



Melodic forms in Sangita Ratnakara

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Abstract

We get information about the origin and evolution of music in the ancient period from Lakshana texts. Sangita Ratnakara is a treatise on Sangita ascribed to 13th century. It is a reliable reference work on ancient music traditions and the author, Sarangadeva, gives an elaborate resume of the overall system of Indian music within theory and practice. It is one of the comprehensive and longest Sanskrit works on music. Sarangadeva has defined the term Sangita as the combination of Gita, Vadya and Nritha. The term Gita occurs first time in Sangita Ratnakara. Gita is regarded as the pre-eminent limb of Sangita and is given an extensive treatment. Sangita appears have to been a performance dominated by Gita. According to Sarangadeva, Vadya and Nritha are the elements of Gita. Sarangadeva deals with many forms associated with Gita. A brief journey through the melodic forms mentioned by Sarangadeva can be viewed in this article.

Key Words: Alapti, Akshiptika, Desi, Gandharva, Gita, Jati, Marga, Nirgita, Nritha, Pada, Prabandha, Sangita, Svara, Tala, Vadya

Research Paper

Introduction

Since ancient times, music has been called Marga music. Later, each place developed its own unique and distinctive music. These came to be known as Desi music. Sangita was also divided into Marga and Desi by Sarangadeva. His interest is especially within the Desi Sangita and its constituents. Consistent with him, Gita comes under Desi Sangita. Gita is additionally classified into Gandharva and Gana by him. Gandharva is that the entire body of music that was performed for pleasing the Gods. Jati Gita, Nirgita, Gitika etc are a number of the Gandharva forms mentioned by Sarangadeva. Gandharva is well regulated and is a way to the highest good. Gana is supposed for the entertainment of individuals.

In the performance of Sangita, Gita represents the tonal or melodic aspect as did Gana within the Natya Sastra of Bharata. According to Sarangadeva, Gita refers to melodic structure regardless of its source of production. In the sense of a melodic form, Gita seems to refer primarily to a musical form which has a meaningful pada or text. The Jati-Gitas, Gitakas, Prabandhas, all have meaningful texts.

The text of Sangita Ratnakara has 1678 verses contact seven chapters. So Sangita Ratnakara is understood

as Saptadhyayi covering the aspects Gita, Vadya and Nritha; Svaragat-adhyaya; Ragavivek-adhyaya; Prakirnaka-adhyaya; Prabandh-adhyaya, Tala-adhyaya; Vadya-adhyaya and Nartana-adhyaya. The primary six chapters accommodate various facets of music and music-instruments; and so the last chapter deals with Dance.^[1]

Melodic forms

The last Prakaraṇa of Sangita Ratnakara is called the Giti prakaraṇa. Although it is termed, thus it takes up the treatment of certain musical forms called Kapala and Kambala first, then goes on to Gitis. Sarangadeva describes many melodic types of Gitis like Prakarana Gitas, Nirgitas, Jati Gitas, Kapala Ganas, Kambala Ganas, Akshiptikas, Alapti and Prabandhas. These are supported some derivatives of Jatis also.

Prakarana Gitas

In the Tala chapter, Sarangadeva deals with the Prakarana Gitas. Prakarana Gitas or Gitakas are popularly known as Gandharva Gita in which laya aspect has a prominent role. In Dattilam, a treatise written by Dattila Muni, Madraka and Gitakas are termed Prakarana. "atha prakaranam nama madrakadyabhidhiyate."^[2]

Prakarana Gitas admit of fourteen different melodic forms which are bifurcated into 2 groups of seven each. These forms are popularly called Gitakas. The first group includes the forms like Mardaka, Aparantaka, Ullopyaka, Prakari, Oventaka, Rovindaka and Uttara. The description of each of the seven Gitakas is so detailed and comprehensive that on the basis of the instructions regarding, Tala, svara and pada. The structure of the Gitakas is primarily determined by Tala. In the Nartanadhyaya, he mentions dance accompanying the Gitakas. The whole span of a Gitaka is split into sections defined by specific Tala structures.^[3]

The term Prakarana which may be a synonymous with Saptarūpa is extended by Sarangadeva to cover all the 14 songs dealt within the Gitaka section. The term Sapta Gitaka referring mainly to the seven Gitakas has been used to denote the Gitakas in general. Thus the term Prakarana seems to use to all the 14 songs.

The Gitaka is constituted by 3 elements of Gandharva-Svara, Tala and Pada. These sections are referred to as Vastu and Anga. Only 3 Gitakas are Vastu based—Mardaka, Aparantaka and Prakari. The Mardaka Gitaka has 3 states- Ekakala, Dvikala and Chatushkala. Ullopyaka, Rovindaka, Ovenaka and Uttara have only Angas and no Vastus. But Gitakas which are Vastu based have also Angas.

Nirgitas

Nirgitas are melodic forms and these include both instrumental and vocal parts. These compositions are among the things which are to be performed behind the curtain in the purvaranga. The instrumental part predominates over the vocal part in the Nirgitas. Known as Vadya, this part is rendered mainly on the Vinas. Instrumental compositions are of two kinds, melodic and non-melodic. Nirgitas come under the melodic type and are meant for the Vinas, Nakula etc. Nirgita even have vocal part, but this part is so designed on reinforce the instrumental character of those compositions.^[4]

The description on the Nirgitas comes under the treatment of Tata Vadyas or stringed instruments. This is often particularly of 5 Vinas, Nakula, Tritantri, Chitra, Vipanchi and Mattakokila. In reference to the Nirgitas another aspect of playing on instruments remarked by Sarangadeva is Vritti. Vritti denotes the styles in performance during this context. In Chitra Vritti, it is the instrument which dominates and in Dakshina Vritti, singing is primary.

Jati Gita

Jati Gitas are the songs presented at concluding a part of the outline of the assorted Jatis. Sarangadeva does not speak of Jati gitas but refers to them as Jatis. We see Jatis in Brihaddesi of Matanga for the first time. Abhinavabharati, the commentator of Natya Sastra has differentiated Jatis and Jati Gitas. While the previous includes a svara form and also the latter have a Gandharva form. Jati gitas seems to be fairly simple forms as far as Tala structure is concerned. References of Jati Gitas are seen in the Brihaddesi of Matanga.^[5]

In comparison with Gitakas and Nirgitas which are complex, Jati gitas are simple songs. The entire song is repeated only when it is to be sung in a different Marga.

The description preceding each Jati Gita is of two parts. The primary part in verse may be a general description of the Jati. This is often followed by the prescription of a selected Murchana. In the second part in prose passage, the Nyasa and Apanyasa svaras are described. Shades of certain Ragas will be seen within the particular melody of Jati gita are enumerated in the prose passage.

Kapala Gana

Just as Jati gitas are songs based on Jatis, Kapala Ganas are the songs based on Kapalas. Kapala Ganas are also sometimes referred as Kapalas. “The ragas of the parent Jatis bear a resemblance to their respective Kapalas”. Kapalas are structures derived from the Suddha Jatis. 7 Kapalas are derived from the Suddha forms of the 7 Svra Jatis. Since certain ragas also are derived from the Suddha Jatis, they resemble the Kapalas.^[6]

Kapala literally means the skull; especially the highest a part of it shaped sort of a bowl. Even as the form of the entire pot is visualised from a component of it, the shape of the raga is visualised from the Kapalas.

Like the Jati Gitas, Kapala Ganas are described as structures of such a large amount of Kalas. The text of Kapala Ganas is only in praise of Siva. Kapala hastam and Kapalamanditamukutam are a number of the epithets of Siva found in these songs. In a number of the songs, the Stuti padas are interspersed with meaningless syllables like the Stobhaksharas seen in Rig Veda.

Kambala Gana

Kambala Ganas are Jati derivatives and therefore the songs based on them are Kambala Ganas. “Where the initial note, the fundamental note and the semi-final note is Panchama, Rishabha is profuse, Shadja is the final note

and Madhyama, Dhaivata and Gandhara are rare, that is accepted to Kambala". Sarangadeva mentions only one Kambala which could be a type of the Jati derivatives. Kambalas are the derivatives of Panchama Jati. The Kambala described by Sarangadeva has Panchama as Amsa, Graha and Apanyasa. Other Kambalas are said to be formed by rendering different Svaras, Alpa and Bahula.^[7]

Akshiptika

These are songs presented at the end of the description of each Grama raga in the Raga Vivekadhya of Sangita Ratnakara. It is during this work that we come across Akshiptikas presented with their Svvara, Tala and Pada. Although there is evidence to point out that these songs existed in earlier times, no text prior the Sangita Ratnakara describes them. Like the Jati Gitas and Kapala Ganas, Akshiptikas are simple songs with no complexity. It is composed of Svvara and Pada set to Tala. The Svvara aspect of Akshiptika is based on Grama ragas. In the Prastaras of Akshiptikas, one can generally identify the Amsa, Graha and Nyasa of the Grama raga. However, in some cases, this is often unfeasible. Sarangadeva says.

**“Chachatputadi talena margatraya vibhushita
akshiptika svarapadagrathita kathita budhaiah”**

All the Akshiptikas except 2 are in Chachatputa Tala and have 8 Kala structures. The song text is divided into 2 groups on the premise of the language during which they need been composed. Akshiptikas are in Prakrit while the others are in Sanskrit. Some are of a devotional nature and a few are descriptive in nature. The Prastara of Akshiptikas is presented with the identical manner because the Prastara of Jati Gitas. The Svvara line consists mostly of Dirgha svvara syllables, and very few Hrasva svvara syllables.^[8]

Alapti

“aalaptibandhahinatvadanibaddhamiyirita”

Alapti is that the term that denotes a kind of Gaan. Alapti and Prabandha are categorised under Gana inside the Gandharva Gana definition by Sarangadeva. Gana (fourth canto of Sangita Ratnakara) is of 2 types, Nibaddha and Anibaddha. The terms Anibaddha and Nibaddha might roughly be translated as un-structured (un-bound) and structured (bound). That which isn't tied within the rhythm, is just vocal, it's called Anibaddha Gaan, like alaap. Chiefly alaap is employed before the song. Natya Sastra explains that one that is ruled by

Chhandas and Tala signifies Nibaddha. It also features a precise beginning and an end. And similarly, the absence of these is Anibaddha. The music which is rhythmic is called Nibaddha Gaan.^[9] Popular Hindustani musical forms like Dhrupad, Dhamar, Tappa, Khayal, Thumri, Tarana etc. and Carnatic musical forms like Kriti, Varna, Kirtana, Pada, Javali, Tillana etc. belong to this category. Alapti was declared to be the Anibaddha type of Gana within the Anibaddha type of Gita, the Svvara, Tala and Pada structure is pre-composed. The structure is defined in terms of the division into sections and thus the varied components or Angas.

Alapti is an elaboration of the tune of the Prabandha then it are often rendered independently likewise as within the song. The Alapti are often the prelude to the song. In ancient days, musicologists had categorised four varieties of Alapti; Raga alapti, Rupaka alapti, Alapti gaan and Svasthan. The raga image is established during a prelude to the Prabandha is Raga Alapti. The song itself or a component of it's rendered as an Alapti is named Rūpaka Alapti. Raga Alapti is independent and Rupaka Alapti is bound by the raga and Tala of the Rūpaka. Pallavi singing, a musical form utilized in Carnatic music, has been hinted at and vaguely described within the words Rupaka Alapti within the Sangita Ratnakara.^[10]

Prabandha

Prabandhas come under the Nibaddha form of Gana. Sarangadeva defines Prabandha as one of the three technical forms for the structured form of music. Literally Prabandha is a musical composition set to raga and Tala. They are also observed as Vastus or Rūpakas. Rupaka refers to a situation of a drama or a condition and Vastu is defined as the sections and integral parts of Prabandha. The outline of Prabandhas is centred on two aspects, Dhatu (section) and Anga (parts).^[11] Matanga mentions 49 Desi prabandhas and Sarangadeva speaks of 75 different Prabandhas. Prabandhas described in Sangita Ratnakara had 6 Angas and 4 Dhatus.^[12-13]

Angas

1. Svvara or the solfa passage
2. Biruda exclamation or words of praise addressed to the Prabandha nayaka expatiating his valour, skill and courage etc.
3. Pada or words
4. Tenaka or auspicious phrases like 'Tena tena' of the Bhandira bhasha

5. Patam, the rhythmical sounds related to the Rudra Vina, the conch and certain drums.
6. Tala

According to the quantity of Angas present, Prabandhas were classified into:

1. Medini Jati prabandha which had all the six angas
2. Anandini Jati prabandha which had five of the above angas.
3. Dipini Jati prabandha which had the four of the above angas
4. Bhavini Jati prabandha which had three of the above angas
5. Taravali Jati prabandha which had two of the above angas
6. Tala was a relentless anga for all the prabandhas^[14]

Dhatus

- (a) Udgraha, the introductory section which corresponds to the pallavi of a kriti.
- (b) Dhruva, the essential or the constant section which corresponds to the Charana of a kriti.
- (c) Melapaka section that links up or unites the above two which corresponds to the Anupallavi of a Kriti.
- (d) Abhoga, the concluding section which corresponds to the madhyamakala sahitya or the Chittasvara of a Kriti.^[15-16]

Of these four sections, the Melapaka and Abhoga were dispensable Angas. The Udgraha and Dhruva were indispensable angas.

Prabandhas were classified into:

1. Niriyukta prabandhas i.e., those which conformed to the rules
2. Aniryukta prabandhas i.e., which do not conformed to the rules.^[17]

Conclusion

The elements or features of a number of the melodic forms mentioned by Sarangadeva in his Sangita Ratnakara can be traced in other treatises just like the Naradiya Siksha, Natya Sastra of Bharata, Dattilam of Dattila Muni, Sangita Darpana of Chatura Damodara Pandit, Sangita Damodara of Pandit Damodara Mishra, Sangita Parijata of Ahobala, Sangita Sudhakara of

Simhabhūpala, Sangita Rajam of Maharana Kumbha and Sangita Saramrita of King Tulaja. Sarangadeva is entirely guided by earlier works in music.

After a detailed study, we can conclude that the melodic forms propounded by Sarangadeva and other musicologists of the ancient period paved the way for the musical forms of the later times. It stands as a bridge between ancient treatises like Natya Sastra of Bharata and Brihaddesi of Matanga and later works like the Ragavibodha of Somanatha, Sangita Samayasara of Parsvadeva and Sangita Saramrutam of Tulaja. The study of those melodic or musical forms shows that Sangita Ratnakara is one in every of the works which illuminates the ancient and medieval traditions. Thus, Sarangadeva's treatment of melodic forms consolidates all the data provided in ancient texts on these forms.

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