



Vital Aspects of Odissi Raaga And Taala in Jayadev's Gita Govinda

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ABSTRACT

The Geetagovinda, though directly can not be said as a scripture of music, it is undoubtedly an eternal treasure house, filled with valuable explanatious and analysis of music and is an unmatched asset of great thoughts and descriptions. Odissi music is sung through Raganga, Bhabanga and Natyanga Dhrubapadanga followed by Champu, Chhanda, Chautisa, Pallabi, Bhajan, Janana, and Gita Govinda, which are considered to be a part of the repertoire of Odissi or an allied act form of Odissi. The purity, sanctity and characteristic features of Odissi music have been enriched, refined and pervaded its horizon through Gitagovinda of Sri Jayadeva. We have the first evidence of Odissi music in an articulated and systematic form from the versifications of Gitagovinda. Sri The songs of Gitagovinda are set to talas (rhythms) such as Rupaka Nisarah Jati Astatala, & ekatali, which are included in navatalas, commonly used in Odissi till to-day.

KEYWORDS : RAAGA, TAALA, MUSIC, GITA GOVINDA

Music is an integral part of human life, which is created when the vibratory waves are brought into melodious audible notes in material form. Human beings are consciously or unconsciously tuned into the vibration of the cosmos. In each walk of life, music is judged as the best among 64 types of arts. The architects express through their architecture for a utilitarian purpose, the painters express to represent the visible, the poets express through the medium of words for communication, where musicians express their consciousness through notes, tunes, beats and rhythms not only for the purpose to please but also to enlighten through entertainment. The ultimate objective of music is to produce aesthetic emotions creating a sense of spiritual love, supreme beauty, eternal peace and inner pleasure.

Gita Govinda in one sense means song of Govinda, in other sense Gita is Govinda. To sing Gita Govinda means to worship Govinda or Lord Jagannatha. The supreme love between Lord Krishna and Radha has been enshrined in earthly mould. Gita Govinda is the quintessence of love between Radha and Krishna or human being with super being. Jayadeva has engirdled the transcendence with the transient in simple Sanskrit grandiloquence of Gita Govinda. The symphonic syntax set in rhymes, rhythms and ragas fascinates each reader and listener with ecumenical predilection. The sensuous and melodious effects of this superb, unparalleled piece of lyrical literature and classical music transgress all human heart, mind and soul. In this classic work, the poets milieu has established relevance to present and future generations in different cultural contexts. Jayadeva has prescribed particular Ragas and Talas for each song. But he has not depicted the characteristic features of these Ragas & Talas. The ragas used in Gita Govinda are Malav, Gurjari, Vasanta, Ramakeri, Malavagouda, Gundakeri, Karnata, Desakhya, Desa Varadi, Vairaba, Bivasa and the talas are Rupaka, Nihara, Jati, Ekatali, Astatali, etc. These ragas and talas are suitable for romantic sentiment. The timings of recital of Odissi Ragas synchronise with different seasonal festivals of Odissa. Gita Govinda recital is integral to Odissi music and indicates the uniqueness and classical quality. Jayadeva was an expert in Gandharv Kala, which is the combination of Swara (notes), Tala (rhythm), Pada (words) and Marg (higher style of recital). The astapadi Prabandha compositions in words, raga-tala repertoire with melodious style of singing fascinate each listener. The raga repertoire used in Gitagovinda such as Malava, Gurjari, Vasanta, Ramakiri, Malavagouda, Gundakiri, Karnata, Desakhya, Desavaradi, Bhairavi, Varadi etc. are being recited in Lord Jagannath temple as well as all the corners of Odissa since 12th century.

The quintessence of Odissi music is discerned in the intrinsic vision of the learners and listeners, who repose in Gitagovinda, for its traits like composition, improvisation, raga repertoire, treatment of rhythms and rhymes, usage and genre. Sri Jayadeva has not only originated a specific music tradition, systematic form and definite melodic pat-

tern, raga-tala repertoires but also built a socio-cultural community. Geetagovinda, as per the definition of 'Gaandharv' was composed with the combination of 'Swara' (Raaga) and 'Taala' based stanzas and hence in the true sense it had the characteristics of 'Gaandharva'. A question may arise, that 'Geetagovinda' is not only a presentation of 'Swara' (tunes), 'Pada' and 'Taala' but also is base of dance. Whereas 'Nrutyā' (dance) is not a part of 'Gaandharva' art. Since the era of Jayadev is the exit period of 'Gaandharva' and the beginning period of 'Sangeeta' and alongwith 'Geeta' (song) and 'Vaadya' instrumental music, dance or 'Nrutyā' is also considered as the major part of this 'Sangeeta', so there should be no clash of opinions over this 'Gaandharva' and 'Sangeeta' which have much similarities. Hence as a result of this Jayadev had said that his lyrical composition 'Geetagovinda' featuring songs-instrumental music-dance etc. is a representation of the 'Gaandharva' art form.

In this manner Sri Jayadev's series of Geetagovinda songs had been composed according to the characteristics of four 'Dhatu' of 'Sangeeta Shashtra' and therefore considered as 'Prabandha Padabaachya' in the true sense. Though the series of 'Prabandha' composed in the 'Geetagovinda' are tuneful but the names of 'Swara' (Tunes) are not directly mentioned anywhere in the 'Dhatu' parts of the 'Prabandha'. The lyrical lines of Geetagovinda are embellished with ornate sentences and apart from this is composed on basis of melodious 'Raagas' which are delightful. Hence the 'Prabandha' series of Geetagovinda epic is the best medium of appeasing Lord Sri Sri Jagannath. The popularity of Geetagovinda was so widespread and had such a mass appeal that its tuneful composition or its singing style has always been unmatched. So whenever the singing tradition of Geetagovinda was found existing in which ever Raaga the scholars of literaturje used to write about those 'Raaga'.

The musical splendour of Geetagovinda is genuinely revealed in Geetagovinda due to 'Raaga' and 'Taala' mentioned in this. 'Raaga' is said to be the soul of Indian-music.

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