

as a prince.<sup>9</sup> The practice of teaching music to princes doubtless continued during Gupta times and after. It certainly was in vogue during Harṣa's period. Bāṇa in his *Kādambarī* speaks of princes being trained in music.<sup>10</sup>

The vast Jain literature of popular tales records many stories of princesses who held *svayamvaras* in which the condition for winning the hand of the princess was to excel her in playing the *viṇā*. An early example of such a story is to be found in the, significantly named, *Viṇālbhaka* of *Vasudeva Hīṇḍī*, a work noticed before the seventh century AD, and perhaps composed during the Gupta age or immediately after. In later Jain tales the *viṇā-svayamvara* became an established and oft-repeated motif; it occurs in the works of Hariṣeṇa (9th century AD), Vādibha (11th century AD), Haricandra (13th century AD), and others. Stories of princesses being won in *viṇā-svayamvaras* belong to the realm of imagination, but they are nonetheless symptomatic of the fact that *viṇā*-playing was a well-respected art, cultivated even by royalty.

It would not, then, have been out for the ordinary Kumāragupta-I to have been a musician like his grandfather Samudragupta.

The Udayana legend records another intriguing fact. It was believed that the *viṇā ghoṣavati* as well as the skill in playing on it was handed down from father to son in the Kasusāmbī royal family to which Udayana belonged. In Bhāsa's *Pratijñāyauḡandharāyaṇam* a play, the script of which, in the main, may perhaps go back to the third century BC, Pradyota, king of Avantī, speaks of Udayana's supreme haughtiness of character. One of the principal reasons he gives is "*darpayati cainam dāyādyakramāgataḥ gāndharvo vedah*" (his skill in music which he has received as part

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. *loc.cit.* Khāravēla states that he learnt *gāndharvaveda* along with *lekha, rūpa* (currency) *ganānā* (accountancy) and administration of justice when he was a crown prince. (*Epigraphica Indica* vol. 20, p. 79).

<sup>10</sup> Candrāpīḍa was trained, among other things, in '*viṇāveṇumurajakāmsyatāla dardurapuṭaprabhriṣu vādyeṣu*' and '*nārādiyaprabhriṣu gāndharvavedaviṣeṣeṣu*': *Kādambarī*, p. 168 (Nirṇayasāgara edition).

of his inheritance makes him insolent).<sup>11</sup>

Another important play on the Udayana-Vāsavadattā theme is the *Viṇāvāsavadattam*. It has been ascribed by some scholars to Śūdraka. This may well be doubted; but though the problem of its authorship cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the tone, structure and ethos of the play are reminiscent of the Bhāsa dramas (it too, was, moreover, recovered in Kerala), and it bears the mark of being a fairly old production.<sup>12</sup> Udayana's *viṇā* figures prominently in the play — as the name *Viṇāvāsavadattam* implies. The *viṇā* has been described as '*vatsarājakula-sarvasvam viṇāratnam*' (Jewel of a *viṇā*, the ultimate treasure of the Vatsa kings').<sup>13</sup> This allusion lends weight to the story as recorded in Bhāsa's play.

In the Udayana story we have an example of a royal family which treasured musical skill as a family heritage. May this not have been true of the Gupta royal family too? It would be too much to expect that music was literally handed down from father to son, but there is certainly nothing fantastic in thinking that the father was an example to the son, and had him learn music, and the son eventually came to cherish it. No positive proofs can, of course, be adduced. But we do have the fact that grandfather and grandson both played the *viṇā* and cared enough about music to mint coins showing them as *viṇā* players. Moreover, given the fact that skill in music was cherished in many royal households throughout the ancient period — and the telling evidence of the Vatsa kings of Kausāmbī — it becomes certainly within the realm of reasonable plausibility that the Gupta household, too, treasured music as a family skill.

There is however one obvious lacuna in our suggestion: there is no evidence that Chandragupta-II was also a musician. Though

<sup>11</sup> *Pratijñāyauḡandharāyaṇam*, Act. II.

<sup>12</sup> *Viṇāvāsavadattam*. See Introduction by K.V. Sarma and Preface by V. Raghavan to the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute.

<sup>13</sup> *op.cit.*, Act IV (p. 69). (*praviśya viṇāhastah kañcukiyah*): "*jayatu mahārājah idam khalu śalāṅkāyanena preṣtam vatsarājakulasarvasvam viṇāratnam*".

Chandragupta-II issued more coin-types than his father Samudragupta, no coin of his showing him as playning the *viṇā* has yet come to light. But before giving up our theory, let us pause and reflect a little more on the available evidence, and the absence of it. Firstly, we must not lose sight of the truth that recovery of material evidence - such as coins - from the ancient period has a great element of chance or accidentality. The fact that non-*viṇā*-type coins of Chandragupta-II have been recovered, does not necessarily mean that no such coins were minted. Prior to the finding of the Bayana Hoard, *viṇā*-type coins of Kumāragupta-I were also unknown.

Again, the *viṇā* coin-type was not issued as a major gold coin by any of the emperors. And the ratio of available *viṇā*-type coins is noticeably small in comparison with the total body of discovered coinage; suggesting that the actual issue, too, was numerically small. Coins of the *viṇā*-type show Samudragupta at leisure and were perhaps issued as a graceful gesture accompanying the achievement of empire, prosperity and well-being. Significantly, the ratio of coins showing Chandragupta-II as indulging in gracious living is also very small. Of some types, only three or four specimens are known. And one coin type, the so-called king-and-queen-on-couch type, where the king is shown drinking wine — a coin which has formed the basis of much speculation regarding the character and personal traits of Chandragupta-II — is known through only a single specimen. This being so, the fact that no *viṇā*-type coin of Chandragupta-II is known, can be reasonably said to be due to the vagaries of discovery.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> However, a gold coin has been found which, as described in the *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Western Circle, 1916-17, may be an example of a *viṇā*-type coin issued by Chandragupta-II. But the identification remains uncertain as no photograph of the coin has been published. The legend on it, as well as its reported description — which itself leaves room for doubt — cannot be verified. Its description is as follows:

Obverse: King seated on a high-backed couch, with one foot hanging; wearing waist cloth; hand to the left touching lyre or feeding some animal; legend — *paramabhāgavata maha*.

Reverse: Figure of Lakṣmī seated on a footstool with a seat over it; holds uncertain object in hand; to left crescent; legend — *vikramāditya (h)*.

Secondly, it has been suggested by Altekar that the letters construed as *rūpākṛti* on one of the couch type coins of Chandragupta-II, actually form the word *rūpakṛti* and mean, a creator of dramas. Thus Chandragupta-II was perhaps a playwright.<sup>15</sup> If this be true, it would not be surprising if Chandragupta-II also took on active interest in music; for drama, as Kālidāsa says, is a performance-oriented art<sup>16</sup> and music in ancient times was an integral part of drama.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the image of Chandragupta-II, as suggested by some of his coins, is that of a person with epicurean tastes. This, coupled with his interest in literature — of which he is also believed to have been a great-patron — recalls the portrait of a well-cultivated, sophisticated *nāgaraka* as painted by Vātsyāyana in his *Kāmasūtra*. The *viṇā* always adorned the room of such *nāgarakas*.<sup>18</sup>

There is thus a distinct possibility that Chandragupta-II, too, like his illustrious predecessor issued a *viṇā* type coin, and it would be premature to conclude that no such coin was ever minted on the strength of the fact that no such coin has been so far recovered. After Kumāragupta-I, Skandagupta was too busy in saving an endangered empire. We expect that he was also taught music as a family tradition or *vidyā-saṁskāra*, but he could not, or did not, keep up the flourishes of his predecessors in minting coins about this or other leisurely occupations. Only three coin types of his have come to light.

As evinced from this description the coin certainly bears resemblances to the *viṇā* type, especially, with that issued by Kumāragupta-I, where the figure of Lakṣmī(?) is shown as seated on a footstool.

See also, in this connection, fn.2, p. 35 'A Lyrist Type Copper Coin' by Bratindranath Mukherjee in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Vol. I, No. I, 1959.

<sup>15</sup> *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, pp. 133-34.

<sup>16</sup> *Parivrājikā: deva prayogaprādhānaṁ hi nāṭyaśāstram. kimatra vāgvyavahārena. Mālavikāgnimitram*, Act I.

<sup>17</sup> *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Gaekwad edition) Vol. IV, 28, 7 and *ṅikā*; also 32, 425 and 436.

<sup>18</sup> *Kāmasūtra*, 1, 4, 4. The *sūtra* describing the room of a *nāgaraka* contains the item: *nāgadantāvāsakā viṇā*. See also *sūtra* 1, 3, 15 where *viṇā* playing is included among the fine arts to be learnt by the cultivated person.

## II

The kings on Gupta coinage are shown as playing a harp *viṇā*.<sup>19</sup> *Viṇās* of this type are quite common in early sculptures at Bharhut, Besnagar, Amaravati and the Buddhist caves of Pitalkhora,<sup>20</sup> besides other sites. This *viṇā* was shaped like a bow that faced down with a tilt or an angle with one end protruding upward, and the other, lower end, forming a hollow belly which served as the sounding board of the instrument. The *viṇā* strings were stretched across the structure like bow-strings. In playing, the sounding belly was usually placed on the laps. Strings were so arrayed, that in the playing position, the lower a string, the shorter its length. The still surviving south Indian instrument *yāzh* resembles this old *viṇā*; most similar in structure to the ancient one, however, is the Burmese harp which seems to have been handed down in an almost unchanged form since ancient times.<sup>21</sup>

In the *viṇā*-type coins, the king is shown sitting on a couch with both legs resting on a foot-board and holding the *viṇā* on his laps. He is portrayed in profile. The right hand is stretched slightly away from the torso, and is shown striking the strings, while the left hand lies stretched across the lap above the hollow belly of the *viṇā*. The left hand lies at ease and the palm forms a *mudrā*-like gesture — to which we will have occasion to return. The thumb and fore-fingers are, in some coins, projecting slightly outwards while in others they are bent towards each other in more than a semi-circle. The open palm faces upward with a slight tilt towards the torso. The remaining

<sup>19</sup> "The lute of Samudragupta's coins has a long hollow belly covered with a board of seven strings". *The Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, Altekar, Introduction p. 1 xviii. The instrument is actually of the harp type, one of the most ancient musical instruments, common to all old cultures. The strings are tied across a triangular frame; each string producing a single musical note. The use of the word 'lute' by Altekar here is unhappy.

<sup>20</sup> *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, p. 74.

'Saptatantri Veena in the sculptures of Buddhist caves of Pitalkhora': Swami Prajnananand in *Roopa-Lekha*, Vol. XXXII No. 1, July 1961.

<sup>21</sup> For an illustration and description of the Burmese harp see 'Die Musikinstrumente Indiens Und Indonesiens', Curt Sachs, pp. 140-41.

three fingers are bent palm-wards.<sup>22</sup>

Scholars have talked of the Gupta kings as *viṇā* players only. But some important considerations have led us to think that the kings are shown as singing, and that *viṇā*-playing is, in the coin-portrayal, an auxiliary activity. This might appear a little startling, for the *viṇā* is evident in the picture while singing is not; the kings are shown as actually playing it, while there are no signs to indicate that they were singing. However, we should like to place our considerations and reasoning before you, and perhaps, then, our suggestion will not appear as something bizarre or merely eccentric. Let us, to begin with, consider some common portrayals of modern Indian classical singers. Numerous sketches, paintings or photographs of singers show them sitting with a big *tānpūrā*, their right hand on the strings of the instrument, and the left lying idle on the hollowed-out gourd which acts as the sounding belly. In such portraits, the *tānpūrā* looms literally large; even appearing sometimes to overshadow the singer in size and prominence. Yet, we know that the musician portrayed is a singer, not an instrumental player and that the purpose of the instrument is to act as an accompaniment to the vocal melody.

The *viṇā* of Samudragupta and Kumāragupta-I, we believe, was also acting as a singer's accompaniment. We will outline our reasons.

Musical instruments of the string group, especially of the harp type, were commonly used in ancient times to accompany song, which was the dominant musical form.<sup>23</sup> It was common in

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<sup>23</sup> (A famous remark of Śārngadeva runs: '*nṛttaṃ vādyānugaṃ proktaṃ vādyam gītānuvartī ca*, (*Śārngita Ratnākara* I, 24). Vocal music has traditionally been the major form in India. Ancient musical genres or types were distinguished on the basis of song. *Sāma*, a basically sung form, gave rise to the *jāti*, predominantly a vocal genre. In fact *gāndharva* — the ancient word for

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ancient India for singers to accompany themselves on the *viṇā*. Many references can be evinced from literature.

Udayana's legendary *viṇā* is well known to scholars and students of history; what is less known is that legends also speak of Udayana's singing. In the play *Viṇāvāsavadattam*, the *viṇā ghosvatī*, whenever played, is used as accompaniment to song. The first instance of its use is in the episode where Udayana sets out to catch a wild elephant. The dramatist portrays Udayana as approaching the raging beast with his *viṇā* — which had powers to cast a spell on the wildest of animals.<sup>24</sup> When he comes near the beast, he sings a spell, accompanying himself on the *ghosvatī*.<sup>25</sup> Later in the play — in act VIII — Udayana goes to Vāsavadattā's apartments to give her lessons on the *viṇā*. During the first lesson, Vāsavadattā feels too shy to make music. Sāṅkrtyāyanī, the elderly female monk who is Vāsavadattā's companion, then requests the king: '*prakṛtyaiva sāpatrapā khalviyam, sandarśanam ca prathamam, tasmādaśaktā devī gātum tantrisparśanādeva vidyārambhaḥ kṛto bhaviṣyati*' ('the lady is bashful by nature. And, as she is meeting you for the first time, she cannot bring herself to sing. Let her be initiated into the art by merely touching the strings'). It is clear from this little speech that learning the *viṇā* implied learning to sing. Indeed, following Vāsavadattā's inability to sing, Sāṅkrtyāyanī asks the king to sing to them an auspicious song, as an appropriate beginning to the lesson. The king complies with a hymn to Viṣṇu accompanying himself on the *viṇā*.<sup>26</sup> His hearers are enthralled, and he sings

music — has been defined in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Dattilam* as containing three elements: *svara* (tones) *tāla* (rhythm) and *pada* (words). Clearly the ancients, in thinking of music, thought primarily of songs. In Greece lyric singers used to accompany their songs on the lyre — the songs were, for this reason called lyrics.

<sup>24</sup> Incidentally, in the *Vidhura Paṇḍita Jātaka* (No. 546), we hear of a *hatthikānta-viṇā* (*hasti-kānta-viṇā*). This *viṇā* had powers to tame elephants. It may have been used by elephant catchers in ancient times, and, perhaps, the stories of *ghosvatī*'s power over elephants may have originated out of tales told among elephant-catching circles relating to the power of the *hatthi-kānta-viṇā*.

<sup>25</sup> *Viṇāvāsavadattam*, Act II, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> *Viṇāvāsavadattam*, Act VII, pp. 114-15.

two more songs, one a *praśasti*, the other a love-song. Vāsavadattā's lessons continue, and her love for Udayana grows with her knowledge of the *viṇā*. In Act VIII, we find that she has become an expert musician. She is requested by her companions to set to music two love-poems which Udayana had sent her. She sings the poems, accompanying herself on the *viṇā*. Sāṅkrtyāyanī praises her music, exclaiming that the *viṇā* playing was wonderfully synchronised with the song.<sup>27</sup>

The practice among singers to accompany themselves on the *viṇā*, goes back to a still remote antiquity. The *Sūtra* works speak of *viṇāgāthins* — a class of *brāhmaṇa* or *ṣatriya* singers<sup>28</sup> who, as the name, suggests, accompanied themselves on the *viṇā*. These singers were employed to sing *gāthās* during sacrificial ceremonies.

<sup>27</sup> *tantrisvarāṇi akṣarāṇi ca anyonyam anupraviṣṭaniva*, *ibid.*, Act VIII (p. 137).

Udayana's *viṇā*-playing was associated with singing even in some later versions of the Udayana-Vāsavadattā romance. In Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Udayana has been portrayed as singing while playing the *viṇā* when approaching the false elephant. He has been described as: *ekāki vādyan viṇām cintayan bandhanāni saḥ madhuradhvani gāyamāsa śanairupajagāma tam: Kathāsaritsāgara*, 2, 4, 17.

Later in the story, as Vāsavadattā's tutor, he is pictured in a charming verse as: *aṅke ghosvatī tasya kaṅthe gītasrutistathā puro Vāsavadattā ca tathau cetovinodini*. *Ibid.* 2, 4, 32.

It is quite likely that the description of Udayana as both singing and playing the *viṇā* was part of the original tale as told by Guṇādhyā; for, significantly enough, we find that Kṣemendra in his *Brhatkathamañjarī* also pictures the king with words like:

*kūṭakūḥjaramālokya viṇāmadhuragītibhiḥ... Brhatkathamañjarī* 2, 2, 39, and again:

*viṇāgeyakalājñāne śiṣyeyam bhavatāmīti*: *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 47.

<sup>28</sup> The *Hiranya Śrauta Sūtra* speaks of '*brāhmaṇau viṇāgāthinau gāyataḥ*' (14, 2, 6) and again '*rājanyau viṇāgāthinau gāyataḥ*' (14-2, 17-18). Also *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra: gāyatāmīti viṇāgāthinau śaṁsasti*' (14, 6, 4).. Sahani in his paper entitled '*Viṇā coin-type of Samudragupta and Kumaragupta-I*' — *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XIX — puts forward the suggestion that Samudragupta issued the *viṇā*-type coins after performing the *aśvamedha* sacrifice — which, too, was celebrated through the issue of appropriate coins — and that he might have played the *viṇā* in this sacrifice as the ritual demands. Perhaps he did, and perhaps he acted as a *viṇāgāthin*, in which case he would also have rendered songs.

Singing of epic-ballads was another ancient art. The *Rāmāyana*, traditionally considered the *ādikāvya* — the first 'composed' poem as opposed to the 'revealed' body of Vedic *mantras* — was associated with singing right from the inception of its first *śloka* by Vālmīki. The sage, as soon as he had uttered the celebrated *śloka* cursing the *niṣāda*, put it to music and sang it in accompaniment to a string instrument.<sup>29</sup> Later Lava and Kuśa sang the *Rāmāyana* in the court of Rāma in the presence of a distinguished gathering, which included experts in music. Again there was string accompaniment to their singing.<sup>30</sup>

In the *Dighanikāya* there occurs the story of Pañcaśikha who sings some *gāthās* to the Buddha. He plays the *viṇā* to his own singing, and so excellent is the total effect that Buddha commends him, saying that his song and his *viṇā* were in beautiful harmony with each other.<sup>31</sup> The *Mahāvagga* contains the story of prince Dighāvu, son of Dīghiti, king of Kosala, fallen on bad days, who sang a sorrowful song to his own *viṇā*-accompaniment, in the elephant-stables of Brahmadata, king of Kāśī.<sup>32</sup>

In the *Jātakas* there are quite a few instances of singers accompanying their song on the *viṇā*. The love-lorn king Kusa, whose story is told in the *Kusa Jātaka* (No. 531), plays the *viṇā* and sings songs of love to attract his estranged queen. The *Cullapralobhana Jātaka* (No. 263) speaks of a dancer who sang with a *viṇā* in order to arouse passion in the heart of the prince of

<sup>29</sup> *padabaddho 'kṣarasamaḥ tantrilayasamanvitaḥ śokārtasya pravṛtto me śloko bhavatu nānyathā. Rāmāyana*, 1, 2, 18 (Gita Press edition).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 7, 94, 2-7.

<sup>31</sup> *'bhagavā pañcaśikhaṃ gandhabhadevapuṭṭam etadavoca - 'samvandanti kho te, pañcaśikha, tantisaro gitassareṇa gitassaro ca tantissareṇa; na ca pana pañcaśikha, tantissaro gitassaraṃ ativattati, gitassaro ca tantissaram'. Dighanikāya, Mahāvagga, Sakkapaṇhasuttam.* (pp. 199-200, Pt. II of the Pali Publication Board edition brought out by the Bihar Government).

<sup>32</sup> *'atha kho bhikkhave, dighāvu kumāra rāttiyā paccūsasamayam paccutthāya hatthisālāyāṃ mañjunā sareṇa gāyi, viṇāṃ ca vādesi'. Mahāvagga* 10, 2 (p. 376 of the Pali Publication Board edition).

Vārāṇasī. So skillfully balanced was her music-making that the *viṇā* playing and the singing appeared as one single melody.<sup>33</sup> The *Kākatī Jātaka* (No. 327) has a musician (*gandharva*) who sang *gāthās* to his own *viṇā* accompaniment.

The *Laṅkāvatara sūtra* (composed sometime during the first two or three centuries of the Christian era) gives a very graphic description of Rāvaṇa, the *rākṣasa* king, who with his retinue attended upon Buddha and sang panegyrics to his glory. He accompanied his song on the *viṇā*, tuning the strings to the appropriate notes. His song merged effortlessly with the melody produced on the *viṇā*.<sup>34</sup>

Kalidāsa in the *Uttaramegha* of his *Meghadūta*, portrays the forlorn *yakṣiṇī* in a series of poignant word-pictures. One moving *mandākrāntā* verse delineates the *yakṣiṇī* with *viṇā* on her laps, desiring to while away her sorrow in singing songs marked with the name of her lover; but her falling tears wet the strings of her instrument, making it difficult for her to tune it.<sup>35</sup> Cārudatta, the hero of Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakatika*, praising the singing of his friend Rebhila, says that the singing was closely synchronised with string-playing<sup>36</sup> referring evidently, to *viṇā* accompaniment. In another play by Śūdraka, a *bhāṇa* called *Padmaprābhṛtaka*<sup>37</sup> *viṇā*-playing with song is clearly alluded to: the haetara Śoṇadāsī

<sup>33</sup> *'-tantissareṇa gitassaraṃ gitassareṇa tantissaraṃ ca'*, quoted in *Prācina Bhārata men Saṅgita*, p. 26, fn. 2. The words are reminiscent of Buddha's commendation of Pañcaśikha's playing quoted above.

<sup>34</sup> *'atha rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipatiḥ saparivārah pauspakaṃ vimānamadhiruhyā yena bhagavānstenopajagāma, upetya vimānādatirya saparivāro bhagavantaṃstrikrtvāḥ pradakṣaṇikṛtya tūryatalāvacaṃ pravadayadbhirindranīlamayena daṇḍena vaidūryamursara pratyupitāṃ viṇāṃ priyaṃgupāṇ-dunārdhyena vastreṇa pārśvāmbitāṃ kṛtvā, saḥsrya, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, dhaivata, niṣāda, madhyama, kaiśika, gitasvaragrāma-mūrchanādiyukte-nānusāryāṃ salilāṃ viṇāmanupraviśya gāthābhīrgitairanugāyati sma'. Laṅkāvatara Sūtra.*

<sup>35</sup> *Meghadūta, Uttaramegha*, 23 (Nimaya Sagara edition).

<sup>36</sup> *'taṃ tasya svarasaṅkramaṃ mṛdugiraḥ śliṣṭam ca tantrīsvanam'. Mṛcchakatika*, Act III, verse 5.

<sup>37</sup> The attribution is, in this case, less certain.

is pictured in a sad mood singing softly and playing the *viṇā* which rests on her lap.<sup>38</sup>

Another old *bhāṇa*, *Pādatāḍitakam*, by Śyāmilaka — who is believed, by some scholars, to have composed it during the reign of Chandragupta-II<sup>39</sup> — also has a similar picture: a restless (*utkaṅṭhitā*) haetara, awaiting her lover, expresses her feelings in a sweet song, accompanying herself on the *sapta-tantri viṇā*.<sup>40</sup> Another *bhāṇa*, attributed to Vararuci, called *Ubhayābhisārikā*, pictures a man tormented by love singing songs in the *vaktra* and *aparavaktra* metres while playing the *viṇā*, tuned appropriately to his song.<sup>41</sup> Dr. Motichandra, on internal evidence, assigns this play to the reign of Kumāragupta.<sup>42</sup>

There is the well-known scene in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* where Candrapīḍa first meets Mahāśveta. He is attracted to her by her out-of-the-world music: she had been singing to her own *viṇā* playing in a lonely Śiva-temple.<sup>43</sup> In Jain stories of *viṇā-svayamvara*, though ostensibly the competition seems to involve *viṇā*-playing alone, yet singing is taken for granted as associated with the *viṇā*. In *Vasudeva Hindī*, Vasudeva sings the *viṣṇu-gītaka* with the *viṇā* in the competition which won him a bride. Later works make a similar association of *viṇā*

<sup>38</sup> '...aṅkādhirūḍhām vallakimiṣatkararuhairavaghaṭṭayanti kākāliman-damadhureṇa svareṇa kūjayanti tiṣṭhati' *Padmaprābhṛtaka*; see p. 44 of *Caturbhāṇī*, translated into Hindi and edited by Motichandra, Pub.: Hindi Grantha Ratnakara Karyalaya, Bombay, 1959.

<sup>39</sup> See Introduction to the *Caturbhāṇī*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> '...asau saptatantrirmakhairghattayanti kalaṁ kālīpañcamaprāyam-utkaṅṭhitā valguṅitāpadeśena vikrośati': *Pādatāḍitakam*, *Caturbhāṇī*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>41</sup> 'aśokavanīkābhyaśe kopi khalu puruṣaḥ sandaṣṭa iva madane-nāvyaktakākalīm racanāmūrchanām viṇām kṛtvā ime vaktrāpavaktre gāyanmātikṛānuah' (the two poems follow). *Udayābhisārikā*, *Caturbhāṇī*, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>42</sup> Introduction, p. 8, *Caturbhāṇī op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> 'anavaratagītapariṣphurītādharapūṭavaśādatiśucibhiḥ... snapayantiṁ gaurinātham... dakṣiṇakareṇa viṇāmāsphālyantiṁ, pratyakṣamiva gāndharvavidyā...' *Kadambarī*, *pūrvabhāga*, pp. 281-83 (Nirnaya Sagara Press ed.).

with song in the bridal competition.<sup>44</sup>

Many more instances can be quoted, but these, we hope, will suffice to indicate a close association between song and *viṇā*. We do not mean to suggest that the *viṇā* was always associated with song. Our intention is to bring out the fact that such an association was common. In the instance of the Gupta kings, such an association is strongly indicated by another circumstance. The *viṇā* type coins, as the experts have remarked, picture an instrument with seven strings. The *saptatantri-viṇā* or the seven-stringed harp was, indeed, a popular ancient instrument. It is mentioned in the *Jātakas*. One entire *Jātaka* story centres round the *saptatantri* (*Guttila Jātaka*, No. 243). The *Vimānavatthu* speaks of the sweet-sounding *saptatantri* (*sataantim sumadhurām*).<sup>45</sup> Śyāmilaka in his *Pādatāḍitakam*, describing a haetara singing (see above), speaks of her as playing the *saptatantri*.<sup>46</sup> Altekar, in calling Samudragupta's *viṇā* a *saptatantri*, has pointed out that representation of this instrument abounds in the sculpture of Bharhut, Besnagar and Amaravati.<sup>47</sup> Swami Prajñānānda in his *A Historical Study of Indian Music* cites illustration of the *saptatantri viṇā* at the Pitalkhora caves.<sup>48</sup>

Another point suggests the *saptatantri*. Harp-*viṇā* in ancient times was played both with a plectrum (*koṇa*) and the fingers. The Gupta kings on their *viṇā* coins are shown as playing the instrument with their fingers, for the gesture of the right palm does not appear to

<sup>44</sup> e.g. *Bṛhatkathākośa* of Hariṣeṇa (c.10th century AD), see the story of Gandharvadattā (114, 6). Also *Gadyacintāmani* of Vāḍibha Simha Sūri, *Lambha* 3. The work is assigned to the 9th century by Panna Lal Jain; see introduction pp. 15-16, to the Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha edition; K.K.Handiqui assigns it to the 11th century, see his foreword to the *Jivandhara campū*, Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha edition). Both *Jivandhara*, and the princess he competes with, sang hymns of the Jina on the *viṇā*, pp. 175-79, Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha edition. See also the same episode in *Jivandhara Campū* (Ca. 13th century) *Lambha*, 3, verses 31-32, p. 64 of the Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha edition.

<sup>45</sup> *Vimānavatthu*, 32, 2, 5, 1.

<sup>46</sup> See fn. 2 on p. 16 above.

<sup>47</sup> *op.cit.*, *loc.cit.*

<sup>48</sup> The book is published by Anandadhara Prakashan, Calcutta. See Chapter 6 of the work and illustrations.

indicate that the king was holding a plectrum. This, along with other circumstances, also points to a seven-stringed instrument; for Bharata in distinguishing between different *vinās* and their number of strings, remarks that *citrā*, the *vinā* with seven strings was played with the fingers<sup>49</sup> Śyāmilka's haetara, who plays a *saptatantrī*, does so with her nails (*nakhairghattayanti*).

Now, if it be true that the Gupta kings are shown playing a seven-stringed harp, then certain implications follow which are meaningful in the present context. A seven-stringed harp can logically be tuned to only seven notes. It can produce only one octave with the seven regular notes of the ancient scale, unless one or more note be dropped; in which case, too, the range will not significantly increase. Dropping of too many notes in order to achieve a greater range of pitch would produce so much tonal gap between notes as to make the resulting melody musically poor or threadbare. In truth, only a single octave can be effectively achieved with seven strings on a harp. But effective music cannot be made if one only has the range of a single octave at one's command. Ancient music recognised a range of three octaves, known as the *mandra*, *madhya* and *tāra*. This was the range theoretically envisaged on the basis of the fact that the gifted voice when rightly trained can attain a range of three octaves.<sup>50</sup> Of the harp *vinās*, the *mattakokilā*, which

<sup>49</sup> *saptatantrī bhavaccitrā vipañci tu bhavennave/ koṇavādyā vipañci syāccitrā cāṅgulivādanā. Nāṭyaśāstra* (Gaekwad Oriental Series Edition), Vol. IV, 29, 118.

<sup>50</sup> This is normal; some rare voices can attain more, and *ati-tāra* and *ati-mandra* were not unknown to ancient theoreticians, too. Only the range of folk-melodies is often restricted to less than an octave, but the Gupta king, in age when art-music had reached great sophisticated heights, was certainly not rendering folk-music. Moreover, in folk forms, song is supreme; instrumental playing of folk-melodies makes little musical sense. The intimate connection between the human voice and the range in octaves of melodies in ancient times is apparent in the ancient notion of 'sthāna'. *Sthāna* was the generic term for the octaves. At the same time, the term also denoted the anatomic seat within the human body from which, in singing, the octaves were believed to be produced. Thus the *sthāna* for the *mandra* octave was the chest, for the *madhya* octave the neck region and for the *tāra* octave the head. A note in the *mandra* octave was often referred to as a chest note; a note in the *madhya* octave could be called a *kaṇṭha* -note or a note of the neck; *tāra* notes were head-notes.

had twenty-one strings was the most appropriate *vinā* for giving an instrumental rendering of melodies in their optimum form.<sup>51</sup> It could do justice to the most ambitiously wide-ranging melody then current. But the *mattakokilā* was evidently a later innovation. It is conspicuously absent in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is also noticeably missing from the works of the early poets who name other *vinās*. Obviously, even though it may have been known in the Gupta age or perhaps earlier, it was not a dominant instrument. Abhinava is the first writer on music who speaks of the *mattakokilā* with twenty-one strings as the chief of the *vinās*. He cites in this connection a passage from an unnamed earlier authority. In this passage, the *mattakokilā* is listed along with a number of other *vinās*, but its dominance is neither stated nor implied. The number of its strings is also not mentioned.<sup>52</sup> The *Amarakośa* names three *vinās*: *vallakī*, *vipañci* and *parivādinī* - these are names quite familiar from ancient *kāvya* literature. The *vipañci*, according to Bharata, had nine strings, the *parivādinī*, says Amara, had seven,<sup>53</sup> the *vallakī*, too, was certainly not a many-stringed *vinā*. The fact that Amara does not mention the *mattakokilā* is certainly an added evidence for its lateness. There is another significant testimony: *Rājaprasānīyam*, the Jain canonical text, which perhaps belongs to the Gupta age. It lists a large variety of *vinās*, but the *mattakokilā* is not named.<sup>54</sup>

Significant music can be made even with a range of two octaves, which is all that many of our best singers command, and doubtless this was true of ancient musicians also. But this is a

<sup>51</sup> *tatra mattakokilā pradhānabhuṭā. ekaviṃśatitantrikatvenānyūnādhikāṃ trishānagatasvarasāraṇājātigitiṅvināśariramucyate. tadgataśca dhātuprayogā ukṭāḥ. tadupajivakatvenāparā bhavanti. Abhinava on Nāṭyaśāstra 29, 112. (See Gaekwad edition, vol. IV).*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*; see verses quoted in commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* 29, 112.

<sup>53</sup> *vinā tu vallakī sā tu tantrībhiḥ saptabhiḥ parivādinī: Amarakośa 1, 7, 3.*

<sup>54</sup> The work contains a detailed description of a very elaborate ballet-like dramatic pageant which the *gandharva* Sūryābha presented before Lord Mahāvira. The following passage lists the *vinās* that were played during the performance: *muccijantānām vinānām vipañcinām vallakinām kuṭtījantānām mahantīnām kacchapinām cittaviṅānām sarijantīnām vaddhisānām sughoṣānām nandighoṣānām phutījantīnām bhamarīṅām chabhamarīṅām parivānīṅām chippantīnām tūnānām tumbaviṅānām.* *Rājaprasānīyam, Sūtra 41.*

limitation that the voice has perforce to submit to. An instrumentalist, with a mechanism that can readily be made to cover a wide range, need not be so limited. To deliberately restrict oneself to just one octave can have no justification — unless the instrument being played was not the chief tool for rendering the melody. This, we suggest, is what obtained in the case of Samudragupta and Kumāragupta-I. They were making vocal music. Musical range and melodic finesse was attained through the voice; the *saptatantri vīṇā* served mainly as instrumental support; for though the *spatantri* could not provide range, it could yet give all the necessary notes in the octave of any desired scale for the sake of accompaniment.

It can here be argued that even on the open string of a *vīṇā* of the harp variety, great musical range can be achieved by playing the string in the manner of the Hawaiian guitar, or the modern *vicitra-vīṇā* or the south Indian *goṭṭuvādyam*. A single string can produce more than one octave if properly manipulated by an object which can press it and glide over it. However, such playing needs both hands, one to strike and another to play the string. The Gupta kings are playing the instrument with only one hand, the other lies idle on the sounding belly of the *vīṇā*.

The gesture and position of this idle hand is suggestive. Altekar, in his famous work, *The Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard* wonders why the left hand is above the sounding board and not below it, where it could have lent proper support to the instrument.<sup>55</sup> One could have expected the musician to be holding tight to the *vīṇā* had the attention of the musician been primarily directed towards the instrument, had he, in other words, been making instrumental music. But if vocal music was the king's chief concern, he would be merely strumming the *vīṇā*, merely sounding the principal note or notes around which he happened to be weaving his vocal melody.<sup>56</sup> A hand loosely

<sup>55</sup> 'One expects the left hand to be placed under the lute in order to support it'. *The Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, Altekar, Introduction, p. 1xix.

<sup>56</sup> This may have been done in ways similar to those employed by modern Hindustani vocalists who use the *svaramaṇḍala*. The *svaramaṇḍala* is an old

placed above the sounding board can make the instrument secure enough for his purpose. In fact, many modern singers too, while strumming the *tānpūrā* with their right hand, place the other loosely on its round belly.

The gesture of the left palm is also noteworthy. It has been suggested that this is the natural gesture of a musician deep in his music. This may be so; and if so, such a gesture is more common with singers than players; for players usually have both their hands full. We suggest another possibility. The gesture, forms what was known as the *vyākhyāna mudrā* — though it has not been looked at this way;<sup>57</sup> except that the arm is not raised towards the chest as is usual in this *mudrā*. But this is easily explained; a person engaged in *vīṇā*-playing could not have raised his free arm as it did act as a support to the *vīṇā*.

In ancient iconography, the *vyākhyāna mudrā* suggests speech, exposition, teaching — in short, uttering of words. The lips are not shown as parted as this would hamper the expression of serenity and composure associated with *vyākhyāna*. The *mudrā* itself is symbolic of utterance. The *vyākhyāna mudrā* found in association with the *vīṇā* surely symbolized the act of singing, which too involves a kind of utterance.

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instrument in India, though in its current form it has obviously been influenced by the East European Zither. The *svaramaṇḍala* has a direct kinship with the older harp-*vīṇā*, especially the *mattakokilā*. Kallinātha commenting on *Saṅgita Ratnākara* 6, 109-113 says: *mattakokilaiva loke svaramaṇḍalamityucyate*. The *svaramaṇḍala* never lost its popularity. Abul Fazl lists it among the instruments used during Akbar's reign. Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh Deva of Jaipur, testifies to the use of the instrument during the end of the eighteenth century in his *Saṅgita-Sāra (Hindi)*: See Part II, pp. 7-8 of the Poona Gyan Samaj edition, Poona, 1910.

It is, indeed, a curious fact that the modern parallels of the ancient kings' *vīṇā*-playing portraits are the familiar photographs or paintings of such singers as Bade Ghulam Ali Khan singing with their *svaramaṇḍalas* on their laps.

<sup>57</sup> There was no single fixed gesture for the palm in the *vyākhyāna mudrā*. But there are a number of loosely related variations. On some *vīṇā* type coins the left thumb and fore-finger are shown as projecting slightly outwards, while in others they bend towards each other in more than a semi-circle. In his *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, J.N. Banerjea notes that both these positions are found depicted in ancient sculpture, pp. 254-55.

The use of this *mudrā* was a happy stroke on the part of the mint designer. He had so composed the figure as to show the king in profile, thus pushing the *viṇā* towards the side and making the figure of the king more prominent. To have shown His Majesty in this posture with his lips parted in song would have resulted in a very uncouth beak-like effect.

### III

Finally, a few words about music, kingship and a historical generalisation commonly made. Historians often speak of music as the tempting devil who lures a king away from his stern regal duties, into the soft arms of decadence, the result being inevitable decay and loss of power. The example of the Gupta kings, especially that of Samudragupta, should make up stop and think before becoming a party to such a generalization. Here were kings, who at the height of power and glory, took active interest in music, without wallowing in decadence. The truth is that music, like any other pursuit, can be the expression of inner strength, power and glory as well as moral weakness and decadence, for music is as complex and multifaceted as the human mind which uses it as a medium of expression.

## CHAPTER – FOURTEEN

### The Music of *Gitagovinda* and its Antecedents: Some Historical Observations

#### I

Since the earliest histories of Sanskrit literature began to be written, scholars have assigned to the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva a unique place in Indian literary writings. One reason for the uniqueness of the *Gitagovinda* is its form. It is quite unlike any preceding lyric in Sanskrit. The cause lies in the fact that no lyric before it was so palpably connected with music.

One of the most well-known verses from the *Gitagovinda* is that in which the poet proudly proclaims his excellence in having composed the most sweet and mellifluous verse.<sup>1</sup> In another verse which is not so well-known, Jayadeva has claimed an equal excellence for his music: In verse 10 of the last *sarga* (one of the verses attached as an epilogue to his work) Jayadeva exclaims —

*yadgāndharvakatāsu kauśalamanudhyānaṁ ca yadvaiṣ-  
ṇavam*

*yacchrīṅgāravivekatattvaracanā kāvyeṣu lilāyitam/*

*tatsarvaṁ jayadevapaṇḍitakaveḥ kṛṣṇaikatānātmanah*

*sānandaḥ pariśodhayantu sudhiyaḥ śrīgitagovindataḥ//*

(Excellence in the skill and subtleties of music; the path of meditation on God according to the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition; the proper assimilation and play of the deepest and truest *śrīgāra* in poetry: may the learned gather (or expect) these things from *Gitagovinda* of the pandit-poet Jayadeva).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Yadi harismarāṇe sarasam mano yadi vilāsakālasu kutūhalam/ madhurakomala-kāntapadāvaliṁ śṛṇu tadā jayadevasarasvatim. Gitagovinda, sarga 1, verse 4.*

<sup>2</sup> Kumbha explains the last line in such a way that it expresses an uncharacteristically modest rather than a boastful thought: “*he sudhiyaḥ jayadevapaṇḍitakaveṣṭatsarvaṁ gitagovindataḥ. atra tasil sārvaṁ vibhaktikāvā- tsaptamyaṁ the upapattiḥ. gitagovinde pariśodhayantu, śuddhaṁ kurvanu*”. But Kumbha adds: *gitagovinde vā śuddhaṁ jānantu*”.

This is a verse which occurs in most manuscripts of the *Gitagovinda*. The claim made here by Jayadeva reveals that in presenting the *Gitagovinda* to the connoisseurs of his day, the poet wanted them to admire his musical as much as his poetic skill.

The larger part of *Gitagovinda* comprises, what have been called *aṣṭapadis* in almost all manuscripts of the work. The *aṣṭapadis* number twentyfour and contain eight stanzas each (the first *aṣṭapadi*, a hymn to the ten incarnations of Kṛṣṇa, however, has eleven). The *aṣṭapadis* have been thematically linked with each other into a drama-like episodic scheme with the help of small groups of intermediate poetic verses. These are composed in the familiar manner and metre of classical Sanskrit poetry. But the *aṣṭapadis* are revealed to be quite different even at a cursory glance: not only is the flow of words and diction in them composed with an eye to music, their metre, too, forms a class apart from customary Sanskrit poetic metres.

There are, indeed, many indicative factors which disclose the song aspect of the *aṣṭapadis* and reveal their kinship with forms conceived in the musical as distinguished from the purely poetic tradition:

1. Each *aṣṭapadi* contains a refrain, a *dhruvapada*, which was a characteristically musical feature.<sup>3</sup>
2. Almost all manuscripts caption each *aṣṭapadi* with the name of the *rāga* and *tāla* to which it was to be sung.
3. And lastly, the end verse of each *aṣṭapadi* includes the name of the poet.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the *prabandha* genre of medieval songs — to which, as we shall argue, the *Gitagovinda* belonged — the *dhruva* was that musical part or movement which was essential to all *prabandhas*. Some other features being optional. The *dhruva*, like the theme in western music and the 'stāyi' in current Hindustani music, was to be often repeated. Someśvara in his *Mānasollāsa* defines *dhruva* as: 'paunaḥpūnyād dhruvattvācca dhruvakāḥ parikīrtitāḥ'; *Mānasollāsa* 4, 16, 442. See also *Saṅgīta-ratnākāra* (henceforth shortened as S.R.) 4, 9 and the commentary of Kallinātha.

<sup>4</sup> This feature is indeed decreed for *prabandha* songs: In the last movement, of the *prabandha*, termed the *ābhoga*, the poet-composer, says Śārṅgadeva, should include his name: *syādābhogastādanantaram geyo vāggyekāreṇa svābhīdhānavibhūṣitāḥ*. S. R. 4, 38.

These are features found associated with song-forms and are quite alien to Sanskrit poetic practice. They have been part of our musical tradition and are still to be found in the practice of song writers who compose in classical forms such as *dhruvad*, *khyāl*, *thumri* etc. The *padas* of the medieval poet-saints which were composed as songs are also seen to incorporate these features. They have a long past and can be traced back at least to the songs of the early medieval 'siddha' poets such as Sarahapāda, Kanhupāda and others, the earliest of whom goes back to the eighth century AD. The compositions of these 'siddha' poets were *geya-padas* (or songs). These early *padas* are found to contain all the features stamped also upon the *aṣṭapadi*: they include a *dhruva-pada* or refrain; they record the name of the poet (the 'bhanitā' as it is called) and, moreover, manuscripts of the text of these songs, dating back, according to their discoverer Hara Prasad Sastri, to a very early period — also mention the name of the *rāga* to which each song was to be sung.

Thus the *aṣṭapadi* is seen to have a strong kinship with forms belonging to the musical tradition. In fact, the name *aṣṭapadi* itself indicates the musical affinities of the form. The *Bṛhaddeśi* of Mataṅga, a well-known and influential text on music, placed usually in the seventh-eighth centuries AD, lists the *tripadi*, *castuṣpadi* and *ṣaṭpadi* as long-standing song-forms belonging to the large genre called *prabandha* (*Bṛhaddeśi*, verses 380 and 386). These forms are classified under *prabandha* in subsequent *saṅgīta*-texts, too. Śārṅgadeva, the famed authority on music, who may have been a younger contemporary of Jayadeva (he composed his *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* in the reign of the Yādava King Siṅghaṇa ruling at Deogiri, modern Daulatabad, between AD1210 and 1247),<sup>5</sup> lists these forms and delineates their characteristic features.<sup>6</sup> Another work, the encyclopaedic *Mānasollāsa* (also known as the *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi*) is most interesting in this context. It covers a large range of diverse

<sup>5</sup> S.R. (Adyar Library edition), Vol. I, Introduction, p. x.

<sup>6</sup> S.R. 4, 29-30 and 4, 268-274.

subjects including music. The work was, purportedly, written by king Someśvara of the Western Cālukya dynasty; though it has been argued that the actual author was a learned pandit in the employ of the king.<sup>7</sup> Someśvara ascended the throne at Kalyāṇi in the third decade of the 12th century AD, and the *Mānasollāsa* was composed perhaps in the next decade.<sup>8</sup>

The *Mānasollāsa* provides many valuable cues to the understanding of the song-tradition in which the *Gītagovinda* was composed. It gives the texts of many a song actually sung during the period. Other technical works on music rarely do so. The material in this work is especially valuable as it was composed some decades before the *Gītagovinda*, which is generally placed towards the end of the 12th century AD. The *Mānasollāsa* has a long section (in the 16th chapter of the 4th *viṃśati*) on *prabandha* songs. Numerous samples of song-texts are given and these provide us with interesting antecedents of the form adopted by Jayadeva in his *aṣṭapadis*. The *prabandha* genre included a rich variety of forms and though Someśvara quotes dozens of examples he says that he is illustrating only those *prabandhas* where he could not find a well-known prevalent song.<sup>9</sup> The songs given are not always complete, for only a few lines are thought as sufficiently illustrative; still, many of the songs contain the name of the professed composer Someśvara at the end<sup>10</sup> much in the same manner as *lakṣaṇa-gītas*, illustrative of particular *rāgas*, contain the name of the composer in the classical songs of today.<sup>11</sup> We find in the *Mānasollāsa* many a song which

<sup>7</sup> *Mānasollāsa*, G.O.S. edition, Vol. I, Introduction, p. vi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vi-vii.

<sup>9</sup> *lakṣaṇena prabandhānām yatra lakṣyaṃ pratyate na tatrodāhṛtiḥ proktā, śāpekṣyeṣu nigadyate; Mānasollāsa* 4, 16, 199.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 16, 476; 412; 495 and etc.

<sup>11</sup> Let us take an example: Pandit Bhatkhande who composed under the name of Catura, gives the following 'sthāyi' for the *lakṣaṇa-gīta* of *rāga śyāmakalyāṇa*: 'śyāmakalyāṇa gāvati nisadina catura guni, (*Hindustāni Saṅgīta Paddhati*, Pt. V, p. 76). Compare this with the following in Someśvara: After saying that he is going to illustrate the *prabandha* called *hamsavati* belonging to the 'elā' class (*Mānasollāsa* 4, 16, 456), Someśvara gives the song, ending with 'ā someśvaradeva viracita elā hamsavati. At the place of the ā syllables a free musical passage was, perhaps, to be sung.

foreshadow the manner, diction, style and even to some extent the theme of the *aṣṭapadis* — though the poetic skill and the well-measured flow of the *Gītagovinda* are absent here. It would be worthwhile to take a few examples:

1. One of the *prabandhas*, called *jayamālikā* (perhaps because every new line began with the word 'jaya') composed as a hymn, bears similarities with Jayadeva's famous *aṣṭapadi* on the *daśāvātāra* theme. The metre in Someśvara's song is irregular as is often the case with the texts of songs even today. The first three lines are—

*jaya bhujaparighadhṛtagovardhanadharādharā*  
*jaya kalpāntakakālakesarikarātākarakāliyapralayakārin*  
*jaya madhuvadhūvidhūntuda*<sup>12</sup> etc.

2. Another *prabandha*-hymn contains a rhyme scheme and has fluid-flowing *samāsas* like Jayadeva:

*nijavibhavaracitadaśāvātāram*  
*niśītaśaraśataḥsatadanujabhāram*<sup>13</sup> etc.

Yet another in the same strain, reads:

*sudarśanadalitabānabāho*  
*śīromātrāvaśeṣikṛtarāho*  
*niravadhiśāstropadeśadakṣa*  
*saṅgararaṅgadalitahiranyākṣa*<sup>14</sup> etc.

3. There are expressions also of the *Kṛṣṇa-gopī* love theme in the liquid style made famous by Jayadeva:

*Yauvanabhūṣitaḥgopavadhūmukhapadmamadhukarā*  
*śyāmalavigrahakāntivirjitanavyajaladhara*  
*śṛṅgārasadanasmērasaroruhasaṅcayapiñjara*<sup>15</sup> etc.

Even Rādhā is mentioned in a hymn where Kṛṣṇa is addressed as:

*samarabharavivaśarādhāhṛdayavallabha*<sup>16</sup>

The *Gītagovinda* reflects a much deeper awareness of poetic

<sup>12</sup> *Mānasollāsa*, 4, 16, 309.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 16, 501.

<sup>14</sup> *Mānasollāsa*, 4, 16, 356.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 16, 451.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 16, 370.

values than do Someśvara's songs, but then, Jayadeva had poetic as well as musical ambitions. Yet the songs quoted here suffice to show that the *Gitagovinda aṣṭapadis* were composed within the well-established tradition, scheme and strand of *prabandha* songs.

One stray song of the species illustrated in the *Mānasollāsa* occurs even in a non-musical Jain Prakrit literary work, the *Kathā-kośaprakaraṇa* of Jineśvara Sūri, who composed his collection of stories in AD 1051,<sup>17</sup> many years before the *Mānasollāsa*. In the story of prince Sihakumāra (*sihakumāra kathānakam*), the main character Siha is described as an expert in the art and technique of music. Siha, when asked to show his skill in the court of his father, sings a song, which Jineśvara has called a *cauṣpadikā bandha*, evidently meaning a composition in the *catuspadika* i.e. a *prabanda* song of the *catuspadī* variety. Jineśvara gives us the text of the song, which is a hymn in Prakrit to Mahavīra. The song has many points of interest. It contains four stanzas in a more or less regular rhyming metre, as in Jayadeva. It has a refrain in the form of a line which is repeated after every stanza — this is evidently the 'dhruva' though not actually called so. The name of the composer Sihakumāra occurs in the line which acts as the *dhruva*. We quote two stanzas:

*Saṁsārasamuddagatabhavika uddharaṇā*  
*Kāmakohamayamohamicchatta avaharaṇā*  
*eṣim kari gāyai rāyasihakumārā*  
*vira tuha pāyavirahi sayalu andhārā*

(This stanza is repeated as *dhruva*)

*Devasuramanuyasivaṣampayatarukandā*  
*narayaduhatiriyabhavasantaticchedā*  
*eṣim kari gāyai.....etc.*<sup>18</sup>

One here observes many notable formal similarities with the *Gitagovinda aṣṭapadī*: the rhyme scheme is of the same nature; the poet's name is included in the song, and there occurs a refrain; and indeed, the very name of the form, *catuspadī*, cannot

<sup>17</sup> See the Introduction to Jineśvara Sūri's *Kathākośaprakaraṇa*, Singhi Jaina Granthamālā No. 11, Published by Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavana, 1949.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., text, p. 42.

but remind us of the *aṣṭapadī*. This song was recorded more than a century before the composition of the *Gitagovinda*.

## II

There is, then, a strong case for believing that the *aṣṭapadī* belonged to genre of the songs called the *prabandha*. Jayadeva, too, has himself called his poem a *prabandha* in a celebrated verse:

*vāgdevatācaritacitritacittasadmā*  
*padmāvaticaraṇacāraṇacakravartī/*  
*śrīvāsudevaratikelikathāsametam*  
*karoti jayadevakaviḥ prabandham!*<sup>19</sup>

The word *prabandha* was used also for any literary composition and this is the sense in which it is generally understood in this verse. But in the view of the extremely suggestive evidence that has been presented above, one can reasonably maintain that the word in this context denotes the *prabandha* genre of songs, too, if not song alone.

There is another suggestive point that emerges from the verse in this connection. Jayadeva here names a woman, Padmāvati, in tones of obvious tenderness and love. Padmāvati was, according to well-known legends, Jayadeva's wife. Jayadeva remembers her again with affection and pleasure at the end of an *aṣṭapadī* in the 11th *sarga*:

*vihitapadmāvātisukhasamāje*  
*kuru murāre maṅgalaśatāni*  
*bhaṇati jayadevakavirājarāje*<sup>20</sup>

(O Murari, bestow a hundred blessings on Jayadeva the king of poets who sings to you — Jayadeva who has often been a source of great happiness to Padmāvati).

<sup>19</sup> *Gitagovinda*, *sarga* 1, verse 2.

<sup>20</sup> According to one reading, the *aṣṭapadī* no. 19, *sarga*, 10, also mentions Padmāvati in the last verse, where Jayadeva refers to himself as the 'beloved or husband of Pādmāvati': *jayati padmāvātiramaṇajayadevakavibhārati-bhaṇitamatīsāram*. This is a *pāṭhabheda* quoted in both the Nirṇayasāgara edition of the *Gitagovinda* (see p. 133) and the Lālbhāi Dalpatbhāi edition with Mānāṅka's *ṭika*; see p. 87.

Mentioning one's beloved in a poem (even if she was a wife) was considered as a highly unorthodox — not to say unseemly-poetic practice, and some commentators have tried to explain Padmāvati as denoting the Goddess Lakṣmī — though such a name for Lakṣmī hardly occurs anywhere. But while we find no precedents where a Sanskrit poet has openly inserted the name of his own wife or beloved within his poem, such a practice seems to have been quite in order among singers and composers of songs. Witness Kālidāsa's *yakṣiṇī*, who tried to while away her sorrow by singing songs with her beloved's name in them.<sup>21</sup> In the case of *prabandha* singers we even find a near-authorization for such a practice in the *Mānasollāsa* where Someśvara states: "A musician should sing to (or of) the king or chief prince who are endowed with the qualities of the great and possess great power; or he should sing to (or of) the chief queen or the great queen or to a woman of distinction whom he loves; to (or of) these he should sing, whomsoever he feels inclined towards; but a *prabandha* should never be composed with a view to please anyone else even for the sake of money."<sup>22</sup> In the light of this statement, we can see that Jayadeva was not violating any code of propriety in having fondly put in the name of his beloved in the body of his composition.

Although the form, the manner of composition, and other peculiarities of the *aṣṭapadī* reveal it as a *prabandha*-song, yet the name *aṣṭapadī* as such does not occur among lists of *prabandhas* in *saṅgīta* texts. But this is not surprising. The *prabandha* was a very large genre comprising a vast number of varieties. These were distributed into classes and sub-classes by theorists with their love for categorization. Not all forms could

<sup>21</sup> *madgotrāṅkaṁ viracitapadaṁ geyāmudgatukāmā: Meghadūta, Uttaramegha, 23.* I am indebted to Professor G.C. Pande for this suggestion.

<sup>22</sup> *nṛpaṁ vā yuvarājaṁ vā mahāśaktiguṇorjitam/mahādeviṁ bhṛhaddeviṁ priyāṁ vā yoṣiduttamāṁ/gāyenniṣecchayā gātā yatra cittaṁ pravartate/ arthalobhāntathānyeṣāṁ prabandho naiva giyate/ Mānasollāsa, 4, 16, 562-563.* 'Priyāṁ vā yoṣiduttamāṁ' may, of course, refer to a king's favourite and not the composer's beloved.

be listed and described, for that would have over-burdened even the most ambitious *śāstric* work. Śārṅgadeva divides *prabandhas* into three classes: *sūda*, *āli* and *viprakirṇa* (lit. 'scattered', i.e. miscellaneous).<sup>23</sup> The third class included *tripadī*, *catuṣpadī* and *ṣaṭpadī*, and comprised a large corpus of forms. Of these Śārṅgadeva proposes to describe only a few well-known ones.<sup>24</sup> It is quite likely that the *aṣṭapadī* was one of the obscure and lesser-known forms of this class and came into prominence later, due, may be, to the attention bestowed upon it by the genius of Jayadeva.

Song-composers in early medieval times were called *vāggeyakāras*<sup>25</sup> i.e. creators of words and (accompanying) music. *Vāggeyakāras* were classified according to their talents and capabilities. The best of them was a master poet-cum-musician in whose compositions both the poem and its music were new and original and embodied the great creative genius (*prabhūtapratibhā*)<sup>26</sup> of the composer. Jayadeva evidently, was a truly *pratibhāvān vāggeyakāra*.

There was no false modesty in Jayadeva. A *vāggeyakāra*, says Śārṅgadeva, should put his name in the last movement of a *prabandha* song;<sup>27</sup> this Jayadeva has proudly done in all his *aṣṭapadīs*. He often also adds an invitation to the *rasikas* and *paṇḍitas* to admire his sweet artistry.<sup>28</sup> The foremost *vāggeyakāras*, says Śārṅgadeva, are 'vastukavis' (S.R. 3, 11) — this Kallinātha explains as meaning a *kathākavi*: a poet whose poem weaves a story. Jayadeva, indeed, claims that the subject

<sup>23</sup> S.R. 4, 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> *tato 'nye vipakirṇāstān prasiddhān katicid bruve.* S.R. 4, 28.

<sup>25</sup> *vāṅ māturucyate, geyāṁ dhāturabhidhiyate/vācaṁ geyāṁ ca kurute yaḥ sa vāggeyakāraḥ.* S.R. 3, 2.

<sup>26</sup> S.R. 3, 6 Kallinātha quoting from another text explains *pratibhā* as: 'prajñāṁ navanavomeṣāśāliniṁ pratibhāṁ viduḥ'.

<sup>27</sup> S.R. 4, 38; quoted ante. See footnote 4.

<sup>28</sup> *śrījayadevabhaṇitarativāñcitakhaṇḍitayuativilāpam/śrīnutasudhāmadhuraṁ vibudhā vibudhālayato' pi durāpam: Gitagovinda sarga 8, last verse of aṣṭapadī.* Also; *śrījayadevabhaṇītamatilalitam/ sukhayatu rasikajanam haricaritam. Gitagovinda sarga 9, last verse of aṣṭapadī*

of his *prabandha* is a *kathā* - the tale of Kṛṣṇa's loves — (*vāsudevaratikelikathāsametam/karoti jayadevakaviḥ prabandham*).

Legends recorded about Jayadeva by Nābhādāsa in his *Bhaktamāla*, and following him by Jayacanda, portray Jayadeva as a singing poet and a dancer dedicated to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was, it is related, a simple, unlearned *brāhmaṇa* who sang and danced before Lord Kṛṣṇa out of spontaneous devotional fervour. Such a picture of Jayadeva's personality is however, belied by the *Gitagovinda*, which is the creation of a deeply sophisticated man, a *nāgaraka*, a *vidagdha* (in the language of Jayadeva's days), who was one of the best products of the urbane culture and refinement attained in the cultivated circles of the age. Jayadeva's Mīrā-like image of a simple spontaneous *bhakta*, which was the ideal of this devotional movement, was transposed upon the memory of Jayadeva, transforming his character completely. But the picture of Jayadeva as a poet-musician is certainly rooted in fact. The *Sekasubhodaya*, a 16th century collection of legends centring around the court of King Lakṣmaṇasena, portrays Jayadeva in a manner quite different from the image of him as a simple devoted *bhakta*. Jayadeva is presented here as the court musician of Lakṣmaṇasena; Padmāvati is his wife; both are reported to have supernatural powers in their music, powers such as those told of Tānsen, Baijū Bāvarā and other renowned musicians (*Sekasubhodaya*, Ch. 13).<sup>29</sup>

### III

The *prabandha* form of music which Jayadeva, from all signs, appears to have adopted for his song, had, we have seen, a tradition antedating him. We have given examples from antecedents composed in the 12th century AD, but the form itself was much older. It was an already well-established, well-regulated form when Maṭaṅga wrote his *Bṛhaddeśi*, in the

<sup>29</sup> The text has been published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta 1963, with an Introduction and translation in English by Sukumar Sen.

seventh or eight century.<sup>30</sup> The form was, in other words, a well-cultivated classical form by the time Jayadeva sang in it.

However, the links that the *Gitagovinda* bears with its *prabandha* antecedents appear to have been overlooked by modern historians of Sanskrit literature. They have put forward the hypothesis that Jayadeva was inspired by folk and rustic forms. Schroeder called the work a 'refined *yātrā*'. Winternitz opined that 'rustic dance games with music served him (i.e. Jayadeva) as models for the songs which form the nucleus of the work'. This view is still the generally current view, and needs to be revised in the light of *saṅgīta*-works.

The *prabandha* is now an extinct form, but technical descriptions of its musical structure are to be found in *saṅgīta*-texts. It, plainly, stands out as a refined form of high art-music.

The musical movement of the *prabandha* has a four-part structure: it began with the *udgrāha*, after which came *melāpaka*, *dhruva* and *ābhoga*. The structure has a distant parallel in the four-part *dhrupad* form which was born out of the *prabandha*.<sup>31</sup> Of the four basic movement of the *prabandha* structure, two, namely, *melāpaka* and *ābhoga*, did not occur in certain *prabandhas*;<sup>32</sup> the other two, *udgrāha* and *dhruva*, were essential.

<sup>30</sup> Maṭaṅga describes a host of forms in terms echoed and often quoted by later authorities. He begins a survey of *prabandhas* with the statement that they are innumerable and that he has chosen to describe only a prominent few: *deśīkārāprabandho'yaṁ haravaktrābhinirgataḥ/kaścītkhyātāstu kathitā na jñāyate'l- pabuddibhīḥ/teṣāṁ madhyāt samuddhṛtya yuktalakṣaṇalakṣitān/śrīmataṅgamuniḥ prāha muninuddiśya tadyathā. Bṛhaddeśi 376-77.*

<sup>31</sup> Nāyaka Gopāla, one of the earliest known *dhrupad* composers whose compositions, however transformed, have come down to us, has been referred to by Kallinātha (15th century AD) as a composer of *prabandhas* (see his *śikā* on S.R. 4, 253-256). Nāyaka Gopāla is believed to have lived in the period of Alauddīn Khiljī (AD 1296—1316). The fact that Nāyaka Gopāla is associated both with the *prabandha* and the *dhrupad* is indicative of the link between the two forms of musical composition. Sadāraṅga, to whom we owe the present *Khyāl* style, had similar links with the older *dhrupad* form.

<sup>32</sup> S.R. 4, 11; See also Parśvadeva as quoted by Śimhabhūpāla on S.R.: 4, 1-19. Also *Mānasollāsa*, 4, 440-43.

The general *prabandha* structure was further analysed into six elements, metaphorically referred to as the six limbs of the *prabandha-puruṣa*.<sup>33</sup> These elements were: *svara*, *biruda*, *pāta*, *tenaka* (also called *tennaka*, *tenna* or *tena* in some works), *pada* and *tāla*.<sup>34</sup>

*Svara*, in this context, denoted the singing of sol-fa notations.<sup>35</sup> Śiṃhabhūpāla<sup>36</sup> here explains: *svara* stands for the singing of the syllables, *sa ri ga ma pa dha ni* at their appropriate pitches.<sup>37</sup> This is what is known as singing of 'sargams in modern musical parlance. *Pada* stood for the words of the sung text (S.R. 4, 16). *Tenaka*, signified the singing of the two syllables 'te na' repeatedly, and seems to have been the forebearer of our own 'nom tom' vocables in singing. The syllables 'tena' were believed to represent the *mahāvākyas* like 'om tat sat' and 'tattvamasi'; consequently, their employ during singing was considered auspicious.<sup>38</sup> *Pāta* was the technical term for the different syllables conventionally employed to represent the different sounds produced on the drums — what we today call *tablā* or *mṛdaṅga* 'bols'.<sup>39</sup> The term *tāla* had the same meaning as it has today: i.e. a rhythmic cycle of numbered beats distributed in a particular pattern. *Biruda* meant a laudatory epithet. Its position and significance in the context of the *prabandha* is not clear.

<sup>33</sup> S.R. 4, 12-13.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> *svarāḥṣaḍjādayasteṣāṃ vācakāḥ sarigādayaḥ/svarābhiviyakti samyuktāḥ svaraśabdena kirtitāḥ*. S.R. 4, 15-16.

<sup>36</sup> He wrote his *tīkā*, entitled *Saṅgītasudhākara*, on the S.R., towards the close of the 14th century AD.

<sup>37</sup> "svarā iti. ṣaḍjādayaḥ svarāḥ pūrvamuktāḥ teṣāṃ vācakāḥ sarigamapadhanitī varṇāḥ tattatsvārabhiviyaktisahitāḥ svaraśabdenocyante: Saṅgītasudhākara on S.R. 4, 1.9. Kallinātha's comments are also revealing: "svarasya ca sakalaprabandhagatatve'pi ṣaḍjādivācakānāṃ sarigādināmeva svarābhiviyaktihetutvādasādhāranyenāṅga-tvavyapadeśāḥ."

<sup>38</sup> *teneti śabdasteṇaḥ syānmaṅgalārthaprakāśakaḥ/om tatsaditi nirdeśāttatvamasyā-divākyataḥ/tadittu brahma tenāyaṃ brahmaṇā maṅgalātmanā/lakṣitastena teneti.....* S.R., 4, 17-18.

<sup>39</sup> *pāto vādyākṣaroīkaraḥ*. S.R. 4, 18. Śiṃhabhūpāla explains: "vādyākṣāraṇāṃ dhigdhigādīnāmutkaraḥ samūho, vādyād-hyāye vakṣyamāṇaḥ, pāta ityucyate".

This brief technical account of the *prabandha* form should, we hope, suffice to sketch before us the picture of its complexities. It was, obviously, a highly developed art-form and bears many suggestive parallels with present classical forms.

A confusion can perhaps arise here: The *prabandha* has been included by theorists in the category of *deśī* music, and *deśī* has been defined as popular, regional music unbound by rules. But one should not on this score be led to think that all so-called *deśī* music was of a folk or rustic character. After all, our own complex and subtle art music is but *deśī* music; for *deśī* is, in *śāstric* works, a category opposed to *mārga*, a term which denoted the most ancient forms of music predating the medieval period, and all *mārga* forms were already extinct by the 16th century AD. Our art-music also is thus *deśī*. The term, then, need not necessarily signify a crude folk form.

There, certainly, must have been folk elements in the *prabandha* as there are in all cultivated art-forms. Both Indian and western art-music contains demonstrable elements traceable to 'folk' sources. Indeed living art-music keeps continuously being renewed through assimilation of influences that have a 'folk' derivation.<sup>40</sup> *Prabandha*, too, seems to have emerged out of *mārga* forms due to a gradual absorption of new folk forms, and it is in this sense that it was *deśī* music. But it certainly could not have been rustic music. As early as in the period of Mataṅga, the *prabandha* forms had acquired a standardised structure. And after Mataṅga too, we come across *saṅgīta*-texts, separated from each other both in time and in space, which describe the *prabandha* in an almost like language and manner. Authorities belonging to different times and regions such as Pārśvadeva (ca. 12th century AD, hailing from western India), Nānyadeva (king of Mithila, early 12th century AD), Someśvara, (Cālukya king of Kalyāṇī, reigning during the 1130s), and Śārṅgadeva (who wrote his *Saṅgītaratnākara* in early 13th century AD at Devagiri, modern Daulatabad) have all described the *prabandha* in similar

<sup>40</sup> Both the *ṭhumri* and the *ṭappā*, for example, have developed in this way.

terms. It was no regional style. It was a form cultivated country-wide over the centuries. Formal rules had to be carefully observed in singing a *prabandha*.<sup>41</sup> *Prabandhas* were sung in Prakrit or the vernacular, but also in Sanskrit, the 'cultivated' tongue. The *vāggeyakāras* who composed and sang *prabandhas* were honoured in the court of cultured kings.<sup>42</sup> The *prabandha* singer's art was an exacting art demanding control over many intricacies and a high degree of finesse and perfection. Critical appreciation was well-developed among discriminating listeners and *saṅgīta* texts describe in detail the *doṣas* to be avoided, and extol the *guṇas* to be cultivated.<sup>43</sup> Most of the observations made in these texts are still valid for classical music today.

#### IV

Jayadeva, we have seen, wanted his audience to admire both his musical and poetic achievement in the *Gītagovinda*. He must have belonged to that charmed group of *vāggeyakāras* who could compose both the poem and the music of a song with genius. His art received a ready response from his public and his fame spread far even in those troubled times. A verse of his has been quoted in a rock edict from Patan, dating AD 1292.<sup>44</sup>

A living tradition treasures and preserves the creations that it deems as works of genius. Yet, though we have the *Gītagovinda* poem, its original music has been lost. There exist many current styles of *Gītagovinda* singing, especially in the east and the south, but none can be traced back with any certainty to the medieval

<sup>41</sup> Someśvara, who was directly acquainted with *prabandhas*, observes: *vidhiryeṣāṃ prabandhānam yādṛśaḥ parikīrtitaḥ/ tālena bhāṣayā rāgaiḥ svaraiḥ pāṭaiśca tenakaiḥ/vidhinā tena te geyā na vidhiḥ pratilāṅghyate/ vidhiloṇe bhaveddoṣo na samyaglakṣaṇam bhavet: Mānasollāsa 4, 16, 556-557.*

<sup>42</sup> Music and dance performances were presided over by the king, and he was expected to be a connoisseur versed in the mysteries of the art (*Mānasollāsa 4, 16, 2-5*). The best *vāggeyakāras* were given seats of honour with the nobility in a *saṅgīta-sabhā*. *Ibid.*, 4, 8, 12-13).

<sup>43</sup> S.R., 3, 13-86; *Mānasollāsa 4, 16 15-87* and other texts.

<sup>44</sup> *History of Indian Literature*, Winternitz Vol. III, pt. 1, p. 136, and other standard works.

period. The earliest tradition may perhaps, in some form, have its source in the *bhakti* period, but even this cannot be really authenticated. Some manuscripts, however, may go back to an earlier period, and these give us the names of *rāga* and *tāla* for each *aṣṭapadī*. But there is no unanimity even in this very meagre musical information. Different manuscripts are seen to give different sets of *rāga-tāla* for many of the *aṣṭapadis*,<sup>45</sup> and none of the manuscripts can be directly linked with Jayadeva, or his immediate tradition.

Jayadeva's own music does not appear to have survived the poet himself for long. Indian music is almost entirely unnotated, and was much more so before the modern period. Music is handed down in a *guru-śiṣya-paramparā*, and hence its forms need a much greater social stability for preservation than do manuscripts of the written word. The turbulent period which followed Jayadeva — who most probably was patronised by Lakṣmaṇa Sena of Bengal towards the end of the 12th century AD — destroyed many forms and traditions; there is nothing to wonder if Jayadeva's music, too, was lost.

Certainly no authentic and generally accepted music attributed to Jayadeva himself was surviving when Rāṇā Kumbha wrote his *Rasikapriyā tīkā* on the *Gītagovinda* in the middle of the 15th century AD.<sup>46</sup> Kumbha in his prologue

<sup>45</sup> We have no direct access to manuscript material, but we give a few striking examples from two printed texts of the *Gītagovinda*, and the *pāṭhabhedas* they record. The texts are (1) the Nirṇaya Sāgara edition with the *tīkā*s of Kumbha and Śaṅkara Miśra, (2) and the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, Bharatiya Sanskriti Vidyamandir, Ahmedabad, edition with the *tīkā* of Mānāṅka. The different *rāgas* and *tālas* recorded for the 10th *aṣṭapadī* are: (a) *rāga deśavarāḍī, paḍīmaṭha tāla*, (b) *rāga deśākha, virāḍī (?) tāla*, (c) *rāga gauḍī, parīmaṭha tāla* (d) *rāga deśavarāḍī, rūpaka tāla*. The 16th *aṣṭapadī* has: (a) *rāga deśākha, gaudīvamaṭha (?) tāla*, (b) *rāga mālava gauḍa*, (c) *rāga deśākha, ekatāli tāla*, (d) *rāga deśavarāḍī, rūpaka tāla*. The 17th has: (a) *rāga bhairavi, yati tāla*, (b) *rāga bhairava, yati tāla*, (c) *rāga megha*. The differences recorded here are apart from those given by Kumbha; he had used an entirely different set of *rāgas* and *tālas* for the *aṣṭapadis*.

<sup>46</sup> Kumbha reigned from AD 1433 to 1468. He seems to have composed the *Rasikapriyā* towards the end of his reign after having fought and won many battles. Verse 14 in the prologue to his *tīkā* reads:

laments the fact that no *ṭikā* on the *prabandha* composed by Jayadeva exists which deals with all the aspects of the song. By this he meant that commentators had confined themselves to explaining the text alone. He proposes to fill in the existing gap by indicating the *svara* and other six limbs of a *prabandha* (such as *pāta*, *tena* etc.) as they should be musically arranged in the sung form of the poem.<sup>47</sup>

But the music to which Kumbha here alludes, was not a traditionally current form, but one which he had himself composed to the *Gītagovinda*. Repeatedly he informs us that he himself was putting the text composed by Jayadeva to music. Beginning his *ṭikā* on *sarga* two, he says — using the musical parlance of his day — that he was adding his own *dhātu* to Jayadeva's *mātu*: *dhātu* and *mātu* meant in medieval times, what the words 'svara' (music) and 'bol' (words) mean today.<sup>48</sup> Kumbha makes the same assertion at the commencement of his comments on the third, fourth, fifth, eighth and other *sargas*.

Kumbha in his *Rasikapriyā* often refers to and quotes from his great tome on music, the *Saṅgitarāja*. It appears that Kumbha had set the *Gītagovinda* to his own music in the *prabandha* idiom, even before he wrote the *Saṅgitarāja*, for in this text he says that he has composed 28 *prabandha* songs to the text of the *Gītagovinda*. He classifies these *prabandhas* as belonging to the *miśrasūda* class, and lists them with the words:

*aṣṭāvimsatirete' tra prabandhāḥ kṛṣṇabhūbhujā*

*jitvā tu prthivīm kṛtvā tatpatunkaradayinaḥ/rādhāmādhavasārasya rasiko ramate' dhunā.*

<sup>47</sup> *pratyajñāyi prabandho yo jayadevena dhimatā na tasya vidyate lakṣma sarvāṅgairupalakṣitaḥ ataḥ svarādibhiḥ ṣaḍbhiraṅgaiḥ samyojya tathyatām/ nūtvā, gitvā tadā hitvā kutukāntu pravartyate. Rasikapriyā, prologue verses 14-15. In the same passage Kumbha again says:*

*atha kumbhakarṇanṛpatiḥ stutvā natvā sarasvatīm devīm/svarapāṭatenakānām karoti gumphaṁ sumānārtham. Ibid., verse 21. The printed text reads 'pāṭha', in the second line; but the association with tena and svara clearly indicates that the reading should be pāṭa. Elsewhere Kumbha calls his ṭikā a 'total ṭikā' kṛptavivṛti and a ṭikā which illumines the music of the Gītagovinda (See verse 7 in the Rasikapriyā on sarga 3).*

<sup>48</sup> S.R. 3, 2; quoted earlier; see footnote 25.

*svopajñāgītagovindamiśrasūde prapañcitāḥ*

(*Saṅgitarāja* 2, 4, 2, 29)

(These 28 *prabandhas* are arranged by Kumbha in the *Gītagovinda miśrasūda* — a class of *prabandhas* — which he has himself composed) Kumbha had given to these *prabandhas* names inspired by Jayadeva such as: *sāmodadāmodarabhram-arapada*, *akleśakeśavakuñjaratilaka*, *amandamukundamakarandaḥ*, and such like.

Kumbha's comments can give us no idea as to how Jayadeva had composed the *prabandhas* almost three hundred years earlier, but they can certainly give us some notion as to how the text of a song was moulded to the *prabandha* form. This notion, too, can be but a faint shadow of what Kumbha had musically achieved, for he does not give us any notations. And even if he had, they would have been like an undecoded language to us, because the tonal values of notations found in old *saṅgita*-texts are far from being satisfactorily known.

Still, with these reservations in mind, let us take a few examples of how Kumbha had applied the formal musical elements of the *prabandha* genre to the *Gītagovinda*. This will at least give us an inkling of the nature of the *prabandha* idiom:

1. The second *aṣṭapadi* is the hymn beginning with:

*śritakamalākucamaṇḍala dhṛtakuṇḍala e  
kalitalalitavanamāla jaya jaya deva hare*

In this song an *ālāpa* — a free improvised musical passage, devoid of words<sup>49</sup> — was to be effected with the last syllable 'e' of the first line (*atra ekārādirālapo jñeyah*). The first line of every stanza in this *aṣṭapadi* ends with an *ekāra*: all were to be followed by an *ālāpa*; the purpose being to give a proper musical form and expression to the *rāga* being sung.<sup>50</sup> The *ālāpa* was to be rich in the use of *gamakas*.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *rāgātāpanamālapīrbhūribhaṅgimanohārā / prayogādvā tathātāpasamjñā sāksaratārjūtā: Saṅgitarāja, 2, 2, 3, 52.*

<sup>50</sup> 'e' iti etadante rāgapūrtyai gānavelāyām pratipadam etāvadpadam. *Rasikapriyā, sarga 1, aṣṭapadi 2.*

<sup>51</sup> *ālāpam ca pratipadam nānāgamakapeśalah. Ibid.*

In current classical music, too, the singing of a poetic text is interspersed with purely musical passages so as to give shape to the *rāga*.

2. The celebrated *aṣṭapadī* beginning with 'lalitalavaṅgalat-āpariśīlanakomalalayāsamīre' was also to be interspersed with *ālāpas* rich in *gamakas*. At the end of the poem were sung the auspicious 'tena' syllables followed by *pāṭa-akṣaras* or *mṛdaṅga* bols, after which 'saragam's were sung.<sup>52</sup>

3. The fourth *aṣṭapadī* (*candanacarcitanilakalevara-pītavasana-vanamāli*..) was set to *rāga gurjarī* and *jhampa tāla*. At the end of its last musical movement, called *ābhoga*, *sargams* were sung, followed by *mṛdaṅga* bols (i.e. *pāṭa*), after which a few stanzas of the song were repeated.<sup>53</sup>

Similar formal elements are found in the composition of other *aṣṭapadīs*. These features of the *prabandha* idiom, remind us of our own approach in musically interpreting poetic texts in the classical style of singing, and can help us imagine the expressive richness of the *aṣṭapadī* form.

<sup>52</sup> "teneti maṅgalavācakam. tata pātavādyākṣaroikarah. tataḥ svarah saḍjādiḥ" Ibid., *sarga* 1, *aṣṭapadī* 3, also in the same context: gamakālaptibhūyiṣṭhaḥ pūrṇakalpaḥ prakirtitaḥ pūrtau punastena-pāṭasvarāni...

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., *sarga* 2, *aṣṭapadī* 1.

## CHAPTER – FIFTEEN

### Music in the *Thānamga Sūtra*

*Aṅga* is the primary canon of the Jains. Śvetāmbara Jains have preserved eleven of the originally twelve *aṅgas* in a redaction made by Devarddhigaṇi in the Fifth century AD. *Thānamga* is the third *aṅga*. This *aṅga* is a store-house of varied lore. Together with matter relating to Jain doctrine and conduct, it also contains much information on many secular arts, skills and sciences.

The arrangement of contents in the *Thānamga* follows a plan based on numbers. The work is divided into ten *sthānas* (*thānas*), and music is placed in the seventh *sthāna* because the basis of music is the seven-note octave.

The *Thānamga* account of music is short and cursory. It is unsatisfactory as a systematic and comprehensive delineation of ancient Indian music, and is similar in this respect to the description of the subject as found in *Purāṇas* such as the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara*. It has, nevertheless, many points of interest. Early texts on music are rare and the *Thānamga* description is valuable on this count also, for it belongs to a period from which few texts survive.<sup>1</sup>

The text on music as found in the *Thānamga* also occurs almost verbatim in the *Aṅuḡgadāra*, another canonical work of the Jains. *Aṅuḡgadāra* is part of the secondary Jain canon.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The *aṅgas* contain material much antedating Devarddhigaṇi who was primarily a compiler. However, certain minor changes, deletions and additions in the *aṅgas* did occur as the discrepancies between the contents of the texts as available and as noted in the later portions of the canon or reported by early *nikākaras* show. Muni Nathamal in his editor's preface, pp. 5-6 to the Jain Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī Mahāsabhā, Calcutta, edition of the *Āyāra* text gives some examples of such changes in the case of *Ayāra*. See also *A History of Indian Literature*, Winternitz Vol. II, foot note 3 on p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Aṅuḡgadāra* is classed by some as a *mūla sūtra* and as *cūlikā* by others (see Introduction to *Dasaveyāliya*, edited by Amolak Chandra Surpuria,

material on music in this text seems to have been borrowed from the *Thānamga*, which being an *aṅga*, contains earlier material.

The purpose of including music as a topic in the *aṅga* was, evidently, to give the Jain monks a modicum of acquaintance with the art. The *Thānamga* account has no further ambitions and for a fuller and more detailed understanding of the subject one has to turn to texts like the *Nāradiya Śikṣā*, *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Dattilam*.

## II

As the *Thānamga* dissertation on music is short and also little known, we give here a full translation of it. We will then attempt at a study and analysis of the text in the light of other ancient accounts.

### THE TEXT<sup>3</sup>

#### *Names of notes*

Musical notes (*svaras*) are said to be seven in number. They are: *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *pañcama*, *dhaivata* and *niṣāda*;<sup>4</sup> thus are the seven notes termed.

#### *Svarasthānas*

There are said to be seven *sthānas* for these seven notes: *ṣaḍja* is produced from the tip of the tongue (*aggajibbhaṅṅ*), *ṛṣabha* from the chest (*ureṇa*), *gāndhāra* from the throat, *madhyama* from the middle of the tongue, *pañcama* from the nasal region, *dhaivata* from the area of the lips and the teeth, and *niṣāda* from the roof of the palate. Such are the *svara-sthānas*.

published by Raibahadur Motilal Mutha, Bhavani Peth, Satara). Winternitz classifies *Aṅgoga* with *Nandi* as an independent canonical text and mentions that some classify them as *prakīrṇas* (op. cit., pp. 429-30).

<sup>3</sup> We have used the text as given in the edition published by the Akhila Bhāratiya Jaina Śāstrodhāra Samiti, Rajkot, 1965. The text includes a *ṭikā* in Sanskrit and explanations in Hindi and Gujarati by Muni Ghāsilālji. See Appendix II for the original Prakrit.

<sup>4</sup> We will give Sanskrit terms as they are more familiar than Prakrit.

#### *Svaras produced by living beings*

Seven *svaras* are said to be produced by living beings (*jīvanissiyā*), in this manner: *ṣaḍja* is sounded by the peacock, *ṛṣabha* by the cock, *gāndhāra* is the call of the swan, and *madhyama* that of sheep. In the (spring) season when flowers bloom, the *kokila* sings the *pañcama*. The sixth note is (in the call) of the *sārasa*, and the *krauñca* bird sounds the *niṣāda*.

#### *Svaras produced by non-living objects*

Seven *svaras* are said to be produced by non-living objects (*ajīvanissiyā*), as follows: *ṣaḍja* is the sound of the *mṛdaṅga*, *ṛṣabha* of the (instrument called) *gomukha*;<sup>5</sup> the conch sounds the *gāndhāra*, and *madhyama* is sounded by the *jhallari*;<sup>6</sup> the *godhikā* with a four-legged stand<sup>7</sup> sounds the *pañcama*; the *ādambara*<sup>8</sup> sounds *dhaivata* and the seventh (note) is (sounded by) the *mahābheri*.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Svara lakṣaṇas:*

There are said to be seven *svara-lakṣaṇas* related to these seven *svaras*. These are (as follows):

With *ṣaḍja* a person acquires livelihood (*vittim*) and (his) actions do not remain fruitless;<sup>10</sup> he comes to possess many cows, friends and sons and is loved by many women.

With *ṛṣabha* (a person) acquires power (*esajjam*); (he) becomes a commander of armies and accumulates great wealth. He comes to possess (rich) clothes, perfumes, jewellery, many couches and many women. With *gāndhāra* (a person) acquires proficiency in the science of music; (he) acquires an excellent

<sup>5</sup> A musical instrument perhaps of the horn variety.

<sup>6</sup> A kind of drum or may be a cymbal.

<sup>7</sup> The *sūtra* has *caucalana pañthāna gohiyā*. 'Gohiyā' is explained as a kind of drum also called *dardarikā* by Ghāsilālji. The descriptive epithet 'caucalana pañthāna' was evidently the distinctive trait of a special type of *godhikā*.

<sup>8</sup> Another kind of drum; also mentioned in *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Another horn.

<sup>10</sup> The text reads 'kayam ca na viṇassai'.

livelihood (*vajjavitti*) and becomes a master of many arts and skills. Poets, wise men and those learned in the *śāstras* (are persons who are characterised by *gāndhāra*).

Persons who are characterised by the note *madhyama* (*majjhi-masarsampannā*) are people with a happy disposition (*suhajivīno*). They are generous, they eat, drink (and make merry): Such is the (disposition) depending upon the note *madhyama*.

Persons characterised by the note *pañcama* become kings; they are brave, they gather together a great number of men<sup>11</sup> and become leaders of vast multitudes (*anekagaṇanāyagā*).

Persons characterised by the note *dhaivata* are of a quarrelsome nature. They become bird catchers (*sāūṇiyā*), hunters (*vagguriyā*), boar-catchers and fishermen.

People whose disposition depends upon *niṣāda* are *caṇḍālas*, professional boxers (*muṭṭhiya*), lowly people, sinners of various kinds, thieves, and killers of cows.

#### The three grāmas:

There are three *grāmas* relating to these seven *svaras*. The *grāmas* are: *ṣaḍja-grāma*, *madhyama-grāma* and *gāndhāra-grāma*.

#### Mūrchanās:

*Ṣaḍja-grāma* is said to have seven *mūrchanās*: *mārgī*, *kauravīyā*, *hari*, *rajanī*, *sārākrāntī*, *sārasī* and *śuddhaṣaḍjā*.

*Madhyama-grāma* is also said to have seven *mūrchanās*: *uttaramandrā*, *rajanī*, *uttarā*, *uttarasamā*, *samavakrāntī*, *sauvirā* and *ābhīrī*, the seventh. *Gāndhāra-grāma*, too, is said to have seven *mūrchanās*: *nandī*, *kṣudrikā*, *pūrimā*, *śuddhagāndhārā* the fourth, *uttara-gāndhārā* the fifth, and *suṣṭhuttarāyāmā*, the sixth as per rules, and finally *uttarāyātā*, the seventh and last of the *mūrchanās*.

#### Questions relating to song techniques

Wherefrom are the seven notes produced? What is the

<sup>11</sup> The expression is 'saṅghakattāro' which may also mean 'accumulators (of wealth).'

fountainhead (*yonī*) of song? of what duration is the breath (in singing)? How many are the processes (*āgārā*)<sup>12</sup> in a song?

#### The answers

The seven *svaras* are produced from the region of the navel.

Lament is the fountainhead of song (*ruīyajonīyamī*).<sup>13</sup> The duration of the breath should be equal to one metric foot (*pāda*).

There are three processes (*āgārā*) in a song: (a song is) soft in the beginning, sustained in the middle and ends with a fury (*avasāne tajjavinto*).<sup>14</sup>

#### Criteria for a good singer

One who is properly trained and knows the six faults, the eight merits and the three *vṛttas* of song becomes proficient enough to sing in theatre-halls (*raṅgamajjhammi*).

#### The six faults

One should not sing timidly, or in too fast a tempo, or in a manner that cuts short the melodic movement; one should not stray away from the rhythm (*tāla*); (moreover, to sing in) a croaking crow-like voice and a nasal tone; these are the six faults in a song.

#### The eight merits

The eight merits in a good song are: fullness, affectiveness, melodic grace, clarity, avoidance of mere loudness, sweetness, evenness and charm.

<sup>12</sup> *Āgārā* literally means, 'forms', but what is signified seems more akin to processes or rather 'phases,' as the answer to this question implies.

<sup>13</sup> The question 'what is the *yonī* of a song' could mean 'what is nature or characteristic of a song, or 'to what class of things does a song belong'; the answer consequently would mean 'a song is of the nature of a lament or belongs to the same class as a lament.' See also Appendix I, at the end.

<sup>14</sup> Ghāsilālji translates 'tajjavinto' as 'kṣapayantah' which seems to be off the track. The *Pāia-sadda-Maharṇavo* equates 'tajja' with 'tajjay' and gives the meaning as, 'to threaten,' 'to deride'. There is, however, a variant reading suggesting, *kṣapayantah*; See Prakrit text, Appendix II.

*Aesthetic elements of a good song*

A good song is fluent (*pasattha*) in all three octaves: *mandra*, *madhya* and *tāra*;<sup>15</sup> it is sung with an enticing flow of words; it is synchronised with the resounding *tāla*-beats (*sama-tālapaḍukkhevaṃ*) and is intoned with an even application of all seven *svaras*: It has depth (*sāramanta*) and grace; it is devoid of faults, rightly applied, sweet, and is sung with due deliberation over its various elements (*uvanītaṃ sovacāraṃ*) and with an eye to measured form (*mita*).

*Vṛtta*

*Vṛttas* are of three kinds: *sama*, *ardhasama*, and *viṣama* in all respects — there is no fourth.

*Languages of songs*

Utterances are said to be of two kinds: Sanskrit and Prakrit, (both) are sung to the whole gamut of notes (*saramaṇḍalammi*). The *Ṛṣibhāṣ-itas*<sup>16</sup> are the best songs (*pasattha*).

*Different women and their inherent qualities as singers*

Which women sing sweetly? and which sing with a rough harshness? which sing skilfully? which sing at an (unduly) slow

<sup>15</sup> The text has '*urakaṇṭhasirapasattham*' '*ura*', '*kaṇṭha*' & '*sira*' were considered to be the three seats or abodes of the three octaves, *mandra*, *madhya* and *tāra*, respectively. The use of the terms '*ura*' etc. is, in this context, obviously indicative of the octaves which were said to reside in them. We come across similar figurative usage in other text too. See for example *Nāṭyaśāstra* 29, 43 (Gaekwad edition; this is the edition we will refer to throughout this paper); here the same *alaṅkāra* has different names when produced in the *kaṇṭha* (i.e. the *madhya* octave) and in the *sira* (the *tāra* octave).

<sup>16</sup> Ghāṣilāji interprets the phrase as a clause qualifying the precedent statement. The meaning he gives is: 'they (Sanskrit and Prakrit) are commendable since they have been uttered by Ṛṣis.' But, Prakrit and not Sanskrit was the Jain *āṛṣa* language. The reference is here perhaps to the Canon called *Ṛṣibhāṣita* or *Isibhāṣiyāṃ*. H.R. Kapadia also interprets the reference here as pointing to *Isibhāṣiyāṃ*, the canonic text. (*The Canonical Literature of the Jainas*, footnote on p. 125.) The *Isibhāṣiyāṃ* has 45 chapters, each a biography of one of the 45 of the '*pratyekabuddhas*' like Nārada, Aṅgarisi, Valkalaciri and others. Many chapters are in verse and may have been set to music.

tempo? which at a (misplaced) fast one and which stray out of a tune?

Young and pretty women (*śyāmā*)<sup>17</sup> sing sweetly; dark ones sing with a rough harshness, fair women are skilfull in song; one-eyed women sing with an undue slowness and blind women with undue speed. Brown-eyed women<sup>18</sup> sing out of tune.

*Well-synchronised song*

(Songs sung with) the seven *svaras* (ought to be) well-synchronised with the accompanying instruments, the *tāla*, the prosodic measure (*pāda*), the tempo (*laya*), the *graha*,<sup>19</sup> and the melodic movement; (it should be) well regulated in breathing in and out.

*The svaramaṇḍala*

The seven notes, the three *grāmas*, the twenty-one *mūrchanās*, the forty-nine *tānas*: these constitute the *svaramaṇḍala*.

## III

We observe that the delineation is fragmentary, eclectic and disjointed. Only a few stray topics of the ancient musical system are treated, and these, too, are merely noticed. The account tells us little of the forms and techniques of ancient music, but seems rather to be a randomly collected popular digest of musical lore. Purāṇic accounts of music are similar in character, and were, evidently, collected with a similar populist aim.<sup>20</sup>

The theoretical framework within which ancient musical forms and structures were interpreted and morphologically analysed had developed quite early into an organised discipline.

<sup>17</sup> Literally, '*śyāmā*' means 'a girl with a darkish complexion': it also denotes a 'young and pretty girl'. Kālidāsa uses the word in this sense in the *Meghadūta*, when describing the *yakṣiṇī* as '*tanvi śyāmā...*'

<sup>18</sup> The term is '*pīṅgalā*'. It perhaps also signified women with hazel-brown eyes, or pigmented brownish skins. A *pīṅgalā* was, obviously, not admired.

<sup>19</sup> *Graha* was the initial *svara* in a melodic pattern.

<sup>20</sup> For a collection of Purāṇic records on music see '*Textes des Purānas Sur La Theorie Musicale*', Alain Danielou and N.R. Bhatt, Pondicherry 1959. The records in different *Purānas* are not all of the same length and scope, but they all share a populist tendency. The *Purānas* were, after all, 'popular' works.

Already in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* — which had acquired its present form by the second or third century AD — we find a fully developed scheme hierarchically arranged into basic and secondary categories and concepts. *Nāṭyaśāstra* does not name earlier musical authorities but it alludes to an authoritative tradition<sup>21</sup> and certainly had many precursors.

The *Thāṇamga* barely lists four concepts of the ancient musical scheme, namely *grāma*, *mūrchanā*, *sthāna* and *tāna*.

The text does no more than record the names of the three ancient *grāmas*. Of these, the *gāndhāra-grāma* was an obsolete *grāma* and survived only in memory. The *Nāradyā Śikṣā* speaks of it as existing with the gods alone.<sup>22</sup>

*Thāṇamga* also names the *mūrchanās* of the three *grāmas*. The names recorded are quite at variance with other ancient lists.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Nāṭyaśāstra* refers to *āptopadeśa* — 'ancient authoritative decree' — in speaking of the two *niṣādas* (28, 34); in describing the *jātis* — ancient *rāga*-like formations — it often refers to rules or formulations as being '*smṛtāḥ*' or '*prakṛitāḥ*' etc. i.e. 'traditionally current' (28, 64; 83; 85; 88; 90; 92; etc.). Similar expressions occur in the description of *tāla* structures (31, 106; 109; 125; 144, etc.).

<sup>22</sup> *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 2, 7.

<sup>23</sup> The *Nāradyā Śikṣā* enumerates two sets of *mūrchanās*, without clearly assigning them to any specific *grāma*. The first set has: *nandī*, *viśālā sumukhi*, *citrā*, *citravatī*, *sukhā* and *valayā* (the text reads *valaya*). These are called the *mūrchanās* of the gods. The enumeration of the second set is couched in a language which suggests that the *mūrchanās* belong to the *ṣaḍja-grāma*:

*ṣaḍje tūttaramandrā syādrṣabhe cābhirudgatā  
aśvagrāntī tu gāndhāre tṛtīyā mūrchanā smṛtā  
madhyame khalu sauvirā hr̥ṣyakā pañcame svare  
dhaivate cāpi vijñeyā mūrchanā tūttarāyatā  
niṣādādṛajanīm vidyādṛṣṇām sapta mūrchanā*

(*Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 2, 9-12)

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* gives almost the same set of names for the *ṣaḍja-grāma mūrchanās* as the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* with a little difference in the sequence of names (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 28, 27-28). This text lists another set of *ṣaḍja-grāma mūrchanās* which is again the same as that of Nārada and is given in the very same language (ibid. 28, 29-30). The *madhyama-grāma mūrchanās* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are *sauvirā*, *hariṇāsvā*, *kalopanatā*, *śuddhamadhya*, *mārgī*, *pauravi* and *hr̥ṣyakā* (ibid. 28, 31).

The *Vāyupurāṇa* gives the same *mūrchanās* for the *ṣaḍja-grāma*, and enumerates them in the same sequence as in the first set listed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*

Nowhere does the *Thāṇamga* account suggest that only two *grāmas* were employed in actual musical practice. Yet the tenor of the text in its present form does not bespeak of an antiquity so high as might lead us to infer that it was composed when the three-*grāma* system was prevalent. The *Thāṇamga* account, on the whole, assumes the same framework of ideas and notions as are embodied in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* which belongs to a period when *gāndhāra-grāma* was quite obsolete.

We do not know when the *gāndhāra-grāma* became obsolete. The earliest known texts were all written within a two-*grāma* system which had already become firmly established by the period of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and must have been the ruling musical system for some centuries before.

Still we must not forget that there certainly was a *gāndhāra-grāma* once. Musical tradition has never let the memory of it die. Some latter-day theorists — like Nānyadeva in his *Bharatabhāṣya* — even constructed a tonal structure for it in order to give it a greater semblance of reality.

The *Thāṇamga* account of music is a heterogeneous juxtaposition of diverse material; perhaps in its diversity it also preserves several layers of material representing diverse periods of musical history. The nucleus of the *Thāṇamga*, in all probability, goes back to Mahāvira's immediate disciples. It is likely that the record hearkens back to an age when the *gāndhāra-grāma* was an actuality, or at least still fresh in people's memory.

Much of the *Thāṇamga*, however, bears the stamp of a relatively later date. It reflects the same milieu of musical culture as is pictured in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The *Śikṣā* is believed to have been composed in the beginning of the Christian era; the *Nāṭyaśāstra* may be a century or two later. Both texts utilised earlier material.

(see *Texts des Purāṇa Sur La Theoris Musicale*, p. 32). This *Purāṇa* also gives a list of *gāndhāra-grāma mūrchanās*: *ālāpā*, *kyṛimā nandini*, *viśuddhagāndhāri*, *gāndhāri*, *uttarā*, *ṣaḍjā* and *pañcāyatā* (ibid. p. 36). Barely a few names here bear a resemblance with the *Thāṇamga* list of *gāndhāra-grāma mūrchanās*.

The present *Thānamga Sūtra* mentions an event which occurred six hundred years after the *Nirvāna* of Mahāvīra. This *āṅga*, then, was certainly retouched in the 1st-2nd Centuries AD. Perhaps at this period new matter was also added to the work in order to enlarge its encyclopaedic scope; the section on music, too, evidently received its share of accretions. The older nucleus — containing the enumeration of three *grāmas* and their *mūrchanas* must have been preserved — albeit with certain changes or alterations — as part of a hallowed memory. Nor was it thought necessary to point out that the three-*grāma* system no longer prevailed; for the purpose of the text was not to serve as a practical guide to music but only as a record of popular lore. Often in popular descriptions of this sort entities which no longer hold sway in practice continue to figure as important, echoing the fact that these entities, too, had their day. Thus we see even today that in many popular enumerations of major *rāga*-forms, the name of *rāga dipaka* looms large. Although *dipaka* has been a lost *rāga* for long.

The Purāṇic texts on music, which, too, are popular accounts, also presume a three-*grāma* system like the *Thānamga*, despite the fact that in their present form the *Purāṇas* are probably later than the *Thānamga*; for they were, in their extant form, composed in the Gupta age or after.

Another fact is worth noting: the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* suggests that *ṣadja*, *ṛṣabha* etc. were comparatively later names for the *svaras*; in the older *sāma* music the *svaras* had another set of names.<sup>24</sup> *Thānamga*, gives the later *svara*-names and shows no awareness of any older nomenclature. This, however, does not detract from the value of *Thānamga* as recording old traditions, for the *ṣadja-ṛṣabha* nomenclature is not necessarily of a later date than the period of the three *grāmas*.

Besides *grāma* and *mūrchanā*, the *Thānamga* also speaks of *sthāna*.

The notion of *sthāna* or 'abode' was in ancient musical

<sup>24</sup> *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 1, 12.

theory based on a principle which related the octaves in singing to various regions of the human anatomy. Ancient music was usually conceived of as having a range of three octaves: *mandra* (Lower), *madhya* (middle) and *tāra* (upper). Chest was the abode of the *mandra*; it was from the chest that this octave was thought to be produced. The throat and head regions were similarly the abodes of *madhya* and *tāra*, respectively.

The *Nāradyā Śikṣā* has named these three *sthānas*.<sup>25</sup> The *Śikṣā* also gives another, quite different category of *sthānas* for each of the seven *svaras*, severally: *ṣadja* is said to be born from the throat, *ṛṣabha* from the head, *gāndhāra* from the nasal region, *madhyama* from the chest, *pañcama* from the three regions of the chest, head and throat, *dhaivata* from the forehead and *niṣāda* from all the above regions.<sup>26</sup>

The *Thānamga* account of *sthāna* is akin to the second category of *sthānas* given in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*. But the details are quite at variance; the *Thānamga* relates the *svaras* to different regions situated almost exclusively in the buccal cavity much in the manner of ancient Sanskrit grammarians recounting the 'sthānas' of different Sanskrit phonemes.<sup>27</sup> There seems to be an attempt here, both by the *Śikṣā* and the *Thānamga* to extend the concept of *sthāna*, as a concept which pictures the

<sup>25</sup> *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 1, 7-8; also *Dattilam*, 8 and 42.

<sup>26</sup> *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 5, 5-6. This passage in the *Śikṣā* is followed by a set of details of the same category but at variance with it. The relation between the two different sets of details concerning the same aspect of *sthāna* is not made clear. The second set of details is as follows: *ṣadja* is produced when the breath strikes these six *sthānas*: nose, throat, chest, roof of the palate, tongue and teeth; *ṛṣabha* is produced when the breath strikes the throat and the head; *gāndhāra* is produced on the breath striking the throat, the head, and also the nose, and *pañcama* is produced when the breath strikes the chest, the heart, the throat and the head: *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 5, 7-10.

<sup>27</sup> The *Thānamga*, however, shows awareness of the idea that chest, throat and head were the 'abodes' of the three ancient octaves, for it uses the terms *ura*, *kaṇṭha* and *śira* to denote the three octaves that were produced from these *sthānas*. It also mentions the related process of the way that *nāda* (voice) was produced in the human body when it says that 'the seven *svaras* are produced from the navel' (cf. *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 5, 7-10).

physiology of sound-production through the human-frame, from the field of grammar to that of music. But the concept remains a mere copy; it is not given any empirical basis that could be really said to *describe* the actual processes of producing different *svaras* in terms of different physiological *places* related to them. Empirically, indeed, quite unlike grammar, the processes described have nothing to do with the actual physiology of *svara* production. In fact, there seems to be no process of *svara*-production which can be said to bear any semblance with the grammatical notion of *sthāna*, and the production of different phonemes through the voice.<sup>28</sup>

The *Thānamga* text closes with a definition of the ancient notion of '*svaramaṇḍala*'. The verse here is almost an exact Prakrit parallel of the verse in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* containing the same idea.<sup>29</sup> The *Thānamga* mentions the concept of *tāna* in this passage but does not explain it, nor does it name the *tānas*.

#### IV

Though unsatisfactory as a guide to the schema and forms of ancient music, the *Thānamga* text outlines certain ideas and notions that formed the metaphysical and aesthetic perspective in which music was generally envisioned and evaluated.

One deep-rooted ancient idea was that musical tones had a series of extra-musical dimensions. The seven *svaras* were perceived to have attributes correlating them with phenomena which, apparently, have nothing to do with tones: a *svara* was not only a pleasing sound, it had a colour, a social caste and also a deity.

The *Nāradyā Śikṣā* lists the following series of these attributes:

The colours of *svaras*: *ṣaḍja* is said to possess a lotus hue, *ṛṣabha* has a tawny parrot-green colour, *gāndhāra* is golden,

<sup>28</sup> For further discussion, the reader might like to see another essay in this collection, 'The Body As An Instrument'.

<sup>29</sup> *saptasvarāstrayo grāmā mūrchanāstveka viṃśatiḥ tānā ekonapañcāśadityetatsvara-maṇḍalam. Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 2, 4. The notion of *svaramaṇḍala* is differently conceived in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Dattilam*. These two texts relate the notion to the *śruti*-intervals between *svaras* (See *Dattilam* 15; *Nāṭyaśāstra* 24).

*madhyama* is the colour of reddish-white orriander (*kunda*), *pañcama* is black (or dark blue: *kṛṣṇa*). *dhaivata* is yellow and *niṣāda* possess all the colours.

These are the '*varṇas*' of *svaras* but each has a *varṇa* also in the sense of social caste: *pañcama*, *madhyama* and *ṣaḍja* are *brāhmaṇas*; *dhaivata* and *ṛṣabha* are *kṣatriyas*, while *gāndhāra* and *niṣāda* are half-*vaiśya*, half-*sūdra*.<sup>30</sup>

*Svaras* also have transcendental attributes. Every *svara* has a specific deity (*adhiṣṭātr devatā*): *ṣaḍja* has Brahmā for its deity; *ṛṣabha* has Agni — 'because this *svara* radiates a fiery brilliance;' *gāndhāra* has the cow — 'because it is pleasing to the cattle, and the *saurabheyas* (i.e. 'cattle', but also 'Rudra') come running on hearing it; *pañcama* has as its deity, Soma — 'for in the different musical *grāmas* this *svara* like the Moon, waxes and wanes in measure; *dhaivata*, too, for the same reason, also has Soma for its deity and *niṣāda* has Āditya — 'since this *svara* overpowers all others.'<sup>31</sup>

Later texts also record attributes of this kind. Mataṅga (ca. 7th century AD) and Śārṅgadeva (13th century AD), for example, give similar lists. Their list of deities is however, quite at variance with that of the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*.<sup>32</sup> There were, clearly,

<sup>30</sup> *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 4, 1-4.

<sup>31</sup> *ādyasya daivataṃ brahmā ṣaḍjasyāpyucyate budhaiḥ  
tikṣṇadiptiprakāśatvādrṣabhasya huṛśanaḥ  
gāvāḥ pragite tuṣyanti gāndhārastena hetunā  
śrutvā caivopatiṣṭhanti saurabheyā na saṃśayaḥ  
somastu pañcamasyāpi daivataṃ brahmarāṭ smṛtam  
nirhrāso yaśca vṛddhiśca grāmamāsādyā somavat  
tasmādasya svarasyāpi dhaivatatvaṃ vidhiyate  
niṣidanti svarā yasmānṣādaṣṭena hetunā  
sarvāmścābhībhavatyēṣa yadādityo'sya daivatamiti.*

*Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 5, 12-18.

The deity for *madhyama* is missing from the text. Bhaṭṭa Śobhokara in his *tikā* interprets the passage as recounting Āditya for both *dhaivata* and *niṣāda*. This, we think, is misconstrued. *Dhaivata* has been bracketed with *pañcama*, not *niṣāda*. Like *pañcama*, *dhaivata* was the only other note which underwent an increase and decrease in measure in the two ancient *grāmas*. Nānyadeva in this context clearly says: '*somavad vṛddhimāpanno dhaivataḥ somadaivataḥ*': *Bharatabhāṣya*, 3, 17.

<sup>32</sup> *ṣaḍjasya daivataṃ brahmā ṛṣabho vahnidaivataḥ  
gāndhāro bhāratīdevo madhyamo haradaivataḥ*

different traditions in this matter. The *varṇas* given in all texts are, however, identical.<sup>33</sup>

Envisioning such attributes was part of the ethos of the period when early theorisings on music and speech-sounds developed. The *Yājñavalkya Śikṣā* gives a similar scheme of attributes for the phonemes and syllables of Sanskrit speech.<sup>34</sup> The concept of such attributes had, evidently, arisen out of a perception of affinity or identity felt at an intuitive, psychic plane.

In later ages enumerating these extra-musical attributes of *svaras* became a part of the mythical lore that grew around music. But this lore appears to have survived as a pious convention alone and not in spirit. Yet we can, to some degree, still sense the genuine core of psychic intuition that lay at the root of this convention, because we still have a 'feel' for qualities in music which are somewhat analogous in nature. We still feel that different *rāgas* have an inner affinity with different hours of the day and with different seasons of the year (at least we do so in the Hindustāni tradition). A morning *rāga* sung in the evening offends our sensibilities; the *rāga malhār* invariably reminds us of rains.<sup>35</sup>

The later medieval phenomenon of picturing *rāgas* as elaborate deities — of which we find the first evidence in the 14th century,<sup>36</sup>

*pañcamah śatayajñastu dhaivato gaṇanāyakah  
niśādo bhānudevastu ityete svaradevatāḥ. Brhaddeśi 79-81.*

Śārṅgadeva's list has many deities in common with this but not all: *Saṅgitaratnākara* 1, 3, 57-58.

<sup>33</sup> Nānyadeva (12th century AD) has 'karbura' for *niśāda*: *Bharatabhāṣya* 3, 4. Śārṅgadeva has the same: *Saṅgitaratnākara* 1, 3, 55. But this is not essentially different from the colour given by Nārada, since 'karbura' also means 'of a variegated colour,

<sup>34</sup> *Yājñavalkya Śikṣā* 86-92. We refer to the edition published in the Banaras Sanskrit Series, by Griffith and Thibaut, Banaras 1891.

<sup>35</sup> For a very different view of the concept of the affinity between seasons and times of the day and *rāgas*, see the essay, 'An Enquiry Into The *Rāga* — Time, Association In the Light of History,' recorded earlier in this collection.

<sup>36</sup> The earliest *rāga-dhyānas* are found in the *Saṅgītopaniṣatsāroddhāra* of Sudhākalaśa (AD 1350) — see ch. 3 verses 72 to 111. The trend may have begun a century earlier. See also the essay, 'Some Thoughts On The Early History of Rāgamālā Paintings' in this collection.

— and as painterly images in the later *rāga-mālā* paintings, too, can certainly be traced to the early concept of assigning a deity and a colour to every *svara*.

The *Thānamga* does not list the kind of extramusical *svara*-attributes that other ancient texts do. It, however, speaks of another: it identifies each *svara* with the call of a specific bird or animal. This, too, was a generally held notion, and the *Thānamga* enumeration has its counterpart in the *Nāradiyā Śikṣā* and other texts, both early and relatively modern. The language in which the descriptions are couched suggest that the relation in this case was considered to be an actual physical one: the peacock is said to intone the note *śaḍja*,<sup>37</sup> the sheep bleat out the *madhyama*, the *kokila* actually sings in the *pañcama* and so forth.

The implications are intriguing. Did the ancients really recognise the *svaras* of their octave in the cries of certain birds and animals? The expressions in the texts do seem to suggest so, yet there are certain difficulties in accepting this as a fact. Let us consider them.

To picture an actual correspondence one may postulate that the ancients had standardised the pitches for different notes just as one finds in modern western music.<sup>38</sup> Tuning forks are used in the west to provide conventionally fixed pitches. Cries of birds and animals, we may imagine, similarly acted as live tuning forks for the ancients; so that if one wanted to arrive at the standard pitch of the *śaḍja*, one only had to listen to the wail-like cry of the peacock. Other notes could similarly be arrived at. But this picture, though appealing, cannot hold ground for a number of reasons.

<sup>37</sup> Note Kallinātha's comments on *Saṅgitaratnākara* 1, 3, 46-47: 'lokato' pi *śaḍjā-disvarūparijñānāya mayūrādiprāniviśeṣadhvaniṃ nidarśanābhiprā-yeṇāha "mayūreti"*.

<sup>38</sup> We must not forget that the evidence from *Dattilam* seems to battle against this assumption. Dattila says that any sound whatever could be taken as the *śaḍja*, and other notes followed through a fixed ratio of tonal relations; *Dattilam* 12. It might, however, be argued that by the time of *Dattilam* the older tradition was already lost.

Firstly, there is the difficulty of variant traditions. Different accounts equate the *svaras* with the cries of quite different birds or animals. The enumeration in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* sharply diverges from the one in *Thāṇamga*. *Ṛṣabha* in the *Thāṇamga* account is the cry of the cock but the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* names the cow; *gāndhāra* according to the *Śikṣā* corresponds to the bleating of sheep or goats (*ājāvika*) but *Thāṇamga* equates it with the call of the swan, and according to this text the sheep (*meṣa*) bleat in the note *madhyama*, not *gāndhāra*. The *Śikṣā* equates *dhaivata* and *niṣāda* with the calls of horses and elephants respectively<sup>39</sup> but *Thāṇamga* in these cases names the *sārasa* and the *krauñca*. One contradiction especially stands out: the *krauñca* bird according to the *Śikṣā* calls in the *madhyama* but according to the *Thāṇamga* the *krauñca* calls in the *niṣāda*, a note half an octave away from *madhyama*. Later texts report other traditions. Mataṅga, quoting Kohala,<sup>40</sup> equates *ṛṣabha* with the call of the *cātaka* bird and *dhaivata* with the croaking of the monsoon frogs.<sup>41</sup> The rest of his list is as in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*.

Still, we find two constants: all known traditions equate *ṣaḍja* with the peacock's call and *pañcama* with the cooing of the *kokila*. These two equations had become almost axiomatic. Kālidāsa, thus, speaks of the '*ṣaḍjasamvādiniḥ kekāḥ*' ('the peacock's call, harmonious with the *ṣaḍja*') while the *pañcama* of the *kokila* was almost a by-word, as it still is. With these notes as our axis-sounds, notes which had an acoustically harmonic relation with each other in the ancient *ṣaḍja-grāma*, we can, in

<sup>39</sup> *ṣaḍjaṃ vadati mayūro gāvo rambhanti cārṣabham  
ājāvike tu gāndhāraḥ krauñco vadati madhyamam  
puṣpasādhāraṇe kāle kokilā vakti pañcamam  
aśvastu dhaivataṃ vakti niṣādo vakti kuñjaraḥ*

*Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 5, 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> There is a confusion in the text on this point. The text quotes the passage with the words: '*tathā cāha kohalaḥ maheśvaraḥ*'. Kohala was a well-known ancient authority; the word *maheśvara* is out of place and seems to have been inserted by an inadvertent scribe.

<sup>41</sup> *Brhaddeśi*, *vṛtti* on verse 62. The same tradition is given by Śārṅgadeva: *Saṅgitaratnākara*. 1, 3, 46-47.

principle, arrive at the other notes. But again there is a difficulty. None of these two birds produce sounds that are themselves constant, meaning that the birds do not produce single sounds. The peacocks call is distributed over a range of at least two tones and the *kokila* makes a whole melodic movement consisting of a large cluster of notes. How is one to pick out *ṣaḍja* and *pañcama* from this range of pitches?<sup>42</sup>

The *Thāṇamga* account makes another classification on this point which is relevant to our discussion. It equates the *svaras* not only with the calls of birds and animals but also with sounds produced by what it terms as 'non-living objects;' these being, in this instance, musical instruments. An equation of this kind is not found in any non-Jain text.<sup>43</sup>

*Ṣaḍja*, the *Thāṇamga* says, is produced by the *mṛdaṅga*, *ṛṣabha* by the *gomukha*, and so forth. The instruments named are of the percussion or the horn group — instruments that have a relatively limited range of tones — and yet none of them are instruments that sound at a constant pitch.<sup>44</sup> They could not have acted as tuning forks. They must, moreover, have come in different shapes and sizes and consequently they must have had different ranges of pitch. It is difficult to imagine of any specific instrument inherently producing only one definite *svara*.

We can only conclude that in all probability the relation between *svaras* and the sounds of birds, animals as well as musical instruments was also conceived on a psychic rather than a physical plane. This may also account for the difference we

<sup>42</sup> It must be added here in good faith that an acoustic study of the ratios between the sounds made by the various animals listed in ancient texts might, perhaps, provide a clue as to the pitch-positions, and tonal relations of ancient *svaras*.

<sup>43</sup> Sudhākalaśa, a Jain author of the 14th century, makes a similar classification of notes into *jiva*, and *ajiva* categories: '*sacetanakṛtāḥ ke' pi kecinnīścetanaodbhavāḥ; Saṅgitopaniṣadsāroddhāra* 1, 10. This classification was, evidently, borrowed from the *Thāṇamga*.

<sup>44</sup> Bharata indeed speaks of tuning them: see *Nāṭyaśāstra* 34, 217; notice especially the expression '*śīthilāñcitavadhrastaniteṣu yathāgrāmāragamā-rjanalīpteṣu mṛdaṅgeṣu...*'

find in the traditional lists of birds and animals, since flexibility is quite conceivable in matters perceived on a supra-sensory plane, without detracting from the value of the perception itself. We can, for instance, validly question if a particular *rāga* should indeed be called a 'morning' *rāga* rather than an 'evening' *rāga*, without questioning the principle of assigning such affinities.<sup>45</sup>

## V

Music had developed into a consciously cultivated art at an early period. As a corollary it had also acquired a significant body of critical terminology. The very early history of music-criticism, as of the theoretical scheme of musical forms and structures, is obscure. Already in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, critical criteria for evaluating music acquire an organised plan and vocabulary. The *Śikṣā* classifies and lists the *guṇas* (merits) and *doṣas* (faults) of performances much in the same way as the early *ālāṅkārikas* classified the *guṇas* and *doṣas* of poetry.

The *Thāṇamga* enumerates eight merits and six faults. It gives us just a string of critical terms without explaining them. However, in many cases the terms are almost self-explanatory; though, of course, we cannot recapture the nuances they must have possessed in a living musical milieu.

The *Nāradyā Śikṣā* lists ten *guṇas* and fourteen *doṣas*. It also has short prose passages defining and explaining the *guṇas*.<sup>46</sup> Most terms in the *guṇa*-enumeration are common with the *Thāṇamga* list — six to be exact — though there is a difference in the number of terms.<sup>47</sup> But the *doṣa*-lists in the two

<sup>45</sup> Lively controversies occur among musicians regarding the 'morning' or 'evening' properties of many *rāgas*, especially newly composed ones.

<sup>46</sup> The *doṣas* are only listed, not expounded. The *Śikṣā* as we have it has some textual lacunae and irregularities. The original text might have contained expositions of the *doṣas*, too. *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 3, 1-13.

<sup>47</sup> The *Śikṣā* list is: *gānasya tu daśavidhagunavrttistadyathā: 'raktam pūrnamalaṅkṛtam prasannaṁ vyaktam, vikruṣṭam ślakṣṇam samam sukumāraṁ madhuramiti guṇāḥ.'* *Nāradyā Śikṣā*, 1, 3, 1. *Thāṇamga* does not have *prasanna*, *vikruṣṭa*, *ślakṣṇa* and *sukumāra*. Instead it has *aviḡhṭṭha* and *salaliya*.

texts have a great divergence.<sup>48</sup>

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* devotes a large section to the examination of *guṇas* and *doṣas* in music (ch-33). Merits and demerits of singing and instrumental playing are presented in the perspective of ancient theatre where music had a major role to play. The material is presented in a much more organised form than in the *Thāṇamga* or the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*. The delineation is, moreover, wider in scope; the merits of singers, players on different instruments and also instructors of music have been distinguished and separately treated. The treatment has many critical notions in common with the *Thāṇamga* and the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*. These must have part of the general milieu. But textual resemblances are superficial. The tenor of Bharata's text is quite different in mode and exposition.

Apart from a list of *guṇas* and *doṣas*, the *Thāṇamga* also contains certain observations regarding the principles governing the forms and the aesthetics of ancient music, especially song. These observations are not found elsewhere — at least not in the same form — and are worthy of consideration.

The *Thāṇamga* speaks of three '*āgāras*' of songs — a notion unique to *Thāṇamga*. Songs it says, begin softly, they are sustained in the middle and end with a fury. The description, in spite of being laconic, is quite suggestive. It, apparently, outlines the general phases of melodic movements made in ancient renderings of song. The suggested formal contours remind us of our own classical singing which usually begins at a slow-soft pace, and gathering momentum as well as melodic wealth, ends with a fast turbulent movement.

After listing *guṇas* and *doṣas*, the *Thāṇamga* sums up the

<sup>48</sup> The *Śikṣā* lists: *śaṅkitaṁ bhīta(m) mudghuṣṭamavyaktamanunāsikaṁ kākasvaraṁ śirasi gataṁ tathā sthānavivarjitaṁ visvaraṁ virasaṁ caiva viśṭiṣṭam viśamāhatam vyākulaṁ tālahiṇam ca gīdoṣāścaturdaśāḥ*

*Nāradyā Śikṣā* 1, 3, 11-12. Only three terms are in common with *Thāṇamga* (if we read '*bhītam*' and not '*bhīmam*'). The *Thāṇamga* has '*duyam*' '*rahasaṁ*' and '*uttalaṁ*' which are absent from the *Śikṣā* list.

qualities expected of a good song in a few pithy phrases. Such aphoristic passages were, no doubt, intended to serve as memorisable guide-lines for aspiring musicians as well as discerning listeners.

Another such aphoristic passage occurs at the end of the *Thānamga* account and states a maxim in a nutshell, namely, that synchronisation or harmony (*samatva*) must pervade a song in all its parts. Especially interesting here is the notion of synchronised breathing. The advice — stated earlier in the text — that the breath should be equal in measure to a single metric foot is, evidently, a related idea. A metric foot usually marks a break or pause in the syntax of a poem; singers are, therefore, asked to regulate their breathing in such a manner that a pause in their singing should coincide with that in the sung text.

Such a notion of pause recalls the concept of *vidāri* (musical pause) as defined by Bharata in relation to theatric songs (*dhruvā*). Bharata lays down the rule that in singing songs during dramatic performances a *vidāri* should be made to coincide with the consummation of a sentence or a clause.<sup>49</sup>

There is a tantalising, though cryptic, remark in the *Thānamga* about the essential nature of song or the source of the impulse to sing. The remark is evocative of certain well-known and penetrating reflections on the origin of the poetic impulse. Songs, the text says, are '*rudītayoni*': they are of the nature of a lament or have their source in a lament. We are reminded of Shelley's famous line: 'Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought'. The remark also brings to mind Bhavabhūti's celebrated statement that all poetry expresses but one sentiment, the *karuṇa* — pathetic — others are nothing but *karuṇa* in different garbs.<sup>50</sup> Similar in spirit is the poignant story of how

<sup>49</sup> '*padavarṇasamāptistu vidarityabhisamjñitā.*' *Nāṭyaśāstra* 32, 17. Abhinava clarifies: '*avāntaravākyasamāptau sthāyādivaṛṇasyāpanyāsenā nyāsenā vā samāptirvidāri.*' It should be remembered that *vidāri* was intimately related to the meaning of a poem only in certain types of songs; it could also relate to melodic content alone.

<sup>50</sup> '*eko rasaḥ karuṇa eva nimittabhedādbhinnah  
prthag prthagivāśrayate vivartān.*'

Vālmīki, the *ādikavi*, (the primeval poet) composed the world's very first stanza of poetic verse at being deeply moved by the sorrow of a *krauñca* bird wailing for its dying mate.<sup>51</sup>

It is remarkable that most of the critical notions we find recorded in the *Thānamga* (and other ancient texts) are still pertinent to our music-making today. Indeed, many ancient expressions can be discovered in current vernacular musical vocabulary; they are a living testimony to certain essential continuities of our art. No doubt, many of the notions are truisms and apply to all music, but a significant number of them are specific to the musical culture as developed in India.

## VI

The *Thānamga* text on music contains quite a motley collection of material within its small radius. It also records some interesting oddities of musical lore.

A longish passage expounds what the text terms *svara-lakṣanas*. The contention of the passage may be explained as an extended application of the principles of palmistry. The passage correlates the fortunes and the disposition of a person with his specific '*svara*'.

Similar divinations were part of the ancient science of *aṅgavidyā*, according to which any characteristic physical trait of a person could be a 'sign' (*lakṣaṇa*) or indication of his fortunes. Every man has a vocal chord which is as distinctive as the lines of his palm. Voice can thus form the basis of prognostication, and it was part of the business of *aṅgavidyā* to 'read' voices.

Not much literature on *aṅgavidyā* survives, though it must have been a very popular *vidyā*. We have fortunately one major ancient text in Jain Prakrit on the subject, entitled *Aṅgavijjā*. The work is classed by Jains as a canonical text of the *pañṇa* (*prakirṇaka*) group and is assigned to the 4th century AD.<sup>52</sup> The

<sup>51</sup> See also Appendix I, at the end, for a discussion of a very different interpretation of passage in view here.

<sup>52</sup> See Dr. Motichandra's introduction to *Aṅgavijjā*, p. 35; text published by the Prakrit Text Society, Banaras 1957.

37th chapter of this work speaks of *lakṣaṇas* (the chapter is called *Lakṣaṇādhyāya*). A *lakṣaṇa* in this context meant the physical trait of a person: such as complexion (*vaṇṇa*) gait (*gati*) and the like. *Svara* is recounted as one of the *lakṣaṇas*. The word 'svara' here is used in the sense of 'a sweet pleasant voice' and not to signify musical tones. Persons who possess *svara* — or in other words people with pleasant voices — are according to *Aṅgavijjā*, the lucky ones; they attain to great power (*issariya*), or a like stature (*issariyasamāṇa*), they acquire proficiency in speech (*gahiyavakkam*), and in the sciences, and become well-known and far-famed. Those devoid of *svara* are misfortunate in these respects.<sup>53</sup>

The *svara-lakṣaṇas* recorded in the *Thāṇamga* are much more specific. Here the word 'svara' denotes a particular musical tone. People with different *svaras* have different fortunes. And unlike the *Aṅgavijjā* account, possessing 'svara' is not by itself considered beneficial; much depends on which *svara* one has: *dhavata* and *niṣāda* are certainly not the right notes to have. But how is one to know the *svara* of a person? No criteria are given. Perhaps, this, too, was a matter of psychic vision. Some occultists believe that every person emanates an aura of a specific colour. The *svara* of a person was, perhaps, similarly envisaged.

Another curious passage occurs among the remarks on musical aesthetics. The musical propensities of women are related to their looks and physical make-up. The basic criterion is simple: beautiful women sing beautifully, ugly ones make poor singers. The attitude reflects the ancient adage — '*yatrākṛtirtatra guṇāḥ*' ('excellence is where beauty is').

Women who are classed as *śyāmā* — a type universally lauded in ancient times — are described as the most excellent singers. Bharata, too in a similar context, has a good word to say

<sup>53</sup> *sarasampanne issariyam issariyasamānam kittijasasampannam ca gahiyavakkam vijjābhāgi ya sarasampanne bhavati sarahine etesim vivatti. Aṅgavijjā, ch. 37 (p. 174).*

about women of the *śyāmā* type.<sup>54</sup> Abhinava, by way of explanation, comments that only a *śyāmā* could stand up to the rigours of musical training.<sup>55</sup> Bharata, however, refrains from going into details about types of women and their capabilities as musicians. He makes a general statement that in dramatic performances songs are often sweeter if sung by women, since women have a naturally melodious voice; recitative prose passages, he says, are more effectively spoken by men because of their vigorous voices.<sup>56</sup>

## VII

We have said that the *Thāṇamga* account of music is a kind of digest. It contains material compiled from various sources. As in Purāṇic compilations of this nature, sources are not mentioned.

Tracing such material to its source can become mostly an exercise in futility because little from ancient times survives.

But we have noted one remarkable parallel with the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* where there is an almost word to word correspondence. This is no doubt a significant clue, but to presume a direct borrowing either way could be misleading. Musical lore like other ancient lore seems to have had a body of material traditionally handed down. It formed a kind of common pool from which all writers on the subject could draw. The passage which occurs both in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* and *Thāṇamga* may have been part of this common heritage. Many early *Śikṣā* works likewise share certain passages in common and the question who borrowed from whom is quite misplaced in such cases.

A fruitful conjecture might yet have been possible if one could be sure of the relative chronology of the *Thāṇamga* and the

<sup>54</sup> *suvihitagamakavidhāyinyo 'kṣobhyā tālalayakuśatāḥ / ātodyārpitakarnā vijñeyā gāyikāḥ śyāmāḥ. Nāṭyaśāstra 33, 34.*

<sup>55</sup> '*śyāmā iti taruṇyaḥ tadvarṇā eva kleśasahatvāt.*' Abhinava on above.

<sup>56</sup> '*prāyeṇa tu svabhāvāt strīṇāṃ gānaṃ ruciraṃ ca pāthyavidhiḥ, strīṇāṃ svabhāvamadhuraḥ kaṅṭho nṛṇāṃ balitvaṃ ca. Nāṭyaśāstra 33, 5.*

*Nāradyā Śikṣā*. But this, too, is uncertain ground and we are left with no threads to follow.

In truth, analysis shows that there are more textual divergences than similarities between the *Thānamga* and the *Nāradyā Śikṣā*. We can even go further and say that there are certain elements in the *Thānamga* account which are either absent from or at significant variance with the material available not only in the *Nāradyā Śikṣā* but also the *Purānas*, and later musical texts which rely, in many matters, on earlier works. It seems that the compiler of the *Thānamga* section on music had borrowed much material from a school of musical theorists with a distinct stance and vocabulary on certain moot points.

## Chapter – Sixteen

### The Body as an Instrument A Theoretical Choice Made by Śāringadeva

I wish to discuss an interesting section which occurs right at the beginning of Śāringadeva's *Saṅgītaratnākara*. It concerns the question of what the text calls, *nādotpatti*, the process by which sound is produced in the human body. Clearly, however, what Śāringadeva wanted to do was not only to explain *nādotpatti*, the production of sound in general through the human frame, but to picturise *svarotpatti*, the more specific process by which musical tones arise in the body.

Śāringadeva's handling of his material is worthy of attention. He had, we find, three different theoretical pictures of the process before him, which were available to him from widely different disciplines and approaches to the human body. He outlines all three of them and then quite perceptibly makes a choice from among them, picking the one most appropriate for his purpose as a *saṅgīta-śāstri*. His understanding of the human body as it emerges from the stand-point he opts for, is to treat the human body as an instrument which the soul, or rather the embodied soul, the *jivātman*, uses for its own creative purpose of making music.

Interesting as the view which Śāringadeva accepts as an answer to the question of how sound is produced through the human body is in itself, what I find even more interesting is to observe him making a choice between available alternatives. In this, curiously, his approach is not quite discursive, as one would expect it to be. He does not *argue* for the propriety of the choice he makes, treating, as he should have, the alternatives he rejects as *pūrvapakṣas* which must be shown as inadequate through a proper reasoning. The intellectual tradition of the *śāstras* such as *alānkāra* in which he was obviously trained, not to speak of the *darśanas*, do indeed follow an articulate argumentative path for

arriving at conclusions. But Śārṅgadeva does not take this path. And yet Śārṅgadeva does make a choice, a choice which, among all the alternative theories he had at hand, most suitably matches his larger picture of music-making as an activity of a free and creative agent, a *vāggeyakāra*. In the theory he finally accepts, the process of *nādotpatti* emerges as a causal, physical process which a person desirous of singing can freely use.

Intriguingly, it also appears that Śārṅgadeva was being pulled in two different directions. He seems, on the one hand, to be *selecting* an appropriate scheme from among those he had before him, but at the same time one also feels that he wanted to present the different schemes, which do not really mesh with each other, as forming a large coherent whole into which the exiguous process of the production of tones in singing fits as a part. Noteworthy is also the fact that the two schemes he 'rejects' and which he takes up in some detail, clearly contain elements he could have used or adapted with advantage in order to formulate a process more in accord with his purpose. Such a procedure would, indeed, have given him a theoretically more satisfying scheme. But he does not follow this course. The process he actually ends up by adopting is, in comparison with what he rejects, or rather ignores, sketched quite cursorily.

Fortunately, for details concerning what Śārṅgadeva actually says I can refer the reader to the English translation of the *Saṅgitaratnākara* by R.K. Shringy and Prem Lata Sharma (vol.I, *adhyāya* 1, *prakaraṇas* 2 and 3).<sup>1</sup> This will allow us to be reasonably brief and save us from lengthy textual references. Although I find that I must reproduce some details for my own critical reflections on the text.

The two, what might be called, 'larger' schemes, sketched at a greater length, which Śārṅgadeva gives us, are outlined in a single chapter which he terms *piṇdotpatti*, 'the birth of the body'. This chapter is, in a significant sense, the first in the text: it

<sup>1</sup>*Saṅgitaratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva, *Text and English Translation*, Vol.1 by R.K. Shringy and Prem Lata Sharma, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

follows a preamble which is just a list of contents of the *Saṅgitaratnākara* as a whole. *Piṇdotpatti* deals not only with the birth of the body, as the name implies, but also its structure. Of the two distinct schemes it contains, the first is a picture sketched in some detail of bodily processes as they had been mapped in the discipline of medicine known to Śārṅgadeva, the *āyurveda*. Śārṅgadeva gives us quite a detailed picture which he had, in fact, studied in even greater detail, writing an independent book on the subject. He refers us to this book for further information. The book, which he had, interestingly, named, *Ādhyātmaviveka* — 'Distinguishing the Self' — is, unfortunately, no longer extant.<sup>2</sup> But we know that he was an expert in the subject, and he tells us that he was also a practising doctor.

In the picture of the 'self' — clearly, in this context, the body as an embodied self — visualised here, the human frame is conceived as a psychosomatic entity, a whole, a 'person', which combines entities and properties that may otherwise be distinguished as material, organic and conscious or mental. Processes which are inner or psychic, whether of thought, emotion or resolve, are part of the 'body', which is conceived as emanating from *brahma* itself, and is part of a cosmic scheme founded on the idea of a single 'spiritual' stuff which manifests itself in entities both physical as well as psychic. *Jīvas*, individual souls, emerge like sparks from a fire out of the ultimate spiritual reality, *brahma*. Shrouded by *avidyā*, and propelled by *karma*, they assume physical form, doing so again and again, till they attain *brahma*-hood and *mokṣa*.

This is not an unfamiliar picture in the tradition of Indian ideas about creation. What is important for our purpose here is a glimpse into the actual mapping of the human body that the picture envisages.

Right from the moment the *jīva* enters the womb, to be born

<sup>2</sup>*Saṅgitaratnākara*, 1, 2, 118 : *iti pratyāṅgasāṅkṣepo vistarastviha tattvataḥ / asmadviracite' dhyātmaviveke vikṣyatām budhaiḥ//*  
The book is not available if we are to believe the *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, which only refers to the work without reporting any manuscript of it.

as a human person, it begins to acquire the extremely complex psychophysical characteristics that will make him an embodied soul, a 'person'. The properties the embryo begins to acquire, have been analysed into six different *bhāvas* — 'states of being', which include a collection of very different things: such as, living organs, functions, propensities and downright physical things. The six *bhāvas* are shaped by, and named after, six distinct sources or causes: mother, father, *rasa*, *ātmā*, *sattva* and *sātmya*. It will be useful to have before us some idea of how they are composed.

Important is the fact that each *bhāva* is in itself a complex mosaic of plural characteristics, containing a mixed bag of elements which we today would separately class as psychic, organic and material. Intriguing, and in a profound sense fitting, as this way of understanding the human body as a psychosomatic entity is, the logic behind the mix is not easy to see, and often appears confusing. Let us have look. The *bhāva*, which is said to be 'born of the mother' (*mātrja*), is obviously thought of as one 'single' *bhāva*, because the apparently very different entities which 'belong' to it share a common quality: that of 'softness' or 'delicacy' (*mrdu*). The entities, which share this quality are also said to share the same source, namely, the mother; they are mainly organic entities such as blood, fat, the navel, the heart etc. But, true to the psychosomatic complexity of the picture, the heart is not just a physical organ, it is, as we shall later see, also the seat of consciousness. *Bhāvas* born of the father have, on the contrary, and quite expectedly, the property of being 'hard'; they consist of veins, arteries, body-hair, beard, teeth as well as semen. Veins and arteries play a vital role in the functioning of the body, as envisaged in this scheme, which they would, indeed, in any scheme with any empirical bias as this one also has, but veins are here instrumental not only in aiding organic functions, but also as carriers of the stuff of consciousness. 'Rasa', which is another *bhāva*, stands, as the word suggests, for fluids which nourish the body and make it grow (*śarīropacaya*); but it is also responsible for a sense of satisfaction (*trpti*), absence of greed

(*alolupatva*), and a continuing strength of resolution (*utsāha*: a word which in this context may also be taken as suggestive not of a property of the will but a general sense of optimism and 'pep' arising out of sheer good health). In any case, what we have is plainly a motley of very different things carrying the single label 'rasa'. There is however, no common 'source' in this case. *Ātmā*, as can perhaps be expected, consists of somewhat more clearly distinguishable features associated with consciousness. Like the Nyāya *ātmā* it contains pleasure, pain, desire, effort and memory (*bhāvanā*: the word being evidently used in the Naiyāyika's, and not the Mīmāṃsaka's, the sense), as well as knowledge. But this *bhāva*, too, unlike the *ātmā* as pictured in Nyāya, is not free of a what seems a peculiar mix. *Ātmā*, thus, besides its bag of psychic qualities, is also the source of the sense organs — the *indriyas* — and is responsible for the age to which a body survives (*āyu*). The word 'indriya' here indicates both *jñānendriyas*, the senses through which one perceives, or 'knows': the senses of sight, hearing, touch and the like,; as well as the *karmendriyas* or the 'senses' of action, the motor organs. These are: the organs of speech, the hands, the feet, the anus and the reproductive organs. There are also two internal organs, two distinct *antaḥkaraṇas*, associated with *ātmā* as parts of it. These are *manas* and *buddhi*. Pleasure and pain are the functions of *manas*, while the functions of *buddhi* are, expectedly, memory and conceiving (*vikalpa*); but, curiously with another odd mixture of categories, it is also the bearer of 'the sense of fear' (*bhiti*).

*Manas* and *buddhi* are important for our reflections here, since this is where one would expect Śārngadeva to locate 'agency' in man, as the producer of *nāda* and the user of *svara* in making music. But if we look for how Śārngadeva has pictured their active role in his scheme, and his understanding of the process of *nādotpatti* and *svarotpatti*, we face problems. How, to begin with, we might want to know, are they related to desire and effort? Are desire and effort included under *vikalpa*, noted as a function of the *buddhi*? — Śārngadeva is strangely

unconcerned regarding how his *ātmā* could, in his scheme, be an agent. We find no relation in his picture between desire and effort, and *buddhi* and *manas*. *Saṅkalpa* is what we look for, but it is plainly quite different from *vikalpa*, which we have. Perhaps a cogent connection can be made between desire and effort and voluntary activity through the *indriyas*, especially the *karmendriyas*, which are part of the *bhāva*, *ātmā*. This is an idea which not only seems fitting but looks plausible in Śāṅgadeva's scheme. Of the *indriyas*, Śāṅgadeva speaks of two contrary views. Some regarded them as physical (*bhautika*) but others considered them to be non-material or 'spiritual' (*brahmayoni*). Indeed, they do seem to share properties which are both conscious as well as material. They could be made to form a bridge between the body and more 'disembodied' entities like desire and effort. But there is nothing in Śāṅgadeva that might lead us to think that he envisaged any such connection. He also speak of the heart, described as a lotus-shaped physical organ, as the seat of consciousness. This, too, we shall see, has possibilities which could have lead to a cogent picture of *nādotpatti* as an agent-produced activity but Śāṅgadeva does not follow the lead.

*Sattva* is another *bhāva*. It has three different 'aspects' or 'modes of operation' which are, in this case, conceived in terms of the three Sāṅkhyan *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These are in their distinct capacities responsible for inner properties such as faith (*āstikya*), altruistic propensities (*śukladharmāḥ*), lust, anger, sleep, laziness etc. It is difficult to see why *sattva* was needed as a distinct *bhāva* and why its properties could not be subsumed under *manas* and *buddhi*. And again we do not know where to place this *bhāva* as a 'part' of the body and relate its functioning with the body as a physical entity. A doctor would have to ask this question if he were to administer medicine to the body in order to treat a malaise relating to this *bhāva*. Or is it perhaps simply a theoretical notion unrelated to the functioning of the body and included merely for the sake of completing the picture of 'man'. In which case why call it a *bhāva*, since it does

not really appear to be related to the other *bhāvas* in any interconnected and organically meaningful sense?

*Sātmya*, the sixth *bhāva*, is an even stranger entity. It cannot be said to be an organ. But neither is it described as another *antaḥkaraṇa*, though perhaps it could have been classed as such since it is certainly not a material thing. It is said to be the source of good health, clarity in the functioning of the *indriyas*, and absence of laziness. It is difficult to see why its functions, too, could not be included in another *bhāva*.

The body, like any physical entity, is made up of the five *mahābhūtas*, and imbibes properties from them, too. These again are a mixed bag. *Ākāśa* imparts to it sound, the power of hearing (*śrotra*), hollownesses (*suśiratā*), and interestingly, a distinct identity in space (*vaiviktya*). But it also imparts a conscious property: subtlety of understanding. *Agni* is responsible for the eyes, form and colour, the quality of 'ripeness' or 'maturity', the state of being 'cooked' (*pāka*); though it is not clear whether the *pāka* spoken of here is a quality of organic entities, or also of 'subtle' *antaḥkaraṇa*-like entities such as *manas* and *buddhi*. *Agni* also causes bile as well as the property of making manifest (*prakāśatā*) — a property which is patently a property of consciousness — as well as heat, sharpness and energy. It is also the source of other inner qualities: bravery and anger and intelligence. *Vāyu* or air is responsible for the awareness of touch and the *karmendriya* of touch. Besides, it is also responsible for the various movements of the body. Ten modifications of *vāyu* (*vāyuvikṛtayaḥ*) reside within the human frame and are responsible for various bodily movements and functions. These include the well-known *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna* and *vyāna*, which are the five major *vāyus*. There are five others with a more minor role. The ten *vāyus* help in carrying out various functions with and within the body, functions both voluntary and involuntary. *Apāna*, for example, expels urine and excreta. *Vyāna* is stationed in the eyes, the ears, the nose, as well as the ankles and the waist. Its role is not quite clear from Śāṅgadeva's account. Perhaps it helps other *vāyus* in carrying out functions

such as smelling, hearing, batting of the eyes (for which one of the five minor *vāyus* is said to be responsible), functions which, like the function of the *indriyas* have in some sense both the aspects of being intentional and unintentional. But its functions in the ankles and the waist, whatever they are, are in no way within our control. *Samāna* performs functions which are purely organic and involuntary. Moving all over the body through *nāḍīs* or arteries numbering 72000, it distributes the juices resulting from food and drink.

The chief of the *vāyus* is *prāṇa*. From its station below the navel, it moves to the navel, the nose and the heart. It is responsible for breathing in and out, coughing and emitting sound.

A question to my mind arises as to why the *mahābhūtas* were needed in addition to the six *bhāvas* which together presumably form a complete picture. How are the *mahābhūtas* related to the *bhāvas*? They might be said to constitute the purely material elements which make up the body. But then we have seen that they are not quite material in nature, being as complex as the *bhāvas*. This makes it even more difficult to understand why their functions could not have been included in the *bhāvas*.

And yet despite questions that might arise, the *piṇḍotpatti* presents us with a fascinating picture which is not merely conceptual in content but clearly takes detailed observations into account. We cannot but be impressed by it and its complexities which display the object needing a doctor's attention as not only a body but also a soul. But, to come back to our present purpose, how is *piṇḍotpatti* relevantly tied up with the process of *nādotpatti*? Śārngadeva himself does not try to make the connections. For him it is only a general picture of the structure of the body as a whole. For the more specific processes of *nādotpatti* and *svatotpatti*, he paints a separate picture. One would have expected him to have shown how these specific processes are related to the general structure of the body as a whole, but Śārngadeva does not make such a move. This is puzzling, since it is not difficult to see that he could have done

this with slight additions and modifications in the structure of the body as understood in the *piṇḍotpatti* picture. We have had a glimpse of an earlier of a possible move he could have made by relating the *prāṇa* to *manas* and *buddhi* through something like *saṅkalpa*. There was, as far as one can see, another potent possibility in the notion of the heart. The heart is plainly described as both an organ as well as the seat of consciousness. It is further described as forming the center of important arteries (*mūlasirā*) which are carriers of force or energy (*oja*). Many of these arteries are indeed channels of communication between the heart and various organs, and responsible for functions such as smelling. Two of these, connected with the tongue, are said to have a role in the act of speech. There are also other arteries, called *dhamanis*, which emanate from the navel as the center like spokes from the nave of a wheel. Some of these are connected to the heart from where they move into different directions creating channels through which awareness of sound, form and colour, taste and smell are conveyed. Two such arteries are responsible for the making of sound and speech (*bhāṣana*, *ghoṣa*).

The picture obviously has elements which could have been suitably moulded to construct a model for explaining the process of *nādotpatti*, if not *svatotpatti*, which could meaningfully include the role of an agent. For *svatotpatti*, it would have needed further modifications in the picture to accommodate an organ that could produce different tones — such as an artery with appropriately placed holes which could function like a flute. Why did Śārngadeva not suitably modify the picture? Śārngadeva, himself has nothing to say. For him the picture of *piṇḍotpatti* seems to form a kind of larger basis which can serve as the ground for understanding the more specific process of *nādotpatti* and *svatotpatti*. But he makes no effort to actually tie up the picture presented in *piṇḍotpatti* with *nādotpatti* and *svatotpatti* in any significant manner.

What held him back? What kept him from remodelling the *piṇḍotpatti* picture in order to envisage *nādotpatti* and *svatotpatti* within it or at least tying it up in a relevant sense with

it? — since without this, *piṇḍotpatti*, fascinating as the picture it presents, is, yet remains an attractive but only loosely attached appendage to the rest of the text, constituting a major *doṣa* in the *sāstra*. Śārṅgadeva is silent. But, perhaps, we can speculate about possible reasons.

There are, I think, two major reasons why Śārṅgadeva did not tamper with the *piṇḍotpatti* picture in order to modify it in any way. One seems to be the fact that he considered the picture as complete and fixed and so unchangeable in principle. No doubt, to begin with, the science of medicine had strong elements of being an empirical science, needing observation and critical examination (*parikṣā*) by its practitioners. It also, evidently, allowed for a plurality in its interpretations of the human body as a person. The two pictures, we have concerning this matter from Caraka and Suśruta, both ancient and foundational authors, are divergent in important ways: The Caraka picture is more Nyāya-like while the Suśruta picture leans much more obviously and significantly on Sāṅkhya. The two distinct views regarding *indriyas*, which Śārṅgadeva speaks of, one believing them to be material and the other putting them in the category of the conscious, also points at an important difference in Caraka and Suśruta. Suśruta calls them *bhautika* while Caraka takes them as distinctive of beings that are *cetana* — living and conscious.<sup>3</sup> Yet despite disagreements between them, and their acceptance of theoretical plurality in practice, Caraka and Suśruta, agree in considering their science as revelatory and unchangeable. Changes and new insights were no doubt incorporated within the *sāstra* during its long history, but, paradoxically, the myth of unchangeability was carefully maintained. Significant intellectual opinion in the days of Śārṅgadeva seems to have regarded *āyurveda* as no less than a revelation, considering it a transcendental and not an empirical

<sup>3</sup> Suśruta, *śarīrasthānam*, 1,10 : *bhautikāni cendriyānyāyurvede varṇyante tathendriyārthah.*

Caraka, *sūtrasthānam*, 1,48 *sendriyaṃ cetanasthānam nirindriyaṃ acetanam.*

science. This may be confirmed from the strongly expressed views of the famous and influential philosopher, Vācaspati Miśra (9th century; Śārṅgadeva wrote in the 13th). The *sāstra* of *āyurveda*, says Vācaspati, like the Vedic *mantra* is authored by God himself; its truth is evident from the success of its operation, but it is not a *sāstra* that could be conceived as being created by the exercise of merely human observation or reason; neither is it a *sāstra* which can be thought of as the result of a growth of knowledge in a *sāstric* tradition where subsequent works build on what had preceded.<sup>4</sup> By Śārṅgadeva's time, the science, then, seems to have acquired a kind of sacrosanct nature, resisting modification. In this it was different from *saṅgita-sāstra* which allowed for changes both in theory and practice — *lakṣya* and

<sup>4</sup> See Vācaspati's *īkā* on the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* on Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*, *samādhipāda*, *sūtra* 24. Vyāsa says that the *yoga* as a *sāstra* was composed by a transcendental supreme being (*prakṛṣṭa sattva*). Commenting, Vācaspati adds that the *sāstra* of *āyurveda* belongs to the list of such divinely-composed *sāstras* as the Veda, with the words : *ayamabhisandhiḥ : mantrāyurvedesu tāvadiśvarapranīteṣu pravṛttisāmarthy-ādarthavyabhicāraviniścayātpṛamānyam siddham. na cauśadhibhedānām tatsamyogaviśeṣānām ca mantrāṇām ca tattadvārṇāvāpoddhāreṇa sahasreṇāpi puruṣāyusaṅgairlaukikapramānavyavahāri śaktah kartumanvayavyatirekau. na cāgamādanvayavyatirekau tābhyām cāgamastatsantānayanāditvāditi pratipādayituṃ yuktaṃ ...* . This may be translated as: 'This is what is meant (by Vyāsa). (In *sāstras* like) *Mantra* (that is, *Veda*) and *Āyurveda*, which are created by God, the *pṛamānya* (their 'authentication', 'proof' but also 'true understanding') lies in the fact that what they say actually works, and is true; to understand and interpret them correctly is to authenticate them (there is no extrinsic proof apart from this). It is not possible to know all the different medicines and their combinations through any *laukika pramāna* (human means of true knowledge). (Just as it is not possible) to arrive at the true order of syllables (*varṇas*) in (Vedic) *mantras* by any process of (selection) through hypothetically choosing and rejecting syllables one by one (*āvāpoddhāra*), even if this process be repeated thousands of times by human beings using their pragmatic, inferential reasoning and other human means of authentication, through *anvaya* and *vyatireka* (projecting and rejecting empirical hypotheses in order to arrive at the truth). Neither can it argued that such a process of empirical inference (*anvayavyatirekau*) is something that is *initiated* by (a primal and ) revealed *sāstra* (*āgama*), but, then, it is carried forward (by human agency and gives rise) to (newer) *āgama* on its own, because not only the *āgama* but its true transmission (without change) is a beginningless process...'

*lakṣaṇa*. The category of the *deśi* as opposed to the 'given' and 'fixed' *mārgi* is one evidence of it: new musical forms could be freely created. And that such a development actually took place can be seen from the long list of *adhunāprasiddha rāgas* — 'modern' as opposed to 'traditional' forms — that Śārṅgadeva himself notes and describes. Kallinātha, commenting on Śārṅgadeva, not much after him, explicitly states that a description of these *rāgas* required basic changes in the theoretical structure of the *sāstra* — its *lakṣaṇas* — in order to mesh with the new material — the changing *lakṣya*.<sup>5</sup>

The second reason why Śārṅgadeva did not remodel the given picture he had for his purposes seems to be connected with the purpose behind the picture. The body in the *āyurveda* model, which is seen as conscious and incorporating volition as an important element in it, was yet also seen as an object to be acted upon, a net-work of causally linked entities that could be administered to and were thus passive. It was not a model designed to reveal the workings of human agency, and the role played by the body in it as an instrument of agency.

The second picture of *nādotpatti* which Śārṅgadeva gives us is also included in the *piṇdotpatti* chapter. It does seem to be drawn with the role of an agent in view, but the agency it has in mind is a kind of yogic, 'spiritual' agency, and not the ordinary volition used in acts such as singing. The picture is a *kuṇḍalini* map of the body, a map familiar enough from popular writings on *yoga*. The body is believed to have a number of 'centres' — *cakras* — through which the yogic energy called *kuṇḍalini* passes on its path to the highest center at the apex of the head where immortality resides. The home of the *kuṇḍalini* is at the base of the spinal column in the lower-most *cakra*. Awakened through *yoga*, the *kuṇḍalini* begins to flow upwards through a *nāḍi* called *suṣumnā*, which is one of a vast network of *nāḍis*. As

<sup>5</sup> *Saṅgitaratnākara*, 2,2,161-194. Note Kallinātha : *idānimadhunāprasiddharāgān-gādinān lakṣye pratitānām lakṣaṇavirodhanām virodhaparihārārthamudyamaḥ kriyate*. He proceeds to give us a formidable list of *virodhas*.

it reaches a new, higher *cakra*, pictured as a lotus with a certain number of petals, it can avail itself of the 'fruits' of that *cakra*, which lie as 'powers', on the petals of the *cakra*. The sixteen-petalled *cakra* at the throat is the home of Sarasvatī, where the music of the *sāma* resides. The seven *svaras*, the musical tones, also reside there. One who can move his *kuṇḍalini* to that *cakra* can be a musician, as Śārṅgadeva says.<sup>6</sup> If the *kuṇḍalini* can be made to reach up to the highest *cakra*, then one can, as is to be expected, achieve a very superior proficiency in music.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly this picture focuses on the role of the agent. But the agent here is a spiritual *sādhaka*, not a musician. The picture is not designed to explain the ordinary, every-day act of singing. It does not aim at explaining the physical processes of *nādotpatti* and *svarotpatti*. And so, Śārṅgadeva gives us a third picture, moving now to a new chapter for the purpose. This is the final picture he gives us, the one he seems to silently favour and after which he moves on to other things. This picture, where the body is envisioned as an instrument, does have elements, in Śārṅgadeva's description, which seem to tie it to the *kuṇḍalini* picture also, but the cementing is done half-heartedly and does not really succeed. Yet the picture is fascinating. The description begins with a well-known *śloka* which is worth a look. Let me quote:

*ātmā vivakṣamāṇo' yaṁ manaḥ prerayate manaḥ /  
dehastham vahnimāhanti sa prerayati mārutam //*

(*Saṅgitaratnākara*, 1,3,3).

"The *ātmā* desirous of saying something impels the *manas* which in turn strikes at the fire contained in the body. The fire then propels the air [to produce speech]."

We notice that Śārṅgadeva says: *ātmā vivakṣamāṇo' yaṁ* — "the soul desirous of saying something ..." when he should — and easily could — have said, *ātmā jigāsamāṇo' yaṁ*: "the soul

<sup>6</sup> *Saṅgitaratnākara*, 1,2, 141 : *viśuddheraṣṭamāḍini dalānyaṣṭau śrītāni tu / dadyurgitādisaṁsiddhim ...*

<sup>7</sup> Do. 1,2,143 : *brahmarandhrasthito jivaḥ sudhayā sampluto yadā / tuṣṭo gitādikāryāṇi saprakarṣāṇi kārayet*.

desirous of singing ...".<sup>8</sup> The reason for Śārṅgadeva's not quite appropriate phrase is not difficult to see. He has borrowed it from an older theorist who had used it in describing a process for the production of speech, rather than song. The *Pāṇiniya Śikṣā* begins its description of the process of how speech arises in the body with the words:

*ātmā buddhyā sametyarthānmano yunkte vivakṣayā /  
manah kāyāgnimāhanti sa prerayati mārutaḥ //*

(*Pāṇiniya Śikṣā* 6)

"Wishing to speak, the *ātmā* approaches meanings through the *buddhi* and harnesses the *manas* for the purpose. The *manas* strikes the fire in the body which in turn propels the air [to produce speech]."

Here obviously lies the source of Śārṅgadeva's own *śloka*. The date of the *Śikṣā* is not certain but it is certainly many centuries older than Śārṅgadeva. It was an important text for any one who learnt Sanskrit grammar, and every educated person had to do so. Or, perhaps, Śārṅgadeva had before him another text parallel to this *Śikṣā*, since the doctrine it espouses was ancient knowledge born in the traditions of Vedic learning and the transmission of the spoken Vedic vocables, and more than one text was written about it. We also find a step missing in Śārṅgadeva's account. *Buddhi* has no role there. The reason is apparent. The function of *buddhi* in the *Śikṣā* account, is to pick out the right words for what the *ātmā* wants to say. But singing is not speaking and so this function is not needed. But then what replaces *buddhi*? Or does *ātmā* pick out the tones directly without a go-between which it needs for *vivakṣā*, but not for *jigāsā*? But if so, the *ātmā* in this conception must be significantly different from that of the *Śikṣā* picture. Where lies the difference? Śārṅgadeva provides no answers. He did not reflect on the matter. And yet, a borrower as he was, Śārṅgadeva

<sup>8</sup> An interesting discussion had taken place on this expression and scholars wondered if Sanskrit has an independent word for, 'the desire to sing'. I am thankful to Dr. Prem Lata Sharma for drawing my attention to the word '*jigāsā*' which, she points, has been used by Abhinavagupta.

could not help retaining the word '*vivakṣā*'.

There are also other modifications in Śārṅgadeva as we can see in the details of the process of *svara*-production he describes. These are, however, modifications not made by him — he seems to have been too tradition-bound in this matter for that — but accepted by him from older *saṅgita-śāstras*.

The *Śikṣā* account of the process of speech production describes it in some detail. Low and high pitches arise as the fire-heated air moves to different regions of the human frame, the chest, the throat and the head. Different syllables are produced in the cavity of the mouth on the basis of *svara* (pitch), *kāla* (time taken in utterance), *sthāna* (chest, throat and head where different registers of a gradually higher pitch are produced) and *prayatna* (the nature of the effort). Further details of these categories and the distinct roles in the production of different syllables are also noted with care by the *Śikṣā*; but we need not enter into these here. It is an impressive account based on careful observation.

Śārṅgadeva's account of *svara*-production is somewhat parallels this account, though its basis is imagination rather than observation. He speaks of a harp-like *viṇā* placed within the human frame. This was an old idea. The ancients called this *viṇā* the *śarīra-viṇā*, the 'body-harp', to distinguish it from the normal harp made of wood. It was this body-harp which was said to produce the musical tones in singing. The body-harp account of the production of tones shares the concept of *sthāna* with the *Śikṣā*. As in the *Śikṣā* scheme, different *sthānas* produce different octaves. The *Śikṣā* scheme also spoke of the seven *svaras*, but *svaras* there are only meant as general areas of pitches used in producing the different Vedic accents (*Pāṇiniya Śikṣā*, 12). They are not distinct tones for musical rather than verbal expressions. In singing, according to Śārṅgadeva, these distinct tones are produced by different 'strings' of the body-harp. These 'strings' are *nādis* stretched across the various *sthānas* with a gradually decreasing length so that the higher the position of the *nādi*, the higher its pitch. Each *sthāna* has twenty

two such *nādis* which account for not only the seven *svaras* but also the *śrutis*, the shades of minute tonal distinctions that are audible to the human ear, and can, according to later *saṅgita-śāstris* such as Śārṅgadeva, enter musical expression. The heated air from the base of the spinal column as it moves over these strings causes them to sound.<sup>9</sup>

This was a picture which Śārṅgadeva had inherited from older musicologists. He intended, apparently, to place it in the larger 'anatomical' perspective of the two other pictures that he draws for us. But the connection, as we can see, between the harp picture and *piṇḍotpatti* cannot be established in any meaningful sense, and any connection that we might think of — such as the common notion of the *nādi* — remains, to say the least, very shadowy. The body-harp can hardly be said to fit as a part in the larger *piṇḍotpatti* picture. The *nādis* of the *piṇḍotpatti* picture have a nature and purpose entirely different from the harp *nādis*. Neither does Śārṅgadeva attempt to connect the two.

He does, however, attempt to connect the harp picture with the yogic mapping of the *kuṇḍalini*. He speaks of *five sthānas* including two others besides the three already mentioned. These two extra *sthānas*, his own additions, produce sounds which are *atisūkṣma* — very subtle — and *sūkṣma* — subtle — and are connected with the *brahmagranthi* and the *nābhi*, two yogic centres. But these subtle sounds, Śārṅgadeva adds, lie outside the range of musical sounds: they are not related to the *vyavahāra* — the actual practice — of the art. They are also not provided with *nādis* which could manifest them. Their role lies purely in the realm of theory. The idea seems to be to connect the musical sounds needed in *vyavahāra*, the so-called *āhata* or 'struck' sounds which we can actually hear and produce for the ordinary purposes of speaking and singing, with the transcendental —

<sup>9</sup> See also, in this connection, the essay, 'Music in the *Thānamga Sūtra*', for a more *Śikṣā*-like picture of the production of different *svaras*. The picture, however, is obviously off the mark, and nothing but a feeble, inadequate attempt to explain *svara*-production as a process identical with that of producing *varṇas*, or spoken syllables.

*pāramārthika* — *anāhata* or 'unstruck' sound of the *yogis*. *Anāhata nāda* forms part of the *kuṇḍalini* picture.<sup>10</sup> The two extra *sthānas* where Śārṅgadeva locates his 'subtle' sounds were obviously suggested to him by the *kuṇḍalini* map. Śārṅgadeva himself tells us that the *anāhata* sound is of no real use to him as a musicologist. He says, 'since it is devoid of all 'colour' and cannot please men; therefore, I shall speak only of *āhata* sounds, which when produced in the form of the *śrutis*, produce song.'<sup>11</sup> Yet he did feel obliged to somehow create a cogent bridge between the harp picture and the *kuṇḍalini* one, and did not mind bending it to his own ends. One wonders what made him feel more free with the *kuṇḍalini* picture than with the *āyurveda* one.

The notions of *sūkṣma* and *atisūkṣma* are, for Śārṅgadeva, stages that connect the *anāhata* with the audible *āhata* sounds. These notions are however empty of any real content in his scheme. The bridge he builds between the yogic and the musical picture of sound production has no real function and is not spoken of later in his *śāstra*.

Another thing before I close. The concept of the body-harp, interesting as it is, is yet somewhat incomplete in comparison with the *Śikṣā* picture of the production of speech. The *Śikṣā* picture goes into the details of how every distinct syllable is produced, noting the exact placement of the tongue in the cavity of the mouth and the kind of distinct effort required. In the harp picture different tones are produced when the air arising from the navel strikes different *nādis*. But where is the means, the tool, one cannot help asking, by which it is ensured that a particular chosen string is struck when required and not just any of them. Where, in other words are the 'fingers', or the 'tongue', evidently needed to play upon this harp?

<sup>10</sup> *Saṅgitaratnākara*, 1,2,162-165.

<sup>11</sup> *op. cit.* 1,2,166-167.

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17. REFLECTIONS ON THE LOGOS OF MUSIC

i. The Search for the *Apauruṣeya*,  
or Absolute in Music

Musicology, the 'logos' of music, its *prajñā*, as one might also call it, articulated as thought relating to music, can, I feel, be understood as thought with a meaning and significance much larger than is usually accorded to it. In this larger sense 'musicology' as an impulse of logos is a venture, or perhaps an adventure, of thought that sets out of music into all the rest that thought is about. Pythagoras was a great musicologist in this sense though we do not normally think of him as a 'musicologist'. Yet music, and the way he perceived it, was vital to his thought. As is well known, he saw a 'given', fundamental relation between *svaras* and numbers, such that *svaras* could be demonstrated on a string, and related to each other through simple mathematical ratios. He then extended this perception beyond music to a number-based 'ratio-nality' of knowledge itself with far-reaching consequences.

Let us also take Confucius. The relation of Pythagoras' thought with music is today a part of our general knowledge and picture of intellectual history. What is not so generally realised is that Confucius was also an equally great musicologist in a similar larger sense, although with a very different spirit.

But even though Confucius' role as a musicologist hardly figures as a living element in our image of the past today, yet he seems to have been much more of a musicologist than the Greek thinker. Unlike Pythagoras, he not only reflected on music in a larger sense but was also a musicologist in the usual narrower sense of the term, spending a great deal of his career as a devoted collector and archivist of music. It may be worthwhile then to sketch here, however briefly, his life as a musicologist and outline his thoughts about music.

Almost contemporaneous with Pythagoras, Confucius lived

in the sixth century BC, and is regarded in Chinese history not only as a great sage and thinker, momentous in the life of the nation for his ideas and ideals concerning man, society and polity, but also for his profound understanding of music. The logos he sought in music was related to his basic concern, the ideal life of man in polity and society. This also made him a deep student of ritual, since he saw an intrinsic relation between ritual and music, and related these two to the larger life of man. He believed that: 'The final goals of ritual and music and the criminal law and government are the same, namely, to bring about a community of the people's aspirations and to result in social and political order', as Lin Yutang quotes him to say.<sup>1</sup> It was with this thought in mind that Confucius is said to have compiled the ancient *Book Of Songs*,<sup>2</sup> revered in Chinese tradition as devoutly as a *Veda*. And he compiled it, it should be noted, not as a book of poems as it is often made out to be, but mainly as a book of music: of that ancient music which, for him, reflected the ideal of what music ought to be, namely the source of logos for the right man and the true rulers of men. So large did music loom in his understanding of man that at the comparatively advanced age of twenty-nine, he sought training in music from a renowned master and is said to have acquired commendable proficiency in it. Often in later life he is pictured as playing the lute and singing to his own accompaniment. In China, as in ancient Greece, music was an important part of an educated man's learning, but for Confucius its significance was much greater than Chinese tradition seems to have accorded it. Later Confucian schools were in fact considered exceptional and even peculiar for their

<sup>1</sup> *The Wisdom Of Confucius*, Lin Yutang, the Modern Library edition, Random House, 1938, Introduction, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> For Confucius' life, I have mainly consulted Lin Yutang's famous and extremely readable *The Wisdom Of Confucius*, referred to in the previous footnote, which includes a biography by Szema Ch'ien (I give the name as Lin Yutang spells it), who lived from 145-85 BC, that is, about three hundred years after Confucius. Lin Yutang praises Szema Ch'ien for his critical, non-partisan, historical approach — his biography is, indeed, part of a work on Chinese history in general, the *Shiki* (p.53-54).

singular emphasis on music.

Confucius is believed to have edited the *Book Of Songs* when he was sixty-four. Before undertaking that important task, he carefully worked as a musicologist during the many years when he wandered over China, following his vocation as a statesman and political thinker. He lived, worked and taught in many different states which constituted the country during his days and one of his major activities during his wanderings was to collect the ancient songs which later went into the *Book Of Songs*.<sup>3</sup> Exercising his own aesthetic judgement, imbued with a high moral purpose, he made a critical and historical enquiry into the original melodies used for the songs, and arranged the texts of the songs in his *Book Of Songs* on their basis, thus organising the text on a musical rather than a textual or thematic principle. Like the *Guru-Granth*, the *Book Of Songs* classifies its material on the basis of melody.

But what makes Confucius really great as a musicologist is not his work as a scholar and collector of music, but his larger vision regarding the role of music in the life of man. Music, for him, reflected the deepest principle of harmony in the soul, a

<sup>3</sup> As is only to be expected, modern scholars, such as Arthur Waley, question the authenticity of the traditional Chinese belief that Confucius himself compiled the *Book Of Songs*. Waley says that the 'songs are 'Confucian' in the sense that Confucius (who lived in c. 500 BC) used them as texts for moral instructions, much as Greek pedagogues used Homer'. See his *The Book Of Songs*, Grove Press, Ever Green Edition, New York, 1960, p. 18. Confucius, it should be remarked here, certainly used the *Songs* for his teachings, and, no doubt, for his own apprehension of things, and it is also true that the songs were known from before his times, though we do not know how they were put together into a single whole, if at all such a 'collection' had been made. But Confucius' connection with the *Songs* was, evidently, much more than one of use alone. The Greek comparison made by Waley has a clearly inappropriate ring. Considering the strong traditional Chinese belief that Confucius did collect the *Songs*, and their inclusion among Confucian Classics, suggests a reasonably strong case for accepting Confucius as the collector. It is likely, however, as the traditional belief also suggests, that what Confucius did was to collect the *music* of the *Songs* and to arrange the text on a musical basis: See Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom Of Confucius*, pp. 15-16. Note, especially, his remark, 'it is said that after this job of editing, the different songs were first shifted and properly classified with respect to their music.'

principle that could serve as the ground for true order among men.

Plato, too, in his *Republic* shows a deep awareness of the power of music in moulding and socialising man, and is concerned about the kind of music that should be sung and taught in his ideal state. But music was peripheral for Plato. In Confucius' vision music is at the centre. The key to the order and harmony that Confucius sought, lay not in reason but in emotion, since human relationships are woven through a web of emotion rather than reason. Therefore, he sought a logos in music, which is directly tied up with emotions, and not in concepts or the realm of thought and philosophy. His logos is related to *svaras*, not words. Any order which rests on a deep mutuality among men, Confucius saw, has to lie in an order among their emotions and the path to this lay through music. Music alone could give that tranquil and joyous harmony to our world of feelings and affections, which could translate itself into an ideal harmonious polity and society. Confucius' vision was, in this sense, the perception of a unique *aesthetic* logos to be found in music, a logos centered in pleasure and joy. "In music", he says, "the sages found pleasure, and (saw that) it could be used to make the hearts of the people good. Because of the deep influence which it produces in manners and customs, the ancient kings appointed it as one of the subjects of instruction."<sup>4</sup>

I will, in my own way, try to articulate here Confucius' ideas concerning music, and the problems inherent in them. As is well-known, his thoughts did not move through well-reasoned and interconnected arguments. They are somewhat scattered, metaphorical and impressionistic, layed out in aphoristic sayings, interspersed with those of his pupils. Yet his meaning and purpose seem to clearly shine through. For my own purpose, I have used the *Yo Ki* section of the *Li Ki*, the Confucian classic. The *Yo Ki* or the 'Record Of Music' forms an important part of the *Li Ki*, which is a "collection of various records in the possession of

<sup>4</sup> The *Li Ki* as translated in the *Sacred Books Of The East*, second impression, 1926, tr. James Legge, vol. xxviii, part iv, book xvii, the *Yo Ki*, sec. ii, 7, p.107.

the Confucian school, and is definitely of extremely diverse origin" — as Lin Yutang puts it in his, *The Wisdom Of Confucius*.<sup>5</sup> It contains an essay on the concept of Central Harmony, ascribed to a disciple, mixed with large sections on funeral ceremonies, ceremonial robes and vessels of public worship. It is somewhat similar in this to our ancient writings on *dharma* and *yajña* in the *Brāhmaṇas*. The chapters on music also contain the ideas of the Confucian philosopher, Zse-hsia, a contemporary of the famous Mencius, who lived in the fourth century BC. Yet we certainly encounter a great and stimulating body of thought in the *Yo Ki*, and what we have of Confucius here is more authentically 'original' than the works of many other ancient thinkers. My articulation of Confucius' ideas concerning music is based on the translation of the *Li Ki*, by James Legge in the *Sacred Books Of The East*.<sup>6</sup>

Right in the beginning of the *Yo Ki* we have what can be significantly described as a formal 'definition' of music:

"Modulations of the voice", propounds Confucius, "arise from the mind and the various affections of the mind are produced by things (external to it). The affections thus produced are manifested in the sounds that are uttered... . The combination of those modulated sounds, so as to give pleasure, and the (direction in harmony with them of the) shields and axes, and of the plumes and ox-tails, constitutes what we call music".<sup>7</sup>

The reference to shields, axes, plumes and ox-tails is

<sup>5</sup> See Introduction, p. 43. The whole section in Lin Yutang, entitled, 'Sources and Plan Of The Present Book', pp. 36-47 of the Introduction is worth reading. It reveals that problems of getting to the Ur Confucius are as great as those presented by most ancient writings in any civilisation. Indeed, for those who are interested in the *thought* of a thinker, rather than a completely 'authentic' text, an insistence on first having a critical Ur text, can only mean a deprivation of meaningful thought. This is true not only of Confucius, but as we sometimes tend to forget, also of Plato and Aristotle, and even a host of later, more modern, writers, including those who have written within living memory.

<sup>6</sup> I have already given a reference to Legge's edition in a footnote above. The quotations that will follow are from the *Yo Ki*. Arranging the thoughts in my own way, I do not quote in a sequence that agrees with the text.

<sup>7</sup> *Yo Ki*, sec.i, 1, p.90.

intended, as Legge points out, to denote war-like ceremonial dances, what Lin Yutang in his own translation has called 'ritual'. Looking at *Yo Ki* as a whole, what seems intended is ceremonial dance or even a formal, ritual-like ceremony in general. The strange phrase, 'modulations of the voice' is a queer rendering of what has been, more cogently, translated as, 'air musical' by another translator, and which is explained by a Chinese commentator as, 'the five full notes of a scale'. This seems reasonable, since the passage we have quoted speaks of combinations of 'modulated sound' as giving pleasure, meaning, obviously, musical compositions containing combinations of the five *svaras* accepted in traditional Chinese music. Lin Yutang, in the book named above, translates it as simply, 'music'. The use of the phrase in the *Yo Ki* appears to contain echoes of all three meanings.

Dance, in a ritual-like, ceremonial form is bracketed with music into a single unit in this definition, and is evocative of the use of the word *saṅgīta* in a similar sense in our own tradition. But as in our usage of *saṅgīta*, dance is the lesser partner. Later in the *Yo Ki*, Confucius makes a crucial distinction between music and ceremony, characterising ceremony as the outer manifestation of the inner movement that is music. "The sphere in which", he says, "music acts is the interior of man and that of ceremonies is his exterior."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>*Yo Ki*, iii, 25, p.126. Such a relation between ceremony and music is reiterated by Confucius in many ways. Confucius' thought in the *Yo Ki* can be felt to move in a kind of spiral-like manner: he keeps returning to his major ideas, but with a new thrust, and a movement forward, as we can see in the present instance.

In the very next paragraph, iii, 26, Confucius says: "Music springs from the inward movements (of the soul); ceremonies appear in the outward movements (of the body)." Earlier in the *Yo Ki* (i, 17, p. 98) we read: "Music comes from within, and ceremonies from without. Music coming from within, produces the stillness (of the mind); ceremonies coming without, produce the elegancies (of manner)." The 'inner', is by implication, also the 'higher', the transcendental, the *paramārtha*, in contrast to the 'outward' which belongs to this world, and has to do with *vyavahāra*, or, human behaviour; and thus going back to section one, we read: "Music is (an echo of) the harmony between heaven and earth; ceremonies reflect the orderly distinctions (in the operations of) heaven and earth." — *Yo Ki*, i, 23, p.100. Also: "Music appeared in the Grand Beginning

Confucius' definition of music suggests that he believed it to form a movement or aspect of consciousness integrally connected with affections, and yet distinct from it and independent of it. Affections are outward-bound, and produced by things (external to the mind), whereas music arises from the mind itself. Affections are passive and given, while music is an active principle which combines affections into aesthetic, 'pleasurable' wholes.

The picture we have here seems to have similarities with Bharata's notion of *rasas*. For, like Bharata's *nāṭya*, which is an active and creative process, music combines *bhāvas* or affections, which are 'given', as reflections of the world of things, and therefore essentially passive, into harmonious and pleasurable wholes. "All modulations of sound take their rise from the minds of man, and music is the intercommunication of them in their relations and differences. Hence even beasts have sound, but not its modulations", says Confucius,<sup>9</sup> raising music, as a free and creative human propensity, into the differentiating property — like Greek reason — that distinguishes men from beasts.

But the similarity between Confucius and Bharata is deceptive; I think for two connected reasons. One, because Confucius, while equating music with reason, also, paradoxically, perceives the different affective wholes that music creates not as 'free' and self-sufficient, pleasurable and *rasa*-giving creations of the imagination, but as related causally with the kind of order ruling in the governance of a state where the music prevails. And, two, the real aim of music was, for him, not mainly aesthetic, lying in the exploration of *rasa*, but much deeper, since music could be a potent *instrument* of morality and true order among men.

(of all things), and ceremonies had their place on the completion of them." — *Yo KI*, i, 34, p.104-105. In music, as this last passage more vocally indicates, the pair of concepts, *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra*, in contrast to a great deal of Indian thought, are seen as essentially interlinked, the one fulfilling the other.

<sup>9</sup> *Yo Ki*, i, 7, p.95.

The first reason points at a strange contradiction in Confucius' thought. It is the inner 'ethos' of the polity reigning in a society which gives rise to a music matching it in form and spirit. And the world of polity, in the final analysis, constitutes the world of 'things' that cause affections in the mind. The 'things', or, in other words, 'the external world', which gives rise to the affections consisted, for Confucius, of *the human world as shaped by a polity*. Confucius did believe that every piece of music had an ethos of its own, but unlike *rasa*, the ethos of a musical composition, in his view, was not an independent *play* that creates pleasurable wholes at will. It was not an active and creative combination of *bhāvas*, as in Bharata — *bhāvas*, which even in Bharata reflect the human world — but a shadow of another order of human things, for it inevitably conformed to the ethos of the state, the polity, in which it was produced. He thus says: "The airs of an age of good order indicate composure and enjoyment. The airs of an age of disorder indicate dissatisfaction and anger, and its government is perversely bad. The airs of a state going to ruin are expressive of sorrow and (troubled) thought. There is an interaction between the words and airs (of the people) and the character of their government."<sup>10</sup>

Confucius, we find, conceives of a network of three-fold interrelations: between music, the world of our emotions and the social world shaped through polity. Polity, as we see in the above quotation, was the dominant, 'governing' factor in the network. Such a conception *can*, imaginably, lead one to a curious kind of aesthetics in which states going to ruin and those in which a sense of dissatisfaction and anger rules might be thought desirable because of the *aesthetic* quality of the music they produce: since sorrow, anger and dissatisfaction *as ethos in music* can be satisfactory as *rasas*. But this seems perversely unthinkable. Yet, it seems equally unthinkable on the part of a thinker who has elevated music to the level of the *logos* which defines man, to be, uncannily, making a move which denies

<sup>10</sup> *Yo Ki*, I, 4, pp. 93-94

music a free and creative role. Indeed, the whole purpose of Confucius was to specify this role. For Confucius, not only saw music as an *index* of polity, but also as a free agent which could shape it, and this he did with a deeper conviction. His deepest aim was to discover the music that could be a profound mover in the *creation* of a desirable polity.

The contradiction, we see in his thought, can perhaps be better, more generously, described as a 'tension', and such tensions are, after all, present in all thought and can be found in the greatest of thinkers. The tension, is at its root, a tension between an aesthetic and a moral vision, present in almost all thinking about art. What is of interest, however, is how Confucius encounters and deals with the tension, and what he makes of it. For he was keenly aware of the independent value of music itself even as he asserted it as reflecting a moral state of things, and was profoundly interested in exploring its potential as a moral tool.

We just spoke of a three-fold linkage in his thought between music, the emotions and the human order governed by a polity. The last link in the chain, namely, polity, appears to be intended as almost 'determining' the rest. But the linkage we do find in his deliberations is not as strong as to forge a smooth, unbroken hierarchy with polity at the topmost rung of the ladder. To forge any such chain, indeed, appears unrealizable in principle, and we can also see this in Confucius. The links between music and emotion, and between music and polity are different in kind, and cannot really be combined to form a straight and even chain, though Confucius seems to have desired to do so, at one level of his thought. The two relations, with music at the centre, clearly lead into quite different directions without a strong, convincing link: the directions of ethics and aesthetics. Confucius, indeed, shows awareness of the two directions as independent. We have quoted from a passage where he links the ethos of music with polity. There are other deliberations where an aesthetic of music emerges independently of polity, though Confucius apparently insists on a link. An intriguing passage establishes the connection

between music and polity with detailed attention to considerations which are aesthetic, and can be detached from the political motive which seems almost imposed upon them:

"Hence, when a ruler's aims are small, notes that quickly die away characterise the music and peoples thoughts are sad; when he is generous, harmonious, and of a placid and easy temper, the notes are varied and elegant and the people are satisfied and pleased; when he is coarse, violent, and excitable, the notes, vehement at first and distinct in the end, are full and bold throughout the piece and the people are resolute and daring; when he is pure and straightforward, strong and correct, the notes are grave and expressive of sincerity, and the people are self-controlled and respectful; when he is placid, and kind, the notes are natural, full, and harmonious, and the people are affectionate and loving; when he is careless, disorderly, perverse and dissipated, the notes are tedious and ill-regulated, and the people proceed to excesses and disorder."<sup>11</sup>

This arresting passage, we can immediately feel, is very different in spirit from the one quoted earlier where the ethos of a piece of music is said to be determined by the state and the essence of its polity. The present passage, however, though also intended to be about kings and the quality of their rule, speaks of kings as *musicians*, judging their rule through the *aesthetics* of their music. It clearly says more about Confucius' understanding of music than of kingship; and the fact that he is actually speaking of kings, really seems a contingent and ulterior advisement, *added on* to insights related to music. Unlike the passage quoted earlier, it also implies that kings *create* a polity through their musicianship.

The tension in Confucius' thought between music as passively 'given' and actively 'created', is transparent here. Music in its relation to the emotions comes through as an active principle, composing *aesthetic* wholes; whereas music in its relation to polity is conditioned in its ethos, or in other words, its

<sup>11</sup> *Yo Ki*, ii, 9, pp. 107-8

aesthetic, by the latter. If our music passively expresses the ethos of a polity, we cannot actively create the music we want at will, since we are all creatures of one polity or another.

And yet, antithetically, Confucius also grants music an active and creative role, and a central one, too, in the very making of a state or polity. It is, indeed, a crucial element in his thought. Music for him, as we have seen, was related to ceremony, constituting its inner movement. The concept of ceremony is central for Confucius' understanding of human behaviour, since, in a profound sense, the whole social and political life of man, was for him, an extension of ceremony, or 'ritual', and 'formalised' action. It is *through* its relation to ceremony that music creates a polity, since the arena of ceremony extends itself to the state of society and polity as a whole. "Hence it is said", says the *Yo Ki*, quoting a maxim in order to advise a king, "carry out perfectly ceremonies and music, and give them their outward manifestation and application, and under heaven nothing difficult to manage will appear."<sup>12</sup> And therefore, to identify and produce the right music, with the right 'given' structure and ethos, was the central purpose of Confucius' musicology.

But we have also seen that Confucius has defined music in terms of pleasure right at the beginning of his discourse. This introduces another kind of problem: how to find the right morally desirable music? The pleasure-principle naturally leads to a pluralistic aesthetic, a multiplicity of *rasas*, since what pleases is naturally many. Also, of course, what pleases is not bound to be moral: *śreyas* and *preyas* do not go together. Music as pleasure seems obviously to lead *away* from Confucius' desired goal, rather than *towards* it. He seems to have deeply felt this 'contradiction', and his moves in trying to resolve it attract attention. One move appears to have led him to somehow deny the pleasure element in the music he desired. The move, natural in all thinking, was to discriminate between the 'real' or 'true' music from that which belongs to the sphere of pleasure, the

<sup>12</sup> *Yo Ki*, .iii, 23, p.126.

merely 'sensuous' and 'apparent'. And so in a passage of the *Yo Ki*, we find a line being drawn between Music and 'pleasurable sound'.

Actually it is not Confucius himself who is said to make this distinction but a disciple, Sze-hsia (also spelled 'Hsentse'). But the move is inherent in Confucius' thought and, indeed, thought in general when trying to resolve similar 'contradictions'. Sze-hsia is quoted in the *Yo Ki* to have said to the marquis of Wei that "Now music and sound" (obviously, meaning 'pleasant sound') are akin, but they are not the same."<sup>13</sup> The translator deliberately spells the word 'Music' in this context<sup>14</sup> with a capital 'M', obviously, and rightly, to distinguish it from ordinary pleasure-giving music. 'Music', as distinct from 'music' is imbued with a moral spirit, and is radically different from the 'new', modern 'music', in Sze-hsia's words, which, he thought, was intended for mere pleasure or *rasa*. What we thus have is intriguingly analogous to the distinction that Plato made between knowledge and mere opinion.

Knowledge, unlike opinion, which is multiple by nature, can only be one. So should be 'good' Music. It has also to be 'given' to us in a vision that runs deeper than mere imagination. It may be bravely argued here that one *can* reasonably conceive of a multiplicity of 'good' political orders, each radically distinct from the other, and hence a multiplicity of 'good' and not just *rasa*-giving music, all sharing the property of being 'right' and morally appropriate. Indeed, in the passage where kings have been conceived as musicians, we do seem to have a plurality of 'good' music, implying a plurality of good polities, since we find Confucius giving his approval to more than one kind of music. Yet, he does not carry this move forward, and his search, predictably, leads him to look for *the 'one'* music matching *the*

<sup>13</sup> *Yo Ki*, iii, 9, p.117.

<sup>14</sup> See *Yo Ki*, iii, 10, p.118. This passage immediately follows the earlier one, and is linked with it. The ancient 'virtuous airs', which belong to 'true' music are contrasted with the new, 'modern' product, which is merely pleasant, and called, 'Music'.

'unique' and 'right' political order. The idea of any real multiplicity in the realm of the ideal polity and society has seemed to most thinkers as both irrational and immoral. Confucius apparently shared this spirit of thought. Perhaps in those moments when the *rasa* of music was dominant in his mind, he could imagine a *variety* of music which could all be described as 'good', but as a moralist, he looked, almost logically, for a *unique* principle of harmony, and hence a *unique* music. Interestingly, however, as we shall later see, Confucius does try to find a resolution, a balance, between the 'one' and the 'many' in as much as he conceives the music that is ideal for the right polity as a kind of *rāga*, which remaining 'one' has yet 'many' possibilities.

The source of true music, for Confucius, as for many other ancient thinkers, who looked for Truth and True Order, could only be a divine, transcendental intelligence or *pratibhā*. Such divine *pratibhā* was not to be found in the present. It had prevailed in the remote past, when moved by it, the *ṛsis* of ancient China had instituted the ideal political order, and created the music that went with it. During this ideal age of the *ṛsis*, "Heaven and Earth acted according to their several natures, and the four seasons were what they ought to be",<sup>15</sup> as Sze-hsia puts it. It was, in other words, the *krta-yuga* when *dharma* or *ṛta* reigned supreme, and when the music of *dharma* or *ṛta* could be created. It was during such an age, to quote Sze-hsia again, that "harmony was given to the five notes (of the scale), and the singing to the lutes and the praise-songs."<sup>16</sup> These songs were the "virtuous airs" constituting 'Music' as it ought to be.

Confucius, in this context, makes an interesting difference between two kinds of intellect: that of the creator and that of the transmitter. True, 'virtuous', music can *now* only be transmitted, since its creators were *ṛsis*, who no longer exist. "Therefore they who knew the essential nature of ceremonies and music could

<sup>15</sup> *Yo Ki*, iii, 10, p. 118.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

frame them; and they who had learned their elegant accompaniments could hand them down. The framers may be pronounced sage; the transmitters, intelligent. Intelligence and sagehood are other names for transmitting and inventing."<sup>17</sup> What Confucius means by 'inventing' here is obviously not the exercise of ordinary imagination but of divine *prajñā*, or *pratibhā*. But what about those, who like Confucius, could identify and recognise the right music even if they could not create it? Such people are clearly necessary to oversee that transmission does not introduce distortions and "notes that are evil and depraved"; as a later passage in the *Yo Ki* puts it. Such people cannot be mere transmitters, who are said to be no more than 'intelligent' in the passage above. They must be more like critics and theorists, and yet share something of the sage-like intellect, to be able to recognise sage-like music. They must have a kind of transcendental *bhāvayitr pratibhā*, a term, the famous 9th century Indian critic Rājasekhara uses to distinguish the insight of the critic from the inventive and imaginative *kārayitr pratibhā* of the poet. (The first essay in this collection discusses these concepts.) Confucius does not quite explicate what he meant by the intelligence of the transmitter, but later tradition did recognise a sage-like intelligence in him, an intelligence which could distinguish the product of a sage's divine *pratibhā*, and teach us how to transmit it.

Confucius, too, though somewhat obliquely, does speak of a process by which the 'Music' of the sage could be recognised. The process appears to be a kind of *anumāna*, a process of inference; but at its heart it is the judgement of a profound music-critic. Sze-hsia, as we have seen above, speaks of a kinship between 'pleasurable sound' and 'Music' even as he sharply divides them: they are akin but not the same, he says, Confucius speaks of the necessity of recognising this kinship in order to be able to recognise "Music". In a remarkable passage early in the *Yo Ki*, we find him saying, "We must discriminate

<sup>17</sup> *Yo Ki*, 1, 22, p.100.

sounds in order to know the airs; the airs in order to know the music; and the music in order to know (the character of) the government. Having attained to this, we are fully provided with the methods of good order. Hence with him who does not know about the sounds we cannot speak about the airs, and with him who does not know the airs we cannot speak about the music. The knowledge of music leads to the subtle springs that underlie the rules of ceremony. He who has apprehended both ceremonies and music may be pronounced to be possessor of virtue. Virtue means realisation (in one's self)."<sup>18</sup> Examples of the kind of 'musical' apprehension and discrimination Confucius had in mind clearly reveal a distinct *aesthetic* wisdom akin to that of a music-critic and *sahrdaya*, although one who intensely feels that music does not belong to a world of self-contained sensibilities but is a part of man's total vision, character and behaviour. In the final passages of the *Yo Ki*, an odd demand is placed before a music-master: Sze-kung asks him to suggest the music appropriate to his (Sze-kung's) temper. The master suggests different pieces that suit the temper of different men — all these, however, being 'good' men in their own way. "The generous and calm, the mild and correct, should sing the Sung; the magnanimous and calm, and those of wide penetration and sincere, the Ta Ya ... The object of this singing is for one to make himself right, and then display his virtue. When he has thus put himself in a condition to act, Heaven and Earth respond to him..."<sup>19</sup>

Such a conception of *pratibhā*, or the true vision, might sound familiar, for it is found in most civilisations. What is remarkable about Confucius' transcendental vision is that it is

<sup>18</sup> *Yo Ki*, i, 8, p. 95. The last sentence, "Virtue means realisation (in one's self).", sounds plainly odd. What the translator has added, obviously to make the meaning clear, hardly serves its purpose. Confucius seems to be saying that virtue is not just an outward knowledge of how one should behave, and what rules one should follow, but an inner becoming, the attainment of a state of being from which virtuous behaviour flows spontaneously.

<sup>19</sup> *Yo Ki*, iii, 31, pp. 129-130