

# NŪR-RATNĀKAR

*A bio-bibliographical survey,  
and techno-historical study,  
of all available important writings  
in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit  
and other allied languages  
on the subject of song, dance and drama*

*Volume I*

**SHAHAB SARMADEE**

*Edited by*

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and

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To

*Prof. S. Nurul Hasan Sahib*

*I owe the inspiration,  
guidance and all that is  
of worth in this work.*

*Verily he has been  
the beacon: the NŪR.*

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## Foreword

A number of artistic trends, derived from the Arabo-Persian tradition, contributed to the richness of music in medieval India. The first volume of *Nūr-Ratnākara* offers a compendium of sources on the early manifestations of this cross-cultural phenomenon, from the end of the tenth century to the end of the fourteenth, a key-period in the development of Indian music, especially court-music. Some of the important Arabic and Persian sources examined in the first volume of this 'Bio-bibliographical survey' highlight diverse but complementary aspects of the art-music of India. This becomes even more clear in the second volume, which is specifically dedicated to India.

Shahab Sarmadee has devoted his life to researching texts, original documents, and other known manuscripts and lithographs preserved in Middle Eastern, Asian and European libraries. Some were available in printed catalogues or hand-lists; he found occasionally printed editions and could quote from published translations of the texts under study, though many of the quotations have been independently translated by the author himself.

Sources of all texts under review as well as biographical sketches of their presumed authors are then treated according to the availability of manuscripts and contemporary corroborating documents, and also according to the importance and the relevance of such texts for the understanding of the music produced in medieval India. Hence some texts are quoted at length, while others are briefly summarised.

A select bibliography compiled by me, provides data on known editions and translations, as well as a list of modern studies relevant to the work.

The author's selections from texts of various literary genres (such as musicological texts, historical chronicles, poetry and ornate prose,

requested to verify these links in his own way. In case they at all lead to one another, and then also any further, the purpose may be supposed to have been served.

The survey has been characterised as 'bio-bibliographical'. Every bibliographical detail, found contemporaneously or otherwise on record about the poet-composers, teachers and trainers, or the performers, in general, or about any individual Guru, Ustad or artist in particular, has been treated as a living testimony of the historical notice earned by the popular art of the time. Similarly, the *knowledge of books* (bibliography) has helped in understanding the impact of *gīta* and *nṛtta* and their allied arts on the minds of people; it has also made possible ascertaining the status of the performing classes in society of the time. Further, these bio-bibliographical descriptions provide sufficient commentary on the ethno-political and socio-religious factors determining the musical culture of the subcontinent from time to time.

From such documents every detail as regards the theory and practice of music has been culled out. The technicalities and aesthetic norms affording sustenance to the Arabo-Persian system in this country have been delved in from a purely historical standpoint. Those of the indigenous system, however, have been dealt with from every angle and allowed to occupy as much of the canvas as needed.

In transliteration of terms, the diacritic marks used by subject experts have been adhered to. As regards proper names a uniform policy of abiding by their original spellings, has been followed; thus we have Al-Hujwiri, Śārngadeva, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, and so on.

The work has been long drawn out and trying (if not taxing). Inconsistencies of various kinds are likely to have crept in. These are, however, to be attributed to nothing else but my incompetence.

As a rule, scrupulous care and caution have been exercised to desist from drawing conclusions. But in some cases, exceptions have been made to prove the rule and assessment of facts had to be done. These assessments may be treated as tentative because they have in every case to stand the test of time. To the future generations of art-historians is, therefore, entrusted the task of examining critically these pages.

SHAHAB SARMADEE

## Acknowledgements

I had to work alone but never felt forlorn. This ought to speak out for the truth of this 'love's labour' put in. But there were quite a few who were around offering words of encouragement and helped me keep up my sagging spirit. Honestly, I do not remember having been discouraged by anyone, whom I approached for assistance or advice, during the long run of this work. For the same reason, even if I tried, it may not be possible for me to thank each and everyone of my benefactors.

It was Professor S. Nurul Hasan who put me on this job. In fact it was he who taught me not only what was to be done but also how to go around doing it. Even as Minister of Education in the Union Government, he remained my singular source of intellectual sustenance. Even on foreign tours he kept the progress of this work in mind. But for his help, I am sure, I would never have been able to reap the benefits out of some of the most inaccessible documents lying in far-off libraries of the world. Among these, the Leningrad manuscript of Ibn Ghaiḥī's *Jāmi'ul Alḥān* happens to be really a treasure trove. It has proved to be the author's latest, finally completed, copy of his work, all scribed, corrected and annotated in his own hand, with numerous additions made to the text subsequently.

In the initial stages, Professor Bashiruddin, the Head, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, did much to boost my confidence. Like a truly noble scholar he sometimes acted as my documentation officer. How can I thank him for all this! In equal measure, his young and energetic successor, Professor S.M.H. Rizavi, has been assiduously earnest in seeing this work build itself up. I owe him much.

Professor Sambamoorthy (peace be on his soul) of the University of Madras, has been one of the ones to lend me a firm hand. As one who knew the subject, he showed the way and made me tread it. Likewise, there have been others, whose beneficence I would have individually acknowledged, but for want of space.

## Preface

I started work on this volume while fulfilling a Research Fellowship at the University of Aligarh. But it assumed its present form only much later. However the initial idea to undertake the task came from Professor S. Nurul Hasan, whose guidance, even when he had taken over as Minister of Education, Government of India, continued to remain a source of an ever-increasing inspiration. In fact, it has been his intellectual benevolence which I could benefit from at every stage of this long-drawn out survey.

The method adopted has been conventional: the documents examined and the facts accumulated and analysed have been arranged chronologically. Only in exceptional cases, and with an avowed purpose, this order had been allowed to alter itself. The idea obviously has been to try and determine, with adequate certainty, the course taken up by the historical processes in question. This was expected to provide the necessary data for eventually embarking upon writing a somewhat comprehensive history of the art of music in medieval India.

And since India, among the ancient nations of the world, has believably been a solitary exception, insofar as the maintenance of her cultural continuity is concerned, the period prior to the dawn of the middle ages has as well been brought within the perview. And the pieces of documentary evidence pertaining to this (past-ancient and pre-medieval) period have been specified as antecedents.

The main stay of the present study has been the documents—subject to their availability, of course—which could be found to yield a somewhat connected account of how the culture of this country 'stood in relation to the social and political regimen'; therefore, how the combined arts of song, dance and drama progressed down the ages, and towards an inevitable synthesis and change.

There are no chapters, and no sections or sub-sections to this book. Every document has been treated as an entity itself. But the chronological method, conventionally observed, purports to link one with the other. Any research student, or ardent reader is, therefore,

memoirs and other personal writings) document the history, theory and particularly the practice as well as the aesthetics of 'music', often in its traditional Indian definition, which includes dance and occasionally drama.

Since music is considered a science and a branch of knowledge in the Arabo-Persian civilisation, classical treatises in Arabic stress the importance of the 'musical and consonantal ratio'. Celebrated texts do not necessarily refer directly to Indian music, but have been found essential for understanding the mathematical structure of music in medieval India.

Besides treatises in Arabic and Persian on the theory of music, historical chronicles highlight the eminence of this art. Knowledge of music was a prerequisite for a sophisticated ruler, hence the aristocratic patronage to music and musicians throughout the Islamic world. In India, from the Sultanate period onwards, many Indo-Islamic rulers encouraged music and dance, of both Persian and Indian origin, with a view to promoting the interaction between Persian and Indian culture. This fact is well-documented by descriptions of music patronised by Muslim rulers and nobles in many Arabic and Persian texts included in the present work. A number of such texts deal with the controversial subject of the licitness and the moral position of music as an expression of mysticism, a fact which nevertheless attests to the prominence of music. However any further discussion of the problem is beyond the scope of the volume.

Even though the works have been arranged chronologically the evolution of certain concepts and themes is discussed while describing striking features of the texts. Such a study helps to explain better both the continuity and the innovations brought in by musicians of old, which have been observed, carefully noted down and occasionally analysed or even criticised by contemporary and later scholars of music.

Among the many remarkable features of Indo-Persian writings on music, what stands out is the insightful power of observation and the almost 'modern' sociological awareness of the authors, which is well illustrated in works of the more literary kind in which music is presented in a poetical, mystical or metaphorical fashion.

In his preface (pp. xiii-xiv) the author admits that he had great difficulty in deciding whether the selection of extracts be presented in the original or be given in translation. This is indeed a serious problem as is the technical terminology to be used. Music-historians and musicologists writing on Indian music in an European language have become aware of this problem only recently. This is equally true of the main concepts of the Arabic and Persian systems of music that are also modal, and for which conventional European 'equivalences' are often inaccurate. However, these difficulties were already apparent to the authors of medieval texts aimed at familiarising educated audiences brought up in a different musical system, but keen to understand the music prevalent in India. Hence, as the author of the present work stresses, the urgent need to compile technical glossaries—taking into rigorous consideration the differences of time and place provided by the socio-cultural context of each document—which could however not be included here.

Though the author raises the problem of the assessment and the interpretation of many texts, the reader may have a different view, according to his own interest or a wider historical perspective. Still, one cannot deny the immense effort on the part of the author, especially considering the epoch when the research for this work was carried out.

Even though there are limitations to this gigantic enterprise, this work is bound to open up new avenues in the field of research—comparative and diachronic—which so far has not been explored with any degree of rigour. With further studies inspired by the compendium of documents available here, the prominent place of music in the socio-cultural history of medieval India may then be assessed in an even more critical and thought-provoking way.

Together with Dr Urmila Sharma I would like to express my gratitude to the countless people who worked behind the scene to make this volume possible.

F. 'NALINI' DELVOYE

## Publisher's Note

With the launching of Sangeet Paridarshini Series, ITC Sangeet Res Academy (ITCSRA) has taken another important stride in it's commi to the publication of scholarly and rare manuscripts as a means to ful the task of widespread dissemination of musical scholarship : history, t and philosophy of Indian music. The present book is a treasury of I glorious music from ancient times to the present day. It is lucidly writ an easy to read style. In addition to the promotion of performance pra in North Indian classical vocal music, the need was felt to evolve a fo publication programme so that ITCSRA could establish its presence in area too. The idea to enter this area particularly was influenced by the dec to publish Professor Shahab Sarmadee's research work, "Nūr Rātnaka two parts of which the first part is ready to see the light of the day.

Three distinguished scholars, Dr. Premlata Sharma, Dr. Urmila Sharma Dr. F. 'Nalini' Delvoye have contributions in the task and have played respective roles in a spirit of service to scholarship and have success completed the editing of this work, which took almost eleven years owi unexpected editing problems.

As this bio-bibliographical work involves important writings in Sans Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Brijbhasha, etc., experts took over the of examining and editing. Calligraphers were entrusted with the tas completing Arabic and Persian scripts and correcting the proofs. It give great pleasure to acknowledge our indebtedness to the three scholars have helped in the preparation of this book.

We owe a deep sense of gratitude to the former Governor of West Ber His Excellency Professor S. Nurul Hasan through whom we had opportunity of procuring the original manuscript directly from Profe Sarmadee.

We are thankful to the Standard Literature Company, Kolkata, for their ardu task of printing and distribution of the book.

Dated : 2003

[Amit Mukerje  
Executive Direc



**Vowel Marks:**

on *a, i, u* as *ā, ī, ū*, to be found in

<sup>c</sup> ālam	عالم	or	ādi	आदि
<sup>c</sup> urfī	عربی	or	vedī	वेदी
nūr	نور	and	sūr	सूर

**Signs for Arabic Sounds:**

ث	as	Ṣ / ṣ
ح	as	H / h
خ	as	Kh / kh
ذ	as	Z / z
ص	as	Ṣ / ṣ
ض	as	Z / z
ط	as	T / t
ظ	as	Z / z
ع	as	<sup>c</sup> A / <sup>c</sup> a; also <sup>c</sup> I and <sup>c</sup> i
غ	as	Gh / gh
ع	as	'A / 'a; also 'I and 'i, and 'U and 'u

\*

**Editors' Note:** *c* stands for च and *ch* for छ in words of Sanskrit origin.

**Introduction**

The term 'Indian Music' stands here for both the styles now known as Hindustani and Karnatic. Later medieval writers recognised no such distinction. Moreover, the theoretical bases of the two styles continued to remain almost the same for quite some time during the period. Their pattern of development and growth, due to the socio-political changes in particular, also remained remarkably identical. On the side of technique, too, both continued to remain *venu*-and-*viṇā*-oriented and both had the backdrop of dance and drama to begin with. The fact of the matter is that the terms 'Karnatic' (*Karṇāṭaka*) and 'Hindustānī' are comparatively quite recent. The rechristening of the terminology from Sanskrit to Tamil is also not very old.

For these reasons the present survey has not found it necessary to restrict its scope, and would naturally have, as well, included the Tamil, Telugu writings on the subject but for the fact that Persian and Sanskrit continued to remain the language of learning during the entire span of medieval period and even south Indian musicologists did not prefer to write in languages of the south.

The medieval period of Indian history when demarcated with a political bias, has the twelfth century as border line. This convention, though out-dated and out-moded, is nevertheless generally respected. But in the words of Professor S. Nurul Hasan it is high time 'to understand, with a scientific outlook, the nature and structure of Indian Society as a whole; with its movements and crises, its thoughts and emotions, its politics and culture'.

And the 'nature and structure' of Indian society had perceptibly changed during the seventh-ninth centuries. This is confirmed by, besides several other things, a whole mass of literary evidence,<sup>1</sup> and

1. This has been called *Deśī Sāhitya*. It is the literature of Apabhramsha ranging from the period after Harṣavardhana (seventh century) to the times of 'Alā'uddīn Khaljī (thirteenth-fourteenth century), i.e. from Sarhappā (born about A.D. 693) to Ambadeva and others.

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ذ	as	Z / z
ص	as	Ṣ / ṣ
ض	as	Z / z
ط	as	T / t
ظ	as	Z / z
ع	as	<sup>c</sup> A / <sup>c</sup> a; also <sup>c</sup> I and <sup>c</sup> i
غ	as	<u>Gh</u> / <u>gh</u>
ع	as	'A / 'a; also 'I and 'i, and 'U and 'u

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also by the silent revolution brought about in the realm of music. Mataṅga's *Bṛhaddeśī* (Great *Deśī*) written right about this time (seventh-ninth century) epitomises this revolution. It marks the supercession of the highly formalised *Mārga* music by the regional folk-music, termed as *Deśī*. It also elaborates upon the transition from *gītī* to *rāga-gītī*. It announces the advent of *rāga*,<sup>1</sup> heralds a new era.

These were also the times when the ancient in society failed to assert. New trends stepped in. The culture of the masses became vocal. Sanskrit and Prakrit began losing in appeal. Apabhramsha came to the fore. The great Sanskrit Pandits like Sarhappā and Svayambhu were enthused to write *dohās* and compose *kāvya*s in people's language. For all these *siddha* and *sādhaka* poets—Sarhappā downwards—poetry inevitably became music-oriented. Every song was to be sung and had to have its appropriate *rāga* and *tāla* assigned to it.<sup>2</sup>

The emergence of medieval conditions in India can therefore, be attributed to the inner social urges. The political upheaval of subsequent centuries was, in a way, a sequel to the aforesaid socio-cultural happenings.

Thus it will be noticed that, apart from the art and technique, the tradition of writing on the subject of *saṅgīta* had also, necessarily, to undergo what may be called an altogether unorthodox change. *Nāṭya-śāstra*, ascribed to Bharata Muni, and dated 'not earlier than the third century A.D.' is popularly known as the first work on Indian music, but strictly speaking it is a treatise on Dramaturgy and Histrionics, or, what has been more aptly called, 'Theatrics'.

*Nāṭya-śāstra* has been given a scriptural status and for this reason is often referred to as *Nāṭya-veda*. It is also known as *Sūtra* as it embodies the principles set out in a concise form. The work has

1. Mataṅga devotes a special chapter to the *rāgas*. 'Indeed, it is in this chapter of the *Bṛhaddeśī* that we first come across the word "Rāga" as understood in all literature on Indian music' (O.C. Gangoly, *Rāgas and Rāginīs* (1935), reedn, New Delhi, 1984, p. 17).

2. Rahul Sankratyayan's researches put forward adequate evidence as proof of this; his *Dohā-Kośa*, Patna, 1957, for instance, includes *Saraha ke pad*, pp. 357-61. These *padas* carry with them *rāgas* like *Guñjarī*, *Desākha*, *Bhairavī* and *Mālasā*.

also been described as a *saṅgraha grantha* as it is believed to be encyclopaedic in nature. Its text has, however, been preserved all over India in one recension only, in the manner of the Vedas and the *Śāstras*.

Many commentaries of the work have been written during the period ending with the eleventh century. Of these, the commentaries of Udbhāṭa, Lollaṭṭa, Śaṅkuka, Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta have come down to us. The last named, i.e. *Abhinava-bhāratī* is, however, better known and usually available.

These commentators flourished from the eighth to the eleventh centuries, and perhaps all came from Kashmir. There are reasons to believe that Bharata, too, was from Kashmir and that he subscribed to the *Pratibhijñā* philosophy. This may have been one of the reasons why the predominantly Śaivite-south concentrated better on the works of these Kashmiri scholars of the same school. And that is why most of the works on *rāsa*, literary criticism, dance and music, originally composed in Kashmir, were found later on scattered throughout the southern parts of India, especially the Malabar coast.

Mataṅga seems to revere Bharata and his system, but by the time he came on the scene (ninth century) song was no longer simple *nāṭya-gītī*. It had acquired a status of its own. It had its own melodic-pattern, called *rāga*. Similarly, instrumental music and even dance were no longer subservient to drama. Hence dependence on *Nāṭya-śāstra*, in respect of the specification of themes and methods of definition and discussion, as well as the mode of interpretation and evaluation, diminished over time. Mataṅga could very well introduce now his work (*Bṛhaddeśī*) as a 'treatise on sound', and initiate his own form and structure for the same.

'Unfortunately, the successive developments are not supported by documents, as there is a considerable gap between the text of Mataṅga and the next landmark.' Even Prince Someśvara's encyclopaedia, *Abhilāṣārtha-Cintāmaṇī*, appears at least two and half centuries later (1131); and that, too, devotes only one chapter to music. *Saṅgīta-ratnāvalī*, his exclusive work on music, has unfortunately been lost to times and is no more extant. The texts attributed to Nārada are of uncertain dates and are rather poor in musical data. The only treatise standing between the *Bṛhaddeśī* and

also by the silent revolution brought about in the realm of music. Mataṅga's *Bṛhaddeśī* (Great *Deśī*) written right about this time (seventh-ninth century) epitomises this revolution. It marks the supercession of the highly formalised *Mārga* music by the regional folk-music, termed as *Deśī*. It also elaborates upon the transition from *gītī* to *rāga-gītī*. It announces the advent of *rāga*,<sup>1</sup> heralds a new era.

These were also the times when the ancient in society failed to assert. New trends stepped in. The culture of the masses became vocal. Sanskrit and Prakrit began losing in appeal. Apabhramsha came to the fore. The great Sanskrit Pandits like Sarhappā and Svayambhu were enthused to write *dohās* and compose *kāvya*s in people's language. For all these *siddha* and *sādhaka* poets—Sarhappā downwards—poetry inevitably became music-oriented. Every song was to be sung and had to have its appropriate *rāga* and *tāla* assigned to it.<sup>2</sup>

The emergence of medieval conditions in India can therefore, be attributed to the inner social urges. The political upheaval of subsequent centuries was, in a way, a sequel to the aforesaid socio-cultural happenings.

Thus it will be noticed that, apart from the art and technique, the tradition of writing on the subject of *saṅgīta* had also, necessarily, to undergo what may be called an altogether unorthodox change. *Nāṭya-śāstra*, ascribed to Bharata Muni, and dated 'not earlier than the third century A.D.' is popularly known as the first work on Indian music, but strictly speaking it is a treatise on Dramaturgy and Histrionics, or, what has been more aptly called, 'Theatrics'.

*Nāṭya-śāstra* has been given a scriptural status and for this reason is often referred to as *Nāṭya-veda*. It is also known as *Sūtra* as it embodies the principles set out in a concise form. The work has

1. Mataṅga devotes a special chapter to the *rāgas*. 'Indeed, it is in this chapter of the *Bṛhaddeśī* that we first come across the word "Rāga" as understood in all literature on Indian music' (O.C. Gangoly, *Rāgas and Rāginīs* (1935), reedn, New Delhi, 1984, p. 17).

2. Rahul Sankratyayan's researches put forward adequate evidence as proof of this; his *Dohā-Kośa*, Patna, 1957, for instance, includes *Saraha ke pad*, pp. 357-61. These *padas* carry with them *rāgas* like *Guñjarī*, *Desākha*, *Bhairavī* and *Mālasā*.

also been described as a *saṅgraha grantha* as it is believed to be encyclopaedic in nature. Its text has, however, been preserved all over India in one recension only, in the manner of the Vedas and the *Śāstras*.

Many commentaries of the work have been written during the period ending with the eleventh century. Of these, the commentaries of Udbhata, Lollaṭṭa, Śaṅkuka, Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta have come down to us. The last named, i.e. *Abhinava-bhāratī* is, however, better known and usually available.

These commentators flourished from the eighth to the eleventh centuries, and perhaps all came from Kashmir. There are reasons to believe that Bharata, too, was from Kashmir and that he subscribed to the *Pratibhijñā* philosophy. This may have been one of the reasons why the predominantly Śaivite-south concentrated better on the works of these Kashmiri scholars of the same school. And that is why most of the works on *rasa*, literary criticism, dance and music, originally composed in Kashmir, were found later on scattered throughout the southern parts of India, especially the Malabar coast.

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*Saṅgīta-ratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva is Rājā Nānyadeva's *Sarasvatī-Hṛdayālamkāra* written in Mithila sometime between 1079 and 1133. No doubt it is essentially a *bhāṣya* (commentary) on Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra*, yet the author has 'introduced new methods not touched by earlier authorities'; he has quoted liberally from ancient authors other than Bharata (in particular Mataṅga); devoted two long chapters (sixth and seventh) to a description of the structure, the improvisation, and the notation 'of numerous melodies (*rāgas*) current during his time'. He has thus brought to the fore a style and scheme of writing commentaries much popularised subsequently by Persian writers on the theme of Indian music.

But in all respects the singular work of the medieval age happens to be Śārṅgadeva's *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* written in the first half of the thirteenth century (1210-47). It is 'justly regarded as the greatest authority of the medieval period'. It represents all that the music of India stands for. For centuries it has been the most indispensable pattern of elaborating on musical theories and practices. The '*sapta-adhyāya*' (seven chapters)—the structure conceived by Śārṅgadeva—has been held virtually sacred by all subsequent writers to the extent that some of the Persian savants have taken the term *sapta-adhyāya* to connote Indian music itself. The *Svara*, *Rāga*, *Prakīrṇa*, *Prabandha*, *Tāla*, *Vādyā* and *Nṛtya*, as the seven constituents of *Saṅgīta*, have assumed an almost scriptural significance for subsequent writers—both Persian and Sanskrit.

Thus, the first Persian work on the subject, namely, *Ghunya'ul Munya*, follows the same scheme and the next earliest extant work, *Lahjāt-i Sikandar Shāhī*, has been identically designed. It has the same seven chapters and has scrupulously followed the same scheme.

This order typifies not only the pre-eminence of *svara* and *rāga* but also stands for an independent status of the science of sound and the art of song and dance. Dance was still one of the trinity (*gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtya*), collectively termed as *saṅgīta*. Drama had by now parted company.<sup>1</sup>

1. It may be interesting to take notice of the fact that centuries later, drama, in the form of *Rahas*, returned to the folds of Indian music with a great bang. The achievements, in this field, of King Wājīd 'Alī Shāh of Awadh have been memorable.

The Arabic writings on the subject go back to *Ḳhalīl ibn Aḥmad* (A.D. 718-19), the celebrated scholar of the Al-Baṣra school of Arabic philology. His researches into the science of music have been path-breaking. His two *kitābs*, one on *naghmas* (tones) and another on *īqā'* (rhythm) have, perhaps, been among the earliest on the subject.

Closely following him in the field has been the famous mathematician and music theorist, *Ishāq al-Kindī* (A.D. 790-c. 874). His writings are believed to have served as textbooks for several centuries. By his time Baghdād had become the centre of most of the memorable activities in the Arab world. The close insight into 'the theory and practice of the virtues of the age', so manifest in his writings, has been a product also of this change. Moreover, the interest evinced by him in Indian sciences, make his findings relevant to the present study. His treatises—on musical composition (*tā'līf*); on the arrangements of the notes (*fī-tartīb al-naghma*); on rhythm (*fī'l-īqā'*); on introduction to the art of music (*fī'l-madkhal ilā' ṣanā'at al-mūsīqī*) and on the composition of music and the art of *'ūd* (*fī-tā'līf al-naghma wa ṣanā'at al-'ūd*)—cover the entire gamut of the art, and contain information of genuine interest, as well.

Of Al-Kindī's writings, four have come down to us, and are known to exist in the Museum libraries of Berlin and London. But their photocopies could not be made available. Al-Kindī had, therefore, to be excluded from our purview.

It is, however, known that the Arabs owe the earliest definite use of a 'musical notation' to him. He has also been among the first to propound, in pursuance of the Greek theories, that the 'seven notes of the scale corresponded to the (seven) planets'. In relation to the prevailing practice, too, he associated the four pegs, the four frets and the four strings of the *'ūd* with the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

Al-Kindī's treatises exercised enormous influence on later writers for the next two centuries at least. Among these, *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī* (A.D. 870-950) and *Ibn Sīnā* happened to be the biggest beneficiaries. Phenomenal in their own right, they still found it safe to repeat Al-Kindī in respect of the fundamentals. Furthermore, being better impressed by the practical aspects of the current art—Al-Fārābī as a practising virtuoso and *Ibn Sīnā* as a confirmed connoisseur of *'amal* (practice), as he calls it—they as well became the greatest among the annalists of the ensuing synthesis.

By the end of the ninth century, when Al-Fārābī commenced his career, the composite character of Arabic song had grown specific. The music itself was infused with most of the dominant artefacts pertaining to Arabia, Iran and Central Asia. Hence in the present context it has been considered necessary to refer to it as Arabo-Persian. Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā happened to be Iranians: intellectually and aesthetically they may well have been immersed in the prosperous art-trends of contemporary Iran. Therefore, they too wrote as Perso-Arabs, although in Arabic. Their writings may, thus, be expected to preserve the details in a more representative manner. That is why they figure, at the exclusion of others, in these series.<sup>1</sup>

According to literary historians, Mataṅga (ninth century) may have flourished about the same time as Al-Kindī. The essentials of the Indian and the Arabo-Iranian systems do as well seem to have commonality on some points: in regard to the number of the *svaras*, for instance.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, centuries later, when Śārṅgadeva wrote his volumes (c. 1210), Fakhr'ur Rāzī (c. 1209) completed his encyclopaedia called *Jāmi'ul 'Ulūm*, about the same time. The first known Persian book on music had already been produced by 'Abdu'l Mu'min bin Šafī'uddīn,<sup>3</sup> (c. 1206). A close look into such Sanskrit and Persian writings initially renders more prominent the divergence which did exist between the two systems—the Indian and the Arabo-Iranian. But, an examination of these very works reveals that exchange of ideas, both in respect of the theory and practice, had become the order of the day. The ethno-political confrontation of the preceding three centuries (tenth, eleventh and twelfth), marked by the in-roads into this country of the military adventurers belonging to the houses of Ghaznā and Ghaur, had by now toned down to yield positive results. And, eventually, a point of history was reached when the two may be seen stabilising themselves and supplementing each other on this soil. This was the time, when much before the 'Mughal-Rājput amity' could come into full play, the 'Paṭhān-Rājput proximity' had made a momentous beginning: when Jaunpur and Gwalior

1. See under Ibn Sīnā, pp. 150-75 and Al-Fārābī, pp. 373-90.

2. The same being *sab'a* (Arabic) and *sapta* (Sanskrit), i.e. seven.

3. Quite a different person from Šafī'uddīn 'Abdu'l Mu'min (d. 1294), the illustrious genius of his time, who gifted to world music its temperate scale.

as allies, and Delhi-Agra as antagonists, struggled for political ascendancy, but in the process, worked together towards the cause of socio-cultural integration. The blossoming forth of the Dhrupad style, and the inception of *Khayāl*, have been the products of the same.

An effort has been made in this survey-cum-study to follow up the above processes from Pāṇini onwards.<sup>1</sup> This has been done because the artefacts of music pertaining to this post-ancient and pre-medieval period of known history, has been found to herald the on-coming ways of life and the consequent change even in the patterns of the traditional art. Treated as 'Antecedents', these have been summarily discussed.

The ways of life, gaining a permanent foothold in the society of the post-Gupta era, did usher in medieval conditions in India. This does not seem seriously debatable. Keeping this in mind, it has been considered necessary to give prominence to the upsurge of Sanskrit drama as evidenced in the technical writings of the time: the *Nāṭya-śāstra* attributed to Bharata Muni being the foremost one among them. Likewise, the literary writings of Māgha, Kālidāsa, and others and some portions of the epics and the *Purāṇas*, supposedly a product of the same incentive, have also been discussed. As precursors of the norms and forms of life, exclusively Indian, they have much to offer.

The earliest document available, to initiate the medieval period, has been Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*. It has no direct bearing on the subject. It also picks up the thread of continuity with perceptible delay. But the said chronicler has talked with confidence about the acts and attitudes of his time. Above all, the sustenance of the *infra* and the change in the *supra* structures of society have been effectively brought out.

It seems Sanskrit drama was still in high fashion. And art-music still acted as its appendage. In spite of this, the art of song and dance, in popular prevalence, may be seen to be picking up. It exhibited unmistakable signs of gaining a permanent foothold in society: *gīti* and its *loka-pakṣa* were already in the air. The days of the *Bṛhaddeśī* were not far to come.

1. The fact of the matter lies in saying that it began as a survey and took the shape of a regular study as it progressed.

With Mataṅga placed, according to recent investigations, in the ninth century, the suggested metamorphosis becomes complete. In the meantime, the aforesaid Arabo-Persian art could also find an inlet in India's west. Coming in congenial contact with India's up-coming *gīti* music, it seems to have made a good beginning. The area around Sind, up to Multān, provides some pieces of irrefutable evidence to the effect. Addahmāna's (i.e. 'Abdu'l Raḥmān's) *Sandeśa-rāsaka* being written in Multān (*Mūla Sthāna*) (c. ninth century), and *Bhairavī*, a natural sister of *Saindhavī*, enjoying a historical precedence over the *ādi-rāga Bhairava*; similarly Sind representing Hind to the Arabs and Multān, insofar as present knowledge goes (see under Baranī, pp. 511-33), being the first place where Persian *ghazal* got dubbed in Arabic, and Hindi *gīta* adapted to Perso-Arabian *maqāms* (major melodies)—all of these factors count.

Thenceforth, too, the documents, whether written in Persian or Sanskrit, do enlarge upon the same idea and lead to the same conclusion, viz., 'the medieval' in India has been exceptionally characterised by 'incessant chance' and an 'elaborate synthesis'.

As indicated earlier, the survey has been mainly bio-bibliographical, but in the course of time as the work progressed, it had to become text-critical and dissertational—even analytic—at places. At times the temptation to fill in the annoying gaps could not be resisted. And keeping the efficiency of it in mind some of the available facts and figures have been supplemented. It must also be confessed that in all cases, where prospects of substantial utility did suggest themselves, departures to the extent needed, have been considered justifiable from the text under reference, too.

As it happens in such cases, the work got initiated as mere fact-finding through some of the well-known catalogues, in particular, those pertaining to the collections of manuscripts treasured in the libraries of Europe. But in course of time, the mass of information so gathered, started to provide definite clues. Ambitions were thus aroused and efforts were put in to follow them further.

The manuscripts within easy reach were first tried; in particular those with which some acquaintance had already been gained while scrutinising the catalogues. The difference in approach proved useful. It brought forth results unforeseen and, the methods impromptu

devised for knowing and noting down of even the less important details began paying dividends. It was encouraging that in a number of cases the notions perpetuated due, perhaps, to a cursory examination of the documents concerned, or to a preoccupied mind, did appear to need a closer and a more objective scrutiny.

In course of time, and as the work advanced still further, a sense of security, against the risk of usual mistakes, managed to develop itself. This led to a sense of a new responsibility as well. Efforts were directed, therefore, towards arranging the documents chronologically and letting the facts on record therein, together with other acceptable as corroborative evidence, speak for themselves.

This procedure assumed its required dimensions, and eventually came up to embody the scheme of the present survey. The methods evolved to work it out have necessarily been unorthodox. Because, as the scope of the work enlarged itself, the exigencies involved made it imperative to make the search adequately exhaustive. It was at this stage that the 'Philosopher and Guide' of this entire endeavour, Professor S. Nurul Hasan Sahib, granted a research-tour to visit as many of the major libraries of north and south India as necessary. The libraries of Madras had already been visited and seen. Therefore, it was planned to go to those of Delhi, Bombay, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Poona, Hyderabad, Rampur, Bankipur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Lucknow, Agra, Farrukhabad, etc.

Repeated visits had to be made to most of these libraries. Moreover, the libraries beyond India, for instance those in Pakistan, Tehran and Tashkent, were as well approached for coordination, quoting specific cases. This was necessitated as some of the most valuable manuscripts were nowhere else to be found: Somanātha's *Rāga-vibodha* and *Ghunyāt'ul Munya*'s sister-volume, *Ma'rifat'ul Alḥān*, for example. The lone copies of such valuables could be traced to the libraries of Lahore and Karachi. Efforts to acquire even photocopies of these manuscripts produced no result. Nevertheless, the yield of documents, to which access could somehow be gained, was really heartening. Books—handwritten, printed, rotographed, or photocopied—with any useful information about any of the aspects of song and play, dance and drama or which did contain even a shred of information, in respect of the ways of life directly concerning the art

or the identity and bio-data of any of the practitioners of the art, were keenly examined and the findings therefrom arranged and preserved.

Chronology has been the prime factor at work in this survey; every effort has been directed, therefore, to maintain the sequences of history—both socio-political and techno-aesthetic. But departures from this rule had sometimes to be preferred. In surveying some of the *Purāṇas* and the *Smṛti* literature, for example, the lapse of time, in between the two and lack of order in respect of their probable dates, had to be over-looked in favour of the continuity of details put up by the two series.

A still more glaring instance of the kind has been to postpone considering Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī till about fourteenth century, the most probable period when his writings and, presumably, his theories too, may be seen making a mark on the performing art of this subcontinent. Data-wise and document-wise, he should have been next to be noticed after Maṭaṅga, but then Ibn Sīnā's influence had spread fast in the entire region of *Khurāsān* and *Hindustan*, much preceding that of Al-Fārābī. Thus, it is as late as early fourteenth century only, that Amīr *Khusrāu*'s earliest reference to the '*maslak-i hukamā-i Rūm*' (the musical ways of the Greek philosopher-scientists) may be seen resurrecting Al-Fārābī for this country.

Besides this, sometimes thematic continuity was allowed to prevail over the requisites of chronology. In the case, for example, of contemporary reporting on the popular art practised in the regions of Ghazni and Lahore: *Majlis*, as an institution, has been the common term for the two types of musical assemblies—the one presided over by the *Šūfi*, the other by the *Sāqī*. And both these form a topic of discussion in the first ever *Šūfi* writing in Persian—the *Kashful Mahjūb* of Saiyyid 'Alī al-Hujwīrī ('*Dātā Ganj Baksh*'), also the *Qābūs-nāma* of Amīr Kaikā'ūs and the *Dīvān* of Mas'ūd Sa'īd Salmān. These are preceded by the researches of Al-Berūnī and his remarkable *Kitāb al-Hind*, 'Book of India'. Taken together, all these cover a period of well over hundred years. For the same reason, they have been considered in a row and the documents, appearing in between, made to wait.

With no such precedent—in the shape of an interpretative study of documents—available to guide or to warp, the present writer had

only to remain pragmatic and go on sorting out the threads of relevant and important facts on the one side; and on the other to remain alert in adducing supporting data to be found in any of the accessible documents, or his own collection, amassed during all these years that he has kept himself engaged in this work.

It lay, of course, quite beyond the scope of the present survey to deal with the documents (otherwise dealt with individually and chronologically), critically. But the inevitability of it always loomed large. As a compromise, therefore, a summing up of points arising out of a comparative-cum-critical study of the various representative writings, contemporaneously or contextually analogous, has been incorporated in as many cases as possible. This may serve some purpose, if not actually make good the deficiency just pointed out.

A similar deficiency did occur again—this time due to the paucity of time and the already over-bloated size of this volume, viz., a glossary of Arabo-Persian, Sanskrit-Prakrit and Karṇāṭa-Deśī terms could not be made to form part of it. There is no gainsaying the fact that it would have proved an asset. Therefore, as a recompense for the same, a uniform policy has been observed to the effect that no technical term belonging to any of the standard languages concerned has been allowed to move along incognito. This is, perhaps, all that could best be done under the circumstances.

To quote or not to quote from the original has been a gnawing question. Every language has its sets of words and symbols which behave ill at ease when translated. There are some combinations which even defy interpretation unless bodily lifted. Then again, technical terms belonging to one language do seldom agree on all points with their most successful equivalents in another. *Šaut* (Arabic), *āhang* (Persian) and *svara* (Sanskrit) ostensibly mean the same but have their own non-transferable semantic undertones. *Rasa* and *dhvani*, *naghma* and *tarab*, similarly *parda* and *āwāz* or *lahn*, *lahja* and *utcāra*, etc., are only a few of the pivotal terms so peculiar to the society and language they were born and bred in. Taken with the rest of their kind they form an enormous lot. The question remains how to transfer, with adequate effect, their entire connotation from one language to another?

Then there are early masters of Sanskrit who preferred to write



in the *sūtra* style, clinching the whole issue within the ambit of a few most pregnant words and phrases. Likewise, there have been men of *Inshā* like Baranī, Amīr Khusrau and Abu'l Fazl, who prided in their 'pun within pun' picturesqueness. Others, too, did not remain far behind in this respect. In fact, the entire '*silsila*' of Persian writers of medieval days may be seen to fall in line.

All this amounted to rendering the profundity of the original text almost inviolable. And the outstanding passages from the text have been freely quoted, wherever really needed. But the policy of the 'common sense' had always been 'allowed to prevail and 'least to quote' while 'most to paraphrase' has been the normal motto.

Notwithstanding all this, the present writer, being conscious of his own inadequacies, did often find himself called upon to project a fact in its original form and leave it to his better-gifted reader to understand the way he chooses to.

It has been among the priorities observed that, as far as possible, the correct pronunciation of every word is retained in its original characters as well as in transliteration. Entries of technical terms, or terms concerning the art practices, or of words having direct bearing on the socio-cultural and religio-philosophical norms of the time, have been assigned pre-determined signs meant to serve as 'accurate equivalents for the graphical form' of the consonants and vowels peculiar to the language in question. The sound specifications and the diacritical rendering of the vocables have, therefore, been looked after according to a uniform scheme.

The diacritical markings and phonetic symbols internationally recognised by the scholars of the world for various classical languages could not remain uniform. Therefore, the 'Steingass scheme of transliterating' the Perso-Arabian and the Sanskrit-Prakrit alphabets in the Roman character, has been adopted. But in exceptional cases, the method devised by the pioneering Sanskrit scholars has as well been evoked. Thus, the five compounds, named *ch* for چ, *gh* for غ, *kh* for خ, *sh* for ش, and *zh* for ز, have been indicated as per the 'Steingass scheme'. Similarly, in non-compound form, six letters, as distinguished by diacritical points, *ṣ* for ث, *ḥ* for ح, *z* for ذ, *ṣ* for ص, *ṣ* for ض, and *z* for ط, do also belong to the 'Steingass

pattern'. But other letters, viz., ب, ج and ف of Arabic, and the totality of characters pertaining to the Devanāgarī script, have been shown as authenticated by the Orientalists and the Sanskrit scholars.

It is hoped that the chart of sounds and their symbols made to form part of this Introduction may prove to be of help in this connection (see Diacritical Marks, pp. xxi-xxii).

And finally, it seems as well necessary to submit:

(i) that some diacritical marks had to be devised in the case of Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit-Prakrit terms necessitating a strictly faithful rendering; e.g. to correctly spell out terms like *dhaurīsa*, the *anusvāra* has been indicated through double dots on top of the extra-nasalised 'n';

(ii) that for an English rendering of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic words in their plural form, the letter 's' has been added in roman without a hyphen: as, for instance, in *svaras*, *nagḥmas*, *maqāms*, and so on;

(iii) that, while eliciting the musical facts from the Jain and Buddhist *granthas*, the terms concerning art and its technique, or the names of musical instruments, have been adopted as found spelt out in the original; thus Pali and Apabhramsha forms of *sippa* (for *śilpa*) *Gandhabba-beda* (for *Gāndharva-Veda*) *āhāriya* (for *ācārya*), *nada* (for *naṭa*), *lasaga* (for *rasa-gāyaka*), *miṅga* (for *mṛdaṅga*), *dunduhī* (for *dundubhī*) and *baṅsa* (for *vaṁśa*), etc., have been retained;

(iv) that, as a rule, all proper names and terms of technical import have been uniformly spelt out, and made to carry the signs and symbols universally accepted. But, exceptions had to be made if efficacy so demanded; in most cases when the Persian writers of India have been found to refer authentically to the current terminology of the time. Thus *sur* for *svara*, *surit* or *surti* for *śruti* and *gandharp* for *gandharva* and so on;

(v) that quotations from the original writings have been avoided as far as possible but very often the words and phrases used and the facts expressed by people such as Bāṇa, Ibn Sīnā, Śārṅgadeva, Amīr Khusrau, and the like, had to be transcribed first and then translated. This has been done to let the original and its rendering into English subsist side by side; also in the hope that future students of art-history, with better insight and understanding, may find it easy to

rectify the mistakes or, at least, like to improve upon the version preferred by the present writer;

(vi) that, some of the documents have been treated rather cursorily, while others have been dealt with at length. This had to be so, in most cases, because some of the documents proved inaccessible inspite of due efforts put forth. In some cases, however, this had to be done also to avoid repetition of the data found borrowed from those already taken due notice of;

(vii) that, although economy of words and scrupulous adherence to brevity has been our motto, from the very beginning the nature of the subject of study made this volume gain in size. This in itself entailed so many practical difficulties: the comparison and correction of sheets, and adding original references to the text, in itself being one of those. All the same, our satisfaction lies in saying that every entry has been checked and re-checked. But omissions are bound to have crept in. Even avoidable mistakes may be there. For all these, we hopefully crave for indulgence.

SHAHAB SARMADEE

#### ANTECEDENTS (1)

*The classics which did authenticate for the coming ages, some aspects of song, dance, drama and musical play in India; and, which also did record the socio-cultural trends conducive to the facts of art claiming a continuity.*

## PĀṆINI

His place of birth, Śālātur, was in the frontier region. His date of birth is, not surprisingly, still in dispute. The word *Yavana* (in *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 4, 1.1949) would normally lead us to date him after Alexander but the argument suggests that here *Yavana* means Ionian Greeks. It, however, needs substantiation, which if forthcoming would move the grammarian back at best to the march of Xenophon's Ten Thousand. For, prior to that it is unlikely that Ionian Greeks could have been heard of, even as traders, in India. Hence, it is important to find out when Ionians became known to the Indian frontier population at the other end of Persia's sphere of influence.

In the circumstances, any date before Darius I is all the more unlikely. Similarly, to place Pāṇini in such early times as the eighth or ninth century B.C. is to misplace probabilities. Even *harṣāpaṇa*, the regular coinage known to Pāṇini, goes back only to the seventh century B.C.

The first commentator (of Pāṇini), Kātyāyana, explains the former's '*Yavanāl lipyām*' as a reference to the *Yavana* script. This script, as referred to by Pāṇini, could possibly have been the *Yavana*, meaning Greek, and not Ionian. That is how, according to some, Pāṇini was in Taxila when Alexander invaded India (326 B.C). But this also lacks confirmation.

It could be more plausible to suppose, therefore, that Pāṇini lived and wrote before the time of the Greek invasion—sometime between the sixth and fifth centuries of the pre-Christian era.

### Pāṇini on Music

Pāṇini informs us about *udgātā* and *pratihartā* in connection with *Sāma-gāna*. The job assigned to the *udgātā* (*udgātr*) was known as *audgātra*. The place where *chandoga* (singer in metre) and *ṛtvija* (the four sacrificing priests—*hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *brahman* and *udgātr*, with three companions each) engaged themselves in *Sāma-gāna* was called *saṁstava*.

The *yajñas* were conducted with *veda-pāṭha* and *gāna*, employing three musical notes (*svaras*) known as *udātta*, *anudātta* and *svarita*.

It may however, be remembered that *veda-pāṭha*, other than that of the *Sāmaveda*, was done as a monotone, referred to by Pāṇini as one *śruti* (1, 2.33-4). Kātyāyana in *Śrauta-sūtra* calls it as *tāna*:

उदात्तादिस्वररहिते एकश्रुतिरेव मन्त्राणां स्वरो भवति।

(1, 8.18)

*Sāmaveda*, too, had its *ārcika* as well as *geya* parts.

The term *Gāndharva* has not found any place in Pāṇini's work. Even Nārada is not mentioned by him. Thus, while Pāṇini discusses *Āyurveda*, *Vāstu-vidyā* (science of building) and *Kṣātra-vidyā*,<sup>1</sup> in his writings, he takes no notice of *Gāndharva-vidyā*.

Fine Arts have been referred to as *Śilpa*, which he has dealt with under two heads *Cāru* and *Kāru*. Under *Cāru-śilpa* he has placed music as well as such arts as practised by *kumhāra*, *svaṛṇa-kāra*, *lohāra*. Others have been classified under *Kāru-śilpa-kāra*. The most skilled among these have been referred to as *rāja-śilpī* by Pāṇini, which may be taken to mean that such highly skilled persons were treated with honour by the *Rāja-kula* (the State as well as the aristocracy).

In *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, *gīta* has been mentioned as *gīti* and *geya* (3, 3, 95; 3, 8, 48). In many of Pāṇini's *sūtras*, *vīṇā-vādyā* has found a mention. Orchestral performance has been referred to as *tūrya* (2, 4, 2), which comprised *vīṇā* as the leading instrument. The various parts of such an orchestral rendering were called *tūryāṅga*. Pāṇini also speaks of *parivādaka* alongwith *vīṇā-vādaka* in a way that it becomes possible for one to presume that *parivādaka* may have been a class of instrumentalists meant to play second fiddle to a *vīṇā-vādaka*:

वीणावादकपरिवादकम्<sup>2</sup>

Any sort of musical accompaniment was termed as *upa-vīṇā* during those times. Thus song without *vīṇā* was *apavīṇam* (6, 2, 187).

The sound (*nāda*) of *vīṇā* has been expressed by Pāṇini as *kvaṇa*, *nikvaṇa* and *nikvāṇa*. For sounds of other kinds, the term used is *ghoṣa*. The latter term is later on found frequenting the Jain *sāhitya*.

Among *avanaddha vādyas* (skin-covered instruments), Pāṇini mentions:

*jharjhara*, *dardura*, *maḍḍuka*, *paṇava*, etc.

*jharjhara* : played by *jharjharika*;

*dardura* : may have been like *ghaṭam* of today;

*dārdarika* : was its player known as in *Nāṭya-śāstra*;

*maḍḍuka* : *maḍḍukika* was its *vādaka*.

Those days the person well-versed in *gāna* was known as *Gāyana* (3, 1, 147) and the female counterpart was called as *Gāyanī*.

The class of people engaged in *gāthāgāna* was called *Gāthakā* (3, 1, 146).

The experts of rhythm who provided *tāla* accompaniment through hand-clap were known as *pānigha* or *pānika* and *tāḍaḡha*.

पाणिघताघौ शिल्विनी

(3, 2, 55)

Dance specialists or *nartana-nāṭya-abhinaya* experts, where called *Śailālin*. Their *dharma* (duty) was the up-keep of the sacred tradition (*āmnāya*) of *nāṭya* which was considered to be their second text (*śāstra*).

The two writers on *Naṭa-vidyā* whose *granthas*, called *Naṭa-sūtra*, had gained popular currency those days have been named by Pāṇini as *Śilāli* (also *Śailāli*) and *Kṛśāśva* (also *Kṛśāśvī*). Their writings had a Veda-like sanctity, it is believed. Two different dance-traditions are associated with these two *ācāryas*. *Śailāli* (*Śailāla*, even)<sup>3</sup> and *Kṛśāśva* or *Kṛśāśvī* had become the common terms those days for two different tribes of (professional) dance-masters.

The *Naṭa-sūtras*, referred to above, make it evident that although dance had continued to remain a pure and simple folk-art till the sixth-fifth century B.C., its formalisation had already begun; its sophistication too, was about to set in.

The *Sammada*<sup>4</sup> festival was celebrated with a great fanfare of song and dance. *Nāṭya*<sup>5</sup> programmes were planned on a mass scale and performed with elaboration (3, 3, 68). Such mass programmes were held in a specially assigned place like *prekṣā-grha*, of later times.

## PĀTAÑJALI

(The period he wrote: approximately between second century B.C.

and first century A.D.)<sup>6</sup>

Pātañjali, the author of *Mahābhāṣya* and also the commentator

of Pāṇini, has been an authority on Sanskrit grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), after Pāṇini himself and Kātyāyana.

He belongs to the period which may be called the Mauryan-Śuṅga. The two centuries constituting it were very revolutionary in character: Just preceding the Christian era, they witnessed a hectic period of Vedic revival and the restoration, therefore, of the over-all importance of *Deva-vāṇī*.

It is so made out that, by Pātañjali's times, *Gāndharva* Art and its *vidyā* had acquired their full stature. The trend of developments and the manner of fading out of *Sāma-gāna*<sup>7</sup> traditions bespeak to that effect.

There is a consensus that the '*laukika-pakṣa*' (folk-bias) of *Mahābhāṣya* predominates. For the same reason, of the various sects engaged in the attainment of the art of song and dance, the Śailāli and the Mārdaṅgika have been taken almost exclusive notice of, and they have been referred to as *ācāryas*. This does go to establish the social status together with the professional character of the persons belonging to the two sects. Because the title of *ācārya* being bestowed upon them goes to signify two things: one that their art was held in high esteem; another, that they were held at par with other men of learning. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the art of drama, alongwith that of music, represented by *mṛdaṅga*, could make so much progress. Cf.

मृदङ्गवादनं शिल्पमस्य मार्दङ्गिकः

(4, 4, 55, p. 332, 5)

*Mahābhāṣya* recognises the musical instruments:

*vīṇā, tuṅava, śaṅkha, mṛdaṅga*  
*maḍḍuka, jharjhara, pithara(?)*

Pātañjali informs that persons highly skilled in playing these instruments lived during his times, and thrived on their art.

*Vīṇā*<sup>8</sup> (as Bhārhut sculptural depictions show) was kept in the lap and played with a plectrum (*koṇa*), held in the right hand. The *mṛdaṅga* is seen in an upright position which shows the way it was played upon.

As regards the folk festivals, these appear to have been invariably celebrated with singing and dancing and *nāṭya*. The performing parties have been known to Pātañjali as *samāja*<sup>9</sup> and *samāsa*; also as *samavāyaka*.

Of these, the *Stūpamaha* festival has been referred to in the same context. A lyrical folk-dance form like *Mayūra-nṛtya* (peacock-dance) finds mention, in this connection. Compare:

प्रियां मयूराः प्रतिननुतीति यद्वत् त्वं नरवर  
ननुतीषि हृष्टः ।

The dance-maidens are referred to as *nartakikā*. Evidently, dance seems to be much in ascendance those days. It led vocal music in dramatic performances associated with *ākhyāna* and *upākhyāna* depictions. The themes of *Kaṁsa-vadha* and *Bāli-vadha* are known to have been two of those usually adopted for popular productions.

*Naṭas* and their *bahurūpa*-shows were much in evidence in the days of Pātañjali.<sup>10</sup> Make-up was used by folk-actors also. The *Naṭas* performed with their wives and sometimes with their younger sisters, too. (The practice is prevalent even now). Pātañjali considers a performing *Naṭa*: '*rasika-yadavācyā*' (an engaging sweet-talker). His phrase *rasiko-naṭah* may be understood to speak so much of the kind of appeal these favourites of the general populace did have to their credit.<sup>11</sup>

It may be inferred from this that *Naṭas* staged shows, danced and sung with their women-folk and recited the lines in a sentiment-saturated style. Pātañjali's *Agāsannīṭah* indicates likewise. At any rate, it has been that *nāṭya*, *pāṭhya* and *gāna* all went together those days, and music of the time happened to be dance-drama-dominated.

Pātañjali commenting on Pāṇini's *sūtra*:

हेतुमति च

has discussed about *saubhika*, i.e. *sobhanika* and *granthika*<sup>12</sup> class of people and their performances.

The *saubhika* class of composers and performers has also been recognised as a class of teachers in dance and drama of *Naṭas*. *Granthikas* were those who did *grantha-pāṭhana* (in public) to conduct a musical narration of the *Ākhyānas*<sup>13</sup> (stories of the heroic elders), and enact the scenes.

The raging superstitions may also be believed to have given shape and colour to the popular arts, including that of song and dance, for instance, the notions about *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī* and those about *kinnara*,<sup>14</sup> *kinnarī* and *nāga*, as found depicted in sculpture. For

these to have been so assimilated in common superstitions speaks of the extent the invading races had integrated themselves in Indian society of the time.

The contemporary sculptural art, as exhibited at places like Sāñcī, Bhārhut, Ajantā and Rūpar, also Koṇḍāṇey and Leṇo of Kārle and others reveal essentially a folk-basis of the prevailing song and dance trends. At these places, particularly at Koṇḍāṇey and Kārle (where community-dancing scenes are found in free abandon), male and female dancers are seen performing with rhythmic steps and harmonious gestures. A solo dancing performance is also to be seen at Bhārhut (it is a love scene). Also at Bhārhut is to be found a scene of *apsarās* dancing and singing<sup>15</sup> in unison; elsewhere shown at the same spot is a party of women engaged in dance, that, too, to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music.

A *nāga-kanyā* dance is also found depicted in one of the art-pieces. Another piece shows the *nāga-rāja* himself performing.

A Bhārhut pillar, as well, shows the *yakṣiṇī* in a dance-pose.

Among the Śuṅga period sculptural highlights include a terracotta piece showing two female-dancers performing before a *Yakṣa* who is playing on a wind-instrument. Ajantā abounds in such portrayals. On the other hand, a Kośam (Kauśāmbī) find shows a pair, the male partner of which is seen playing on a *viṇā*.

In short, the art pieces at Sāñcī and Bhārhut reveal that *viṇā*, *vamśa* (*bansī*), *śṛṅga* (horn), *kāmsya-tāla*, *dhapa* (Arabic, *duff*),<sup>16</sup> *ḍholaka* (Persian, *duhlak*), and *mṛdaṅga* were the most popular musical instruments those days as confirmed by the depictions elsewhere. The skin-covered instruments were of two varieties: the *alpākṛti* (shorter in size) played with fingers, and the other called *bṛhadākāra* (of full-size) which was slung on the shoulders and played. *Vamśa/vansī/bansī*, had as an instrument developed an adequacy for solo-play by that time. This has been an event by itself, and need be noted with all its implications.

### HARIVAMŚA-PURĀṆA

Among the eighteen *Purāṇas*, the following are believed to have quite a good deal to inform about the music of the time. These are: (1) *Harivamśa-Purāṇa*, (2) *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, and (3) *Vāyu-Purāṇa*.

In the *Harivamśa*, the music-inspiring personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Krishna) is for the first time fully introduced. The story of Kṛṣṇa's life has been narrated in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* also. The former deals with the part wherein Kṛṣṇa appears as a human hero endowed with godly wisdom. The latter devote themselves to his most fascinating early life—a source of pride and joy to one and all. And so does the *Harivamśa*.

- In *Mahābhārata*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personality emerges in two forms:
- (1) as a *Rājanīti-dhurandhara*—a political wizard, a powerful diplomat, a grim fighter and a great upholder of social justice;
  - (2) as a *Prakāṇḍa-dārśanika*—a sublime philosopher; also advocating the universal principles of *Karma* (action), *Jñāna* (knowledge) and *Bhakti* (single-minded devotion to God).

In *Harivamśa*, the life of Kṛṣṇa, with his great personal charm and sportive nature—the life spent in the midst of the *gopas* and the *gopīs* of Gokula and Vṛndāvana—is colourfully depicted. In it we come to know, the youthful Kṛṣṇa of the *gopīs*, the Kṛṣṇa of *horī*, *dhamār*, the Kṛṣṇa of the *Kṛṣṇa-gopikā rāsa-kriḍā*. This Kṛṣṇa is to be found nowhere else but in *Harivamśa*. Going through the principal outline of Kṛṣṇa's life, as delineated in the *Harivamśa* and the *Purāṇas*, it is learnt that he was born more than about 3,000 years ago in the *Yādava* or *Vṛṣṇī* family of Mathurā. Here he grew up to become a symbol of love for all. People were enamoured of his magic flute. The *gopīs* used to think of him while he was away tending cows in the forest, and rejoiced when he returned home in the evening. He freely indulged in play with all of them. He played his flute and danced with them in the autumn moonlight. He is the *vamśī-vādaka*, the propagator of a particular *gīta-sailī* and a particular *nṛtya-praṇālī*. In his name came to be patronised a mixed *strī-puruṣa-maṇḍalākāra nṛtya*, known as '*Rāsa*'<sup>17</sup> which is the exclusive gift of the Kṛṣṇa cult. The subsequent *Vaiṣṇava* literature mainly draws on *Harivamśa*, therefore.

*Harivamśa* tells of *laukika* and *vaidika gānas* having equal sway during the period. *Laukika* was the common art of song and dance

practised by the common people as *gāndharva*; but *vaidika*, on the other hand, concerned itself exclusively with *sāma-gāna*, for example, in connection with *yajña-yāga*. An explicit statement to this effect is contained in the *Harivamśa*:

गानप्रभाषं सञ्चक्रे गन्धर्वाणामशेषतः ।  
अन्येषां चैव विप्राणां गानं ब्रह्मप्रभाषितम् ॥

(भविष्य-पर्व, 20, 3)

According to *Harivamśa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*sabhā* allowed access to such *kalā-kuśala* and *natyācāryas* as *gandharva*, *apsarā*, *sūta*, *māgadha* and other such class of persons as *bandījana*, engaged in the allied arts of song and drama. The *gandharvas* and *apsarās* sang and danced while *sūta*, *māgadha* and *bandījana* did the *stuti-gāna*, too, when the occasion demanded.

*Gāndharva* art has been elaborated upon in the *Harivamśa*. It included, besides song, dance and drama, the art of histrionics and theatrics. The *gāndharva* art was practised by the *gandharvas* and also by the *kinaras*.

*Harivamśa* speaks of Nārada as a patron of both *gāndharva* and *vaidika-gāna*. He is shown as a world-trotter with his *mahatī-vīṇā* hanging by his neck. *Gāndharva*, as *Harivamśa* testifies, had all its compositions in *deśī-bhāṣās*.

It is in relation to Nārada, again, that the following information about musical theory have come to be recorded, e.g.

- (i) Nārada goes about doing *Hari-guṇa-gāna* (singing in praise of Hari);
- (ii) Nārada fixes the *mūrcchanās* of *sapta-svaras*, the seven *svaras* on *vallakī vīṇā* and renders the *ṣata-grāma-rāgas*—vocally and instrumentally; cf.

वल्लकीं वाद्यमानो हि सप्तस्वरविमूर्च्छिताम् ॥

(वि.प., 28, 111)

In *adhyāya* 89 of *Harivamśa*, *gāndharva* art has been elaborately discussed: on Balarāma meeting Revatī, for instance, there is great rejoicing. Professional musicians (*vārāṅganā*) present *gāndharva*.

In these celebrations *gīta*, *vādyā*, *nṛtya* had their 'Trivenī' in full flow. Some *ramaṇīs* (lovelies) could have been performing *madhura-gāna* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*, and some dancing on instruments. *Gītas* remained in full swing and were dance-interpreted by the *nartakīs*

(female dance-performers) through *abhinaya*. In song and dance compositions, various *deśī-bhāṣās* of vast popularity were employed. Costumes and other paraphernalia meant for these dance-dramas were also of all designs and colours. They boldly spoke of the regions they came from, and of the people who patronised them.

The '*maṇḍalākāra*' *rāsa-nṛtya* was one in which the female performers whirled round clapping each other's palms. The same dance-type, with its emphases differing from region to region has been a presentation par excellence of all times.

In one such *rāsa-utsava*, the Yādavas have been described engaged in *loka-gīta* and the folk-character of all such music gets endorsed in this manner; cf.

गीतानि तद्दर्शनोहराणि स्वरोपपन्नान्यथ गायमानाः

(*Harivamśa*, 89, 43)

In this connection *chālikya-gāndharva*<sup>18</sup> has been an outstanding form of a dance-play, profusely interspersed with song and music. It has been described as *pramukha* and *anivārya*.

Further on, it has been told that the *gāndharva* chorus-singing called *chālikya* used to be accompanied by different musical instruments. Nārada handled the *vīṇā* which could render the *ṣata-grāma-rāga*; Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself has been mentioned performing *hallīsaka nṛtya*, to the accompaniment of his own *vamśa*. Arjuna, too, has been one such performers. He is found playing on *mṛdaṅga* and the *apsarās* have been shown playing upon their own favourite instruments.

In *Harivamśa*, *chālikya gāndharva* has been mentioned in relation to *chālikya-krīḍā*, which makes it possible to believe that it was a sort of *nṛtya-gīta* performed by *gopa* tribesmen on the occasion of their community festivals. Both men and women sang this *gīta* (*chālikya*) and danced together.

Similarly, there is a mention of *hallīsaka-gāna*. It has been said that Śrī Kṛṣṇa started *hallīsaka* alongwith *chālikya-gāna*; cf.:

हल्लिसकं तु स्वयमेव कृष्णः सर्वशघोषं नरदेव पार्थः।

(i.e. Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed *hallīsaka* to the tune of his flute....)

It was presumably a kind of *rāsa-nṛtya*. The commentator, Śaṅkara of *Harṣacarita*, thinks that *hallīsaka* was a form of a *maṇḍalī-nṛtya* in which the dance number was done by female dancers, led by a male-dancer in the middle.

(Cf. *Sarasvatī-Kaṇṭhābharāṇa* by Bhoja, p. 309)

Nīlakaṅṭha, the famous commentator, reads *hallīsaka* as *jhallīsaka* and believes it to have been a kind of musical instrument. But this does not appear to be correct. Abhinavagupta, on the other hand, regards *hallīsaka* as a 'nṛtya-prakāra', danced in 'maṇḍalākāra' and in a party. Bhoja and Bhāsa also refer to *hallīsaka* as a dance-form meant for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Dr Vasudev Sharan Agarwal, in his historical study of *Harṣacarita* (p. 33), regards *hallīsaka* to be a corrupt form of the Greek dance-term, Elysium. According to him, it was introduced here in the opening years of the Christian era.

Dance and water-sports (*nṛtya* and *jala-kriḍā*) may have provided a type of entertainment quite popular among almost all classes of people. Young dancers were joyfully assaulted on the surface of the water to the rhythmic accompaniment of *mṛdaṅga*. And, then, all protestations of the mirth-provoked performers got drowned in a fanfare of trumpets.

*Harivamśa* does also authenticate some other dance-forms; cf.

नाटकं ननुतुः

and

प्रकरणे ननुतुः

Such statements make it evident that dance was the principal constituent of the then commonly practised *nāṭaka* and *rūpaka*<sup>19</sup> compositions and presentations.

*Nāṭaka* was then mostly referred to as *prekṣā*.<sup>20</sup> *Nāṭakas* such as *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Gaṅgāvatarāna* have been named in the *Harivamśa*. Male and female actors are said to have taken part in these popular plays. It has also been stated that musical instruments of the usual four categories, namely *tata* (stringed), *vitata* (non-stringed), *ghana* (percussion) and *suṣira* (mouth-blown, wind instruments) were played upon in these *prekṣās*.

An instrument called *nāndī* also finds mention. Perhaps it was a skin-covered instrument looking like the mouth of Nandī, the sacred bull. In Jain literature, too, such a loud-sounding drum is said to have been played on the occasion of their ritualistic ceremonies.

*Tūrya* was the collective term for instruments those days.

On the side of theory, *Harivamśa* gives credit to a system based on seven *svaras* and twenty-two *śrutis* as also on *sthānas*, *mūrcchanās* and *grāmas*. *Gāndhāra-grāma* may have been operative and in good demand during the period. In *Mahābhārata*, the same has been remembered as 'the sweet *gāndhāra-grāma*', and the theory of consonance also alluded to. This speaks about the fullness of the system and its practical procedures being in live conformity with its theoretical norms.

As regards the historicity of *Harivamśa* and its contents, the fact bears repetition that it has been appended, as an epilogue, to the *Mahābhārata*, the mythical or real creator of which has been designated as Vyāsa. As textual sources on the life of Kṛṣṇa, both the epic and its epilogue occupy primary positions. Dating back to some time in the pre-Christian era, their earliest plastic representation occurs on some Mathurā reliefs belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period, i.e. to the second century A.D.

The Kṛṣṇa cult, however, attained great popularity during the days of the Guptas, ranging up to fifth and sixth centuries. By tenth century, with the writing of *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, it undergoes a marked change: the historical figure of Kṛṣṇa recedes into the background and the element of *līlā* is made to become predominant. And when *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* gives the call:

'Foresaking every *dharma* come to me for refuge'

the theme of his life becomes almost all-pervading. It inspires so many classical texts. With '*prema*' (cf. Ar. '*ishq*') as one of its principles, and *śṛṅgāra* its own mood, the Kṛṣṇa-theme provided to poets, writers, artists, musicians and dancers an inspiration of vast magnitude. For all of them Kṛṣṇa was now 'a god who made music'.

The *Gīta-govinda* of twelfth century, being noticed elsewhere in this survey, down to the *rāsa* performances of nineteenth century, in Wājīd 'Alī Shāh's Awadh, together with the sculptured reliefs, murals and miniature paintings, and epigraphical records, including notable Braj *bhāṣā* and Persian writings on the subject, as well as those on *Rāga-mālās*, and *nāyaka-nāyikā-bheda*—all of these may reasonably be believed to have been built upon the same tradition.



## MUSIC IN THE DAYS OF KAUṬILYA

(culled from his *Artha-śāstra*)

Kauṭilya (also known as Cāṇakya) lived during the Mauryan period (321–232 B.C.)

This has been a period when India remained in closest cultural contacts with her neighbouring and other countries situated farther off. It was as well a period when a society, urbanised in character, came to be formed and nurtured. Significant still that rationalism reigned supreme in it.

Some important land-marks of the history of the period have been Alexander's campaign into India in 326 B.C. and Megasthenes' coming as a Greek envoy to Candragupta's court after 315 B.C.

Beautiful and talented slave-girls together with young boys with musical promise were among the articles of import during the Mauryan times.

'*Śilpa-sampanna-gaṇikās*' ('Public Ladies' fully conversant with the arts and crafts of the time), together with the *Nartakīs* (female dancers) wielded great power and influence. *Gāna-śilpa* (the performed art of song with instrumental accompaniment) was held in very high esteem. Even the ruling class was expected to acquire the requisite practical insight into the art of song and dance. *Rāja-purohitas* were supposed to be in full knowledge of it.

*Sāmaveda* seems to have acquired a distinct status of its own, apart from the *Veda-trayī* (the other three Vedas).

The artists appointed by the state for the purpose of song and dance were known as *Cāraṇa*, *Kuśīlava*, *Tūrya-kāra* and *Gaṇikā*:

1. *Tūrya-kāras* (members of the royal band) drew a salary which was double that of the *kuśīlava* (mostly state-artists), and were also employed on espionage duties (*gupta-cara*) whenever necessary;
2. *Cāraṇas* were appointed in the cadre of state publicity officers. Their musical instruments were kept handy for them in the royal treasury;
3. The *Gaṇikās* with outstanding physical charm and professional finesse were employed as *Rāja-nartakīs* (royal dancers) on very high salaries. Their recruitment was conducted at the tender

age of seven to eight years, by highly knowledgeable persons, who did, in most cases, also train them.

*Gaṇikās* came from the class of *Kuśīlavas*. The profession of *Kuśīlavas* was treated as a requisite qualification for espionage jobs.

In spite of all this, the dichotomy did persist; the professional communities of *Kuśīlavas*, *Gāyakas* and *Vādakas* were openly looked down upon in society. In fact, people of this class were considered to be of the *dāsa-varga*.

But the *Gaṇikās* did, all the same, occupy an exclusive place during the Mauryan period. They were believed to be a necessary factor for the maintenance of healthy social trends. Their private lives were above reproach and subject to constant watch by public servants appointed by the state for the purpose, and headed by a *Gaṇikādhyakṣa*.

These *Gaṇikās* were highly well-trained persons. As *Artha-śāstra* itself testifies, they were trained to become adept in:

'गीत-वाद्य-पाठ्य-नृत्त-नाट्याक्षर-चित्र-वीणा-वेणुमृदङ्ग.....  
वैशिककला-ज्ञानानि गणिकादासी रंगोपजीविनीश्च, ग्राहते  
राजमण्डलादाजीवकं कुर्यात् ।

Their training comprised, besides their own art of *vaiśikī*, the art of *gīta*, *vādyā*, *pāthyā*, and *nāṭyā*, *citra*, *viṇā*, also the art of playing on *veṇu* and *mṛdaṅga*....

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## FACTS OF MUSIC IN SMṚTI-SŪTRAS

(from *Dharma-śāstra*, *Manu-smṛti*, and other *Smṛti-sūtras*, more so the *Smṛti* of Yājñavalkya)

*Smṛti*-period: more exactly between second century B.C. and second century A.D. Yājñavalkya's *Smṛti*, however, belongs to the fifth century A.D.

According to *Smṛti*, song and dance was forbidden for the twice-born (*dvija*). Those persisting in the art of *Kuśīlava* were dubbed as *adharmā* (irreligious or shirkers of the duties assigned to them).

Manu and Yājñavalkya both declare *śilpa* (craft) as forbidden for it is

'an occupation suited only to the low-born'

(*Manu-smṛti*: 10, 100 and Yājñavalkya's *Smṛti*: 5, 120).

According to the *Smṛti* injunctions they could however, indulge in it in the form of an *āpaddharma*, i.e. in moments when their life is in danger.

*Brahmacārīs* engaged in learning Vedas were, in any case, totally forbidden from the pursuit of music and stage-acting; also from using perfumes and eye-salves; Cf.

कौशिलवगन्धाञ्जनानि

(*Gṛhya-sūtra* of Gobhila).

The students (*vidyārthī*) were forbidden from even witnessing a *nṛtya-prekṣaṇa* (dance-performance).

According to some *Sūtras*, the entire class of *brāhmaṇas* was to treat *gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtya* as totally tabooed. For *vaidika brāhmaṇas* taking food at or with *Gāyakas*, *Śailūśa* and *Raṅgāvatārīs* was undesirable as dining with low-caste people such as carpenters, thieves and *Gaṇikās* (public performers), etc.

According to *Manu-smṛti*, students residing in scholastic dormitories (*guru-grha*) for the purpose of attaining knowledge should keep away from *gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtya*.

Even *Sāmaveda* was to be learnt by only one out of every ten 'dharma-nirṇāyaka-brāhmaṇas' (correct perceivers of right and wrong in respect of *dharma*). *Manu* assesses the aspects of *Sāmaveda* to be related with the dead (*pitras*) to be *aśuci* (rather unclean).

In the face of such past precepts, *Yājñavalkya* recommends *nāda-upāsanā*. According to him, the concept of *Śabda-Brahma* leads to a devotional discipline, a *sādhana*. The change of attitude is significant. And the facts responsible for it need to be pin-pointed and examined for a fuller understanding.

It is to be appreciated, however, that during this period, musical tendencies leaning towards artistic presentation, or folk and festive in nature, were looked down upon by a section of the society. During this period, i.e. *Smṛti-kāla*, two trends are quite distinct:

1. The one restricted to *sāma-gāna*.
2. Another pertaining to *laukika-gāna*.

The former was professed to be and practised as a means to spiritual salvation. The latter was meant for material employment—for recreation as well as for the satisfaction of the senses.

On this account *Naṭas*, *Cāraṇas* and *Kuśīlavas*, etc., although classed as anti-social elements by some, are yet to be found vociferously engaged in practising and popularising *laukika gīti-gāna* (the folk-style of *gīti* singing).

The dominant social tendency of the time is thus to be viewed in its objectivity; that inspite of all taboos and prescriptions the *laukika* did find itself capable of representing the art-music of the time. In fact, it is so on record that, as a result of the raging antagonism, this has been a period of immense and unique activity towards the development of song and dance and drama, both as a form of popular occupation and also as a means of expression through art.

The *gīta*-forms, known to have been in practice during this period in a highly developed stage, have been those associated with the melodo-rhythmic presentation of *Ṛk*, and *Gāthā*, or those called *pāṇikā*, *brahma-gītikā*, *aparāntaka*, *ullopyaka*, *madraka*, *prakarī*, *oveṇaka*, *sarobindu* and *uttara*.

*Gāndharva* was still practised by the music-lovers in general and by the professional people as well; by the latter, however, to eke out a living in most cases.

All the same *gāndharva*, even now, embodied every kind of song and dance. It was practised in strict adherence to the norms traditionally sanctified. The terms *śruti*, *jāti*, etc., were much more in use. This shows that the process of its formalisation had become more brisk than before. *Viṇā* now happened to become the most popular instrument even among the elite. In fact, the idea seemed to have assumed authenticity that attainment of proficiency in *viṇā*-playing was a mark of respectability.

In this connection, it is to be noted that *Naṭa*, as a term, also stood for *Bharata*. These people called *Naṭa* coloured their faces and bodies with *sita*, *aśita* and *pīta*, i.e. with white, non-white (meaning black, blue and such other colours) and with yellow pastes, and walked about enacting various roles as:

<i>Bahurūpiyā</i>	: masqueraders
<i>Raṅgāvatārī</i>	: stage-actors
<i>Cāraṇa</i> , <i>Kuśīlava</i> and <i>Naṭa</i>	: All these poet-composers, musicians and dance-acrobats

travelled from place to place; performed and earned their living thereby and also trained young talents wherever they went.

Eventually tribes after tribes of them are known to have crossed the frontiers and settled in parts of Greater Persia (Chaldea, for instance), and thence moved on into Europe of the Middle Ages.

According to late Professor Kosambi, the *sūtras* of Manu's *Smṛti* were 'meant primarily, it seems, for the Brahmins'. Otherwise, the period represented by *Manu-smṛti* has been the one in which the 'Timeless Indian Village' comes up once more. Again, according to him, 'The village-kingdom of the *Manu-smṛti* had little use for the Buddhism suited to combine warring Aryanised tribe into a new society, or for the earlier Vedic religion....' On the other hand, it had been a period when 'New Gods developed, better suited to the rustic mentality.... The most successful (of these) was Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa-Kṛṣṇa, who dominates the final redaction of the Mahabharat, which is closely related to the *Manu-smṛti*. It was easy to absorb all prominent ancient or local cults as incarnations or numina of the god. This syncretism gave a cultural unity to the land. It was most important for the absorption of foreigners into a caste society.'

Quoting instances in support, the learned professor writes, 'At Besnagar, near the ancient Vidiśā, a stone column still bears the Prakrit inscription:

'This *Garuḍa-dhvaja* (eagle-topped) pillar of Vāsudeva, god of gods, has been erected here by Heliodoros, a votary of *Bhāgavata*,<sup>21</sup> a son of Diya (Dio), man of Taxila, ambassador of the Greeks (Yona), who has come from the great king Antialkidas to king Kāśīpati-Bhāgabhadra<sup>22</sup>, the Saviour who prospers in the 14th current year of his reign.'

### GODS OF THE MANU-SMṚTI PERIOD

Besides Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa-Kṛṣṇa 'The other prominent god is Śiva, who has features reminiscent of the three-faced Indus figures surrounded by totem animals. With his

*gaṇa* companions ... and a family headed by ... the mother-goddess Pārvatī', Śiva has been the other inspiring source for the popularisation of a syncretic religion in the whole of this sub-continent.

From all that has been laid down in the *Sūtras*, and what has been said in reference to it, a few deductions of vast import to the present study appear plausible:

- (i) that, the temple, which was to play such a pivotal role in providing patronage to the art of song and dance, during a better part of early medieval period, was yet to establish itself;
- (ii) that, the injunctions, so vehemently promulgated by the designers of the *Smṛti-sūtras*, mostly appear to have been observed with indifference although they do serve a purpose: that of functioning as powerful indicators of the trend against vulgar music. In this connection, it may be recalled that for the self-same reason Aśoka did also categorically ban *samajjā* performances (vide his Public Announcement: Edict II);
- (iii) that, inspite of the growing popular will in favour of folk-music, there is to be found an unyielding trend to accord priority to recitative music, more true to ritualistic tradition;
- (iv) that, the 'golden age' of Sanskrit drama, which was to usher itself in soon, shared a good deal of these trends. How far the sequences worked calls for a much closer study. All the same, the music accorded recognition by Kālidāsa and others had much more in common with the *laukika* as compared to *vaidika* traditions of song and dance.

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### GĀNDHARVA IN BUDDHIST WRITINGS

During the days *Jātakas* came into being, the Vedas and the *Vedāṅgas*, too, had their own sphere of popularity.

In *Tevijja-Sutta*, the *Chāndogya-carāṇa* of *Sāmaveda* is thus found also mentioned and, in *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *ācāryas* of

*Chāndogya-carana* have been *Chandoga*.

The *Bauddha Suttas* (sayings of Buddha), on the other hand, were also to be recited *sasvara*, i.e. melodiously, like the *ṛcās* of the *Ṛgveda*. In *Pālī-mahāvagga* and *Udāna*, there is a clear and complete statement to the effect that:

‘A *bhikṣu*, named Kuṭṭikaṇa, recited from *Aṭṭhakavaggika* (*Artha-pāda*) *sūtra* before Gautama, in a highly tuneful manner.’

In Buddhist period, Takṣaśilā was a great centre of art and learning. It had alongwith a *vaidika* and eighteen other *vidyālayas*, one also for *śilpa-vijñāna-vidyā*—all having an attendance of five hundred students each. The main subjects taught at these institutions also included:

- |                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| 1. <i>Śabda-vidyā</i>     | — i.e. grammar;  | } all five<br>collectively<br>called<br><i>Pañcayāna</i><br>in the<br><i>Jātaka</i> age. |
| 2. <i>Addhyātma-vidyā</i> | — spiritual knowledge;   |  |
| 3. <i>Cikitsā-vidyā</i>   | — science of medicine;   |  |
| 4. <i>Hetu-vidyā</i>      | — the knowledge of socio-<br>ethical principles and<br>moral precepts; |  |
| 5. <i>Śilpa-vidyā</i>     | — the knowledge of arts<br>and crafts.                                 |  |

Apart from Takṣaśilā, Vārāṇasī was another seat of learning. It had a special department set up for the education of music (*Saṅgītādhyāpana*).

Likewise, there are known to have been faculties of music at the universities of Nālanda, Vikramaśilā and Tadantapurī. At all these places a separate *nikāya* (faculty) for the study of the *Gāndharva* (art-music) was established. *Gāndharva* had by then attained a status of its own. It was freely referred to as *gandhabha-beda*, comprising *gīta* (song), *vāditta* (instrument-playing) and *naccha* (dance).

*Akkhānam* (*ākhyānam*) provided a popular form of music. It included the old *ākhyāna* and *vīra-gāthā* singing. But as a performing art it was even then known as *sippa*, i.e. *śilpa* (an item of professional skill).

Representative writings authenticate the belief that even Bodhisattvas (Buddhas in the making) were supposed to be well-versed in music and their women-folk were expected to be equally conversant in the art of dance, too.

According to *Lalitavistara*, Buddha's mother, the great Māyādevī, was herself highly skilled in all the allied arts of music. *Buddha-carita* makes it clear that in the royal apartments those days, *mahatī-viñā*, *mṛdaṅga*, *paṇava*, *tūrya*, and *veṇu* were in constant play and were fully enjoyed by all and sundry. In *Jātaka-granths*, the classes of musicians and dancers mentioned are: *Naṭa*, *Nartaka*, *Gāyaka*, *Bherī-vādaka* and *Nāṭaka-kāra*.<sup>23</sup> They formed their own groups and lived in separate apartments specially allotted to them.

*Gaṇikās* were still held in high esteem. They were expected to be *śāstrajñya* (fully immersed in *śāstric* injunctions); cf.

शास्त्रविधिज्ञकुशला गणिका यथैव

The attitude of society is to be further looked into, and its ramifications examined that even a public woman (*veśyā*) was believed to be *janapada-kalyāṇī* (a social benefactress) and accorded national recognition.

In *Bauddha-yuga* (Buddhist age), *nāṭya*, i.e. *nāṭaka*, was termed as *pekkhā* (Skt. *prekṣā*), and the dramatist was called *Naṭācārya*. But the *pramukha-naṭa* (the *Naṭa*-in-chief) was an altogether separate entity, and was designated as *Naṭa-grāmaṇī*.

Frequent references are found to the effect that royal patronage was afforded to music and its allied arts—to *nāṭya*, in particular.

On festive occasions *gīta*, *vādya* and *nṛtya* found favour with all. Fa Hsien, coming a little later, has been an eye-witness to public festivities of the kind, especially those observed in Magadha. These popular festivals were called *samajjā*<sup>24</sup> those days. Besides the Aśokan inscription already referred to, some of the *Jātakas*, too, speak about these: the *Vidhur-Paṇḍita-Jātaka*, for example, wherein a *samajjā* finds a mention as an occasion for community song and dance. *Ākhyāna*-type of singing and instrument-playing was also done on such occasions. These festivals were celebrated at sacred places where most learned persons of the age were invariably invited to attend (Rhys-David, *The Buddhist Age*, p. 83).

*Jātakas* also yield useful information to the effect that the folk-festivals such as *Giragga*, *Samajjā* and *Nakka-Trakīlama* (?), were celebrated with music and dance, as their dominant features.

The usual four types of musical instruments, namely, *tata* (stringed), *avanaddha* (skin-covered), *ghana* (percussion) and *suṣira*

(hollow, wind instruments), and as known to Buddhist writings, in general, have been:

*vīṇā, mṛdaṅga, ghaṇṭa, śaṅkha, parivādinī, paṇava, jallī, tūrya,*<sup>25</sup> *vipañcī, bherī, jhallarī, kurāla, mahatī (vīṇā), ḍiṇḍima, kāmsyatāla, śṛṅga, kacchapi (vīṇā), nakulī (vīṇā), dundubhī, tumba-vīṇā.*

During the period under review, the *ekatantrī-vīṇā* was very much developed. It served to produce all the accordant notes on its single string.

*Vīṇā* and *mṛdaṅga* were played with a *daṇḍa* (wooden stick). The excavations at Kausambī, Rāmnagar, Rāja-ghāṭa, Mathurā and Bhītā support this.

*Vīṇā* had by then developed itself as a generic term for all stringed instruments. Its gourd (*tumbī*) used to be of *bel* (*bilvaphala*, the Indian apricot) (cf. *Dīghanikāya*). *Vīṇā* playing competitions were also held. The winner was awarded by the state and his services recognised. For instance, a *vīṇā-vādaka* bore the title of *Pañca-sikha-gāndharva*.

Again, it is on record that the lover of a *tumburū* maiden, Sūrya-Varvasā, when disappointed in love, sought solace in the *vīṇā*. And because his heart was broken he was able to develop his art so well that it attracted the great Mahātmā of the time. All this is on record.

Yet another Buddhist writing, *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*,<sup>26</sup> says that on having the *darśana* of Bhagavān Buddha, Rāvaṇa took down the *vīṇā* slung on his shoulder (*pārśvalambitām*) and commenced his song based on the seven *svaras*: *saharṣya, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, dhaivata, niṣāda, madhyama* and *kaiśika*.

The seven *svaras* listed above are not to be equated with the notes which comprise the present-day *saptaka*. The novel arrangement is, however, to be kept in view, and the implications possibly understood in the light of further evidence on the point.

Alongside all this, it is as well to be appreciated that the Buddhist *Śramaṇas* permitted only that music which caused no hinderance to their spiritual pursuits; otherwise for them *gīta, vādya* and *nṛtya* were prohibited (Cf. *Śikṣāpāda*, 10; also, cf. Fa Hsien's *Travels into India*).

Similarly, another feature of the time has been its art-attitude in

respect of music, viz., the *visvara-gāna* of bygone times had given place to *susvara-gāna* of current prevalence and common popularity.

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### SOME ASPECTS OF ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE AS FOUND MIRRORED IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The rich life in royal palaces and abodes of cultured men and women, and of those with wealth and position, in ancient Indian cities is mirrored in the sculpture and painting of the time.

To have some idea of the contents and some of the known bases of this culture, with its remarkable continuity, a few facts are taken notice of.

To take first, the *rājā* himself. We can consider in him the *mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇas* (the signs of a great man): he is as tall as a *sāla* tree and has long mighty arms:

सालप्रांशुमहाभुजः

(*Raghuvamśa* 1.13)

In the case of the mighty Gupta emperors, for instance, each one is tall and mighty when depicted in stone or metal. To bring out and further heighten the contrasts the *chatra-dhara* (umbrella-bearer) is invariably a dwarf.

Even Vālmīki's Rāma is accustomed to riding a tall majestic elephant with an umbrella held aloft protecting his face from the sun. He is to be settled on the lion-throne (*siṃhāsana*) of Daśaratha. This image of Rāma is very much in correspondence with the much later impressions of Gupta emperors on coins as may be verified from ocular parallels, at Amarāvati.

The *rajānka* or marks of royalty, the umbrella (*chatra*) and the fly-whisk (*chaurī*) always accompanied the king and the prince whether in State-Chamber or his palace apartments or out on an elephant or in a palanquin. The palanquin, as a rectangular vehicle borne by bearers, finds a fine representation in Amarāvati sculpture, and closely follows the description of the '*Catura-śrayāna-manuṣya-vāhya*' given in the *Raghuvamśa*.

मनुष्यवाह्यं चतुरश्रयानमध्यस्य कन्या-परिवारशोभि

(*Raghuvamśa* 6.10)

'Seated in a rectangular palanquin, borne by men and beautiful attendants, (all around) the maiden, the jewel of the family'.

This vehicle, wherever it occurs, is mostly preferred for women. The picture of *hastipaka*, or the mahout lazily lounging on the neck of the elephant, as at Amarāvati, and in similar fashion in distant Bārābudur and Prāmbanass, has effective description in literature especially from the pen of Bāṇa.

This is only matched by *dauvārika* (door-keeper) dozing at the palace-gate in the representation at Bārābudur. The description of the baggy shirts worn by the *kañcuki*, into which the frightened *kubjas* and *vāmanas* could rush, is clearly portrayed in sculpture from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Goli, Gummīḍi-Durru and Amarāvati. A peculiar turban is an additional point to be noticed in the case of the *kañcuki*. His extreme old age and the staff to support his drooping frame as given in the *Mudrārākṣasa* is most effectively shown in one of the paintings from Ajantā.

Quaint representations of *kubjas* in the retinue of the princess in the palace occur both in painting and sculpture at Amarāvati where there are fine representations of the *vāmanikā* arranging the *nūpura* (ankle-bells) on the feet of the queen, carrying her toilet-box, and creating a funny situation in such a solemn scene as that of Udayana with a drawn bow and Sāmavati replying his anger by love.

A lovely picture of a *kubja*, as depicted in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, with due emphasis on the hump for which Kaikeyī had prepared a golden cover and chain arranged on it, as in the case of a monkey decked with straps of gold, is also presented in one of the scenes from Amarāvati, where Buddha visits the apartment of his noble wife Yaśodharā, and the *kubja* attendant bows to the master.

Bāṇa makes mention also of *kirāṭa*, alongwith the *kubja* and *vāmana*, as in the royal retinue, e.g. in *Kādambarī* (p. 91). The *kirāṭas* have representations in sculpture with their equipment of nets, i.e. *jāla* and *vāgurā* both for catching fishes, in particular.

Besides these, there is the beautiful *pratiharī*, with a huge sword hanging by a strap from her left hip and with an arresting personal charm and awe-inspiring personality as we find in sculptures from

Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Amarāvati, etc. Bāṇa likens it to a sandal-creeper entwined by snake, sweet but not approachable. Analogous is the personality of *khaḍaga-vāhini*—a female personal attendant of the *rājā* mentioned by Bāṇa, although in a different capacity.

*Ṛṣabha-śṛṅgas*, i.e. bovine-horn-bearers are also mentioned in Sanskrit classics, e.g. in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. A lady bearing such a cornucopia often occurs on the reverse of many Gupta coins too. In this way the noose and the cornucopia in either hand of the goddess of royal prosperity, Rājyalakṣmī, seated on a lion, and suggestive of the lion-throne, connotes the sense of her being the source of *kośa* and *danḍa* (treasure and power; cf. Kālidāsa).

The *śimhāsana* used by the imperious ruler is often depicted richly ornamented with gold, silver, precious stones and ivory and spread with coverlets, of which a fine picture is delineated in the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa.

In sculpture, such a *śimhāsana* is represented faithfully with lions, either standing or squatting, but supporting it on either side. The *mañca* or *parayanka*, often referred to in literature, are other comfortable seats for ordinary use. The *vetrāsanas*, like the ones referred to in *Dūtavāyaka*, are comfortable cane-seats or seats with a framework of wood and wicker-work with or without back and arms and with fine *makara*-decoration on the back. The *pādapiṭha*, or the foot-rest, as well, has numerous representations in sculpture.

Royal pleasure-boats with *kirāṭas*, as attendants, for rowing them, are variously represented (e.g. in *Raghuvamśa*); also: *jala-krīḍā* of Kuśa, as represented in sculpture of some medieval date, found at Bhuvaneshwar, Puri, etc.

Pleasure-chariots known as *puṣpa-rathas* (flower-bedecked chariots) are mentioned in literature and illustrated in early sculpture. This is different from the war-chariot which has four horses yoked to it. This type has no canopy or awning and is open on one side. Such a vehicle, meant for ordinary use, has been the one popularly known as *pravahaṇas* which is drawn by five pair of bulls or horses. These were to be distinguished from common *grāma-śakaṭas* or country-carts. But even these *pravahaṇas* are described as making a creaking noise like an old pig; e.g. the one Śākara describes in the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*:

शकार : भावे भावे आगदे प्रवहणे (भाव भाव आगतं प्रवहणम् ।)

विट : कथं जानासि ?

शकार : किं न पेक्खादि भावे । बुद्धशूअले विअ घुलघुला अभाणे लक्ख आदि ।  
(*Mṛcchakaṭikā*, 8)

In *Mṛcchakaṭikā* complete equipment for a comfortable travel is mentioned, referring to *yānāstarāṇa* or soft carpets and *apavāras* or screens, and so forth.

The king's bath described in *Kādambarī* shows the great taste and grandeur in all items of everyday-life. (*Kādambarī*, p. 16)

A close pictorial representation of the same may be seen in a similar scene from Ajantā where a prince is being bathed.

The dainty manner in which the man of taste took his food also depicts the level of material culture of the time. As described in *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, he is likened to a painter surrounded by number of small vessels, or shallow saucers, called *mallaka* or *śrāva*. A Rajput painting of *Pahārī* School, as well, gives the same idea.

A *pātrāsana* (also to be seen in an Amarāvati sculpture) used to be a small circular table of wicker-work on which plates and dishes containing food were laid.

Vasantasenā's residence in *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, and the different *kakṣyas* described in detail in *Ayodhya-khaṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in the case of Rāma's palace, present a picture of the mansions of wealthy persons of those days. In sculpture, too, mansions are equally well-represented. The buildings are multi-storied; the pillars are of varied workmanship; the screen-windows are most gorgeous; the balustrades, with a variety of patterns and decorative motifs, are numerous. Even the doorways vary in size and workmanship.

In fact, in every way, and in every bit of detail, these representations are worthy of a most careful study. With Amarāvati, Sāncī and Bhārhut, which present a picture of the culture during early centuries—round about the Christian era—we can come down to Ellora to have a more recent view of culture, the sophistications of which introduce us to the medieval conditions of Indian life.

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## MUSIC AS ONE OF THE ESSENTIALS OF ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE AND AS AUTHENTICATED BY SOME OF THE GREAT AUTHORS OF SANSKRIT DRAMA

Kālidāsa has referred to Bhāsa as his predecessor and called him *prācīna* and *praudha*, i.e. belonging to the olden days and the elderly. The exact period when Bhāsa lived and wrote is yet to be determined, but he did precede Kālidāsa as a *nāṭya-kāra*, that is certain.

Bhāsa in his dramatic writings refers to the combined art of music and dance and drama. He uses for it the same term which others prior to him had done, viz., *gāndharva*. He also affirms that this art of *gāndharva* had by then attained the status of an *Upa-veda*.

It is also of an exclusive significance that he takes notice of such a term as *tārasthāna* in relation to the musical scale of his time. If also otherwise confirmed, this may serve to provide a definite clue as to the employment of the octave.

Similarly, the term *ātodya*, denoting instrumental music, has been not only known to Bhāsa, but considered by him as the dominant feature of the music of his time. This, too, may be held as being strongly indicative of the art-trends of the time.

Among the music-producing instruments of the period, Bhāsa may be taken to testify to the effect that *viṇā* was held most in respect in those days. *Nārādīya-viṇā* may be supposed to have been known to the poet-dramatist. According to him, it was played with finger-nails (cf. *karajāgra-vādana*). As compared to it, the *ghoṣavati-viṇā* was plectrum-played.

Bhāsa also tells that *gīta* was accompanied by *kara-tāla* and *hasta-tāla*. The latter, in case it may be proved to refer to the art of hand-clap, constitutes a remarkable piece of information. This practice, on the one hand, goes back to post-Vedic days, and on the other, suggests a possible parallel to *dastak zadan* (beating of rhythm with the palm), so peculiar to the art of *qawl* singing.

The playwright also gives a privileged status to *hallīsaka*,<sup>27</sup> which ought to have been a form of community dancing as Bhāsa also calls it *nṛtta-bandha*.

It seems one of the acts of a stage-drama, i.e. a *prakaraṇa*, was

in those days suited to the weather and season, with music and song. The *Naṭas* performed, and the *Naṭīs* sang folk-tunes: *chaitī*, *jhūlā* and *kajrī* songs may be presumed to have first caught popular fancy in this way.

The earliest specimens of *nāṭaka* (drama) are believed to have 'survived in the Sanskrit plays of Aśvaghōṣa and Bhāsa'. Aśvaghōṣa wrote in the first century A.D. His plays, however, dealt entirely with Buddhist themes, and 'could well have been performed at religious assemblies'.

Bhāsa's plays, coming a few centuries later, were historical romances 'based on incidents from the epics' or on 'the amorous exploits of King Udayana of Avāntī'. They could, therefore, sparkle of life in a better way. But being written for the 'limited audience of the court circle', they are also not really free to move about.

However, it was left to the later 'immortals' of Sanskrit drama to consummate it, and to produce plays which did reflect the life of the time and, in some cases, as well breathe of the soul of the country. Among these, the poet-cum-aesthete, Kālidāsa, put forth a literature representing the high standard of artistic and cultural life of his days. And drama (*nāṭaka*) depending more than ever on its main beneficiaries—song and dance—did carry both, on its broad shoulders to new heights and to unknown depths.

In his well-known play, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, he himself informs:

नाट्यं भिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाप्येकं समाराधनम्॥

'people of diverse tastes assembled in the *nāṭya-śālās* to enjoy the *nāṭya-kalā*'.

Otherwise, too, Kālidāsa makes specific observations on the allied nature of the arts of drama and music. For example, in two places in his *Śākuntalam*, he 'speaks of the effect of song and in both places, whatever the meaning and the context, it is the *rāga* he says that, flowing like a stream, is enjoyed and it is the *rāga* that has made the audience still as in a picture; and in the second context the poet speaks also of the *psychological sub-conscious* effects of music'.

In his prologue to *Śākuntalam*, Kālidāsa using *rāga* most probably in its literal sense of *rañjana* ('colouring' the mind by imparting an enjoyable feeling to it) speaks of the aesthetic effect created by a *Naṭī*'s song as:

अहो रागबद्धचित्तवृत्तिः

or, about its lending a most pleasant colour to *gīta* and *gīti*, as:

तवास्मि गीतरागेण

and

अहो राग परिवाहिणी गीतिः

Similarly, in *Kumārasambhava* (7.91), Sarasvatī sings of Pārvatī and Parameśvara 'in sublime Sanskrit and in sweet Prakrit, and she is followed by the *apsarās* who delight the divine couple with their dramatic representation of a *nāṭaka*'.

Here, Kālidāsa may be found demonstrating his knowledge of the *śāstric* norms of *nāṭya* as well as of *gīta* and *gīti*. He 'speaks of dramatic *sandhīs* (thematic junctures), *vṛttis* (kinds of tempo), *rasas* (sentiments), *rāgas* (melodic modes of music), *prayoga* (putting on boards) of the first type of drama (*ādyā*) i.e. *nāṭaka*, and *aṅgahāra* of the *lalita* variety as opposed to the *āviddha* variety, meaning thereby *lāsya* as opposed to *tāṇḍava*'.<sup>28</sup>

On the theory of music, too, some of his allusions are equally noteworthy. In *Raghuvamśa*, for instance, he alludes to the *śadja svara* by describing the *mayūra-svara* as '*śadja-samavādinī*'.

In *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the heroine

उपगानं कृत्वा चतुष्पदवस्तु गायति ।

i.e. she performs *upohana* by doing the *upa-gāna* for the *geya-vastu*.

And, in his well-known lines in *Kumārasambhava* (1.8), Kālidāsa brings in the term *tāna*, understood by some to mean an 'ālāpa-like embellishment',<sup>29</sup> in between the song proper, by vowelising the *svaras* in *laghu* and *guru* time-measures. The lines run as:

यः पूरयन्कीचकरन्ध्रभागान्दरीमुखोत्थेन समीरणेन ।  
उद्गास्यतामिच्छति किन्नराणां तानप्रदायित्वमिवोपगन्तुम् ॥

Incidentally, these lines do appreciably denote the importance of the bamboo-flute in the poet's mind, and the advanced stage of development attained by its art of play.

Otherwise, too, the procedure of *vastu-gāna*, followed in musical concerts of the time, has been that its commencement was preceded by an *upa-gāna*, introduced in *ālāpa*-form. After that the *gīta* proper was rendered, to the accompaniment of *muraja* and *venu*.

Kālidāsa considers *nṛtya* (art-dance) to be the soul of music. He says:



सङ्गीतार्थो ननु पशुपते नृत्यतस्त्र पूर्णः

(Pūrva megha)

Thus, it has been that the entire plot of *Mālavikāgnimitra* hovers around *nṛtya*. As remarked by a music historian, 'the whole conflict in the plot may be called *nṛtya saṅgharṣa*'.

Moreover, a close look at Kālidāsa's heroines, such as Mālavikā, Harṣapadikā, Śarmiṣṭhā, Irāvātī and Indumatī endorses the above impression. These talented girls were all well-trained in *gīta*, *nṛtya*, *vādyā* and other fine arts such as painting. The *rāja-grha* had its own *raṅga-śālās*, and *nāṭya-śālās* where they were, presumably, trained.

Correspondingly it seems *kalā*, *kāminī* and *kādambarī* had become the motto of the male members of the ruling class.<sup>30</sup> But *kalā* evidently, came first, as even *rājās* are shown by Kālidāsa taking better pride in their *kalā-kauśalya*. It is through them that the art of *mṛdaṅga*-playing acquired respectability. And even ruling monarchs are sometimes shown by Kālidāsa providing rhythmic accompaniment to leading *nartakīs* in action.

In musical concerts, elaborated upon by Kālidāsa, may be seen the *gātā* (the singer), the *veṇu-vādaka* (flute-player) and the *muraja-vādaka* (the drummer) (*Meghadūta*, 1.59).

That *gīta* was still flute-based is apparent. Also evident is the fact that although *mṛdaṅga* occupied a place of pride among instruments of rhythm, *muraja* had a longer following and better currency. Besides these two, *puṣkara*, with three faces, was also preferred for dance-drama performances.

Prakrit and Deśī happened to be the language of the *gītīs*—folk songs adopted for drama purposes. The musical accompaniment provided to them had also to be of the popular type, conforming to popular taste. The arch-artist in Kālidāsa kept up the priority of *prayoga* (practised art), therefore.

In *nṛtya*, he gave appropriate places to the *śāstriyā* and the *laukīka*. But *calita* or *chalita* and *prerāṇa* had been the forms of common appeal, therefore better recognised. Kālidāsa considered these as *prayāsa-sādhyā*—acquired through intense training. The *vārāṅgaṅās* (the female professionals) danced these in temples on sacred occasions, but the art exponents took it to new heights, developing it to become thematic and making impromptu embellishments. This called for devotedness to the discipline of the art.

The terms *saṅgīta* and *saṅgītaka* seem to have come in vogue as in a passage in *Pūrvamegha* (58); they occur for Paśupati's music. Their threesome character, however, was yet to develop itself. They still denoted *gāyana-kalā*.

Kālidāsa regards *saṅgīta* as a *śilpa*. He refers to the *gāyakas* of Rājā Agnimitra as *śilpakārī*. But he rated it also as a *lalita kalā* (a fine art) or even as *lalita vijñāna*.

The art of *gāndharva*, it seems, still held its own. Kālidāsa purports to associate it with the semi-divine *gandharvas*, whom he regards as *deva-yoni-vyaktī*. For them, he uses the epithets '*udgātum*', '*udgīyamāna*', '*udgāsyatām*', '*udgātukāmā*', etc.

It is, most probably, their music that he associates with *gāndhāra-grāma*. In the *Yakṣa-nagarī* of *Meghadūta* (1.59), the *yaśo-gāna* in praise of the *yakṣa-pati* has been exemplified as being in *tāra-svara*, the most distinctive feature of the *gāndhāra-grāma*. Again, from the table-land of the Himalayas, Kālidāsa usually remembers the '*deva-gāyaka*' *kinnaras* and their *udgāna*, which has been associated with *gāndhāra-grāma*. This implies a good deal techno-historicism and needs to be looked into further.

Among the instruments, Kālidāsa may be believed to have found the *vallakī* and the *parivādinī viṅās*, together with the drums, *muraja*, *mardala*, *mṛdaṅga* and *puṣkara* representing their respective categories. The *śaṅkha* and *veṇu* have been the mouth-blown instruments of similar standing. *Veṇu* find frequent mention in his writings<sup>31</sup> as an instrument par excellence of song-accompaniment. At some places, e.g. in *Kumārasambhava* (1.45), the poet refers to a *vitantṛī-viṅā*. *Vitantṛī*, unless it stands for *ekatanṛī*, would mean 'without strings',<sup>32</sup> which probably it does not.

On the techno-aesthetic side, the writers of Sanskrit classics have been equally perceptive. The technicalities and subtleties recorded by them are many. The poet Māgha has 'a verse in his *Śiśupālavadha* which makes a precious observation on voices having volume and audibility without affectation of *kāku* (the tonal suggestibility) and without the loss of smoothness and fineness'.

Śūdraka 'has a more varied and technical appreciation in his *Mṛcchakaṭika* when he says, "*raktam ca nāma*", etc. Colour, sweetness, evenness, clarity, feeling and artistic turns and graces

captivating the mind, such are the qualities; according to Śūdraka *the acme of enjoyable music*, is in a gifted woman's singing and in the way it remains, as it were, in our ears, *gacchāmi sṛṅvanniva*, even after the performance is over.'

In fact, he presumed good singing to be a monopoly of women. So, when Maitreya in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* (III) does not approve of Cārudatta's praise for Revila's singing, the latter too continues with his compliments, saying: had Revila sat behind a screen and sung, 'I might have taken him for a woman—*antarhito yadi bhaved vaniteti manye*.'

Kālidāsa, in his seven plays and poems, says all this with more of variety and well-earned authority.

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### A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE PLACE OF ART-MUSIC IN GUPTA AGE

(Often Called the Classical Age of Indian History)

Music thrived under the personal patronage of the monarchs. *Gāndharva* was studied as a Veda, and taught with aid from the state.

The stone-pillar of Hāthīgumphā has an inscription relating to Rājā Khārvela, who has been mentioned as '*Gāndharva-veda-budha*'; similarly the stone inscription of Jūnāgaḍha, says that *Mahākṣatrapa* Rudradamana was a specialist in *gāndharva-vidyā* as well as an expert in all its branches.

In his travelogue Hsuan Tsang (seventh century), too, has provided some information about the art-pursuits of the Gupta period. He has talked about the five wisdoms, one of these being related to the *śilpāsthāna vidyā*.

In *Antagaḍha-dasāow*—the Jain *grantha* of this age—there is a clear reference to the slave-girls being imported from outside on account of their musical prowess as well. Kālidāsa, too, writes about the talented *Yavanīs* of foreign lands, who served as the *aṅga-  
rakṣakas* of the monarchs.

There is a consensus that this has been an age of revival of

'*sanātana saṅskṛiti and vaidika dharma*'. As is generally believed, it has been in this age that *sāmagāna* was revived. Samudragupta (A.D. 335-75) is said to have been singularly responsible for this. In connection with *Viṣṇu-upāsanā*, Kālidāsa, too, talks about *sapta-  
vidhi-sāma* (*Raghuvamśa*, 10.21).

The founder of this dynasty, Candragupta I (A.D. 320-35) married a Licchavī princess. Vaiśālī, the capital of the Licchavīs, has been known for its art and learning. The *vārāṅganās* of this town have also been known. This may have played some part in the raising of standards of the composite art of music.

Samudragupta succeeded him. In *Samudragupta-praśasti* (written in A.D. 4), he has been described as *Kavirāja* and *Gāndharva-kuśala*. In a stone inscription also he has been remembered as:

निशितविदग्धमतिर्गन्धर्वललितैर्व्रीडित...<sup>33</sup>

Samudragupta vividly stands out also for his special personal interest in music. In many of his coins he has been shown playing on a type of *viṅā*, not unlike the *chang*. The instrument, placed in the lap, is being played by both hands.

Samudragupta and Candragupta II, his son and successor (A.D. 375-415), very much enlarged the orbit of similar achievements. Thus, a high standard of artistic and cultural life came into being. And, insofar as real progress entails a series of change, *saṅgīta* and *nāṭya* underwent the process to their advantage.

In addition to Sanskrit, during the age literature in Prakrit had also its patronage outside the court circles. This had its own reasons and its own results: the reason, a major one, being the release of forces equipped to bring in the best of demand of the *apabhraṃśas* and the *deśī* as the language of songs—even Kālidāsa prefers sometimes to use them for effect—and the result, more mentionable, being the blossoming forth, one by one, of the Prakrits. The Buddhist and Jain literature in Pali and Prakrit could now have a better say in society and set up a pace for the eventual blossoming forth of Bhāsa as the expression-medium of the *Bhakti* cult.

The *Purāṇas* as they have come down to us, in their present form, were composed as well during this time. The relevance is, however, not to be lost of the fact that they 'were originally composed by bards' for being recited or sung before their patronising

potentates. The geneologies of each dynasty included in the *Purāṇas* owed their authorship to the *Cāraṇas* (the bards), and pointed to one of the source-material of *prabandha-gāyakī* of pre-to-early medieval days in India.

It was under Candragupta II (A.D. 375-415), identified by some also as Vikramāditya that 'a better part of the country formed into a single political entity'. This did result, it may be said, in vitalising many aspects of socio-cultural integration.

Vātsyāyana's *Kāma-sūtra* has been found to depict the daily life of the contemporary elite 'of a comfortably well-off citizen', not only addicted but also devoted to the refinements of it: literary gatherings for poetic recitations were frequent. 'Painting and sculpture were always on view in the homes of those who executed them. Music was another necessary accomplishment, particularly the playing of the *vīṇā*....'

It has been further said that 'the courtesan was a normal feature of urban life, neither romanticised nor treated with contempt (this continued to remain so upto modern days). Judging by the training given to a courtesan, as described in the *Kāma-sūtra*, it was amongst the more demanding professions, for she was often called upon to be a cultured companion..!'

For an institution to spring up around such a one, and for that institution to be constantly called upon to remain abreast of every thriving art-trend, has always been a professional necessity. The *śāstric* writers of yore, and Baranī, the earliest among medieval historians, takes elaborate notice of most of the details involved in this social phenomenon of their time.

During this period, 'a number of Indian elements were introduced into Chinese culture. Perhaps the most obvious was the use of Indian techniques in sculpture and painting.... Music, astronomy and medical treatises were all enriched by contacts with India.'

In the same process, the Buddhist initiative, intensified, since A.D. 379 on Buddhism being declared the state religion in China, worked itself up in various parts of Asia. This allied India culturally with them. On the political plane, too, territorial expansion may be expected to have brought about further prospects of cultural assimilation.

The Kuṣāṇas, already driven out from Indian *madhya-deśa*, were still in power in the Kabul valley and parts of Indian border-land. They manipulated matrimonial alliances with the Sassanian rulers of Persia, and, perhaps, acknowledged them as over-lords, too. 'But about A.D. 350 they transferred their allegiance to Samudragupta.' Thus it has been that 'in the fifth century, we come across the Kidara Kuṣāṇas ruling over Gāndhāra and Kashmir ....' and assiduously trying to maintain very close diplomatic relations with Samudragupta.

To this state of affairs may be attributed the sudden spurt in the number of the clearly discernible stringed instruments, generically known as *vīṇā*; the stage requirements, tending to accord better preference to their louder clarity of tone and the more readily manageable multiplicity of melodic phrase—the *venu*, therefore, receding in the background (as Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra*, XXXIV, 215 also unmistakably indicates), and the *vīṇā* coming forward to claim priority, and, as significant as anything else, Samudragupta's affixing, so to say, the royal seal on *chang* having become the prime instrument of his time.

Perhaps the *Pañcatantra* was also written during this period. It speaks of seven *svaras*, twenty-one *mūrchanās* and thirty-six *varṇas*, signifying in clear terms an advanced stage of development of musical theory. On the practical side, too, formalisation appears to have become due. A point in instance is provided by the *chalita* or *calita* dance. It was now taught only to *buddhamatī* ladies.

Values of life had definitely stabilised themselves at higher levels—at levels of excellence high enough to form a standard for later times. Like Samudragupta, Kālidāsa has been a spokesman of this age. For the popular, practised art, too, he sets up this standard in *Śākuntalam*, saying:

“आपरितोषाद् विदुषां न साधु मन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम्”

'To me that *abhinaya-kalā*, or its science, is not acceptable, which fails to satisfy the knowledgeable and the cultured.'

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## NOTIONS IN ART AND MUSIC ABOUT THE DAWN OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

The Christian era opens with Kuṣāṇas in India. They were Mongolians and had originally moved out of north-west China. Theirs was a Buddhist Empire; the most eminent personality among these people has been Kaniṣka. He was ardently devoted to *Dhamma* (*Dharma*). He made Puruṣpura Puruṣāvāra (Peshāwar) his capital. Takṣaśilā (Modern Taxila) was nearby. It had remained for long a centre of Buddhist culture. From here, a continuous coming and going to the Kuṣāṇa homelands did popularise Buddhist knowledge and learning far and wide. In the bargain, Western and Central Asia had also much to influence the Buddhist ways of living and thinking.

A large part of Western Asia had remained 'under Greek rule since Alexander's day, and large numbers of Greeks had brought their culture to it. The Greek Asiatic culture mingled now with the Indian Buddhist culture.' Thus, apart from Western Asia, China, Mongolia and Central Asia came into cultural contact with India and bilateral influences came to be freely exchanged.

Kaniṣka was a great patron of art and learning. The famous *mahākāvya* and *saṅgīta*, Aśvaghōṣa, occupied a place of honour under him. The story goes that Aśvaghōṣa formed bands of musicians and went about preaching Buddhism among the common people, in almost the entire expanse of Asia. His poems and plays did also imbibe considerably from the prevailing circumstances just mentioned.

During this period the subcontinent had very close contacts with the outside world. Rome was one of the places having vast commercial ties with India.

The 'Kuṣāṇa period corresponded with the last days of the Roman Republic'. Julius Caesar was then alive, and his Rome was in close contact with Buddhist India. Trade continued to flourish between the two countries, both by land and sea. The Guptas, as seen already, gave further fillip to it. Earlier, the Kuṣāṇa emperor is said to have 'sent a great embassy to Augustus Caesar'. Internally, too, a momentous debate was going on 'in the Buddhist monasteries and at the meetings of the *Saṅgha*', as regards the true and to-date

interpretation of Buddhism. 'New ideas, or old ideas in a new attire', were therefore welcome, and 'the simplicity of Buddhist thought was being gradually effected'. A meaningful process of change was, thus, on.

In this process, with new interpretations being given to life and religion, the manifestation of these ideas in art also changed. And the change so brought about being both Brahmanic and Hellenic in its making, added unforeseen dimensions to Buddhism. Of these, the one more material to be found in the present study related itself to 'image-worship'. Gautama had scrupulously put a total ban on it. But what an irony of history that in Persia of the time his very name Buddha became a synonym for Butt (بُت) meaning 'idol'. And the way the art of image-making, aided by the Iranian's love for the beautiful, made it grow into a symbol and live on in Persian lyricism speaks at some length, and for good reasons, about the over-all intimate transactions between new-Buddhists and some other flourishing cultures, far and near.

The *Gāndhāra* art, for example. It owes its prosperity to the eminently synthesised and co-ordinated efforts of the indigenous and the Greco-Buddhist craftsmen. In music, too, facts already on record make it possible to believe that similar circumstances of life prevailed. The art of dance, drama and song, called *gāndharva*, may or may not have shared anything with the motivations behind the fruition of the *Gāndhāra* art, their origins (still to be determined) may or may not have been the same, but both belonged to an extensive region.

In the Amarāvati murals *ḍholak* (Pers. *duhlak*, smaller *duhl*), *mṛdaṅga* and *puṣkara* are variously and very neatly depicted. Scenes of *avarodha-saṅgīta* (harem-music) are also in prominence at Amarāvati. In one of its wall-paintings can be seen three women playing on a *vīṇā* which is unmistakably *rubāb*-shaped; the other three playing on *ḍholak*, and yet another three wielding long-bodied *vaṁśīs*.

Vocal accompaniment equally shared by the *vīṇā* and the *vaṁśī* may be understood to denote a fast-evolving tono-aesthetic preference. Obviously, the golden days of the flute—the instrument of humanity, most distinctive one of India's musical genius—were soon to be on the wane. Being associated with Kṛṣṇa, it continued

traditionally to live on as *gānapriyaloninī*, but its resources were limited. To take an epithet from Kālidāsa, the string had always an upper hand over 'kīcaka-randhra' (bamboo-hole); it was free to raise or lower its pitch; in the latter case it was not possible, being pre-determined and fixed.

It was during this time that growth of towns and amenities of life brought about a 'New Urbanisation' (c. third century B.C. to second century A.D.). The *nāgarika*, or the man of the town, now became a type with polished, well-developed tastes and 'special codes of conduct'. Vātsyāyana describes the life of this *nāgarika*, putting up a picture of the state of *nagara sabhyatā*. His description of a young man's apartments is of direct concern to us, as it gives an insight into the intimate life of the class of people who mattered most in the pursuance and furtherance of the excellences of fine arts.

According to Vātsyāyana, thus, a young *nāgarika's* rooms were 'to be elegantly furnished both for comfort and for enjoyment'. Ivory brackets were 'to be provided for keeping such articles as painting-boxes and musical instruments'. In this connection Vātsyāyana asks the young man 'to keep the *vīṇā* on a special rack'. This exclusive attention shows the prior status of the instrument, thereby confirming the stability of a trend: the trend to the effect that the art-music of the time tended to be *nāṭya-pradhāna*, with *nṛtya* as its auxiliary. *Gīta* was at best their accessory.

It may be remembered that Vātsyāyana, or his time, did not produce the term *nāgarika* nor did it simply denote a *nagara-nivāsī*, but as defined by Pāṇini, 'he was one who on account of his artistic refinements could afford to derive genuine pleasure from good living'.

In between the two *śāstras*—Kauṭilya's *Artha-śāstra* and Vātsyāyana's *Kāma-sūtra*—glimpses of *nagara-samskriti* are more and more to be seen on the surface of common life. People from all walks were attracted towards the *nagaras* of those days: the village-dwellers regarded the townsmen as their ideal. Thus talented *grāma-nivāsīs*, too, found easy access to the inner circles of cultured society, and arts enabled to grow up in tune with life. In this manner the belief is rife that art had in those days become a sure means for ensuring economic self-sufficiency.

Like *nagara-goṣṭhīs*, *samāja-sabhās* were also convened those

days, by the professionals and the amateurs of the place as a common venture. Their venue, in most cases, used to be the village temple. The performing dancers here were professionally trained and known as *prekṣanaka*.<sup>34</sup>

Vātsyāyana also informs about the class of persons engaged in *nāṭya* and designated as *pīṭha-marda*, *viṭa* and *vidūṣaka*.<sup>35</sup> According to him 'they came from far-off places', were extremely well-versed in every form of music, and possessed requisite expertise to train the *Gaṇikās* in their art.

This explains how fresh talents—both from far-off places and from among the indigenous masses—were drawn to the re-urbanised towns, how new ideas and new techniques were procured and perfected, and how, inspite of the professional class being made to suffer under the stigma of the low-born, a cross-section of people led by the amateur class emerged to fulfil the urges of the society and its dominant culture. In their *goṣṭhīs* and *sabhās*, literateurs and music lovers assembled. *Gaṇikās*, too, attended these parties on special invitation, and were much respected. Their *gurus* were respected all the more.

Besides these, there were periodical festivals. Vātsyāyana makes special mention of *Yakṣa-rātri*, *Kaumudi-jāgara* and *Suvasantaka* in particular. These are known to have been celebrated by all and attended by high and low alike. The mainstay of common interest in these festive gatherings did prove itself to have been the art of song and dance presented in the form of musical toursneys and folk-plays. The *ākhyayikā* has been named among the most popular folk-plays, and *hallīsaka* as the dance-form. The latter had developed into a community folk-dance even as Bhāsa was writing his *Bālacarita*. It was performed as an accompaniment to *gīta* and *vādyā*.

*Gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtya* may be believed to have become a major draw by then, as the author of *Mṛcchakatikā* says writing some times towards the beginning of the Christian era and happening to be one of the first to make a mention of *saṅgīta* as a term comprising the three, and an art-form most acceptable to the general populace; cf.:

कृतं च सङ्गीतकं मया (अं०, १)

The play opens with a direct reference to art-music. The third *anka* then deals in some detail with *gāndharva*. *Nāṭya* was on the

whole still in the lead; *nṛtya* still played a part next to it, but *gīta* and *vādyā*, although still acting as their accessories, may be clearly seen gaining ground.

Thus, in the *anka* just mentioned, the hero, Cārudatta, goes to the house of a *śreṣṭhī*, Revila, recognised as an accomplished musician of the time. According to the practice in vogue, he played on the *viṇā* and sang. Śūdraka, to whom this play is ascribed, gives words to the excellences of his performance; the first line runs as:

रक्तं च नाम मधुरं च समं स्फुटं च भावान्वितं च ललितं च मनोहरं च ।

That is, Revila sang and played: 'his performance had the warmth of life as blood; it was sweet to the ear as honey is to taste; in it tone and melody and rhythm mingled to bud and blossom forth as one; it filled the mind with feeling; it aroused the emotions; it created beauty and joy; it charmed the being and elated the soul'.

Furtheron, the then art of *gāndharva* singing, its vocal-instrumental synchronisation, together with their tono-aesthetic values have been idealised (in *ślokas* 3-5) in a way that tells about their future course and explains so much; the *śloka* runs:

तु तस्य स्वरसंक्रमं मृदुगिरः श्लिष्टं च तन्त्रीस्वचं...

वर्णानामपि मूर्च्छनान्तरगतं तारं विरामे मृदुम् ।

i.e. the melodically balanced and even progression on *svaras*, making the measured words sounded more beautiful and sweet; the *viṇā*-string pronouncing the song in harmonious unison and the *varṇas* lent movement by *rāga*-bases, called *mūrochanās*, spanning the notes from *tāra* down to *mṛdu*, thereby adding fresh colours, specified as *salila* and *saṁyamita gāna*....

Taking the two references together brings into clear focus the truth that by the opening centuries of the Christian era the art-music of India—whether in the wake of its own continuity, or by evolving out a new dynamism—stood almost at par with *nāṭya*. It becomes as well evident that *gīta* and *vādyā* naturally combined to express in full the aesthesis of melody and rhythm—un-aided even by *nṛtya*. From now on to the time Śārngadeva testifies to the effect (early thirteenth century), and thence to the present day, history establishes *gīta* as the *pradhāna-aṅga* of India's folk and art-music alike. As a necessary corollary, *śabda* assumes paramountcy and poetry becomes integral to music.

In the Gupta revival of Aryanism, *vāk* came to be further glorified. The post-Vedic writings had symbolised and sanctified it already. In centuries to come, the power of *śabda* and *nāma* came across and could also create circumstances to gain country-wide recognition.

Music proved itself to be the natural choice to act as a vehicle of desired expression. The rise of the Kṛṣṇa cult made this more imperative. It could develop, therefore, a popular halo around it. The widely spoken non-Sanskrit languages of regional origin had by then managed to become one of the chosen media for the purpose. Therefore, the more Kṛṣṇa-worship proselytised itself, the better sustenance could these *deśī* (regional) dialects procure for themselves.<sup>36</sup> In the circumstance, *deśī gīta* and the hallowed philosophy of *śabda* and *nāma* became indispensably disposed towards one another. In course of time the two almost merged into one. And as the creed of *Bhakti* took over, using poetry and music as its sole media, a fresh impetus was provided to both. The overweening importance of *śabda* in Guru Nānak and Sant Kabīr testifies to this.

The trend so traced up was almost certainly set in motion, as suggested above, sometimes towards the advent of the Christian era.

Among the instruments of music, those to find significant mention in Śūdraka have been *mṛdaṅga*, *dardura*, *paṇava*, *viṇā* and *vaṁśa*. *Viṇā* with seven strings, and *vaṁśa* with seven holes, were believably the leading types. This facilitates the belief that the *saptaka* was procedurally basic to the art.

The side-heroine of this play (*Mṛcchakaṭikā*) is Vāsvadatta. Her house has been shown as a bee-nest of music performers. The playwright illustrates:

- (i) some of the young girls were playing on *mṛdaṅga*;
- (ii) others were handling their *kāṁśya-tāla*;
- (iii) an adept girl at her *vaṁśī* was playing upon it with added grace;
- (iv) yet another was busy over her *viṇā*;
- (v) and while the rest were engaged in singing *gītas*;
- (vi) those more experienced and better practised were teaching them how to do that still better;
- (vii) still others were training another set of girls in items of dance and drama.

The heroine of the play, Vasantasena, has been introduced as one fully skilled and excelling in all the above aspects of the musical art. In particular, she has been a *nartikā* and a *gāyikā* of outstanding merits.

Her leading man has been Cārudatta. He is an aesthete and an amateur immersed in all the finer points of the art of song and dance. In all he represents his class: while describing the advent of rains he is reminded of the *svara-dhvani* of *vīṇā*; the rain-drops developing into an incessant downpour do remind him of the *tāra* and *mandra* of a melody. Hence, the memorable lines:

तालीषु तारं वितपेषु मन्द्रं शिलासु रूक्षं सलिलेषु चण्डम् ॥

(5, 52)

Like the *zīr* and *bamm* of the Persians, *tāra* and *mandra* may be supposed to have represented between them all that was high and low in the musical tone; *rūkṣa* (same as *rukḥ* of Urdu) and *caṇḍa* refer to the dreariness or brilliance determining their aesthetic values.

#### EVIDENCE ON MUSIC IN SOME OF THE LATER PURĀṆAS

*Purāṇas* have been understood to mean history (study) of the ancient. Dr Winternitz regards *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* to be 'probably one of the oldest works of the whole Purāṇa literature'. H.H. Wilson dates it as c. ninth-tenth centuries A.D.

Incidentally it is one of the later *Purāṇas* with enough to say about music. Another is *Vāyu-Purāṇa*.

On the basis of some expositions made in *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, it may be supposed that in the view of its compilers the art of music was losing in prestige—even its serious practice was on the wane. The art of *gāndharva* was being considered to have become an occupation of the *Śūdras*. The *Purāṇa* concerned does not expect a 'yogī-puruṣa' to even dream of *gandharvanagara* as it was an *aśubha* act. Even so it was regarded to be the *dhvani* (musical intonation) of *Sāmaveda*. Taking cue from the *Smṛtis*, perhaps, it goes to the extent of calling it *aśuci* (un-clean).<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, the *gandharvas* and the *apsarās* have been treated as semi-divine beings, and the art of *gāndharva* their own profession.<sup>38</sup> Territorially, too, *Gandharva-deśa* has been said to be theirs. Nārada and Tumburu figure as their *ācāryas*. So do Kambala

and Aśvatara. Among the semi-divine dancers, names of Viśvācī, Ghṛtācī, Urvaśī, Tilottamā, Menakā, Rambhā, etc., are to be found.

Of better historical interest, however, should prove out to be the emergence of the Sarasvatī concept, believably finding, its first mention here. Sarasvatī is from now on the presiding female deity of literature and music, and *gāndharva* is her principal domain.

The *śāstric* injunctions, as regards the musical theory, are also found reiterated herein. In *ślokas* 23, 51-3, the seven *svaras*, seven *grāma-rāgas*, seven *gītakas* and seven *mūrccchanās* purport to form the fundamental bases of the art. Similarly, the forty-nine *tānas*, three *grāmas*, four kinds of *padas*, three varieties each of *tāla* and *laya* and *yati* are held essential. The number of *ātodya* has also been fixed at four.

In responses to the prevailing urges, equal prominence has been given to the art of dance. A young body and a beautiful face have been stated to be its pre-requisites. But *rūpa* (beauty) with *guṇa* (adequate amount of talent) has been quoted as Nārada's motto.

The instruments mainly associated with the arts both of song and dance have been enumerated to be:

vīṇā, veṇu, dardura, paṇava, puṣkara,  
mṛdaṅga, paṭaha, ānaka and dundubhī.

Apart from these, *śaṅkha*, *ghaṅṭa* and *śṛṅga* of numerous varieties have been assigned to festive occasions and the exigencies of war.

The string (*vīṇā*) and the holes—bamboo (*veṇu*) still competed for sole authority. So far, both were equally needed for art-performances, with *gīta* in the lead. Cf.:

वीणावेणु स्वनं गीतं किन्नराणां मनोहरम् ।

(61, 57)

The standard of judgement set up by the orthodoxy seems to have centred round *puṇya* (virtue); the *śloka*:

एषु च विविधाः कामा गीतवाद्यादिकं च यत् ।  
सर्वमेतन्मया मतं फलं पुण्यवनस्पतेः ॥

(24, 21)

runs to that end. It is, however, a mute question if this could in any way determine the aesthetic norm of the time.

To appear earlier than this has been the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, believed to have been completed upto c. fifth century A.D.<sup>39</sup>

Its *aṅkas* 86 and 87, do provide quite useful musical data, but according to some, their genuineness is a matter of grave doubt. At any rate, the art of music being dear to Śiva, in all its aspects, amounted to an exclusive approach. He is, as Mahādeva, shown engrossed in *gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtya*, has also been referred to as a *nṛtyācārya* and a dance-god. He has been shown propitiated by the *bhūtagaṇa* and *gaṇeśvara* to the magical sounds of *jharjhara*, *śaṅkha*, *paṭaha*, *bherī*, *ḍiṇḍima* and *gomukha* and pleased by the *rasa-bhāva* in *gīta*, and the *lāsya* in *nṛtya*.

In Śiva-worship, both *vaidika* and *laukika* *gītis* were to be used. The god's dwelling-place, Kailāśa, has been stated to eternally reverberate with the tones of *vīṇā* and the sounds of *ghaṅṭā*. Śiva's Śivapurā is thus always alive with music. His *bhakta* and *bhūta-gaṇa*, too, are found treating music as a form of *ārādhanā* (worship).

With this *Purāṇa*, it may be seen, the deification of music begins; the different *mūrchanās*, worked out of the musical scale, have been assigned, in most cases, to some *deśa* and also dedicated to a *devatā*. The *sauvīri-mūrchanā*, for instance, is said to have come from *Sauvīra deśa*, having *Brahmā* as its propitiatory god.

According to this *Purāṇa* (34, 93, etc.), *gandharva* people had their art-music known as *gāndharva*. They are said to have been the exponents of *gāna-vidyā*, just as the *kinnaras* have been of the *nṛtya-vidyā*. Others, like them, have been the folk-artists called *māgadha*, *cāraṇa* and *sūta*. The *apsarās* have also been folk-performers like them. These have been rated as the tribes solely engaged in various forms of song, dance and acrobatics, together with singing the eulogies of the persons in power.

Some of the notions and ideas concerning the theory of music also find mention in this *Purāṇa*. The seven *svaras*, associated with *kalpas* (Vedic observances), are said to have made their respective appearances so as to form the under-noted series:

<i>gāndhāra</i> ,	<i>ṛṣabha</i> ,	<i>ṣadja</i> ,	<i>madhyama</i>
(ग)	(रि)	(स)	(म)
<i>dhāivata</i> ,	<i>niṣāda</i>	and	<i>pañcama</i>
(ध)	(नि)		(प)

The delineation of the *mūrchanās*, *grāmas*, and their *tānas*, is more or less the same as found in the *Nārādīya-śikṣā*. The *varṇas* have

been four, namely, *sthāyī*, *sañcārī*, *avarohī* and *ārohī*. *sthāyī*, which restricted its movement to one *svara* only; the *sañcārī* in which the *svara*-movement was varied; the *avarohī* and *ārohī* *varṇas* had their movement of *svaras*, respectively, in descent or ascent.

*Alaṅkāras*, too, have been mainly four: *sthāpanī*, *kramarejin*, *prasāda* (?) and *apramāda* (may be *aprasāda*). The *gīta*-forms described have been three, viz., *madraka* and *aparāntika* in which *gāndhāra-svara* dominated. The third form has been named as *uttarā*.

Evidently, these *sāstric* details pertain to the period under view, their authorship, notwithstanding.

The two *Purāṇas*, viewed in perspective, reveal a few outstanding features: the new elements which entered Aryan society, towards the dawn of the Christian era and thenceforth, seem to have aspired for dominance. Their arts and crafts, like all new things of life, could also exercise a winning hand. This naturally threw the priestly class of the country on its guard. The consequent drastic attitude put up by the ordainers of the correct norms of acts and beliefs may, therefore, be attributed to these developments, and the existing dichotomy explained.

*Gāndhāra*, the country, *gandharva*, a class of people inhabiting it, and *gāndharva*, the allied arts of song, dance and play practised and popularised by them, were born from and for each other, this may be safely assumed. But as would always happen, the goodwill created, and the appeal for an appreciative majority exercised by them, attracted local aspirants. An extremely broad-based class of professionals, thus, came into being. It had its own traditions and talents, active and alive in the infrastructure. *Gāndharva*, in this manner, got infused with a new spirit but being *laukika* (folk-based) it came to be treated as other than *vaidika*, and being identified with those placed lower down the rung, it attracted the ostensibly wanton epithets of *aśuci* and *aśubha*.

The fact remains, however, that in spite of such taboos *gāndharva* had the inner strength to follow its own course of natural growth and thereby fulfil its career. Its tenure lasted for so many centuries. The Sanskrit drama accorded it sole recognition. This has been seen. The *Nāṭya-sāstra*, as would be presently seen, did the same. And so does the *Bṛhaddeśī*. But much before the time



Śāringadeva sat down to record the facts of his time, the performing class of *gandharvas* alone remained; the art of *gāndharva* and its representative character were gone. Had the fading out of Sanskrit drama, by about the same time (twelfth century), anything to do with this? Most probably it did.

There is some account of the music material to be found in the *Liṅga-Purāṇa*<sup>40</sup> as well. 'Intimately connected with that is the *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa*'; it has been given to us in the form of 'stories of Kauśika and Harimitra who propitiated Hari with music', and of Nārada who learnt music from Gaṇabandhu (the Owl).

These form part of the *Uttarabhāga* and its first three chapters. Precedence in time, however, makes the *Liṅga* more noticeable. It has no mention of *rāgas* and *rāginīs*. In Chapter II, 1, the sages ask the *Sūta* 'with what is Kṛṣṇa pleased?' The *Sūta* says: 'he would give them the answer that sage Mārkaṇḍeya gave' to Ambariṣa. He then narrates. The narrative has the terms *tāla*, *varṇa* and *laya* (śl. II); also 'mūrcchanā-svara-bhedena śruti-bhedena bheditam' (śl. 12). This condenses in a self-explanatory way some of the fundamentals of the art.

Similarly, in the context of Viṣṇu blessing Nārada to become Tumburu's equal in music, the efficacy of *gīta* and *gāna* (cf. नारायणस्य गीतानां गानं श्रेष्ठं पुनः पुनः) and the togetherness of *gāna*, *nṛtya* and *vādyā* (cf. अर्चनं गाननृत्याद्यं वाद्योत्सव समचितम्) are found significantly established. And, lastly, with *Viṣṇu-bhakti* are found associated devotional narratives called *ākhyāna* and *kathā*, rendered through the medium of *gāna* and *nṛtya*, etc.

The *Purāṇas*, in a general way, bring into bold relief such *ākhyānas* and *kathās*. In the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* a term *Kathāvācaka* occurs at several places. It signified a class of persons engaged in the recitation of portions of *ākhyāna*, or in singing any narrative poem. Pātañjali, commenting on Pāṇini's *granthika*, explains the term almost to the same effect, while Kayyāta regards it to be a synonym for *kathaka*. In Jain writings, too, the same class of persons has been referred to as *kahaga*, and remembered alongwith *Naṭa*, *nartaka* and such other public artists. The *Siddhāntakaumudī* has *kathika* as one highly versed in *ākhyāna-kalā*, etc. In *Brahma-Purāṇa*, *Naṭa*, *gāyaka*, *nartaka* and *kathaka* have been noticed together. They

recited, sung and dance-played different *granthas* and *kathā* before the public.

In later medieval period—through the personal attention, even participation, of the Nawabs of Awadh—the art of *kathak* got revived. Its historical perspective will have to be realised in the backdrop of its antiquity outlined above.

### SOME MUSICAL CONCEPTS IN TANTRA AND ĀGAMA

Most of these are to be found in *granthas* of *Yoga* and *Āgama*, written up to fifth century A.D.

During this period, two definitely different religious trends held sway; the one *Vaidika*, also called *Nigama*, the other *Tāntrika*, also called *Āgama*.

The *Tāntrika* ideology was based on a philosophy of its own. Creation, according to it, has been the outcome of *Śiva-Śakti-samyoga*. This *samyoga* proved to be unitarily the basic cause of *nāda*. In the words of Śaṅkarācārya:

सदाशिवोक्तानि सपादलक्षलयावधानानि वसन्ति लोके ।  
नादानुसन्धानसमाधिमेकं मन्यामहे मान्यतमं लयानाम् ॥

(*Yoga-tārāvalī*)

*Nāda* and *laya* have a centralised significance in these *granthas*. *Nāda*, as *āhata* (produced by striking) and *anāhata* (produced un-struck)—the one manifest in the form of prose, poetry and music, and the other permeated in the form of *nāda* in the skies—formed a favourite theme. Music has been accordingly held to be a means of salvation. It was a method of *ādhyātmika sādhanā* (spiritual discipline) if practised with dedication, but a sheer *bandhana-kāraka* (fetters on the feet) when indulged in as vulgar people do. It is thus that it degenerates itself to become *kutsita* (Ar. *mazmūm*) and *tyājya* (from amongst the *manāhī*).<sup>41</sup>

Śiva conceived as *Sanḡītācārya* and *Naṭarāja* has been based on ideas indigenous to this country. His *ardhanārī-naṭeśvara svarūpa* has also been quite ancient. Both the art and literature of the country prove this. The *Nāṭya-sāstra* too confirms that dance as a part of drama is there because of the traditional impact of the *Śiva-upāsana*. The poet Kālidāsa does also refer to the *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava* dance-

forms in relation to Śiva. In fact, he is very much conscious of music being intimately associated with Śiva.

Mataṅga as well asserts that both *deśī* and *mārga* types of music have been a creation (according to popular tradition) out of 'Mahādeva's mukha'. He thinks that *varṇa* (word) and *pada* (phrase) combination came into being through *mūla-dhvani* (principal sound), and *gāndharva*, thus, appeared out of Śiva's mouth.

Śiva is believed to have sounded his *dhakkā*<sup>42</sup> fourteen times towards the close of his *tāṇḍava-nṛtya*. The fourteen *Māheśvara-sūtras* were so produced.

In this way, music is found amply discussed in almost any of the *Purāṇas* associated with him. Of these, the *Śiva-Purāṇa*, the *Skanda-Purāṇa* and the *Padma-Purāṇa* have been found more mentionable. Later on the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* (of eleventh-twelfth century) has been found much more full of musical references.

In old and medieval Tamil literature, too, the significance of the class-dance and its origination with Śiva, the *Naṭarāja*, have been amply brought out. *Śilappadikāram* vehemently gives the Śiva-Śakti background to music and dance. The *tantrātmaka-purāṇas* such as *Kohala-Purāṇam*, *Cidambara-Purāṇam*, etc., also establish that the art of *nṛtya* owed its being to the divine grace of the *Naṭarāja*.

Śiva-Naṭarāja of Chidambaram temple in the south has drawn the attention of the world to it. Its symbolism suggests his victory over the spirit of evil. This is of cosmic significance, for the destruction of evil presages re-creation and the establishment of the divine order. The surrounding halo in it honours Śiva; it also represents the cycle of creation, destruction and re-birth.

On the walls of the said temple is found depicted the *yugala-nṛtya* of Śiva and Śakti. Done in the competitive spirit, it brings into relief most of the remarkable movements both of the *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. Tradition recalls that worked up by this challenge, the 'Lord of the Dance' (*Naṭarāja*) did newly create a *karāṇa* called *Ūrdhva-tāṇḍava*.

### MORE ABOUT MUSIC IN BUDDHIST AND JAIN CLASSICS

(in Pali and Apabhramsha)

Buddhism is known to have given much more to the country of

its birth and growth than to the lands it was taken to. The literature which grew around it, and the arts it promoted, say as much. More eloquent, in this respect, has been the musical art—as much in evidence in other arts of the time as in its written words. The cave-walls of Ajantā and the pages of the *Jātakas*, as well as of other similar writings, bear this out.

In the process the uninhibited identification, on the part of Buddhism, with the common man's priorities of life could assume a historical role and so it did. Pali was adopted to serve as a medium of mass communication; arts and crafts embedded in the living ways of the people were given a boost. Pali speaks of those as *Sippa*. It recognises the up-graded art-forms of music as *Gandhabba-beda*, and, as already seen,<sup>43</sup> makes it take roots in folk bases.

This provided for a new aura of respectability to emanate from the music of the time. Indulgence in it was held as an occupation of the body and mind towards a noble cause. *Lalitavistara* informs to the effect that Siddhārtha was called upon to have a wife who happened to be:

शास्त्रे विधिज्ञकुशला गणिका यथैव

'as talented and well-trained (in music and its allied arts) as a *Gaṇikā*'.

Similar attitudes and aesthetic norms are found to prevail in Jain *granthas*. These, too, refer to the pre-Christian era culture and range from the period a couple of centuries (fourth century) before Christ to the advent of the Christian era; thenceforth, coming to a peak-point by the sixth century A.D. An entire millennium is thus covered by a type of popular writing dealing with Jain *Āgamas*.<sup>44</sup>

As in the case of the Buddhist classics, these also do project the details of the performing arts of song and dance as a part of the common man's everyday life and his own preferences.

It is found emphasis ed that *Sāmaveda* had by then become a monopoly almost of the high-class *brāhmaṇas*. On the other hand, the *veśīya* and *gāndharva* arts were classed as things of *laukika sūya*, i.e. *laukika jñāna* and as forms of living crafts.

*Gandhabba* was the common term for the musical arts. It was believed to have been blessed by Mahātma Mahāvira, with whom it developed. The *puvva-granthas*, i.e. the writings of former days,

authenticate this, and elaborate upon the principles of technique and the procedure of singing and stage-acting.

The art of song and dance, called *gandhabba*, comprised:

- Gīya* : i.e. *geya*, meaning song;  
*Vaiya* : i.e. *vādyā*, for instrument;  
*Naṭṭa* : for *nṛtta*;  
*Pukkhangaya* : for *puṣkarageya* (drum-play);  
*Samtāla* : accompanying rhythm.

As a form of secular art or as a science of sound, music in all its forms and dance of all types were sought and learnt. The song-forms usually heard of have been *gāthā*, *ākhyāna* and *kathā*. All these were employed for propaganda of Jain *Āgamas* among the masses.

Scenes and anecdotes from Mahāvīra's life were dramatised and played in public. Even the Jain *munis* took part as actors in such performances. A drama called *Raṭṭhawāla* was presented in Pāṭalīputra in which Āśādhbhūka' Jain Muni played a leading part. A *gīta* called *calita* was learnt as a part of the above discipline.

*Ācāryas*, as masters of these forms of learning, seem to have been treated with respect. They have been of three kinds:

*Kalāyariyas* (Skt. *Kalācārya*): those engaged in promoting the *kalā-pakṣa* (art-side) of all the musical forms;

*Sippāyariyas* (Skt. *Śilpācārya*): those whose occupation it was as a craft to professionally practice the art of music in all its allied forms;

*Dhammāyariyas* (Skt. *Dharmācārya*): who were supposed to look after the moral-cum-religious aspects of all such performances.

The performing classes of the time, as mentioned in some of these representative *granthas*, have been:

- Gandhavviya* — the *Gandharvas*;  
*Naḍa* — the *Naṭas*;  
*Naṭṭaga* — the *Nartakas* (the dancers);  
*Lāsaga* — the *Rāsa-gāyakas* or *lāsyakāras*;  
*Tuṇaila* — players on *tūṇava* (flute);  
*Tumba-viṇiya* — the players of *tumba-viṇā*;  
*Māgaha* — the *Māgadhas* (the *bhāṭa* professionals);  
*Doma* — *Dombas*, known for their proficiency in any and every form of song and dance;  
*Mātaṅga* — of *Mataṅga-jāti*, perhaps; roamed about like

gypsies, singing, mimicking and dancing for their living.

Music was patronised by the state and practised by ruling *rājās*. Rājā Udayana, for instance, is told to have been a *saṅgītajñya*. Besides him, one Uddāyana, too, has been named as '*saṅgīta-kuśala-rājā*'. In *Uttarādhyayana Ṭīkā*, he is said to have provided *viṇā* accompaniment to his wife when she danced.

The musicians belonged mostly to the *paricāraka* class in the personal employ of the ruler. The *viṇā-vāhaka* (like 'Ādil Shāh's *tambūr-bardār* in later times) accompanied the Rājā even on tours and in travel.

*Gaṇikās* occupied places of dignity in royal courts and were held in high esteem. The *Gaṇikās* of Campānagarī are on record as exceptionally skilled music makers; also as a great specimen of the feminine charm. A dancing class of *niṭṭayāvas* did also exist. It seems to have enjoyed a similar reputation.

The *Gāyakkas* (same as the *Gāyakas* of today), *Nartakas* and *Naṭas* toured the whole countryside, giving their shows and entertaining people. Baranī, the historian of thirteenth-fourteenth century, tells similar things about the *Naṭa* community of his days.

Among the religious sects, that of the *Giyāreys* was by virtue of its faith and belief given over to song and dance. The sect has, however, been commonly considered as *vilāsa-bhogī* (luxury-seeker).

The popular festivals depended mainly on music as an item of popular appeal. Some of these are stated to have been *Indamaha*, *Khaṇḍamaha*, *Jakhkhamaha*, and *Bhūtamala*, i.e. those in which Indra, *Yakṣa* and *Bhūta* figured as celebrities and were worshipped. These festivals sometimes went on for days, attracting vast multitudes.

It is also found that dancing girls and dance-parties were given as dowry and *pīti-dāna* (*prīti-dana*, i.e. gifts given out of love and affection). Dramatic performances were as well very popular; therefore, encouraged by all. In *Rāyāpaseṇiya*, thirty-two different types of dramatic shows have been described. In all of these *pāṭhya*, (recitation), *gāna* (singing), with *nṛtya* (art-dance) played an exclusively important part.

Orchestral music was even in those days termed as *kutapa*. It was meant to provide better suited accompaniment to class-dance. In this connection some dance-forms, viz., *sauṭhiya* (*svastika*),

*nandiyāvata* (*nandiyāvarta*), *badhdhamānaga* (*vardhamānaka*), *bhaddāsana* (*bhadrāsana*), *kalasa* (*kalaśa*), *maccha* (*matsya*), *siribaccha* (*śrīvatsa*), *dappana* (*darpaṇa*), etc., have been named. It should be of interest, from the point of view of art-history, to note that almost all of these have been *piṇḍibandha* dance-forms.

Alōng with these we come across a terminology which incites further interest. For example, *duya*, *bilambiya* and *duyaibilambiya*, stand for *druta*, *vilambita* and *druta-vilambita laya* of dance-rhythms; *añciya* (*añcita*), *ribhiya* (*ribhita*), *ārabhaḍa* (*ārabhaṭa*),<sup>45</sup> *bhasolā* (*bhasolā*), *ārabhaḍa-bhasolā* for dance-movements and gestures, and *saṅkuciya*, *pasāriya*, *bhanta-sabhānta*, and *uppayayapavata*, etc., for some of the best-practised popular dance-forms.

As regards the side of music, the Jain *granthas* *Rāyāpaseṇīya* and some others—mention *tūrya* as a collective term, classifying these as part of it:

<i>sankha</i> ( <i>śaṅkha</i> )	<i>siṅga</i> ( <i>śrṅga</i> )	<i>saṅkhiya</i> (?)	<i>kharmuḥī</i> (?)
<i>peyā</i> (?)	<i>pīripiriyā</i> (?)	<i>paṇava</i> (?)	<i>paḍaba</i> ( <i>paṭaha</i> )
<i>bhāmmā</i> (?)	<i>horambhā</i> (?)	<i>bherī</i>	<i>jhallarī</i> (?)
<i>dunduhi</i> ( <i>dundubhī</i> )	<i>muraya</i> ( <i>muraja</i> )	<i>muiṅga</i> ( <i>mrdaṅga</i> )	<i>nandī-Muiṅga</i> ( <i>nandī-Mrdaṅga</i> )
<i>āliṅga</i> ( <i>āliṅgya</i> )	<i>kutumba</i> ( <i>kastumba</i> )	<i>gomuḥi</i> ( <i>gomukhī</i> )	<i>maddala</i> ( <i>mardala</i> )
<i>vīṇā</i>	<i>vipañcī</i>	<i>vallakī</i>	<i>mahatī</i>
<i>kacchabhī</i> ( <i>kacchapī</i> )	<i>citta-vīṇā</i> ( <i>citra-Vīṇā</i> )	<i>bhaddhīṣā</i> (i.e. <i>Carcasā</i> ?)	<i>sughoṣā</i>
<i>nandīghoṣa</i>	<i>bhāmarī</i> ( <i>bhramarī</i> )	<i>chambharī</i> (?)	<i>paravayanī</i> ( <i>parivādini</i> )
<i>tūnā</i> ( <i>tūṇa</i> )	<i>tumba-vīṇā</i>	<i>āmota</i> ( <i>āmōda</i> )	<i>ghanjhā</i>
<i>makula</i>	<i>mugunda</i> ( <i>mukunda</i> )	<i>hudduki</i> ( <i>huḍukka</i> )	<i>vicikkā</i> (?) <sup>46</sup>

<i>karḍā</i> ( <i>karatā</i> )	<i>ḍiṇḍima</i>	<i>kiniya</i> ( <i>kiṇita</i> )	<i>kadamba</i> ( <i>kanda?</i> )
<i>daḍariya</i> ( <i>dardaraka</i> )	<i>daḍarcā</i> ( <i>dardarikā</i> )	<i>kalasiyā</i> ( <i>kalaśikā</i> )	<i>maḍḍaya</i> ( <i>mardala</i> )
<i>tala</i>	<i>tāla</i>	<i>kansa-tāla</i> ( <i>kāṅsya-tāla</i> )	<i>riṅgirisiyā</i> ( <i>riṅṣika</i> )
<i>laṭṭiyā</i>	<i>margariyā</i> ( <i>maṅgarikā</i> )	<i>saṁsumāriyā</i> ( <i>śuśumārikā</i> )	<i>vaṁsa and baṁsa</i> ( <i>vaṁśa</i> )
<i>vedu</i> ( <i>veṇu</i> )	<i>vālī</i>	<i>parillī</i> ( <i>parili</i> )	<i>vaḍḍhagā</i> ( <i>baddhaka</i> ).

Elsewhere, in such writings,<sup>47</sup> a few other instruments have also been mentioned; as for instance: *kāhala* (*kāhalī*), *damarūga* (*ḍamarū*), and *ghanakuṇa* (same as *dhankuna/dharkun*), etc.

In many mass-based cultures, superstitions and beliefs do so often overlap. This has been so in the case of some of the musical instruments. In the folk-life of India, the sound of *saṅkha*, *bherī* and *nandītūra* has always been held as auspicious. In the *Bṛhatakālpa-bhāṣya*, Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa's four-mouthed *bherī* finds a mention. All of these have been assigned supernatural powers. The popular belief was that diseases were driven out by their loud sound. That is how *bherīs* commanded extra respect, and were often built of expensive sandal-wood.

According to Jain traditions the old authorities on music have mainly been Bharata, Viśākhila, and some others less known, e.g. Abhayadeva (eleventh century A.D.), the Sanskrit commentator of *Thānāṅga Sutta*. According to him, there have been fourteen such old *granthas*. One of these<sup>48</sup> is said to have explained in an original manner the production out of seven *svaras* of twenty-one *mūrcchanās* and eleven *alamkāras*.

Much of the musical data found in this *Sutta* is on conventional lines. All the same, it has a semblance of historicity which deserves notice. The statement as under, for instance:

सज्जं तु अगगजिब्भाए, उरेण रिसभं सरम् ।  
कंदुगतेण गंधारं मज्झजिब्भाए मज्झिमं ॥

(*Thānāṅga Sutta*, VI, 40.1)

suggests that the *ṣaḍja* coming to the fore as a leading *svara* had become an essential part of the musical technique by the time. Similarly, it has been said in this connection that *ṛṣabha* is stationed in *ura-sthāna* (centre of the heart) and *gāndhāra* in *kañṭha* (throat); *madhyama* is sounded from the *madhya* (middle), *pañcama* through the nose and *dhaivata* with the help of teeth and lips (*danṭoṣṭa*). All this usefully compares with the concepts put forth by the authors of *Nārādīya-śikṣā* and *Bṛhaddeśī*. Likewise has been the concept with regard to *svaras* as per animal-calls. The *Sutta*, under reference, says:

*Ṣaḍja* is the call of a peacock (*mayūra*);  
*Ṛṣabha* comes out the way domestic cock, *kakubha*, calls out;  
*Gāndhāra* resembles the cry of *haṃsa*;  
*Madhyama* compares with the lowing of cows;  
*Pañcama* sounds like the black *koil's* voice;  
*Dhaivata* echoes that of the *krauñca*; and,  
*Niṣāda* intonates itself as a crane shrieks. (Ibid., VI, 41.1-2)

All this may be pure wishful imagination, but one thing helps: that *ṣaḍja* and *pañcama* had by then come to pair themselves as notes exercising maximum consonance.

About the aesthetics of melody-making, the *Sutta*, in question, (VI. 48. 4-14) enumerates eight *guṇas* (merits) and six *doṣas* (defects). These have been:

1. *Pūrṇa*—full-throated singing; pronouncing and enunciating the *svaras* without mincing them;
2. *Rakta*—full-blooded singing with feeling: bringing to fore *rasa* and *raṅga* of every note combination;
3. *Alaṃkārita*—uttering every note-pattern with melodic-cum-psycho-physiological accord;
4. *Vyakta*—synchronisation of words with musical phrases and of sense with musical sound;
5. *Avighuṣṭa*—intonation of *svaras*, not too loud, but still high-pitched and clear;
6. *Madhura*—having in full the element of soft and sweet rendering of the musicality ingrained in *svaras*;
7. *Sama*—in which the melody and rhythm as well as the

voice and *venu* accompaniment do combine so as to produce the desired, compact musical effect;

8. *Sukumāra*—the effect of *lālitya*, wherein every 'note' imbibes the resonance of all accordant notes.

'A *gāna* having in full all these *guṇas* would be *geya*', so says the text; otherwise, as the commentator Abhayadeva remarks, it would simply be an effort at caricature; cf.

अन्यथा विडम्बना

The demerits of *gīta* and *gāna*, the *Sutta* concerned suggests as:

<i>Bhīta</i>	— the act of singing which suffers from lack of concentration due to a disturbed mind;
<i>Druta</i>	— the <i>gāyana</i> which shows signs of impatience or hurry;
<i>Rahasya</i>	— the inappropriately short pronunciation of 'svaras' and short measuring of <i>śabdās</i> ;
<i>Uttāla</i>	— which entails falling out of rhythm;
<i>Kākasvara</i>	— to sound harsh and gruff-throated like a crow;
<i>Anunāsika</i>	— the type of singing characterised by an inordinate rendering of <i>svaras</i> through the nose. <sup>49</sup>

### THE SURVEY SO FAR

Keeping in full view the fact that, together with some of the Pali and Apabhramsha writings just now looked into, most of the preceding ones so far included in this survey do serve to reflect the folk-life of the time, the major preferences in respect of music—in all its art-forms—may be believed to have grown out of it and sustained themselves through subsequent formalisation. Therefore, all that does effectively project itself as objective truth in the above exposition may be supposed to qualify for being treated as 'Antecedents' to further realities of the kind.

Pāṇini affirms that *Sāma-gāna* used a compass of two note-points—raised and unraised—with a third in between, called *Svarita*. It confirmed to a chant-style: melodically accenting the syllables lending colour (*varṇa*) to every vowel and consonant. Pāṇini in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* also testifies to the effect that *gīti* and *geya* had popular prevalence. *Parivādana*, instrumental accompaniment, was an equally common feature. Rhythm was provided by skin-covered instruments like *gharjḥara* and *dardura*, etc. The male singers have been addressed to as '*gāyana*', and the female as '*gāyani*'.

Besides them have been the masters of *nāṭyābhinaya*. Pāṇini happens to be the foremost, perhaps, in authenticating the pioneering efforts of the *Naṭa* tribes in standardising *gīti*, *nṛtya* and *nāṭya*. He speaks of Śailālin—the one who engaged himself in *nāṭya* and *abhinaya* (dance-drama). He also informs that the *Naṭa-sūtras* of Śailāli and Kṛṣāśva had common currency during his days; remarkable still, that these were accorded an acceptability akin to that of the Vedic tradition. Admittedly, thus, Śailāli and Kṛṣāśvi have been two illustrious branches of *Naṭa* artists during Pāṇini's days—fifth-sixth century before Christ. Also that the *Naṭa-kalākāras* had their own *śāstra*. With roots so deep, the continuity of the *Naṭa* arts has much in it which tells so intimately about the many aspects of music down the ages.

Kauṭilya has been another image-maker of life and society during ancient days. To him ethno-cultural history, as well, owes a good deal. He is the first eye-witness to put in writing of the amalgam of ways and manners brought about by an admixture of races—Indian, Parthian, Greek and Central Asian. The import of 'turk-bachas' (*bālaka*) and choicest of slave-girls (*dāsī*) introduced a new brand of music-makers. This is being said on the basis of his *Artha-śāstra*. Also, the *śilpa-sampanna-gaṇikās* were already at work in this direction; their activities, within and without the royal court, the prominence given to their services, the self-sufficiency demanded of them in the knowledge of various languages, coupled with their musical skill all added to the respectability of the art in question. Verily, it could on their account, become an indispensable part of the civilised life of the time. In fact, according to Kauṭilya, even princes and other young men of high birth had to inculcate these arts if they aspired for any diplomatic or espionage assignments.

The *Gāyakas*, *Vādakas*, *Nartakas* and *Nāṭya-kāras* drew highest salaries, so says Kauṭilya. They lived in colonies especially built for them by the state and found it professionally incumbent upon them to practise their arts intensively, learn to play all the important instruments—both indigenous and foreign—and make themselves free and fluent with songs composed in languages of the country and beyond.

The momentum thus gained by these arts during the Mauryan period was maintained till the age of the Guptas arrived. In between,

the Śuṅgas created conditions which revived Aryanism, and in the process Sanskrit regained its position as a *deva-vāṇī*. Thenceforth, it is seen that the ways of life—Aryan, Bauddha and Jain—do thrive side by side. Sanskrit accomodates Pali and Prakrit, even Apabhramsha. So do the musical arts, the *vaidika* and the *laukika*. The aesthetic norms do likewise readjust themselves. And, inevitably, therefore, so many of the old taboos against mundane music could not be reinforced, inspite of the *Smṛtīs* made to say so. On the other hand, the same mundane type did confirmedly vitalise itself to become the popular art-music of the time.

Pātañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (c. second century B.C.) bears early testimony to this. He is explicit on the point that *vaidika-śabdās* were meant to be studied and uttered only by the privileged classes, but that a *veda-pāṭhaka* had now to aim at being a *kokilābhivyāhāra* (*kokila-toned*), as well. This attitude speaks of the prevailing urges. And insofar as the folk art of melody and rhythm, called *gāndharva*, had assumed enviable proportions, it becomes obvious that the call upon the formalised *sāma-gāna* ought to have become enormous and the resultant reciprocity, therefore, benefited both. At least this is to be taken for granted that the two musical traditions—those of *pāṭhya* and *nāṭya*, as often referred to—did combine to stabilise a singular basic trait of tonal aesthetics: that of full-throated *svara-uccāraṇa*, with every shade of *rasa* and *bhāva* maintained, and every *aṃśa* of tono-melodic contents intact.

The *Mahābhāṣya* also helps understand that, like *svara*, the accent on *laya* and *tāla* had come to prove all-embracing by that time. *Mṛdaṅga*, the prime instrument of rhythm, was being specialised in by a whole community of performers, the outstanding among whom were classified as *ācāryas*. Indications are also clear that *mṛdaṅga* could prove better suited to combine with *nāṭya*. For, *nāṭya* being an upcoming musical form of the period, and *nṛtya*, i.e. dance with *abhinaya*, being most actively associated with it, the art of the instrument concerned had to do more and more to keep pace with the increasing demands of both. The fact of the matter is that several styles of *mṛdaṅga*-playing had come into being by then, and *mardāṅgikas* of different schools—all practising the art for a living—vied with each other in exhibiting better perfection. The probability

points out, therefore, that the hoary tradition of the *Bhāratanaṭyam* may have had its beginnings somewhere in these conditions.

To add to these conditions have been some of the socio-cultural urges quite singular in nature. Pātañjali, in his *Mahābhāṣya*, lays some stress on the ceremonial festivities observed in the main with music. The term *samajjā* (of the Aśokan pillar) is found quoted by him as *samāja* and *samāsa*—also as *samavāyaka*. Keeping their literal sense in view, it may be surmised that in the festivals referred to, the series of songs and dances and dance-plays presented were for the people coming together (*samāja*); these were to exercise that much of common appeal which could make them forego their differences and assemble as one man (*samāsa*) and could weave together the music of all sorts produced there (*samavāyaka*).

In programming and performing this composite type of music the *śailālaka*, the artists belonging to the *Naṭa* tribes, remained foremost. Pātañjali describes them as

सर्वकेशिनो नटाः

‘i.e. the masters of disguise, the *Naṭas* of multi-purpose hairdo.’

Assisted by their womenfolk on the stage, the *Naṭa* players could impart to every musical item its desired success, and earn for themselves the covetous sobriquet of ‘*rasiko-naṭaḥ*’. Continuing further, Pātañjali informs that even these all-pleasing *Naṭa* craftsmen had their *gurus* in *saubhikas*. The *Granthikas*—otherwise called *Kathakas*—worked in association with them. This purports to accord a standing and a status of its own to the present day *Kathak*, the famed art-dance form.

On all these accounts the stage of development arrived at during the *Mahābhāṣya* period (second century onwards B.C.) puts the allied art of music on a raised pedestal. It would be found that influences both indigenous and exogenous were still at work; a new socio-cultural ferment was fast bringing into being the immortal art of Sāñcī, Bhārhut, Ajantā and other places. The visual evidence so preserved in stone and clay speaks of the recent gains made by the aural art of music. The emergence of the *mūrti-kalā* adds to that evidence. It identifies for all concerned the semi-divines and the legendaries of music, namely, the *Yakṣas* and *Yakṣiṇīs*, the *Kinnaras*

and *Kinnarīs*, the *Gandharvas* and *Apsarās*. It has in it carved and drawn some of the leading musical instruments of the time: the *tūrya*, the long flute and the *murlī*, the *ektārā* and the *viṇā*, the *kara-tāla* and the *kāmsya-tāla*, also the *mṛdaṅga*, the *puṣkara* and their like.

All these leading instruments were still led by *varṣī* and *murlī*, this is evident. It was as ever before the piece par excellence for musical accompaniment, although the *viṇā*—even the *sapta-tantrī* one, and the one <sup>c</sup>*ūd* and *barbaṭ* shaped—was visibly managing to come to the forefront.

From Pāṇini to Pātañjali and Bhāsa to Kālidāsa, there has been an intense activity in the respective spheres of Sanskrit language and learning, as well as Sanskrit drama. This intensity has, however, been just portent—a portent clear enough, though, to be read through. The work done on the *Mahākāvya*s and some of the *Purāṇas* during this span of time, therefore, the release of post-Vedic intellectual energy, the coming into its own of Aryanism, the giving of finishing touches to the synthesis of socio-cultural preferences, old and new—in short, all of it which did contribute to the effervescence of the Gupta Age and enthuse the life activities of the time—was brought into limelight, alongwith.

Moreover, for the almost state-sponsored religious revival of the days of the Guptas to remain content with its own welfare, and let other religions sustain their dynamism, the best they could, fostered conditions which added to the conduciveness of cultural growth. Above all, the values of life set up in this manner did, therefore, continue to serve as ideals, and these ideals lasted for long.

In circumstances so nurtured, the incentive given to arts—to the homely art of music, in preference to others—could manage to bring about unprecedented results. And so it happened that the facts of life found portrayed in Kālidāsa, for instance, go to show that the dividing line between the *vaidika* and the *laukika* in Indian music did by that time become faint and feeble. A uniform theory vitalised from the roots got enforced, and the art-form engendered by it became technically active and aesthetically alive. A *Mahākāvya*, or a *Purāṇa* or the *Tantra* and *Āgama* writings, or those of the type of *Jātakas* and *Piṭakas*, or, to top them all, the classics put forth by the Sanskrit playwrights of the calibre of Kālidāsa and Śūdraka, all of

these put up the art-details of a singularly unified system. Its vitality so replenished, rendered its art sensitive to every dominant attitude of life, and answerable to every material change in society.

In spite of this, its infrastructure always got reinforced from within and never changed: the *sapta svaras* did make room for a *sādhārīta* or a *kākalī*, but only in the interest of their own self-sufficiency, never at the cost of their self-confidence.

This made it incumbent upon every *svara* to stand by itself, and suffer only conditional modifications. Unmodified *svara-uccāraṇa*, thus, became the foremost distinguishing trait of Indian music, and out of it the basic concept of *dhvani* was born. And since *dhvani* was built upon the physics and aesthetics of sound, it naturally became paramount both in the case of *pāṭha* and *gāna*. Melody therefore came to constitute the very soul of every agreeable vocalisation.

The transition from *dhvani* to *rāga*, inevitable on the face of it, established this truth. Furthermore, it determined and decided for ever—as it then seemed—the tono-aesthetic optimum and, thereby, one of its major essentials. The emphasis found in Kālidāsa upon melodic improvisations preceding *vastu-gāna*, and upon *gītis* necessarily being in Prakrit and Apabhramsha languages, demonstrates the same. The term *dhun* (once, *dhvani*), denoting a melodic tune, makes understandable even now, the nature of tonal excellence an original folk-tune might have possessed in those days. Also, that the same out of the ordinary *dhvani*-property of a folk-tune, was believably conceived by Kālidāsa and others as an 'extra undefinable colour'; therefore the word *rāga* adopted for it—whether as an adjective or as a noun. It could have been for the same reason, again, that Kālidāsa is led on to imagine the words *gīta*, *rasa* and *rāga* (same as *raṅga*) as most congenial companions, and uses them in his plays accordingly.

Out of this perspective, the event of a fast developing trend to exalt the status of *gīta* projects itself. But *nāṭya* is visibly in the fore-front even now. It can even now cater to the popular will and satisfy the urges of society and its culture. It is there to be uniformly felt that whether as an *ākhyānaka* or a *kathā*, audio-visually presented on the people's stage, or as a Sanskrit play produced for the elitist *raṅga-mañca*, the demand is most on *nāṭya*. The arts of *gīta*, *vādyā* and *nṛtta-nṛtya*, they do share its new successes in a great measure

but are still its accessories. This gets amplified in Bharata's *sāstra*, having *nāṭya* as its main subject giving an almost exclusive treatment to *dhruva gītas* and the instruments which provided accompaniment to them.

Likewise, in the case of class-dance the trends are quite marked. From the survey done so far, it has become clear that dance, both of the festive and formalised types, had made immense headway by the time Kālidāsa and Śūdraka, on the one side, and the Buddhist and Jain *ācāryas*, on the other, wrote their classics.

Kālidāsa has been by far a more consummate chronicler of this art-form. A musical performance of his days was dance-dominated. This fact has its own implications. *Gīta* was an asset to *nṛtya*, therefore. Presumably for the same reason, the terms *saṅgīta* and *gīta* are found to be interchangeable in his writings. Kālidāsa also authenticates that flute-accompaniment to song—also to dance, therefore—was an accepted norm. Rhythmic accompaniment to song and dance was provided by *muraḥa* and *mṛdaṅga*. The former, however, finds frequent mention. *Puṣkara*, on the other hand, is more in play in connection with *nāṭya*.

The noted dance-numbers in Kālidāsa have been the *calita* and the *preraṇa*. These were considered a speciality: a special prerogative of the male and female artists who have really devoted themselves to their acquisition. Of the two, the *calita* (also *chalita*) has been a dance-type par excellence. It demanded total dedication and long practice, indispensably at the feet of a *Vidvattama-guru*. The *guru-śiṣya-paramparā*, so glorified by one like Kālidāsa, deserves careful note for its correct understanding.

In addition to this, Kālidāsa is very explicit on the point that the sophistication of the art-dance owed much to its folk bases. That is how it could muster so much of mass-appeal. In his *Mālavikāgnimitra* perhaps much more than in any other of his plays, he is so specific in making this reflect itself as one of the main emphases of the art. That is why the dance-number selected for the challenge-dance-bout between Mālavikā and her equally intensely trained adversary, has been the *calita*. Not only that it demanded the dancer's unflinching initiative and creative ingenuity to be at work, but also because it had its own demands of high technique, that it was singled



out. Maybe it represented at its best what Indian dance stood for.

This supposition may be believed to have had a sound base. *Calita* or *chalita* stands traditionally linked with *chālīka* or *chālīkya*, and their hallowed past. *Harivamśa* speaks of 'chālīkyageya', informing further that it was sung in chorus, and that it was associated with the *gopa-gāyakas* who used to perform it as a *nṛtya-gīta*. Also that male and female participation turned it into a sort of *chālīkya-kṛīḍā*. On the same authority this is as well to be believed that it was blessed into action by Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Likewise, about *hallīsaka*, it is found stated that it was an exquisite type of dance; also that it was 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own' (*hallīsakam tu svayameva kṛṣṇaḥ*). Moreover, it has been indicated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa commenced *hallīsaka* (dance) with *chālīkya* (dance).

Recent researches have brought out that Bhāmaha and Daṇḍi also talk about a song-oriented dance-form called *chalika*. It was performed to impart a visible and physical interpretation to the meaning of words and the emotional contents of the song, and was a solo-type. By eleventh century, when Bhoja is known to have written his *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa*, the same dance-form is found again referred to as *chālīka*. It was even then a prestigious item, done solo. Kālidāsa's *Mālavikā* had been an adept in the same type, it would be remembered.

This shows that *calita* and *chalita*—most probably of the same stock as *chālīkya* and *chalika*—having a bright trail, even of deification, continued to develop with time. *Hallīsaka* happened to be a correlative: a reciprocating compatriot. According to *Harivamśa*, *hallīsaka* commenced itself on Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing the tune of *chālīkya* on his *vamśī*. He is said to have taken so much interest in lending life and colour to it that the whole performance came to be regarded as one, and thus it became a speciality of the *Naṭa-nāgara-Kṛṣṇa*.

On subsequent evidence, too, *hallīsaka* may be regarded to have exercised a continuous sway of its own. Bhāsa in one of his *nāṭakas* (*Bālacaritam*, 4, 6) portrays it in some detail. It was known to him also as a dance performed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. He confirms it as a *rāsa-prakāra*, in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in the centre with the *gopīs* dancing around him. Abhinavagupta quotes the same

technique, and so does Bhoja in the *Sarasvatī-Kaṇṭhābharāṇa* attributed to him.

Thus, *hallīsaka* may be believed to have begun as a *rāsa-nṛtya*. *Harivamśa* (*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, 20, 25, 26) testifies to this effect, also providing a memorable clue that it was performed during the moonlit wintry night—*śaraccandra*. How revealing that the same art-saturated theme became the soul and substance of so many schools of painting in India of medieval days; still more revealing that the same blossomed forth into the *rāsa-līlā* art as inspired and sponsored by Wājid °Alī Shāh, the Nawab of Awadh, and raised to its present heights (among others), by the *kathaka-gurus*, Kālkā and Bindādīn—may peace rest on their souls!

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#### REFERENCES

1. Knowledge as regards the military order.
2. Cf. Pātañjali अवाविद् वीणापरिवादकम्; Kālidāsa talks about परिवादिनी वीणा in *Raghuvamśa*. He mentions it to be the one having seven strings (*Raghuvamśa* 8, 33).
3. According to Kāśikā, Ācārya Kṛṣṇa's followers were called *Kṛṣṇaśvīnatas*.
4. In the Bhārhut Stupa, the Sammada festival has been sculpted in stone. In it *gāyaka*, *vādaka* and *nṛtya-karmin* (female dancers) have been shown in action.
5. But this does not explicitly indicate that *nāṭya-kalā* was associated with *nāṭaka* in any way.
6. This period stands out for the rise of gifted professionals in respect of song and dance, also, for the mass popularity of the combined art, on account of the media of folk languages and folk music coming to the fore.
7. The three Vedas had so many *Śikṣā-Granthas*, most of which were written during this period; although nothing much is known about the *Śikṣā-Grantha* of the *Sāmaveda*.

This has also been the period when *yajñas* were restored: Puṣyamitra's stone-inscription in Ayodhya bears testimony to it but nothing could so far be found anywhere telling anything of the like

about *Sāma* traditions. Pātañjali too refers to *aśvamedha* only in three different contexts, but says nothing much about *Sāma*-rituals. He, however, remembers the *sāma-gāyaka*, the *udgātā* and his *sahāyaka* (aide), the *pratihartā*.

8. It resembles the Egyptian lyre in many ways, what in Central Asian countries appeared as *chang*; Sāñcī too has it as *vīṇā*.
9. The *samājiye*, meaning the members of a musical party of professionals, seems to be a relic of its same past.
10. A stone inscription of the times also informs that male dancers from among the professionals were called *śailālaka*.
11. It does also provide a vital clue to the course of glorious future followed by these people as a class of talented entertainers. The *Gada-Ghāzīs* (beggar-warriors) about whom the historian Baranī, so intimately talks about, were none other than these ever-progressive tribals, called *Natas*.
12. Kayyaṭa regards a *granthika* as a synonym for *kathaka* (see *Kayyaṭa-bhāṣya*). This provides a clue of vital importance and may be followed up. Also to be kept in constant view, in this connection, are the epithets *saubhika* and *sobhanika*, used by Pātañjali.
13. *Ākhyānas* or *Paurāṇic* tales were presented by a class of dancers known as *kathaka*. They used *abhinaya* in dancing.
14. *Kinnara* people (of the sub-Himalayan region today) gave us the *kinnara-vīṇā* (the popular *kiṅgrī* of today).
15. The present writer came across these at the Mathura Museum, a couple of years back.
16. It is to be borne in mind that *dhapa* was not struck with sticks. Similarly, *ḍholaka*, too, although a like of it, alongwith other instruments and *mṛdaṅga* could be found being played with sticks, called *vādana-daṅḍa*.
17. According to Śaṅkara, the famous commentator of *Harṣasarita*, *rāsa-nṛtya* is the one which is danced together in a particular style by 8, 16 or 32 persons, male and female: cf.

अष्टौ षोडश द्वात्रिंशद् यत्र नृत्यन्ति नायकाः ।  
पिंडीबन्धानुसारेण तन्नुत्तं रासकं स्मृतम् ॥ (शंकर)

(V. Ś. Agrawāl, *Harṣacarita: ek Sānskr̥tik Adhyayan*, Patna, 1953, p. 33)

18. This *chālikya-gāndharva* comprised singing of the different *grāma-rāgas* from different *sthānas* and with different *mūrcchanās*. It was not to be easily mastered and required a life-long dedication.

*Chālikya/chalitaka/chālīka* and *chalita*—all these musical forms—are found noticed in Sanskrit literature, too. In *Kāma-sūtra*, for instance: of

the 64 *kalās* recommended for the *kumārikās* and *varāṅganās* there is *gīta*, *vādyā*, *nṛtya* as well as *chalitaka*.

According to Bhoja (c. eleventh century, A.D.) and his *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa*, *chālikya* has been a particular form of dance of his days, performed solo by a female dancer. Prior to this, Bhāmah and Daṇḍī have mentioned it as *dṛśya-kāvya*, calling it *chālikya*. It may be believed to have been *kāvya-bandha*, i.e. based on song and dance.

Kālidāsa has as well been so graphic about a song-dance form known to him both as *calita* and *chalita*. According to him, it was performed to a particular *gīti*-type by a solo girl-performer. (For more details, refer to his *Mālavikāgnimitra*)

19. Further confirmation forthcoming, the *rūpaka-tāla* of the present day may be traced back to this possible origin of it.
20. The colloquial *nāch-pekhṇā* of today stands in direct relation to this term.
21. The title meaning 'blessed me', transferred by Buddhism to the followers of Viṣṇu.
22. 'A Śuṅga ruler, pr. 90 B.C. at Taxila.'
23. The affinity apparently established in between *Naṭa-nātya* and *nāṭaka-kāra* deserves careful notice.
24. As pointed out elsewhere, too, the term '*samājiye*' popularly used to denote the band of accompanists to a leading songstress, seems to stand in close relation to this.
25. *Tūrya* had a *dhvani* high, loud and shrill.
26. According to Maurice Winternitz, it has been a composition of the third century A.D.
27. See supra, pp. 11-12 and 62.
28. From V. Raghavan, 'Some Early References to Musical Ragas and Instruments'; its off-print was kindly sent for this writer by the author.
29. The author of the *Nātya-sāstra* uses the term '*ālāpa*', but means by it the employment of one *svara* to develop other *svaras*. Likewise, *tāna*, according to *Abhinavabhāratī*, was to mean 'the *svara-prastāra* based on the *amśa-svara*'.
30. Cf. *Raghuvamśa* (19, 4, 5); Agnivarṇa, the last *rājā* of that dynasty, for instance.
31. E.g. *Kumārasambhava*, 1, 8; *Raghuvamśa*: 2, 12 and *Meghadūta*, 1, 59.
32. Or else, out of tune.
33. Vide no. 1 of J.F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors*, Varanasi, 2nd revd edn, 1963.
34. The Hindustānī word '*pekhṇā*' goes back to it.

35. For *viṭa* and *vidūṣaka*, respectively, see *Nāṭya-śāstra*, XXXV, 76-7 and 79; the former was to be an expert in dealing with *Gaṇikās*, and the latter a jester.

*Pīṭha-marda* may be taken to mean a dancer's 'guru', although it originally stood for a 'nāyaka's confederate and constant companion'—that is how its full form has been '*pīṭha-marda-sakhā*'.

36. The suggestion that even *Gīta-govinda* was originally created by Jayadeva in his spoken language, and that its Sanskritization had to be done later on, falls in line with these developments.
37. Cf. 102-19.
38. Cf. *Nāṭya-śāstra*, XXVIII. 9.
39. See M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, 2nd edn, Delhi, 1972, part I, p. 554; also D.K.R. Patil, *Cultural History from the Vayu Purana*, New Delhi, 1973, Introduction, p. 3.
40. The present writer owes most of the informations contained in this *Purāṇa* to Dr V. Raghavan, the Sanskrit scholar and musicologist of note.
41. This compares so well with the notions held and practised by the *Sūfī* pioneers of medieval days. They too believed listening to ennobling music as a '*rūḥānī-riyāzat*'; they, too, remonstrated by saying that music was a law unto itself for '*ahl-i ḥāl*', but strictly tabooed for '*ahl-i qāl*'.
42. The Hindustānī *ḍaṅkā*, and the various idioms Urdu has spun around it, may trace their origin to it.
43. See supra, *Gandhabba-beda*.
44. Among the *mūla-āgamas* and their commentaries, the *Thānāṅga-sutta*, *Anuyogadvāra-sutta*, *Rāyāpaseṇīya* and *Kalpa-sūtra* have been found to contain better details to the musical practices then prevailing.
45. Kālidāsa and much later Bāṇa also talk about *Ārabhaṭī* dance, as one of the art-delicacies of their days.
46. Some of the above-named instruments could not be identified so far; probably they belong to the repertoire of folk dance. A question mark has therefore been put against them.
47. In *Niśīṭha-Cūraṇī* (xvii, p. 1158).
48. Namely *Pūrvagatasvaraprābhṛta*.
49. From V. Raghavan, 'Music in Jain Works', *Journal of Music Academy*, Madras.

## ANTECEDENTS (2)

*The Śāstric writings having a direct say on the subject and setting up precedences to the aspects of musical precepts and practices found discussed in similar works pertaining to the early medieval period, onwards to the pre-modern.*

perceiving the realities put up by the documents included in the survey, which is to follow. In this connection, the *śikṣā* and the *śāstra* of Nārada and Bharata—the latter in particular—antecede the writings of medieval days most meaningfully. The reasons responsible are not far to seek; Kālidāsa so fondly remembers Bharata Muni, and Kālidāsa has been the latest and also the best benefactor of *nāṭya* which eventually entrusted its entire legacy to *saṅgīta*.

There has thus been a sort of chronological sequence. To the extent the text of the *Nāṭya-śāstra* is found reflected in the art-mannerisms of Sanskrit drama, it ought to have been fresh enough to exercise that much of vigour. According to A.B. Keith, the author of *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice*, (1924; rept. London, 1954), the date of that text cannot with any certainty be placed before the third century A.D. Bharata may thus have been as much of a predecessor of Kālidāsa as Kālidāsa has been of Bāṇa, whose *Harṣacarita* happens to be the first document presented in the main survey.

#### REFERENCES

1. See S.K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (1923), Calcutta, 2<sup>nd</sup> revd edn, 1960, Vol. I, pp. 120-1.
2. The instrument of rhythm of that name: head of the family of *kāṁsya-tāla*, *kara-tāla* and *khaṭa-tala*, etc.
3. In view of the age of the text, as generally assigned to it, this *guṇa-doṣa* listing of a musical voice may be believed to have kept on echoing itself in almost every work pertaining to the subject during medieval days.
4. Being 'wooden' typifies, *vipañcī* and *citrā*, as the wooden-bellied *tata* instruments of pre-medieval days. The paper and the parchment-bellied varieties were later additions it seems.
5. The drum called *puṣkara* ought to have been generic, as *vīṇā* had been in its case.
6. I.e. *tāla*, the instrument.
7. The Sanskrit and Persian writers of medieval India kept on including this as one of the essential topics for discussion.

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#### A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

*Of facts, musical together with socio-cultural, pertaining to medieval India, as ascertained from so far available important writings on the subject of history, literature and art, especially those exclusively dealing with Gīta, Saṅgīta and theatrics.*

## HARṢACARITA

Name of the author : Bāṇa (Bhaṭṭa)  
Date of writing : during the reign of Harṣavardhana  
(A.D. 606-48)  
Place of writing : Kānyakubja, better known later on  
as Qannauj or Kannauj.

The author came from an almost affluent Bhaṭṭa Brāhmaṇa family. His parents are believed to have been Citrabhānu and Rājadevī. He lost his mother in childhood and father when only fourteen. He was married early but, once his father was no more, he became a roving youth, ever anxious to know the new and novel and to experience the queer and curious. In his own words he became 'itvara' (Pers. *āwāra*).

In spite of this, his education, as he himself says, went on uninterrupted in his own village, Prītikūṭa.

In his wanderings he went all over the country; he also went to meet and derive knowledge from some of the leading learned men of the time. His *goṣṭhīs*<sup>1</sup> with such people were varied and full of vantage. He himself describes these as *Vidyā-goṣṭhī*, *Kāvya-goṣṭhī*, *Vīṇā-goṣṭhī*, *Vādyā-goṣṭhī*, *Nṛtya-goṣṭhī*, and so on. May this be taken to indicate a stabilizing of attitudes in favour of string-play and popular dance? At any rate the probabilities are to be probed further.

On his own account, Bāṇa had a very wide circle of friends of whom he enumerates as forty-four—four of them being accomplished ladies. These are introduced by the author as:

- (1) Īśana, the *bhāṣā-kavi*, i.e. a folk-poet of eminence, whom Bāṇa remembers as his *parama-mitra* (foremost friend). *Bhāṣā*-poets, according to Bāṇa, were those who composed popular songs in people's language. *Bhāṣā* also stood for *apabhramśa*. According to Daṇḍī, the *Ahīras* and the like

used the *apabhramśa* forms of spoken dialects for poetry and song.

The sweet-tongued Puṣpadanta in the preface to his *Apabhramśa-mahāpurāṇa* remembers Īšana and Bāṇa as noted poets; he ranks them with the four-mouthed (linguist?) Svayambhū, Śrī Harṣa (the ruler), and Droṇa. He says, 'I have read their poetry with reverential attention.' This may be supposed to establish, if not an almost equal with Sanskrit, at least a much elevated status of *bhāṣā*, the song-language of all times.

- (2) *Varṇa-kavi*, Veṇībharata: *Varṇa-kavi*, Bāṇa most probably again, means a folk-poet usually a song-composer, as well. 'Varṇa' is more at home as a term of music than literature. The famous commentator, Śaṅkara, thinks that the poet who composed musical verses in *gāthā chanda* used to be a *varṇa-kavi*. Dr V.S. Agarwal, too, is of the opinion that folk-songs like *ālhā* should have been a *varṇa kavi's* speciality.
- (3) Composers in *Prākṛta bhāṣā*.
- (4) Anaṅga Bāṇa } the slave (cf. 'bandī-jana') poets, who recited
- (5) Sūcī Bāṇa } eulogistic verses, moving along with their masters when they rode past. It has been characterised as correct and melodious (*subhāṣita*) recitation.
- (6) Vāra-Bāṇa and Vāsa-Bāṇa: students of metaphysics.
- (7) (name not decipherable)
- (8) *Pustaka-Vācaka* (Pers. *kitāb-khwān*): Sudṛṣṭi, whose sweet-throated voice much attracted Bāṇa (cf. 85). As Bāṇa himself tells, later on, flute was played to provide to his songs a tuneful background of music.
- (9) Govindaka: a writer.
- (10) Jayasena: the 'kathaka'<sup>2</sup> the professional narrator of *Paurāṇic* tales in song-form or as dance-plays.
- (11) Vīra-Vermā: the painter.
- (12) Cāmīkara: the goldsmith.
- (13) Sindhusen: the diamond-cutter (*hairika*).
- (14) Kumāradatta: the terracotta artist (*pustakṛt*).
- (15) Jīmuta: the *mārdagika* (the *mṛdaṅga*-player).

- (16) Madhukara } the flute-maestros.
- (17) Pārāvata } the flute-maestros.
- (18) Dāmodara: the *dardura* (a drum) player.
- (19) } Saumila and Gṛhāditya: the music vocalists.
- (20) }
- (21) Gāndharvopādhyāya Darduraka: the *dardura* player, who happened to be a leading authority on *gāndharva*.<sup>3</sup>
- (22) Tāṇḍavika: the young male dancer (but in *lāsya* style).
- (23) Hariṇakā: the female dancer.
- (24) Śikhaṇḍaka: the young classical-dancer (the *Śailīla*, as Bāṇa calls him).
- (25) Vakraghoṇa: the *Śaiva* mendicant (*sādhu*).
- (26) Vīradeva: the Jain mendicant (*śapaṇaka*).
- (27) The 'Pāraśarī Sumati' (the reciters of Vyāsa's *Bhikṣu-sūtra*).
- (28) Maskarī, happened to be a sort of *sanyāsī*.
- (29) Kātyāyanikā: *Bauddha-bhikṣuṇī*.  
Kātyāyanikā: the physicians and apothecaries or sorcerers, etc. (mentioned at 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34).
- (30) Ākhaṇḍala, the *ākṣika*: i.e. the dice-thrower.
- (31) Bhīmaka: the trickster (*dhūrta*).
- (32) Cakorākṣa: the 'aindrajālika' (hypnotist).

#### Bāṇa's friends among *paricārakas* (royal attendants)

- (33) Cedaka, the *tambūla-dāyaka* (Pers. *dārogha-i tambūl*).
- (34) Sairandharī, the *kuraṅgikā* (personal maidservant), an adept in *prasādhana* (Pers. *mashshāṭagī*); therefore referred to as *prasādhikā*, also.
- (35) (name not decipherable).
- (36) Rudra } the devoted servants.
- (37) Nārāyaṇa } the devoted servants.
- (38) Candrasena } Bāṇa's confederates; both from low-caste
- (39) Mātrasena } mothers.

This long array of variously gifted persons and their ways of life highlights some of the eloquent aspects of contemporary society and its culture. The attitude of the elite towards *śilpa* and *kalā*, for instance, or, the leading intellectuals of the time identifying themselves alike with the amateurs and the professionals of music;

still more noteworthy is the dividing line between the uppermost and the lower classes, including that of the so-called menials, being crossed so safely, and at so many places, even by an eminent *brāhmaṇa* like Bāṇa.

Bāṇa's first known commentator has been Śaṅkara (his 'Śaṅketa'). In our days, there had been Dr V.S. Agarwal, (cf. his *Harṣacarita: Ek Sānskritika Adhyayana*). Equal benefits have been derived from both, indicating the paragraphs of the original and quoting their numbers in brackets.

The whole book is divided into eight parts, called *ucchavāsa*. These describe the geneology of Harṣavardhana (pp. 1-30); his birth and early life (pp. 63-86); the wars of the time, and the death of Harṣa's father, Prabhākaravardhana (pp. 87-114); the troubled times, preceding Harṣa's accession, and his declaration to world conquest (pp. 115-35); followed by his accession to power, his coronation, his military-preparations and order to the army to march (pp. 136-84). The concluding chapter tells of Harṣa's victorious march-back and his meeting his widow-sister, Rājyaśrī, etc. (pp. 185-202).

In earlier chapters (ii and iii), Bāṇa narrates about his entry into court circles; his being granted audience; his return to his village home, and starting work on *Harṣacarita*. All this affords him ample opportunity to dilate upon the themes and confide as regards the life-styles of the period.

p. 6: A reference to 'Baudha Saṅgīta' in connection with the work, *Vāsvadatta* of Sunandhu, who probably preceded Bāṇa, and wrote in the very same style.

pp. 33-4: The devotees of Rudra burn incense (*gūgula*). Bāṇa refers to it often; there are occasions when they burn (*gūgula*) on their forehead and allow it to burn down consuming their person down to the very bones (103, 153). In this context, Bāṇa has twice mentioned the *naṭas* performing *Ārabhaṭī* dance.

In the opening reference, he says: *naṭas* doing *Ārabhaṭī* dance in circle-formations (*maṇḍalākāra-rūpa*) moving (*recaka* is the term used) their waist, hands, and neck and perform *rāsa* (48).

The style, in particular, manifests itself in the following characteristics:

- (1) it is *maṇḍalī-nṛtta* (not *nṛtya*);
- (2) it is *recaka*;
- (3) it invokes *rāsa-rasa*;
- (4) it is *rabhasārabdha-nartana*;
- (5) and finally, it is *caṭulaśikā-nartana*.

(1) *Maṇḍalī-nṛtta*: Śaṅkara calls it *halīmaka* (not *hallīsaka*) which is (as its *netā*) led by a male-dancer (*puruṣa*) and is danced by a female group, in a circle. It appears that the more well-known term *hallīsaka* was also known to Śaṅkara, as he seems to explain *halīmaka* as a *rāsaḥ*; cf. 'tāla-bandha viśeṣa-yuktam rāsaḥ'. *Hallīsaka*<sup>4</sup> has been a sister variety.

Dr V.S. Agarwal suggests that *hallīsaka* may have been an Indianised version of the Greek work Elysian, and, as a dance-form, an advancement on the 'Elysian Mystery-Dance' of the Indo-Greeks. This fusion, according to him, must have come about around the opening centuries of the Christian era. In any case, as already seen, *hallīsaka*, the group-dance, was popularised in India by the enthusiasts of the Kṛṣṇa cult. This was the initial reason for its earliest known closest associations with *rāsa* and *līlā*. The two styles may have been admixed and made to thrive alongwith.

(2) *Recaka*: according to Śaṅkara, was of three various kinds: *Kaṭi-recaka*,<sup>5</sup> *Hasta-recaka*<sup>6</sup> and *Grīvā-recaka*.<sup>7</sup> It seems, apart from its other characteristics, these three happened to be its distinguishing features.

(3) *Rāsa*: 8, 16 or 32 *nāyakas* (dancers) formed the *maṇḍalī*<sup>8</sup> and performed this *nṛtta*, moving round and round; cf. Śaṅkara:

अष्टौ, षोडश, द्वात्रिंशद् नृत्यन्ति नायकाः ।

पिण्डीबन्धानुसारेण तन्नृत्तं रासकं स्मृतम् ॥

This is significant, as the form of *rāsa-nṛtya* and *rasa-līlā* performances, together with *kathak*, as revived in nineteenth century Awadh through the personal efforts of Wājīd °Alī Shāh and his court-dancers, Kālkā and Bindādīn, may be found to lay their rightful claims at continuity dating back to a period prior even to this.

(4) *Rabhasārabdha-nartana*: with immense alacrity and speed the hands and feet are moved making characteristically manifest the *uchāma-bhāva* (the sense perhaps of climax) and *ceṣṭā (tayyārī)*.<sup>9</sup>

As regards this dance-form, namely *Ārabhaṭī*, Dr V.S. Agarwal sums up to say:

आरभटी ....

अर्थात् हाथ-कमर-ग्रीवा को विभिन्न भाव-भङ्गियों में, उद्दाम वेग से चलाते हुए गोल चक्कर में सम्पन्न होने वाला नृत्य आरभटी कहलाता था: उछल-कूद, मार-काट, डाँट-फटकार, उखाड़-पछाड़, आग लगाने, आदि का उपद्रव, माया या इन्द्रजाल, आदि के दृश्य को जहाँ झुंड में नृत्य के द्वारा प्रदर्शित किया जाय उसे आरभटी कहा गया है।

यूनान के Elysium<sup>10</sup> (blessed abode of the dead) स्थान में होने वाले नृत्यों में भी अन्धकार, विपत्ति, मृत्यु के सूचक अनेक भयस्थान आदि उद्दाम और प्रचण्ड-भाव से, ताल-बद्ध, और अङ्ग-सञ्चालन से प्रदर्शित किये जाते थे।

और, अन्त में जब ये अङ्ग-विक्षेप-जिन्हें अपने यहाँ रेचक कहा गया है—भाव की प्रकाशा पर पहुँचते और नाश और विपत्ति की सीमा हो जाती तब अकस्मात् एक दिव्य-ज्योति का आविर्भाव उन नृत्यों में होता था।

Śaṅkara had also alluded to these characteristics in his comments:

...प्लुष्टाव-पाद-प्लुत-गर्जितान्...

According to *Nāṭya-śāstra* of Bharata, dance thrived in its four major and characteristic styles during the times under his purview:

- (1) *Bhāraṭī* : dances of *Bharata-Janapada*, or of Kurukṣetra;
- (2) *Sāttavaṭī* : dances of the *Sāttavata* (Yādavas) of Gujarāt and Kāṭhiāwāda;
- (3) *Kaiśiki* : dances of Vidarbha-deśa or Barāra, called *Kratha-Kaiśiki*;
- (4) *Ārabhaṭī* : inferentially, also of some such region (?)

It (*Ārabhaṭī*) lacks identification even now, but for the Greek historians the territory in south Baluchistan towards west of Indus has been inhabited by Arbitae or Arbiti people. The river Arbius watered this region. Arrian and Strabo, both describe this region as the extreme borderland of India and report that Alexander's army passed through it on its return from India. May be this land proved to be the meeting ground of Greek Elysium (*hallīsaka*) and Indian *rāsa* and came to be called *Ārabhaṭī* (i.e. of *Ārbaṭa deśa*):

Bāṇa states: चटुलशिखानर्तनारम्भारभटीनटः (51) i.e. the *naṭas* threw up their thick locks in huge clusters when proceeding with this dance.

The Baluch and Afghan tribals may even now be seen dancing with this kind of abandon and zeal.

p. 56:

Speaking about Thāneśwar, Bāṇa delights to go into some details about the socio-economic conditions which fed the development and growth of the performing classes engaged in the arts of music. He says:

'the fields were under plough, the newly tilled earth was cleared of scrubs and stubs. Sugarcane was blooming green. The "khalihāns" (thrashing-floors) were mountain-high with harvested crop. The "rahaṭa" was used in irrigating the patches far and near. Paddy (*dhāna*), *rājamāṣa*, *mooṅga* and *godhūma* (wheat) fields were coming up. The forest around was teaming with cattle-wealth. The bells around the milk-yielders necks were shouting aloud. The cow-herds sitting on the flat black back of grazing buffaloes were singing their songs of contentment and love. Camels studded the scene. Trees were grown on the frequented paths. The cows were coming out from underneath their shade to quench their thirst in the *rahaṭ*-water stored as a pond. The mares were grazing around and frisking about like shy gazelles. The town nearby was alive with busy humans and well-membered cattle-sheds. The stone-carvers were engaged in shaping out stone-pieces for the new temple under construction. (With all this being there) the town was resounding to the tune of *vedic* recitals and the rituals of *havana*, *yajña*, *mahādāna* and *vedaghoṣa*. The musical instruments traditionally employed on the occasion of "vr̥ṣotsarga" were in full play.'



Further on, too, Thāneśwar and its dynamic culture has been portrayed by Bāṇa in most picturesque terms. He goes on to say:

'There were *tapovanas* of the *munis*; *kāmāyatanas* of the prostitutes, *saṅgīta-śālās* of the *lāsakas* (idle dreamers of cultured tastes), *gurukulas* of the scholars, *viṭa-goṣṭhīs* of the *vidagdha* (the sophisticated elite) and, above all these, the *Mahotsava-samāja*<sup>11</sup> of the *cāraṇas*. The soldiers, the singers, the scholars, the artists (*śilpīs*), the traders (*vaidahakas*), the political detenus (*bandīs*), the *bhikṣus* and the rest like them, thronged the floor of this *samāja*.'

This may on verification prove to be the earliest mention of *cāraṇas* as a class of minstrels. It seems this organisation had taken deep root by the seventh century. Earlier than this we hear almost nothing about them.

### Vīṇā Vādana

Similarly, some of the cultural traits of the Central Asians, earliest to find themselves reported in any standard work of India, have been:

- (i) the use of 'colī' (brassiere) by our women-folk;
- (ii) 'muṇḍamālā-maṇḍana': hair-decorating with woven flowers;
- (iii) use of ear-ornaments 'avataṅsa' and 'kuṇḍala';
- (iv) use of a sort of veil by ladies of dignity;
- (v) perfuming of clothes with camphor by women-folk;
- (vi) wearing of necklaces;
- (vii) use of 'indranīla-nūpura' (tiny sapphire-studded ringing bells around foot-fingers);
- (viii) and the proficiency exhibited by such ladies in playing on their Central-Asian type of *vīṇā* called *chang* by the Persians.

p. 47:

Bāṇa has gone to quite some length in etching out a pen-picture of the *vāravilāsinīs* (the dancing-beauties of the court). As regards these talented beauties he says:

'... their forehead adorned with *aguru-tilaka*, their gracefully exposed limbs writhing along with their glistening ornaments; their restless eye-brows speaking of sex and love. Their lips gasped for breath when they performed a dance-number; the domes of their

rounded breasts were tickled by the flower-bedecked necklaces which moved and danced with them; they yawned most out of purpose and put their shapely hands to their mouth—thus making their ripe breasts more pointed than ever....'

'... adjusting the *parāga* (the flowers) in their ears, they shut their expressive eyes as if with pain and arch their eye-brows which they alone could do; they look at nobody and excite everybody; they smile on their own accord and the onlookers smile with them....'

'... they twist their bodies, shake their limbs and move the eyes, the fingers, the hips and the breasts alongside, effortlessly and artistically ... they intertwine their fingers, put up their palms and dance keeping rhythm: sometimes by cracking their fingers and sometimes by moving about in short circuits making the figure of a bow....'

Like this he goes on, he is really graphic and so often inimitable in being so.

p. 52:

Here is another pen-picture of a performing virtuoso belonging to the musical-brotherhood—that of a *granthika*. Bāṇa gifts these details to the cause of socio-cultural history:

'... after the mid-day meal the *pustaka-vācaka* by name Sudrṣṭi, presented himself: he was attired in an apparel prepared in Puṇḍradeśa (north Bengal). It was all white, and in two pieces. On his forehead there shone the 'go-rocanā' and *gaṅgāmātī-tilaka*; his hair smelt of *āmlā*, his 'coṣī' (hair-tuft) wore flowers. His lips were red with betel-chewing, and his eyes of the thin-pointed 'aṅjana' (85).'

Further on, Bāṇa adds to the above, saying:

'Sudrṣṭi possessed a melodious throat and a very well-modulated voice. When he entered, the flute players, namely, Madhukara and Pārāvata, made room for him to come and sit down in front of them....'

'The *pustaka* Sudrṣṭi had brought with him was *Vāyu-Purāṇa*.<sup>12</sup> It was tied around with a pretty tape. He untied it (cf. तत्कालापनीसूत्रवेष्टनं पुस्तकम्) and placed it on a reed-stool (*śaraśalākā-yantram*), holding in his hands the passages he was to open with, and began ... (Bāṇa stops here)....'

After him, the slave-poet, Sūcibāṇa, recited two stanzas in