A Raga performance at Collège des Bernardins, France

Raga (Melodic Mode)

Raga

This article is about melodic modes in Indian music. For subgenre of reggae music, see Ragga. For similar terms, see Ragini (actress), Raga (disambiguation), and Ragam (disambiguation).

A Raga (IAST: rāga), Raag or Ragam, literally means "coloring, tingeing, dyeing". The term also refers to a concept close to melodic mode in Indian classical music. Raga is a remarkable and central feature of classical Indian music tradition, but has no direct translation to concepts in the classical European music tradition. Each raga is an array of melodic structures with musical motifs, considered in the Indian tradition to have the ability to "color the mind" and affect the emotions of the audience.

A raga consists of at least five notes, and each raga provides the musician with a musical framework. The specific notes within a raga can be reordered and improvised by the musician, but a specific raga is either ascending or descending. Each raga has an emotional significance and symbolic associations such as with season, time and mood. The raga is considered a means in Indian musical tradition to evoke certain feelings in an audience. Hundreds of raga are recognized in the classical Indian tradition, of which about 30 are common.

Each raga, state Dorothea E. Hast and others, has its "own unique melodic personality".

There are two main classical Indian music traditions, North Indian (Hindustani) and South Indian (Carnatic), and the concept of raga is shared by both. Raga are also found in Sikh traditions such as in Guru Granth Sahib, the primary scripture of Sikhism. Similarly it is a part of the qawwali tradition found in Sufi Islamic communities of South Asia. Some popular Indian film songs and ghazals use rāgas in their compositions.

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Etymology
The Sanskrit word raga has Indo-European roots, as *reγ- which connotes "to dye". It is found in Greek, Persian, Khwarezmian and other languages, in variants such as "rāxτ", "rang", "rakt" and others. The words "red" and "rado" are also related.[12]

Terminology
Rāga (Sanskrit: राग), states Monier Monier-Williams, means "the act of colouring or dyeing", or simply a "colour, hue, tint, dye".[13] The term also connotes an emotional state referring to a "feeling, affection, desire, interest, joy or delight", particularly related to passion, love, or sympathy for a subject or something. In the context of ancient Indian music, the term refers to a harmonious note, melody, formula, building block of music available to a musician to construct a state of experience in the audience.[13]

The term raga in the modern connotation of a melodic format occurs in the Brihaddeshi by Matanga dated ca. 8th century.[21] or possibly 9th century.[22] The Brihaddesi describes raga as "a combination of tones which, with beautiful illuminating graces, pleases the people in general".[23]

According to Emmie Te Nijenhuis, a professor in Indian musicology, the Dattilam section of Brihaddeshi has survived into the modern times, but the details of ancient music scholars mentioned in the extant text suggest a more established tradition by the time this text was composed.[21] The same essential idea and prototypical framework is found in ancient Hindu texts, such as the Naradiyasiksa and the classic Sanskrit work Natya Shastra by Bharata Muni, whose chronology has been estimated to sometime between 500 BCE and 500 CE, probably between 200 BCE and 200 CE.[25]

Bharata describes a series of empirical experiments he did with Vina, then compared what he heard, noting the relationship of fifth intervals as a function of intentionally induced change to the instrument's tuning. Bharata states that certain combination of notes are pleasant, certain not so. His methods of experimenting with the instrument triggered further work by ancient Indian scholars, leading to the development of successive permutations, as well as theories of musical note inter-relationships, interlocking scales and how this makes the listener feel.[22] Bharata discusses Bhairava, Kaushika, Hindola, Dipaka, Sri-raga, and Megha. Bharata states that these have the ability to trigger a certain affection and the ability to "color the emotional state" in the audience.[13][22] His encyclopedic Natyashastra links his studies on music to the performance arts, and it has been influential in Indian performance arts tradition.[26][27]

The other ancient text, Naradiyasiksa dated to be from the 1st century BCE, discusses secular and religious music, compares the respective musical notes.[28] This is earliest known text that reverentially names each musical note to be a deity, describing it in terms of varna (colors) and other motifs such as parts of fingers, an approach that is conceptually similar to the 12th century Guidonian hand in European music.[28] The study that mathematically arranges rhythms and modes (raga) has been called prastara.(Khan 1996, p. 89, Quote: "(...) the Sanskrit word prastara, which means mathematical arrangement of rhythms and modes. In the Indian system of music there are about the 500 modes and 300 different rhythms which are used in everyday music. The modes are called Ragas.")[29]

History and significance

In the ancient texts of Hinduism, the term for the technical mode part of Raga was Jati. Later, Jati evolved to mean quantitative class of scales, while Raga evolved to become a more sophisticated concept that included the experience of the audience.[30] A figurative sense of the word as 'passion, love, desire, delight' is also found in the Mahabharata. The specialized sense of 'loveliness, beauty,' especially of voice or song, emerges in Sanskrit, used by Kalidasa and in the Panchatantra.[31]
The classical Indian music has ancient roots, and it primarily developed due to the reverence for arts, for both spiritual (moksha) and entertainment (kama) purposes in Hinduism. Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, discouraged music aimed at entertainment, but encouraged chanting of sacred hymns. The various canonical Tipitaka texts of Buddhism, for example, state Dasha-shila or ten precepts for those following the Buddhist spiritual path. Among these, is the precept recommending "abstain from dancing, singing, music and worldly spectacles". Buddhism does not forbid music or dance to a Buddhist layperson, but its emphasis has been on chants, not on musical raga.

Raga, along with performance arts such as dance and music, has been historically integral to Hinduism, with some Hindus believing that music is itself a spiritual pursuit and a means to moksha (liberation). Ragas, in the Hindu tradition, are believed to have a natural existence. Artists don't invent them, they only discover them. Music appeals to human beings, according to Hinduism, because they are ideational ideas found in music, and may be roughly described as a musical entity that includes note atmosphere of expression.

Western translation. According to Walter Kaufmann, though a remarkable and prominent feature of Indian A colonel period. The attempt to appreciate, understand and explain raga among European scholars started in the early colonial period. In 1784, Jones translated it as "mode" of European music tradition, but Willard corrected him in 1834 with the statement that a Raga is both mode and tune. In 1933, states José Luiz Martinez – a professor of Music, Stern refined this explanation to "the raga is more fixed than mode, less fixed than the melody, beyond the mode and short of melody, and richer both than a given mode or a given melody; it is mode with added multiple specialities".

A raga is a central concept of Indian music, predominant in its expression, yet the concept has no direct Western translation. According to Walter Kaufmann, though a remarkable and prominent feature of Indian music, a definition of raga cannot be offered in one or two sentences. Raga is a fusion of technical and ideational ideas found in music, and may be roughly described as a musical entity that includes note intonation, relative duration and order, in a manner similar to how words flexibly form phrases to create an atmosphere of expression. In some cases, certain rules are considered obligatory, in others optional. The raga allows flexibility, where the artist may rely on simple expression, or may add ornamentations yet express the same essential message but evoke a different intensity of mood.
In the Hindu traditions, raga musical notes have personalities, and they are reverentially linked to gods and goddesses. New ragas to noon, love-themed and passionate ragas to evening, and universal ragas to night.[73]

Raga and mathematics

Reliefs and carvings, as well as painting collections such as the Sangita-darpana, may characterized ragas as separated by scale, line of ascent and descent, emphasized notes and register, and intonation and ornaments.[63]

Rāgā-Rāgini system

For illustrations of ragas and ragnis, see Ragamala paintings.

Rāgini (Devanagari: रागिनी) is a term for the “feminine” counterpart of a “masculine” rāga.[64] These are envisioned to parallel the god-goddess themes in Hinduism, and described variously by different medieval Indian music scholars. For example, the Sangita-darpana text of 15th-century Damodara Misra proposes six raga with thirty ragni, creating a system of thirty-six, a system that became popular in Rajasthan.[65] In the north Himalayan regions such as Himachal Pradesh, the music scholars such as 16th century Mesakarna expanded this system to include eight descendants to each raga, thereby creating a system of eight. After the 16th-century, the system expanded still further.[66]

Raag Bhairava associated with Shiva is deemed a morning raga. In Sangita-darpana, the Bhairava raga is associated with the following ragnis: Bhairavi, Punyaki, Bilawali, Aslekh, Bangli. In Mesakarna system, the masculine and feminine musical notes are combined to produce putra ragas called Harakh, Pancham, Disakh, Bangal, Madhu, Madhava, Lalit, Bilawa.[64]

Ragas and their symbolism

The North Indian ragas system are also called Hindustani, while the South Indian system is commonly referred to as Carnatic. The North Indian system suggests particular time of a day or a season, in the belief that human state of psyche and mind are affected by seasons and by daily biological cycles and nature’s rhythms. The South India system is closer to the text, and places less emphasis on time or season.[67][68]

The symbolic role of classical Indian music through raga has been both aesthetic indulgence and the spiritual purifying of one’s mind (yoga). The former is encouraged in Kama literature (such as Kamasutra), while the latter appears in Yoga literature with concepts such as “Nada-Brahman” (metaphysical Brahman of sound).[69][70][71] Hindola raga, for example, is considered a manifestation of Kama (god of love), typically through Krishna. Hindola is also linked to the festival of dola,[69] which is more commonly known as “spring festival of colors” or Holl. This idea of aesthetic symbolism has also been expressed in Hindu temple reliefs and carvings, as well as painting collections such as the Ragamala.[70]

In ancient and medieval Indian literature, the raga are described as manifestation and symbolizm for gods and goddesses. Music is discussed as equivalent to the ritual yajna sacrifice, with pentatonic and hexatonic notes such as “ni-dha-pa-ma-go-ri” as Agnistoma, “ri-ni-dha-pa-ma-go” as Asvamedha, and so on.[69]

In the Middle Ages, music scholars of India began associating each raga with seasons. The 11th century Nanyadeva, for example, recommends that Hindola raga is best in spring, Pancama in summer, Sadjagrama and Tokka during the monsoons, Bhinnasadja (Bhairava) is best in early winter, and Kaisika in late winter.[72] In the 13th century, Saranga deva went further and associated raga with rhythms of each day and night. He associated pure and simple ragas to early morning, mixed and more complex ragas to late morning, skillful ragas to noon, love-themed and passionate ragas to evening, and universal ragas to night.[73]

Raga and mathematics
According to Cris Forster, mathematical studies on systematizing and analyzing South Indian raga began in the 16th century.\cite{74} Computational studies of ragas is an active area of musicology.\cite{73,76}

**Notations**

Although notes are an important part of rāga practice, they alone do not make the rāga. A rāga is more than a scale, and many ragas share the same scale. The underlying scale may have **four, five, six** or **seven tones**, called svaras (sometimes spelled as svaras). The svara concept is found in the ancient Natya Shastra in Chapter 28. It calls the unit of tonal measurement or audible unit as Śruti,[77] with verse 28.21 introducing the musical scale as follows,\cite{78}

![Svara in North Indian system of raga](image)

These seven degrees are shared by both major raga system, that is the North Indian (Hindustani) and South Indian (Carnatic).\cite{81} The solfege (sargam) is learnt in abbreviated form: sa, ri (Carnatic) or re (Hindustani), ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, sa. Of these, the first that is “sa”, and the fifth that is “po”, are considered anchors that are unalterable, while the remaining have flavors that differs between the two major systems.\cite{81}

![Svara in South Indian system of raga](image)

The music theory in the Natyashastra, states Maurice Winternitz, centers around three themes – sound, rhythm and prosody applied to musical texts.\cite{84} The text asserts that the octave has 22 sruti or microintervals of musical tones or 1200 cents.\cite{77} This is very close to the ancient Greek system, states Emmie Te Nijenhuis, with the difference that each sruti computes to 54.5 cents, while the Greek enharmonic quartenr system computes to 55 cents.\cite{77} The text discusses grama (scales) and murchana (modes), mentioning three scales of seven modes (21 total), some of which are the same as the Greek modes.\cite{85} However, the Gandhara-grama is just mentioned in Natyashastra, while its discussion largely focuses on two scales, fourteen modes and eight four tanas (notes).\cite{86,87,88} The text also discusses which scales are best for different forms of performance arts.\cite{85}

These musical elements are organized into scales (melo), and the South Indian system of raga works with 72 scales, as first discussed by Caturdandi prakashika.\cite{83} They are divided into two groups, purvanga and uttaranga, depending on the nature of the lower tetrachord. The anga itself has six cycles (cakra), where the purvanga or lower tetrachord is anchored, while there are six permutations of uttaranga suggested to the artist.\cite{83} After this system was developed, the Indian classical music scholars have developed additional ragas for all the scales. The North Indian style is closer to the Western diatonic modes, and built upon the foundation developed by Bhatkhande using ten Thaat: kalyan, bilavol, khamaj, kafi, asavari, bhairavi, bhairav, purvi, marva and todi.\cite{89} Some ragas are common to both systems and have same names, such as kalyan performed by either is recognizably the same.\cite{80} Some ragas are common to both systems but have different names, such as malkös of Hindustani system is recognizably the same as hindolam of Carnatic system. However, some ragas are named the same in the two systems, but they are different, such as todi.\cite{90}

Rāgas that have four svaras are called surtara (रूटरा) rāgas; those with five svaras are called audava (आउदवा) rāgas; those with six, shaodava (शावदवा); and with seven, sampurna (संपूर्ण, Sanskrit for ‘complete’). The number of svaras may differ in the ascending and descending like rāga Bhopalali which has five notes in the ascending and seven notes in descending or Khamaj with six notes in the ascending and seven in the descending. Rāgas differ in their way how to ascend or descend. Those that do not follow the strict ascending or descending order of svaras are called vakra (वक्र) (‘crooked’) rāgas.\cite{citation needed}

The mood of the rāga depends mainly on the way the notes are approached and intoned and their dominance as well as their duration.
Carnatic rāga

Main article: Carnatic rāga

In Carnatic music, the principal rāgas is called Melakartha, which literally means "lord of the scale". It is also called Asraya raga meaning "shelter giving raga", or Janaka raga meaning "father raga". [91]

A Thoata in the South Indian tradition are groups of derivative rāgas, which are called Janya rāgas meaning "begotten ragas" or Asrita rāgas meaning "sheltered ragas". [91] However, these terms are approximate and interim phrases during learning, as the relationships between the two layers are neither fixed nor has unique parent-child relationship. [91]

Janaka rāgas are grouped together using a scheme called Katapayadi sūtra and are organised as Melakarta rāgas. A Melakarta rāga is one which has all seven notes in both the arōhanam (ascending scale) and avarōhanam (descending scale). Some Melakarta rāgas are Harikambhoji, Kalyani, Kharakarapriya, Mayamalavagowla, Sankarabharanam and Todī. Janya rāgas are derived from the Janaka rāgas using a combination of the swarams (usually a subset of swarams) from the parent rāga. Some janya rāgas are Abheri, Abhogi, Bhairavi, Hindolam, Mohanam and Kambhoji. [citation needed]

Raga schools and training

The rāga and classical Indian music has been transmitted through Guru-Shisya parampara (teacher-student tradition) through an oral tradition and practice. Some are known as gharana (houses), and their performances are staged to rural and urban public through sabhas (music organizations). [92][93] Each Guru tradition has freely improvised over time, and differences in the rendering of each rāga is discernible. In the Indian musical schooling tradition, the small group of students lived near or with the teacher, the teacher treated them as family members providing food and boarding, and a student learnt rāga and other aspects of music thereby continuing the musical knowledge of his guru. [94] The tradition survives in parts of India, and many musicians can trace their guru lineage. [95]

Persian Rāk

The music concept of Rāk in Persian is probably a pronunciation of Raga. According to Hormoz Farhat, it is unclear how this term came to Persia, it has no meaning in modern Persian language, and the concept of rāga is unknown in Persia. [96]

See also

- List of rāgas in Indian classical music
- List of rāgas
- Nava rasas
- Rāga
- Raga rock
- Ten Ragas to a Disco Beat

References

1. ^ a b Tilton et al. 2008, p. 284.
2. ^ a b Wilke & Moebus 2011, pp. 222 with footnote 463.
3. ^ a b c d Lochtefeld 2002, p. 545.
4. ^ a b Kaufmann 1968, p. v.
7. ^ a b c d e Nettl 2010.
10. ^ Salhi 2013, pp. 183-84.
Natyasastra is an exhaustive encyclopedic dissertation of the ancient Indian dance system. It is believed to have been authored by the sage Bharata, who lived before the time of the Buddha, and the principles of this work have been transmitted down through the ages in oral tradition. The Natyasastra, which means "the science of drama," is divided into 36 chapters, each containing detailed descriptions of the different aspects of dance, including its forms, techniques, and theories.

The Natyasastra is divided into three main sections: the first section discusses the theoretical foundation of dance, the second section focuses on the practical aspects of dance performance, and the third section deals with the ritual and religious aspects of dance. The work is written in Sanskrit and is divided into chapters, each of which is devoted to a specific aspect of dance.

The Natyasastra is considered to be one of the most important texts in ancient Indian dance and is still studied and performed today. It has had a profound influence on the development of Indian dance and continues to be a source of inspiration for dancers, scholars, and students of the art form.

Bharata, the author of the Natyasastra, was a great sage and scholar who lived in the ancient Indian city of Panchala. He is believed to have been a contemporary of the Buddha and is said to have written the Natyasastra as a guide to help others understand and practice the science of dance.

The Natyasastra has been translated and studied extensively, and its influence can be seen in the development of many different styles of Indian dance, including Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi. The Natyasastra remains a valuable resource for dancers and scholars alike, providing insights into the history, theory, and practice of Indian dance.
It is also full of invocations to deities, acknowledging the divine origins of the arts and the central role of performance arts in achieving divine goals (...)."

38. ^ a b Dalal 2014, p. 323.
40. ^ Staal 2009, pp. 4-5.
44. ^ Brown 2014, p. 455, Quote: "Kirtan, (...), is the congregational singing of sacred chants and mantras in call-and-response format."; Also see, pp. 457, 474-475.
47. ^ Sastri 1943, pp. v-vi, ix-x (English), for raga discussion see pp. 169-274 (Sanskrit).

Bibliography

- Sastri 1943, pp. v-vi, ix-x (English), for raga discussion see pp. 169-274 (Sanskrit).
- Kelting 2001, pp. 28-29, 84.
### Concepts
- Swara · That · Shruti · Raga · Sargam · Tala · Laya · Bandish · Gharana · Swaralipi ·

### Instruments
- Sitar · Sarod · Veena · Bansuri · Santoor · Shehnai · Sarangi · Tanpura · Harmonium · Tabla · Pakhavaj ·

### Genres
- Dhruhap · Dhamar · Khyal · Tarana · Sadra ·

### Semi-classical genres
- Thumri · Dadra · Tappa · Kajri · Chalti · Sawani · Hori · Bhajan · Abhang · Natyageet · Qawwali · Ghazal ·

### Thats
- Bilaval · Khamaj · Kaifi · Asavari · Bhairav · Bhairavi · Todi · Purvi · Marwa · Kalyan ·

### Related topics
- List of Hindustani classical music festivals

#### Rāgas as per Performance Time

##### Morning
- Ahir Bhairav · Asavari · Bairagi Bhairav · Basant Mukhari · Bhairav · Bhankar · Bhatiyar · Bhoopali Todi · Bilashkhandi Todi · Bilaval · Deshkar · Desi · Gunakri · Gurjari Todi · Hindol · Jaunpuri · Jogia · Kalinga · Lalit · Nat Bhairav · Sohni · Todi · Vibhas ·

##### Afternoon
- Bhimpalasi · Gaud Saarang · Madhuvanti · Madhyamad Sarang · Marwa · Multani · Patdeep · Poorvi · Shri · Shuddh Sarang ·

##### Evening
- Bhoopali · Desh · Hansdhwani · Kamod · Khamaj · Maru Bhag · Pahadi · Puriya · Puriya Dhanashri · Sham Kalyan · Shankara · Shuddh Kalyan · Tilang · Yaman · Yaman Kalyan ·

##### Night
- Adana · Bageshri · Bahar · Basant · Bhinna Shadja · Bihag · Chandani Kedar · Chandrakauns · Chhayanat · Darbari · Durga · Gorakh Kalyan · Hemraj · Jalaiwantmi · Jhinjhoti · Kalyavati · Kedari · Kirwani · Malgunj · Malhar · Malkauns · Malkauns Pancham · Nand · Rageshri · Shivranjani · Tilak Kamod ·

##### Anytime
- Bhairavi · Charukeshi · Dhani · Gara · JanaSammohini · Kaifi · Mand · Piloo · Vrindavani Sarang ·

##### Season
- Gaud Malhar · Miyan Malhar ·

### Melakarta Ragas

#### Shuddha Madhyama Ragas

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### Janya Ragas

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### Melody types

Arabic maqam · Dastgah · Echos · Makam · Modal frame · Mugham · Muqam · Pathet · Qupai · Radif · Raga · Shashmaqam

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Authority control

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Music producer and DAW wiz of 12 years.

source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raga