

Terminology used:

Raaga, the unique feature of Indian music and its appeal to emotion has captured the minds and hearts of one and all who have been exposed to the Hindustani Music. When one thinks of unfolding the secrets, endless variety, subtlety as well as the clearest emotional appeal of Indian music, the very thought of it leads him to a world of research. The principles of Indian music will then be found to be the principles of every other systems of music. **It is the grammar of music in general that is found in greater clearness in Indian music.** The rules of this divine art contained in our texts are of universal application to all systems of the world.

In these texts, a note is said to be composed of more pitches than one although each note has a main pitch where it stays for longest period. The simple pitch has a different name from a note. **A pitch is called a Shruti and a note is called a Swara. There are Swaras of 2 shrutis, swaras of 3 shrutis and swaras of 4 shrutis also though all of them may have same main shruti where they stay longest.** This can be explained with the help of flute. When the full hole is left open we get a swara of 4 shrutis, when the hole is half closed we get swara of 2 shrutis though the main shruti of both may be same.

In the same way swaras of three shrutis are produced by alternatively opening and closing the hole. The composition of notes is thus more complex than it is imagined and their pronunciation is capable of variety giving rise to several systems of music in the world.

Few of the terms, which are used very often in Indian music, and which have different interpretations in different references, have been discussed below in the reference in which they have been used in the present work to elaborate their meanings.

Swara (Note), Shruti, Saptak, Aroha & Avroha: A resonating sound that is formed of ‘Shrutis’ without intervals, that has the property by itself of affording pleasure to the mind of the hearer is a swara whereas shruti is defined as “the first sound from the act of listening which is heard for a short duration and which can be defined as part of a swara.

Pitches with a minimum distance required for separate existence without beats are also called by the term “Shruti.

Also a Swara (the two terms 'swara' & 'note' are used interchangeably in Indian & Western music) is one of the seven musical notes of the Saptak. There is no essential difference between Shruti and Swara. Both are sounds capable of being heard. This distinction between them is something like that which exists between a snake and its coil or between the gold and ornaments made out of it. All shrutis are capable of being used as swaras in various Raagas. Sounds (shrutis) actually used in 'raaga' become swara of that raaga, while those not so used remain shrutis only. The swaras of one raaga will again become shrutis only, when the 'raaga' is changed and a different set of shrutis is selected as swaras of that raaga.

The selection is always to be made from the aforesaid twenty two shrutis in to which the scale is divided. The set of a seven consecutive swaras is called a Saptak in Indian music or Octave in Western Music. When such swaras are in ascending order it is called 'Arohan' or 'Aaroh' however, when such swaras are used in descending order it is called 'Avrohan' or 'Avroh'.

Moorchana: "A moorchana is defined as a regular ascent from any swara through seven swaras and descent back to the starting swara." If we take a set of seven swaras composing an octave we can start from any one of the seven ascend up to seven making use of higher or lower octave also when necessary and descend back to the starting swara. We can thus produce seven Moorchanas from any set of seven swaras. They will assume the following forms:

1. Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Ri Sa
2. Ni Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Pa Ma Ga Ri Sa Ni
3. Dha Ni Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Ma Ga Ri Sa Ni Dha
4. Pa Dha Ni Sa Ri Ga Ma Ga Ri Sa Ni Dha Pa
5. Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa Ri Ga Ri Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma
6. Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa Ri Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga
7. Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Ri

It may appear at first sight that these seven series consisting as they do of the same seven swaras may not have any difference of melodic effect on the hearer, but the fact is, it makes a world of difference whether the series begins from Sa, Ni or Dha, for the emotional quality of the musical effort these seven Moorchanas give seven distinct chhayas or shades as will be evident to anyone who recites them with special attention to emotional appeal of each Moorchana.

Instance of different Raaga chhayas produced from the same set of seven swaras when we produce the Moorchana in different swara can easily be given both in Hindustani and Karnatic system.

Two Emotional appeal of a Moorchana: A Moorchana is built up on the basis of the fact that the initial note determines the emotional quality of a musical phase. A moorchana has an ascent as well as descent. The ascent of a moorchana begins in a particular note and therefore subserves its corresponding emotion. The descent which starts from the seventh note from the beginning has a different emotional quality. **A moorchana therefore, has two emotional appeals one in ascent and the other in descent. Therefore it must be made sure in every Raaga whether it is the ascent or descent of the moorchana that the Raaga is born and has its being or in other words whether there is 'raaga prakash' i.e. the peculiar emotional appeal of the Raaga, in Arohi or Avarohi varna (musical effort).**

Melody: A Melody is created very often by dwelling in a single note, sometimes by ascending through a series of notes, sometimes by descending through a series of notes and sometimes by mixed movements of ascents and descents.

These four modes of creating a melody are known as varnas or music efforts also. They have been given the names of Sthayee, 'Arohi' & 'Avrohi' and 'Sanchari'.

Jatis or Parent Raagas:

Raagas are designs of swaras formed and expanded maintaining the unity of emotion. It is a well known fact that every artistic design has a base on which it is constructed. Similarly every Raaga has a base on which it is formed. It will be easily seen that we can have a number of designs on a single base and that all designs on one base will have certain common features. A base with its common features can well be called a parent design. This analogy explains the concept of Jati or parent Raaga and its relation to raagas born from it. **Vikrit (modified) jatis are the mother of Raagas.**

Raaga: It is defined as manipulation of notes so as to be highly enjoyable. In one another definition the Raaga is also elaborated as **'a musical sentence having a meaning'.**

How they are born: From shrutis, swaras are born. From swara are formed Gramas. From Gramas are born Moorchanas. From Moorchanas are formed Jatis or parent raagas and from Jatis the several raagas.

Nyasa or the Base of the Raaga:

A traveller who goes about stays wherever he finds comfort and when he finds a place specially inviting he makes it the headquarters of his tour. Similarly in sancharas (musical sequence of swaras of any raaga) through the swaras one stays in those particular swaras that suits one's mood or in other words that subserves the emotion one has in view, a little longer than in other swaras and there is a particular swara where the musical pleasure is at its highest so much so that one is not inclined to move from that swara. The former swara that decides the emotional quality of the Raaga is called Amsa swara and the later swara where the raaga attains the completeness and has its finale is called as Nyas swara. It is in fact the base of the Raaga and is easily recognized as the swara at which the raaga expansion has its natural end. It is the swara where the raaga sits well and therefore serves its base. Each Nyasa gives rise to a Jati. We can have a number of Raagas with a single Nyas swara. The common features of all these raagas gives rise to the parent design or Jati as explained above. Since we have seen swaras we can therefore have seven Nyasas giving rise to seven jatis. Thus jatis gets their names from those of the Nyasa swaras e.g. Shadji, Arshabhi, Gandhari etc.