 2024 | Kuttu Raga-s: Evoking the character | The Music Academy Madras

Between Page and Stage: Raga and Raga Music in Classical Literary Sources

Presented by Prof. Naresh Keerthi

Professor Naresh Keerthi, in his lecture, examined passages from various literary sources such as *kāvya* and *nāṭaka* dealing with musicological references, with the intent of understanding the accounts of performing arts in literature. He dedicated his talk to Dr V Raghavan and Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Śrī Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma.

He first took up the Sanskrit work ‘*Vijayaśrīnāṭikā*’ of Maṇḍana, written in 12th century. Explaining that the *nāṭikā* is a genre of play with the closest contemporary equivalent being the romantic comedy, he said that this particular work is found inscribed in stone in the Kamal Maula Masjid in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh.

He explained a passage from the work describing a scene from Vasanta ṛtu or spring season. The passage is a dialogue between the King and his jester, where the former is describing *rāga hindōla/hinḍōla* in some detail to the latter. He also says there is no *ṛṣabha* or *dhaivata* in the *rāga* and that it has *kampa* in *ṣaḍja* and *pañcama* and calls it a *grāma rāga*.

Next the speaker chose four passages from a Jain *kāvya* from Karnataka called the ‘*Sanatkumāracarite*’ of Terakaṇāmbi Bommarasa, ca. 1485. The Kannada work deals with the story of Sanatkumara and Mahendrasimha, and the speaker, explaining the context, said that it is of Mahendrasimha witnessing an entertainment by *apsara-s*. The verse set in *ṣaṭpadi* metre gives a detailed description of the dance and drumming of the *apsara-s* -- it says one is keeping tempo with her hands and feet; another skilfully plays the *mṛdaṅga*. Different *tāla-s* are such as *sūlādi*, *caccari*, *caṅcupuṭa*, *jayamaṅgala*, *jayaśrī*, *simhanānda*, are mentioned. The verse also mentions that the *apsara-s* danced the 108 *tāla-s*.

The subsequent passages mention an *apsara* singing in lower and higher octaves, and here names of *rāga-s* are mentioned - *dhanyāsi*, *malahari*, *lalite* and *kāmbōdi*. The speaker remarked on the amount of musical detail to be gained from these particular passages alone.

He next took up the Telugu work ‘*Cokkanāthacaritramu*’ of Paccakappurapu Tiruvēṅgalarāju (Madurai, ca. 1540). Explaining that the author was in the Court of Gollapeddarāma, the speaker said that the work is a retelling of ‘*Tiruvilayāḍal Purāṇam*’. The passages he chose are part of the story of Hemanatha who goes to the Pandya kingdom and proclaims himself a peerless champion in the science of music. Prof Keerthi pointed out the details given about Hemanatha’s singing, which included renditions of *tāna*, *ālāpa*, *sūlādi-s*, *gīta-s*, and *prabandha-s*.

The speaker next spoke of a passage from the Kannada work ‘Mōhanatarāṅgiṇī’ of Kanakadāsa (Karnataka, ca. 1550). It is about the demon king Bāṇāsura, and the women musicians of his court rendering Bāṇāsurasuprabhāta, begging the King to arise. The description goes: ‘sweet-smelling women came to sing daybreak songs; they tuned their daṇḍi-s and sang śuddha, sālaga and saṅkīrṇa notes and sang ālāpa-s, ṭhāya-s, gīta-s on the 108 tāla-s.’ rāga-s such as nārāṇi, dēśākṣi, gurjari, dēvagāndhāri, guṇḍakriya, ārabhi, sāmanta, malahari are mentioned here.

The ‘Nalacaritamu’ of Raghunāthanāyaka (Tanjore, ca. 1600), a Telugu work, was taken up next. The speaker chose a passage giving details of a vīṇā performance by Princess Damayanti -- it describes how she strums it with flair, practises the mūrchana-s repeatedly, checked the notes and their counterpoints, ran over the scales and then played a flood of tunes. There is a description of the sound of her playing and her nāṭa rāga and sañcāri tāna performance, as well as her playing gaula rāga. Further she is said to have played songs in bhairavi, śrī, śaṅkarābharaṇam and jayantasēnā. The ārōha-avarōha rendition of the last is also described.

The last excerpt the speaker took up for discussion was from a Sanskrit nāṭikā again, the ‘Raghunāthavilāsanāṭakam’ of Yajñanārāyaṇa Dīkṣita (Tanjore, ca. 1600). The situation is of King Raghunātha and his jester coming to a temple where they hear the playing of music in the temple grove. The passage the speaker discussed mentions gamaka, kāku, tāla, nāda, mūrchana, svāra, etc. It also shows the king pondering whether what he is hearing is auḍava or ṣāḍava, and his subsequent inference that it is actually a sampūrṇa as all seven notes feature, and his conviction that the rāga is actually nāṭa.

Prof. Naresh Keerthi then concluded his presentation, observing that such detailed musical descriptions can be found in the works of early modern period probably because of the co-presence of vāggēyakāra-s and poets. Speaking of the time period he took up for discussion, he said it saw a revitalisation of forms such as prabandha, gīta, āyitta, etc. He called for the setting up of a historic atlas of the various stages of music, dance and theatre from non-musical and non-dramaturgical texts of this time period, with special emphasis on dēśya vocabulary of music and dance, of which, he felt, not much is known.

Experts’ Committee member Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan paid her compliments to the speaker and expressed concern over the amount of technical information given which might undermine the kāvya effect. The speaker explained that the kāvya is meant to be like an encyclopaedia as it is considered a scholarly genre; the author’s sharing such details can be taken as a compliment to his learned audience, he said. Śrī V Sriram here mentioned the Prabandha Kāvya-s of Krishnadeva which feature a lot of varṇana-s.

Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr RS Jayalakshmi speaking next mentioned a similar approach to composition in ‘Silappadikāram’.

Vid Śrī RK Shriramkumar, Vid Smt Sangeetha Sivakumar, and members of the audience also participated in the interactive session that followed.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna, in summing up thanked the speaker for his insightful presentation, and noted that kāvya-s play a major role in understanding music practice by augmenting the information provided in musical treatises. He remarked on the usage of older terminologies in musicological works that is observed in kāvya-s too, and Prof. Naresh Keerthi gave a brief exposition on the evolution of the usage of such terminologies through various stages in kāvya history. Śrī TM Krishna then observed that the Post-Ratnākara period saw treatises emerge focusing only on the music part of Saṅgīta and no longer dealing with a form that is a composite of music, dance and theatre. He wound up with a mention of a verse from ‘Vasucaritramu’ that is also quoted by Subbarāma Dīkṣita, where it is said that the rāga vasantā should feature the pañcama. It is interesting to find Subbarāma Dīkṣita referencing kāvya in his work which is a musical treatise, he said.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – Lec Dem 08 Academic Session 2024 | Between Page and Stage: Raga and Raga Music in Classical Literary

December 20, 2024

Hindustāni rāga-s in the Karnāṭik repertory

Panel Discussion : Vidvan MA Sundareswaran, Dr Pantula Rama and Dr Subhashini Parthasarathy

The day's session started with the singing of Mysore Vasudevachar's Pāhi Kṛṣṇa Vāsudēva, in Behāg rāga, by Ragasudha (I year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. The proceedings commenced with Sriram V's introduction. The session was presided by TM Krishna.

Opening the discussion, Pantula Rama traced the historical evolution of Indian music from the period of Śāringadēva, noting that the term *Karnāṭaka Saṅgīta* was first coined by the 15th-century musicologist Kallinātha.

M.A. Sundareswaran followed, drawing parallels between Karnāṭik *rāga-s*, *Tēvāra paṇ-s*, and the *Hindustāni rāga-s*, and observed that significant similarities exist among these three systems of music.

Subhashini Parthasarathy then elaborated on *dēśī rāga-s* — those believed to have originated from the northern tradition. Over time, she explained, many of these *rāga-s* were adapted into the Karnāṭik idiom and transformed into *naya* or *rakti* *rāga-s* through the incorporation of characteristic *gamaka-s*. She highlighted key distinctions between the two systems, including the Karnāṭik use of *kampita gamaka*, a broader compositional base, and the tendency to employ both preceding and succeeding *svara-s* in relation to an anchor note — unlike in Hindustāni music, where only the higher note is emphasized.

Subhashini also presented a survey of *dēśī rāga-s* mentioned in various treatises beginning from 'Rāga Lakṣaṇamu' of Śāhājī. She discussed *rāga-s* that share the same name but differ in *svarūpa*, as well as those with identical *svarūpa* but different names across the two systems. A noteworthy reference was made to Girirāja Kavi, a poet from the period of Śāhājī and Sarabhōjī, who composed in the *rāga-s* Dvijāvanti and Brṇḍāvani.

The panel further examined how influences from Hindustāni music may have shaped certain Karnāṭik *rāga-s* — such as the introduction of *kākali niṣāda* in Khamās and prati madhyamam in Pharaju. The discussion concluded with practical demonstrations on the adaptation and rendition of Hindustāni *rāga-s* within the contemporary Karnāṭik concert circuit.

The session ended with a lively interaction involving members of the Experts Committee of The Music Academy. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-designate Vidvān T.M. Krishna appreciated the speakers and concluded the proceedings.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Panel Discussion: Academic Session 2024 | Hindustani raga-s in the karnatik repertory

December 21, 2024

An examination of ālāpa and ṭhāya

Presented by Dr Arati Rao

The day's proceedings began with a composition of Irayimman Thampi in Asāvēri rāga, from the Mohiniattam repertoire, presented by Shruthika and Snigdha (II year students) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music.

The first lecture of the day was presented by Viduṣī Dr Arati Rao, on the above mentioned topic. Convenor Sriram V introduced the proceedings, TM Krishna presided over the session.

Since the presenter has written a detailed article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 09 Academic Session 2024 | An examination of ālāpa and ṭhāya
| Dr Arati Rao

Evocative Expressions of Mohiniattam using Karṇāṭik Music

Presented by Dr Neena Prasad, Nritya Kalanidhi designate

Though Karṇāṭik music thrives in all its glory in a concert performance, there are myriad human emotions, in all its shades and complexities, that are evoked through the music in a dance performance.

Mohiniattam as an art form primarily employs the vilamba kāla gait of music and movement, without being distracted by explicit complexities, giving it the luxury of leisure to bring out the rāga bhāva. This requires the musicians of the orchestra to be equal participants in the performance.

Compositions presented by Neena Prasad:

1. Colkaṭṭu - aṭa tāla - rītigaula - Madhavan Nambudri. In this piece, music's interaction with pure dance was demonstrated.
2. Sakhē kṛṣṇa sakhē - latāṅgi - ādi - set to tune by Madhavan Nambudri. This composition depicted the narrative dance element of the style, and music's role is crucial to this segment.
3. Ālimāre kāṅga - śaṅkarābharaṇam, darbār, latāṅgi - ādi - Madhavan Nambudri. Narrative dance again, with different rāga-s used to contrast between various emotions of the composition and the subject.
4. Amba kāmākṣī - bhairavi - miśra cāpu - Syama Sastri. In Mohiniattam, compositions of Swati Tirunal and Iraiyyamman Thampi are quite popular, but this piece was presented to show how a composition foreign to Mohiniattam is negotiated into the genre, while retaining the aesthetic identities of both bodies.
5. Kāṅga kāṅgi - gānamūrti - miśra cāpu - Madhavan Nambudri. This piece is based on Amrapali, where the music is tuned to directly reflect the feelings of the protagonist.

Neena Prasad argued that Mohiniattam, from the beginning to end, is a purely musical experience. She acknowledged the contributions of her long-time collaborator and musician, Madhavan Nambudri, who provided the musical accompaniment for the day, stating that if not for the equal investment of musician and the dancer, the creative process would remain incomplete. She was also joined on stage by KP Ramesh Babu (mr̥daṅgam) and Vidya Pradeep (cymbals).



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 10 Academic Session 2024 | Evocative Expressions of Mohiniyattam using Karnatik Music

December 22, 2024

Mysterious Medieval transformations – Rāga-s Āharī and Ābhērī

Presented by Dr K Srilatha

The proceedings of the seventh day of the academic sessions began with the rendering of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar's kṛti Vīṇābhērī in Abhērī rāga with the śuddha dhaivata, sung by Mahati (I year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music.

Since the presenter has written a detailed article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 11 Academic Session 2024 | Mysterious Medieval transformations – Ragas Āharī and Ābhērī

Accompanying a Rāga – A percussive perspective

Presented by Vidvān K Arun Prakash accompanied by Viduṣī Brindha Manickavasakam (vocal), Vidvān N Madan Mohan (violin)

Vid Arun Prakash gave a demonstration-oriented presentation punctuated by his insights at suitable intervals. He began by emphasising the need for a mṛdaṅgist to understand the nuances of a composition and the intent of the composer in order to accompany aesthetically; this in turn helps the vocalist to a great extent. The speaker said that although the tāla forms the base for the percussionist, he needs to be guided just as much, if not more, by the melody, be it for compositions or manōdharma aspects of niraval or svara.

Supported by Vid Brindha Manickavasakam and Vid Madan Mohan, the speaker demonstrated playing styles for different compositions. The first song presented was ninnāḍa nēla in kannāḍa rāga. Here the speaker demonstrated an approach to suit the madhyama kāla tempo of the composition. He also observed that it is important for the audience to hear the sāhitya clearly and notice the way it merges with the rāga itself.

Next śrī mātṛbhūtam, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita's kṛti in the same rāga in mīśracāpu was presented. The speaker called attention to the spread of the rāga in this song as opposed to the earlier one. In mēlkāla saṅgati-s where faster playing is required he said it is important to ensure that the volume does not overpower the melody and when there are drops in the melody to the lower octave refraining from playing allows the melody to be heard. He also noted that matching the beat to the syllables of the sāhitya enhances the structure of the madhyamakāla.

cētaśrī was presented next. Here Śrī Arun Prakash deliberately refrained from joining immediately, explaining that it allowed time for the melody and sāhitya to register. It is important not to over-embellish saṅgati-s, which can end up stifling them, he said. He also remarked on the role of silences between the lines in the compositions of Dīkṣitar.

Next tāyē tripurasundari was presented and here he commented on the nature of rāga-s like śuddha sāvēri which naturally demand a certain tempo, rhythm-oriented style of playing ('viṭṭu vāsikkardu').

The final composition demonstrated was the svarajati 'kāmākṣī' in bhairavi by Śyāmā Śāstri. Here the speaker highlighted the various nuances in laya and melody and their interplay within the composition. The grandeur of the rāga unfurls slowly through the eight caraṇa-s, said the speaker, and it requires the percussionist to compose himself mentally in a similar manner. His role here becomes vital in directing attention to the structure and melody. The

artists took their time to present the entire composition, and the slow buildup of momentum to the crescendo of the last carāṇa was much appreciated by everyone present.

Experts' Committee member Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan complimented Vid Arun Prakash on his gift for anticipation which she said is reflected in his ability to accompany for all pāṭhāntara-s. She also remarked on the differences in the madhyama kāla approach of Tyāgarāja and Dīkṣita. With reference to the svarajati, she said that Śyāmā Śāstri in his notations has noted the miśracāpu always as 4 and 3, and not the other way round; the change to 3 and 4 must have been brought about in later years. In the svarajati too the 7 has been perceived in a variety of ways (2+5, 2+3+2, etc.).

Here Śrī Arun Prakash remarked on the need to understand the laya in Śyāmā Śāstri's works through the lens of his time period. The rhythm in his works is unconventional and novel, and probably one of the biggest contributions of the time period, he said.

Dr Rama Kausalya, Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr RS Jayalakshmi, and Executive Committee member Dr Sumathi (Meenakshi) Krishnan also offered their comments.

The Q&A session followed next and Vid Praveen Sparsh, Vid Bharat Sundar, Vid BS Purushothaman and Vid Ramanathan took part.

Summing up for the presentation Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Vid TM Krishna remarked whether structural emphasis is more difficult to bring out in cauka kāla compositions than in madhyama kāla ones, to which Śrī Arun Prakash agreed. The latter further stressed on the cultivation of 'rasikatvam' and what he termed 'Carnatic percussive creativity' – an approach to percussion similar to that of the vocalist to manōdharma.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 12 Academic Session 2024 | Accompanying a raga – A percussive perspective

December 23, 2024

Lakṣaṇa and Lakṣya: A contested relationship

Panel Discussion : Vidvān Bharath Sundar, Vidvān G Ravikiran and Viduṣī Sriranjani Santhanagopalan

The day's proceedings began with the kīrtana composed by Dandapani Desigar, Pāḍi magiznidūvōm, in rāga Jīvantika, sung by Kamakshi (II year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music.

Opening the discussion, Sriranjani Santhanagopalan defined *lakṣaṇa* as the grammatical framework and *lakṣya* as the creative expression of the artist. She emphasized that *lakṣaṇa* encompasses theoretical sources such as musical treatises, recordings, and teachings handed down by gurus. She noted that there is a constant interplay between these two concepts in Carnatic music.

G. Ravikiran elaborated on the significance that celebrated composers have accorded to *lakṣaṇa grantha-s* and *granthakartā-s*, illustrating this with references to the kṛtis Vidulaku and Saṅgīta Śāstra. He analyzed definitions of *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* from various classical texts, cited the *rāga lakṣaṇa* deliberations that took place at The Music Academy, and explained how these discussions have contributed to shaping the structure of *rāga-s*. Ravikiran also highlighted inconsistencies that exist between *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* as recorded in such proceedings, as well as the changes observed over time in *varṇa-s* and *gīta-s*.

Bharath Sundar shared his experiential insights, reflecting on how *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* have influenced his own approach to performance and interpretation.

The discussion then progressed to address contentious issues such as the violation of *lakṣaṇa* in the renditions of popular musicians, the evolving nature of *lakṣya* over time, and the mismatches between the two. The panel also debated the relevance of *lakṣaṇa* in the context of present-day Carnatic music.

Ravikiran categorized musical information into three groups:

1. Rāga-s with both *lakṣaṇa* and *lakṣya* available,
2. Rāga-s with only *lakṣya* available, and
3. Rāga-s with only *lakṣaṇa* available.

He noted that several compositions of Śrī Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar fall into the third category, mentioning the *rāga-s* Dhāmatī and Gīrvāṇī as examples where compositions exist, though

performance practice has diverged. The panel concluded with a discussion on the importance of ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa in learning and internalizing rāga-s.

The session was well-received and concluded with a lively interaction involving members of the Experts Committee and the Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-designate, Vidvān TM Krishna.



The panel discussion can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel
— Panel Discussions | Academic Session 2024 | Lakshana and Lakshya: A contested
relationship

December 24, 2024

The Abhinaya Saṅgītam of Kathakali: The blend of Rāga and Bhāva

Presented by Vidvān Nedumbally Ram Mohan and Viduṣī Meera Ram Mohan

The proceedings of the day began with the rendition of a Kathakali padam by Bharatraj (II year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sriram V introduced the session, TM Krishna presided.

Vid Ram Mohan started the presentation with the traditional invocatory pieces like Tōḍayam and Mukhacalam in rāga Malama. He then forayed into Pāḍi, which is different from the Pāḍi of the Carnatic system that falls under the 15th Mēla. This rāga is used especially for the segments played by the ‘villain’ characters like Duryodhana and Kichaka. He presented two compositions in the same rāga to show its versatile usage to bring out both śṛṅgāra and vīra rasa-s.

Khandaram and Dukha Khandaram are also rāga-s that are used for vīra and śōka rasa-s respectively. This rāga has both sādharmaṇa and antara gāndhāra varieties. For scenes dominated with pathos, sādharmaṇa gāndhāra is used extensively, and antara gāndhāra, when it is charged with valour.

Vid Meera then presented Gaulipantu and showed how both the madhyama-s are used in the phraseology of the rāga.

Gānakuriṅgi, another indigenous rāga of the Kathakali tradition, is used to express helplessness. Ram Mohan mentioned at this juncture that most rāga-s used in Kathakali fall under the Harikāmbhōji mēla.

Dvijāvanti too has a different identity in the Kathakali tradition, used to depict despair. It conveys the feeling differently when rendered in sama śruti and madhyama śruti. This technique of altering between sama and madhyama śruti-s is used strategically to convey the bhāva of the situation and the composition. This was elucidated further through the example of Punnāgavarālī.

Different laya-s and octaves are used to enhance the abhinaya accordingly. Bhairavi, Sahānā, Cencurutṭi, Bēgaḍa, Sāraṅga are some of the extensively used rāga-s.

Ram Mohan also performed abhinaya to Meera’s singing to demonstrate how the music aided the movement.

Allied rāga-s like Śrī and Madhyamāvati, and Dhanyāsi and Tōḍi, are sung subsequently in some plays. So a perfect grasp of each rāga is crucial, in not just maintaining its unique identity but also to employ it accordingly to bring out the rasa of the scene.

Though, due to the Carnatic and Hindustani influences, many rāga-s like Rañjani and Dēś are used in Kathakali today, these rāga-s undergo a process of adaptation to the genre of Kathakali, in order to suit the specific demands of the form.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 13 Academic Session 2024 | The Abhinaya Sangitam of Kathakali: The blend of Raga and Bhava

Rāga's changing nature across Compositional forms

Presented by Viduṣī Amritha Murali

Since the presenter has written a detailed article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 14 | Academic Session 2024 | Raga's changing nature across compositional forms

December 25, 2024

Understanding a Rāga through the interpretations of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T Brinda and Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Dr S Ramanathan

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Dr S Sowmya

The proceedings on the tenth day began with the rendering of Sabēśan sēvaḍi in Sāvēri rāga, a composition of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Dr S Ramanathan. It was sung by Nandhika and Meenakshi (I year students) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Convenor Sriram V set the proceedings in motion. The following two sessions were presided by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Bombay Jayashri Ramnath.

In a student's journey of learning music, there comes a point when one matures into the stage of singing manōdharma saṅgīta. This is achieved by learning multiple compositions in a rāga and listening to live concerts in the early stages. And in this process of listening to various schools of music, a student becomes aware of the differences in approach to a composition, or a rāga. These differences in handling of rāga-s were the central idea of S Sowmya's presentation. She was aided by the students of Tamil Nadu Government Music College -- Madhushikan, Rithikeshwar, Divyan, Nidarshan and Vasanth, who provided musical support for this endeavour.

Sāvēri

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi S Ramanathan's approach to this time-tested rāga was characterised by the handling of the niṣāda and gāndhāra of the rāga in starkly plain manner. On the other hand, in the tradition of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T Brinda and Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Āchārya T Muktha, these same svāra-s are held in lower frequencies. This contrast was demonstrated through the renditions of Durusuga and Telisēnu rā.

Sahānā

In this rāga, Dr Ramanathan's approach was to hold the gāndhāra in its original position (svārasthāna). Here too, in the tradition of T Brinda, the gāndhāra is held in a lower position. Giripai nelakonna and Ini enna pēccu were used to demonstrate this difference.

Suratī

The niṣādam is, as prescribed, held predominantly with the dhaivatam just as a shadow note in the Ramanathan style, as seen in his composition Āḍiḍam arasē. Whereas, in the

Brinda way, in rare instances, dhaivatam is sung as an independent note with predominance. Indendu vaccitirā is a perfect representation of the Surati that Vid Brinda propagated.

Highlighting these differences, Sowmya mentioned that they can open up a new world of understanding the course of a rāga, and pique a student's curiosity into delving deeper into the rāga's history through aural and textual references we have of the past.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 15 | Academic Session 2024 | Understanding a Raga through the interpretations

Notations for Niraval by Sangita Kalanidhi Kallidaikurichi Vedanta Bhagavatar

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Dr RS Jayalakshmi

Since the presenter has written a detailed article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 16 | Academic Session 2024 | Notations for Niraval by Sangita Kalanidhi Kallidaikurichi

December 26, 2024

The day's proceedings commenced with the Tyagaraja kṛti Sogasugā mṛdaṅga tālamu, in Śrīrañjanī rāga, sung by Gayatri Varenya and Nanda (I year students) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sriram V introduced the two sessions, which were presided by TM Krishna.

A Tuned Mridangam

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Tiruvarur Bakthavatsalam with Valangaiman Vidvān Navaneetha Krishnan – Mṛdaṅgam Maker

The speaker Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Tiruvarur Śrī Bakthavatsalam began the presentation by introducing Valangaiman Vid Navaneetha Krishnan, great-grandson of tavil maestro Valangaiman Shanmugasundaram Pillai. An expert mṛdaṅgam-maker, he has been making the instrument for the speaker for 40 years.

The presentation focused on the making and maintenance of mṛdaṅgam. Made from animal skin, the instrument, he said, is highly susceptible to even the slightest change in the environment which can affect its pitch. He went on to explain the technical difficulties involved in the tuning, observing that the 16 eyes or kaṅṅu need to be in perfect tune, a phenomenon that apparently seldom occurs.

Śrī Navaneetha Krishnan joined in the discussion at intervals, and he talked about the making. He explained the types of animal skin that are used for the two heads (valantalai and toppi), and also demonstrated the seasoning process using the sādham for the two heads (mīṭṭu and cāpu) and the tonal changes that occur through the seasoning. vāru piḍittal (process of wiring) was also shown, and the demonstration was supplemented by video illustrations for the benefit of the audience.

Śrī Bakthavatsalam then showed mṛdaṅgam-s of different sizes custom-made by Śrī Navaneetha Krishnan to suit the former's requirements. He observed that the skill of the mṛdaṅgist is dependent on the maker, and expressed indebtedness to their community. He also commented on the difficulties involved in the little-known maintenance aspect of the instrument and expressed a need for more awareness within the music community and among audiences in this regard.

At the close of the presentation he shared some of his interesting experiences as a mṛdaṅgam artist, particularly one from the 80s when he had gone to Hyderabad to accompany Saṅgīta Kalānidhi ML Vasanthakumari for her concert at Kalāsāgaram. The pitch of his mṛdaṅgam, supposed to be 4.5, had risen due to various reasons to 5.5! He recalled that after fruitlessly

spending half a day trying to adjust the pitch, he had desperately gone ahead and cut off two of the heccu kaṇṇu strings and adjusted them, a technique he had learnt by observing his maternal uncle and guru while in gurukulavāsam. The technique had successfully brought the pitch down to the desirable level, and the concert had gone smoothly.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Trichy Śrī Sankaran spoke and he recalled that Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar had once waited for quite a while for Pazhani Subramania Pillai in mid-concert to tune the toppi before recommencing. He also mentioned the tradition of his guru (Pazhani Subramania Pillai) and maestros like Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Palghat Mani Iyer of allowing only the sāraṇi and anusāraṇi of the tambura to be played during the tani āvartana, and noted that sadly the electronic tambūra does not allow for the harmonics to align with the tone of the mṛdaṅgam. He insisted on the importance of the younger generation of mṛdaṅgists to possess at least a working knowledge of mṛdaṅgam repairing.

Following Vid Śrī Sankaran, Dr Rāma Kausalya and Vid J Vaidyanathan spoke. Vid Patri Satish Kumar posed a technical discussion on kucci mūṭṭu and kappi mūṭṭu which gave rise to a discussion on the subject. Videos to demonstrate the making of the two were shown. Following this Dr Mahalingam and Śrī KSR Aniruddha participated in the interactive session.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate TM Krishna in summing up shared some of his experiences in engaging with the community of mṛdaṅgam makers while doing research for his book. He further dwelt on the indispensable role of mṛdaṅgam makers in the milieu of Carnatic music and ended with the observation that without them, there is no mṛdaṅgam.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 17 | Academic Session 2024 | A Tuned Mridangam | Sangita Kalanidhi Tiruvarur Bakthavatsalam

Rāga-s in 70mm – A Cinematic Identity

Presented by Ms Subhashree Thanikachalam

The second session of the day was a lecture by Ms. Subhashree Thanikachalam on the topic “*Rāga-s in 70mm – A Cinematic Identity*.” The session was chaired by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-designate Vidvān TM Krishna.

Introducing the subject, Subhashree remarked that Tamil film songs are not strictly rāga-based, but rather “rāgā-inspired”, since film composers have often exercised creative liberty that transcends classical *lakṣaṇa*. The lecture was interspersed with fascinating insights into the evolution of Tamil film music. She began with references to TP Rajalakshmi, the first playback singer who started her career with the movie *Kālidasa*, and Vidvān Harikesanallūr Mutiah Bhāgavata, who composed a song for a Tamil film. She also shared the rationale behind the choice of rāga-s in the rāgataḷamālikā “Māsilla Nilavē.”

Tracing the history of Tamil cinema music, Subhashree highlighted the monumental contributions of early composers. She noted that classical music gained renewed prominence with the entry of Pāpanasam Sivan, whose collaboration with G. Ramanathan reshaped the industry’s musical identity. This was illustrated through the song “Vadanamē Candra Bimbamō”. The speaker credited Rajeswara Rao, CR Subbaraman, the MS Viswanathan–Ramamurthy duo, and KV Mahadevan for bringing versatility and depth to film music, and emphasized that Ilaiyaraaja played a pioneering role in introducing a wide range of rāga-s into the cinematic soundscape.

Subhashree then explored the stylistic differences in rāga handling among various composers, using Madhyamāvati and Gaurī Manōharī as examples. She demonstrated how each composer’s interpretation of a rāga reflected a unique emotional palette. Further, she illustrated how a single rāga could be employed to evoke contrasting moods, supported by carefully chosen song excerpts.

The concept of *graha bhēdam* was also explained through the compositions “Nān Andri Yār Varuvār,” “Saṅgītamē,” and “Vaidēhi Rāman”. The talk delved into the role of rhythm, chord arrangement, and orchestration in shaping the emotional tone of a song. As an example, Subhashree compared “Pūjaikētta Pūvidu” and “Ō Vasanta Rājā”, both set in the rāga Śrōtasvini, to demonstrate how subtle differences in arrangement influence mood.

In her concluding remarks, she observed that the association of specific rāgas with fixed emotional states — a convention of classical theory — was often defied by film composers. This point was illustrated with diverse songs set in the rāga Kalyāṇī.

The lecture was well-received and followed by an engaging discussion among Executive Committee members and the audience. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-designate Vidvān TM Krishna appreciated the speaker's presentation and concluded the session.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – lecdem 18 2024 - YouTube

December 27, 2024

Conceptualising an Abstract Rāga

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate TM Krishna

The day's proceedings commenced with the rendering of Muttusvāmi Dikṣitar's kṛti Śrī bhārgavī in Maṅgalakaiśiki rāga, sung by Pavanetra (III year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Convenor Sriram V introduced the sessions, which were presided over that morning by Sangita Kalanidhi Bombay Jayashri Ramnath.

As the presenter has written a detailed article on the subject which is published elsewhere in this journal, the readers are requested to refer to it.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 19 | Academic Session 2024 | Conceptualising an Abstract Raga

Staging Music: The unique case of Yakṣagāna

Presented by Vidvān Gururaj Marpally with Professor Deepa Ganesh, accompanied by Vidvān Shashikiran Manipal Bhagavath (vocal), Vidvān Koodli Devadas Rao (maddalam) and Vidvān Nagaraj Barkur (ceṇḍe)

Renowned Yakṣagāna scholar Śrī Gururaj Marpally and award-winning author Prof Deepa Ganesh were the speakers for the Lecdem. The latter introduced the artists on stage followed by their demo of a traditional Yakṣagāna nāndi padya in Kannada language.

Prof Deepa Ganesh then briefly traced the 1000-year-old antiquity of Yakṣagāna established by oral history and documented research. She discussed its genesis and evolution throughout history, and the reinventions it underwent from time to time.

Speaking next, Śrī Marpally discussed the development of Yakṣagāna in three phases. Talking of the first stage as the singing one, he said that Yakṣagāna music does not adhere to any system of rāga-s or lakṣaṇa-s; the songs are composed in specific rāga-s on mythological themes and are of fixed tune. He also discussed the influence of Yakṣagāna in the songs of Purandaradāsa, with suitable demonstrations.

The second stage was the tālamaddale phase, where the art became a form of performance with dialogue; the themes were derived from the Bhāgavatam, Śrī Marpally said. He talked about the performers involved, the stories enacted, the rāga-s and themes featured in the songs, etc.

He then discussed the third stage as Yakṣagāna, and went on to explain its different aspects as a composite of music, theatre and percussion. He was duly supported by the team of artists who gave suitable demonstrations of song, percussion and acting in the course of the presentation.

Śrī Marpally observed that more than rāga, bhāva was important in Yakṣagāna. The emotion followed the text, he said.

Both Śrī Marpally and Prof Deepa Ganesh spoke of the immense contributions of Dr Kota Shivarama Karanth, Kannada author, playwright and ecological conservationist. Considered the foremost authority on Yakṣagāna, his two books, *Yakshagana Bayalata* and *Yakshagana*, are products of years of systematic study on the subject, and have helped vastly in its preservation, they said.

Talking about the challenges to the art form and the changes it has undergone to suit the tastes of modern society, Śrī Marpally expressed bemusement at the fact of stories of even contemporary personalities such as movie stars being enacted nowadays! Prof Deepa

Ganesh finished with a plea to the music community, particularly the Yakṣagāna artist community, to protect the identity of the art form by adhering to its purāṇic framework while adapting it to contemporary relevance. The presentation ended with a rendition of a maṅgalam 'māranaiyyana mātā' by the artists.

Members of the Experts' Committee Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan, Dr Rāma Kausalya, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna, and Vid Smt Sangeetha Sivakumar offered their comments. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Smt Bombay Jayshri who chaired the LecDem thanked and complimented the artists in her summing-up.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 20 | Academic Session 2024 | Staging Music: The unique case of Yakshagana

December 28, 2024

On the occasion of the centenary of Pandit Kumar Gandharva, Hindustāni vocal maestro and composer, the proceedings commenced with a Nirguṇī bhajan popularised by the maestro. It was sung by Baanupriya and Shreya Ravikumar (alumni 2021-23 batch) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Convenor Sriram V opened the sessions which were presided by TM Krishna.

Teaching Manōdharma Saṅgīta on the Violin

Presented by Vidvān HK Narasimhamoorthy

TTK awardee Śrī HK Narasimhamoorthy began the presentation with a discussion on manōdharma, observing that it is the ultimate in violin training. Arrived at through a step-by-step process, he said that manōdharma training begins with the intensive practice of varisai lessons. The speaker referred to manōdharma as ‘self-acquired knowledge’, saying that it is an expression of music that comes only with years spent in accumulating and assimilating it.

Assisted by disciples Śrī HN Bhaskar, Mysore Śrī V Srikanth, and Smt HM Sindhu on stage, Śrī HK Narasimhamoorthy elaborated on his teaching techniques for manōdharma saṅgīta. The students are generally first trained intensively to play varisai-s in various rāga-s, which are then understood better by learning compositions, he said. Speaking of the different manōdharma forms of ālāpana, tānam, niraval, and kalpana svara, he observed that the trend of playing muktāipu and poruttam by violin accompanists in concerts are an impact of their association with laya vidvān-s.

Different practice techniques of bowing, fingering, playing in different speeds, etc., were demonstrated by the speaker’s disciples for varisai-s (with and without gamaka-s) and varṇam-s. They also demonstrated rāga and tāna practice methods.

The speaker also recommended playing alongside vintage concerts of old maestros to improve accompaniment skills. Explaining the differences in approach between the accompanist and the soloist, he observed that the former has to understand the style of the vocalist in order to play suitably. In conclusion, he discussed the pros and cons of violin accompaniment, saying that although there are more opportunities in it, there are also limitations as the accompanist cannot dominate the vocalist on stage; his playing has to be guided by the singing.

Experts’ Committee member Vid Śrī Sriram Parasuram posed the question of evolving technique to support the evolution of the violinist’s manōdharma and aesthetic choices,

and a discussion followed in which the speaker, his disciple Śrī HN Bhaskar, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna, and convenor Śrī V Sriram took part. Following the discussion Dr Rama Kausalya, Śrī KSR Aniruddha, and Vid Śrī K Arun Prakash offered their comments.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna in summing up noted that manōdharma can be accessed only through the guidance of the guru, and offered his compliments to the speaker and his disciples on their presentation. He observed that although a relatively recent addition to Carnatic music, the violin has adapted itself to the milieu in technique and style through the hands of great maestros. He ended by expressing concern about the limited audience for violin music, calling for a change in the approach to listening.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — lecdem 21 2024 - YouTube

கானா பாடல்கள்: விளிம்புநிலை மக்களின் பண்பாட்டு அடையாளம்

Presented by Dr M Elumalai

Śrī V Sriram introduced the speaker Dr Elumalai, Professor at the Department of Tamil, DG Vaishnav College. A specialist in folklore Saṅgam literature and modern literature, he is also an ecological conservationist who has helped identify over 700 Draupadi Amman temples and over 200 Terukkūttu groups in Tamil Nadu.

Dr Elumalai began with a welcome gānā song before introducing his team of artists -- Śrī Rahman, Śrī Ashwin (tabla), Śrī Mani (vocal), Śrī Yasir (keyboard), Śrī Karuna (vocal), and Śrī Mari (vocal). Following this Śrī Rahman demonstrated a gānā on the Madras mārgazi season and the equalising power of music.

Dr Elumalai elaborated on gānā and its role in documenting the life and experiences of the marginalised communities of Chennai, particularly 'North Madras'. Examining gānā's connections with the Madras bāṣai or language, he explained that the latter is the product of the influence of many cultures, beginning with the arrival of the British in the 17th century. He explained the interesting etymology of many words such as porambōkku, capemāri, and bējār, saying that it is wrong to view the language as plebeian or inferior, as it draws heavily from Indian languages like Hindi, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Kannada, Urdu, Telugu, English, etc.

He spoke next of the themes of gānā songs; they are mostly a reflection of the simple lives and experiences of the gānā artists and their people. There are songs to celebrate every occasion from birth till death, he said, and here Śrī Karuna demonstrated one sung for weddings. Dr Elumalai also spoke of gujili panuval songs as being a forerunner to gānā, in terms of documenting events, especially major historical ones such as the advent of railways and electricity.

Śrī Rahman demonstrated a gānā about the travails faced by their people due to changed living circumstances. Following this the speaker lamented the lack of visibility or improvement in the economic conditions of gānā artists and extended a plea to support them. He also requested Śrī TM Krishna and the Music Academy to help in the publication of his books on gānā. The presentation ended with a demonstration of a maraṇagānā by the artists.

Speaking next, Śrī V Sriram referred to a gānā which helped establish the number of theatres in Chennai. He observed that gānā is to Chennai what jazz is to New York -- a musical form inseparable from the cultural identity of its birth city.

Experts' Committee member Dr Rama Kausalya, Śrī KSR Aniruddha, Vid Smt Sangeetha

Sivakumar, Vid Śrī Arun Prakash, Vid Śrī Ashwath Narayanan, Vid Śrī Vignesh Ishvar, Vid Śrī Srivatsan, and Śrī V. Balasubramanian offered their comments and compliments. Members of the audience also participated in the interactive session where the impact of social media and events such as COVID on gānā was discussed.

Summing up the presentation, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna commented on the celebratory nature of gānā, be it in times of grief or joy. He spoke briefly about its aspects of documentation and activism. He concluded saying that gānā is not given the recognition that it deserves, and urged a re-examination of its status in society, particularly the music community.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 22 | Academic Session 2024 |

கானா பாடல்கள் : விளிம்புநிலை மக்களின் பண்பாட்டு அடையாளம்

December 29, 2024

Tāna: Its impact on Rāga Grammar and Aesthetics

Presented by Dr Jayanthi Kumaresh

The day's proceedings began with the rendering of the Tyāgarāja kṛti Koluvaivunnādē in Dēvagāndhāri, which was sung by Pavanetra and Uttara (III year students) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sriram V introduced the session which was presided by TM Krishna.

Dr Jayanthi Kumaresh began with a brief introduction to tānam. Describing it as 'a joyful expression of manōdharma saṅgīta', she said it is a mellow rhythmic expression of rāga-s that is movement-based.

She next dealt with the etymology of the word 'tāna', saying there are several references in texts but none that is decisive. One interpretation, she said, goes that 'ta' means 'tatvamasi' and 'na' is 'namaskāram', meaning 'I bow to the Brāhmaṇ'. She also mentioned that 'tēnā' means 'that which is auspicious', and quoted Śārīgadēva from the Saṅgīta Ratnākara, 'tanyatē iti tānah', meaning, 'that which can be elaborated'. Further, she said that tānam is elaboration in a chosen rāga done meaningfully with context, within boundaries, and within a particular structure.

Moving on to the approach to tānam, she discussed the usage of 3s, 5s, 7s, and 9s and their combinations, saying that tānam is usually begun in odd numbers. For even numbers the tāla string is played in the vīṇā, and in vocal the akāra, ikāra, and ukāra are sounded. She briefly demonstrated where the stress or accent is sounded, in vocal and in vīṇā.

The speciality of the tānam in vīṇa, she said, is the usage of the tāla string which is sounded between notes to maintain an illusion of continuity of sound; this she duly demonstrated. Further she said that the tāla string can be tuned to a particular svāra for different rāga-s (for pañcama varja it can be to ma; for hamsānandi, ga, ni or dha, etc.)

Next she spoke of the types of tānam that are commonly played: ghana rāga pancakam, ciṭṭe tānam, and rāgamālikā tānam.

Referring to the ghana rāga-s and their names, she spoke of the pañcaratna kṛti-s of Tyāgarāja, adding that it is a very good exercise to try tānam of their svāra-s portions. She then shared a short snippet of Vīṇā Dhanammal's tānam in nāṭṭai and gaula. She also mentioned that nārāyaṇagaula, kēdāragaula, rīṭigaula, nāṭṭakuriṇji, and kēdāram were also historically featured for rāgamālikā tānam.

She then spoke of the type of t̄anam popular in Karnataka called ciṭṭe t̄anam, giving a glimpse of its origins in the Mysore Court where Veena Seshanna and Subbanna would compose characteristic templated t̄anam phrases and notate them. These would be taught to the students and were considered an essential part of their training. About 40 to 50 such t̄anam-s in a r̄aga would be taught, she said, showing a picture of a ciṭṭe t̄anam notation in English. She also shared an audio of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Veena Doreswamy Iyengar's rendition of a ciṭṭe t̄anam in gambhīra nāṭṭa from an AIR interview.

She next discussed the r̄agamālikā t̄anam, recalling that Vid Śrī S Balachander once played t̄anam in 45 r̄aga-s at the Music Academy itself.

Moving on to t̄anam practice methods, she said that t̄ana varṇam-s are a great source material, both for instruments and vocal, and stressed the importance of varisai practice. She demonstrated various exercises in māyāmālavagaula and śaṅkarābharaṇam. She also highlighted the featuring of more plain notes in t̄anam compared to ālāpana.

She then discussed t̄anam for different types of r̄aga-s :

1. mēlakarta r̄aga-s
 2. auḍava-ṣāḍava r̄aga-s
 3. vakra r̄aga-s
 4. rakṭi r̄aga-s
1. mēlakarta r̄aga-s -- here she said that usually t̄anam is begun in the lower octave. Taking up kalyāṇī r̄aga for demonstration, she said that the t̄anam is first started in the area of the jīva svāra. Usually patterns of 3s are played initially, and there is an unconscious adherence to a rhythm. Saying that it is not necessary to end in a pattern or cycle, just that it sounds better, she demonstrated it duly. She also showed the usage of jhaṅṭa, dāṭu, vādi-samvādi, symmetrical phrase renditions (for r̄aga-s where the distance between pūrvāṅga and uttarāṅga are the same), jumping between octaves, and yati-s such as gōpucchā and śrōtōvāha. She also showed the handling of t̄ana-specific br̄ga-s, jāru, and the usage of pakkatandi to achieve double-string harmony. During the course of the discussion she recalled an interesting incident at her 16 years of age when she was under the guidance of Vid S Balachander. During a concert when he was playing tōḍi his string broke and he suddenly turned to her and commanded her to play. She started playing the phrase 'sarīsagasamasapasadhasanisasa' for which he sternly rebuked her asking, 'Idu tōḍiyā? (Is this tōḍi?)'. She explained that such explorations may not be possible in the case of all r̄aga-s.

2. auḍava-ṣāḍava rāga-s -- she demonstrated ārabhi with its uneven intervals and other features.
3. vakra rāga -- here she demonstrated nalinakānti rāga, saying that such rāga-s already come patterned, and gave pointers to navigate the vakra for tānam. Demonstrating nāṭṭakkuriṅgi next, she stressed on the importance of not templating the tānam but approaching it for every rāga according to its nature.
4. rakṭi rāga-s -- she spoke on this in general, discussing handling the tempo and unique phraseologies of rakṭi rāga-s in tānam. She also shared a clipping of tānam in kēdāragaula by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.

She next spoke of the different styles of presenting tānam.

1. gāyaki style -- this she demonstrated with a video clip of her guru Vid Padmavathy Ananthagopalan playing tānam in pantuvarāli.
2. tāntrakāri style -- saying this is a very instrumental style, she played an audio clipping of Vid Dr Emani Sankara Sastry's gānamūrṭi tānam.
3. Individual style -- she spoke of tānam played according to each artist's unique style, playing a clip of Vid S Balachander's suruṭi tānam.

Discussing the different techniques of playing tānam, she mentioned traditional and textual references to the gaits of different animals to denote different tānam-s. Some of these are:

- aśva - horse
- gaja - elephant
- markaṭa - monkey
- mayūra - peacock
- kukkuṭa - rooster
- maṇḍuka - frog

Next she spoke in brief about the types of tānam based on figurative patterns.

- cakra - cyclical
- vakra - zigzag
- miśra - mixed
- mālikā - rāgamālikā
- gambhīra - majestic
- vidyā

Speaking of the dynamic nature of t̄anam, she said that it is a form to be explored by mixing all the above mentioned different elements for maximum effect.

Tracing the journey of the t̄anam form, she referred to j̄oḍ and jhāla in Hindustani music, saying that the first follows the music according to rhythm, while the second is faster, more colourful, and instrument-specific. Both, she said, influenced t̄anam.

She said that t̄anam is a form that is constantly evolving, influenced by the social, geographical, and cultural experiences of musicians. Demonstrating the usage of the third finger, she said that it is the influence of jugalbandi with other instrumentalists such as sitār and tabla. Concluding the presentation she urged students to explore the scope of the instrument fully, and keep pushing the envelope to express themselves; that is how one becomes ‘the voice of the v̄iṇā’.

Experts’ committee member Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr RS Jayalakshmi paid her compliments to the speaker and asked whether m̄iṭṭu is possible for pulling, to which the latter replied in the negative, saying it hinders continuity.

Speaking next, Dr Rama Kausalya said that in the Karaikudi school too there is the tradition of teaching ciṭṭe t̄anam, and mentioned that Vid Sankari had taught her.

Sri V Balasubramanian then referred to vaiṇika Vid Subramanyam Sastrigal (guru of vaiṇika Vid Raghavan) saying that he was a specialist in viralāḍi technique. He also recalled Vid Chittibabu who was hailed for the sweetness of his m̄iṭṭu.

Vid Arun Prakash enquired when the practice of electrification of the v̄iṇā came in, and whether it affected the tone and melody. The speaker said that the instrument might have initially been meant for chamber concerts. She also spoke of the difficulties she faced growing up when playing with the usual mike setups at sabha-s. Hailing from a family of violinists she was alone in the pursuit of the v̄iṇā and felt bad about the lack of volume and sustain, which led to a serious consideration of amplification for the instrument. She mentioned that Vid S Balachander introduced the concept of the pick-up for the v̄iṇā, later adopted by Vid Emani Sankara Sastry as well. The Mysore school of vaiṇika-s who were sceptical of the concept at first, later started using it as well. She said that in the Mysore and Andhra bāṇi-s the pulling string method was not used, so that the topboard would be thin, enhancing amplification. The Tanjore style, on the other hand, makes extensive use of the pulling technique, so the topboard would be thicker, she said. Also the latter is played in 2 or 2.5 śruti, unlike the former schools which play in 5. Citing all these reasons, she said the necessity urged her to take up amplification, which would allow the instrument to be heard in chambers as well as enormous closed/open concert spaces.

Here Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna asked whether the requirement for amplification changes according to the style of playing, to which the speaker agreed, saying that everything depends on the context of the performance, in terms of venue, environment, transportation, etc.

Vid Brindha Manickavasakam offered her comments next. A member of the audience asked about the difference between speed and tempo. The speaker said that it is the difference between tāla and laya, explaining that change in speed is perceived, whereas tempo is inbuilt kālapramāṇam.

Another member asked whether the pallavi chosen for a concert influences the speaker's tānam. She replied that her guru-s would say that each composition ideally can be foreshadowed by the ālāpana. When it comes to tānam, it depends on the piece that follows it, she said. For a kṛtī such as kamalāmbām bhajarē (kalyāṇī), she said she would play tānam to represent the mood she would be carrying forward. For pallavi-s the tānam can be very exploratory, she said; the responsibility is more to the rāgadēvata than the pallavi.

Complying with a request from another audience member, the speaker demonstrated double-string playing, and said that it usually involves harmonic or vādi-samvādi notes.

She then spoke of one occasion when Vid S Balachander asked her what to play for a concert before going on stage. Thinking of the popular concert tradition of beginning with a varṇam, she had suggested the navarāgamālikā varṇam. Vid S Balachander had ended up playing it for the entire concert, with elaborate rāga and tānam in all the nine rāga-s, along with navarāga-svara for caraṇam, ending with śrīrāga.

Following this Śrī Anand Mahadevan presented the original 1943 address of the Music Academy to Sarvepalli Śrī Radhakrishnan to Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna who received it on behalf of the Music Academy.

Śrī TM Krishna began his summing-up by complimenting the speaker, and spoke about his attempts to trace the exact origins of tānam, and its relation to the ghana mārga. He discussed Śrī U V Swaminatha Iyer's writings on ghanam, with special reference to Ghanam Śrī Krishna Iyer. He also talked about the possible connection between dhruvad and tānam.

In closing he spoke of the inexplicable rhythm of tānam, and the reimagination of gamaka-s through its gait. He called for a revival of tānam, lamenting the ignorance towards niraval and tānam in vocal music.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 23 | Academic Session 2024 | Tana: Its impact on raga grammar and aesthetics - YouTube

December 30, 2024

The morning session began with the rendering of Karuṇālaya nidhiyē, Vedanayakam Pillai's composition in Hindōla rāga. This was sung by Kamakshi (II year student) and Mahati (I year student) of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Convenor Sriram V initiated the proceedings. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate TM Krishna presided over the two sessions.

Sarva Samarasa Kīrtanaigaḷum Saṁmārgak Kīrtanaigaḷum**Presented by Vidushi Sr Margaret Bastin**

Since the presenter has written a detailed article on the topic, we request readers to go through the same, published elsewhere in this journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 24 | Academic Session 2024 | Sarva Samarasa Kirtanaigalum Sanmargak Kirtanaigalum

Rāga-s as expressed in Padam-s and Jāvali-s

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalā Achārya awardee Viduṣī Geetha Raja

“Padam-s are replete with the bhāva of rakti rāga-s and depict human emotions. They are to be sung in vilamba kāla and the gaps provided in the sāhitya should be filled up by the singer with long kārvai-s and beautiful gamaka-s. The correct method of singing padam-s can only be learnt from a Guru and not from the notations published in books”, said Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T Brinda in her presidential address in 1976 at the Music Academy, Madras.

Jāvali-s are however quicker in their tempo, with a lilting, joyful portrayal of a rāga. They are seen both in rakti rāga-s as well as lighter ragas like Behāg. Together padam-s and jāvali-s became the staple of the musical ocean that is the Vīṇā Dhanammal bāṇi. Vid Geetha Raja delved into the beautiful essays of rāga-s that these cherished compositions portray and how they can enhance our view of the rāga. She was accompanied by her disciples Madhumitha Doraiswamy, Vibha Krishnakumar, Janani Mahalingam, Niveditha Doraiswamy and Shreya Ravikumar, who provided vocal support.

Padam-s and Jāvali-s presented:

1. Mānamē bhūṣaṇamu - Śaṅkarābharaṇam - miśracāpu - Govindasamayya
2. Tanakku tānē - Śaṅkarābharaṇam miśracāpu - Ghanam Krishna Iyer

The opening line of the caraṇam dwells on pañcama and offers insights into how that region can be explored; this comes in handy while singing an ālāpana or a niraval.

3. Rāma Rāma prāṇasakhi - bhairavi - ādi - Kshetrayya
4. Inimēlnavarukkum - bhairavi- miśracāpu - Kavi Kunjaradasar

The picture of the bhairavi presented in these padam-s is rather different from the one seen in a kṛti. This shows the unique approach to the rāga, that is seen in the genre of padam.

5. Ēlā rādayanē - bhairavi - ādi - Chinnaiah

The phrasings in this jāvali are quite distinct, and they can inspire creative ways of presenting the rāga during manōdharmā expositions.

6. Bāla vinavē - kāmbhōji - tisra tripuṭa - Kshetrayya
7. Padari varugudu - kāmbhōji - rūpakam - Subbarama Iyer
8. Ēmi māyamu - kāmbhōji - rūpakam- Pattabhiramayya

There is a glorious picture of kām̄bhōji in these compositions that aid one’s understanding and appreciation of a rāga like no other.

9. Entaṭi kulukē - kalyāṇī - rūpakam - Dharmapuri Subbarayar
10. Gaddhari vagala kalyāṇī - miśracāpu - Kshetrayya

The quintessential flavour of Vid T Brinda’s kalyāṇī is reflected elegantly in these pieces.

11. Kuvalayākṣirō - gaulipantu - miśracāpu - Kshetrayya

In the tradition of Brinda-Muktha, this rāga is rendered as a prati madhyama rāga.

12. Smara Sundarāṅguni - Paras - ādi - Dharmapuri Subbarayar

This jāvali was rendered finally as a tribute to the musical style of Dhanammal.

Vid Geetha Raja interspersed her presentation with audio recordings of some padam-s by Viduṣi-s T Brinda and T Muktha. She dedicated her presentation to her late husband, SK Raja.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s YouTube channel — Lec Dem 25 | Academic Session 2024 | Raga-s as expressed in Padams and Javalis

December 31, 2024

The morning commenced with group Devotional music by the Winners of the Devotional Music Competition of the Music Academy. As usual, Sriram V introduced the sessions which were presided over by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate TM Krishna.

Tāla Laya Sampradāyam, Jāti, Naḍai, Gati and Jati

Presented by Saṅgīta Kalā Achārya awardee Vidvan Parassala Ravi

Vid Parassala Ravi gave a presentation centred on tāla laya sampradāyam. The various technicalities involved in aspects of jāti, naḍai, gati and jati were discussed. The speaker was assisted by his disciples Vid KV Prasad and Vid Arun Chandramohan. The full LecDem can be viewed on the official YouTube channel of the Academy.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 26 | Academic Session 2024 | Tala Laya Sampradayam, Jaati, Nadai, Gathi and Jathi

Rāga-s in Melattur Bhāgavata Mēla

Presented by TTK Awardees Thiruvaiyyaru Brothers Vidvan S Narasimhan and Vidvan S Venkatesan

In this quaint village of Melattur in Tanjavur's vicinity, Bhāgavata-s gather each year to enact scenes from the Bhāgavatam, which narrates various tales of Lord Vishnu. The orchestra that provides the musical support starts the performance usually with the punḍarikam, followed by the mēlaprāpti and dhyāna ślōka-s. The speciality of the Bhāgavata Mēla Nāṭaka is that each daru is prefixed with a mukhajati (which introduces the character to the audience) and ends with jati in different metres.

Thiruvaiyyaru Brothers rendered 'gaṇapati vaccē' in bēgaḍa, which in the Bhāgavata Mēla Nāṭaka accompanies the introduction of Ganapati's character into the performance arena. They then performed the pravēśa daru of Hiranyakashipu, set to dēvagāndhāri. Though aṭhāṇa is usually used to depict anger and bravery, it is used in Chandramati's pravēśam, as a part of the Harishchandra Nāṭaka, soaking with śṛṅgāra rasa.

The rāga-s and the kālāpramāṇa-s of the compositions deployed in this genre are integral to the rasa of the scene. In a composition describing the conversation between Leelavati and Hiranyakashipu, though only paras is used, the distinction in the voices of these characters is brought out by altering between slower and faster paces respectively.

ghaṇṭa is one of the rāga-s used extensively. Due to its natural ability to express pity, it is even known in Melattur as dukhaghaṇṭa. Some of the other rāga-s used are āhiri, nādanāmakriyā, kuriṅji, sāvēri, cencuruṭṭi, ābhōgi, ānandabhairavi, tōḍi, sāmā, rītigaula, śaṅkarābharaṇam, pantuvarāli, etc. Even rāga-s like darbārikānaḍā and sindhubhairavi have been added to this repertoire owing to the multicultural influences that Tanjavur nurtured through time.

But the compositions employed in Bhāgavata Mēla are set usually to the traditional Carnatic rāga-s and with a purpose behind each choice. The Bhāgavata-s retain the same tunes even to this day without any compromise of the values that govern this art form.

The team also showed clippings from the Bhāgavata Mēla Nāṭaka from Melattur to elucidate the usage of rāga-s in strategic, and sometimes ingenious and unconventional, ways to accompany the scenes in this glorious tradition.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel — Lec Dem 27 | Academic Session 2024 | Raga-s in Melattur Bhagavata Mela

January 1, 2025

Open House

The concluding day of the academic sessions commenced with group Devotional music by the Runners up in the Devotional Music Competition of the Music Academy. This was followed by the customary Open House session. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Dr S Sowmya, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī T M Krishna, Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr Ritha Rajan, and Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr R S Jayalakshmi graced the dias for the Open House session, convened by Śrī V Sriram. They each offered their compliments and comments on the Conference. Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Smt Suguna Varadachari observed that the designation of a theme for the year had offered a lot of scope for insightful discussions. Śrī V Sriram then offered thanks on behalf of the Academy to all the members involved in the smooth organisation and conduct of the Conference.

Following this the interactive session began, with Dr Rajshri Ramakrishna asking a question on akṣara and mātra and their references found in the textual tradition, which was taken up for discussion by the dignitaries on stage. Dr Sumathi (Meenakshi) Krishnan spoke next, offering her thanks. From the audience Mr Sankaran and Smt Vidya Nagarajan spoke, expressing their best wishes. Dr Rajshree Sripathi appreciated the extra time taken up for some of the LecDems, which allowed for deeper discussions. Members of the audience offered their comments next, followed by the President Śrī N Murali, Śrī Bala, and Śrī Jagdish. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Śrī TM Krishna acknowledged his disciples Vid Archana and Vid Adithyanarayanan for working on reports on each day's proceedings for publication in *The Hindu*. Śrī V Sriram then concluded the Open House session, extending New Year wishes to all present.



The discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel —
Open House | Academic Sessions 2024 | The Music Academy Madras



The Sadas

Renowned Carnatic musician T.M. Krishna was conferred the title of ‘Sangita Kalanidhi’ by Professor David Shulman, Chair, Renee Lang Professor of Humanistic Studies, and former professor of Indian Studies and Comparative Religion, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, at the 98th Conference and Concerts — Sadas, the traditional oriental convocation — of The Music Academy in Chennai on Wednesday. Parassala Ravi and Geetha Raja were conferred the title of ‘Sangita Kala Acharya’ and Dr. Margaret Bastin was the recipient of the ‘Musicologist Award 2024’. Thiruvaigyaru Brothers S. Narasimhan and S. Venkatesan, and violinist H.K. Narasimhamurthy received the TTK Award.

Speaking at the event, N. Murali, President, The Music Academy, and Director, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, said Krishna’s concert on Christmas Day was of “very high quality” and the response from the audience “was truly overwhelming. The rapturous applause and standing ovation that the artist received were incredible”. “All in all, the rasikas, young and old, were in such high spirits and bursting with such energy and enthusiasm that the whole atmosphere was surreal in a sense. I would dare say that, if at all there is a musician who could attract into the fold of Carnatic music those outside it, particularly younger audiences, it is T.M. Krishna,” he said.

“The Carnatic music ecosystem needs such an induction sorely as there are structural changes already happening, which, institutions involved in classical performing arts, need to take serious note of.”

N. Murali said that Krishna “distinguished himself in the role as the President of the 98th Annual Conference and Concerts”.

“His brilliance absolutely shone through the entire season. The academic sessions have been specially curated for the first time in over 20 years with an overarching theme ‘Aesthetics and Synaesthetics: Reflections on Raga in India Art’,” he said.

‘Non-stop action’

Upon receiving the title, T.M. Krishna, who thanked the people of Uroor Olcott Kuppam, along with his friends and family, said his life changed after he was invited to organise a music festival in 2015 in Uroor Olcott Kuppam in Chennai.

“My life over the past decade or so has had many rounds of disturbances. Many have lasted about a month or so, but 2024 was different. It was about eight months of non-stop action, if you can call it that. I know I’m tough, but sometimes, it is hard and it can get very lonely,” he said.

Krishna recalled his experiences of performing at The Music Academy on December 25. “It was not just about the number of people who gathered here. For me, it was not about that. It was not about the applause. It was not about the standing ovation. It was not about the screams or the howls and happiness. No, I think what made it unprecedented for me was that everybody here on that day was here for a very personal reason. And I left that morning with a lot of hope and a lot of joy, but above all, truth,” he said.

Professor David Shulman said Carnatic music possesses the power to change self and change something in reality as well.

“One of the features of Carnatic music is that you’re just capable of changing your life and also changing something in reality. Let me say that part of the reason for this, the magic of that kind of transformation, part of it, of course, has to do with the tremendous interpenetration and interdependence and more than symbiosis of the text, the verbal text, and the musical, melodic and rhythmic text. It’s one of the strongest features of this entire tradition, because Carnatic music, we all know it’s a music of compositions... as a compositional framework, and even if the composition exceeds itself in the course of performance, and wedding together of words and sounds, that’s a magical combination,” he said.

Courtesy: The Hindu



The event can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s
YouTube channel – https://youtu.be/4n_vwY07k5I



The 18th Annual Dance Festival

Dr. Neena Prasad, was presented the 'Nritya Kalanidhi' award at the inauguration of the 18th Dance Festival hosted by The Music Academy on January 3, 2025.

Presenting the award, Chang-nyun Kim, Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Chennai, highlighted the similarities between India and Korea, particularly in Tamil Nadu, across various domains.

Noting that the diplomatic relations between the countries spanned over five decades, he underlined the InKo Centre's pivotal role in organising various events related to classical arts, and added that cultural cooperation was inevitable for building lasting bilateral relationships.

Lauding The Music Academy for its contributions to classical fine arts through music and dance, he said the Academy had a well-deserved reputation of an eminent institution in India and abroad, and hosted annual festivals over the past nine decades.

N. Murali, President, The Music Academy, and Director, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, said this year's dance festival too would feature different genres of classical art forms, including Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Vilasini Natyam. There will be both solo and group performances.

Felicitating Ms. Prasad, he said she underwent training in Mohiniyattam, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Kathakali. She has trained several students through her Bharathanjali Academy of Indian Dances in Thiruvananthapuram and Centre for Mohiniyattam in Chennai.

Neena Prasad said receiving the coveted award from the prestigious institution was a special occasion in her life and milestone event in the history of Mohiniyattam.

She thanked veteran artistes who taught her different art forms and recalled her initial struggles as a dancer three decades ago.

Courtesy: The Hindu



The full proceedings can be viewed on the Music Academy's YouTube channel —
18th Annual Dance Festival, Inauguration at The Music Academy Madras 2025
<https://youtu.be/fC3yEeo9u80>



Encapsulating a Rāga:Varṇameṭṭu

By Saṅgīta Kalā Ācārya Dr. Ritha Rajan

In early times music existed as tunes. The word Varṇameṭṭu means tune, very popularly used once upon a time in Tamil Nadu. Tune was called varṇameṭṭu, meṭṭu or rāgameṭṭu. While the term varṇameṭṭu was the most popular denoting the tune of a song, the term meṭṭu was also used for setting tune to a song (meṭṭamaittu). The first half of the 20th century was the period of varṇameṭṭu, wherein the same varṇameṭṭu or tune of a song was adopted in some of the later songs. The study of the Varṇameṭṭu is very interesting and also significant for the reason that it covers not just Carnatic Music, but also Hindustāni Music, Indian Dance Music, Indian Drama Music, Indian Ritual Music, Indian Film Music, Indian Folk Music and Western Classical Music. The folk music of other countries may also offer some scope for this study. In olden days, songs were identified by their tune or varṇameṭṭu and not by the rāga in which they were set in. The rāga-s in which these varṇameṭṭu-s were set, like ānandabhairavi, nādanāmakriyā and punnāgavarāli were our earliest rāga-s which naturally evolved through oral tradition. The varṇameṭṭu or tune encapsulates the essential features of the rāga as in a capsule. The most important factors of the rāga are characteristically and succinctly given in a short space. Interestingly, within that short space it also shows how the rāga should wind up naturally.

Earliest Dictionaries referring to “Meṭṭu”

The following are the earliest Tamil Dictionaries that give meaning for the word ‘meṭṭu.’

1. A Dictionary of the Tamil and English Language, by Rev. J.P. Rottler... [assisted by A.F. Caemmerer, W. Taylor and Vencatachala Moodelly].

By Rev. J.P. Rottler · 1834

Printed at the Vepery mission Press, 1834

Meṭṭu – (mus) tune of a song; rhythm, *paattinragappokku, idu Hindustānimeṭṭu*

(1935 edition: 3335)

Varṇa-meṭṭu - (mus) lilt or melody of a tune: *paattinisaiaimaippu* (ibid 3505)

2. The Tamil Lexicon of Winslow Miron, published in 1862 Page*894 of the 974 pages of the whole Dictionary. (A comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary).

Meṭṭu – Rise or fall in Music, A musical interval, Irāgameṭṭu, the bridge of a fiddle.

3. Tarkāla Tamiz Sol Agarati by Bhavanandam Pillai, 1925

Meṭṭu, Rāga meṭṭu

The following are studies related to Varṇameṭṭu

1. Musical Structure of padam-s, Journal of the Madras Music Academy – Dr.Ritha Rajan, 1984
2. Tales Tunes Tell – Matthew Harp Allen, 1994
3. Concept of Rāga – Dr. N.Ramanathan, 2001
4. Plural Sāhitya-s for famous Tunes and Plural Tunes for famous Sāhitya-s. South Indian Music Book V, Prof. P.Sambamurthi, Eighth Edition, 2002
5. The Concept of Rāga with Special Reference to Varṇameṭṭu – PhD thesis - Dr. K.Rukmani, 2014
6. Sankaradās Swamigaḷin Nāṭaka Isai Kalañjiyam, 2018
7. Isai Tamizum Nāṭaka Tamizum - books by Dr. Arimalam Padmanabhan 2023
8. “Those Who Talk of Plagiarism in Carnatic Music Know Not About the Tradition” - T.M.Krishna, The Wire, 2018

Traditional Folk Tunes that evolved naturally are

- ānandakkaḷippu
- nonḍicindu
- oḍam
- kummi
- kiḷikkanni
- kiḷippaṭṭu

Rāga-s in the Traditional Folk Tunes

‘Some of the recognizable rāga-s’ in the Traditional Folk tunes are

- punnāgavarāḷi

- nādanāmakriyā
- ānandabhairavi
- saindhavi
- kurañji
- navarōj
- nīlāmbari

Examples of Traditional Folk tunes in some of these rāga-s

Punnāgavarāli

1. maguḍi–‘nādamuḍimēlirukkum nalla pambē’
2. Tyāgarāja kīrtana (daru)“gandamupuyyarugāni” from Nauka Caritra
3. The song ‘mālai mayaṅguginra nēram’ in the Tamil Film Marakatam(1959)

The 2nd and 3rd songs have more or less identical tunes or varṇameṭṭu.

s	r	g	r	s	,	r	s	*n	,	n	,
gan	.	da	mu	puy	.	ya	ru	gā	.	ni	.
s	r	g	r	s	s	r	s	n	,	n	,
mā		lai	ma	yañ	gu	gin	ra	nē		ram	

*It is interesting to see that in Tyāgarāja’s daru, it is kaiṣikī niṣāda and in the Tamil film song, it is kākalī niṣāda. In art music forms like kṛti-s and padam-s in the rāga Punnāgavarāli, only kaiṣikī niṣāda is used. E.g., ‘ēhi annapūrṇē’ of Dikṣita, ‘śivagaṅga nagara nivāsini’ of Pāpanāsam Sivan and the Kṣētrayya padam ‘ninnujūḍa’.

Nādanāmakriya

The following are noteworthy for their well-known varṇameṭṭu in the rāga

Nādanāmakriya

1. “Nandavanattil ōraṅḍi”
2. Pāvam seyyādiru manamē”
3. “Tāyin maṅikkoḍi pārīr”
4. Dēvarnāma – “Dāsanamadiko enna”
5. The kaḍga in NandanārCaritram – ‘Tirunālaippōvār’
6. Tyāgarāja kīrtana – “Karunājaladē”.

In the varṇameṭṭu of the rāga Nādanāmakriyā, the characteristic phrases are ‘s r p m g m g r s ’ s’ and ‘s r g r M MM’.

In the above songs in Nādanāmakriyā, the first five, start as ‘s r p m g m g mr s s’.

The Tyāgarāja kīrtana starts as ‘s r g r M MM’.

The same characteristic phrase is also found very conspicuously in the Kṣētrayya padam in this rāga in the lines ‘ammamma vēgadāyane’.

The famous song of Subramanya Bharathiyar ‘Tāyin maṇikkoḍi pāṭir’ was composed by him in the traditional varṇameṭṭu only, says Dr. Arimalam Padmanabhan.

Ānandabhairavi

Ānandabhairavi is the most popular rāga of folk origin with many varṇameṭṭu-s, with and without tāla. The famous song of Subramanya Bharathiyar “Sentamiz nādenum pōdinilē” is sung in a folk varṇameṭṭu in ānandabhairavi rāga.

Ānandabhairavi rāga has also been handled as an art music rāga by composers Kshētrayya, Sāraṅgaṇi and the Musical Trinity, especially Śyāmā Śāstrī and Muttusvāmi Dikṣitar.

Pāpanāsam Sivan’s Tamil song ‘siṅgāra vēlavan vandān’ in this rāga has more or less an identical varṇameṭṭu like the kīrtana ‘palukē baṅgāramāya’ of Bhadrācala Rāmadās.

There is a Tamil marriage song sung popularly, which has an identical varṇameṭṭu like Śyāmā Śāstrī’s kīrtana ‘himācalatanaya’ in this rāga.

In the first half of the 20th century, Tamil books were published containing many compositions with only texts without rāga, tāla or notation. The only specification was that the song had to be sung following the varṇameṭṭu of some other song, whose title was given at the very outset.

Varṇameṭṭu-s of Carnatic Music Forms adopted in later compositions

The varṇameṭṭu’s of the following Tyāgarāja kīrtana-s have been adopted verbatim in the following songs.

Varṇameṭṭu of Tyāgarāja’s ‘Nāda tanumanīsam’ in Cittaraṅjani rāga adopted in the song ‘kādal kani rasamē’ in one of Sankardās Svami’s Tamil dramas.

Varṇameṭṭu of Tyāgarāja’s ‘Undēdi Rāmuḍu’ in Harikāmbhōji rāga has been adopted in the Tamil song ‘vaṅḍāḍum sōlai’ composed by Kalki Krishnamurthy.

The tune of Tyāgarāja kīrtana ‘raghunāyaka’ in Hamsadhvani is seen verbatim in Pāpanāsam Sivan’s Tamil Kīrtana ‘karunaiseyvāi’.

Papanasam Sivan’s ‘ninnaruḷ iyambalāgumā’ in Pantuvarāḷi rāga has an exact tune like Tyāgarāja’s ‘Ninnē nera namminānurā’.

Marathi Bhajana Sampradāyam

In Tanjavur Kriṣṇa Muṭṭ of the Madhvā-s, some Marathi bhajans have been tuned after certain Tyāgarāja kīrtana-s. All the Marathi bhajan-s sung in this Muṭṭ were tuned and established by Mridangam Narayanaswami Appa, the famous artist who was a Madhvā.

The entire varṇameṭṭu of the Marathi Bhajan ‘Ramakithu’ is that of Tyāgarāja’s ‘Nannuvidici’ in the rāga Rītigauḷa.

The starting lines of Nārayana Tīrtha’s Taraṅgam ‘kṛṣṇam kalaya sakhi sundaram’ has the same tune of Tyāgarāja’s daru ‘ānandam’ ānandam’ from Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam.

The first line of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita’s kīrtana ‘vātāpi gaṇapatim bhajēham’ has become a favourite theme for bandiś for the Hindustāni Musicians. The rāga Hamsadhvani along with the rāga Kīravāṇi has been so fondly taken up in Hindustāni Music. It is said that Ustad Aman Ali Khan (1888-1953) of the Bhēṇḍi Bazār Gharāna who learnt Kaṇṇāṭaka Music from Vidvān Bidārām Krishnappa of the Mysore court, introduced Hamsadhvani rāga to Hindustāni Music.

His bandiś ‘lagela gaṇpati sakhisaṅg’ has become very popular. Ustad Amir Khan learnt this bandiś from Usman Aman Ali Khan. Pt. A.T.Kanan, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Vidushi. Kishori Amonkar, Pt. Ajay Chakravarthy, Ustad Rashid Khan and many other well-known Hindustāni musicians have performed rāga Hamsadhvani and this bandiś in their concerts.

In Hindi film music, it was music director Salil Chowdhury who introduced Hamsadhvani in the Hindi film Parivār.

The song ‘ja tōsē nahi bōlun kanhaiyā’ from the Hindi film ‘Parivar’ 1956 is very popular even now. The music of the first line of this film song is the same as that of the opening line of ‘vātāpi gaṇapatim’.

The Śyāmā Śāstrī kīrtana-s ‘himādrī sutē’ and ‘birānavarālicci’ have identical varṇameṭṭu. The former kīrtana is in Samskr̥ta and the latter kīrtana is in Telugu. These two are well known kīrtana-s. The kīrtana ‘himādrī sutē’ is usually sung in tīsra ēka tāla and ‘birānavarālicci’ is sung in Ādi tāla tīsra gati. This is an instance of dual rhythm.

Marathi Nāṭya Saṅgīta

The varṇameṭṭu-s of two of Patnam Subramamanya Iyer's kīrtana-s have been adopted in Marathi Nāṭya Saṅgīta. They were frequently sung by many well-known Marathi musicians.

They are

- 'varamulosagi' in Kīravāṇi rāga. The varṇameṭṭu has been adopted in the song 'sura sukhakani' in Marathi Nāṭya Saṅgīta.
- 'manasu karuga demi' in Hamsadhvani rāga. The tune adopted in the song 'yuvati mana' in Marathi Nāṭya Saṅgīta.

Varṇameṭṭu-s of Padam-s

The varṇameṭṭu-s of Kṣētrayya and other padam composers have been very much adopted in later padam-s and other compositions.

The following compositions in the rāga Sahānā have almost identical tunes or varṇameṭṭu.

- 'Ēmoradamma' - Kṣētrayya padam
- Magadōci - Telugu padam by Kārvēṭnagar Sāraṅgapāṇi
- 'Kanavan vandazaikīrān' - Tamil padam by Subbarāma Iyer, which is a complete translation of 'magadōci'
- 'Uragē galguna' - Tyāgarāja kīrtana
- 'Eṅgō pirandavarām' - Tamil Film song (Film 'Bomma', produced and directed by Vīṇā S Balachander, who also set music).

The Kṣētrayya padam-s 'vadarakapōvē' and 'yālanē vānipai' in Kāmbhōji rāga have the same musical structure to a great extent.

A note on the varṇameṭṭu-s in the rāga-s Suraṭi and Kāmbhōji

The svāra śuddha madhyama in the rāga Suraṭi and the svāra catuśruti dhaivata in the rāga Kāmbhōji are very important svāra-s which have a vital role in the respective varṇameṭṭu-s. The śuddha madhyama in the rāga Suraṭi and the catuśruti dhaivata in the rāga Kāmbhōji are very essential to create a relaxed and leisurely musical atmosphere, especially in the later part of the composition, the caraṇa. For example, while compositions in the Suraṭi rāga start on the svāra-s sa,ri or ni, the caraṇa of most of these compositions starts with (what may be called) a prolonged madhyama and offer a relaxed musical treatment as seen in the Tyāgarāja kīrtana-s 'bhajanaparula', 'vērevvarē', 'rāma deivama' and as in the padam-s 'indendu vaccitirā' and 'kontegadu'. Tyāgarāja kīrtana 'gītārthamu' is perhaps the only composition starting with madhyama.

A similar relaxed and leisurely musical treatment with catuśruti dhaivata is seen in caraṇa of the Kāmbhōji rāga kīrtana-s, ‘evarimāṭa’, ‘ō raṅgasāyi’ and ‘koniyaḍinanāpai’.

Varṇameṭṭu-s of jāvali-s

The varṇameṭṭu of the Khamās rāga jāvaḷi ‘mārubāri tālalēnurā’ has been adopted in the devaṇmāma ‘kara bare dara bārade’.

The varṇameṭṭu of the Khamās rāga jāvaḷi ‘nārimaṇi’ has its impact on the Marathi bhajan ‘ālōtulā caraṇa’, sung at the Thanjavur Muṭṭ of the Madhva-s

The varṇameṭṭu of the Khamās rāga jāvaḷi ‘apaduluku’ has been adopted in the song ‘sāku sāku navamōhana’ in the Kannada film ‘Bedara Kannappa’ (1954). Music director was R.Sudarsanam.

The varṇameṭṭu of the Senjuruṭṭi rāga jāvaḷi ‘prāṇa sakhiditu’ has been adopted in the rendering of the Appar Thevaram ‘munnam avanudaiya’ in the Tamil film ‘Pārthiban Kanavu’ (1960). The music director was Vedha.

The varṇameṭṭu of the jāvaḷi ‘celinēneṭṭu’ in the rāga Pharaz has been adopted in the song, ‘maravēnē ennālilume’ a song composed by Kalki R.Krishnamurthi and sung by Vidushi. M.S. Subbulakshmi for the Tamil film Meera (1947) with music by S.V.Venkataraman.

The jāvaḷi ‘sāmmeeradāyakatay’ of Dharmapuri Subbharayar is a folk tune, based on the svara-s of Ānandabhairavi rāga. It is sung only in Vina Dhanammal’s family and the raga is called Māñji.

Varṇameṭṭu-s from sources other than Carnatic Music

The varṇameṭṭu-s of some of the well-known Bengali songs were adopted in Hindi films mainly by music directors S.D. Burman & R.D. Burman.

For example, the tune of the Bengali Song “aruṇakānti”, composed and tuned by the Bengali poet and composer Kazi Nazrul Islam was adopted by S.D.Burman for the song ‘pūchōnā kaise maine’, sung by Manna Dey for the Hindi Film: Meri Sūrat Tēri Ankhen (1963). This film song had become very popular.

The tune of the film song ‘bālamāyē basō mōrē mana mē’ sung by K L Saigal for the Film: Devdas (1935) had been adopted for the song ‘pūṅguyil kūvum’, composed by Kalki R, Krishnamurthi and sung and popularized by D.K.Pattammal. The music director of the Hindi movie was Timir Baran.

Varṇameṭṭu-s adopted for religious songs

Many Christian devotional songs in Tamil were popularised by Professor VPK Sundaram, which were set to the tunes of Tyāgarāja kīrtana-s. It was one Raja Iyengar, musician and brother of Vidwan S.V. Parthasarathi, who set the tunes of these songs, adopting the tunes of famous Tyāgarāja kīrtana-s.

Nagore Hanifa, the famous singer of Islam devotional songs, had also sung a few songs, with adopted varṇameṭṭu-s. For example, the tune of the song ‘mērē naina’ from the Hindi film Mehbooba (1976) had been adopted in Nagore Hanifa’s Islam devotional song ‘adikālai nērattil.’

R.D. Burman was the music director for the Hindi film Mehbooba.

Tunes in Art Music adopted from Film Music and vice versa

Occasionally, film music tunes have influenced art music. Vidvān Maharajapuram Santhanam had set the music of the pallavi of his Tamil kīrtana ‘vēl vēl vīra muruganin vēl vēl’ just like the opening lines of the Hindi film song ‘jāō nand ki lāla’ from the Hindi film Rangoli (1962). The music directors of the film were Shanker and Jaikishan.

In a few Hindi films, the tunes of ṭhumri-s popularised by great Hindustāni musicians have been adopted. The tune of the ṭhumri ‘yādpiyākīyē’ that became very famous by Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan’s singing had been adopted in the Hindi film song ‘balaṁā anāḍi manabhāye’, in the Hindi film Bahurani (1963). C. Ramachandra was the music director.

Tunes have also been taken from Western Art Music. The music of the first movement of Mozart’s 40th Symphony in G minor can be heard in the opening lines of the Hindi film song “Itanānā mujsētu pyār baḍhā” in the film Chaya (1961). Salil Chowdhury was the music director.

Observations

Generally, the folk varṇameṭṭu-s in South India are based on the svāra-s of Tōḍi, Māyāmāḷavagaḷa, Bhairavi, Kharaharapriya, Harikāmbhōji and Śāṅkarābharaṇam. It is very common to find anya svāra-s in all the folk varṇameṭṭu-s.

There is no prati madhyama in folk tunes. In Sindhubhairavi, the rāga from Hindustāni music, which was introduced through Harikāthā kālakṣēpa and made popular with many later light music songs and later folk songs, along with śuddha madhyama, a kind of augmented madhyama is also used. This augmented madhyama is higher in pitch than the śuddha madhyama, but lower than the pitch of prati madhyama. This particular madhyama

in Sindhubharavi is of pure oral tradition and cannot be written down in notation. In the famous Sindhubhairavi tiruppugaz ‘amudamūru’ this augmented śuddha madhyama can be heard. The nāgasvaram vidvān-s play this tiruppugaz so beautifully.

In almost all the folk tunes invariably both the varieties of the same note for one or two svāra-s are used. This is in fact more or less a regular feature in folk tunes.

In the folk tune maguḍi ‘nādamuḍi mēlirukkum nāga pāmbē’, in Punnāgavarāḷi rāga, both śuddha and catuśruti ṛṣabha-s and both kaiśikī and kākali niṣāda-s occur very naturally.

Surprisingly in the renderings of art forms in Punnāgavarāḷi, while both the ṛṣabha-s are present, there is a conspicuous avoidance of kākali niṣāda. Ex: Kṣētrayya padam ‘ninnujūda’, the kīrtana ‘ēhiannapūrṇe’ of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar and the kīrtana ‘śivagaṅgā nagara nivāsini’ of Pāpanāsam Sivan.

In the folk song ‘nanda vanattil ōrāṇḍi’ and the similarly tuned ‘pāvam seyyādiru manamē’, though the rāga is named Nādanāmakriyā, the niṣāda is only kaiśikī. This anya svāra or accidental note is not used in art music forms like the padam and kīrtana-s.

In the rāga Ānandabhairavi while the anya svāra-s antara gāndhāra and catuśruti dhaivata are sung in both folk tunes and art musical forms, the other anya svāra kākali niṣāda can be heard more frequently in folk songs only. Ānandabhairavi is the most frequently used rāga in South Indian Folk Music, as in the folk tunes kummi, kiḷikkāṇṇi, kāvaḍicindu and in the Telugu Kanda padyam or verses in the operas and dance dramas.

All the rāga-s which evolved naturally through oral tradition with a strong folk musical background have anya svāra-s, i.e. two varieties of the same svāra like śuddha and catuśruti ṛṣabha, sādharmaṇa and antara gāndhāra on so on.

There is no prati madhyama svāra in any of the naturally evolved rāga-s

As said earlier, the varṇameṭṭu or tune is a rāga capsule containing in itself, all the essential features of the rāga, with a wonderful scope to unfold the rāga.





Rāga Descriptions in Mataṅga's Bṛhaddeśī

Prof. V Premalatha & Arutla Rohith

Introduction

Bṛhaddeśī is one of the important early works on Indian music, written by Mataṅga and is placed between the 6th and the 9th centuries. It is a very significant work in music history, since it speaks about one of the most prominent concepts of music, namely “Rāga”, for the first time. The music tradition that is known in texts like Nāṭyaśāstra and Dattilam are referred to as the Gandharva or the Mārga tradition, while the practice that evolved later to these are called Deśī. In this regard, Bṛhaddeśī is considered to be the earliest work on the deśī tradition of music practice.

Bṛhaddeśī was first published from a single manuscript from Travancore, in 1928, edited by K. Sāmbāśiva Śāstri. Later a critical edition with English translation was made by Dr. Premlata Sharma and Anil Bihari Beohar, which was brought out in 1992 & 1994, by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi. The first volume of this edition consists of the first chapter and the second volume consists of chapters two to six. This paper aims to give an insight into the description of the Rāga-s and their related concepts as found in the work Bṛhaddeśī and would deal with the following:

- a. Contents of Bṛhaddeśī
- b. Technical terms related to description of Rāga-s
- c. Classification of Gīti-s and the Rāga-s under them
- d. Description of Rāga-s
- e. Observations & Findings

Contents of Bṛhaddeśī

The available work deals with concepts relating to music only, and appears to be incomplete. There are six chapters and the first chapter deals with deśī, nāda, śruti, svara, grāma, mūrchanā, varṇa, alaṅkāra, pada and gītī. The second chapter speaks on the Jāti-s and

their characteristics. The third chapter is dedicated to the treatment of Rāga-s and the fourth on the Bhāṣa-s. A detailed note on the deśī rāga-s are presented in the fifth chapter and the sixth chapter speaks on the Prabandha-s. Mataṅga quotes many early authorities, like Bharata, Kaśyapa, Yāṣṭika, Durgāśakti and Śārdūla, in his work.

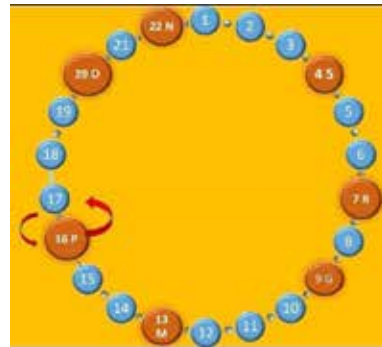
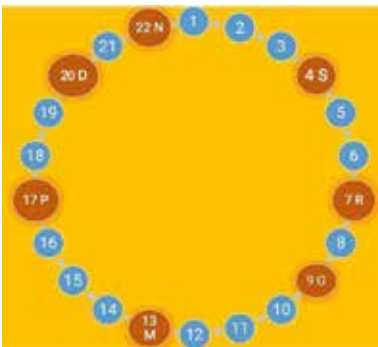
The third chapter deals with the Rāgalakṣaṇa-s and it commences with the definition of the term, “Rāga”, which is as follows: ‘that which colours and delights the mind of the good, through a specific svara and varṇa or through a type of dhvani is known by the wise as rāga’ (Brd,3,263)¹. This is followed by the seven types of Gīti-s and their descriptions. Mataṅga gives the names of the rāga-s under each gīti and then follows, the description of each rāga, in order.

Technical terms related to the description of Rāga-s

As stated earlier, this paper takes up the description of rāga-s as found in the Bṛhaddeśī of Mataṅga. In order to understand the ancient musical concepts, it is essential to know about some of the technical terms that were used during that period, in the said context. A few of them are explained below.

a. Grāma

This is the basic concept that had come down from the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata which refers to the grouping of the seven svara-s, namely Ṣaḍja, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, pañcama, dhaivata and niṣāda. These seven svara-s were distributed within 22 śruti (pitch) positions. Śruti, here also refers to the definite tonal interval between consecutive svara-s. It is to be noted that the placement of the svara-s within the 22 śruti range was not equally divided. In other words, the tonal interval between the consecutive svara-s was not similar, but varied. Based on the intervals, there were two grāma-s, namely, Ṣaḍjagrāma & Madhyamagrāma. Fig.1 and Fig.2, below, would provide the positions of the svara-s in the two grāma-s.



1 References and translations, here are based on the IGNCA edition of the work

b. Mūrchanā

While the grouping of svāra-s was called a Grāma, the sequential arrangement of the seven svāra-s was termed as mūrchanā. Each mūrchanā commenced with the seven svāra-s, in order, thus seven mūrchanā-s were formed out of each grāma. The mūrchanā-s also dropped one or two svāra-s in some instances and were then called tāna. Thus the mūrchanā-s with six svāra-s and five svāra-s were called Śāḍavatāna and Auḍavatāna, respectively. It is also to be noted that only definite svāra-s were to be omitted in the above said tāna-s in each of the grāma-s.

c. Jāti

Jāti-s were the basic melodic structures of musical forms and it meant a class of melody. There were 18 kinds of jāti-s, of which some were based on the svāra-s of the Śaḍjagrāma and others were based on madhyamagrāma. Each jāti did not denote an individual melody but encompassed several melodic types. The jāti-s had ten characteristic features, namely – graha, amśa, tāra, mandra, śāḍava, auḍava, alpatva, bahutva, nyāsa and apanyāsa.

d. Gīti

The term Gīti in Bṛhaddeśī, referred to the stylistic rendering of the rāga and Mataṅga mentions seven kinds of gīti. (3,275 - 289). They are śuddhāgīti, bhinnāgīti, gauḍīgīti, rāgagīti, sādharāṅgīti, bhāṣāgīti and vibhāṣāgīti. Each gīti was specified with some rāga-s under them. Those rāga-s pertaining to the first five gīti-s were considered as Grāmarāga-s and those of the other two gīti-s were called, bhāṣā, vibhāṣā and antarabhāṣā rāga-s.

Classification of Gīti-s and the Rāga-s under them

There were five primary gīti-s and few rāga-s were grouped under each gīti. The details are given below.

ŚuddhāGīti

It is explained thus:

“The Cokṣa (śuddhā) gīti is spoken of as being complete with mandra (low) amandra (not low, medium) tāra (high) straight, attractive, equal svāra-s and śruti-s” (Brd,3,275). The five rāga-s under this gīti are Śāḍava, Pañcama, Kaiśikamadhya, Śuddha (Cokṣa) Sādharīta and Śuddha (Cokṣa) Kaiśika.

In this context, it is to be noted that the above-mentioned rāga-s are similar to the Grāmarāga-s – the most ancient types of melodies that were born of the jāti-s. (Brd,Anu.170). There were seven primary grāmarāga-s and were the same as those found in the Kudumiyanmalai

music inscription. The raga-s mentioned in the Kudumiyanmalai inscription are Śaḍjagrāma, Madhyamagrāma, Śāḍava, Pañcama, Kaiśikamadyama, Sādhārīta and Kaiśika (Richard Widdess, 2001, p.205). Thus except the first two, other five are similar to the rāga-s born from the Śuddhāgīti in Bṛhaddeśī.

BhinnāGīti

It is explained thus:

“Bhinnāgīti is said to be with sūkṣma (short in time), mobile, curved, ullasita (made to shine upwards), prasārīta (spread out), attractive, high and low (svara-s).” (Brd,3,276)

The rāga-s born of the Bhinnāgīti are BhinnaŚaḍja, Bhinnatāna, Bhinnakaiśikamadyama, Bhinnapañcama and Bhinnakaiśika.

GauḍīGīti (Ohāti)

It is explained thus:

“The svara-s of gauḍī are beautiful and are attractive ohāti. Ohāti is said to consist of a combination of the sound ‘ha’ and ‘O’. Ohāti belongs to the low (register); it is produced by placing the chin on the chest. It is to be made fast and faster, being pressed with the shake of svara. (Brd,3,277-278). The rāga-s belonging to the Gauḍīgīti are Gauḍapañcama, Gauḍakaiśika, Gauḍakaiśikamadyama.

RāgaGīti

It is explained thus:

“Rāgaḡīti is said to be with attractive gamaka-s with variegated low (prasanna) (svara-s) pertaining to the chest region, even, colourful or delightful arrangements of svara-s”. The rāga-s are so called because the beautiful rāga that comes about in all the four varṇa-s is seen in them in its completeness. (Brd,3,282-283). The rāga-s classified under this gīti are, Ṭakkarāga, Sauvīra, Mālavapañcama, Śāḍava, Botṭarāga, Hindōlaka, Ṭakkakaiśika and Mālavakaiśika.

SādhāraṇīGīti

It is explained thus:

“(This gīti) should be made with straight attractive, somewhat minute and large, properly audible, slightly fast, similarly soft, attractive, smooth (or soft), and minute, prayōga-s (melodic phrases?) that are well combined with minute kaku-s. Thus sādhāraṇī should

be known to be the abode of all gītis". (Brd,3,284-285). The rāga-s classified under this gīti are, Narta, Śāka, Kakubha, BhammānaPañcama, Rūpasādhārīta, Gāndhārapañcama and Ṣaḍjakaiśika.

BhāṣāGīti

It is explained thus:

"The bhāṣāgīti is described by the experts in gīti as consisting of prayōga-s that are rendered by the body (voice), are smooth, colourful with kāku-s, well composed, shaken, soft, brilliant, combined with mālavīkāku, attractive and graceful. It is performed in the manner that delights the people." (Brd,3,286-287)

VibhāṣāGīti

It is explained thus:

"Vibhāṣāgīti-s should be composed with gamaka-s that are attractive, numerous, brilliant, shaken, pertaining to the chest region, even, high and very high, smooth in which madhyama shines forth in between that are delightful to the ear and attractive. The process of composition should be spontaneous and should take the course that delights the people." (Brd,3,288-289).

Description of Rāga-s

The rāga-s are described in Chapter-3 of Bṛhaddeśī. (Brd,3,300-344) and they pertain to the grāmārāga-s. While describing such rāga-s, some important aspects are found to be taken into account. They are, graha, amśa, nyāsa, vādi, samvādi, anuvādi, alpatva, bahutva, mūrchanā, varṇa, alaṅkāra, mārga, tāla, rasa, prayōga (plot in nāṭya), sampūrṇa or auḍava or ṣāḍava and kākali or antara. This is an important aspect in Maṭaṅga's treatment of rāga-s.

Given below is an example of the lakṣaṇa of Bhinnapañcama, a rāga under the Bhinnāgīti (Brd 3,307 & Anu.177). The original text and its corresponding English translation are provided, herein.

[२.भिन्नपञ्चमः]

[अनु० १७६]

..... असौ भिन्नपञ्चमः स्वरभिन्नोऽभिधीयते । लक्षणं च तद्यथा -

शुद्धपञ्चमवत् प्रोक्तः स्वरज्ञैर्भिन्नपञ्चमः ।

स्वर(चैते)

धैवतांशः पञ्चमान्तः सूत्रधारप्रवेशने ॥ ३०७॥

[अनु० १७७]

अस्यार्थः - भिन्नपञ्चमो मध्यमग्रामसम्बन्धः, मध्यमापञ्चमीजात्योर्जातत्वात्

भिन्न(म?)पञ्चमो

-वा(म)

षड्जोदीर्घ्यवती-नलेः मध्यमा(पञ्चमी) जात्यो-

ग्रहोऽश्लक्ष धैवतः। पञ्चमो न्यासः। निषादोऽत्र काकली। क्वचिन्निषादस्यापि प्रयोगः। सम्पूर्ण-
ज्ञायम्। सूत्रधारप्रवेशेऽस्य विनियोगः। बीभत्सभयानकौ रसौ। धैवतादिमूर्च्छना। सञ्जारी वर्णः।
प्रसन्नदिल्लङ्कारः। दक्षिणे कला, वृत्तौ कला, चित्रे कला, स्वरपदगीते चञ्चत्पुटादितालः।[2. *Bhinna-pañcama*]

[Anu. 176]

..... This *bhinna-pañcama* is said to be *svarabhinna*. Its description is thus-

The knowledgeable ones in *svara* have spoken of *bhinna-pañcama* being similar⁴⁸ to *śuddha-pañcama*. It has *dhaivata* as its *aṁśa*, *pañcama* as its concluding note and is (applied) in the entry of the *sūtradhāra*.

(307)

[Anu. 177]

This means—*bhinna-pañcama* is related to *madhyama-grāma* on account of being born of *madhyamā* and *pañcamī-jātis*. *Dhaivata* is the *graha* and *aṁśa*, *pañcama* is the *nyāsa*, *niṣāda* is *kākalī* here. Sometimes *niṣāda*⁴⁹ is also used and this (*rāga*) is complete. It is applied in the entry of the *sūtradhāra*. *Bibhatsa* and *bhayānaka* are the *rasas*. The *murchanā* beginning with *dhaivata* obtains. *Sañcarinī* is the *varṇa*. *Prasannādi* is the *alaṅkāra*. The *kalā* is formed in the *dakṣiṇa* (*mārga*), the *kalā* obtains in the *vṛtti* (*mārga*) and the *kalā* prevails in the *citra* (*mārga*). A *tāla* like *caccatpuṭa* obtains in the songs comprised of *svara* and *pada*.

Observations

In the above example, the *rāga* is described in two forms- as a verse, numbered 307 and then is followed by the prose description, numbered as Anu.177. One can notice that the description in the verse is very crisp and it only mentions the *aṁśasvara*, *nyāsasvara* of the *rāga* and that it has to be used during the entry of *sūtradhāra*. But the prose passage following this verse gives an expanded description, as could be read from the translation of the text given above. All the *grāmarāga*-s under this chapter are described in the same manner.

In this juncture, it is to be noted that *Bṛhaddeśī* is the first work to deal with *Rāga*-s and to use sargam syllables, like, sa, ri, ga, ma and so on. Thus the descriptions of *rāga*-s in this chapter, also happen to be one of the earliest references. With regard to the description of a *rāga*, the verse and its following prose passage together presents the whole summary. The present text is incomplete and relation between the verses and prose passages needs to be examined. This aspect has been raised by scholars like Prof N Ramanathan in their research writings².

Another important observation is that *Mataṅga* says that he speaks about those aspects which were not mentioned by *Bharata* (Brd,3,262). Meanwhile the chapter on *Bhāṣālakṣaṇa* is said to be an extract from *Sarvāgama Samhitā*, by *Yāṣṭhika* (Brd,p.182). The description of *rāga*-s under this section is totally different from the description of the other types of *rāga*-s, given under the five *gīti*-s. One can notice illustrations of *svara* passages for each *rāga*, and the factors that determine the *lakṣaṇa* of the *rāga* also differ.

Given below is the *lakṣaṇa* of *Pañcamākhyā* – a *rāga* derivative of *Bhāṣā* (Brd,4,51)

पञ्चमांशा तु षड्जान्ता सम्पूर्णा लोकरञ्जिका ।
 पञ्चमर्षभसंवादः षड्जमध्यमयोस्तथा ॥
 भाषेयं पञ्चमाख्या तु सम्पूर्णा समुदाहृता ॥ ५१ ॥
 उदाहरणम् - पापापरिपा । रिपापापापमापामपमा सासासरीरीरि । निघाधपापा । पसामामा
 रिगगारिसपा पगारिसागारिसारिपापरिरिगारि । गाधामागारि धपरिसासा । पञ्चमाख्या^{३४} । [१०]

Having *pañcama* as *aṁśa* and *ṣaḍja* as the concluding note, being complete and delightful to the people, this *bhāṣā* is said to be *pañcamākhyā*. There is concert¹⁹ between *pañcama-ṣabha* and similarly between *ṣaḍja-madhyama*.

(51)

Illustration - *Pāpāpāripā. Ripāpāpāpamāpāpāmapamā sāsāsarīrīri Nīdhādhapāpā. Pasāmāmārīrīgagarīsapā pagārīsāgārīsāripāpārīrīgārī. Gādhāmāgārīrīdhaparīgasāsā. Pañcamākhyā* [x]

Thus it is understood from the above, that the *rāga* description is presented in a different format and all the *rāga*-s in this section carry an illustration of sargam passages.

2 The Prose and Verse Portions of *Bṛhaddeśī* : Their Mutual Relationship, by N Ramanathan, <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ebo8stibnoxlbi85ha7ks/AE-RamanathanN-Prose-and-Verse-Portions-of-Bṛhaddeśi-SNA-0978.pdf?rlkey=7dmrux4xrwfv0e784v58t8cog&dl=0>

Findings

- There exists a relation between the factors that determined the lakṣaṇa-s of jāti-s of Bharata and the grāmarāga-s of Maṭaṅga. The present day rāgalakṣaṇa-s also bear a correlation to this tradition, with contextual variations.
- Rāga-s were associated with one or more jāti-s and derived from the Ṣaḍja and/or madhyamagrāma-s in Maṭaṅga's time. This is contrary to Bharata's tradition, where jāti-s were strictly based on any one grāma.
- Some concepts of Bharata are described in a different manner in Bṛhaddeśī, like gīti, kāku, sādihāranasvara-s etc. This suggests a transformation in the tradition, which has been documented by Maṭaṅga and quoted by later authors too.
- Attribution of rasa, tāla, mārga and association with specific junctures in the drama to the rāga-s, suggest that the rāga descriptions by Maṭaṅga, pertained to specific songs that occurred in Nāṭya.
- Aspects like ways of rendering (subtle/delicate, straight/curved), endowed with gamaka-s and kāku-s, kinds of svāra phrases (varṇa/alāṅkāra), pace of melodic rendering (steady/fast/quick), sthāna or the range of melody, and rāga-s meant for the enjoyment of common people - stand as a testimony for Maṭaṅga's perception of a rāga.
- Names of some rāga-s of Bṛhaddeśī are found in some later literary works in Samskrīta, Prākṛt, Kannada and Tamil. Some rāga names of Bṛhaddeśī are also noticed in the Paṇ-s of the Tevāram tradition, like Kausikam, Gāndhārapañcamam, Takkarāgam, Indalam, BhinnaṢaḍjam and so on.

Thus it is learnt that the Bṛhaddeśī of Maṭaṅga is a very important work that serves as a bridge between early gandharva and later deśī tradition and had highly influenced later authors. The discovery of the remaining parts of the work, (which could probably be hidden in any unpublished manuscripts), will shed more light and contribute to the understanding of the music system of ancient India.

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Mysterious Transformations – Rāga-s Āharī and Ābhērī

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1 Introduction

The *rāga* is fundamental to Indian music, with musicologists defining it through parameters such as scale, key notes, consonant and dissonant relationships, and melodic movement. This theoretical framework, known as *rāga-lakṣaṇa*, has long coexisted with oral traditions upheld by practitioners. However, discrepancies between textual descriptions and practice have been a persistent challenge.

One striking instance of such a tension is seen in the shifting identities of *rāga-s* Āharī and Ābhērī, between the 17th and 19th centuries. The *Rāgalakṣaṇamu* of Śāhajī (RL-S), a late-17th century treatise, appears to have played a crucial role in this change. This article examines how Śāhajī's work may have contributed to the transformation, drawing data from primary, manuscript sources, and situating it within the broader historical and musicological context.

2 Background

2.1 Early references to Āharī

Early descriptions of Āharī in the musicological treatises are remarkably consistent. Rāmāmātya's *Svaramēlakalānidhi* (SMK, 1550 CE), is the first to describe it. It assigns Āharī to the Āharīmēla¹, which contains the svara-s *ṣaḍja*, *pañcaśrutīṣabha*, *sādhāraṇa gāndhāra*, *śuddha madhyama*, *śuddha pañcama*, *śuddha dhaivata*, and *kākalī niṣāda*. It is classified as an *uttama* (superior) *rāga*, where there is no admixture of svara-s. Other texts

1 The *mēla* (family, gathering) can be understood as an abstract set of seven svara-s which serves as the basis for grouping *rāga-s* (Ramanathan, p. 1). *Rāga-s* that share some subset of the notes of this set are grouped together and the group itself is named after the most prominent member. - Āharī in this case.

of the late-16th and 17th centuries² give similar accounts of the rāga (Hema Ramanathan, 2004, pp. 119-29)³.

Vēṅkaṭamakhin, in his *Catur daṇḍī prakāśikā* (CDP), includes Āharī in a list of fifty-five prevalent rāga-s that had concurrence between usage and theory⁴, making them suited for compositions of the gīta, thāya and prabandha forms⁵. He places it under the twenty-first mēla in his newly-envisaged 72-mēla scheme, with the same set of svāra-s described in the Svaramēlakalānidhi (Vēṅkaṭamakhin, 2002, p. 206). This version of the rāga will be referred to as Āharī-21, in this paper.

2.2 Late-17th century

In the Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Śāhajī (1684-1712) this rāga undergoes a major transformation. Here, rāga Āharī is assigned to the Bhairavī mēla, which corresponds to the twentieth in the 72-mēla scheme. Mēla-s Bhairavī and Āharī differ only by one svāra - the niṣāda. As a result, rāga Āharī's kākalī niṣāda is replaced by Bhairavī's kaiśikī niṣāda, which has a lower pitch position. Subsequent texts, including Tulaja's *Saṅgītasārāmṛta* (SSA) and Muddu Veṅkaṭamakhī's Rāgalakṣaṇa (RL-MV), follow this new definition. This version of the rāga will be referred to as Āharī-20 in this paper.

2.3 Later texts

A set of texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the *Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi*, the *Mahābharatacūḍāmaṇi*, and the *Saṅgītasārasaṅgrahamu*, assign 'Āhiri' to the Hanumattōḍi mēla. Subsequent texts of the twentieth century give a vastly different account of the rāga. Subbarāma Dīkṣita, in his *Saṅgīta sampradāya pradarsini* (SSP, 1904), places 'Āhiri' in mēla 20, while also acknowledging that this rāga has been placed in mēla 8 by previous experts. P. Sambamoorthy (1963, p. 159) recommends placing Āhiri under Vakulābharaṇa (Mēla 14), due to the preponderance of antara gāndhāra in the extant oral practice. These differing views tell us that contemporary Āhiri is a phrase-based rāga that cannot be easily assigned to any single mēla.

2 *Rāgatālacintāmaṇi*, *Sadrāgacandrōdaya*, *Rāgamañjarī*, *Rāgamāla*, *Rāgavibōdha*, *Saṅgītasudhā* and *Saṅgītapārijāta*

3 The texts give slightly differing names, but similar descriptions: *Sadrāgacandrōdaya* (*Ābhīrī*), *Rāgamañjarī* (*Āhērī*), *Rāgamāla* (*Āhērī*), *Rāgavibōdha* (*Ābhīrī*), *Saṅgītapārijāta* (*Ābhīrī*).

4 *tatahprasiddhivaidhuryāntyaktvārāgāmstutānpunah|| sarvatra lakṣya mārgē'trasampratipracarantiyē | tānasmātparamācāryatānappācāryasamuddhṛtān || rāgānnirūpayiṣyāmi lakṣya lakṣaṇa sammatān* (Vēṅkaṭamakhin, 2002, p. 222)

5 *lakṣitāhpañcapañcāsāditirāgāhṣphuṭammayā |gītaṭhāyaprabandhārhatānappāryaiḥpravartitāh ||* (Vēṅkaṭamakhin, 2002, p. 234).

2.4 Ābhērī

While one would not think it by listening to their modern versions, the biographies of the rāga-s Āhiri and Ābhērī are deeply interlinked. Both the *Saṅgītasudhā* and the *Catur daṇḍī prakāśikā* place Ābhērī in the Āharī mēla. However, parallel to the shift observed in Āharī, Ābhērī too is reassigned to the *Bhairavī mēla* (Mēla 20) by Śāhajī. This shift is confirmed by subsequent sources such as SSA, RL-MV and the SSP.

The debate over Ābhērī's identity takes on a topical quality, as it is prevalent in the *Karnāṭakasāṅgītam* of the post-19th century with two identities. The first is as described in the SSP. In the second, it is moved to mēla 22, where the *śuddha dhaivata* of Bhairavī mēla is replaced by the *catuḥśrutidhaivata*. (Catlin, 1995) (Janakiraman, 2009, pp. 54-7).

3 Motivation for the study

RL-S is among the earliest sources to document the reclassification of the rāga-s Āharī and Ābhērī from mēla 21 to mēla 20. Scholars have proposed various explanations for this shift. Hema Ramanathan (2004, pp. 2–5) suggests that the niṣāda may have gradually diminished in usage or been intentionally lowered over time - a transformation likely effected through oral transmission. In contrast, S.R. Janakiraman (2009, pp. 2–5) maintains that the Āharī employed in contemporary renditions of Kṣētrayya's padams represents the authentic form of the rāga, and he firmly rejects its earlier association with mēla 21.

This article proposes an alternative perspective. Recent research has uncovered previously unknown connections between the compositions referenced in RL-S and those preserved in manuscripts housed in the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library (TMSSML). Notably, several of these manuscripts include rāga descriptions in their paratexts - an under explored but potentially valuable source of rāga lakṣaṇa. Drawing on this newly uncovered evidence, the present study investigates these manuscripts to explore the possible reasons behind the reclassification of Āharī and Ābhērī. While a comprehensive analysis of their complex histories lies beyond the scope of this paper, the focus here is specifically on the textual evidence in RL-S.

4 The Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Śāhajī

RL-S appears to have been written for Śāhajī I, the ruler of Tañjāvūr (1684 - 1712 CE). It deals exclusively with rāga-s and their mēla-s and is not part of a broader treatise on music (Seetha, p. 142). What makes it noteworthy is its inclusion of melodic phrases illustrating rāga-s. Most of these illustrative excerpts are drawn from compositions belonging to the *Caturdaṇḍī* tradition (encompassing *ālāpa*, *ṭhāya*, *gīta*, and *prabandha* forms) as well as from *sūlādi* compositions.

4.1 Mēlakartā-s

The focus of the RL-S is to list the rāga-s derived from the different mēla-s⁶. The RL-S refers to the prominent rāga of each mēla as the *mēlakartā*. It defines twenty mēla-s, assigning each the name of a mēlakartā rāga (Table 1)⁷.

Table 1 – Mēla-s in the RL-S (Śāha Mahārāja, 1990, p. 2)

S.No	Mēlakartā	Equivalent mēla in the 72-mēla scheme ⁸	No. of rāga-s in the mēla
1	Śrīrāga	22	18
2	Nāṭa	36	2
3	Mālavagauḷa	15	30
4	Varāḷi	39	1
5	Bhairavi	20	11
6	Kāmbhōji	28	16
7	Śaṅkarābharaṇa	29	15
8	Mukhāri	1	1
9	Vēgavāhini	16	1
10	Sindhurāmakriyā	45	2
11	Hejjijji	13	1
12	Śuddharāmakriyā	51	2
13	Sāmavarāḷi	3	3
14	Vasantabhairavi	14	2
15	Bhinnaṣaḍja	9	2
16	Dēśākṣi	35	1
17	Chāyanāṭa	34	1
18	Sāraṅga	-	1
19	Tōḍi	8	3
20	Kalyāni	65	2

A majority of the 115 rāga-s described by Śāhajī belong to the mēla-s Mālavagauḷa, Śrīrāga, Kāmbhōji, Bhairavī and Śaṅkarābharaṇa. The following nomenclature is used by the RL-S to describe the notes of each mēla-*ṣaḍja*, *śuddha rṣabha*, *pañcaśrutirṣabha*, *ṣaṭśrutirṣabha*, *śuddha gāndhāra*, *sādhāraṇa gāndhāra*, *antara gāndhāra*, *cyutamadhyama*

6 *tattadmēlasamudbhūtarāgāḥkramēṇalikhyaṅtē* (Śāha Mahārāja, 1990, p. 2)

7 The RL-S appears to be the first text to insist that the mēlakartā should be a saṃpūrṇa rāga, with all the seven svara-s of the mēla appearing in it.

8 Given only for ease of recognition. The RL-S does not map mēla-s on to the 72-mēla scheme.

gāndhāra, śuddha madhyama, cyutapañcamamadhyama, pañcama, śuddha dhāvata, pañcaśrutidhāvata, śuddha niṣāda, kaiśikī niṣāda, kākalī niṣāda and cyutaśaḍja niṣāda. Although this list appears to be borrowed from the SMK, the list of mēla-s and rāga-s in the RL-S is different from that of the SMK. Importantly for us, this list does not have the Āharī mēla at all.

4.2 Rāga-s

Next, the RL-S takes up the 115 rāga-s and describes each of them. A typical description of a rāga is seen in the examples of rāga-s Āharī (Figure 1) and Ābhērī (Figure 2).

Each rāga is described in two parts. The first part describes the grammar of the rāga (*lakṣaṇa*) - verbally. The rāga's lakṣaṇa includes categorizations such as rāgāṅga, bhāṣāṅga, kriyāṅga, upāṅga, dēśī, rakti. A rāga's suitability for use in various musical forms is also mentioned, using terms such as 'ghanamātrayōgyamu' 'ghananayayōgyamu', 'nayayōgyamu'⁹. This is followed by a brief narrative of the movement of the svara-s in the rāga and its ascending and descending phrases (termed *mūrchana* or *svara naḍavaḍika*). Other parameters of a rāga, such as its *graha*, *nyāsa*, *amśa* are rarely discussed.

In the second part, titled 'udāharana', illustrative excerpts extracted from compositions of the Caturdaṇḍī¹⁰ and sūlādi forms are given – representing its 'lakṣya'. The illustrative excerpts are marked with labels denoting the 'forms' of the compositions from which they are extracted, but not the actual compositions in which they occur. They are drawn from the forms *āyittam*¹¹, *udgrāham*¹², *ṭhāya*, *gīta* and *prabandha*. They were perhaps meant to provide a sampling of the characteristic as well as uncommon phrases of the rāga being described. For some rāga-s classified as 'dēśya' and 'rakti', the text notes the presence of compositions of non-Caturdaṇḍī forms such as *padam*, *daru*, *ślōka* and *varṇam*¹³.

9 The definitions of these terms are not given in the RL-S. They are interpreted today through the SSP (Dikṣitulu, 1904, p. 35).

10 Ālāpa, ṭhāya, gīta and prabandha

11 Āyittam refers to the ākṣiptikā part of an ālāpa. In the GMSS, the entire ālāpa is labelled 'āyittam'

12 Udgrāha refers to the first rāgavardhini part of an ālāpa

13 For example, for the dēśī rāga Māgadhi and Dhanāśī, the presence of *daru* compositions is noted. For the rakti rāga Yarukalakāmbhōji, the presence of *daru* and *pada* compositions is noted.

Āhari¹⁴ (suitable for ghana and naya) is to be sung in the evening. It is a bhāṣā of Ṭakka and belongs to Bhairavi mēlaṁ and is saṁpūrṇaṁ. The notes take a linear (lit. not twisted) path in ascent and descent.

Examples:

mapagarisanisaririsa | gagarigamapadhadhapapasā | sanidhadhapamapadhapapamagarisa
| - This is an udgrāha prayōgam

papamagarisa | mapadhapapamagarisanisa| dha...sasānidhapa |
mapadhapapamagarisanisa | This is a Ṭhāya prayōgam

sasa ma ga risasamama pa pa ga ma | pa sasarisani dha pa ma pa ma ga risa |
pa du mādē ē vi ma nō ō ōra ma ṇu | dā . nakar. ṇa sa ma a nuvaa re |

This is a gīta prayōgaṁ

Sāpāppamapadhapapamagarigamaga | ririsani | sāsa| sānīdhāmāpadhapapamagarisa | -
This is svarakhaṇḍa of prabandha

Figure 1 Description of rāga Āharī in the RL-S. Source: (Śāha Mahārāja, 1990, pp. 102,104)

Ābhēri is a bhāṣā of Pañcama¹⁵, complete with all seven notes. It belongs to Bhairavi mēlaṁ. The movement of svāra-s is contextual in ascent and descent

Examples:

Ga ma pa sasārrisa | nisani dha pā ma ga ma pa sasā ma | ma mamama | ma ma ga ga
s ani sāssa - This is an āyittam

Pa ma ma ga gasasa | sā ma ga ma pā sanini | pa pama ma ga gasasānini pa pama ma
ga ma pa sasā | This is an udgrāha prayōgaṁ

Sāni dha pa ma | pa ma | ma mama ga sasa | This is a descending tāna

Sa sani pa | sanini pa | pa sa s ani sanisānini pa | - This is a ṭhāya

Sa sasama ma pa | sasāni dha pa ma | māma ma ga risa |

I yam vaiiya | te yam vai I ya e | kaṁsa ha ri .sa ka |

Figure 2 Description of rāga Ābhēri in the RL-S. Source: (Śāha Mahārāja, 1990, pp. 108,110)

14 The names of many rāga-s which end with a ‘ī’ (a long vowel) in the Sanskrit texts are spelt with a ‘i’ (short vowel) in the RL-S. Thus, Āharī becomes Āhari and Ābhēri becomes Ābhēri. This variation is also reflected in the spelling used in this article.

15 ‘Pañcama’ might stand for the rāga Pañcamī, a bhāṣā of Ṭakka. (Śārṅgadēva, 1944, p. 114). Presumably, this rāga too has kākālī niṣāda and antara gāndhāra, inherited from Ṭakka. Again, it is unclear how Ābhēri resembles or differs from Pañcama.

4.3 The Unknown Sources of the RL-S

The origins of the rāga list, their lakṣaṇa, and the illustrative excerpts found in RL-S remain unknown. Notably, the RL-S does not adopt the 72-mēla system formalized in the *Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā* (CDP), the seminal mid-17th-century treatise from Tañjāvūr. Seetha (p. 145) observes that Śāhajī appears not to have consulted earlier texts such as the *Saṅgītasudhā*, the *Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā*, or the works of Paṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala - all of which were later referenced by his successor Tulajājī in the *Saṅgītasārāmṛta*.

However, recent research offers new insights into the possible sources of the RL-S. Studies by Rao (2015; 2022) and Srilatha (2023, pp. 160–162) have traced several of the illustrative excerpts in the RL-S to *sūlādi* and *prabandha* compositions preserved in the manuscripts. The following section briefly examines these manuscripts as potential sources for understanding the musical material embedded in the RL-S.

5 The Gīta manuscripts

The TMSSM Library contains a notable collection of manuscripts featuring compositions in the *Caturdaṇḍī* and *sūlādi* musical forms. The manuscripts will be referred to in this article as the *Gīta Manuscripts* (GMSS)¹⁶.

The GMSS feature the songs of various composers from the 15th to early 18th centuries, spanning different regions of South India and the Deccan. Among them are composers of the 15th and 16th centuries such as Peda Tirumalācārya, Purandaradāsa, and Ōbayāmātya (late 16th century), alongside several composers of the Thanjavur court such as Veṅkaṭamakhī, Muddu Veṅkaṭamakhī, Śāhajī and Ēkōjī II (17th to early-18th centuries). Colophons in these manuscripts indicate that the songs were curated from private collections of musicians and musicologists. It is the largest collection of pre-Trinity era song notations, making it an understudied, yet significant, resource for South Indian music.

5.1 Rāga lakṣaṇa annotations in the GMSS

Besides song notations, the GMSS provide valuable musical information in the paratexts found in the margins, header sections, or appendices. A composition's header section typically records details such as the *rāga*, *tāla*, and compositional form. Sometimes, brief annotations on *rāga-s* also appear in the paratexts. These annotations remained an under-explored resource for *rāga* studies until recently (Srilatha, 2023a). The relevance of these annotations to the RL-S is explored later in this article.

¹⁶ These were accessed through the microfilms at the Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA RC) at Bengaluru

Figure 3 shows a folio of the GMSS containing a brief description of rāga Śāṅkarābharāṇa.

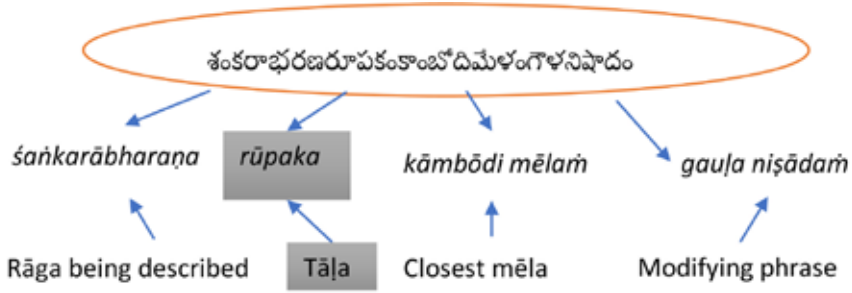


Figure 3 – A sample rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in the GMSS. Image Source: IGNC, SRC, Bengaluru

There are three parts to this description:

- a) the name of the rāga being described (Śāṅkarābharāṇa)
- b) the mēla ‘closest’ to it (i.e., the mēla containing most of the svara-s found in this rāga, which is Kām̄bōdi in this example), and
- c) a ‘modifying phrase’ that describes any svara-s that vary from the closest mēla.

The modifying phrase ‘*gauḷaniṣādam*’ indicates that while Śāṅkarābharāṇa has a near-identical set of svara-s as Kām̄bōdi, it differs with respect to the niṣāda. i.e., It uses the ‘*kākalī*’ niṣāda of Gauḷa (informally referred to in the MSS as *gauḷaniṣādam*) instead of the ‘*kaiśikī*’ niṣāda of Kām̄bōdi mēla.

In the GMSS, the svara-s, such as *pañcaśruti ri* or *kaiśikī ni*, are rarely used to describe the notes of a rāga. Instead, the svara-s are prefixed with the name of a well-known mēla, as in the example of ‘*gauḷaniṣādam*’ above. Table 3 (Appendix B) shows examples of svara-s as represented in the GMSS.

Figure 4 illustrates the same rāga being described differently in different manuscripts. Vēgavāhinī is characterised as ‘*kām̄bōdi mēlam gauḷa riṣabham*’, and through ‘*Saurāṣṭramēlam*’ in another. Though different mēla-s are named in these descriptions, they signify the same set of svara-s. There may be many reasons for such differences. It could be because the manuscripts belonged to an era when the assignment of rāga-s to mēla-s was not standardised and the authors were describing the rāga-s intuitively, based on whichever rāga-s were closest to the one at hand. It could also be that these manuscripts represent rāga-wise reorganisation of materials compiled from different manuscripts – that differed in owner, period and provenance.

Rāmakriyā (Mela 51)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>gauḷamēlaṃ varāḷimadhyamaṃ ṣaḍja grahaṃ saṃpūrṇaṃ </i> (B11573, f. 237) 2. <i>gauḷamēlaṃ</i> (B11583, f14b) 3. <i>pantavarāḷimyālaṃ</i> (B11591, f. 21) (B11591, f. 21)
Vēgavāhinī	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>kāmbōḍi mēlaṃ gauḷa riṣabhaṃ</i> (B11584, f.55) 2. <i>kāmbōḍimēlaṃ</i> (B11575, f. 1b) 3. <i>Saurāṣṭramēlaṃ saṃpūrṇaṃ</i> (B11587, f. 174)

Figure 4 – Examples of the same rāga being described differently

The annotations are not based on any one lakṣaṇa text. The presence of erroneous or incomplete descriptions in the MSS cannot be ruled out. In some manuscripts, the modifying phrase is dropped, perhaps due to copying errors, as in the case of Rāmakriyā and Vēgavāhinī (see highlighted descriptions in Figure 4).

5.2 Correlation between RL-S and GMSS

A preliminary search of the GMSS was conducted for some of the illustrative excerpts cited in the RL-S 17. A selection of the results is presented in Table 2 (Appendix A). The starting line of the composition is noted in the column ‘Composition containing the phrase, from GMSS’. Additionally, the rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in the corresponding manuscript is noted in the column ‘Rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in GMSS’.

We see evidence that *both* the illustrative excerpts and the rāga descriptions in the RL-S correlate with the compositions and rāga lakṣaṇa annotations in the GMSS, as follows:

1. Table 2 shows that the illustrative excerpts can be traced to compositions in the GMSS.
2. Additionally, Table 2 shows correlation between the rāga descriptions in the RL-S and GMSS. Though the RL-S uses the śruti-based names of svāra-s instead of the mēla-based names used in the GMSS, both result in the same set of svāra-s, as in the case of Sāmavarāḷī:
 - a. GMSS - ‘SāmavarāḷiVarāḷimēlaṃ, nijamadhyamaṃ’
 - b. RL-S - ‘Sāmavarāḷi has kākālī niṣāda and the rest are śuddha svāra-s’ (Śāha Mahārāja, 1990, p. 118).
 - c. Resultant svāra-s: *sa, śuddhari, śuddhaga, pañcaśrutima, pa, śuddhadha, kākālīni*

17 Though the manuscripts contain multiple witnesses of several compositions, this study did not attempt to uncover or tabulate all of them.

3. Some rāga-s, seen for the first time in the RL-S, but not described in older treatises, are found in the GMSS. For example: The compositions cited in the RL-S for Udayaravicandrikā, Vēgavāhinī and Indughaṅṭāravaṁ are found in the GMSS (Table 2).
4. For some rāga-s, the descriptions in the RL-S, while resembling those in the GMSS, differ from other lakṣaṇa texts written around this time. Examples:
 - a. Udayaravicandrikā, a rāga that first appears in the RL-S (Hema Ramanathan, 2004, pp. 2-1409), is described in both sources using the Nāṭa mēla. Whereas later sources such as the RL-MV move it to the Dhunībhinnaṣaḍja mēla, as ṣaṭśruti ri could not be present in a rāga in the absence of antara ga.
 - b. Both GMSS and RL-S assign Hindōlavasantam to the Bhairavī mēla, whereas the CDP assigns it to Āharī (Hema Ramanathan, 2004, pp. 2-459 to 2-465).

6 From Discord to Resolution

This brings us back to the problem we started with, regarding the transformation of Āharī and Ābhērī. Providentially, I could trace three illustrative excerpts of Āharī, and all five phrases of Ābhērī attested by the RL-S to the GMSS (Table 2).

As we have seen in section 5.1, the GMSS are not only a corpus of song notations (and therefore of melodic material) but also have valuable descriptions of the rāga-s in the marginal notes. So, it is worthwhile to investigate what the manuscripts containing these compositions say, about the *lakṣaṇa* of rāga-s Āharī and Ābhērī.

1. MSS B11584, containing the composition ‘*sasāsanidhadhapa*’ attested by the RL-S, describes Āharī as ‘*Bhairavi mēlam heccu niṣādam*’.
2. MSS B11573, containing the gīta ‘*uddhataśirōmaṇi*’ in rāga Ābhērī, describes it as ‘*Ābhēri Āhari mēlam*’.
3. MSS B11591, containing an āyittam in rāga Ābhērī describes it as ‘*ābhēri bhairavi mēlam gauḷa niṣādam*’.
4. Yet another manuscript, not listed here, describes Āharī as ‘*ābhēri bhairavi mēlam gauḷa niṣādam*’ (B11584, p. 46).

In each case, the rāga is described using the Bhairavī mēla along with a modifying phrase ‘*heccu niṣādam*’ or ‘*gauḷa niṣādam*’, both of which refer to kākālī ni. This implies that Bhairavī mēla’s kaiśikī ni must be replaced with kākālī ni, effectively aligning Āharī (rāga and mēla) with mēla²¹ of the 72-mēla scheme.

Additionally,

- the Ābhērī gīta, ‘*uddhataśirōmaṇi*’, contains a signature identifying its composer as Venkaṭamakhī¹⁸, aligning it with mēla²¹.
- The gīta ‘*arērēmadanarāvu*’ (B11575, f. 34b) in Āharī is dedicated to Pratāparudra, a 16th-century Gajapati ruler of Orissa, and contemporary sources define it with kākālī niṣāda.

The above evidence points to Śāhajī having cited compositions that were originally composed in Āharī-21 and Ābhērī-21. However, significantly, we see that the rāga descriptions in the GMSS and RL-S are only a partial match. They *match* to the extent that they both use the ‘Bhairavī mēlam’. The difference is that the modifying phrase ‘*gauḷaniṣādam*’ is missing in the RL-S.

- GMSS: Āharī – ‘**Bhairavī mēlam**, gauḷa niṣādam’
- RL-S: Āharī – ‘**Bhairavī mēlam**’

This brings to mind the lacunose descriptions of Rāmakriyā and Vēgavāhinī seen in some manuscripts (highlighted examples in Figure 4). This suggests that Śāhajī’s source for Āharī’s rāga lakṣaṇa, too, was similarly incomplete.

To summarize a) Śāhajī must have cited rāga lakṣaṇa of the type seen in the GMSS, but with an incomplete description of Āharī, leading him to misconstrue Āharī as being a derivative of Bhairavī mēla b) the transformation of Āharī-21 to Āharī-20 was *caused* by a misreading of lakṣaṇa or scribal error, which is typical of textual transmission.

While we do not claim to have found Śāhajī’s exact sources, we are now able to explain why RL-S (and its followers) differs from earlier treatises such as SMK, SS, and CDP, but agrees with the rāga lakṣaṇa annotations in the GMSS. We now know that Śāhajī used an empirical approach where he derived both the rāga phrases and rāga lakṣaṇa from a common source, even if they occasionally misled him.

18 The MSS contains a concluding verse, with the signature of Venkaṭamakhin - ‘*Gōvindamakhivaranāgamāmbānandanabayakāru re! Venkaṭamakhipātēpāhi*’. We must remember here that Venkaṭamakhin, in the Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā, places rāga Ābhērī in the Āharī mēla.

7 Influence of RL-S on later texts

7.1 Tulaja's Saṅgītasārāmṛta

The rāga descriptions in the RL-S and Tulaja's *Saṅgītasārāmṛta* have much in common. Both assign Āharī and Ābhērī to the Bhairavī mēla, and the illustrative excerpts are nearly identical in both texts. However, it is unlikely that the author of SSA independently undertook the onerous task of examining the primary sources and arrived at near-identical illustrative excerpts and transformed rāga definitions¹⁹. While the shift in the definitions of Āharī and Ābhērī seen in RL-S and SSA Āharī-20 could have originated from an untraced common source, it is more likely that the SSA copied the materials of the RL-S.

7.2 Anomalies and Clues in the Saṅgītasampradāyapradarśini

In the SSP, the lyrics of the gīta 'īśvarīlakkumī' in rāga Rītigauḷa enlist Āhiri and Ābhērī as members of the twentieth mēla, Nārīrītigauḷa. (Dīkṣitulu, 1904, p. 397) However, we encounter two interesting data in the gīta-s illustrating these two rāga-s:

The gīta in rāga Āhiri, 'bhūriprabhāvu' contains the svara-mnemonics *ri, gi, ma, pa, dha* and *nu* at the beginning of each āvarta of the first section, which correspond to the svara-s of mēla 21 (Dīkṣitulu, 1904, p. 501). This is unmistakable evidence that the composer/author of these lyrics intended it to be sung with the kākālī nī.

The gīta in Ābhērī, 'uddhataśirōmaṇi' (Dīkṣitulu, 1904, p. 457), has been identified as a composition of Vēnkaṭamakhin (See Section 6), who places Ābhērī in mēla 21.

Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita's 'Vīṇābhērī' in Ābhērī-20 (Dīkṣitulu, 1904, p. 458) closely adheres to the contours of the rāga presented in the gīta 'uddhataśirōmaṇi'. For example, the jump from *pa* to *sa* (skipping both *dha* and *ni* in ascent) is a characteristic of this rāga that is seen in both the compositions. If Dīkṣita used the RL-MV as a prescriptive text, as implied by the SSP, he has composed Vīṇābhērī in Āhari-20 but has followed the contours of the rāga depicted in the older compositions.

The Rītigauḷa gīta, 'īśvarīlakkumī', which places the rāga-s in Mēla-20 appears to be from a different tradition – one that aligns with the RL-S. Further investigation is needed to ascertain the origins of these gīta-s.

¹⁹ This argument is based on the "common error method" which is widely used in the domain of textual criticism (Grier, p. 63).

8 Conclusions

The contents of Śāhaji's Rāgalakṣaṇamu make better sense when viewed along with the Gīta manuscripts that were his sources. The RL-S represents a crucial turning point in the history of South Indian classical music. Unlike earlier texts, it juxtaposes lakṣya and lakṣaṇa by sourcing both from the same repository of compositions. However, this methodological innovation also led to some changes – such as the reclassification of rāga-s Āharī and Ābhērī.

The shift of these rāga-s from mēla 21 to mēla 20 was not a gradual evolution but a sudden transformation caused by the exigencies of textual transmission. Later musicologists, perhaps treating the RL-S as an authoritative source, carried this forward into modern times.

However, conflicting definitions of some rāga-s such as Sāmanta, where it is assigned to Śaṅkarābharāṇa mēla in one and to Śrīrāga in another, remain unresolved (Table 2). It is possible that Śāhaji's sources provided only one version, which placed Sāmanta under the Śaṅkarābharāṇa mēla.

This case study highlights the complex interplay between oral and written traditions in Indian music. It underscores how textual transmission can reshape musical practice, demonstrating that changes in rāga identity are not always organic but can be the unintended consequences of scholarly interpretation.

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Manuscripts Retrieved from Microfilms in the “TMSSML Music Collection”, Indira Gandhi National Centre For the Arts, Regional Centre, Bengaluru:

Manuscript B11573 (Roll No. 414, Record No. 4850)

B11575 (415/4852)

B11576 (415/4853)

B11584 (416/4860)

B11588-A (417/4863)

B11591 (418/4867)

Appendix A

Table 2 – Citations in the RL-S traced to manuscript sources

Rāga	Illustrative excerpt cited in the RL-S	Composition containing the excerpt, from GMSS	Rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in GMSS	Mela of Rāga in RL-S
Āharī	<i>mapagarisanisaririsa... mapadhapapamagarisani – udgrāha</i>	?	N/A	Bhairavī
Āharī	<i>Papamagarisanisa... madapapamagarisanisa – Thāya</i>	<i>sasāsanidhadhapā</i> (B11584, f. 36)	<i>Bhairavi mēlam</i> / <i>heccuniśadam</i> (B11584, f. 46)	Bhairavī
Āharī	<i>svarakhaṇḍam - Svarakhaṇḍa of Prabandha</i>	<i>dgidgi dam dam</i> (B11588-A, p. 57)	N/A	Bhairavī
Āharī	<i>Padumādēvimānōramaṇu dāna karṇāsamānuvarē - gīta</i>	<i>arirēyamadanavatāru</i> (B11575, pp. 34b-35)	N/A	Bhairavī
Ābhērī	<i>gamapasasārriisanisani-dhapā - āyittam</i>	<i>gamapasasārriisanisani-dhapā</i> (B11582, p. 128b)	<i>āharimēlam</i> (B11582, p. 128b)	Bhairavī
Ābhērī	<i>pānamagagasasa- udgrāha prayōgamu</i>	<i>pāmamagagasasa</i> (B11582, p. 129)	<i>āharimēlam</i> (B11582, p. 128b)	Bhairavī
Ābhērī	<i>sānidhapamapamamamamagagasasa - avarōhitānamu</i>	<i>sānidhapamapamamamagagasasa – (avarōhi)</i> (B11582, p. 130)	<i>āharimēlam</i> (B11582, p. 128b)	Bhairavī
Ābhērī	<i>sasanipasaninipa - thāyam</i>	<i>sasanipasaninipa (pak-kasārāṇiṭhāyam)</i> (B11582, p. 132)	<i>āharimēlam</i> (B11582, p. 128b)	Bhairavī

Rāga	Illustrative excerpt cited in the RL-S	Composition containing the excerpt, from GMSS	Rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in GMSS	Mēla of Rāga in RL-S
Ābhēri	<i>kaṁisahisaka - gīta</i>	<i>uddhataśīrōmani</i> (B11573, p. 185)	<i>Ābhēri āharimēlamśaipūrṇam</i> (B11573, p. 236b) <i>Āhari Bhairavi mēlam</i> <i>gaulaṁśādam / śaḍja graham</i> <i>śaipūrṇam</i> (B11573, p. 236b)	Bhairavi
Bhinnasāḍja	<i>anmiṣavirakīṭinarasīmha - gīta prayōgam</i>	<i>anmiṣavirakīṭinarasīmha</i> (B11591, p. 25)	<i>bhūpālamēlam</i> (B11591, p. 25)	Bhinnasāḍja
Hindōlavasanta	<i>karāḡambhīrasālade - sīlādi</i>	<i>kratupaīyambā</i> - Paper Manuscript in Devanagari script corresponding to B11577, p. 125	<i>bhairavimēlamśampūrṇam</i> (B11577 ²⁰ , 196)	Bhairavi
Indughāṇīrava	<i>śanīdapamapa - ṭhāya</i>	<i>śanīdapamapasaririsasani-dapamapa</i> (B11584, p. 39)	N/A	Bhairavi
Mālavagaula	<i>Arēśrīnagarādhipurē - gīta</i>	<i>Arēśrīnagarādhipurē</i> (Only a few āvartas found) (B11584, p. 38)	N/A	Mālavagaula
Sāmanta	<i>Sasasasasasanīdhani - āyittam</i>	<i>Sasasasasasanīdhani - āyittam</i> (B11573, p. 3)	<i>śāṅkarābharaṇamēlam</i> (B11573, p. 1) <i>śrīrāgamēlam</i> (B11573, p. 273)	Śāṅkarābharaṇa
Sāmavarālī	<i>dhasasarīmamapapad-hapa- udgrahaḥprayōgam</i> (B11591, p. 91)	<i>Sāmānīdhanisa</i>	<i>varāṇimēlam, nijamadhyamam, ārōhinīgāndhāraṇaṇaḍavadu, śaipūrṇam</i> (B11591, p. 91)	Sāmavarālī
Udayaravicandrikā	<i>bhāṇaprayōgam - gīta</i>	<i>Ujhalitagaṅgā</i> (B11591, p. 26)	<i>nāṭamēlam</i> (B11591, p. 26)	Nāṭa

20 Devanagari paper manuscript

Rāga	Illustrative excerpt cited in the RL-S	Composition containing the excerpt, from GMSS	Rāga lakṣaṇa annotation in GMSS	Mēla of Rāga in RL-S
Vēgavāhinī	<i>dalitamaṇḍalarē – gīta prayōgani</i>	<i>gaṅgātaraṅga</i> (B11575, p. 1b)	<i>kāmbōdimēlai</i> (B11575, p. 1b)	Vēgavāhini
Vēlavālī	<i>sanidhasarisari – thyaṇprayōgani</i>	<i>Sanidhasarisari</i> (B11573, p. 38)	<i>śrīrāgamēlai</i> (B11573, p. 36), <i>śrīrāgamēlai, gāndhāra graham, saṃpūrṇam</i> (B11573, p. 236)	Śrīrāga

Appendix B

Table 3 – Description of svara-s in the Gīta MSS and Śāhaji's Rāgalakṣaṇamu

Svara in Gīta MSS	Svara in Śāhaji's Rāgalakṣaṇamu
gauḷaṣabham	śuddha ṛsabha
bhairavi or śrīrāgaṣabham	pañcaśrutirṣabha
nāṭaṣabham	ṣaṭśrutirṣabha
mukhāriḡāndhāram	śuddha gāndhāra
bhairaviḡāndhāram	sādhāraṇa gāndhāra
gauḷa, kāmbhōjiḡāndhāram	antara gāndhāra
nijamadyamam, or 'madhyamam' prefixed with the name of one of the well-known śuddha madhyama rāga-s	śuddha madhyama
varālimadyamam/heccumadyamam	pratimadyama, cyutapañcamamadyama
gauḷadhāivatam	śuddha dhāivata
kāmbhōji, śrīrāgadhaivatam	pañcaśrutidhaivata
nāṭadhāivatam	ṣaṭśrutidhaivata
mukhāriṇiśādam	śuddha niśāda
bhairavi, kāmbhōjiniśādam	kaiśiki niśāda
gauḷaṇiśādam, heccuniśādam	kākalī niśāda, cyuta ṣaḍja niśāda



An Examination of Ālāpa and Ṭhāya

Dr Arati Rao

1. Introduction

The concept of rāga has had a presence in Indian Art music for several centuries. To define a rāga in words is difficult, however, every connoisseur of Indian Art music has a sense of 'rāga'. It is the melodic framework of Indian Music within which composed and improvisatory presentations are made. Broadly, 'rāga' can be equated to a musical mode. In the words of R. Sathyanarayana 'Rāga is a structured continuum of musical tone composed of five, six or seven svāra-s. It may also be regarded as the locus of a musical tone with varying pitch moving in time.' (54)

Not only does the concept of rāga date back several centuries, the exposition of rāga (sans lyrics and rhythm) also goes back in time. A case in point are the musical forms of ālāpa and ṭhāya, that have been described in the 17th-century Sanskrit text 'Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā' (CDP) by the author Veṅkaṭamakhi. We find ālāpa and ṭhāya described as comprising only svāra-s and meaningless 'nam-tam' syllables, not set to any tāla and not having lyrics. The description in CDP clearly indicates that ālāpa and ṭhāya were focused on rāga exposition. Prior to the CDP, we find that the text Saṅgīta-sudhā (SSudha) written by Veṅkaṭamakhi's father, Gōvinda Dīkṣita gives detailed description of ālāpa in several rāga-s¹. There are hundreds of palm-leaf manuscripts preserved in the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library (TMSSM Library) that contain ālāpa and ṭhāya notations. The question arises as to whether these notations conform to the lakṣaṇa (theoretical descriptions) given in CDP and SSudha. Another question that comes to mind is whether ālāpa was preceded by another musical form in the medieval period to which it bore some resemblance. It is also interesting to trace a possible legacy of ālāpa and ṭhāya in present-day Karnāṭaka Music. This paper attempts to deal with these questions and ideas.

The present study examines the musical forms of rāga exposition based on theoretical

1 In the Saṅgīta-sudhā, the author's name is given as Raghunātha Nāyaka. However, Veṅkaṭamakhi clearly states that the author is his father, Gōvinda Dīkṣita.

descriptions and musical notations preserved in manuscripts. While some of the finer nuances of rāga exposition cannot be deciphered from either of these two sources, an attempt has been made to reconstruct the structure of the musical forms based on the musical notations and compare them with theoretical descriptions.

2. Prior research on ālāpa and ṭhāya

The publication ‘Rāga Ālāpana and Ṭhāyams’ by K. Vasudeva Sastri in 1958 was a pioneering attempt which comprised notations of ālāpa and ṭhāya sourced from the TMSSM Library in Thanjavur. S. Seetha noted several manuscripts containing notations of ālāpa and ṭhāya in her work – *Thanjavur as a Seat of Music*, published in 1981. A doctoral dissertation by E.B. Saraswathi in 1991 focused on the study of ṭhāya-s and cittaṭānam-s. The critical edition of CDP edited by R. Sathyanarayana, brought out in two volumes by the IGNCA in 2002 and 2006, gave a critical analysis of the description of ālāpa and ṭhāya by Veṅkaṭamakhi. V. Premalatha’s writings, related to her research in the area, comprise a study of Caturdaṇḍī forms in an unpublished manuscript from Kerala (2014) and a study of ṭhāya-s from TMSSML manuscripts (2022). The present author has also been working on and has presented papers on ālāpa and ṭhāya in the last few years².

3. Evolution of ‘rāga’ in Indian Music

3.1 The concept of rāga

Rāga is often described as ‘the musical mode of Indian music’. The following description of ‘mode’ developed at a seminar in ethnomusicology at UCLA, 1976 sums up the key features of a ‘mode’ succinctly: *A ‘musical mode’ is a traditional system applied in musical composition or improvisation based on:*

- *a non-equidistant scale of at least 3 pitches*
- *establishing a hierarchy of pitch-relationships expressed in the form of melodic formulas*
- *may include additional refinements such as subsidiary pitches, rhythmic considerations, cadential formulas, variation, ornamentation and so forth* (Widdess, 30)

If the above technical terms defined for ‘mode’ are interpreted in the context of Indian music, we can substitute ‘pitches’ with svara-s, subsidiary pitches with ‘anu-svara-s’, ‘rhythmic considerations’ with ‘kāla pramāṇa’, cadential formulas with ‘ending sañcāra-s’, ‘variation’ with ‘saṅgati’, ornamentation with ‘gamaka’ and so on.

² Please see bibliography for further details

3.2 The emergence of rāga

In the 4th-5th century AD, we find that the grāma-jāti system is described in detail in the texts Nāṭyaśāstra(NS) and Dattilam (Dt). There is a reference to ‘grāma-rāga’ in the NS, which is believed by scholars to have be a ‘later accretion’ (Widdess, 9). We find reference to ‘grāma-rāga’ in the Nāradyā-śikṣā of the 1st-5th century AD. Seven primary grāma-rāga-s are named with detailed notation of solfā syllables giving melodic passages for each of the grāma-rāga-s in the 7th century Kudumiyamalai rock inscription in Pudukottai, Tamilnadu. Bṛhaddēśī (BrD) dated approximately around the 9th century AD gives detailed information about grāmarāga-s and bhāṣa-s. We see the detailed exposition of dēśī rāga-s in Saṅgītaratnākara of the 13th century AD. A later development, seen in texts belonging to the 16th and 17th century such as Svaramēlakalānidhi, Sadrāgacandrōdaya, Rāgavibōdha, Saṅgīta-sudhā and Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā is the mēla system. In these texts, we also see classification of rāga in various ways. The mēla system and rāga systems develop further and continue into the modern period. The mēla system crysallised into the 72 mēlakarta/rāgāṅga-rāga systems which have been described in texts such as Saṅgraha-cūḍāmaṇi and Saṅgīta-sampradāya-pradarśini.

4 Rāga exposition described in texts prior to the 17th century AD

4.1 Musical Forms pertaining to Rāga exposition

Through the ages, there are several musical forms which have rāga exposition sans meaningful lyrics, and which are unbound by rhythm. In the grāma-rāga and bhāṣā system, we find descriptions of the musical form ālāpa in texts such as Bharatabhāṣyam (12th century AD) and Saṅgītaratnākara (13th century AD). In the Saṅgītaratnākara (SR), there are svara passages of ālāpa-s pertaining to grāma-rāga-s in sargam notation. There is a general description of rāga ālapti in the SR. In the vādyādhyāya of the SR, there are descriptions of vādana-krama-s of several rāga-s which appear to pertain to rāga-ālapti. In the 17th century, in the CDP, we find descriptions of ālāpa and ṭhāya. It is noteworthy that these ālāpa-s are very different from the ālāpa-s of grāmarāga-s. SSudha gives detailed descriptions of ālāpa-s of several rāga-s. In the 18th and 19th century, we come across sargam notations of ālāpa and ṭhāya in Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Śāhajī and Saṅgītasārāmṛta of Tulaja. In the 20th and 21st century, there is rāga ālāpana and tānam which is part of the concert repertoire of Karnataka Music.

4.2 The grāmarāga – bhāṣā system of Bṛhaddēśī

In the Bṛhaddēśī, the following are the features of grāmarāga-s:

- The grāma rāga-s are described in terms of ‘gītī’:

- a. *Śuddha* – svara-s proceed smoothly, and are not crooked
- b. *Bhinna* – svara-s with curves
- c. *Gauḍī* – rendered with ‘o’ and ‘ha’ syllables in lower region (mandra sthāna) by resting the chin on the chest
- d. *Vēsara* – svara-s rendered fast
- e. *Sādhāraṇī* – mix of all other gīti-s

- Primary grāmarāga-s are śuddha and the other gramarāga-s are variants of these, for example, bhinna-pañcama and gauḍa-pañcama are variants of pañcama
- Gīti-s are defined for another set of rāga-s: ‘bhāṣā’
- Grāmarāga-s are linked to jāti-s in Bṛhaddēśī, for example, Madhyamagrāma rāga is said to be derived from the jāti-s Gāndhārī, Madhyamā, Pañcamī
- Bhāṣa-s are derived from grāmarāga-s

It is noteworthy that grāmarāga-s started off as actual tunes or melodies, and not possible melodic structures. (N. Ramanathan, “Musical Forms in Saṅgītaratnākara” 528) It is possible that they later developed into musical modes.

In the Bṛhaddēśī and Saṅgītaratnākara, notations for the following melodies are seen:

- For bhāṣa-s: ālāpa and rūpaka
- For grāmarāga-s: ālāpa, rūpaka, karaṇa and vartanī

These melodies are undivided into sections, unbound by tāla and not having lyrics. They illustrate the rāga lakṣaṇa features of graha, amśa, nyāsa, omitted svara-s, alpa (weak svara-s), varṇa, alānkāra, rasa and mūrchana.

An example of an ālāpa in the grāmarāga Śuddhasādhārīta can be taken.

The features of Śuddhasādhārīta are as follows (SR 2, 21-22)

- Born of ṣaḍja-madhyamā jāti
- Tāra ṣaḍja is graha and amśa
- Alpa (weak) niṣāda and gāndhāra
- Nyāsa is madhyama
- Mūrchana with ṣaḍja
- Having a varṇa (tonal movement) in the descending pattern

The following is an illustration of the notation of an ālāpa in this rāga, taken from SR (SR 2, 26):

sā' pā' dhā' rī pā pā dhā rī pā dhā sā sā pā dhā nī dhā pā mā' mā' rī' pā dhā rī' pā dhā rī' pā dhā pā dhā pā pā sā sā mā| sā' gā' rī' mā| ma ga ri sā sā sa ri ga pā dhā rī pā dhā rī pā dhā pā dhā sā sā sā rī gā mā dhā pā nī dhā pā nī dhā pā sā' sā'|

4.3 The mārḡa and dēśī rāga system in Saṅgītaratnākara (SR)

Mārḡa rāga-s of six varieties: grāmarāga, uparāga, rāga, bhāṣā, vibhāṣā and antarbhāṣā

- uparāga-s and rāga-s are other melodies besides grāmarāga-s which are important
- bhāṣā, vibhāṣā and antarbhāṣā are sub-varieties of grāmarāga-s and uparāga-s

Dēśī rāga-s of four varieties: rāgāṅga, bhāṣāṅga, kriyāṅga, upāṅga

These are linked to mārḡa rāga-s in the following way:

dēśī rāga	parent
rāgāṅga	grāmarāga, uparāga
bhāṣāṅga	bhāṣā, vibhāṣā
kriyāṅga	-
upāṅga	bhāṣāṅga

While ālāpa, ākṣiptikā, karaṇa, vartani and rūpaka are defined for grāmarāga-s and bhāṣa-s, rāga ālāpti is defined for dēśī rāga-s

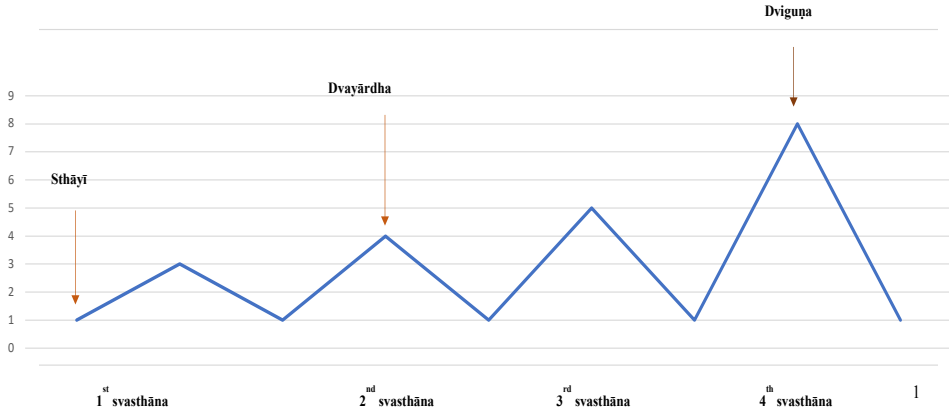
Exposition of dēśī rāga-s:

Rāga Ālāpti is built up of short phrases of the rāga called 'sthāya-s'

It has the following stages (svasthāna-s) (SR, 3, 189-196):

1. Melodic movement from the sthāyī svara, upto the 4th svara, not including the 4th svara (dvayārdha)
2. Melodic movement from sthāyī svara including and upto the 4th svara
3. Melodic movement from the 4th svara to the 8th svara, not including the 8th svara
4. Melodic movement including the 8th svara (dviguṇa)

Rāga ālāpti was improvised, so there are no notations for it in SR. However, the vādana krama of musical instruments for some rāga-s appears to depict rāga ālāpti. A pictorial depiction of rāga ālāpti is given below:



We see from the above picture that a recursive pattern is seen in the svasthāna-s.

In the SR, the following rāga features have been defined for grāmarāga-s and bhāṣa-s:

- Graha: the starting note of the melody
- Amśa: the prominent note of the melody
- Nyāsa: the final note of the melody
- Alpatva and bahutva: sparingly used and profusely used svara-s, respectively
- Vādī, samvādī, anuvādī and vivādī:
 1. Vādī – the prominent note
 2. Samvādī – the consonant note(s) with the vādī
 3. Vivādī – the dissonant note(s)
 4. Anuvādī – those svara-s which are neither consonant nor dissonant

We observe the following points about mārṅa and dēśī rāga-s:

- Graha, amśa, nyāsa:
- In the jāti system, nyāsa could be different from amśa.
- There could be multiple amśa-s in jāti-s and only one amśa in the grāmarāga-s and dēśī rāga-s
- Amśa was characterized in the SR as
 - i) that which gave delight
 - ii) it along with its samvādī are frequent
 - iii) that which specified tāra and mandra limits as 4/5 notes above and one octave below

- In rūpaka ālāpti, ‘sthāyī’ performs the role of both graha and nyāsa
- Amśa is equated with jīva svara

Melodic range:

- In the jāti and grāmarāga system, the range was about 1.5 octaves.
- Śāraṅgadēva introduces a ‘madhya sthāyī’ to extend the range to 2.5 octaves from 1.5 octaves

5 Ālāpa and Ṭhāya

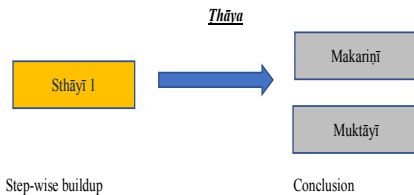
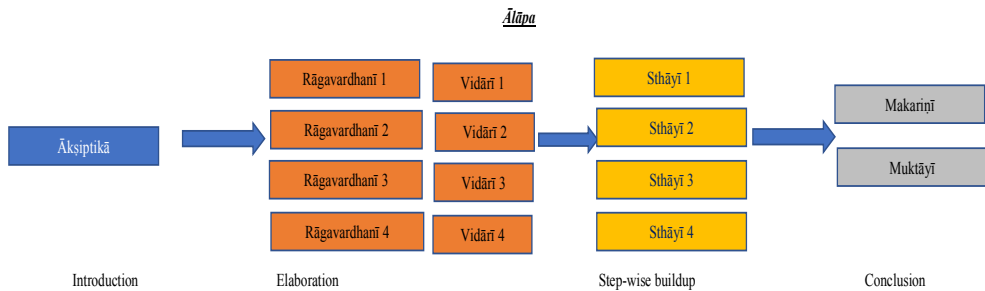
5.1 Overview of theoretical descriptions of ālāpa and ṭhāya

CDP defines the four daṇḍa-s (pillars) as ālāpa, ṭhāya, gīta and prabandha. These are four musical forms that apparently constitute a ‘Caturdaṇḍī’ performance.

SSudha and CDP define ālāpa and ṭhāya in the following manner:

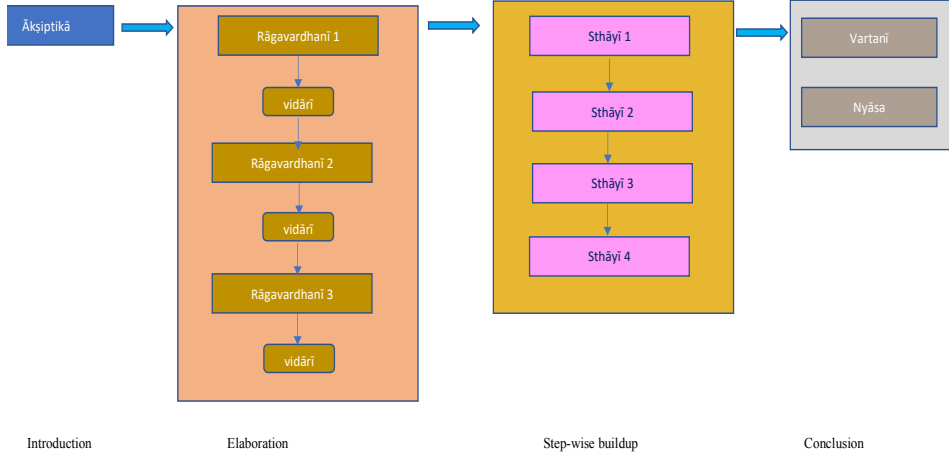
- They are free of lyrics and rhythm
- They are sung with solfa symbols ‘sa, ri, ga etc.’ or ‘nam-tam’ syllables

The ālāpa and ṭhāya forms can be pictorially depicted as below:



We see from the above diagrams that ṭhāya appears to resemble a small part of ālāpa!

5.2 Description of ālāpa in CDP and SSudha:



The above sections in each stage of the ālāpa have been described in the CDP as below (CDP (6, 1-32)):

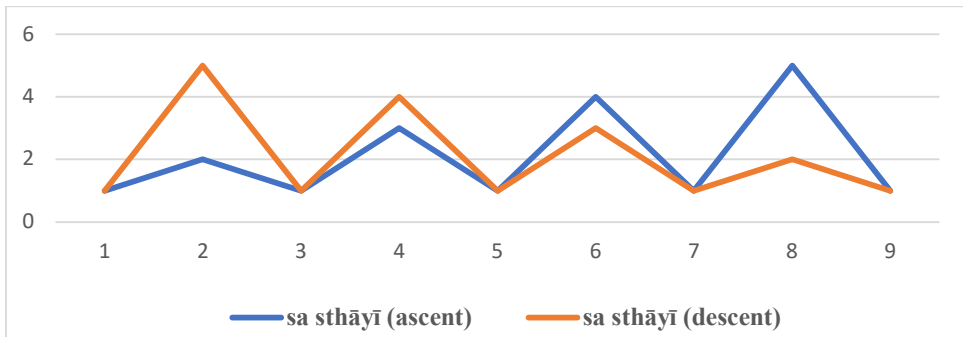
1. **ākṣiptikā (āyittam)** : The introductory phase of a rāga
2. **First rāgavardhanī (yeḍupu)**: Phase for rāga elaboration
3. **vidārī (yeḍupu muktāyī)**: Concluding section for rāgavardhanī
4. **Second rāgavardhanī (udgraham)** and **vidārī**
5. **Third rāgavardhanī (udgraham)** and **vidārī**
6. **sthāyī**: A sthāyī section has tāna-s pertaining to a particular base note: for example, pañcama sthāyī has pañcama as the base note. There can be as many sthāyī sections in an ālāpa as the number of base notes.

sthāyī sections have the following features:

- For every base note, notes above the sthāyī are chosen successively, and two tāna-s (musical phrases) in ascent and two tāna-s in descent are rendered in each of the notes.
- While singing tāna-s on a given note, if the tāna-s are in ascending order, notes higher than it should not be touched; if the tāna-s are in descending order, notes lower than it should not be touched
- Tāna-s should end on the base notes
 1. **vartanī** : melodic movements before conclusion
 2. **nyāsa**: Conclusion

Descriptions of ālāpa-s of 50 rāga-s have been given in Saṅgītasudhā. Some of the salient features of the descriptions are as follows:

- For each of the following sections, the starting svāra-s, the highest/lowest svāra-s and the ending svāra-s have been specified – rāgavardhanī and vidārī sections, sthāyī sections, vartanī and nyāsa sections
- Most of the nyāsa sections follow the specifications of the first or penultimate vidārī
- For some rāga-s, in the rāga lakṣaṇa, a graha svāra other than ṣaḍja has been specified. In one case, i.e. Baulī, Gōvinda Dīkṣita states that the graha svāra madhyama takes the place of the ṣaḍja. However, the individual sections or the ālāpa itself do not start on them.
- The term ‘graha’ can be used in two senses:
 - The svāra from which the portrayal of the rāga commences
 - The svāra from which the scale commences (when the tonic was not ṣaḍja)
 - *The mention of non-ṣaḍja graha svāra seems to be in the second sense above.*
- The sthāyī sections are specified mostly for tāra sa, madhya pa and madhya sa, sometimes for madhya ma, in fewer cases for madhya ga and madhya ri. They are not specified for madhya dha and madhya ni.
- The octave range is about 1.5 or 1.75 octaves
- Recursion is seen in the sthāyī section as depicted below:



भूपालं ॥ श्रीरविमेलम् ॥ गापाथासा । रिगिरिस । ससरिसिस्थाप ।
 पथधसथम । पपद्धपगारि । रिगपागपथस । रिदिसाधा । पथथसा ।
 सासा ॥ श्रीगगिरिसससि । रिस्थधथम । पपथपथ । ससरिसरि ।
 गपथापापा । गरिरिस । ससरिसससि । रिस्थधम । पथसथ ।
 पपथधपगरिगपप । गगपपथधसस । रिगिरिस । धापथ ।
 पप । गरिगारिसधसास ॥

The āyittam section of the Bhūpālam ālāpa in the TMSSML manuscript B11586

The following table sums up the comparison of the structural features of the Bhūpālam ālāpa in the TMSSML notation with the lakṣaṇa of Bhūpālam ālāpa in the SSudha. The lakṣaṇa of the ālāpa is as translated from SSudha by Hema Ramanathan. (Hema Ramanathan, 2-158 – 2-161).

Stage	Section in SSudha			Section in TMSSML notation		
Introduction	ākṣiptikā			unnamed + muktāyī		
Elaboration	rāgavardhanī I + vidārī			udgraham I + muktāyī		
	rāgavardhanī II + vidārī			udgraham II + muktāyī		
		tāna-s (a)	tāna-s (d)		tāna-s (a)	tāna-s (d)
Step-wise build-up	sthāyī I (tāra ṣaḍjasthāyī)	5	5	sthāyī I (tāra ṣaḍjasthāyī)	5	5
	sthāyī I (pañcamasthāyī)	6	6	sthāyī I (pañcamasthāyī) (not labelled)	5	5
	sthāyī I (madhya ṣaḍjasthāyī)	6	6		–	–
Conclusion	vartanī (makariṇī)			makariṇī		
	nyāsa			muktāyī		

Some observations can be made about both the ālāpa notations:

- Recursion is noticed in ascent and descent, for each sthāyī sub-section (ṣaḍja-sthāyī, pañcama-sthāyī) etc.
- In the sthāyī section, phrases are short, having a common motif, and gradually increasing in size,
- Svāra-s appear to be short and staccato, without long pauses
- Though ṣaḍja is listed as graha, amśa and nyāsa, the ālāpa commences from other svāra-s (tāra ri in the case of Malahari and tāra ga in the case of Bhūpālam.
- Some sections start on a svāra not specified in the lakṣaṇa, for example, the first rāgavardhanī of Bhūpālam starts on tāra sa and not tāra ḡa, its vidāri starts from madhya sa and not tāra sa.
- The ending notes seem to adhere to lakṣaṇa in most cases.
- In the case of Bhūpālam, a common ending phrase, a motif is seen in most of the tāna-s of a sub-section, for example, pā dha dha sā in ṣaḍja sthāyī.
- While the highest svāra-s in each step are progressively increased, the lower limit can be about five svāra-s below (madhya pa in the case of tāra ṣaḍja sthāyī).
- The total range seems to be a little more than two octaves.

If we compare the lakṣaṇa of SSudha with the ālāpa notations, the following observations can be made:

- Colloquial names – āyittam, yaḍupu, udgraham, muktāyī are seen instead of ākṣiptikā, rāgavardhanī, vidāri.
- In most of the ālāpa notations, the number of sections is lesser than those specified in the lakṣaṇa. For example, there may be only one rāgavardhani, only ṣaḍasthāyī and pañcama sthāyī.
- The commencing notes for the sections are not always the notes specified in the lakṣaṇa. But in most cases, the ending notes are those specified in the lakṣaṇa.
- For rāga-s where the graha svāra is other than ṣaḍja in the lakṣaṇa, it is mentioned in the notation. But it is not reflected in the starting svāra-s.
- The octave range seems to span more than two octaves in some instances.

A comparison of grāmarāga and bhāṣā melodies, rāga ālapti with ālāpa of CDP and SSudha can be summarized as follows:

	Grāmarāga & Bhāṣā melodies	Rāga Ālapti	Caturdaṇḍī Ālāpa
Purpose	Illustration of rāga characteristics	Elaboration of the rāga, crystallising the shape of the rāga	Elaboration of the rāga features
Structure	Short, no sections	Medium, 4 svasthāna-s	Long, with 4 stages - introduction, elaboration, step-wise buildup and conclusion
Improvisation	Unlikely to be improvised	Improvised	Unlikely to be improvised
Key tonal points	graha, amśa, nyāsa, alpatva, bahutva, varjya svara, tāra, mandra	sthāyī, dvyārdha, dviguṇa, ardhasthita	Starting, highest/lowest and ending svara-s for each section, sthāyī svara-s
Illustrations in notation	Notations in Bṛhaddēśī, Bharatabhāṣyam and Saṅgītaratnākara	No notations - but templates in vādanakrama in Saṅgītaratnākara	Templates in Saṅgītasudhā, notations in TMSSML manuscripts
Interesting features	<i>Definitions in Bṛhaddēśī, Bharatabhāṣyam and Saṅgītaratnākara:</i> graha, amśa, nyāsa etc. defined	<i>Definitions in Saṅgītaratnākara:</i> graha, amśa, nyāsa defined in the rāgalakṣaṇa amśa = jīva svara while describing sthāya amśa and graha not specified in ālapti, but only sthāyī, dvyārdha, ardhasthita, dviguṇa specified	<i>Definitions in Saṅgītasudhā:</i> graha, amśa, nyāsa defined in the rāgalakṣaṇa but not in the sections ‘sa’ had become tonic note

5.4 Theoretical description of ṭhāya in CDP

CDP describes the various sections of ‘ṭhāya’ as follows CDP (7, 1-7),:

1. **sthāyī**: A sthāyī section has tāna-s pertaining to a particular base note: for example, pañcama sthāyī has pañcama as the base note. There can be as many sthāyī sections in an ālāpa as the number of base notes.

sthāyī sections have the following features:

- For every base note, four notes above the sthāyī are chosen successively, and four tāna-s (musical phrases) in ascent and four tāna-s in descent are rendered in each of the notes.
- While singing tāna-s on a given note, if the tāna-s are in ascending order, notes higher than it should not be touched; if the tāna-s are in descending order, notes lower than it should not be touched

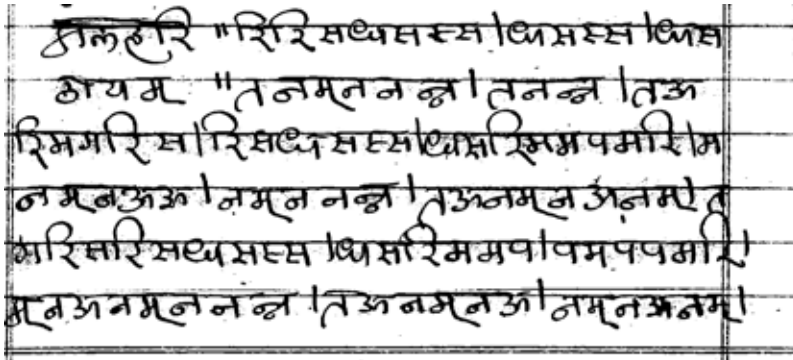
1. **makariṇī**: melodic elaboration leading to conclusion

2. **muktāyī**: conclusion

Interestingly, the word ‘ṭhāya’ appears earlier as a synonym for the word ‘sthāya’ in Saṅgīta-samaya-sāra, meaning ‘musical phrase’ which has the attributes such as sthāna, tāna, māna and gamaka.

Case Study of ṭhāya notations from TMSSML manuscripts:

A case study of two ālāpa notations from the TMSSML manuscripts B11575 (Rāgalakṣaṇa gītādi) and B11586 (Rāgalakṣaṇa suḷādi) in the rāga-s Malahari and Bhūpālam has been summarized below:



The beginning of a Malahari ṭhāya in the TMSSML manuscript B11575

॥ ढायम् ॥ गगगरिगिरिस। ससरिगिगिरिस। सरिगपग -
 गरिगिरिस। सरिगप। धधपप। धपगगिरिगिरिस। सरिग -
 पधपधप। गगरिगिरिस। सासधधपप। गरिगिरिस। ध. 4
 पग। गगरिगिरिस। धा^धधधप। गगरिगिरिस। ससरि -

The beginning of a Bhūpālam ṭhāya in the TMSSML manuscript B11586

Some observations about the above ṭhāya notations can be summarized as follows:

- The sthāyī svāra is ṣaḍja in both cases
- All sections are not marked, but sthāyī, makariṇi and muktāyī seem to be present
- No tāna-s are marked with numbers, but the patterns indicate recursion in ascent
- About 7 to 9 tāna-s may be present, which is less than the prescribed number according to lakṣaṇa
- Phrases are short, having a common ending motif and gradually increasing in size
- Svāra-s appear to be short and staccato, without long pauses
- The ṭhāya could have either svāra or both svāra and nam-tam syllables
- The Bhūpālam ṭhāya is succeeded by another ṭhāya in the same rāga, labelled ‘pakkasāraṇi’

5.6 A brief note about the pakkasāraṇi method:

In the CDP, Veṅkaṭamakhi discusses the ‘pakkasāraṇi’ method with respect to ‘śuddha-mēla-vīṇā’, which is a method of tuning of the vīṇā. This can be briefly described as below:

Strings				
4	3	2	1	
mad ma	mad sa	man pa	man sa	Frets
ma2	ri1	dha1	ri1	1
pa	ri2	dha2	r2	2
dha1	ga2	ni2	ga2	3
dha2	ga3	ni3	ga3	4

ni2	ma1	sa	ma1	5
ni3	ma2	ri1	ma2	6
sa	pa	ri2	pa	7
ri1	dha1	ga2	dha1	8
ri2	dha2	ga3	dha2	9

In the above table, ri1, ri2, ga2, ga3, ma1, ma2, dha1, dha2, ni2, ni3 stand for the svара-s śuddha ṛṣabha, pañcaśruti ṛṣabha, sād̄hāraṇa gāndhāra, antara gāndhāra, śuddha madhyama, varāli madhyama, śuddha dhaivata, pañcaśruti dhaivata, śuddha niṣāda, kākali niṣāda respectively.

In CDP (1, 131-143), Venkaṭamakhi describes pakkasāraṇi in the following manner

- In the saraṇi way, mandra sa, ri, ga ma should be played on the 1st string and pa and others in the other string (2nd string)
- In the pakkasaraṇi way, svара-s pa, dha may be played on the 1st string itself.

The label of ‘pakkasāraṇi’ for some ṭhāya notations probably indicates that these were to be played on the vīṇā in a certain way.

5.7 Reflections on ālāpa and ṭhāya

Based on the case study and theoretical descriptions, some observations can be made about ālāpa and ṭhāya:

- In the TMSSML manuscripts having ‘gīta’ in their names, ālāpa and ṭhāya notations are found along with gīta, prabandha and suḷādi, pertaining to the same rāga. Perhaps these are the set of ‘caturdaṇḍī compositions’ which were meant to be performed together
- Ṭhāya song notations seem to be akin to a sthāyī section of an ālāpa combined with a makariṇī and muktāyī. It is puzzling to think of the performance of ṭhāya immediately following an ālāpa of the same rāga.
- Both ālāpa and ṭhāya notations may have only svара passages or both svара-s and ‘nom tom’ syllables. The labels – pakkasāraṇi and saraṇi are seen in some notations, to reflect the method of play in vīṇā. However, it cannot be determined if the ālāpa and ṭhāya notations with only svара-s were meant for vīṇā playing. Some of such notations are found to precede suḷādi notations.

- Ālāpa and ṭhāya appear to be pre-composed songs. It seems likely that these were to be performed as such. However, it cannot be ruled out that these were templates for spontaneous composition/improvisation.

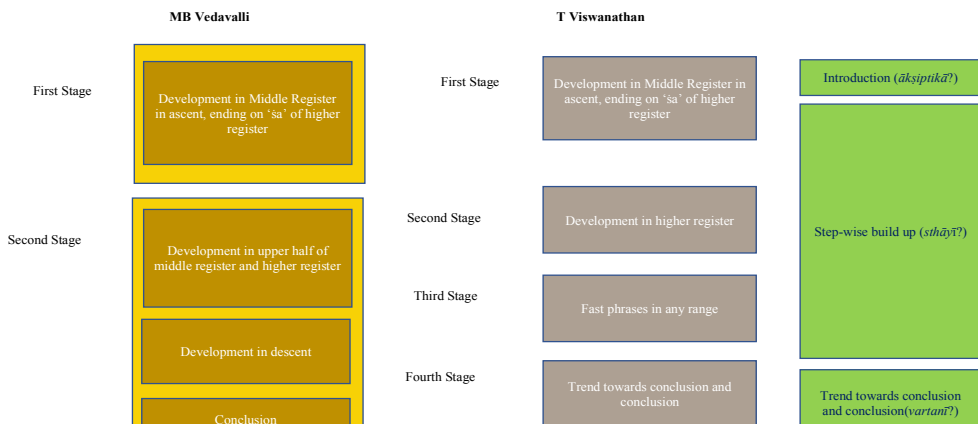
6. Modern theoretical definitions of rāga ālāpana

Rāga ālāpana is a musical form which is perhaps the most important form for rāga exposition. In the modern period, authors have attempted to describe rāga ālāpana. Some salient features of these descriptions are as follows: (Karthik, 19-21).

- Authors such as Subbarāma Dīkṣita, Chennakeshavaiah and P. Sambamoorthy have described modern rāga ālāpana in terms of ākṣiptikā, rāgavardhanī, sthāyī and makariṇī (vartanī).
- The boundaries have been defined in terms of lower, middle and higher registers.
- For example, Dīkṣita describes the rāgavardhanī-s as follows:
 - First rāgavardhanī is sung in lower and middle registers mostly in slow tempo. vidārī (conclusion for rāgavardhanī) is in high speed, touching the higher register.
 - Second rāgavardhanī is sung as the first, but with more embellishments, and touching higher svaras
 - Third rāgavardhanī is sung as the second, but traversing more in the higher register.
 - Fourth rāgavardhanī (not seen in CDP!) is similar to the third.
- P. Sambamoorthy equates makariṇī to the modern musical form of tānam!

Comparison of modern rāga ālāpana with ālāpa of CDP:

The authors MB Vedavalli and T Viswanathan have described stages in the modern rāga ālāpana. A comparison of these with ālāpa of CDP can be pictorially depicted as below:



We see from the above depiction that modern ālāpana of South Indian music is structurally different from the ālāpa of CDP. There is no equivalent of rāgavardhanī followed by a vidārī. The stages described by Vedavalli and Viswanathan seem similar to the sthāyī stage in the ālāpa of the CDP. However, the step-wise build-up prescribed in the CDP is not followed strictly in the modern ālāpana.

7. Summary of Findings

- The ālāpa of CDP is structurally different from ālāpa of gramarāga and bhāṣā melodies as well as rāga ālapti in its length, number of sections and span of octave registers.
- The meaning and significance of rāga lakṣaṇa features such as graha, amśa and nyāsa have changed from the times of mārga rāga-s of Bṛhaddēśī to dēśī rāga-s of Saṅgītaratnākara. Terms such as sthāyī, dvayārdha and dviguṇā are seen in rāga ālapti and jīva svara comes into the picture.
- The terms graha, amśa and nyāsa seem to be defined in a ‘legacy’ manner in Saṅgītasudhā, while the actual rāga features are demonstrated by the Caturdaṇḍī ālāpa templates.
- The large number of notations of ālāpa and ṭhaya in Thanjavur manuscripts, that have some conformance with the lakṣaṇa defined in Saṅgīta-sudhā, seem to portray pre-composed songs and not improvised pieces.
- Though attempts have been made to link the ākṣiptikā-rāgavardhanī-sthāyī-makarīṇī structure to modern rāga ālāpana by modern scholars, the marked absence of rāgavardhani as well as stylistic differences in the sthāyī section indicate that these are two different musical forms.
- The study of grāmarāga and bhāṣā melodies, rāga ālapti and Caturdaṇḍī ālāpa and ṭhaya indicates that concept of rāga has grown over the centuries, from being specific melodies, to becoming sources of musical composition and improvisation.

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Rāga's changing nature across compositional forms

Vid Amritha Murali

INTRODUCTION

rāga is all-pervasive in Carnatic music, and every compositional form is replete with it. Each form, however, provides a different perspective through which the *rāga* is experienced. This raises an important consideration - whether the *rāga*'s form, nature, contours, and aesthetic character undergo change depending on the compositional structure. A *rāga* does not necessarily transform completely with the form. Its core grammar and identity remain intact, but the manner in which it is approached, and the aesthetic expression often vary. The forms that are in practice today such as the *gītam*, *varṇam*, *svarajati*, *kṛtī*, *padam*, *jāvali*, and the *tillānā* are taken up in order to highlight how each of these brings out a unique picture of the *rāga*.

GĪTAM-S

The *gītam* is a short composition that, in terms of structure, typically consists of either a refrain followed by two or three stanzas that return to the refrain, or three stanzas of similar melody. Within this tight framework, the entire gamut of the *rāga* is encapsulated. Since almost every beat carries a note, there is hardly any room for elongation or *sangatīs*. The spacing between the notes is very small, and the *sāhitya* and *svara* travel hand in hand, providing a compact picture of the *rāga*.

Pārvati Janani in *Bhairavi*, a *gītam* of Śyāmā Śāstri set to *khaṇḍa maṭya tālam*, consists of three stanzas of similar melody, where the *svara* and *sāhitya* move together with very few *kārvai-s*. Beginning at the *tārasthāyi ṣaḍja* and extending all the way up to the *mandrasthāyi pañcama*, the conception of the *rāga* here is not necessarily straightforward; we encounter phrasings such as *sr̥ḡ n̄sr̥ p, dn̄sr̥ mpdn̄sr̥*. The compactness of the notes does not preclude the use of *anusvara-s*, which are essential for bringing the *rāga* to life - for instance, the *ndpmgr* phrasing at *nīrajākṣi* is particularly evocative. The *jāru-s* from *Sa to Pa* at *Parama*

Pāvani and *Ri to Pa* at *Sarvalōka Pālini* add further subtlety and the entire essence of *Bhairavi* is captured in just two lines.

A similar concept is observed in the well-known *Kalyāṇi gītam Kamalajādala*, reinforcing the compact and expressive nature that is characteristic of this compositional form.

VARṆAM-S

It is important to distinguish between *tāna varṇam-s* and *pada varṇam-s*, as each displays unique structural and aesthetic features. In a *tāna varṇam*, the structure is such that every note needs to be accentuated. The *sāhitya* is elongated, and the *rāga* takes precedence in this form, often through rare and interesting phrasings. The *rāga* is also approached through patterns, which sometimes lead to a note or return to a phrase, and at times may even evolve within a single *svaram*.

The magnum opus *ata tāla varṇam Viribōṇi* in *Bhairavi* by Pacchimiriya Adiyappa exemplifies this. The *varṇam* traverses the *mandrasthāyi* and has an abundance of *jhaṅṭa* phrases. It features a rarely rendered third *eṭṭugaḍa svaram* and a beautiful linking passage that returns to the *anupallavi* and ending in *Viribōṇi*. This particular *svaram* has rare *varja* phrasings such as *ndmggrs* and *ngrndm*, an unusual *jhaṅṭa* usage at the *dhaivatam* and a beautiful *sm,grg* ending that leads back to the *caraṇam*.

The third or fourth *svaram* in many such *varṇam-s* usually has no *kārvai-s* - and goes beyond the *krama*. Yet, these *svaram-s* remain extremely flowing and one can find beautiful and rare phrases. A pertinent point here is that perception of the *rāga* shifts with the *kālapramāṇam* - when the *anusvaram-s* are not fully filled in a slower *kālapramāṇam*, the essence of the *rāga* is easily lost.

In the uncommon *Bhairavi varṇam Vanita Ninnēkōri* set to *ādi tālam*, the opening phrase *rmg,r* makes us understand the *rāga* beyond the confines of the *ārōhana-avarōhana* structure. A similar start is also seen in the *kṛti Upacāramu jēsēvāru*. In Ponniah Pillai's *Tōgaimayil Anaiya*, also in *Bhairavi*, one can note the use of interesting patterns. For instance, one *svaram* employs *Pa* as a pivotal point to which the melodic line returns, while another exhibits a change in its internal pattern midway. The fourth *eṭṭugaḍa svaram* is particularly notable - beginning with a distinct opening motif before moving into phrases that use *p,d* as a recurring reference, with multiple phrases leading back to that anchor.

One interesting observation is that the *madhyamam* appears to have been a particularly alluring note for beginning *caraṇam-s* of several compositions in *Bhairavi*, as seen in many *varṇam-s* and *kṛti-s* in this *rāga*.

The *bēgaḍa varṇam Inta Calamu* features some unusual and beautiful usages around both *niṣāda-s*. A rendition by Vidushi Veena Dhanammal showcases this exquisitely; in the second line of the *anupallavi*, the phrase *dn̄sr̄,s* with the *kākalī niṣāda* is used (at *panta*), while the *kaiśikī niṣāda* is employed in *d,p̄s,ndn̄sr̄*, beautifully highlighting both varieties in the same line. Śyāma Śāstri's *Dayānidhē* contains patterns such as *s,gr g,mg m,pm* and mirroring phrases such as *gr,sndp dm,grs* in the *uttarāṅga*.

Inta cauka in *Bilahari* unusually begins its *caraṇam* on the *niṣāda*, and the last *svaram* intriguingly reflects Western musical influences in its phrasing and melodic construction.

The *pada varṇam* and the *svarajati* share a similar overall structure, comprising a *pallavi*, *anupallavi*, *muktāyi svaram* with *sāhitya*, *caraṇam*, and several *ciṭṭa svara-sāhityas*. In contrast to *tāna varṇam-s*, *pada varṇam-s* typically have a more flowing structure in the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* and provide scope for *saṅgatī-s*.

Entani nē in *Khamās*, the *pada varṇam* of Subbarāma Dikṣitar departs from convention with a different refrain line after each *svara* in the *caraṇam*, a structural innovation uncommon in *varṇam-s*. A subtle use of the *sādhāraṇa gāndhāram* can be observed at the line *Śrī Puramuna*. In the ever-charming *Mōhamāna varṇam* of the Tanjore Quartet, the *caraṇam* again begins on the *madhyamam*, and one finds patterns that lead back to a *svaram* or a phrase throughout. In the first *svaram*, a distinct pattern is established, while the second *svaram* highlights *Pa* as a focal point, beautifully resolving back to *Ma* and the third *svaram* uses the refrain *dp*, as a pattern.

SVARAJATI-S

The *Svarajati-s* of Śyāma Śāstri showcase a structure that typically comprises a *pallavi* followed by multiple *svara-sāhitya* passages, each leading back to the *pallavi*.

Both the *Bhairavi* and *Yadukula Kāmbhōji* *svarajati-s* are conceived in the *ārohaṇa krama*, and their beautiful, stepwise progression offers a vivid, almost visual image of the *rāga* unfolding stage by stage. In the *Bhairavi svarajati*, the *svaram* beginning on *Da* does not employ the *catuśruti dhaivatam*. One also encounters several captivating *svara* patterns such as *nsrgmp*, *srgmpd*, and *mpgrgm*.

In the *Yadukula Kāmbhōji svarajati*, the frequently heard phrase *s,rgr,s* is notably absent. The various endings, each one crafted differently that lead back to the *pallavi* are especially striking. Another fascinating feature that Śyāma Śāstri reveals is a subtle hint of *poruttam-s* executed without ever compromising the *rāga*'s identity. Some examples are seen in *Rāvē Himagiri* ; for example *rgs*, *srn*, *nsd*, and *ndmg*, *dmgr*, *mgrn*, *grsd*.

KRITĪ

The *krītī* form offers an expansive and expressive canvas for a *rāga*. Unlike in the *varṇam*, where every note must be accentuated, or in the *svarajati*, where structure dictates progression, the *krītī* provides the *rāga* with space to breathe and flow naturally.

Within this form, several structural types exist. The *cauka kāla* and *madhyama kāla krītī-s*, for instance, bring out entirely different dimensions of the same *rāga* proving that *kālapramāṇa* plays a decisive role in shaping both the flavour and contour of the melodic form.

The *saṅgati-s* within a *krītī* provide an edifice of progression and expansion. In most compositions, *saṅgatīs* build logically, each successive variation adding subtle layers to the *rāga*'s portrayal. However, in the *krītī-s* of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, one rarely encounters multiple *saṅgati-s*. His compositions are thus often perceived as “unintuitive” in structure, because their development does not follow a linear or incremental progression. Instead, Dīkṣitar's *krītī-s* offer a panoramic view of the *rāga*.

By contrast, in Tyāgarājā's *krītī-s*, the *saṅgatīs* usually follow a logical progression. In the *bēgaḍa krītī Bhaktuni cāritramu* the *carāṇam-s* are set in *madhyama kāla*, where the fast-moving *svaras* leave less time for elongated *gamaka-s*. The result is a lilting, fluid progression that gives *bēgaḍa* a fresh sparkle without compromising its identity. Similarly, in *Niverākula Dhanamu (bēgaḍa, miśra cāpu)*, although *saṅgatī-s* are present, the *kālapramāṇa* itself alters the aesthetic. The slower tempo allows *gamaka-s* to be more expansive, lending a different emotional and melodic dimension to the same *rāga*.

The concept of *rāga parampara*, the lineage and tradition within which a *rāga* is treated is a vast subject in itself. For instance, in the Dīkṣitar sampradāya, *Bhairavi* is rendered with the *śuddha dhaivatam* in the ascent. Dīkṣitar's *Āryām Abhayāmbām* in *Bhairavi* exemplifies this approach. In the *carāṇam*, one often finds that a single *laghu* carries two syllables with a sustained oscillation. The elongated *niṣāda* at *nandana vanōtpādana* is a striking and rare feature. Interestingly, the *niṣāda* also emerges as a pivotal and emotive point in several *padams*.

In some cases, the emotion of the *sāhitya* itself governs the treatment of the *rāga*. A poignant example is seen in Dīkṣitar's *Bālagōpāla* in *Bhairavi*. The line “*drōṇa karṇa duryōdhanādi hara*” is assertive, while “*draupadī māna samrakṣaṇa*” that follows is gentle and restrained, the transition marked by a subtle *jāru* that leads gracefully back to the *madhyamam*. Here, the *rāga* responds to the *bhāva* of the words, and the *dhātu* (melodic framework) and *mātu* (text) complement each other to convey the emotional core of the composition.

Subtle variations in phrase usage also reflect how rāga identity is maintained within a particular lineage. For instance, in the *bēgaḍa* kṛti *Tyāgarājāya Namastē*, the phrase *gr,s* or *gmr,s* (touching the *madhyamam* lightly) appears at *namastē*, a nuanced detail that connects it to phrases heard more prominently in the *bēgaḍa varṇam*. Similarly, the *anupallavi* of *Śrī Mātah* contains a distinct *ndns* phrase. In *Rītigaula*, too, the *catuśruti dhaivatam* is absent in the Dīkṣitar tradition, another example of how rāga identity subtly shifts across *parampara-s* while retaining its core essence.

PADAM-S

Padam-s represent an extremely nuanced and intricate compositional form, often paired with *jāvalis* and extensively used in dance. Their structure is relaxed and spacious, allowing for long, drawn-out *gamakas* that highlight the *rāga*'s expressive depth. As mentioned in *The Musical Structure of Padam-s* by Dr. Ritha Rajan, the *dhātu* often repeats multiple times in *padams* - a contrast to many compositions of Dīkṣitar and Śyāma Śāstri, where the *dhātu* generally does not repeat. Another distinctive tradition is to commence the *padam* from the *anupallavi*.

Padams bring out alluring shades of the *rāga*, as seen in the exquisite *prayōga-s* in the *bēgaḍa padam Adinomu Phalamu (Yāla Padare)*, the haunting oscillation at the *niṣāda* in *rāma rāma prāṇa sakhi* in *Bhairavi* and the grand opening of *Moratopu* in *sahānā*. In the tamil *padam Yārukkāgilum Bhayamā*, rare phrasings are showcased - for example, the phrase at *Allavo Penne* is unusual. The *madhyama* serves as a particularly charming segment in *bēgaḍa*, exemplified in *Rājāngamāginen* in the *caraṇam* of this composition and also the well preserved *saṅgati* at *viśvamella* in *Nādōpāsana*.

Certain *padam-s* also allow subtle license in the usage of notes. For instance, in *Indendu Vaccitirā* in *Suruṭi*, the *sādhārana gāndhāram* is showcased, with a very rare hint of the *kaiśikī niṣāda*, adding to the expressive nuance of the composition.

JAVALI-S

Jāvali-s are a lively and expressive form, where the combination of melody and rhythmic structure gives a lilting character to the *rāga*. They are inherently colourful, sometimes incorporating notes that may not strictly belong to the *rāga* - for instance, the usage of *kaiśiki niṣāda* in *Khamās* in *jāvali-s* such as *Marubāri*, *Jānaro* (a characteristic not seen in the compositions of Tyāgarājā) or the *prati madhyama* in *Smarasundarāṅguni*. Such unique phrasings add a distinctive charm to the *rāga*.

The form of the *jāvali* is structured yet accommodates patterns that lend themselves naturally to dance, as seen in *Neramora*. Sometimes we find that the same *jāvali* can be

structured in more than one tāla, where the change in spacing can subtly alter the perception and phrasing of the rāga. Compared to *padam-s*, *jāvali-s* are generally faster in tempo, emphasizing rhythmic agility alongside melodic expression.

TILLĀNĀ

The *tillānā* is a form that brings out the rhythmic possibilities in the rāga while retaining its melodic essence. Unlike other compositional forms, the use of *sāhitya* in a *tillānā* is minimal. The core appeal lies in the *sollukaṭṭu-s* and *jati-s*, which add to the structural compactness of the piece. This rhythmic framework not only enhances the *laya* dimension but also aids in developing clarity and precision in the rendering of *svaram* and *tānam*.

A fascinating example is the *bēgaḍa tillānā* composed by Chinniah. The *anupallavi* begins with the rare and distinctive phrase *dpdḡrḡ*. The presence of *jhaṇṭa* patterns such as *rrggmmpp* and the phrase *d,pns*, both of which are seldom encountered in this rāga are refreshing. Another recurring motif, *mpgmrs*, enriches the piece with a characteristic *bēgaḍa* flavour.

In summary, a rāga's journey through different compositional forms offers a fascinating lens for exploration. From the compact phrasing of a *gītām* to the rhythmic vitality of a *tillānā*, each form illuminates a different facet of the same melodic entity. Ultimately, the rāga stands as an all-pervasive and ever-evolving entity - capable of infinite reinterpretation within each compositional form. Its capacity to adapt and yet preserve its essence is what makes it both timeless and inexhaustible, not only inspiring curiosity as also providing an unlimited realm for study and understanding.





Pallavi, Ālāpana, Niraval, Svaram

Composed by
Kallīḍaīkuricci Vēdānta Bhāgavatar

Transcript by
Mahādēva Bhāgavatar

by Sangīta Kala Acharya Dr. RS Jayalaksmi
Supported by Charulatha Chandrasekar

Introduction

Carnatic music, the classical art form of South India, is broadly categorized into two distinct yet complementary components: **Kalpita Saṅgītam** and **Manōdharmā Saṅgītam**. Kalpita Saṅgītam refers to the pre-composed, structured aspect of music. These are compositions set to specific rāga-s and tāla-s, handed down through generations either in written form or by oral tradition. Renowned compositions such as the *kr̥ti-s* of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar, and Syama Sastri form the backbone of this domain. Kalpita music is well-documented through notations, texts, and treatises, making it a widely accessible and teachable form. In contrast, **Manōdharmā Saṅgītam** (literally “music of the imagination”) is the improvisational, spontaneous component. This is where the artist’s creativity, understanding of rāga and tāla, and deep internalization of the musical system come into play. It includes various elements such as **Rāga Ālāpana**, **Tānam**, **Niraval**, **Kalpana svāra-s**, and **Rāgam-Tānam-Pallavi (RTP)**. Unlike Kalpita Saṅgītam, Manōdharmā cannot be fully captured in notation, as it is inherently fluid and personal. Its transmission relies heavily on the **guru-śiṣya parampara** (teacher-disciple tradition), making documentation rare and challenging. Thus, while Kalpita music forms the foundation, Manōdharmā gives Carnatic music its soul, vitality, and dynamism. This is where the present article based on the lecture demonstration presented at The Music Academy revolves.

The lecture demonstration focuses on a unique manuscript titled *Pallavi, Ālāpana, Niraval, Svaram*, composed by Kallidaikuricci Vedanta Bhagavathar and transcribed by Mahadeva Bhagavathar. It is important to note that this is a **manuscript**, not a published book, and serves as a valuable resource for understanding various aspects of *Manōdharma saṅgīta*—the improvisational facet of Carnatic music.

Kallidaikurichi Vedanta Bhagavatar

- **Life & Legacy**

- Born in 1878 in Kallidaikurichi, Vedanta Bhagavatar came from a distinguished family of Sanskrit scholars linked with the Tiruvadudurai mutt. He trained under Vidvān Melattur Ramaswami Iyer and became renowned for his expertise in **Rāgam-Tānam-Pallavi and Harikatha**. In 1940, he was honored with the Sangita Kalanidhi award

- **Compositions & Transmissions**

- He composed over 100 works—varṇam-s and kṛti-s—in Sanskrit, Telugu, and Tamil, featuring devotional themes centered on Dēvi, Subrahmanya, and Śiva. In 1936, he published **Kamalāmbā Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s** with detailed notation—a rare effort to document kalpita compositions

Mahadeva Bhagavatar — The Transcriber

- **Profile & Connection**

A direct disciple of Vedanta Bhagavatar, Mahadeva Bhagavatar carried the legacy of the Kallidaikurichi–Ambi Dikshitar lineage

- **Transcription & Insights**

In an interview, he recalled that Vedanta Bhagavatar maintained precious palm-leaf manuscripts and portraits of Dikshitar in Ambi Dikshitar’s pooja room in Chennai, including a collection of nearly **1,000 kṛti-s**, with around **470** preserved in three copies—his, Anantakrishna Iyer’s, and Sundaram Iyer’s. Mahadeva Bhagavatar transcribed Vedanta Bhagavatar’s **Harikatha texts**—such as the *Lalitōpākhyāna* portion of the Kamalāmbā kṛti-s—which he later performed and documented himself.

Manōdharma in Carnatic Music

As stated earlier, *Manōdharma* refers to the creative and spontaneous expression within the framework of classical tradition. In Carnatic music, it manifests through four principal forms:

1. **Rāga Ālāpana** – melodic improvisation
2. **Tānam** – rhythmic improvisation in a raga
3. **Niraval** – melodic and rhythmic elaboration of a line of text
4. **Kalpana Svara** – improvisation using swaras (notes)

This manuscript sheds light on **three of these four forms**—*Ālāpana*, *Niraval*, and *Kalpana Svara*. Notably, it **does not contain notations for Tānam**.

Overview of the Manuscript

The manuscript includes:

- Niraval notations for **8-Kalai, 4-Kalai, and 2-Kalai Pallavis**
- Notated **Ālāpana-s** for selected ragas
- **Kalpana Svara** patterns for a few Pallavi-s

Focus of the Lecture Demonstration

The lecture centers around the **first Pallavi** from the manuscript, which is:

- Set in **Rāga Śaṅkarābharaṇam**
- Structured as an **8-Kalai Pallavi**
- Has an **eḍuppu**(entry point) at **6/8 iḍam**

Niraval Section

- The manuscript provides **approximately 105 Niraval variations** for this Pallavi.
- The range of the line spans from **Mandra Pañcama** to **Tāra Pañcama**.
- Certain variations include **unconventional and distinctive musical phrases**.
- Many sangatis (musical phrases) are structured in **patterns of 8 and 16**.
- The composer has also introduced **jati-based (gati) patterns** with:
 - **Tisra (3)**
 - **Khaṇḍa (5)**
 - **Miśra (7)**
 - **Saṅkīrṇa (9)**

Rhythmic Elements

- **Trikālam** (three-speed) notations are provided, with speed transitions beginning from **samam** (the starting point of the tala).

Multi-Rāga Exploration

The same Pallavi has also been notated in **other rāga-s**, each set in **4 Kalai**:

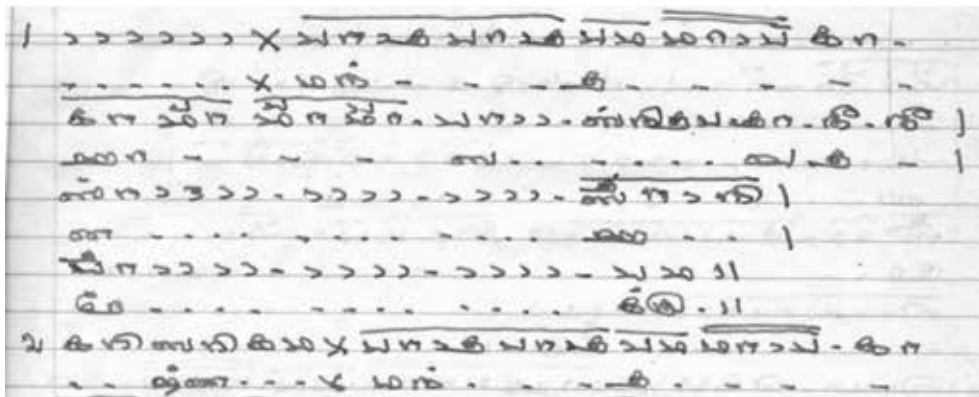
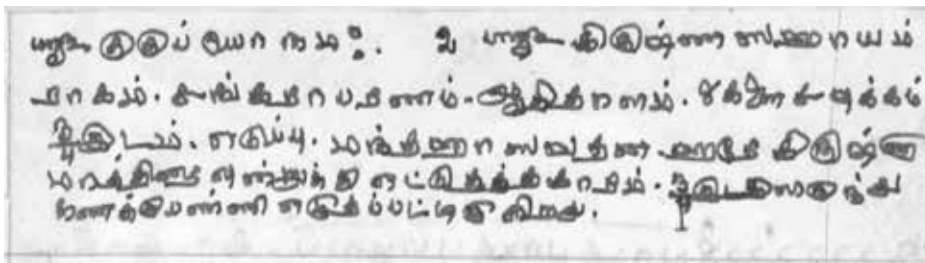
- **Ānandabhairavi**
- **Sahānā**
- **Aṭhāna**

BELOW ARE THE EXCEPTS FROM THE ACTUAL MANUSCRIPT

Pallavi

Ragam: Śaṅkarābharaṇam

Ādi tāla, 8 kalai 6/8 Idam and arudi kārvai 14



Mahadeva Bhagavathar has given Niraval notations for the same. There are around 105 Niraval variations given. The range of the line goes from Mandra pañcama to tāra pañcama. There are unusual phrases found in one of the variations of the Niraval.

திணி-கி 200 - திணி X 200 - 200 கி 200 -
 - - - - - கி 200 - - - - - X 200 - - - - -
 200 - 200 - - - - - திணி - - - - - திணி -
 -
 திணி - திணி - 200 கி 200 - திணி - திணி -
 -
 திணி - திணி - திணி - திணி - திணி -
 -
 200 - 200 - 200 - திணி - திணி - திணி -
 200 - - - - - கி 200 - - - - - திணி -
 -
 திணி - திணி - திணி - 200 கி 200 - 200 கி 200 -
 -
 திணி X 200 - 200 - 200 - திணி - திணி -
 -
 திணி - திணி - 200 கி 200 - 200 கி 200 -
 -
 200 - 200 - திணி - திணி - திணி - திணி -
 -
 200 கி 200 - திணி - திணி - திணி -
 -
 திணி X 200 - 200 - 200 - 200 - 200 -
 -

The author has given the same Pallavi in multiple Raga-s in 4 Kalai. The Raga-s are Ānandhabhairavi, Sahānā, Aṭhāṇa.

ĀNANDHABHAIRAVI

இசைகம், ஆனந்திசையம். (பிரதிபாலைகம்.)

64

1) ௨௨௨௨௨X பநமந-கிரநீ-ஸநா௨-கரிஸநி-
 - - - - -X மந் - தி - ஸநா... ஸ - - - -
 ஸமகரி-கநா-மநா |
 - - - - - வ - தி - |
 பந௨௨௨௨௨ - ௨௨௨௨௨ - கம |
 ஸ - - - - - - - - - - - ஸ - |
 பந௨௨௨௨ - ௨௨௨௨ - ௨௨௨௨ - தி ||
 கம - - - - - - - - - - - கீ ||

2) பம-கரிமநXபநமந-கிரநீ-ஸநா௨-கரிஸநி-
 - - - - -X மந் - தி - ஸநா... ஸ - - - -
 ஸமகரி-கநா-மநா |
 - - - - - வ - தி - |
 பந௨௨௨௨௨ - பமகரிமந |
 ஸ - - - - - - - - - - - ஸ - |
 பந௨௨௨ - ௨௨௨ - மமம - தி ||
 கம - - - - - - - - - - - கீ ||

3) பம-கரிமநXபந-மநா-கிரநீ-ஸநா௨-
 - - - - -X மந் - தி - ஸநா...

Its content goes beyond basic documentation; the inclusion of **trikālam (three-speed) exercises, multi-gati (mixed rhythmic gait) structures, and multi-rāga configurations** showcases an **extraordinary level of rhythmic ingenuity and melodic sophistication**. These elements reflect not just technical prowess, but a **deep and intuitive grasp of the grammar of creativity** that lies at the heart of manodharma. The manuscript, therefore, is more than a notated guide—it is a **living pedagogical tool, a window into the mind of a master, and a treasure trove for scholars, connoisseurs, and performers** seeking to explore the intricate landscape of improvisational Carnatic music.





Conceptualising an Abstract Rāga

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Śrī T M Krishna

Before I present the rāga that I have conceptualised, it is important to discuss the fundamental principles and patterns that govern rāga-s. Understanding the way rāga-s behave is essential to be able to think in an abstract manner. Over centuries, rāga-s have transformed and expanded, but not arbitrarily. And hence, in most cases, we can identify internal melodic mechanisms that musicians intuitively followed.

Each rāga that we utilise as a melodic source in the practice of Karṇāṭik music, has acquired its own acoustic identity. But all rāga-s have not evolved in the same way and this has determined their form. Based on their evolution, rāga-s can be slotted into two broad categories. One set of rāga-s, an older collection, evolved through an organic process. These rāga-s concretised into clearly demarcated melodic identities through the continuous handling by musicians and composers, influenced also by other musical traditions. A central characteristic of this process of evolution is that these rāga-s grew out of practice, composition and listening. Their theorization was post-facto.

Such rāga-s share one fundamental feature. They derive their form from the coming together of rāga “phrases”. These phraseologies, each a line of melody, are related to one another. The relationship being - commonality of svāra-s employed, shared and gamaka characteristics and movements. This holds the rāga together cohesively as a singular melody source. But these abstract rāga-s are also not static. They undergo continuous transformations.

Another set of rāga-s were born out of theorization. Theoreticians came up with different orders and combinations of svarasthāna-s. By assembling svarasthāna-s and then giving them characteristics of svāra-s, melodic identities were constructed. These rāga-s also became melodic sources. As suggested by scholars such as Dr. N. Ramanathan, such rāga-s can be called synthetic rāga-s.

Organic rāga-s cannot be defined or boxed into an ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa krama. There will always be melodic phrases and features that transgress their given ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa krama.

The degree of transgression varies from rāga to rāga. There are rāga-s that just cannot be defined by any ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa. There are others that to some extent abide by an ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa. And there are still other rāga-s that work within an ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa perimeter but permit one phrase which does not fall in line with the accepted ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa. Therefore, among organic rāga-s the extent of abstractness varies.

Another unique feature of organic rāga-s is the location of their melodic identity. Take for instance māñji. māñji can only be comprehended through the learning of compositions in the rāga. In terms of rāga identity, māñji cannot be found in linear melodic movements that traverse it's scale. Instead, melodic information of the rāga consists of bundles of phrases that are situated in different places across octaves. The rāga is contained in small collections of phrases that remain within certain regions. The musician can remain in any one of those locations, delve upon the rāga without having to move anywhere else. The necessity to move up and down the octave in order to keep the identity of the rāga intact is negated. Though there are many collections of phrases, not all of them possess the same strength or importance. There is a hierarchy of preference within these phrase baskets. Certain phrases, or phrase groups are more powerful than others. And this relationship defines the rāga's identity. Any shift in the phrase-power-equation, can result in the rāga identity becoming morphed or lead to the infringement of another rāga's territory. Therefore, understanding each phrase's place, context and relevance in any given rāga is essential.

Organic rāga-s, more often than not share common phrases or overlapping phrases with each other. For example, bēgaḍa shares a phrase with aṭhāṇa and aṭhāṇa in turn shares phrases with kannaḍa. These phrases have internal coherence and continuity in their respective rāga-s. For example, in the pallavi of the kīrtana cētaḥ: śrī bālakraṣṇam in rāga dvijāvanti, the phrase 'S,nnSnD'(caraṇa) is found. This is a phrase we normally associate with yadukula kāmbhōji. Yet in this context, it is part of the dvijāvanti aesthetic. The phrase is relevant to both rāga-s. Unfortunately, musicians modify the phrase, presuming that it can only exist in yadukula kāmbhōji. Similarly, there are overlaps in bhairavi, and mukhāri. Or for instance the phrase 'snnddpM' that can be rendered both in sāraṅgā and kalyāṇi. Where and how it is rendered, what phrase precedes and what follows defines which rāga it is contained within.

New phrases will always enter the fold of older rāga-s. We may agree or disagree with these inclusions, but the fact that they happen is true. Evidence for this is seen in both oral traditions and in musicological manuscripts. New melodic phrases are included through kalpita or kalpana saṅgīta. Through repeated renditions, these phrases get integrated into the rāga. Phraseologies in organic rāga-s constantly grow, providing musicians a larger pool of information. Yet certain core melodic markers of the rāga remain undisturbed.

Sometimes, even a svarasthāna can change. In the case of ānanda bhāravi, śuddha daivata

was replaced by catuśruti daivata. Despite this significant change, the core features of ānanda bharavi have remained the same. Irrespective of whether we render kamalāmbā samrakṣatumām with a śuddha daivata or catuśruti daivata, the kīrtana frame and melodic movements are unchanged.

sampūrṇa mēlakarta rāga-s are completely synthetic in character. The moment you arrange seven svaras linearly one after another and make that the rāga's defining characteristic, skipping svāra-s or singing them in vakra form becomes unnatural. Our mind will not conceive the phrase 'pns' in rāmapriya. Strict linearity limits our imagination and consequently stops the rāga from growing beyond the ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa framework.

Certain auḍava-ṣāḍava and ṣāḍava-auḍava rāga-s provide some level of freedom, because of the unequal gap created by the missing svāra in the ārōhaṇa or avarōhaṇa. This makes a melodic turn from an ārōhaṇa movement to an avarōhaṇa movement or vice versa interesting. For example, in jayamanōhari, the absence of the niṣāda in the ārōhaṇa, but its presence in the avarōhaṇa allows for some exploration of the region around the daivata and niṣāda. This ever so slightly pushes the musician's mind towards abstract conceptualization. Similarly, bahudāri provides such a possibility in the daivata and niṣāda region. Also, rāga-s such as bahudāri and rudrapriya that have a 'sīp' avarōhaṇa krama permit the phrase 'sīdnp'.

In the case of some auḍava/auḍava or ṣāḍava/ṣāḍava rāga-s there has been forced linearization. hindōlam and śrīrañjani originally used a vakra phrase 'mndns' when moving from the madhyama in the madhya sthāyi to the ṣaḍja in the tāra sthāyi. But the phrase has been straightened out, thus making 'mdns' the standard usage. This diminishes the rāga's abstractness.

A vakra scale does provide greater opportunity for exploration. But at the same time, it cannot be completely vakra. For example, kōkilavarāli, which has the scale srgMpdndS' - sdndPmrgS is so vakra in form that the rāga is severely constrained. A synthetic rāga, that has a mix of both vakra movement and linear movement, is similar in form to organic rāga-s. Such rāga-s can grow beyond the ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa structure. nalinakānti, with the presence of the vakra prayōga 'sgm' and then a linear 'pns' in the ārōhaṇa, followed by a ṣāḍava avarōhaṇa in sīpms is an example of such a scale. A lot has also got to do with how our mind processes information. In rāga-s like nalinakānti the mind looks for possibilities in the in-betweens and the rāga begins to go beyond the scale.

For many centuries organic rāga-s were our primary melodic source. We later shifted to creating and using more linear scale rāga-s. Consequently our perception of rāga changed. Which is why, in the past two hundred years, no abstract rāga has been created. We have only arranged and rearranged svarasthanas in different sequences and created synthetic

rāga-s.

Yet, there is one anomaly. When we imbibed and incorporated Hindustāni rāga-s such as sindhubhairavi, behāg or māṇḍ into Karṇāṭik music, we did not reduce them to mere scales.

In order to create an abstract rāga, we have to also understand different kinds of abstract structures and recognise patterns in them. This includes understanding similarities in gamaka movements across rāga-s.

aṭhāṇa is almost entirely abstract. It cannot be defined by any ārōhaṇa-avarōhaṇa. Movements from madhya sthāyi pañcama to tāra sthāyi ṣaḍja in this rāga include phrases such as ‘mpnsRS’, ‘dnsRS’, ‘PRS’ and pdnsRS. If one was to move from madhya sthāyi pañcama, just touch upon the tāra sthāyi ṣaḍja and turn downwards, then the phrase employed is ‘PDN,sD,nP. In this phrase, the extent of kampita gamaka on the niṣāda is reduced and the ṣaḍja moves down to a chutta ṣaḍja position. Such a change in kampita gamaka is found in many other rāga-s. Movements from tāra sthāyi ṣaḍja to madhya sthāyi pañcama in aṭhāṇa includes ‘sṅP’, ‘sṅpdNP, rṣṅp, ‘sD,nP. In kīrtana-s like bṛhaspatē and mummūrtulu the phrase ‘SDPMP’ is also used.

aṭhāṇa employs both kākali and kaiśiki niṣāda. kākali niṣāda usage is found in phrases such as ‘S#NSD#N;S’, ‘s#npdNP. The phrase PDNS can be rendered with kaiśiki and kākali niṣāda. If we analyse the rāga purely on the basis of its phrases, it is difficult to decide if kaiśiki or kākali niṣāda is the anya svāra. Both niṣāda-s seem to be of equal strength, with their respective weightage changing from composition to composition. While epapamu jesitira is kaiśiki niṣāda heavy, bṛhaspatē is kākali niṣāda heavy.

Depending on the context, the svāra-s - ṛṣabha and gāndhāra in aṭhāṇa are interchangeable. They are rendered in the same manner with the same gamaka and identical sound, but in phrases such as ‘pmrmrs, ‘mrpmnp’ the svāra is articulated as ṛṣabha, but in phrases such as ‘pmgmP, ‘mpgmP’ the svāra is articulated as gāndhāra.

With regard to the idea of the anya svāra, another characteristic is evident in some organic rāga-s. The gāndhāra used in the rāga saḥāna in the Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar sampradāya is sādḥāraṇa. But antara gāndhāra is also employed specifically in the phrase ‘RgmP’. Today, when we encounter such a feature, wherein an anya svāra appears in a specific phrase, the given phrase is always rendered with the anya svāra. But that is not how it is in Dīkṣitar’s saḥāna. sādḥāraṇa gāndhāra can also be used in the phrase ‘RgmP’. No phrase is exclusively allocated for the anya svāra. The moment we perceive the anya svāra in such a manner, the notion of ‘anya’ dissolves and the ‘other’ svāra becomes a part of the rāga’s intrinsic identity.

Let us now take up a rāga that is less abstract - bēgaḍa. One feature of bēgaḍa is the existence of two nishadas in avarōhaṇa phrases. Traditionally, the choice of which niṣāda is to be used is determined by whether or not the ṣaḍja is present in the phrase. The phrase ‘s̄ndp’ is rendered with the kākali niṣāda while ‘r̄ndp’ with a kaiśiki niṣāda. Secondly, when the phrase r̄ndp is rendered the niṣāda is dīrgha, ‘rNdp.’ But if there is no descent to pañcama after the niṣāda, the kākali niṣāda can be used even in a non-ṣaḍja phrase. An example is, the mandra sthāyi phrase R#NDDDP found in Vīṇa Kuppaiyer’s intacalamu varṇam. bēgaḍa also has some very unique phrases that we render mainly in the kīrtana-s. For example snM;;mgG, P,nP,n and MGRMP in nādōpāsana.

Vādi-samvādi svāra-s are present in many rāga-s. But, along with this, older rāga-s also employ mirror phraseologies. Meaning, the same phrase pattern is found in two different locations, though the svāra-s used in the phrases are different. For example, in kēdāragaula the phrases mpDPmgr is mirrored in the phrase ṅRSṅdp.

Some rāga-s that are entirely different in terms of the svāra-s that they are made of follow similar rules. rāga-s kāmbhōji, sāvēri and bilahari all have an ascent of ‘pds’ and descent of ‘s̄ndp’. In all these rāga-s, the turn phrase ‘pdndp’ is permitted. Similarly, rāga-s such as sāvēri and mukhāri have a ‘srm’ ascent and ‘mgrs’ descent. Both these rāga-s allow for a ‘srgs’ usage. Some rāga-s have a jhaṇṭa prayōga as a characteristic phrase, such as ‘ṅsgGM’ in rītigaula, ‘srgGP’ in bilahari and ‘pdnNS’ in āhiri. You will never find the phrase ‘mns’ in an organic rāga. Because of the large distance between these svāras, this phrase will be rendered with a janta on the niṣāda ‘mnns’ as found in pūrṇaṣaḍjam and rītigaula.

All the above rāga descriptions are examples of how identifiable patterns, and guidelines exist in older rāga-s. These learnings aid in us developing an abstract way of thinking.

Instinct and intuition are different. Instinct is a faculty that is neither visual or ideational. It does not lead to action or non-action. Intuition is a result of seeing, apprehending something, which leads to some awareness and knowledge. It comes from the Latin word in-tuitus, which means ‘to look’. From all the knowledge that abstract rāga-s gift us, intuition is born.

In one such intuitive moment, I rendered a few phrases without thinking of a rāga form, and captured that moment in notation. Having jotted down these melodic movements, I employed a method Subbarāma Dīkṣitar used in the Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini - to notationally describe a rāga. Subbarāma Dīkṣitar put down a series of phrases in every rāga that gives us a gist of its salient features and melodic movements across octaves. He called this collection of phrases a sañcāri.

After notating my initial ideation, I began expanding and elaborating the phrases. This meant I intuitively sang phrases and allowed the phrases to guide me melodically. I did not

force any conditionality on them. After writing down about twenty or more such phrases, I began looking for patterns in the movements. I also looked at phrases that stood out and did not conform to any pattern. Keeping in mind the principles that guide phraseological forms in various abstract rāga-s, I gave this rāga structural order and core, secondary and tertiary melodic phrases.

rāga : kannāḍa gāndhāra

The svaras in this rāga are catuśśruti ṛṣabha, sādihāraṇa gāndhāra, śuddha madhyama and kaiśiki niśāda. antara gāndhāra is also permitted in certain phrases.

Some phrases in the rāga

srgMR/sṇḍṇsrgMR/rsṇḍṇSR/rgmdn#Gmr/rgm#GmrS

pmDnp#GmrsṇḍṇS/pmdnssinppm#Gmrs/pmDnsP#GmrS

rgmdnsDnp#GmRS/mrgmDpGmD#Gmr/rgmdndmdp#Gm/srgmgNp#GmrS

srgmdnS/sṇḍṇpmgmdnS/nsRṣṛgimR/Sṛgimp#GmīsrNsDnmp#Gmr/

rgmdnP#GmrS/sMgmdnp#GmrgmdnS/rsṇsMdN/sDN#GmRsṇsRS/

kīrtana in rāga kannāḍa gāndhāra

śaṅkaram śaraṇāgata vatsalam in tāla ādi composed by Vidvān R K Shriramkumar





இராமலிங்க வள்ளலாரின் சமரச சன்மார்க்கக் கீர்த்தனைகளும் வேதநாயகரின் சர்வ சமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனைகளும்

Dr. Sr. Margaret Bastin fsj (Musicologist)

முன்னுரை

சமயம் என்பது என்ன?

மனித குலம் தோன்றி 65 இலட்ச ஆண்டுகளுக்கு மேல் ஆகின்றன என்பது அகழாய்வு முடிவு. இயற்கையின் அதிசயத்தைக் கண்ட மனிதன் அதன் இரகசியங்களை அறிந்து கொள்ள விரும்பினான். இதனை உருவாக்கியது யார்? நான் யார்? இவைகளை இயக்குவது யார்? என்று அறிய முற்பட்டான். இந்த கேள்விகளுக்கான விடையை அளிப்பதுவே தத்துவஞானம் என்று அழைக்கப்படுகின்றது. 'மனிதனை விஞ்சிய ஏதோ ஒரு சக்தி உண்டு அந்த ஒன்றிலிருந்து தோன்றிய அனைவரும் சமமாக ஒத்தும் உதவியும் வாழ வேண்டும்.' இதுவே சமயம் எனப்பட்டது. (சம+இயம்)

ஆன்மீகம் என்பது என்ன?

தனிமனித ஒழுக்கம், சமுதாய ஒழுக்கம், அவரவர் நிலைக்கான கடமை, ஈகை அல்லது தர்மம் என்ற அற உணர்வோடு வாழும் உயர் நிலையே ஆன்மீகம் எனப்பட்டது.

இவற்றிற்கிடையேயான தொடர்பு எது?

அறிய இயலாத புத்திக்கு எட்டாத அந்த சக்தியிலிருந்து தோன்றிய மனிதன் மீண்டும் அதனுடனேயே சென்று இணைய வேண்டும். எந்தத் தடையும் இல்லாமல் இணைய வேண்டும் என்றால் ஒழுக்கம், கடமை என்கின்ற இந்த அறச் செயல்களைக் கடைப்பிடித்தால்தான் அது சாத்தியமாகும். இதுவே சமயத்திற்கும் ஆன்மீகத்திற்குமான தொடர்பாகும். இந்தத் தொடர்பைத்தான் எல்லா சமயங்களும் வலியுறுத்துகின்றன என்று விளக்கம் அளிக்கின்றார் வேதாத்திரி மகிரிஷி.

கம்பன் தமது இராமாயணத்தில் குறிப்பிடுவது போல் தோள் கண்டவர் தோளே இராமன் என்றும் தாள் கண்டவர் தாளே இராமன் என்பதாக சொல்வதே நமது புரிதலாக உள்ளது. கடவுளைக் கண்டவர் விண்டிலர், விண்டவர் கண்டிலர்.

இந்தத் தலைப்பைத் தெரிவு செய்ததற்கான காரணம் என்ன?

1. தமிழ்ப்புலமை, இசைப்புலமை, இனிய குரல்வளம் இவை சமகாலத்தில் வாழ்ந்த இவ்விருவரிடமும் காணப்பட்டது.
2. இருவேறுபட்ட அறத்தை (இல்லறம்-துறவறம்) வாழ்வாக்கியவர்கள்
3. கடவுள் அனுபவத்தில் இருவருமே தோய்ந்தவர்கள்
4. 'சமய சமரசம்' என்ற உயரிய நோக்குடைய இவ்விருவரும் வெவ்வேறு சமயத்தைச் சார்ந்தவர்கள்
5. இருவருமே 'சமுதாய அக்கறை உடையவர்கள்'

இவர்களது கீர்த்தனைகளின் அகச் சான்றுகளினின்று, சமயம் கடந்து அன்பும் அருளும் எவ்வாறு வாழ்க்கையானது என்பதை அறிவதே இந்த ஆய்வின் நோக்கமாக அமைந்துள்ளது.

வள்ளல் பெருமான் (1823 அக்டோபர் 5)

1) தமிழ்மொழி, இசைப் பாடல்கள், பாடுந்திறன்

இவர்தமது வாழ்க்கை வரலாறு நாம் நன்கறிந்தது. கல்லாமல் உணர்ந்தவர் சொல்லாமல் உணர்த்தியவர். 6000 பாடல்களுக்குமேல் எழுதியுள்ளார். ஆறு திரு முறைகளாக இவை தொகுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. இப்பாடல்கள் சாதி, மதம், இனம், நிறம், நாடு போன்ற வேறுபாடுகள் இல்லாத சன்மார்க்க சமுதாயம் உருவாக வழிகாட்டுகின்றன. இப்பாடல்களில் காணப்படுகின்ற அகச் சான்றுகள் வழியாகவே (Internal evidence) அவரது வாழ்க்கை மற்றும் சன்மார்க்க குறித்த அனைத்துச் செய்திகளையும் அறிய முடிகின்றது.

இப்பாடல்களை இயற்றியளித்தது இறைவனே என்பதை இவ்வாறு பதிவு செய்கின்றார்.

“வான் கொடுத்த மணிமன்றில் திருநடம் புரியும் வள்ளல்
எல்லாம் வல்லவர் நன்மலர் எடுத்து என் உளத்தேத்
தான் கொடுக்க நான் வாங்கித் தொடுக்கின்றேன்”

ஆக இந்த ஞானம் இறைவனிடமிருந்து பெற்றவை என்பது அறியப்படுகின்றது. ஆகவேதான் இப்பாடல்கள் காலத்தால் பாதுகாக்கப்பட்டு நமக்குத் தரப்பட்டுள்ளன. தர்க்க நூலில் உண்மையை அளப்பதற்கான கருவியாக பிரமாணத்தைக் குறிப்படுவர். இது மூன்று வகைப்படும். காட்சிப் பிரமாணம், அனுமானப் பிரமாணம், ஆகமப் பிரமாணம். வள்ளலாரின் பாடல்கள் ஆகமப் பிரமாணத்தின் வகையைச் சார்ந்துள்ளன. எத்தனையோ நூல்கள் தோன்றிய வண்ணம் இருந்தாலும் காலம் கடந்து சில நூல்கள் வழக்கில் இருக்கின்றது என்றால் அதனை இயற்கை பாதுகாத்துத் தந்துள்ளது என்று அர்த்தம்.

வள்ளல் பெருமான் நூலாசிரியர், (மனுமுறைகண்ட வாசகம் ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம்) உரையாசிரியர், (ஓழிவிலொடுக்கம், பாயிர விருத்தி உரை, தொண்டை மண்டல் சதகத்தின் கடவுள் வாழ்த்துப் பாடல் உரை) பதிப்பாசிரியர், (சின்மய தீபிகை) பத்திரிகை ஆசிரியர், (சன்மார்க்க விவேக விருத்தி) ஞான ஆசிரியர், சித்தமருத்துவர், (மருந்து சரக்குகளின்

குண அட்டவணை) சீர்திருத்தவாதி, சமுதாய அக்கறைக் கொண்டவர், அருட்கவிஞர், சித்துக்கள் அறிந்தவர் போன்ற பன்முகத்தன்மை உடையவர்.

இசை இலக்கணத்தில் எத்தனை வகைப் பாவகைகள் உண்டோ அத்தனை வகையிலும் பாடியுள்ளார். இவருக்கு கின்னரத்தை ஒத்த சாரீரம் உண்டு என நேரில் கேட்டவர்கள் பதிவு செய்துள்ளனர்.

வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை (1826 அக்டோபர் 14)

திருச்சிக்கு அருகாமையில் உள்ள குளத்தூரைச் சார்ந்தவர். தமது 22ஆவது வயதில் பதிவுப் பொறுப்பாளராக (Record Keeper) 2 வருடங்கள் திருச்சியில் பணியாற்றினார். தமிழ் ஆங்கிலம் இரண்டிலும் புலமைப் பெற்றுத் தென்மாகாண நீதி மன்றத்தின் மொழி பெயர்ப்பாளராகப் பணியாற்றிவந்த திரு. தியாகப்பிள்ளையிடம் ஆங்கிலத்தை முறையாகக் கற்றுத் தேர்ந்தார். இதனால் மொழி பெயர்ப்பாளராக விழுமிய நிலை எய்தினர். பின்னர் முறைமன்றத் தலைவர் (Municipality) உத்தியோகம் கிடைக்கப்பெற்று தரங்கம்பாடி சென்றார். ஓராண்டுக்குப்பின் நீதிபதியாக சீர்காழிக்கு மாற்றம் பெற்றார். இறுதியாக மாயூரத்தில் தமது பணியைத் தொடர்ந்தாற்றி 1872இல் ஓய்வு பெற்றார். தமது இறுதிக் காலம்வரை பொதுநலப் பணியில் ஈடுபட்டு உழைத்து 21ஆம் நாள் ஜூலை 1889 இல் இயற்கை எய்தினார்.

தமிழ்மொழி, இசைப் பாடல்கள், பாடுந்திறன்

தமிழின் மீது மிகுந்த பற்றுக் கொண்டிருந்ததால் தமது 12 வயதிற்குள் பெரும்பான்மையானத் தமிழ் நூல்களைக் கற்றறிந்திருந்தார். சிறு வயதிலேயே கவி இயற்றும் ஆற்றலும் பாடும் திறனும் பெற்றிருந்தார். திரு மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளையிடம் தொடர்ந்து தமிழைப் பயின்றதோடு இசையை கோபால கிருஷ்ண பாரதியிடமிருந்தும் கற்றுக் கொள்ளும் வாய்ப்பைப் பெற்றிருந்தார்.

நீதிநூல், பெண்மதிமாலை, பிரதாப முதலியார் சரித்திரம், சுகுண சுந்தரி சரித்திரம், தேவமாதா அந்தாதி, திருவருள் அந்தாதி, திருவருள் மாலை, சத்தியவேதக் கீர்த்தனை, சர்வசமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனை, தேவ தோத்திர மாலை, சித்தாந்த சங்கிரகம், பெரிய நாயகி அம்மன் பதிகம், பொம்மைக் கல்யாணம் என 13 நூல்கள் படைத்துள்ளார்.

இவையன்றி காலத்துக்கும் இடத்துக்கும் ஏற்றவாறு அவ்வப்பொழுது ஆக்கியளித்துள்ள சுவை மிக்கத் தனிப் பாடல்களும் சிறுசிறு நூல்களும் பலவாம். கிண்டலும் கேலியும் நிறைந்த நலுங்குப் பாடல்கள் சோபானப் பாடல்கள் பலவற்றை இயற்றியளித்துள்ளார்.

இவரது சர்வ சமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனைகளே இவர் இசை அறிவு கொண்டவர் என்பதற்கு சான்றாக அமைகின்றது. இறக்கும் தருவாயிலும் ஒருபாடலைப் பாடியே உயிர் விட்டதிலிருந்து இசைமீது இவருக்கிருந்த ஆர்வத்தை அறிய முடிகின்றது. சுத்தானந்த பாரதி வேத நாயகரை மேதை நாயகம், கீதநாயகம், நீதிநாயகம் எனப் பாராட்டுவதிலிருந்தும் இதனை அறியலாம்.

2) வள்ளல் பெருமானின் துறவறம் (துறவு+அறம்)

திருக்குறள் ஓர் அறநூல். வள்ளுவப் பெருந்தகை அறத்தை இரண்டாகப் பிரிக்கின்றார். ஒன்று இல்லறம் மற்றது துறவறம். இரண்டுமே அறம்தான். இல்லறம் துறவு நோக்கி ஒருவரை நகர்த்தும். இல்லறத்தில் அன்பும் துறவறத்தில் அருளும் முக்கியம் பெறுகின்றன. (அன்பு என்பது தொடர்புடையவர் இடத்தில் காண்பிப்பது. அருள் என்பது தொடர்பில்லாதவர் இடத்தும் ஏன் அனைத்து உயிர்களிடத்தும் காண்பிப்பது.)

இவர் இல்லறம் ஏற்றும் துறவியாக வாழ்ந்தவர். காவி விடுத்து வெண்ணாடை அணிந்த துறவி. வாழையடி வாழையாக வந்த திருக்கூட்ட மரபில் தானும் ஒருவன் என்று தன்னை அடையாளப்படுத்தும் இவர் சிறுவயதில் சம்பந்தரைத் தமது ஆன்மீகக் குருவாகக் கொண்டிருந்தார். மணிவாசகரின் திருவாசகத்திற்கு தம்மை மறந்து உருகினார்.

63 நாயன்மார்களைச் சொல்லி இவர்களுக்கெல்லாம் நான் அடியேன் என்று சொன்னபின் 'அப்பாலும் அடிசார்ந்த அடியார்க்கும் அடியேன்' என்ற சுந்தரரின் அருள் மொழிகளின் அர்த்தத்தை முழுமையாக அறிந்திருந்தார். எல்லா சமயத்திலும் இறைவனின் திருவடியைச் சார்ந்த அடியார்கள் உண்டு அவர்களுக்கும் நான் அடியேன் என்ற அவரின் மகோன்னதமான கருத்து இவரின் சன்மார்க்க நெறியில் பிரதிபலிப்பதைக் காணலாம்.

“என்னை நன்றாய் இறைவன் செய்தனன் தன்னை நன்றாய் தமிழ் செய்யுமாறே” என்று திருமுலர் தம் பிறப்புக்கான காரணத்தைக் கூறுவதை அடியொற்றி வள்ளல் பெருமானும் தமது அவதரிப்பின் நோக்கத்தைப் பாடல்வழி உறுதி செய்கின்றார்.

“அகத்தே கறுத்துப் புறத்து வெளுத்திருந்த உலகர் அனைவரையும் சகத்தே திருத்திச் சன்மார்க்க சங்கத்து அடைவித் திடஅவரும் இகத்தே பரத்தைப் பெற்று மகிழ்ந்திடுதற் கென்றே எனை இந்த உகத்தே இறைவன் வருவிக்க உற்றேன் அருளைப் பெற்றேனே”

இவ்வுலகவரை திருத்திச் சன்மார்க்க சங்கத்தில் இணைத்திடுவதனால் வாழும் காலத்திலேயே மறுமை இன்பத்தை இவ்வுலகோர் பெற்று மகிழ்ந்திடுவதற்கு என்றே தம்மை இறைவன் இந்த உலகில் அவதரிக்கச் செய்தான் என்கின்றார்.

ஊரன் அடிகள் இவரின் வாழ்க்கை வரலாற்றை எழுதி வெளியிட்டபோது அன்றைய தினமணி நாளிதழ், “சமயத் துறையில் மட்டுமின்றி சமூக வாழ்க்கையிலும் மாறுதல் வேண்டி உழைத்த, சாதிமத வேறுபாடுகளைக் கடந்த சமரச சன்மார்க்கப் புது வழியைத் தமிழ் மக்களுக்கு அளித்துச்சென்ற ஞானி இராமலிங்க அடிகளாரின் அன்பு நெறியை உலகறியச் செய்ய...” என்று குறிப்பிட்டிருந்தது. (தினமணி 07.05.1971) இச்செய்தி இவரை முழுமையாகப் படம் பிடித்துக் காட்டுகின்றது. இதில் மூன்று கருத்துக்கள் முக்கியம் பெறுகின்றன.

1. சமயத் துறையில் மட்டுமின்றி சமூக வாழ்க்கையிலும் மாறுதல் கொண்டுவர உழைத்தவர்
2. சாதிமத வேறுபாடுகளைக் கடந்த சமரச சன்மார்க்கப் புது நெறியை அளித்தவர்
3. அன்பு நெறியை வாழ்ந்து பரவச் செய்தவர் என்பதனைக் குறிப்பிடுவதிலிருந்து வள்ளல் பெருமானது வாழ்வு நெறியை அறிய முடிகின்றது.

வேதநாயகரின் இல்லறம் (இல்+அறம்)

செல்வக் குடும்பத்தில் பிறந்த வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை அவர்கள் இல்லறத்தை மிகச்சிறப்பாக வாழ்ந்தவர். இல்லறத்தினை முறையாக வாழ்வதன் வழி இறைவனைத் தரிசிக்க முடியும் என்பதைத் தம் வாழ்வால் எண்பித்தவர்.

“பாரிருள் நீக்காதே சூரியனாலே அப்பாருக்கென்னசாரம் - ஞான ஆரியனே உன்முன் சாரலாமோ என் அகத்தில் அந்தகாரம் - நாளும் சாரமில்லாச் சம்சார கோலாகலம் சாருமெனக்கென்றுந் தீரா வியாகூலம் வீரனே நீயறிவாய் என்பலாபலம் வேதநாயகனே நீதருவாய்நலம்”

தமது பிறப்பிற்கான காரணம் இது என்று சொல்லக் கூடிய ஆன்மீகவாதியாக இல்லாமல் தமது இயலாமையில் இறையருள் ஒன்று மட்டுமே தம்மைக் காக்க முடியும் என்று நம்பியவர். தமது இயலாமையை எடுத்துக் கூறி இறையருளை வேண்டுகின்ற சாதாரண ஒரு மனிதனாகவே தம்மைக் குறித்துப் பாடல்களில் வெளிப்படுத்துகின்றார்.

“முத்தொழிலில் முதல் தொழில் கொண்டுசெய்தாய் என் சடம் முத்தஞானம் அளித்து எனைக் காத்தருளாயோ என் ஹடம் அத்தனே அவ்விரண்டாம் தொழிலில் என்ன சங்கடம் அதுதரில் முன்றாந் தொழிற்கு அஞ்சினேன் இது திடம் பரனே”

என்னைப் படைத்த நீ தானே எனக்கு ஞானம் அளித்துக் காக்க வேண்டும். அதில் உனக்கு என்ன சங்கடம்? நீ அவ்வாறு செய்யவில்லை எனில் நான் அழிந்து போவேன் என இறைவனின் முத்தொழில் குறித்துப் பாடுகின்றார். இவர் கிறித்தவ மதத்தைச் சார்ந்தவர் என்ற போதும் இவர் போற்றி மதித்தவர்களும் இவரின் நண்பர்களும் மாற்று மத்தினராகவே இருப்பதைக் காண்கின்றோம்.

நண்பர்கள்

1. மாபெரும் புலவர் மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை, திருவாடுதுறை ஆதீனத் தலைவர் சுப்ரமண்ய தேசிகர். சி.வை தாமோதரப் பிள்ளை, வள்ளல் பெருமானார், கோபாலகிரு-ண பாரதி, சென்னை சுப்பராயச் செட்டியார் போன்றோராவர்.
2. வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையவர்கள் மீது “குளத்தூர்க்கோவையை” மீனாட்சிசுந்தரம் பிள்ளை அவர்கள் பாடியளித்துள்ளார்கள்.
3. மானுடரைப் பாடாதவர் கோபாலகிரு-ண பாரதி வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையின் மீது “நீயே புரு-மேரு” என்று கீர்த்தனையை இயற்றி அளித்துள்ளார்.
4. 600 பாடல்களைக் கொண்டு 1859 இல் வெளியான நீதிநூலுக்கு வள்ளலார் அவர்கள் சாற்றுக் கவி வழங்கியுள்ளார்கள்.

“வளங்கொள்குளத் தூர் அமர்ந்த வேதநாயகன் அருளால் வயங்க முன்னாள் உளங்கொள்மனு உரைத்த னன்ஓர் நீதிநூல் அந்நூற்பின் உறுநூ லாகத் துளங்கிடும்அவ் வூர்உறைஅத் தோன்றல்ஓர் நீதிநூல் சொன்னான் இந்நாள் விளங்கும் இந்நூல் முன்னர்மற்றை நூல்எல்லாம் கிழிபடத்தின் வெண்ணூலன்றே”

5. 'என் சரித்திரத்தில்' உவேசா அவர்கள் வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை மற்றும் ஆதினத் தலைவர் ஸ்ரீலக்ஷ்மி சுப்ரமண்ய தேசிகர் இவர்கள் இருவருக்கும் இடையேயான நட்பு, பாடல் போக்குவரத்துக்கள் ஆகியவற்றைக் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். அப்பாடல்களை ஆதினத் தலைவரிடம் வாசித்துக் காண்பிக்கும் பொறுப்பை சாமிநாத ஐயரே செய்ததோடு இப்படிப்பட்ட நல்ல மனிதர்களைத் தெரிந்து கொள்ளவும் நட்பு பாராட்டவும் வாய்ப்புக் கிடைத்ததைத் தமது பேறு என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

சில நேரங்களில் தம்மைக் காணவரும் கனவான்களிடம் வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை அவர்கள் எழுதியனுப்பிய பாடல்களை வாசித்துக் காண்பிக்கும்படி திருவாவடுதுறை ஆதினத் தலைவர் கட்டளையிடுவதும் உண்டு. அதனைக் கேட்டவர்கள், 'ஒரு கிறித்தவ கனவான் சைவ மடத்துத் தலைவரை இவ்வளவு தூரம் பாராட்டியிருக்கிறாரே' என்று வியந்ததாக என் சரித்திரத்தில் உவேசாமிநாத ஐயர் பதிவு செய்துள்ளார்.

3) வள்ளலாரின் கடவுள் அனுபவம்

பொதுவாகக் கடவுள் அனுபவம் என்பது தனி மனிதரையேச் சாரும். கடவுளை பக்தி செய்ய நூலறிவு மற்றும் அனுபவ அறிவு என இரண்டு முறைகள் உண்டு. எல்லா சமயங்களும் இந்த இரு முறைகளையும் போற்றுவதைக் காண முடிகின்றது.

தன்னை தரிசிக்கத் தெரிந்த ஒருவரால் மட்டுமே ஆன்ம தரிசனம் பெற இயலும். வள்ளலார் தாம் யார் என்பதைக் கண்டு கொண்டவர். கந்தகோட்டத்தில் தனிமையில் விழித்து, பசித்து அமர்ந்ததில் பெற்ற ஞானம். "எழுதுங்கால் கோல் காணா கண்ணே போல்" என்ற பொய்யா மொழியாரின் வரிகளுக்கு ஏற்ப ஆடியின்முன் இவர் அமர்ந்திருந்த போதும் இதயத்தில் நிறைந்திருந்த முருகப்பெருமானே கண்ணாடியில் தெரியும் அளவுக்கு ஞான நிலையில் முருகனை தரிசித்ததைக் காண்கின்றோம்.

"எக்கோலத்து எவ்வுருவாய் எத்தவங்கள் செய்வார்க்கும்
அக்கோலத்து அவ்வுருவே ஆம்"

அற்புதத் திருவந்தாதி (33)

இறைவனை எந்தக் கோலத்தில் நினைத்துத் தவம் செய்து வழிபட்டாலும் அந்தக் கோலத்தில் அந்த வடிவோடே அவன் காட்சி தந்து அருள் புரிவான் என்று தம் அனுபவத்தின் வயிலாக அற்புதத் திருவந்தாதியுள் பதிவு செய்கின்றார் காரைக்கால் அம்மையார்.

சைவத்தில் இறைவனை சொரூப நிலையிலும், தடத்த நிலையிலும் வழிபடுகின்ற வழக்கம் உண்டு. தொடக்கக் காலத்தில் உருவ வழிபாடு செய்தவர் பின் அருஉருவம் இறுதியில் அருவம் (சோதியை) மட்டுமே என்று இவரின் வழிபாட்டு முறையில் மாற்றம் தோன்றிற்று.

"பால்வகை ஆணோ பெண்கொலோ இருமைப் பாலதோ பால்உறா அதுவோ
ஏல்வகை ஒன்றோ இரண்டதோ அனாதி இயற்கையோ ஆதியின் இயல்போ
மேல்வகை யாதோ எனமறை முடிகள் விளம்பிட விளங்கும் ஓர் தலைவன்
மால்வகை மனத்தென் உளக்குடில் புகுந்தான் வள்ளலைத் தடுப்பவர் யாரே"

இறைவன் ஆணோ பெண்ணோ அல்லது அலியோ ஒன்றோ இரண்டோ ஆதியோ

அனாதியோ இயற்கையோ வேதங்கள் கூறும் எதுவாயினும் சரி அவன் எனது மனத்திற்குள் புகுந்து விட்டான் இதனைத் தடுக்க யாரால் இயலும் என்கின்றார். மனிதப் பிறவியின் வழி தெய்வீக நிலையை அடையமுடியும் என்று வாழ்ந்து உணர்த்தியவர்.

19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் வெளிவந்துள்ள திருவாசக மறுபதிப்பே இந்த 'அருட்பா' என்று இதனை போற்றுபவர்கள் உண்டு. திருவாசகத்தை யாராவது பாடக் கேட்டால் மூர்ச்சித்து விடுவார் என்று அவரை அறிந்தவர்கள் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளனர்.

'புனைந்துரையேன் பொய்ப்புகலேன் சத்தியம் சொல்கின்றேன் வம்மின் மரணமில்லாப் பெருவாழ்வை வாழ்ந்திடலாம்' என்று அழைப்பு விடுக்கின்ற பாடலில் அவர் மணிவாசகரைப் போலவே அழுது அரற்றுவதைக் காணலாம். நினைந்து நினைந்து, உணர்ந்து உணர்ந்து, அன்பே நிறைந்து நிறைந்து ஊற்றெழும் கண்ணீர் அதனால் நனைந்து நனைந்து, வனைந்து வனைந்து ஏத்தும் நாம்.. என்று சொல்லுகின்றவை அடுக்கு மொழிகள் அல்ல அவை ஒவ்வொன்றிற்கும் பொருள் உண்டு என வாரியார் சுவாமிகள் அழகாக விளக்குகின்றார்.

- நினைந்து நமது சிறுமையை நினைந்து மற்றது இறைவனின் பெருமையை நினைந்து
- உணர்ந்து இறைவனை சாத்திரங்களால் உணர்வது (அபரஞானம்) - அனுபவத்தால் உணர்வது (பரஞானம்)
- அன்பே நிறைந்து பயன்விரும்பி அன்பால் நிறைவது (காமியம்) - பயன்விரும்பாமல் அன்பு நிறைவது (நிர்காமியம்)
- நனைந்து துன்பமிகுதியால் இதயத்தின் அடியிலிருந்து வரும் கண்ணீர் - நுனியில் வருவது ஆனந்தக் கண்ணீர்
- வனைந்து இறைவனைப் பாடலினால் வனைவது - வசனத்தினால் வனைந்து ஏத்துவது என்று தத்துவக் கருத்துக்களையும் உள்ளடக்கி உள்ளதைக் காணமுடிகின்றது.

மனிதர் ஒளி உடம்பைப் பெற்றது என்பது இதுவரைக் கேட்டிராதக், கண்டிராத ஒரு நிலைப்பாடு எனலாம். தாம் ஒளி உடம்பைப் பெற்றிருந்ததனை பாடலில் வள்ளல் பெருமானே பதிவு செய்கின்றார்.

“நான்செய்த புண்ணியம் என்னுரைக்கேன் பொது நண்ணியதோர்
வான்செய்த மாமணி என்கையில் பெற்று நல் வாழ்வடைந்தேன்
ஊன்செய்த தேகம் ஒளிவடிவாக நின்று ஓங்குகின்றேன்
தேன்செய்த தெள;ளமுது உண்டேன் கண்டேன் மெய்த்திரு நிலையே”

(பா 860)

இவரின் ஒளி உடம்பு புகைப்படங்களுக்குள் அடங்கவில்லை என்பது நாம் அறிந்ததே.

வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையின் கடவுள் அனுபவம்

தமிழையும் ஆன்மீகத்தையும் நாம் பிரித்துப் பார்க்க முடியாது. சிறுவயதிலேயே தமிழ் நூல்களைக் கற்றுத் தேர்ந்ததினால் ஆன்மீகம் குறித்தத் தெளிவு இவரிடம் இருந்தது

எனலாம். வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை வள்ளலாரின் பாடல்களில் மனத்தைப் பறிகொடுத்தவர் அதன் தாக்கத்தை அவரது பாடல்களிலும் காண முடிகின்றது.

‘ஆணல்ல பெண்ணல்ல ஐம்பூதஞ் சுடரல்ல
அரிஅயன் சிவனல்ல அதுவல்ல இதுவல்ல
காணருமுன் திவ்யகாந்தி விரியும் நல்ல
கனலடிவினைக்காணக் காதல் கொண்டேன் வல்ல
காரணா சுகபூரணா குணதாரணா கன ஆரணா நீ.....’

எனத் தொடர்கின்றது பாடல். இறைவா! நீ இனத்தைக் கடந்து, இயற்கையைக் கடந்து, பல்வேறு பெயர்களைக் கடந்து சூரியகாந்தி மலரை ஈர்க்கக்கூடிய ஒளிவடிவானவனாய்த் திகழ்கின்றாய் உனைக் காணவே நான் காதல் கொண்டேன் என்பது இப்பாடலின் பொருள்.

ஆயினும் இறைவன் தனக்கு ஏன் இன்னும் காட்சி தரவில்லை என்பதைக் கேட்டு, ‘காட்சி எனக்குக் கொடாமல் இருக்கின்ற காரணம் ஏதய்யா?’ என்று பாடி பக்தியில் உருகுகின்றார்.

‘தேவனே உனைக் கண்டால் திருஷ்டி தோஷம் தொடுமோ?
திவ்ய தேஜோ மயம் என் தேகந்தனைக் கூடுமோ’

ஒளியாகிய இறைவா! உன்னைக் காண்பதால் எனது தோ-ம் நீங்கப் பெற்று என்னாலும் ஒளி உடம்பைப் பெற இயலுமோ என்று ஏங்குகின்றார். மற்றொரு பாடலில், உய்யும் வகையிது நெஞ்சமே வேறு செய்யும் உபாயங்கள் வஞ்சமே என்று உறுதிபட பாடுகின்றார். நீ உய்வதற்கான ஒரே வழி இதுதான், மையல் தருகின்ற மும் மலங்களை நீக்க வேண்டும் பின்னர் அவனின் பொற்பாதத்தில் உன்னை முழுமையாக சரணாகதியாக்கிட வேண்டும் மற்றெல்லா காரியங்களும் வீணே என்று திட்டவட்டமாக அறிவுறுத்துகின்றார்.

4. வள்ளலாரின் சமரச சூத்த சன்மார்கம்

ஊரன் அடிகளின் வள்ளல் பெருமானது வரலாற்று நூலுக்கு அணிந்துரை வழங்கியுள்ள மதுராந்தகம் வடதிருச்சிற்றம்பலக் குரு பழநி ஆதீனம் திருக்குறள் பீடம் குருகுலம் அழகர் அடிகள் சமய சமரச சன்மார்கம் பற்றிக் குறிப்பிடுமிடத்து, “சமரச சன்மார்க்க சங்கம் என்பதற்குப் பொருள் எதுவெனில், எல்லாச் சமயங்களுக்கும் பொதுவாகிய அறிவுநூல் சொல்லுகின்ற நான்காவது மார்க்கம் அதாவது ஞான மார்க்கத்தை அனுஷ்டிக்கின்ற கூட்டம்” என வள்ளல் பெருமான் உரைத்துள்ளதாகப் பதிவு செய்கின்றார். மேலும்,

“எம்மத நிலையும் நின்னருள் நிலையில் இலங்குதல் அறிந்தனன்
எல்லாம் சம்மதம் ஆக்கிக் கொள்கின்றேன் அல்லால்
தனித்து வேறொன்று எண்ணியது உண்டோ?.....”

(பா 980)

என்று வள்ளல் பெருமான் பாடுவதிலிருந்து மதங்களைக் குறித்த இவரின் கணிப்பை அறிய முடிகின்றது. எனவேதான் மதமான பேய் பிடியாதிருக்க வேண்டும் என்று வேண்டுகின்றார்.

சன்மார்க்கம்

தோத்திரத்துக்குத் திருவாசகம், சாத்திரத்துக்குத் திருமந்திரம் என்பார்கள். வள்ளல் பெருமான் திருமூலரை தமது வழிகாட்டியாகக் கொள்கின்றார். திருமந்திரத்தினுள் நான்கு சாதனம், நான்கு மார்க்கம், நான்கு முக்தி ஆகிய பன்னிரண்டையும் பன்னிரு அதிகாரங்களில் விளக்குகின்றார் திருமூலர்.

சாதனம்	மார்க்கம்	பயன்
1. சரியை	தாசமார்க்கம் (ஆண்டான் அடிமை)	அப்பர் சாலோகம்
2. கிரியை	சத்புத்திர (தந்தை மகன்)	சம்பந்தர் சாமீபம்
3. யோகம்	சகமார்க்கம் (தோழமை)	சுந்தரர் சாரூபம்
4. ஞானம்	சன்மார்க்கம் (இரண்டறக்கலத்தல்)	மணிவாசகர் சாயுச்சியம்

வள்ளல் பெருமான் இதற்கு புதிய விளக்கத்தைத் தந்து இதுவே 'ஜீவ நியாயம்' என்று விளக்குகின்றார் என ஊரன் அடிகள் தமது நூலினுள் பதிவு செய்துள்ளார்கள். அதாவது எல்லா உயிர்களையும் தன் அடிமையாகப் பாவித்தல், தம் மகனாகப் பாவித்தல், தம் நண்பனாகப் பாவித்தல், அனைவரையும் தன்னைப்போல் பாவித்தல் இதுவே சமய சமரச சன்மார்க்கம் என்ற "ஜீவ நியாயம்" என்கின்றார். (பக்.283)

சன்மார்க்க சமயத்தின் பெருநெறிகளாவன:

1. கடவுள் ஒருவரே
2. எல்லா உயிர்களையும் உன்னைப்போல் அன்பு செய்ய வேண்டும்
3. சாதிசமய வேறுபாடுகளைத் தவிர்க்க வேண்டும்
4. சிறுதெய்வ வழிபாட்டினையும் அவற்றிற்கு உயிர்ப்பலித் தருவதையும் தவிர்க்க வேண்டும்
5. புலால் மறுப்பு வேண்டும்
6. ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கமே பேரின்ப வீட்டின் திறவுகோல்
7. இறந்தவர்களை எரிக்காது அடக்கம் பண்ண வேண்டும்.
8. உயிர்க்குலமே கடவுள் வாழும் ஆலயம் எனவே உயிர்களுக்குத் தொண்டு செய்ய வேண்டும் இதுவே இறப்பொழிக்கும் சன்மார்க்கம் என்கின்றார்.

நாமக்கல் காந்தீயக் கவிஞர் வள்ளலாரின் சமரச நெறியை உள்வாங்கி இவ்வாறு பாடுகின்றார்.

அல்லா என்பார் சிலபேர்கள் ஹரன் அரி என்பார் சிலபேர்கள்
வல்லார் அவன் பரமண்டலத்துள் வாழும் தந்தை என்பார்கள்
சொல்லால் விளங்கா நிர்வாணம் என்றும் சிலபேர் சொல்வார்கள்
எல்லாம் இப்படி பலர்பேசும் ஏதோ ஒரு பொருள் இருக்குதன்றோ

அந்தப் பொருளை நாம் நினைத்தே அனைவரும் அன்பாய் குலவிடுவோம்
எந்தப்படியாய் எவர் அதனை எப்படித் தொழுதால் நமக்கென்ன
நிந்தைப் பிறரை பேசாமல் நினைவிலும் கெடுதல் செய்யாமல்
வந்திப்போம் அதை வணங்கிடுவோம் வாழ்வோம் சுகமாய் வாழ்ந்திடுவோம்.

யார் எப்படி கடவுளை வழிபட்டால் என்ன சாதி மதம் சமயம் என்ற வேறுபாடுகளைத்
தவிர்த்து ஒருவரை ஒருவர் ஏற்று, அன்பு செய்து ஜீவகாருண்யம் கொண்டு வாழுங்கள்
என்று இப்பாடல் வழி அறிவுறுத்துவதைக் காணமுடிகின்றது.

வேதநாயகரின் சர்வ சமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனைகள்

கிறித்தவ மதத்தை பின்பற்றிய வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையினது சமய வழிக்காட்டலின்படி

1. கடவுள் ஒருவரே
2. உன்னை நீ அன்பு செய்வது போல் மற்றெல்லா உயிர்களையும் அன்பு செய்ய வேண்டும்
3. சாதி வேறுபாடுகளைத் தவிர்க்க வேண்டும்
4. வேற்றுதெய்வ வழிபாட்டினையும் அவற்றிற்கு உயிர்ப்பலித் தருவதையும் தவிர்க்க வேண்டும்.
5. பொய், கொலை, பிறன் மனை விரும்புதல் முதலியவற்றைத் தவிர்க்க வேண்டும்.
6. உடல் கடவுள் வாழும் ஆலயம் எனவே அதன் தூய்மையைப் பேண வேண்டும் என்ற கொள்கையுடையவராய் வாழ்ந்து வந்தவர்.

தமது ஆசிரியர் மகாவித்துவான் மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை அவர்களோடு வடலூர் சென்று தாம் இயற்றிய சர்வ சமய சமரச கீர்த்தனைகளை வள்ளாரின் முன் பாடிக் காண்பித்து அரங்கேற்றி வந்தார் என்று கர்ண பரம்பரையாகவும் கே.வி. சீனிவாச ஐயங்கார் இயற்றியத் தமது 'சங்கீத சில்லறைக் கோவை'யிலும் எழுதியிருப்பதாக ஊரன் அடிகள் பதிவு செய்துள்ளார். (பக்.169) 200 பாடல்களைக் கொண்ட இத் தொகுப்பில் இறைவனைப் பற்றியவை உபதேசக் கீர்த்தனைகள் உத்தியோக சம்பந்தமான கீர்த்தனைகள், குடும்பசம்பந்தமான கீர்த்தனைகள் என்ற தலைப்பில் அமைந்துள்ளன.

“சீர்கொண்டு இலங்கிடும் சிரு-;டி திதி சம்ஹாரம் செய்ய முக்குண வஸ்துவாய்
செப்பரிய சுகுணமாய் நிற்குணத்து ஆதார தீண்டிடா ஞான ஒளியாய்
பார்கொண்டு இலங்கிடும் யாவையும் தந்தாளும் பரமனாய் பரஞ்சுடருமாய்
பக்தரின் உள்ளத்தினிலே ஆடும் தெய்வீகனாய்...”

சர்வசமய சமரசக் கீர்த்தனைக்கு உரிய கடவுள் வாழ்த்தாக அமைந்துள்ள நெடும் பாடலிலேயே வேதநாயகரின் மத சிந்தனையை, அவரின் ஆன்மீக அணுகு முறையைப் புரிந்து கொள்ள முடிகின்றது. இவரது பாடல்களில் எவ்விடத்தும் இவரது இ-;டதெய்வத்தின் பெயர் இடம் பெறவில்லை. மாறாக பொதுவான பெயர்களே இடம் பெறுகின்றன. முக்குணனே, ஞான ஒளியானவனே, பக்தரின் உள்ளத்தில் திருநடம் புரிபவனே! ஆதியே பரஞ்சோதியே! கருணாலய நிதியே! வேத நாயகனே என்று இறைவனை

அழைப்பதிலிருந்தே இறையைப் பற்றிய அவரது புரிதல் தெளிவாக விளங்குகின்றது

“சொர்க்க வாசலில் தொண்டைமானும் தோட்டியும் சரியே” எனப் பதிவு செய்கின்றார். தருணங் கருணை புரிகுவாய் ஐயா... என்ற பாடலில்

‘காயத்தை எரித்தேன் அருமாயத்தை அடுத்தேன்
அநியாயத்தை உடுத்தேன் திரு நேயத்தை விடுத்தேன்’

உடம்பை எரித்து அநியாயம் செய்து மனித நேயத்தை விட்டுவிட்டேன் என்று வருந்துகின்றார்.

“பிறர் உங்களுக்குச் செய்ய வேண்டும் என விரும்புகின்றவற்றை எல்லாம் நீங்களும் அவர்களுக்குச் செய்யுங்கள். இறைவாக்குகளும் திருச்சட்டமும் கூறுவது இதுவே” என்ற பொன்விதிக்கு ஏற்ப

‘என்னுயிர்போல் எவ்வுயிரையும் பேண
இகசகபோகத்தை என்றுமே நான் நாண’

என்று பாடுவதால் அனைத்து உயிர்களையும் தம்முயிர்போல் அன்பு செய்ய வேண்டும் என்பதனைத் தமது வாழ்வாக்க வேண்டும் என்கின்ற தமது பேராவலைப் பதிவு செய்கின்றார். வள்ளலாரின் ஜீவகாருண்ய ஒழுக்கம் என்பதுவும் இதுவேயாகும்.

வேதநாயகரின் மதம் கடந்த அன்புள்ளம்

1. திருச்சி மலைக்கோட்டையில் உள்ள தாயுமானவர் கோயில் கட்டளைத் தம்பிரான் சிலரது தூண்டுதலால் தருமபுர ஆதீனத் தலைவருக்கு மாறுபட்டு நடந்தார். வழக்குப் பதிவு செய்ய மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம்பிள்ளை வழியாக வேத நாயகரை அணுகினார். அக்கால முறைப்படி வேதநாயகர் கடிதத்தை ஆங்கிலத்தில் எழுதிக் கொடுக்க ஆதீனத்திற்கு சாதகமாக வழக்கு முடிந்தது. இவர் நீதியோடும் மனிதாபிமானத்தோடும் நடந்து கொண்டார் என்பதை ஆதீனம் பதிவு செய்துள்ளது.
2. வேத நாயகரைப் பற்றி அறிந்த திருவாவடுதுறை ஆதீனம், மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை வழியாக அவரைத் தாம் சந்திக்க விரும்புவதாக வேதநாயகருக்குத் தூது அனுப்புகின்றார்.

“விதியிருந்த பதியெனும் சுப்ரமண்ய தேசிக மெய்ஞ்ஞானக் குன்றே!
துதியிருந்த நிற்புலவன் சொல்வழியே பல்வழியும் தோன்றும்; நீயென்
மதியிருந்தாய்; பிரிந்திடவும் மனம் பொருந்தாய் என இருந்தேன் வான்கோ முத்திப்
பதியிருந்தாய் என வந்த மாபுலவன் பொய்சொலவும் படித்தான் யாதோ?”

மெய்ஞானக் குன்றே! நீ என் அறிவில் வாழ்கின்றாய். என்னைப் பிரிந்திட ஒருநாளும் நீ விரும்பமாட்டாய் என்றிருந்தேன். இந்த மாபுலவனோ நீ திருவாவடுதுறையில் இருப்பதாகப் பொய் சொல்கின்றார் இது என்ன ஞாயம் என்று கேட்பதிலிருந்து சந்திக்காமலேயே ஆதீனத்திடம் இவர் கொண்டிருந்த அன்பை அறியமுடிகின்றது. இருவரும் சந்திக்கும் இடம் மாயூரத்தில் உள்ள சைவ மடாலயம் நேரம் இரவு என்பது

சொல்லி அனுப்பப்பட்டது. அது அமாவாசையோடு கிரகணக் காலமும் ஆகும்.

“குருவும் கிரகணமும் கூடலால் கங்குல்
மிகுமென் றுளமே வெருவல் - நகுதுறைசைச்
செப்பரிய மாசுப்ரமண்ய தேசிகனாம்
அப்பரிதி ஈங்கு உதித்தால்”

வேதநாயகர் தம் மனதிற்குக் கூறுவதுபோல் அமைந்துள்ளது இப்பாடல். அமாவாசையும் கிரகணமும் ஒன்று கூடி வருகிறதே என்று நீ அஞ்சாதே. சுப்ரமணி என்ற ஞான சூரிய ஒளித் தோன்றும் இடத்தில் இருள் இருக்க ஞாயம் இருக்குமோ? என்று தம்மைத் தேற்றுவதுபோல் ஆதீனத்தின் பெருமை கூறுகின்றார். நட்பு வலுவடைந்தது. இருவருமே சந்திப்பிற்காக ஏங்கினர். ஆதீனத்திடமிருந்து அவ்வப்போது அழைப்பு வரும். ஒருநாள் வெகுநேரம் பேசியிருந்து விட்டு வீடு திரும்பிய பின்னும் வேதநாயகர் ஆதீனத்தின் நினைவாகவே இருந்ததால் பாடல் ஒன்றை எழுதி அனுப்புகின்றார்.

“சூர்வந்து வணங்கும் மேன்மைச் சுப்ரமண்ய தேவே!
நேர்வந்து நினைனைக் கண்டு நேற்று ராத்திரியே மீண்டு என்
ஊர்வந்து சேர்ந்தேன் என்றன் உளம் வந்து சேரக் காணேன்
ஆர்வந்து சொலினும் கேளேன் அதனை இங்கு அனுப்புவாயே”

இது ஒருதலையான நட்பு அல்ல. திரிகூட இராசப்பரின் வழித்தோன்றல் அல்லவா மகாசந்திதானமும் பதிலுக்கு பாடல் எழுதி அனுப்புகின்றார்

“இந்து வினை நோக்கும் எழிற் கைரவம்
ஏகதந்து வினை நோக்கும் சமயிமனம் - முந்துலகில்
நன்றமையும் நீதி நல வேதநாயகமால்
உன்றனையே நோக்கும் உளம்”

குமுத மலர் சந்திரனையே நோக்கும், சமய குரவர் மனம் ஞான நூலையே நோக்கும் அதுபோல வேதநாயக தங்களையே பற்றி நிற்கிறது என்மனம் என்ற பொருளில் அமைந்துள்ளது இப்பாடல்.

வேதநாயகர் உலகில் வாழக்கூடியக் கடவுளாக ஆதீனத்தைக் குறித்துப் பாடுவதையும், அவரிடமிருந்து பெற்ற அன்புக்கு பதிலன்பு காட்டுகின்ற விதத்தையும் காண்பது படிப்போரை வியப்பில் ஆழ்த்துகின்றது. ‘அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்கும் தாழ்’ என்ற வள்ளுவரின் பாடல் வரிகளே நம்முன் நிழலாடுகின்றன. இனம், மதம், வகிக்கின்ற பதவி, பொருளாதார நிலை போன்றவைகளைக் கடந்து தமிழும், உயர்நிலை ஆன்மீகமும் இவர்களை அன்பில் இணைத்திருந்தது என்பதுவே நிதர்சனமான உண்மை.

5) வள்ளலார் ஒரு சமுதாய சீர்திருத்தவாதி

ஊரன் அடிகளின் நூலுக்கு சித்தாந்த கலாநிதி திரு ஓளவை துரைசாமிப் பிள்ளையவர்கள் வழங்கிய அணிந்துரையில், “வள்ளலாரைப் பொறுத்தவரை கடவுள் வழிபாடு என்பது உயிர்கள்மேல் இரக்கமுற்று உண்டியும் மருந்தும் அளித்து உதவும் உயிர்வழிபாடே என்ற கொள்கை உடையவராய்த் திகழ்ந்தார்” என்று பதிவு செய்கின்றார். பஞ்ச காலத்தில் மக்கள் வாடியதை வள்ளலார் தம் பாடலில் இவ்வாறு படம் பிடித்துக் காட்டுகின்றார்.

“வாடிய பயிரைக் கண்டபோதெல்லாம் வாடினேன் பசியினால் இளைத்தே
வீடுதோறும் இரந்தும் பசியறாது அயர்ந்த வெற்றரைக் கண்டு உளம் பதைத்தேன்
நீடிய பிணியால் வருந்துகின்றோர் என் நேர்உறக் கண்டு உளம் துடித்தேன்
ஈடல்மானிகளாய் ஏழைகளாய் நெஞ்சிளைத்தவர் தமைக்கண்டே இளைத்தேன்”

இக்காரணம் கருதியே இன்றளவும் அணையாது பலருக்கும் உணவளித்துவரும் ‘சத்திய தருமசாலையை’ நிறுவினார். அவதாரப் புரு-ர், அ-டமா சித்திகள் அறிந்தவர், தீராத நோய்களைத் தீர்த்தவர். இரஸவாதம் தெரிந்தவர் இதன்வழி ஏழைகளுக்கு உதவியுள்ளார். பலியிடுவது பாவம் எனக்கூறி வாயில்லாத உயிர்களிடத்திலும் இரக்கம் காட்டியவர். அதிமதுரத் தமிழில் ஆழமான கருத்துக்களை வழங்கியுள்ள இவரின் பாடல்கள் இவரின் வாழ்க்கை முறைக்கு கட்டியங் கூறுகின்றன.

வேதநாயகரின் சமுதாய அக்கறை

வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளை அவர்கள் அரசாங்க உத்தியோகத்தில் இருந்தார். கைநிறைச் சம்பளம், மொழியறிவு, நீதிபதி என்று மக்கள் கொண்டாடும் அளவுக்கு மக்களை நீதியில் வழிநடத்திய இவரின் வாழ்க்கை சமுதாய அக்கறை கொண்டு மக்கள்மீது இரக்கம் காட்டி வாழ வழிகோலியது.

1. பஞ்ச காலத்தில் கஞ்சித் தொட்டி அமைத்து ஏழை எளிய மக்களின் பசிப்பிணியைப் போக்கப் பாடுபட்டவர்.

1876 ஆண்டு தொடங்கி 3 ஆண்டுகள் பஞ்சம் நாடெங்கும் வறட்சி 8 நாட்கள் 10 நாட்கள் தொடர்ந்து பட்டினி. வடலூரில் வள்ளல் பெருமான் இந்நிலைக் குறித்துப் பாடல் இயற்றித் தம் வேதனையைப் பதிவு செய்தது போலவே பிள்ளையவர்களும் இந்நிலையை இவ்வாறு பதிவு செய்கின்றார்.

“எட்டுநாள் பத்துநாள் பட்டினி யோடே இடையிலே கந்தல் இருகையில் ஓடே

ஓட்டி உலர்ந்த உடல் என்புக் கூடே ஒரு கோடி பேர்கள் வசிப்பது காடே

ஊரும் இல்லாமல் குடிக்கத் தண்ணீரும் இல்லாமல் அன்னமெனும்

பேரும் இல்லாமல் பசிதீர்க்க ஆரும் இல்லாமல் பாரில் அநேகர் பரதேசி ஆனாரே
ஊரில் அநேகர் உயிர் மாண்டு போனாரே”

2. காலரா வந்து மக்கள் அவதியுற்றபோது மாத்திரைகள் தந்து உயிர்களைக் காப்பாற்றினார்

காலரா நோய் தாக்கியதால் மக்கள் கொத்துக் கொத்தாக இறந்து போனார்கள். அரசாங்க அதிகாரியான தாம் உதவி செய்தும் மருந்துகள் வாங்கப் போதுமான

பொருட்செல்வம் கிட்டவில்லை. உடனே மடாதிபதியை அணுகுகின்றார். மனித தெய்வம் அல்லவா? மறுப்பின்றி உதவியதைப் பார்க்கின்றோம். அதற்கான வேதநாயகரின் பாடலை உ.வே.சாமிநாத ஐயர் அவர்கள் என்சரித்திரத்தில் பதிவு செய்கிறார்கள்.

“இலக்கண மெய்க்குஅரை மாத்திரையாம் இவ்வளவுமின்றி
மலக்கண்விளை பிணியாற்பலர் மாய்ந்தனர் அண்டும் இந்நோய்
விலக்க அருள்புரி மும்மல நோய்க்கெட வித்தகனா
நிலக்கண் உரை சுப்ரமணி ஆனந்த நின்மலனே”

இவ்வுலகவரின் மும்மல நோயைப் போக்கத்தெரிந்த வித்தகனே! தமிழிலக்கணத்தில் வரும் மெய்யெழுத்துக்குக் கால அளவு ½ அரை மாத்திரை. அந்த அரை மாத்திரையும் நோயுற்ற இவர்களது மெய்யென்ற உடம்புக்குக் கிடைக்கவில்லை. எனவே இவ்வுலகில் வாழும் மனித தெய்வமாகிய நீயே அருள் புரிய வேண்டும் என்று கேட்பது அவரின் எளிமைக்கும், தமிழ்ப் புலமைக்கும் ஆதீனத் தலைவரிடம் அவர் கொண்டுள்ள நம்பிக்கைக்கும் எடுத்துக்காட்டாக அமைகின்றது.

3. ஆதரவற்றிருந்த கோபால கிரு-:ண பாரதியை இறுதிவரை தமது இல்லத்தில் அடைக்கலம் தந்து பராமரித்தார்.

ஆனைத் தாண்டவபுரம் கோபால கிரு-:ண பாரதி 'திருநீலகண்ட நாயனாரின்' வரலாற்றை காலட்சேபமுறையில் நிகழ்த்தினார். இக்காரணம் கருதி அவரை குலத்தைவிட்டு விலக்கி வைத்தனர். அவரை யாரும் ஆதரிக்காததால் வறுமையில் வாடினார். மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை அவர்கள் கோபாலகிரு-:ண பாரதியை வேத நாயகருக்கு அறிமுகம் செய்து வைக்க வேதநாயகரோ அவரைத் தமது வீட்டிலேயே சிவபதம் அடையும்வரை இருக்கச் செய்து உபசரித்தார். இந்நட்பே வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையின் இசை அறிவை மேம்படுத்திக்கொள்ள உதவியிருக்க வேண்டும். (முத்.வித்தகர் ப.31)

4. மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம்பிள்ளையின் மகனுக்கு உதவியது

மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளையவர்கள் இறந்தபின் அவரது மகன் வறுமையில் வாடுவதைக் கண்டு மனம் பொறாத வேதநாயகம் அதனை ஆதீனத்தின் கவனத்திற்குக் கொண்டு செல்ல எழுதி அனுப்பிய பாடல் வரிகள் இவை.

“பாவிற் பெரியவன் மீனாட்சிசுந்தரப் பாவலனே
தாவிற் பெரியவன் அவன் சேய், நினக்கதைத் தானுரைக்க
நாவிற் பெரியவன் நான்: என் சொற்கேட்டு நலம்புரிவாய்
பூவிற் பெரியவன் நீ சுப்ரமணய புரவலனே!”

அடுக்கிச் சொல்லும் அழகு, எளிமையான மொழி, சைவசமய மடாதிபதிக்கும் இவருக்கும் இடையிலான அன்புரிமை, மதங்களைக் கடந்த மனித மாண்பு இவற்றையெல்லாம் இச்செய்திகளின் வழி அறிய முடிகின்றது.

முடிவுரை:

ஞான மார்க்கத்தின் உயர் நிலையை அடைந்திருந்த வள்ளல் பெருமான் தாம் சோதியுள் கலக்கப்போவதை முன்னரே அறிந்திருந்தார். ஆன்மாவானது (பசு) இறை(பதி)யுடன் இரண்டறக் கலந்த நிலையை அடைந்தவரளால் மட்டுமே தமது இறுதி வேளையைக் கணிக்க இயலும் என்பதற்கு சித்தர்களது வாழ்வில் ஏராளமான சான்றுகள் உண்டு. தாமும் சோதியும் ஒன்று என்பதையும், இம்மையிலும் மறுமையிலும் இவனே அவன் எனப் போற்றுவார்கள் என்பதையும் மிகத் தெளிவாக வள்ளல் பெருமான் பதிவு செய்துள்ளார்.

“தவநேயமும் சுத்தசன்மார்க நேயமும் சத்தியமாம்
சிவநேயமும் தந்தென் உள்ளம் தெளியத் தெளிவித்தனையே
நவநேய மன்றில் அருட்பெருஞ்சோதியை நாடிநின்ற
இவனே அவன் எனக் கொள்வார் உன் அன்பர் இருநிலத்தே”

(பா 1178)

வள்ளல் பெருமானது சன்மார்க்க நெறியானது உலகம் முழுவதிலும் பரவி இயங்கிவருகின்றது. ஜெர்மனி பிரான்சு போன்ற ஐரோப்பிய நாடுகளில் மிக நேர்த்தியாக இக்கொள்கையினைக் கடைப்பிடித்து வருகின்றனர்.

வேதநாயம் பிள்ளை அவர்களும்; தமது இறுதிவேளை நெருங்கி விட்டதை உணர்ந்திருந்ததை இவ்வாறு வெளிப்படுத்துகின்றார். “வேற்றார் பிரயாணம் விரைவில் வைத்திருக்கின்றேன் அதற்கான ஏற்பாடுகள் நடந்து கொண்டு இருக்கின்றது. ஆகவே, நீவீர் வேகமாக வந்து என்னைப் பார்ப்பது நல்லது” என்று ஒரு நகைச்சுவை நனி சொட்ட மடல் வரைந்து அனுப்பினார். வந்த அனைவரிடமும் நல்லுரையாடினர். வேடிக்கைப் பேச்சு, வேதாந்த முழக்கம், அருள் பழுத்த வார்த்தை, அறம் பழுத்த அமுதச் சொன்மழை என அனைவருடன் மூன்று நாட்கள் கடந்துவிட்டன. இரவு 10 மணி குருவை அழைத்துவரக் கேட்டுக் கொண்டார். வந்தவுடன் முறைப்படி பெறவேண்டிய இறுதி நிகழ்வுகளைப் பெற்றார். பின் கண்களை மூடி அமைதியான முறையில் இன்னிசையோடு மென்மையாகப் பாடினார். ‘ஆதியே பரஞ்சோதியே எனை ஆதரித்தாள்வாயே’ என்று த்வஜாவந்தி இராகத்தில் ஆதிதாளத்தில் அமைந்த கீர்த்தனையைப் பாடினார். மரண அவஸ்தை என்ற உயிர்வாதை ஒரு சிறிதும் இல்லை. இன்முகம் பொன்முகமெனப் பொலிவுற ஆருயிர் நீத்தார் என நேரில் கண்ட நம்பிக்கை அம்மாளின் அமுதவாக்கைப் பதிவு செய்கின்றார் திரு சரவணபவானந்தர் 1970இல் வெளியிட்ட முத்தமிழ் வித்தகர் வேதநாயகம் பிள்ளையின் வாழ்க்கை விளக்கத்துள். (பக்107,8)

“வையத்துள் வாழ்வாங்கு வாழ்பவன் வான்உறையும்
தெய்வத்துள் வைக்கப் படும்”

என்ற வள்ளுவரின் வாக்கிற்கிணங்க வாழ்ந்து மறைந்துள்ள இவர்களிருவரும் இருவேறு அறங்களை முறையாக வாழ்ந்து, சக உயிர்களிடத்து அன்புப் பாராட்டி, சமூக அக்கறைக் கொண்டு வாழ்ந்ததால் தெய்வத்துள் வைத்துப் போற்றப் படுகின்றனர்.

இருவேறு சமயத்தைச் சேர்ந்த இருவரும் ஞானம் கைவரப்பெற்றதால் தமது பிறவியின்

பொருளை உணர்ந்து, அவரவர்தம் அறத்தை நிறைவாக வாழ்ந்து, அருளை சமுதாயத்திற்கு வழங்கி உலகம் உய்வடைய வேண்டும் என்று விரும்பி சன்மார்க்கத்தை வாழ்வாக்கியுள்ளனர். இயற்கை அவர்களது பாடல்களை நூற்றாண்டுகள் கடந்தும் காத்து நமது கையில் அளித்துள்ளதால் அவை இன்றளவும் போற்றப்படுகின்றன.

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The Physics and Metaphysics of Nataraja:

A Dance of Cosmic Proportions

By Dr. Sudha Seshayyan

The iconic image of Nataraja — the dancing form of Lord Siva — is not only a profound symbol in Hinduism but also a fascinating representation of cosmic principles that resonate deeply with the laws of physics. Let us delve into the intricate connections between the dance of Nataraja and the fundamental concepts of physics, offering an inspirational and informative exploration of this timeless symbol.

1. The Cosmic Dance

Nataraja's dance, known as the *tāṇḍava*, symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction. This cyclical nature mirrors the principles of thermodynamics, particularly the second law, which states that systems evolve towards a state of entropy or disorder. The dance of Nataraja represents the dynamic equilibrium of the universe, constantly moving between order and chaos. This dance is not just a mere representation but a profound reminder of the perpetual motion and transformation that governs all existence. It inspires us to recognize the beauty in change and the inevitability of transformation, urging us to embrace the flow of life with grace and understanding.

2. The Circle of Fire

Nataraja is often depicted within a circle of fire, which represents the continuous cycle of time. In physics, this can be related to the concept of spacetime in Einstein's theory of General Relativity. The circle signifies the curvature of spacetime around massive objects, illustrating how time and space are intertwined in the fabric of the universe. This fiery circle is a powerful symbol of the eternal and unending nature of the cosmos, inspiring us to see beyond the immediate and comprehend the vast, interconnected web of existence. It encourages us to appreciate the infinite possibilities that lie within the bounds of time and space.

3. The Drum of Creation

In one of his right hands, Nataraja holds a drum (damaru), symbolizing the sound of creation. This can be likened to the Big Bang theory, where the universe began from a singularity and expanded. The rhythmic beats of the drum can be seen as the oscillations of quantum fields that give rise to particles and, consequently, matter. The drum's sound is a call to the creative forces within us, urging us to tap into our potential and contribute to the ongoing creation of the universe. It reminds us that every beat, every action, and every thought has the power to shape reality, inspiring us to create with intention and purpose.

4. The Flame of Destruction

In another hand, Nataraja holds a flame, representing destruction. This aligns with the concept of entropy and the eventual heat death of the universe, where all energy is uniformly distributed, and no work can be performed. The flame also signifies the transformative power of energy, as described by the first law of thermodynamics, which states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed. This flame is a beacon of transformation, reminding us that destruction is not an end but a necessary phase in the cycle of renewal. It inspires us to let go of the old and embrace the new, understanding that through destruction, we pave the way for new beginnings and growth.

5. The Abhaya Mudra

Nataraja's raised hand, showing the abhaya mudra (gesture of fearlessness), signifies protection and the dispelling of fear. This can be interpreted through the lens of quantum mechanics, where particles exhibit wave-particle duality and uncertainty. Despite the inherent uncertainties, the universe maintains a balance, providing a sense of stability and order. This gesture is a powerful reminder of the strength and courage within us, inspiring us to face the uncertainties of life with confidence and resilience. It encourages us to trust in the inherent balance of the universe and to move forward fearlessly, knowing that we are protected and supported.

6. The Dwarf of Ignorance

Under Nataraja's feet lies the dwarf Apasmara, symbolizing ignorance. This represents the suppression of ignorance through knowledge. In physics, this can be seen as the pursuit of understanding the fundamental laws of nature, overcoming the ignorance of the unknown through scientific inquiry and discovery. This act of subduing ignorance is a call to enlightenment, inspiring us to seek knowledge and wisdom. It reminds us that through learning and understanding, we can overcome the darkness of ignorance and illuminate our path with the light of truth.

7. The Dynamic Equilibrium

Nataraja's dance is a perfect example of dynamic equilibrium, where opposing forces are balanced. This concept is prevalent in various physical systems, from the equilibrium of forces in classical mechanics to the balance of matter and antimatter in particle physics. The dance of Nataraja embodies the harmony of these forces, maintaining the stability of the cosmos. This balance is a testament to the intricate and delicate nature of existence, inspiring us to find harmony within ourselves and our surroundings.

The Dance of Nataraja has kindled several thoughts in several minds.

Ananda Coomaraswamy observed: The essential significance of Siva's dance is threefold: First, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos, which is represented by the arch. Secondly, the purpose of his dance is to release the countless souls of men from the snare of Illusion. Thirdly, the place of the dance, Chidambaram, the centre of the universe, is within the heart. According to this great scholar, the image, apart from being a representation of energy, also symbolises alternation of phase over vast regions of space and great tracts of time. The damaru and fire are visual symbols of day and night.

Fritjof Capra drew a comparison: "Hundreds of years ago, Indian artists created visual images of dancing Siva in a beautiful series of bronzes. In our time, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the patterns of the cosmic dance. The metaphor of the cosmic dance thus unifies ancient mythology, religious art and modern physics." This quote is in the plaque next to the statue of Nataraja in the front lawn in CERN, the European Council for Nuclear Research, in Geneva in Switzerland – it is the European Laboratory for Particle Physics.

Leaving the dance and the dancer aside, let us try to focus on the activities (!) of the universe. Let us imagine an individual sitting at the centre of a vacant area. He is still; no movement of hands, feet, fingers, toes or eyelids. Absolutely still. The cells, the intercellular substance, the blood, the blood cells and components are all, nevertheless, in small and large movements inside his body. The heart is beating; the brain, the kidneys, the liver, the pancreas and all others are in work and activity. The lungs are pulling in and pushing out with bluntly clear movements. The air, the space, the mud and all elements around him are also in activity and motion. Take for example, the air around him. The atoms and molecules of its components are obviously moving and moving; moving and mixing in various permutations to recreate a different set of atoms and molecules. They join and re-join; fall apart and merge; mix and match; move and move. The earth on which the individual sits, is moving; it revolves; the atmosphere around also rotates. High energy particles move

in the cosmic rays that reach the atmosphere. These particles mix and match with the air molecules of the atmosphere. It is a long play of hit, run, clash, collision, breaking and reforming. It is a perennial story of conjoining and disjoining. It is a permanent play of new appearances amidst old disappearances. It is the style of movement – movement, movement and movement.

It is easy to understand that the entire cosmos is replete with intricate movements that are not explicitly revealed or perceived. In other words, ‘movements’ appear to be in some kind of ‘meditation’. Meditation can focus on movements and be done while in motion. Siva, as Nataraja, is all of these and more. As He meditates while dancing, He, no doubt, is the personification of ‘movement in meditation’.

The colossus in physics, Robert Oppenheimer, while studying collisions between electrons and atoms, pointed out that the incident electron can exchange with the atomic electron. This concept changed the way physicists looked at things. Oppenheimer’s statement on the electrons is apt to be quoted here: “If we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether the electron’s position changes with time, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say ‘no’.” It would not be inappropriate to compare Oppenheimer with the Isa Upanishad in this statement.

Tadejati tannaijati tad dūre tadvantike

Tadantarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyāsya bāhyataha (IsA – 5)

The meaning of the sloka is as follows: That moves, that does not move; that is far off, that is very near; that is inside all this, that is also outside all of this. In his exposition, Adi Sankara explains the ‘ejati-naejati’ phenomenon — in Itself It is motionless, but It seems to move; It is motionless because It is all pervasive and It moves because It is inside everything; It is continuous and without interstices.

As much as the small Isa Upanishad of a mere eighteen verses proclaims the divinity of man and nature and the spiritual oneness of all existence, the intellectual, scientific and spiritual and philosophical oneness of Oppenheimer’s observation, Capra’s inference and Nataraja’s Dance cannot be disputed.

Matter and Force are the two sides of the same coin. Matter is explicit sometimes; and force at others. If motionless Siva is the material, the ever-moving Sakti is the force.

Matter sometimes is particulate; and wave-like at others. If the stances of dance can be defined as ‘particulate’ positions, movements of dance are the ‘waves’.

And Nataraja makes Oppenheimer's observation true and true and truer than ever. If we ask, for instance, whether the position of Nataraja remains the same, we must say 'no' (and 'yes'); if we ask whether Nataraja's position changes with time, we must say 'no' (and 'yes'); if we ask whether Nataraja is at rest, we must say 'no' (and 'yes'); if we ask whether Nataraja is in motion, we must say 'no' (and 'yes').

Sub-atomic particles have been studied in recent and modern times. The more they have been researched upon, the more revealing they have been. And the more difficult to define too. When subatomic particles are made to collide with each other, they exchange (Remember, Oppenheimer said this!). They exchange energy, exchange form; though what emerges (appears outside) may be something different (in form, shape, and appearance), what has gone inside is the same. The essence, nevertheless, is that 'Nothing is new' and 'Nothing is lost'. In other words, the same is manifested and the same is drawn in; the same is seen in one form and the same is seen in another form; the same is moving and the same is unmoving; the same is merging and the same is re-emerging.

The Dance of Nataraja is of course, all the same, the very same of sub-atomic physics. Fritjof Capra summarized the same: According to quantum field theory, the dance of creation and destruction is the basis of very existence of matter.Modern Physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but is also the very essence of inorganic matter.Modern Physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also is an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction. For the modern physicists then, Siva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter, the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena.

And so, Siva dances at Geneva, in the European Centre for Research in Particle Physics and Siva dances at Chidambaram. Siva dances in the nano-cosm, in the micro-cosm and in the macro-cosm.





BOOK REVIEW

Song of the Clay Pot – My Journey with the Ghatam by Sumana Chandrashekar

-Review by Priyanka Soman

Who, I often wonder, was the first ghatam player in the universe? Was it Lord Ganesh, happily drumming away on his own potbelly—quite literally keeping perfect tāla on himself? Or Shiva, who loved the clay pot so much that he decided to become one—Kumbheswara, still worshipped in Tamil Nadu for his... well, earthen form? Or maybe it was Gundayya, the legendary potter who couldn't resist testing the musical quality of his wares, tapping and thumping until, as the story goes, “the whole world danced to the sound of the pot.”

Then again, perhaps it all began with the village women who, after a long day, balanced their pots on their heads and absent-mindedly drummed on them with their banded hands—our earliest percussionists, making music while walking home. Who's to say the first concert wasn't actually at a village well, attended by cows, crows and the occasional curious goat?

Whatever the origin, one thing is clear: the ghatam has been making the world dance, hum, and wonder for centuries. And in *Song of the Clay Pot*, Sumana Chandrashekar follows that rhythm back to its source—with curiosity, reverence, and a sparkle of earthy humour that makes this story sing.

This playful opening question sets the tone for Sumana Chandrashekar's *Song of the Clay Pot – My Journey with the Ghatam*, a book that is equal parts memoir, travelogue, and philosophical reflection. It's as earthy, lyrical, and resonant as the instrument it celebrates.

Sumana takes us on a journey that begins not on stage, but in a dream—when the ghatam first calls to her. That “pukaar”, as she beautifully puts it, is not a polite invitation. It’s a tidal wave that sweeps through her being, leaving her no choice but to surrender. It’s this surrender that leads her to Sukanya Ramgopal, India’s first woman ghatam player, and to Sukanya’s guru, the legendary Vikku Vinayakram—whose 1966 performance in New York with M.S. Subbulakshmi placed the ghatam firmly on the global map.

From there, *Song of the Clay Pot* flows effortlessly between myth and history, personal reflection and social commentary. We follow Sumana to Manamadurai, the sacred home of ghatam-makers, where clay from lake beds is transformed into music. “The forest had prepared the clay—my senses; Amma and Appa, like two diligent potters, carefully turned this clay on the wheel,” she writes, crafting one of the most tender metaphors for parenthood and artistic birth I’ve read in recent times.

The book doesn’t shy away from difficult truths either. Chandrashekar examines the *hierarchies* of Carnatic music, where the ghatam stands fifth in line—after the main artist, violin, mridangam, and khanjira—and questions what this means for recognition and respect. She also confronts gender biases with both courage and humour. Her decision to perform in kurta-pyjama and a turban, instead of the expected Kanjeevaram sari and neatly coiled hair, ruffled more than a few traditional feathers. One television channel, she recounts with gentle irony, refused to air her performance because it appeared “odd and un-Carnatic”—a phrase that perfectly sums up how we sometimes confuse conformity with culture.

There are moments in the book that are delightfully introspective. Over a morning cup of coffee, she wonders not where her coffee came from, but *where her ghatam came from*. This small, domestic moment turns into a profound inquiry into identity, belonging, and creation itself. Her curiosity takes her deep into the making of the instrument—the gathering of clay, the shaping, the firing, the waiting. By the time she names her ghatams *Kabir*, *Maitreya*, *Baba Farid*, *Sundareshwara*, and *Meenakshi*, they feel less like instruments and more like family members, each carrying a story and a sound of its own.

But beyond all this, what makes the book shine is Sumana’s ability to weave the cosmic and the commonplace with the ease of a master storyteller. She writes, quoting Milan Kundera, that “the struggle of memory against forgetting” defines much of her journey. She reminds us that remembering isn’t merely nostalgia—it’s resistance. “Why do we remember what we remember? What do we choose to forget?” she asks, gently turning the reader’s attention inward, much like the ghatam itself—hollow, yet filled with sound.

Her exploration of the pot as a symbol—spiritual, artistic, and feminine—is deeply moving.

She challenges the reader to rethink ideas of form and formlessness, being and unbeing. And just when you think the mood is too heavy, she lightens it with a line so wry that it could only have been written by someone with both a researcher's mind and a Chennai sense of humour: "My cap always gives people the impression that I am a foreigner. Some have even asked for my passport; my Aadhaar card only seems to confuse them further!"

In *Song of the Clay Pot*, the ghatam is more than a percussion instrument—it becomes a metaphor for wholeness, a container of stories, silences, and centuries. This is not just a musician's memoir; it is a meditation on art, identity, and the politics of belonging.

So, if you've ever tapped your kitchen vessel and thought, "*Hey, that sounds nice,*" this book is for you. You might not become the next VikkuVinayakram—but you'll never look at a clay pot the same way again.

A must-read for lovers of music, memory, and the magical murmur of everyday life.





BOOK REVIEW

by Dr Pushpa Lakshman

“A life in three octaves – The musical journey of Gangubai Hangal”

by Deepa Ganesh

Deepa Ganesh in writing her book ‘A Life In Three Octaves’ The musical journey of Gangubai Hangal, has woven a rich tapestry of events of that era!

Gangubai (1913—2009) lived a little short of a century, at a time when India went through enormous changes politically, socio-economically and culturally. The book narrates this in a very interesting manner! Keeping Gangubai’s life as the main chord, the other story lines like the evolution of music, the beginnings of gharanas, the life styles in guru sishya parampara, the political changes during Indian independence movement, social changes like the abolition of devadasi system (Gangubai was born in such a community), the recognition and improvement of women’s status in society, technological developments like gramophone, radio, recordings, beginnings of television, the complimentary nature of music and literature, music expounding beyond religion, India’s development post-independence, are interwoven beautifully to give a wholistic picture.

Gangubai was born in Dharwad (Karnataka), into a family with a rich musical tradition. Even though her mother was an expert singer in Carnatic system of music, young Gangu, listening to the magical new technology, that was the gramophone, became interested in Hindustani system of music. She was able to reproduce whatever she heard effortlessly. Her mother, a very forward thinking person, got her to learn Hindustani classical music. Eventually Gangubai became the student of Sawai Gandharva and continued to be his student until his death. Her unswerving devotion to her mother and Guru is there to see throughout the book.

In the beginning of the narration the author subtly brings in the history and evolution of music. To quote her “There can be many histories of music, each with its own perspective. While some interpret the history of 20th century Indian music as a movement from conservative tradition to liberal modernity, others see it as a shift from intellectual and classical modes to popular style. In any given period, however, music could only be understood as a cumulative effect, as the sum total of ongoing changes in the fabric of social, political and cultural life”.

Gangubai belonged to Kirana Gharana and until her last days, she didn't deviate from its original classicism. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was her Gurubandhu and Mallikarjuna Mansur, a dear friend. Several anecdotes about musicians of that period are cited which gives a personal touch to the story. The evolution of music stage, from royal patronage to theatres to Natak Mandalis was an interesting transition. As the music of the nation moved out of the patron's threshold, Gangubai also changed things for the devadasis. Resolutely and quietly, she was leaving behind an unpleasant social past. Her spirit was shaped by the exemplary women of her times. The advent of gramophone, followed by the birth of All India Radio brought together the culture and heritage of the country. It unified the people of the country as no other medium could. “Music has only history, and no geography”, Gangubai often said. As one reads about the extent of hard work, dedication, endless hours of practice, the total immersion into music — it is breathtaking. Gangubai heightened spiritual experience through sur sadhana, she would say, with no superior air of a sadhaka, but in total perplexity before the mystery of music.

The harmonious nature of Music and Literature, is brought about beautifully. The influence of the great mystic poet of Kannada D.R. Bendre on Gangubai and her contemporaries like Bhimsen Joshi, and the related stories are interesting. The symbiotic nature of music and literature comes forth.

The friendly nature of Gangubai, her warmth and affection for people is evident from her relationship within the family, extended family (they always lived in joint families with 20 or more members living together), friends, neighbours, and any musician travelling through, the stories are indeed amazing. How she found the time and ability to bring both, her family life and her music, into her fold, is something to wonder about. While talking about her family life, it is heart-wrenching to read about the abuses she experienced because of caste, poverty in the initial stages of her life, the inequality on the basis of caste, gender, status etc. Despite this, how Gangubai earned her self-esteem, made a life for herself and her family, the name and fame she achieved, are great lessons for all. Gangubai was devoted to her family and she took good care of them. Her children, grandchildren, extended family of uncles and aunts were looked after by her with equal affection. When

her Guru was unwell, she brought in his family as well to live with her and served him until he recovered. Her simple living, simple habits, cheerful disposition, love for life, enthusiasm to celebrate all the festivals and more than anything, her devotion to her lord Mylaralinga stood by her. The doors of Gangubai's house were never shut, literally and metaphorically.

The several awards she won, including Padma Vibhushan, doctorate degrees from various universities, concerts all over India and abroad, did not deter her simplicity. She gained more popularity, and was becoming a public figure. She was elected a member of the legislative council in 1993/94 at the age of 80 and a Rajya Sabha member. She continued to lead a simple life, yet was quite vocal about her thoughts, beliefs, values and traditions!

Her personality as a very intelligent and strong woman expresses the stories of women of outstanding courage and conviction, the stories of an era that upheld values of a tradition over the individual self. Her music was pure and unadulterated. She sang only pure classical music, not even devotional songs. Especially after she lost her soft voice after her tonsillitis surgery in her thirties, she modulated her voice in such a way that she dazzled her audience with her aesthetic brilliance, with a rhetoric that was deeply emotional. Gangubai had guarded her creative space with exacting austerity.

In turn her family stood by her at all times, high and low. Her son became her secretary cum manager and looked after all affairs, and her daughter was her companion in music (gave vocal support) and in her personal life as well. Typical of devadasi tradition, Gangubai had neither the support of her father nor her husband, which she took in her stride. She had only complimentary words for them. She suffered great losses throughout her life, her near and dear, and in her final years, the loss of her daughter and her illness took its toll. She stood strong and faced the illness bravely. Her grandson, even brought out a booklet – “Cancer ? Do not Fear”, based on her medical experiences at various stages of her treatment, and this booklet, along with a red rose was gifted to all patients in the cancer hospital. She lived a meaningful life for 96 years. Till the end, Gangubai stuck on to her past. Like Gandhiji, who had a great influence on her, she did everything - washing, cleaning, shopping, and carrying firewood - right till the end. Gangubai died on July 21 in 2009. The Karnataka state government announced a state funeral.

This book is a must read for the fans of Hindustani music, for a better understanding of the ethos of her music, the inimitable Gangubai Hangal.



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