

THE STUDY OF PUNDARIKA VITTALA'S TREATISES WITH REFERENCE TO THE SYSTEMS OF RAGA CLASSIFICATION IN POST RATNAKARA PERIOD



Summary of the Thesis

by

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SUMMARY

The development of music in India is very much connected with the social and cultural history of India. Nada vidya was very important among the various kinds of knowledge. Even nada was worshipped by rishis and munis to attain moksha. The development of music can be divided into three periods: (1) from ancient (vedic) period to Bharata's Natya Sastra (2nd century to 4th century AD), (2) from Bharata to Sarangadeva (13th century), and (3) from Sarangadeva to modern period.

This thesis deals mainly with the third stage, with Sarangadeva and after. The main emphasis being on the treatises of Pundarika Vittala. But, it is necessary to mention the development during the first and second periods, before going into the third period, because the developments in this period was linked with those in the earlier periods.

During the vedic period, only seven svaras were developed and the very important invention of music was the 22 srutis in an octave. Even now the same 22 srutis are being accepted. In these 22 srutis, 7 points were selected and were called as prakruti svaras which were designated by the first syllable of the names, viz. Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha and Ni.

Along with the development of music, it is necessary to understand the social situation which had an impact on the learning of music. Generally, learning of music was not favoured, especially for ladies, during the medieval period and after, but this was not the situation during the ancient period. In the ancient period, during the conduct of yaga and yagna, upagayakas who were mainly ladies, had an important role, they used to play instruments, like veena, during the yagas and yagnas. But a kind of degradation started to take place during the later ancient period.

During the ancient period, Hinduism was the main religion, but after Mahabharata, Buddhism and Jainism had spread throughout India, and existed upto 4th century AD. Although, the religions were different, they accepted the then existing forms of music and used it to propagate their religions.

The second stage started from Bharata. Before that time 7 svaras were utilized, Bharata introduced two more svāras on the 22 srutis. These were Antra Ga and Kakali Ni. Another important development in this period was the Desi ragas. Desi ragas were those ragas which did not conform to rules and regulations which were laid down in the ancient period. These Desi ragas were classified by Matanga in his Bruhaddesi called as grama ragas, their bhasha, vibhasha, etc.

The next stage started with the monumental work of Sarangadeva, who wrote Sangita Ratnakara. He not only classified ragas by the ancient method grama, murchana, jati system, but also introduced many points in the srutis as svaras. The concept of suddha and vikruta svaras started from Abhinava and Sarangadeva. Sarangadeva introduced 7 suddha and 12 vikruta svaras. The last one who classified ragas according to the grama, murchana, jati system was Rana Kumbha and after his period, this system was replaced by the mela concept. Generally, ragas were classified according to two methods: one was rational and the other based on tantric principles, like Raga-Ragini Parivara system. Both these systems were used side by side by musicologists. Even during the period of Pundarika Vittala (16th century) the methods of classifying ragas existed.

Pundarika Vittala was an important musicologist during the second half of the 16th century and he was the first one who classified the then prevailing ragas under both the systems of classifications, viz. Raga-Ragini and Mela.

He hailed from Karnataka State in the South and migrated to the north and was in the court of Faruqi, dynasty of Khandesh. He wrote mainly four books, viz. Sadraga Chandodaya, Ragamala, Ragamanjari and Nartana Nirnaya. While the first three dealt with music, the last one was on dance and music for instruments.

In Sadraga Chandodaya, he mentioned his benefactor, as Ahmed Khan, Tej Khan and Burhan Khan, but these names were not mentioned in the Imperial Gazetteer or in any other texts. But the famous historian, Sethumadhavarao Pagadi suggested that Tej Khan might have been the younger son of Ahmed Khan and may be Burhan Khan was Tej Khan's son. They may have been young princes and that was why

their names were not mentioned by historians. Another historian, Radheyshyam mentioned that Mohammad Shah died in 1536 and left behind very young sons. So his brother Mubharak Khan looked after this kingdom on behalf of the young princes. So when Pundarika Vittala wrote Sadraga Chandodaya, the real king was the young son of Mohammad Shah and Mohammad Shah's brother Mubharak Khan managed the state. One of Mohammad Shah's son was named Ahmed. So Sadraga Chandodaya was written during the time of Mubharak Khan only. In this book, he classified ragas under the mela system. He gives 20 melas and their derivatives.

In the second book, he himself mentions the date as 1576. In this book, in the opening verses, he refers to Kapila Muni. This must have been sufi saint; sufism was widely prevalent during that time in the Deccan. In fact, the capital of Khadesh, Burthanpur was named after the sufi saint. In this book, he classifies ragas under Raga-Ragini system. He gives 6 male ragas and for each five wives (raginis) and 5 sons. In all 66 ragas have been explained. This has been discussed in detail in Chapter VII of the thesis.

The third book Ragamanjari was written during the time of Mansingh Madhavsingh, approximately during 1585-90 AD. He explains in this book his own opinions and classifies ragas under the mela system. He discusses the mela and their derivatives (janya), totalling 64 ragas.

Nartana Nirnaya was written around 1590 at the request of Emperor Akbar.

In all the three books on music, he briefly discusses Nada - Sruti - Svara, which were important topics and were dealt by all the writers. The details given by him on nada and sruti were very similar to what has been given by Sarangadeva. However, while discussing svaras, his ideas differ from those of Sarangadeva. He accepts seven suddha svaras and seven vikruta svaras. These aspects have been discussed in detail in Chapter III of this thesis.

In the early days, ragas were classified under grama-murchana-jati system. There were three gramas, Sa, Ma and Ga grama. Bharata did not mention Ga grama and hence it can be taken that this grama had already disappeared. Surprisingly, Sarangadeva (13th century) and Narada of Sangita Mekaranda describe this Ga grama and how to derive the svaras of Ga grama. During the time of Pundarika Vittala even Ma grama had disappeared. Pundarika Vittala clearly says that only Sa grama ragas only prevailed. Pundarika Vittala also describes Ga grama as given by Sarangadeva and Yashtika.

Generally, svaras alone do not make ragas. In order to give ranjakatha to a raga, it needed some gamakas and alankars. Mainly, the concept of 'raga' started from Matanga. Sarangadeva gives details of 15 gamakas and numerous sthayas and other characteristics like graha, amsa, nyasa, etc. Pundarika Vittala accepts few of these sthayas and the 15 gamakas, a few of the characteristics given by Sarangadeva. This has been discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

In those days, there were mainly four schools of thoughts called Mathas. These could have evolved based on specialisation of music like, some gave importance to Tala, some gave importance to purity of music and some others gave importance to music for dance instruments or vocal rendering. Pundarika Vittala mentions three mathas: Bharata, Arjun, and Hanuman. These mathas followed the raga-ragini padathi: The ragas which were mentioned during the medieval period were classified by the different authors and these have been discussed in detail in Chapter VI.

As mentioned earlier, in Ragamala, Pundarika Vittala explains 6 ragas for each, 5 wives and 5 sons, totally 66 ragas. He mentions that Suddha, Chayalaga and Sankirna ragas were analysed as ragas and putras. He also gives a natural explanation to the classification. He introduced a new concept 'gathi' in the book, which meant movement of svaras from one sruti to another. He gives for all these ragas their svaras, colour of the body, colour of clothes, ornaments worn, tilakas in the forehead, time of the day, season for singing these ragas. All these ragas have been discussed in detail in Chapter VII and compared with those given by other authors and also with the modern ragas of Hindustani and Canatic styles of music.

The details of the mela system discussed in Sadraga Chandrodaya and in Ragamala have been dealt with in Chapter VIII of this thesis. The difference in mela details between Sadraga Chandrodaya and Ragamala were: (1) in Sadraga Chandrodaya he gives 19 melas and in Ragamala he gives 20 melas; (2) in Sadraga Chandrodaya he introduced a new term lagu sadja, lagu madhyama, etc. and also used the conventional terms sadharana gandhara, antra gandhara, kakali Ni and Kaisiki Ni. In Ragamanjari, he introduced the new turn gathi while explaining the ragas. He clearly mentioned chatuscruti rishabha and dhaivata and suggested dvisruti rishabha and dhaivata which later on became komal. May be from his period only the fourth sruti Ri was considered as suddha for the musicologists of the north, and in the South, they considered dvisruti as suddha svara.

He was the first one to mention a mela with two madhyamas called Saranga, which later on became popular in Hindustani music. He also gives a new term to vivadi svara called as prativadi and he also mentions that the vivadi svara can be used in a vakra pragaya. Most of his melas had this vivadi dosha.

In ancient days, if a svara was dropped in aroha, it had to be dropped in avaroha also. But during Pundarika Vittala's days, different svaras could be dropped in the ascent and descent. In the earlier days, changes of svaras were taking place in a symmetric fashion (paryaya vriti), but slowly this concept changed. In Chapter VIII, the melas of Pundarika Vittala have been analysed with the melas given by all the authors upto Venkatamakhi.