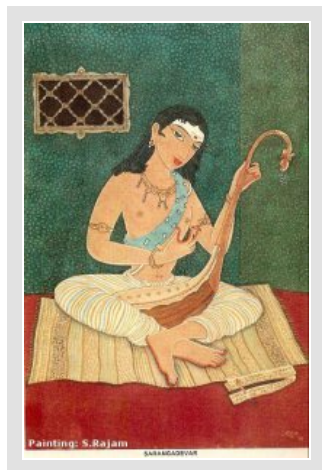


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## Music of India - a brief outline - Part sixteen

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### 8. *Sangita-ratnakara* by Sarangadeva



Sarangadeva's *Sangita-ratnakara* (first half of 13<sup>th</sup> century) is of particular importance, because it was written just before influence of the Muslim conquest began to assert itself on Indian culture. The Music discussed in *Sangita-ratnakara* is free from Persian influence. *Sangita-ratnakara* therefore marks the stage at which the 'integrated' Music of India was before it branched into North-South Music traditions.

It is clear that by the time of Sarangadeva, the Music of India had moved far away from Marga or Gandharva, as also from the system based on Jatis (class of melodies) and two parent scales. By his time, many new conventions had entered into the main stream; and the concept of Ragas that had taken firm roots was wielding considerable authority. Sarangadeva brought together various strands of the past music traditions, defined almost 267 Ragas, established a sound theoretical basis for music and provided a model for the later musicology (*Samgita Shastra*).

Sarangadeva's emphasis was on the ever changing nature of music, the expanding role of regional (Desi) influences on it, and the increasing complexity of musical material that needed to be systemised time and again. Yet; Sarangadeva was rooted in the prevalent musical practices of his time. His stress was consistently on the Lakshya the music as practiced than on ancient theories which though he respects them highly

Sarangadeva gives some information about himself in the beginning of the work. Sarangadeva introduces himself as belonging to a family which hailed from Kashmir. His grandfather Bhaskara, an Ayurveda physician, moved Kashmir into the newly found Yadava capital Devagiri (Maharashtra) in the Deccan region at the invitation of King Bhillanna V (1173-1192). After the death of Bhillanna, his son Jaitrapala or Jaitugi ascended the throne and ruled for a short period. He was succeeded in 1200 by Singhana (1200-1247). He was a very powerful king and also a great patron of arts, literature, and science. It is during his reign that Sarangadeva was appointed in his father's (Sodhala's) post as the Royal Accountant (*Sri-karana-agrani*). Along with his work at the King's offices, Sarangadeva continued to practice the family profession of Ayurveda. He is also said to have written a Vedanta work entitled *Adhyatma-viveka*. That work is not available now.

During his spare hours Sarangadeva was busy composing his monumental work on Indian music the *Sangita Ratnakara*, the Ocean of Music. It turned out to be one of the important and comprehensive Sanskrit texts on Music of India.

The *Samgita Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva is a great compilation, not an original work, that ably brings together various strands of the past music tradition found in earlier works like *Nātyashastra*, *Dattilam*, *Bṛhaddēśī*, *Sarasvatī-hṛdayālāṅkāra-hāra* and one that is greatly influenced by the commentary of Abhinavagupta the *Abhinavabharathi*. But for *Samgita Ratnakara*, it may have been more difficult to understand *Natyasastra* and *Bṛhaddēśī* and other ancient texts. And, *Samgita Ratnakara* also established a sound theoretical basis for

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music related issues and practices. It also provided a model for the subsequent treatises to elaborate on music-theories and practices (*Samgita Shastra*).

By the time of *Samgita-ratnakara*, three divisions of Samgita (vocal, instrumental and imitative art) were well developed. Of these, the Vocal music was regarded as the essential, fundamental music through which all other forms of music were to be understood and interpreted.

*Samgita Shastra* as envisaged by Sarangadeva was a composite art consisting *Gita* (melodic forms), *Vadya* (instruments) and *Nrta* (dance or limb movements). By the time of *Samgita-ratnakara*, three Angas (limbs) of Samgita were well developed. Of these, the Vocal music was regarded as the essential, fundamental music through which all other forms of music were to be understood and interpreted. Here again, Sarangadeva focuses on Desi Sangita, though he comments on aspects of Marga Sangita. On Dance (*Nrtya*) he offers clear picture of both Marga and Desi traditions, although in a concise manner.

*Sangita Ratnakara* is a standard and an authoritative text; and it hugely impacted almost all the writers in the subsequent period. It is also a reliable source book on ancient music traditions and their authors. But for *Samgita Ratnakara*, it may have been more difficult to understand *Natyasastra*, *Brhaddesi* and the other texts.

The text of *Sangita Ratnakara* has 1678 verses spread over seven chapters (*Sapta-adhyayi*) covering the aspects *Gita*, *Vadya* and *Nrta*: *Svaragat-adhyaya*; *Ragavivek-adhyaya*; *Prakiraka-adhyaya*; *Prabandh-adhyaya*, *Taala-adhyaya*; *Vadya-adhyaya* and *Nartana-adhyaya*. The first six chapters deal with various facets of music and music-instruments; and the last chapter deals with Dance.

The first chapter deals with Nada (the sound); the second with Raga; the third with Prakirna (miscellaneous topics relating to music); the fourth with Prabandha class of Music; the fifth with Marga and Desi Taala systems; the sixth with Vadya (musical instruments); and the seventh chapter on *Nartana* dance.

In general, Sarangadeva follows Abhinavagupta very closely.

Chapter One – Nada: What seems rather unusual for a formal text on music is that *Samgita-ratnakara* opens with a lengthy chapter (*Svara-gathadhyaya*), divided into eight *Prakaranas* or Sections running into more than 170 verses purportedly dealing with Svara. It does not talk much about music. But, it goes into elaborate details of human anatomy (according to the Ayurvēda), the centers (*Sthanas*) in the body associated with origin, development and articulation of sound – heart (*Hrid*), throat (*Kantha*) and head region (*Murdha*) – in three varieties of pitches – *Mandara*, *Madhya* and *Tara*.

The third *Prakarana* of the first chapter is *Nada-Sthana-Sruti-Svara-Jati-Kula-Daivata-Risi-Chanda-Rasa-prakarana*. It also goes into the philosophical aspects of Nada, sound, which it regards as the manifestation of the undifferentiated, absolute principle Nada Brahman. Then it talks about two forms of Nada the un-struck or un-manifest (*anahata*) and the struck or the manifest (*ahata*). The sound in the human initially commences as an impulse or an idea in the mind with an urge to express itself. That idea is individualized and activated by the mind. It takes the aid of breath (*Prana*), the medium, to act as the vehicle to carry that idea. When the intention (idea or impulse) strikes (*ahata*) a bond with breath (*Prana*), the un-manifest turns into manifest Nada.

The, *ahata*, like its prior form (*anahata*) is neutral Svara, sound. It is only after passing through series of processes; the Svara is differentiated into *Sruti* (pitch) modulations.

*Srutis* are units of tonal interval with which the interval of a Svara is measured. Hence the Svaras are described next. After describing the intervals of the Suddha-Svaras those of the Vikrita-svaras are given. Suddha-svaras are those which conform to the arrangements of the seven Svaras of the Shadja-murcchana of Shadja-grama. Those which differ from this arrangement are the Vikrita-svara-s. There are 7 Suddha and 12 Vikrita-svaras.

The *Sruti*-s (pitch) are said to be of 22 kinds of time-intervals. When certain of these are located along the chosen octave-continuum, modified (sharp or flattened) from their normal and highlighted, a recognizable pattern of Svaras emerge. Here, the *Prana* and certain body parts play vital roles to transform *Sruti* into Svaras. Body is considered as an arched harp with 22 strings activated by *Prana* (vital breath).

Three Gramas are described – *Sahdja-grama*, *Madhyama-grama* and *Gandharva-grama*. The names of the Seven Murcchanas in each Grama are also given.

The sixth *Prakarana* is on *Varna* and *Alankara*. *Varnas* denote the different kinds of movements that a melodic line can take. Four *Varnas* are described: *Sthayi*, *Arohi*, *Avarohi* and *Sanchari*. *Alankara*-s are ornamental patterns of Svaras that decorate a melodic line. *Alankaras* are classified under the four *Varnas*.

The seventh *Prakarana* is *Jati-prakarana* in which the *lakshana* (characteristics) of eighteen *Jatis* are given. The first seven are classified into Suddha and Vikrita; and the remaining eleven as *Samsaragaja*. The characteristics or the *laksana*-s that are used for a describing a *Jati* are the same ten as mentioned in *Brihadhesi*.

The last *Prakarana* is called the *Giti-prakarana*. Although it is named thus it takes up the treatment of certain musical forms called *Kapāla* and *Kambala* first and then goes on to *Giti*-s. The *Kapāla* songs are based on some derivatives of *Jāti*-s and they are made up of words describing the fierce form of Lord Shiva.

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■ Vedanta (10)
■ Vishnu (5)
■ Vishnudharmottara (6)
■ Zen (4)

Chapter Two – Raga viveka: is about the descriptions of the Ragas which are treated under two broad heads of Marga and Desi. He mentions six varieties of Marga Ragas: Gramaraga, Uparaga, Raga, Bhasha, Vibhasha and Antarbhasha. He also gives a list of *purva-prasiddha* (well established) and *adhuna-prasiddha* (recently established) Ragas. Many Ragas are illustrated in notation. There are also Sanskrit compositions in notation.

But, Sarangadeva's focus is primarily on the Desi Ragas. He describes and discusses four types of Desi Ragas: Raganga, Bhasanga, Upanga and Kriyanga.

The Gramaragas resemble the Jāti-s closely and they are further classified on the basis of the different melodic styles. These styles are called Gīti. In this chapter, the five Gīti-s, namely, Suddha, Bhinna, Vesara, Gaudi and Sadharini are described.

Chapter Three: *Prakirṇaka*: deals with varieties of topics such as: *Guna –Doshā* (merit and de-merits) of *Vak-geya-kara* (composers who set their songs to music) ; *Guna –Doshā* in voice culture of male (*Gayaka*) and female (*Gayani*) singers, articulation (*Sabda*) and resonance in voice (*Sarira*); improvisations in song-rendering by application of ornamentations (*Gamaka*) of fifteen kinds\*; expressions that manifest the feelings or effects associated with Raga phrases (*Sthaya*) , which are of ninety-six kinds; and, *Alapi* free and improvised rendering of Raga and the song of two sorts *Raga-Alapi* that is not bound (*Anibaddha*) or restricted by *Taala* ; *Rupaka-Alapi* , melodic improvisation done while rendering the text of the song.

[\*He recognized fifteen varieties of Gamakas- Tiripa, Sphurita, Kampita, Leena, Andolita, Vali, Tribhinna, Kurula, Ahata, Ullasita, Humpita, Plavita, Mudrita, Namita and Misrita; and, three kinds of Yatis – Sama, Srotogata or Shrotovaha and Gopucchā.]

Chapter Four –Prabandha: is a detailed discussion on Prabandha class of Music that was dominant during the days of Sarangadeva. He says: the *Gayana* (singing) is twofold – *Nibaddha* and *Anibaddha*. That which is composed of *Anga*-s (limbs or elements) and *Dhathu*-s (sections) is *Nibaddha Samgita*. And *Alapita* which is free from such structures is known as *Anibaddha Samgita*. Then he goes on to say that *Nibaddha* has three names: Prabandha, Vastu and Rupaka.

By the time of *Samgita-Ratnakara*, Prabandha had grown into thousands. Sarangadeva explained Prabandha as that which is pleasant; and that which is governed by rules regarding Raga, Taala, Chhandas, Vritta (Sanskrit verses) and Anga. Sarangadeva described about 260 types of Prabandha-s with their variations. Sarangadeva generally followed *Manasollasa* and *Sangita-Samayasara*.

He describes the four sections (*Dhathu*) of a Prabandha song (Udgraha, Melapaka, Dhruva, and Abogha) along with Antara the intermediary; and its six elements (Anga) or limbs (Svara, Birudu, Tenaka, Pata, Pada and Taala) . These comprehensively cover the three aspects of a song: the text, the Raga (melody) and Taala (rhythm).

Then he takes up the discussion on class of Prabandhas: Shuddha Suda, Salaga Suda, Alikrama and Viprakirṇa. Of these , Sarangadeva selects Salaga Suda for detailed treatment. Sarangadeva was the first to present the class of Suda systematically, lending it a theoretical base. For about 300 years thereafter, the terms and descriptions provided by Sarangadeva were adopted by all the later authors.

He discusses seven types of Salaga Suda songs: Dhruva, Mantha, Prati-mantha, Nihsaru, Addatala, Rasaka and Ekatali.

Chapter Five – Taala: deals with time units or rhythmic patterns Taala. Sarangadeva deals with Marga Taala and Desi Taala separately. Under Marga Taala , Sarangadeva mentions five varieties : *Caccatpuṭa* ; *Cācapuṭa* ; *Ṣaṭpīṭaputraka* ; *Sampakvēṣṭāka* ; and *Udghaṭṭa*. Under these he discusses the different aspects of the Taala such as the time-units *Laghu*, *Guru* and *Pluta*; the *Kriyā*-s; the different forms of a Taala like *Ēkakala*, *Dvikala* and *Catuṣkala*.

After the Marga Taala, 120 varieties of Desi Taala employed in Prabandha songs are discussed.

Chapter Six- Vadya: generally follows the discussions on Music instruments (*Vadya*) as elaborated in *Natyashastra*. Sarangadeva also describes various class of instruments in terms of : *Tata* (stringed) *Susira* (hollow) , *Avadhana* (Drum type) and *Ghana* ( solid like cymbals).

Under these, he names some specific types: *Tata* (*Ekatantṛi*, *Citrā*, *Vipaṅci*, *Mattakōkilā*, *Ālāpini*, *Kinnari*); *Susira* (*Vamśa*, *Kāhala*, *Ṣaṅkha*); *Avadhana* (*Huḍukka*, *Paṭaha*) ; and, *Ghana* (*Kāmsyatāla*, *Ghaṅṭā*).

He also talks about the construction of these instruments and ways of playing them.

Chapter Seven– Nartana: The seventh and the last chapter is in two parts. The first one deals with Nartana. The term Nartana is a common term representing the arts of *Nṛtta*, *Nṛtya* and *Nāṭya*. In describing the Marga tradition of Dance, Sarangadeva follows *Natyashastra*. As regards the Desi class of Dance he improves upon the explanations offered in *Manasollasa* of King Someshwara and *Sangita Samayasara* of Parsvadeva

Although he follows Bharatha in describing the movements of the body, he differs from Bharatha in dividing the limbs into three categories, Anga, Upanga and Pratyanga. he follows the *Manasollasa* in using the term Nartana

for dance; dividing Nartana into three categories : Natya, Nrtya and Nrta (SR. 7. 3).

He also differs from *Natyashastra* which identifies Tandava as Shiva's dance and Lasya as Parvati's. According to Sarngadeva, Nrta and Nrtya can both be of two kinds, Tandava and Lasya (SR. 7. 28). Tandava requires *uddhata* (forceful) and Lasya requires *lalita* (delicate) movements (SR. 7. 29- 30).

Sarangadeva's description of Cari, Sthana, Karana and Angaharas of the Marga type are as in the *Natyasastra*. But the Desi Caris, Sthanas and Utplutikaranas are the same as those in the *Manasollasa* of Someshwara.

Next described are Gaundali and Perani, the two dances commonly performed in the Desi tradition. Here he follows *Sangita-Samayasa*.

Sarngadeva explains the importance of aesthetic beauty, lays down the rules of exercise, and describes the qualities and faults of a performer (including a description of her make-up and costume), and those of the teacher and the group of supporting performers. Then he describes the sequential process of a performance, including the musical accompaniment, in the pure mode or *suddha-paddhati*.

After describing these two dance pieces, Sarngadeva deals with the qualifications of the Acharya (the teacher), the Nata (the actor), the Nartaka (the dancer), the Vaitalika (a general entertainer), the Charana (an expert in understanding gharghara) and the Kohlatika (a performer who specializes in Bhramari, rope-walking and dancing with a dagger). Next, he describes the audience and the sitting arrangements.

In the second part of this chapter, the author describes Rasas (nine in number), Sthayibhavas (thirty-three in number) and the definition of Sattva (the essence) and Sattvikabhavas (eight in number). Sarangadeva largely follows the explanations offered by Abhinavagupta on the theories of Rasa. The chapter concludes with final prayers

The significant commentaries on the text include the *Sangitasudhakara* of Simhabhupala (c.1330) and the *Kalanidhi* of Kallinatha (c.1430).

[ Ref : 1. *Sangitaratnakara of Sarngadeva* by Dr.N. Ramanathan ; 2. *Sangitaratnakara of Sarngadeva* translated into English with detailed notes by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, the Adyar Library, 1945. 3. *Sangitaratnakara of Sarngadeva* by Natalie Savelyeva. 4. *The Evolution of Classical Indian Dance Literature: A Study of the Sanskrit Tradition* by Mandakranta Bose ]



## 9. *Swaramelakalanidhi* of Ramamatya (1550AD)



Ramatya who described himself as the maternal grandson of the learned scholar Kallappa Desika (*Vidyandih Kallappa Desikaste matamaho*) was a noted scholar and musician in the court of the Vijayanagar King Sadashiva Raya (1542-1570). It is said; that Ramamatya was requested by Venkadri, the brother of Rama Raja the Minister of King Sadashiva Raya, to write a book on Music, particularly to reconcile the tradition and the current practices. The result of his efforts was *Swaramelakalanidhi* having four Chapters *Swaraprakarana*, *Veenaprakarana*, *Melaprakarana* and *Ragaprakarana* with a total of about 328 couplets in Sanskrit. The text systematically deals with Svara, Veena, Mela system and Ragas.

*Swaramelakalanidhi* is a fitting introduction to the post-*Sangita Ratnakara* period in the history of South Indian Music. Ramamatya's work makes it evident that the Sangita of his time (1550) was yet to be influenced by the Muslim music. The *Raga-vibodha* of Somanatha (1609) supports this view, although Somanatha himself seemed to be getting familiar with Muslim music.

As desired by his patron, Ramamatya brings the theory up to his times, rationalizes music principles and practices). He speaks of two kinds of Music: the ancient Marga or Gandharva which was *Lakshya* oriented (*pradhana*) and the Desi Sangita which is in practice (*Lakshya pradhana*). He seemed to favor the practice of Music over the theory (*Lakshya pradhanam khalu Gita-shastram*).

Ramamatya describes various types of Veenas used in his day as well as their tuning. He distinguishes two main types: Veena with fixed frets which that allows all the Ragas to be played (*Sarva-raga-mela-veena*); and, Veena on which only one Raga could be played at a time (*Eka-raga-mela-veena*) and for playing another Raga the frets had to be moved and re-arranged.

Besides these he mentions three other types of Veena differing in in the tuning of their main strings : Shuddha-mela-veena (*Sa, Pa, sa, ma*); Madhya-mela-veena (*Pa, sa, pa, sa*) ; and , Achutharaya-mela-veena (*Sa, Pa, sa, pa*) .

An interesting aspect of Ramamatya's description is the method of placing the frets. Ramamatya bases his technique in the principle of Samvadi Svaras as described in in ancient texts. . Applying this principle, he introduced the concepts of Svayambhu-Svara (self-generating note, which some say is the equivalent of the ancient Samvadi- perfect consonant) to all other notes . Based on this he determines the positions of all the frets on the Veena. He explains that the different Shuddha and Vikrtasvaras can be derived as the Samvadi-s of one another, starting with the basic Svaras viz. Sa, Pa and Ma to which the strings of the Veena are tuned, are termed *Svayambhu-Svara*. And in turn, he says, the other Svaras derived through Samvadi relationship are also called Svayambhu-Svaras.

He also brought certain improvements into the technical aspects of Music. For instance; the ancient music-theories mentioned 22 Srutis, although only 14 were used as Svaras (notes). Ramamatya reduced the number of Srutis to 12, because, he said, the difference in pitch between *Antara Ga* and *Cyuta Ma* (prefix *cyuta* means *lowered*) and the notes were negligible. He specified the implementation of this tuning by describing the location of six frets on his *Veena*. He clarified the distinction between abstract Mela ragas and Janya ragas. He then combined these three concepts to identify 20 Melas under which he classified about 64 Janya Ragas.

Ramamatya's *Swaramelakalanidhi* marked the revival or a new beginning of an era of classifying Ragas on purely music principles; and, methodically grouping them under what came to be known as Mela system. After *Swaramelakalanidhi*, numerous other works were written following Ramamatya's theories of classifying Ragas into Mela system. Thereafter, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries grew into periods of great importance for production of *Lakshna-granths*. Bringing to fore the method of classifying Ragas into Melas could be said to be the major contribution of Ramamatya.

It appears that by the time of Ramamatya, the method of deriving tunes from the complicated arrangement of Grama-Murchana-Jaati was no longer in use. Similarly, the ancient model essentials (*lakshanas*) for identifying a Raga based on ten criteria was no longer in practice. The ten ancient criteria (*lakshanas*) had then been reduced to five. Ramamatya, in his *Svara-mela-kalanidhi* classified the then known Ragas into 20 Melas. His classification of Melas was based on five criteria (*Lakshana*). That is, Amsa (predominant note); *Graha* (initial note); *Nyasa* (final note); *Shadava* (*sixth note*); and, *Audava* (pentatonic structure) were no longer considered necessary. This meant that the ancient modal system was replaced by a scalar system. Nevertheless, individual Raga continued to preserve some of their ancient modal essentials (*Lakshna*), in certain case even until today.

Even prior to Ramamatya the method grouping the Ragas into Mela was in vogue. Mela is a Kannada word meaning gathering or grouping. The practice of grouping (Mela) the Ragas according to their parent scale, it said, was initiated by Sage Sri Vidyaranya in his *Sangita-sara* (14<sup>th</sup> century). Govinda Dikshita (who reverently addresses Sri Vidyarana as: *Sri Charana*) confirms this in his *Sangita-sudha* (1614). Sri Vidyaranya classified about 50 Ragas into 15 groups (Mela). The intention of the Mela system was to organize then known Ragas that were in practice. Sri Vidyaranya's work on Melakarta system was followed up and improved upon in later times by other scholars.

Following Sri Vidyaranya, Ramamatya in the fourth Chapter – *Mela-Prakarana*– of his *Svara-mela-kalanidhi* introduced the theoretical framework for classifying then known Ragas under 20 Melas (parent scale), the notes and names of which were taken from the prominent Ragas of that time. This was an improvement over the system initiated by Sri Vidyaranya.

Treating Ragas in terms of a Mela was possibly the most significant approach and development in musical history. Mela refers to a collection of seven *Svarasthanas* (Svara postions). All Ragas are Janya Ragas, and janya Ragas that have a common set of *Svarasthanas* are placed in the same Mela. The name of the Mela was given to the Raga among the group that was most significant or popular. At this stage, the Raga that held the title for the Mela did not need to possess all the seven Svaras; and though the Mela was referred by its name, it was still a janya Raga.

Ramamatya lists 20 Melas: 1.Mukhari; 2.SriRaga; 3. Malavagaula; 4. Saranganata; 5. Hindola ; 6. Shuddha-ramakriya; 7. Desaki; 8.Kannadagaula; 9. Shuddanti; 10.Ahari; 11.Nada-ramakriya; 12.Shuddhavarjati; 13. Ritigaula; 14. Vasantha-bhairavi; 15.Kedaragaula; 16.Hejujji; 17.Samavarali; 18.Revagupti; 19. Samantha; and 20. Kambhoji.

[Later, Venkatamakhin pointed out that two of Ramamatya's Melas – Saranganata and Kedaragaula – do not differ in their structure.]

Ramamatya gives details of Shuddha-svara-s and Vikṛta-svara-s occurring in each of the Mela, a list of sixty-four Janya Raga-s classified under each Mela, and the Sruti positions of Svaras in the Melas. Mukhari is established

as the Shuddha-svara saptaka in this treatise (For more, please see *Swaramelakalanidhi of Ramamatya by Dr. N. Ramathan*) According to Tulaja The Karnataka Raga Mukhari (Raga as well as Mela) is the same as the ancient Suddha-sadharita.

In this scheme, ten ancient model essentials (*lakshanas*) which had been reduced to 5 (the predominant note (*Amsa*); the initial note (*Graha*); the final note (*Nyasa*), the hexatonic structure (*Shadava*) and the pentatonic structure (*Audava*) were no longer considered to be the criteria for classifying the Ragas. That meant that the ancient modal system was replaced by a scalar system. Nevertheless, individual Raga continued to preserve some of their ancient modal essentials (*Lakshna*), in certain case even until today.

Such continuity in the Ragas is illustrated by the following Ragas: 1. The Karnataka Raga Mukhari (a Raga as well as a Mela), which according to Tulaja is the same Raga as the ancient Suddha-sadharita; 2. Karnataka Raga Varali or Varati that is both Samavarali and Jhalavarali; 3. Hindustani Varari or Barai – Varati; 4. Hindustani Bhairava; 5. Karnataka Lalita; 6. Karnataka and Hindustani Dhanasri; and, 7. Hindustani Sindhubhairavi.

Ramatya's exposition of Mela, Raga and his technique of '*Madya Mela Veena*' was a pioneering work in the systematic classification of Ragas. After his work, numerous others on Raga, Mela, Janya, etc were published. Ramamatya was followed by: Pundarika Vittala (16th century); Venkatamakhin (17th century); and his grandson Muddu Venkatamakhin (18th century).

Ramatya's work also enormously influenced Somanatha's *Raga Vibodha* and Govinda Dikshitar's *Sangita Chudamani*, two important works which deal with Ragas current at their time. Some regard Ramamatya, Somanatha and Govinda Dikshitar as the Trinity of Karnataka Sangita theory (*Sangita Shastra*).

Later scholars, that is after Ramamatya, started computing the maximum number of seven Svara combinations they could derive (*melaprasthara*) based on the number of Svara positions. Here, each author computed a different number of Melas based on the number of *Svarasthanas* he had theorised. For example, the *Sad-Raga-chandrodaya* Pundarika Vittala mentions a possible 90 Melas, while in Somanatha's *Raga Vibodha* there are 960 possible Melas. Even though they came up with this computation they found that only a limited number of these were actually used in the form of a Raga. Therefore, Somanatha felt that 23 Melas would suffice to classify the 67 Ragas then in practice.

During the second half of the 16th century Pundarika Vittala (in his *Raga-manjari*) introduced Ramamatya's Mela system in North India. But, he changed the names and scales of several Melas. Another South Indian musicologist who migrated North was Srikantha who wrote his *Rasa-kaumudi* at about the same time. He reduced Ramamatya's 19 Melas (as *Saranganata* and *Kedaragaula*) were actually the same scale. This system resembled the contemporary Arabic system of 12 predominant modes (*Maqam*).

One of the most important texts in music of South India was *Chatur-dandi-prakashika* of Venkatamakhin (1660), which brought the Mela- Janya system on a rational basis. It classified the Ragas according to the system of 72 basic scales (Mela). This system still prevails in South Indian music, though with modifications.

In 1620, Venkatamakhin, son of Govinda Dikshitar, corrected Ramamatya's Mela system by reducing the number of Melas from 20 to 19, because he said the notes of the two Melas Kedaragaula and Saranganata were the same. More importantly, in the Appendix (*Anubandha*) to his *Chatur-dandi-prakashika*, Venkatamakhin mentions the possibility of classifying Ragas (*Kanakangi* to *Rasikapriya*) built on 12 *Svara-Sthanas* under a 72 Mela-karta scheme made into two groups of 36 each (Shuddha Madhyama and Prathi Madhyama). (It was at this time a theoretical possibility, since all those Melas were yet unknown.) The 72 Melas bear the names of prominent contemporary Ragas; and each of which is considered the basic scale of one or more Ragas.

It is believed that it was Venkatamakhin's grandson Muddu Venkatamakhin, who gave the nomenclature for the Mela Ragas, (Kanakambari, and Phenadyuti etc) in his Gitam called *Raganga Raga Anukramanika Gitam* (found in Sri Subbarama Dikshitar's *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini* (1904). Shri TM Krishna observes: 'The Muddu Venkatamakhin tradition, which uses the terms Raganga Raga (equivalent term to Mela-kartha) and Janya Raga, adopts the opinion that the Raganga Raga needs to be Sampurna in either Arohana or Avarohana but non-linear. Sri Muthusvami Dikshitar gave form to most of these Ragas through his compositions.'

Again, during late 17th – early 18th century, Govindacharya the author of *Samgraha-chudamani* changed the names of some Melas of Venkatamakhin. He expanded on Venkatamakhin's *Chatur-Dandi-Prakashika* by introducing the *Sampoorna Melakarta* scheme which has a complete (*sampoorna*) arohana – avaroha structure. as well as delineating *Lakshanas* for 294 Janya Ragas, many of which were till then unknown, with their Arohana and Avarohana. In this scheme, the Melakartas arise out of systematic permutation of the seven Svaras into the twelve *svara sthanas*. . Govindacharya also gave *lakshana gitas* and *lakshana slokas* for 294 Janya Ragas. And, he also refined the *Katyapadi* prefixes by linking the Mela Ragas to their first two syllables of their names. This system of 72 Mela is the Karnataka Mela system of the present day.

As per Shri TM Krishna: 'Mela started out as a way to organize existing Ragas but moved to creating scales as Ragas using the Mela structure. Probably for the first time in musical history theory influenced practice. This is probably why many Ragas in performance even today are only svara structures sans features that give a Raga an organic form'.

The voluminous *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini* by Sri Subbarama Dikshitar (1839-1906), the grandson of

Sri Mutthuswami Dikshitar , running into about 1700 pages is a source-book on Music of India , tracing the history of Music from Sarangadeva to the 20<sup>th</sup> century through a series of biographies of noteworthy musicians and music-scholars .It also provides exhaustive details on 72 Melas as also tables of Ragas, Ragangas, Upanga-s, Bhashangas with their Murcchanas, Gamakas, in addition to details of the Taalas.

Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936), a scholar and a musicologist, in his colossal work ' *Hindustan Sangeet Paddhati*' reorganized the Uttaradi or North Indian Music, mainly, by adopting the concept of Mela system as expanded by Venkatamakhin (1660) in the Appendix to his *Chatur-dandi-prakashika*.

Bhatkhande also adopted the idea of *Lakshana-geetas* that Venkatamakhin employed to describe the characteristics of a Raga. Bhatkhande arranged all the Ragas of the Uttaradi Sangita into ten basic groups called 'Thaat', based on their musical scales. The Thaata arrangement, which is an important contribution to Indian musical theory, broadly corresponds with the *Mela-karta* system of Karnataka Sangita.

When you look back the long and interesting history of Raga in Karnataka Sangita stretching from Matanga to the present-day , you find that the system has evolved through several stages. If Matanga defined the Raga and lent it a sense of identity, it was Ramamatya that activated the process of binding the Ragas into structured groups. This has provided Karnataka Sangita a unique and a thorough theoretical foundation.

Thus, *Swaramelakalanidhi* of Ramamatya occupies a significant position in the history of the development of Karnataka Sangita. And, as Dr. N. Ramanathan remarks: *Swaramelakalanidhi* is an important work as the information contained in it is more relevant and related to the modern practice than the books written prior to it.

[ At the end of his work , Ramamatya says he does not treat the subjects of Taala and Prabandha because these had already been treated exhaustively by Sarangadeva .]

[Ref: 1. *Swaramelakalanidhi* of Ramamatya by Dr. N . Ramanathan ;2. [http://www.chrysalis-foundation.org/Ramamatya-s\\_Vina.htm](http://www.chrysalis-foundation.org/Ramamatya-s_Vina.htm) 3.<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/centred-upon-centuries/article1117724.ece>;4.Indian Music: History and Structure by Emmie Te Nijenhuis]



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