



THE ESSENCE OF GANDHARVA SANGITA

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ABSTRACT

The different between Desi and Gandharva Sangita is the capacity of the latter to produce or spiritual fruit. The fruit which is the result of pleasing the gods or heavenly beings who are unseen or unperceivable. This benefit is not possible through Desi Sangita. The Svvara-Sannivesaor specific pattern of Svaras would have to incorporate the ten characteristics of the Jati as prescribed by Bharata. BHARATA in his Natyasastra refers to Gandharva Sangita or the music for divine beings. But he lays certain conditions. This was also called Margi Sangita. Bharata describes the Jatis as they applied to drama. But there were obviously Jatis under different situations and circumstances. For example, the epic Ramayana was supposed to have been sung in the form of a ballad before Rama by Lava and Kusa, his two sons in the different Jatis

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Vedic Sangita was also considered as Margi Sangita or Gandharva Sangita.

The conditions are four :

1. Gandharva Sangita will always be to the accompaniment of several instruments- stringed, membranophonous and percussion.
2. Gandharva Sangita must have the three essentials- Svvara, Tala and Pada, i.e., the music should have melody in a specific order and arrangement; it should have tala or rhythm also well organised with suitable texts.
3. The music should be pleasing to the Gods.
4. The music should also please the Gandharvas- especially the Deva-Gandharvas as opposed to Manushya Gandharvas.

But all this description is in the context of the drama. Jatis were also considered as Margi Sangita. Bharata describes the Jatis as they applied to drama. But there were obviously Jatis under different situations and circumstances. For example, the epic Ramayana was supposed to have been sung in the form of a ballad before Rama by Lava and Kusa, his two sons in the different Jatis. The examples given in the S.R., of Jatis have no connection with drama. They are in praise of Sankara and are in fact Sankara- stuti. So it stands to reason that Jati-gana must have had other varieties of rendering. These forms appear to have remained in vogue till the time of Matanga who is ascribed to the 7th-8th century. This music is described at length in Matanga's work Brhaddesi. But there was the other music which was prevalent. It was known as Desi Sangita. Desi Sangita was not folk music. It was regional music. Kallinatha appears to contradict himself when he first states that Desi Sangita is almost free style music but immediately states that some of the characteristics of Margi raga are also found in some Desi ragas. He seems to be searching for the rules of Jati in Desi ragas which is obviously conflicting. The Tara-Mandra range mentioned by him applies to Jatis and where this range was not clear, he says those Desi ragas tend to become anarchic. He also states that where the Desi ragas have rules, it is not altogether different from Margi ragas. Matanga gives more details than Bharata. He mentions the specific scene or act in which specific Jatis should be sung or played. He also mentions the different Murchanas from which Jatis are derived.

Grama raga is also mentioned by Matanga. Bharata refers to it at only one place as to which act or scene, it should be used. Grama raga is described in greater detail by Matanga but Jati was still more popular and prevalent in his time. Jati remained in vogue till the tenth century, and thereafter began to fade. S.R., describes both Jatis and Grama ragas but emphasizes more on Desi ragas and Adhuna-Prasiddha ragas.

Jati It has several meanings. It means caste, type, race and

genus. Of these, which connotation is most appropriate to music? The root of the word Jati in Sanskrit is Jan which means to produce. It is an extraordinary coincidence that the Latin root for the word genus is also gen (pronounced jan) which means exactly the same as the Sanskrit one. There is a difference of opinion as to the interpretation of the Jati in terms of music. Most of the scholars have taken the meaning of giving birth to and have stated that Jati is bora under such and such conditions. But the other meanings of the word as caste, race or species are also worthy of consideration. Because when one studies the names of different Jatis, one feels that some of them have imbibed the names of regions. Even scholars like Matanga feel that the word Jati connotes birth, origin whereas it is not logical to assume its meaning in this narrow sense. Jati in some form must have existed before its stylized version emerged. It, therefore, stands to reason that Jati may have evolved from folk music and the word may have been used in the sense of genus. Jati interpreted thus becomes genus of a certain arrangement of notes. They must have had an ethno-sociological origin. This itself could form a subject for separate research.

Matanga while defining Jati does not seem to be sure of himself. '1' After giving various interpretations, he concedes the possibility of the word Jati to be used in the sense of genus. As stated earlier, the names of the Jatis suggest reference to certain regions. For example, the Vikrt Jatis Kaisiki, Sadjodicyava, Andhri indicate specific regions. Kaisiki, according to Mortier Williams Dictionary represented the regions which pertains to the present Vidarbha. Sadjodicyava is referred to as a place in the North; Udicyava means northern region; Andhri straightaway denotes the region of Andhra. So it seems justifiable to presume that Jatis like ragas, which followed, may have evolved out of folk melodies. Because no form of music, especially classical can spring up without, a base.

But the technical definition of Jatis is best given by Acarya Abhinavagupta in his Abhinavabharati. When the notes are in a specific arrangement or pattern producing aesthetic enjoyment, giving rise both to material prosperity and unseen spiritual benefits then it is called Jati. There were a total of eighteen Jatis. The seven Jatis were based on Sadja Grama and the eleven Jatis on Madhyama Grama. The Jatis affiliated to Sadja Grama were Sadji, Arsabhi, Dhairvati, Nisadi, Sodjodicyavati, Sadjakaisiki and Sadjamadyama. The Madhyama Grama affiliates were Gandhari, Madhyama, Gandharodicyava, Pancami; Raktagandhari, Gandharapancami, Madhyamodicyava, Nandayanti Karmaravi, Andhri and Kaisikamadyama. Out of these eighteen Jatis seven were named after the seven Svaras of the Saptaka. They were of two kinds - Suddha and Vikrta- Under Sadja Grama, there were four Suddha Jatis. They were Sadji,

Arsabhi, Dhaivati and Nisadavati or (Naisadi). What the definition of Suddha Jati? Suddha Jatis were those in which no diminution of the seven notes and the Svara on which it was named itself became the Graha, amsa and Nyasa Svara of those Jatis. When a change takes place in the Nyasa Svara and in respect of the other Lakshanas then the Jatis were termed Vikrta. In other words, the same Suddha Jatis can turn into Vikrta Jatis also.

The basic distinction between Suddha Jati and Vikrta Jati is that in the former the Nyasa Svara is the Mandra Svara, i.e., the

For instance, the combination of Sadji and Madhyama produced the Vikrta Jati, Sadjamadhyama, Gandhari and Dhaivati resulted in Gandharodicyavati; Gandhari, Pancami, Madhyama and Dhaivati produced Madhyamodicyavati. Gandhari, Pancami and Saptami (Naisadi) produced Raktagandhari; Gandhari and Arsabhi produced Andhri; Arsabhi, Pancami and Gandhari produced Nandayanti; Naisadi Arsabhi and Pancami produced Karmaravi; Gandhari and Pancami produced Gandharapancami; and Sadji, Gandhari, Madhyama, Pancami and Naisadi produced Kaisiki. Out of the above Jatis, four are septatonic, four hexatonic, and the remaining ten, pentatonic. There were no Jatis with less than five Svaras. Karmaravi, Gandharapancami, Sadjakaisiki and Madhyamodi. Cyava were always, septatonic; and Andhri; Nandayanti, Gandharodicyavati Sadji were always hexatonic; the rest were pentatonic. But the most significant point was that the hexatonic (Sadava) and pentatonic (Audava) Jatis could naturally be converted into the other with the reduction or addition of a note and yet be considered the same Jati. This strange latitude of conversion cannot be applied in the case of raga as it will change the entire character and structure of the new convert. This is completely out of vogue now.

Another peculiarity in the tradition of Bharata in the rendering of Jati was the rule that the Samvadi Svara of the Amsa Svara can never be omitted. The strict observance of this rule consequently prevented several Jatis from having their Sadava and audava forms. The Amsa Svara that stood in the way of the sadava or Audava formation was known as Sadavadvesi or Auduvadvesi. For example, the Jati Sadjamadhyama obtains its sadava form by omitting nisada but as nisada itself is its amja Svara, its omission is impossible and hence its Sadava form is equally impossible. Similarly, Gandhari, Raktagandhari and Kaisiki Jatis are said to become Sadava with the omission of rsabha but in the Madhyama Grama there was Rsabha-Pancama Samvada; therefore in these three Jatis, Pancama Svara is never the Amsa Svara because if it becomes Amsa Svara, then the exclusion of its Samvada, Rsabha, will be impossible.'2' Another example is Sadji Jati. The omission of Nisada engenders its Sadava Rupa, but in its Sadava state its amsa Svara being Gandhara, its Samvadi Nisada cannot be excluded. Therefore Sadji Jati cannot have its sadava state.

One more peculiar feature of the Jatis is that although the exclusion of any Svara was possible and permissible, the exclusion of Madhyama Svara was impossible. It was termed Avinasi or indestructible. Even the Brahmana singers of Sama-gana have stated in Gandharva Kalpa in their reference to the madhyama Svara that it is inerasable or indispensable and indestructible. The ten lakshanas of Jatis are as follows: Amsa, Graha, Tara, Mandra, Nyasa, Apanyasa, Alpatva, Bahutva, Sadava and Audava. There is no reference to Vadi or Samvadi.

CONCLUSION

Suddha Jati takes place in the Mandra Svara whereas in the latter, this rule is relaxed. Out of the eighteen Jatis, eleven are the result of the blend of two or more Jatis, and therefore become Vikrta. In other words, Vikrta Jatis are formed by the

mutual combination of the above Jatis.

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