

MUSIC IN BHARATA'S NATYA SASTRA

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ABSTRACT

Bharata's Natya Sastra is the earliest document available to trace the history of music and dance in India. As per the dictionary the term 'Sastra' denotes –any department of knowledge, applied collectively to the whole body of teaching on that subject, science, a treatise and so on. Hence it is the work to reveal the Sastra on Natya and naturally music is also focused at length. T

Key words: Gandharva, Svara, Tala, Pada, Dhruva.

Introduction

Nātya Ūāstra (2nd Century B.C)

Bharata's Nātya Ūāstra (2nd Century B.C) written in Sanskrit, can be said to be the oldest known literary work. *Nātyam* is considered as the fifth Veda '*Tasmât sṛjâparam vedam pañcamam sârvavarnikam*'.

The *Nātya Ūāstra* was compiled with the materials of the four vedas. Brahmâ took the *Pathya* – the text to be spoken in dramas from the Rig Veda, *Gitâ* – song from the Sâma Veda, *Abhinaya*-acting from the Yajur Veda and *Rasâs* – sentiments from the *Atharvana Veda*. The fifth Veda was taught to *Bharata* by *Brahma* with an instruction to hand it down to his sons (one hundred) to be promulgated on earth over the years.

The *Nātya Ūāstra* of *Bharata* consists of thirty six chapters with six thousand *Grandhâs* (a *Grandhâ* consists of 32 syllables).

i. 36 Chapters and its Saramsa (Summary):

1. Natyothpatthi (the origin of drama)
2. Mandapavidhanam (construction of the play house)
3. Rangadaivatâvidhanam (worship of the gods of the stage)
4. Tandavalakshanam (characteristics of the Tandava dance)
5. Poorvarangavidhanam (rites of the prologue)

6. Rasâdhyâya (the chapter on sentiments)
7. Bhavavyanjaka (the exposition of emotion)
8. Utthamânghabhinaya (the gestures of the head)
9. Hastâbhinaya (the gestures of the hands)
10. Sharirâbhinaya (the gestures of the limbs)
11. Cârividhanam (the cârî movements)
12. Mandalavikalpanam (the mandala movements)
13. Gatipracaar (the different gaits)
14. Kaksyâpravrutthidharmivyanjaka (divisions, usages and conventions)
15. Chandovibhag (the section on prosody)
16. Vruttavidhi (enumeration of metres)
17. Lakshanalangkârâdiviveka (classification of characteristics and embellishments)
18. Bhashâvidhânânam (use of languages)
19. Vâkyavidhânânam (use of sentences)
20. Dasaropakavidhânânam (rules of ten types of dramas)
21. Sandhiniroopanam (enumeration of junctures)
22. Vruttivikalpanam (division of styles)
23. Âhâryabhinaya (costumes and make-up)
24. Sâmânyabhinaya (generic representation)
25. Vaishikam (the arts of courtesans)
26. Citrâbhinaya (the special representation)
27. Siddhivyanjakam (indication of success)

28. Jâtivikalpam (classification of musical notes)
29. Tatatodyavidhi (rules of the stringed instruments)
30. Sushiratodyavidhi (rules of the hollow instruments)
31. Tâlavyavidhi (rules of solid instruments)
32. Dhruvavidhi (Dhruva songs)
33. Avanaddhavidhi (rules of covered instruments)
34. Prakrutivicaṛ (types of characters)
35. Bhumikavikalpa (distribution of roles)
36. Nātyavatāra (the descent of drama)

The first three chapters respectively deal with the origin of drama, the erection of theatre and the worship of the stage. Chapter four deals with the varieties of dance, while chapter five is devoted to the Pūrvanga rites, Chapters six and seven relate to the Rasās (sentiments) and Bhāvās (emotion). Chapters eight to fourteen are set apart for a discussion on Ângikābhinaya. Chapters fifteen to twenty two deal with Vâcikābhinaya and related topics. In chapter twenty-three Âharyābhinaya is treated. Chapter 24th describes the generic representation. 25th chapter is on courtesans and the 26th deals with various forms of bhāvābhinaya. This chapter also talks about the qualities of performers, singers, audience, kings, sabhapathi and good Nātya. The 27th chapter deals with two Siddhies, Sthānakās, Lakshana of examiners, teachers, audience, Nātya gunās and so on. The next six chapters-twenty eight to thirty three are devoted to music.

The last three chapters of the treatise-thirty four to thirty six-provide details regarding the different characters, varieties of costumes and popularization of the art of histrionics.

ii. The chapters devoted to Music

As mentioned above, the six chapters – twenty eight to thirty three-devoted to music deal with Jâtivikalpam, Tatatodyavidhi, Susiratodyavidhi, Tâlavyavidhi, Dhruvavidhi and Avanaddhavidhis respectively. The chapters also provide Svaras, Grâmas, Mûrchchanās, Tānas, Sthānas, Vrttis (three), Svarasthānas, Varnās, Alankāras, Sruties, Yati, Svarâçeravidhi, etc.

The detailed description of Gândharva grâma is also given in the 28th Chapter.

iii. The inbuilt components of a composition

Gândharva (Song or Music compositions):

Gândharva is the general term for the compositions.

According to Bharata, the word **Gândharva** incorporates in itself the study of note, time measure and song. Based on these, Bharata categorizes the entire field of music as **Svarâtmaka Gândharva** (pertaining to the note and pure music), **Tâlâtmaka Gândharva** (pertaining to the time-measure and instrumental music), and **Padatmaka Gândharva** (pertaining to the composition or song).

..... |
 Gandharvamiti tajgneyam
 svaratalapadatmakam || 28.8

a. Svarâtmaka Gândharva

Twelve aspects of the following have been dealt within this Svarâtmaka Gândharva.

1) Svara-s or notes, 2) Srutis or quartertones, 3) Mûrchchanas or scale, 4) Grâmas or group of scales, 5) Tānās or patterns of notes, 6) Sâdhāranās or intermediaries, 8) Varnās or combination of notes, 9) Alankāras or permutations of Varnās, 10) Jâtis or melodies, 11) Dhātus or techniques of production of notes and 12) Vrttis or methods of employing the technique.

These twelve are common for both the vocal and instrumental music. Todyas of the standard musical instruments (Atodya) are of four categories – Tata Atodyās (stringed instruments), Sushira Atodyās (wind instruments), Ghana Atodyās (Lohaja) and Avanaddha Atodyās (the percussion instruments).

Here, the different types of instruments, the structure, playing method have been given. An interesting story is also given about the origin of the various Ghana Atodyās.

Bharata's Nātya Ūāstra is the earliest authentic reference to the Grâmas. He mentions Shadja and Madhyama Grâmas based on 22 Sruties. Bharata identified the Sruti value with the help of Dhruva and Chalavina. Bharata then explains 14 Mûrchchanas, seven each for the two Grâmās. Then he describes how the Mûrchchanas are divided into four classes, combinations of svaras in different ways led to the emergence of Tānas. They are 84 in numbers based on Mûrchchanas – i.e. Shâdava type-49 and Audava-35. Then he defines Sâdhāranas i.e., Jati Sâdhāranâ, Svarasâdhārana, etc. Bharata defines 18 Jâtis-7 in Shadja grâma and 11 in Madhyama grâma. He gives 10 Lakshanās for these Jâtis.

b. Tâlâtmake Gândharva

Tâla or time measure is based on one unit of time, the kâla. The standard tâlas are Chachchaputa, Chachaputa, Shatpitaputrika, Sampadveshtaka, Udghatta tâlas. Bharata also explained the orchestration of instruments for various purposes.

c. Padatmake Gândharva:

A literary composition with meaningful words conforming to the principles of music (Svara and Tâla) is called a Pada or a soul.

iv. Musical forms or compositions:

Bharata defines the compositions into three varieties as:

1. Gities
2. Seven varieties of songs
3. Dhruva Gâna

Bharata gives description of Gities. **Gities are forms** bound by Chandâs and Akshara Kâlâs and rules. Gities are mainly classified into four varieties as (1) Mâgadhi, (2) Ardhamâgadhi, (3) Sambhavita and (4) Prthulâ.

In Magadhi, a word is sung thrice in different tempos. For Ardhamagadhi half of the word should be repeated twice in Citramarga. In Sambhavita all the syllables in the song are long and sung just once in the Vrttimarga. For Prthula all them are short syllables and it is sung just once in Dakshinamarga. In musical performances the singers could employ these Gitis.

In 29th chapter 'Tatodyavidhi' along with the rules to be adopted for the instruments of Lute, Bharata indicates **seven varieties of songs**. They are Madraka, Ullopyaka, Aparantaka, Prakari, Ovenaka, Rovindaka, and Uttara.

Bharata has devoted a complete chapter (32) to Dhruva Gâna or the composition.

In this chapter – 'Dhruvavidhi', Bharata enumerates Dhruva with its varieties. He defines Dhruva as an Anga of Gitâ used by Devâs, Brâhmanâs. Dhruvas are mainly five types such as Prâveûiki, Âksepiki, Prâsâdiki, Antarâ and Naiûkrâmiki. On the other hand, it can be said that Bharata classified songs into five kinds depending upon the occasion of their use.

Praveûihakshepaniû Krâma prâsâdikama thântaram |

Gânam pancavidham vidyât dhruvâyoga samanvitam || 32. 323

The occasions for the use of songs are enumerated as five such as entrance (Praveœa), diversion (Âkûepa), exit (Niœkrama), pacification (Prâsâdana) and transition (Antara).

The occasions described are as follows:

Nânârasârtha yuktâ nrunâm yâ Giyate praveûeûu |

Praveshiki tu nâmna vijeyâ sâ Dhruvâ tadjnai : || 32.324

Angkante niûkramane pâtrânâm Giyate prayogeûu |

Niûkrâmopagatagunâ vidyannaiûkrâmikim tâm tu || 325

Krama mullangya vidhijnai : kriyate yâ drta layena natyavidhau |

The Dhruva song during the entrance of a character is Prâveûiki, and that song during the exit is called Naiûkrâmiki. Âkûepiki is made use of in Vilambita or Drutalaya in changing a sequence. To smoothen the sentiment, which is suddenly, shifted Prâsâdiki is used. The Antarâdhruva is used during the gaps between occasions of sorrow, changing the dress and arranging the ornaments. The Dhruva songs were originally in Prâkrt. If it is for Narkuta the language is Magadhi. For celestials it is prescribed in Sanskrit. For men it should be with mixture of Sanskrit and Prâkrt or any regional language.

Bharata analyzed the concept of Dhruva in 525 verses. It is found that Sangita consists of Svara (notes), Tâla (time – measure) and Pada (word). In fact it is the word that gives the feeling of the notes and time – measure. Pada is of two kinds, namely

1. Nibaddha (that which has Tâla)
2. Anibaddha (that which has no Tâla)

For example, the Dhruvapada which is a composition is possessed of Tala. The word is not composed to metres and which enhances the charm of all instruments is without the Tala.

The songs attain the status of Dhruva because of the different (1) metres and (2) the limbs (18) of the songs.

1. Metres: Bharata narrated what type of metre should be adopted. For Prâveûiki-the metres Vaktra,

Aparavaktra and Mala are useful for celestials, for Naiúkrâmiki-Putra and Culika, for Âkúepiki-Anustup metre, Prâsâdiki-Udghatta metre.

Bharata gave 92 metres and its descriptions for the various Dhruva ganas.

2. Limbs : Mukham pratimukham caiva vaihayasikameva ca Sthitapravrtta vajram ca sandhihi samharanam tatha || 32.4 Prasvaro masaghataha syadupavartanameva ca | Upapata praveni ca caturasram sirsakam ||32.5 Sampista mantaharanam mahajanikameva ca | Dhuvanamangasamgnani pancanamapi nityasa ||32.6

18 Limbs are Mukha, Pratimukha, Vaihayasika, Sthita, Pravrtta, Vajra, Sandhi, Samharana, Prasvara, Masaghata, Upavartana, Upapata, Praveni, Caturasra, Sirsaka, Sampistaka, Antaharana and Mahajanika are the (eighteen) limbs pertaining to all the five Dhruvas.

Bharata then describes the qualities and defects

of voice. In the chapter Avanaddhavidhi, Bharata describes various percussion instruments, the method of playing, construction, Jâtis to be played, etc. He also explains about 21 Vâdyaprakaranâs and the Lakshanâ of Vâdakâs.

Conclusion: The three main elements- Svara, Tala and Pada- utilized **to form a song** in the period of second (2nd) century are still followed in the twentieth(20th) century. The four kinds of instruments- stringed instruments, wind instruments, Lohaja and the percussion instruments are also in practice. But there is no information on the music to which these texts were set. The study of the varieties of songs, the inbuilt components for a song are noteworthy for the research scholars, music teachers, music students to enrich their knowledge in the field of music.

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