CHAPTER IV


Music according to tradition originated from the Gods. It was considered to be an expression of the religious ideas and principles, and its main function was to render these ideals communicable on an emotional level. The Divine nature of Music was established from the earliest times. Legend connects it with the Vedas, D.D. Kosambi while commenting on the Indian traditional arts, writes —

"It would be difficult to treat of Indian Music which has an uninterrupted tradition from the oldest times, but no reliable history." 1

The tradition has come down to us through important treatises on music. It's actual application is difficult to trace though names of traditional Ragas (Musical Modes) have survived to the present day.

It is interesting to notice here how an abstract art like Music is brought into the sphere of allied arts so that it not only serves as a point of inspiration, but is turned into an image, and portrayed as a motif in painting. Visual arts, to the present day have aspired to achieve that abstract form and means of direct communication between the artist and the audience which music retains as an inherent quality. Colours and forms have often been compared to Music. But in very few instances in Europe and Asia have Music acquired a body or form which can be used as

motif for a portrait. Commenting on this Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —

"There is a doctrine inherent in the Indian theory of melodies which helps one to understand the fundamental psychic values of Rāgas, and to apply them to requirements of particular emotional situations or interpretations. It is believed that each Rāga or Rāginī has its peculiar psychic form corresponding to its sonal body over which the former presides as the nymph deity or the devatā (presiding genius or god) of that particular melody. This deity or image formed dwells in the super-terrestrial regions, the world of musical symphonies, from which it can be invoked and induced to descend to Earth through the prayers of the musical performer, with the aid of a definite symphonic formula peculiar to each melody. The idea is evidently coloured with the doctrine of image worship as known in the Hindu Brahmanical religious thought."

The whole concept is seen to be based on the established grounds of Indian religious ideas and so appear as extremely familiar.

But despite their semi-divine attributes the Rāgas and their families are human in form. They are set in a colourful world of dance and amour. The depiction of the Rāgas and Rāginīs are therefore quite similar to the Nāyaka-Nāyikā bheda pictures.

The Rāgamalā paintings, are charming mainly because they have incorporated a variety of elements to present Music in a physical garb. Time, physical environments, geographical names and moods have all coalesced to form the iconography of the Rāgas. The early treatises on Music were rarely written without accompanying chapters on dance and dramaturgy, and this had greatly influenced the artist, working within the framework of an established artistic norm.

2. Ganguly, O.C. Rāgas and Rāginīs, Bombay, 1948, Pg. 96.
The study of the Rāgamālā paintings includes a study of the prevalent concepts of time, space and deity. The study of gestures also becomes interesting in this context. Embracing all these complex factors, the portraits of the Rāgas and Rāginis served as a miniature mirror reflecting the life and attitudes of the medieval Indian.

Treatises on Music:

Popular legend associate Music with the Gods — Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. Another story is associated with Mrdula. One of the earliest legends mark Siva as the originator of the Science of music and dramaturgy. According to this story the Rāgas are said to have been derived from the union of Siva and Śakti. Before Siva began his cosmic dance, the five Rāgas came out from his five faces it is said. The Sixth Rāga came out of the mouth of Pārvati when she started the 'lāsya' dance.

The divine origin of the Rāgas being established, it now falls to tradition to devise an elaborate system which will represent the science of music. Henry Cowell writes in this context —

"The Gods' gave forth the seven principal Rāgas together with the seven different categories which they represent. All Indian art music since has been created through an elaboration of each of these rāgas into families of related 'Rāgas and Rāginis'." 3.

The Rāgas and their feminine counterparts form the basis of Indian music and the science of music has grown round this structure.

The earliest available material on the science of music is found in the 'Natyasāstra' ascribed to Bharat Muni. The chapters twenty six and twenty seven are devoted to music in general. They deal with both theories and techniques of vocal and instrumental music. Though in general a work devoted to dramaturgy, Bharat can be considered as one of the earliest classifiers of tones, moods, composition of sounds, etc.

Between the tenth and the twelfth century A.D. the names of a large number of texts became known. Mention may be made of 'Sangītamakaranda' attributed to Nārada (probably belonging to the 10th century A.D.), 'Sangīta ratnākara' of Misānka Sāramgadeva (13th century A.D.), 'Sangītadarpana' of Dāmodara. Other important works are by Dattila, who is supposed to be a disciple of Bharat, the 'Brahaddesi' of Mātanga, 'Sangītapārijāta' of Ahobala and 'Sangītadāmodara' of Subhankara etc. These works, though important in their own context, have little bearing upon the illustrations of the musical modes, for they deal with the technical musical aspect of the notes and structure of the rāgas and the variations that are introduced. The iconography of Rāgas are found to be a later development, and are included in the Rāgamālā texts dealing mainly with the dhyānas (i.e. formula of meditation conjuring up the visual image) of the different Rāgas and Rāgīnīs.

Mr. O.C. Ganguly in his book 'Rāgas and Rāgīnīs' gives a comprehensive list of the various texts on music. He mentions the

"Pañcama-Sara-Saṁhitā (dated 1440 A.D.) some times called Pañcama Saṁhitā" 4

composed by an author called Marada. The significance of the work lies in giving the iconographic representation and a formal classification of the entire musical system into Six Rāgas and thirty-six Rāginīs. He writes —

"The text evidently relates to musical theories prevalent in the north, at the time, and belongs to a period when out of the large mass of floating melodies, six had been selected as major melodies to each of which five or six minor melodies are related and assigned. . . . We have here for the first time the mirror or the derivative melodies designated as the wives of the rāgas (rāga-yosita) and the word 'rāginī' is used in the text for the first time." 5

It is difficult to assess, when the principle for visualising music first came into vogue. Earlier than the 'Panḍamāṇa Sāra-Samhitā' are found names of treatises like the 'Sangitaratnakara' (13th century) where the iconography is only hinted at by ascribing the rāga gītisī to particular protective divinities; the presiding deities are however not fully described as in the later texts.

Another text that deals with the iconography of the Rāgas in the earlier stage is Rāgasāgara. About this work Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —

"It is not possible to assign the development of the iconography of rāgas to the time of Dattila, whose name is apparently invoked here for lending an air of antiquity to these dhyāna formulas given in this text, under the chapter 'Rāga-Dhyāna Vidhāraṇam.'" 6

He further writes —

"The dhyānas given in this text are simple in conception, diction and style and appear to be earlier than all the known anthologies." 7

5. Ibid., Pgs. 24-25.
7. Ibid. Pg. 107.
Thus a slow development of the visualisation of the musical modes are noticed which reached a fully formed system of iconography by the 15th century. Descriptive verses then became a good basis for pictorial representations.

Mr. O.C. Ganguly gives us a long list of a large number of Rāgamālā texts written in Sanskrit, Persian and Hindi. These texts are also mentioned by other historians of music. By the fifteenth century, texts depicting the visual images of Rāgas and Rāginīs had become quite frequent. Mention may be made of some texts which are important in this period. Composed in 1509 A.D. the 'Rāgamālā' by Mēṣakarnā is considered to be a landmark in the Mughal period. A mention is found in this work of an authority named 'Mṛpa' who is supposed to have provided outlines for the portraits, or images for visualising some of the melodies. The reference however is very scanty and little is known about him.

Another important text of the same period is the Rāgamālā by Pundarīka Vitthala composed in 1576. All these texts were helping to the formation of a northern Rāgamālā system. In the Sangīta-Darpana by Dāmodara Miśra, the School of Hanumāna is supposed to have been followed. (Little is known about who Hanumāna is but it becomes clear that he constitutes what is known as the northern school of Rāgamālā iconography). In this work Dāmodara cites descriptive verses for thirty six melodies and Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —
"The dhyāna formulas are identical with those given in the 'Nārada-Saṁhitā' and other texts." 8

Right up to the Eighteenth Century, Rāgamālā texts dealing with the iconography of the Rāgas came to be written in Sanskrit. Mention may be made here of two works by Bhava Bhatta, the Anupa-Saṅgīta Vilāsa and 'Anupa-Saṅgīta-ratnākara'. Both the works are compilations quoting liberally from earlier texts.

'Saṅgīta-Mālā', a Sanskrit text by an anonymous author is considered by Mr. O.C. Ganguly to be the last datable treatise on Rāgamālā written in Sanskrit. About this work he writes —

"It is represented by a single manuscript dated 1778 so that the work may be a few years earlier, say about 1750 A.D. The work follows a system of six rāgas with five rāginīs each. The descriptive verses are elaborate and not only give a visualised picture of each melody but also its note structure and an indication of its appropriate hour of singing. Each verse is followed by a note in Hindi under the title of Sāhitya Guḍhārtha (i.e. implicit rhetorical significance of each melody) in which the nayikā, the nāyaka and the rasa of each melody are specified and is accompanied by two or three examples of old songs in which each melody has been appropriately sāng." 9

An interesting development of the Rāgamālā texts are found to be in their Persian versions. Sanskrit works came to be translated into Persian. These in turn were illustrated. The Mughal Court took a special interest in the development of Indian music. The patronage extended by the nobility and even the Emperors led to the production of these large number of illustrated Rāgamālā albums with Persian inscriptions on them. The earlier attempts noticed in the Persian albums are — to

indicate the nature and quality of the motif of the Rāgas by interpretative annotations on the separate pictures.

The works that came to be translated in Persian are — the 'Sangīta Darpaṇa,' 'Sangīta Parijata' and the Hindi treatise Man Kutuhala. Mr. O.C. Ganguly gives a detailed description of a particular Persian Rāgamālā album.

"The album, consisted of (84) paintings together with descriptions in excellent Persian verses explaining the illustrations opposite to the text." 10

A further inscription records that the work was executed under the command of his Imperial Majesty Muhammad Shah in the City of Kabul in the year 1150 Hezëera (1737 A.D.) and presented to the emperor. The popularity of the albums continued unabated, and all through Eighteenth and even Nineteenth century the Rāgamālā albums came to be produced.

Rāgamālā texts are also found in the vernacular languages of Hindi and Bengali. It is interesting to notice that quite a large number of Rāgamālā paintings follow the Hindi texts. The paintings often show, a couplet describing the subject, being inscribed on the top of the picture. Sometimes the names of the poets are mentioned, but often they remain anonymous. The illustrations often show a variety in their depiction of the same motif. The general iconography of the Rāgas remaining the same a change can be noticed in the surroundings. Here the innovations are not introduced by the painter but the poet.

10. Ganguly O.C. Rāgas and Rāginīs, Pg. 143.
Among the many examples found, the notable name that may be mentioned of composers of the Rāgamālā texts is Hari-vallabha (c. 1625-1643 A.D.) Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes about him —

"This musical poet is represented by an elaborate treatise which he himself describes as a vernacular version of 'Sangītā-Darpana' written in an obscure form of old Hindi. The work survives in four Mss. the earliest is in the collection of the British Museum and bearing a dated colophon -- 'Finished vernacular version of Sangītā darpana by Hariballabha Samvat 1710 (1643 A.D.) the second day of the black fortnight of Phalguna (February-March) written by copyist Saranga.' The second manuscript written by Khemankara Misra at Shahajahanabad (Delhi) is in the collection of the Sarasvatī-bhavan Library, Benares, and bears a colophon which purports to bear date Vaisākh Sudi 7, Samvat year 1748 (= 1691 A.D.) the third manuscript undated is in the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The fourth manuscript is a magnificent editio princeps finally written and illustrated with numerous pictures of the ragas, now in the collection of Mr. P.C. Nahar, Calcutta."

The peculiarity of this work lies in the fact that it contains over and above the thirty six rāginīs of the Hanumāna School, a number of Saṅkīrṇa (composite melodies) and upa-rāginīs (additional melodies not affiliated to the Six ragas).

"It is a matter of conjecture" writes Mr. O.C. Ganguly "If the verses of Harivallabha represent the early rāga-māla texts in Hindi versions." Evidently quite a large number of illustrated Rāga-mālā texts have been found which does not quote Harivallabha. The inscriptions on the back of a large number of Rāga-mālā paintings also show them to be from Harivallabha. This points to the fact that many other Rāga-mālā texts in Hindi which had become more popular might have been earlier than Harivallabha.

11. Ganguly O.C., Rāgas and Rāginīs. Pg. 119.
12. Ganguly O.C., Rāgas and Rāginīs. Pg. 119.
The most famous name in Hindi literature who also figure in the Ragamala text is that of Deo-Kavi. According to most lovers of Hindi literature, he was one of the greatest poet of the vernacular in his time. He wrote a short treatise on music called 'Rāga Ratnākar'. Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes about the work —

"Specially devoted to a classification and description of the rāgas with five rāginīs each. To each melody is devoted a short descriptive couplet followed by a Savayia giving a more detailed picture with suggestions for appropriate seasons and time for singing and sometimes some details of the notes composing the melody." 13.

Quite a large number of illustrated texts have appeared whose authors are not known, while there have been quite a few attributed to one poet, for example the poet of the name of Lāl. About him Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —

"That Lāl Kavi's texts won some amount of popularity with the illustrations is proved by the fact that his kavittas are quoted in more than one series of miniatures." 14

Mr. Ganguly further mentions two sets of Rāgamālā miniatures reserved in the British Museum which bear quotations from Lāl Kavi's texts.

**Iconography of the Rāgas**:

An iconography of musical modes had grown up consisting of six rāgas with their six wives, sons and even daughters in law. The basis of this iconography lay in the Rāgamālā texts. By the nineteenth century, while Rāgamālā texts still came to be written

14. Ibid. Pg. 128.
and illustrated) four different schools of Rāga iconography came to exist. They are ascribed to Brahmā, Bharat, Kallīṇāth and Hanumān. Rāgamālās outside these four schools have also been found. It must also be remembered that different treatises contain variations which are very difficult to trace. The illustrated Rāgamālās again in turn differ from the inscriptions of the texts to which they serve as illustrations. Thus no definition regarding a fixed iconography of the Rāgas and Rāginīs can be made.

The school of Brahmā divides the main Rāgas into —
Bhairava with his family of Bhairavi, Gurjarī, Ramkeli, Gunaṅkeli, Saundavī and Vangālī; followed by the Śrī Rāga with wives Nālarī, Trivārī, Gouri, Kedārī, Nādhūmādhavi Paṅḍālī; then comes Megha Rāga with Mallārī, Sourāṭī, Sāverī, Kouśikī, Gandhārī, Hara Šingārī; next is Vasantā with Desī, Devagiri, Varāṭi, Toḍī, Lalitā, Hindolī. Panḍāma Rāga follows with Vibhāgā, Bhupālī, Karnāṭi, Vādahāmsikā, Nālāvī, Paṭamānjīrā. The last is Nāța Rāga with Kāmodī, Kalyāṇī, Abhirī, Nāṭikā Saṅrāṅga Maṅvīra.

The school of Bharata as referred to in other texts — differs in the classification of the main Rāgas — Bhairava is followed by Mālkāusa, Hindola, Dīpak, Śrī and Megha. Wives and sons also differ.

The school of Hanumāna contains — Bhairava, Kāmsikā, Hindola, Dīpakā, Śrī and Megha with variations in the Rāginīs.
belonging to each family. While Kallināth has a totally different group of Rāgas and Rāginīs ascribed to him — Śrī, Panḍama, Bhairava, Megha, Nāṭa Mārāyāna, Vasanta. — Thus no uniformity is found in the iconography of the Rāgas and Rāginīs.

Mainly due to this the other attributes which generally follow a fixed iconographic formula are often ignored. The appearances of the Rāgas (for example, of Bhairava as Śiva, Panḍama as the god of love, Śrī as Brahmā) are only some times found, at others they are represented by other scenes or deities (for example 'Krishna'). The colours, too, are barely present, though they are supposed to correspond to the different Rāgas as they represent different emotions.

In fact it must be made clear that our knowledge of the iconography and representations of the Rāgas undergo changes and new knowledge is brought to us with the discovery of every fresh illustrated manuscript. Thus the iconography of the Rāgas and Rāginīs must be treated as a subject without fixed limits. It is a knowledge with broadening horizons and we must beware of rash generalisations.

But in spite of the paucity of our knowledge, it becomes evident that certain Rāgas become more frequent in depiction than others. The six common Rāgas whose depictions form the general convention are mainly — Śrī, Vasanta, Bhairava, Panḍama, Megha and Nāṭa mārāyāna. The other additions are — Nālkaś, Deśjāk and Hindol. A cataloguing of their common forms as found in most texts, and their actual depiction in painting may be interesting
They are represented as follows — Sri Rāga: The dhānya depicts him as the demi-god who sweetly sports with his nymph gathering fresh blossoms in the groves. It is sung in the evening of the dewy season.

The paintings usually depict 'Brahma' with his four faces either in the act of conducting a Yajñā or being worshipped.

The Vasant Rāga is represented as being of a golden hue and dressed in yellow garments. He wears flower ornaments. His lotus eyes are rolling round and are of the colour of the rising Sun. He is loved by females. This Rāga is sung in spring. The usual depiction in painting is Krishna dallying with the gopies.

Bhairava Rāga bears the description of the God Siva. The Rāga is sung in summer. The paintings usually correspond to this description.

Pancmama Rāga is described in the texts as having large red eyes wearing red clothes young, intelligent and of amorous disposition. This Rāga is sung in summer or spring. The paintings usually depict a love scene or often Krishna is depicted as the lover.

The Megha Rāga is represented as being dressed in blue garments. He is sombre, and rides an elephant. The Rāga is sung in the monsoon.

The paintings usually depict Krishna, or Krishna dancing in the rain.
The Nața-nărāyaṇa is described as a mighty warrior riding to battle on horseback. His body is besmeared with blood.

The Rāga is usually sung in winter. The paintings usually depict a scene of war and is thereby consistent with the dhyāṇa.

Mālkausī is usually represented with a naked sword listening entranced to the music. The paintings often show a royal scene or a man and woman in a love scene.

Rāga Hindol is played in the months of March and April and is described as playing the flute, swinging in the sowing and is of amorous disposition. The paintings often portray Krishna in the swing surrounded by Gopis.

The Rāga Dūpak is described as fire. It is supposed to light up darkness. It is sung in May and June in the hour of darkness.

The paintings usually portray a young man robèd in red, sitting with a woman, in a dark room lighted with candles.

Interesting motifs are found in the depiction of the Toḍī Rāgini, with deers. The Asāvari Rāgini is drawn as a yoginī with snakes. The Kaṃhāḍā Rāgini is shown with the trunk of an elephant being cut off. The Desākha Rāgini shows the performance of a circus. The explanations behind these pictorial representations are only sought in the 'Rasas' or emotive significances of the Rāgas. The legends are not traced. But it becomes clear that medieval life, both aristocratic and popular, lent its imagination in creating
these images forms of music. The traces of the inventions are found in the paintings, but the visual source of the motif is lost in oblivion. It may be relevant to trace the medieval concepts which might have formed the background of the motifs. For this we have to refer to the ideas of time, mood and space.

Uses of Time, Mood and Space:

The abstract concept of Time in Indian religious literature actually depicts a timelessness, in which the birth and death of the entire universe is enclosed. The concept is therefore based on the creation of the universe, and is not bound by events. In visualising the Rāgas and Rāginiś there is a continuous reference to time. Time here reflects that same concept of life and death, enclosing and determining the fundamental idea of creation.

The relation between 'time' and nature is another important aspect of the concept, that is reflected in the Raga-Rāginiś paintings. Nature's laws and seasonal cycles of creation and decay find an important place in the Rāgamālā paintings. (For Indian music is greatly inspired by nature) Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —

"Though very antagonistic views have been held by Indian musicians and theorists as to the validity or scientific basis of the so-called relationship between the spirit of a season and its appropriate melodic interpretation, it has however been handed down from a period of respectable antiquity." 14.

'Time' has been associated with the 'Rāgas' in many forms. Firstly the main Rāgas are supposed to represent the different

seasons of the year. The six major ragas correspond to the six seasons. The earliest written authority which formed the basis of the classification of the 'Rāgas' according to time is the 'Sangīta Makaranda' by Nārada. However it is not till we come to 'Somesvara' as quoted in the 'Sangīta darpana' that the actual delegation of the Rāgas to the different seasons follow. According to this authority — (i) Śrī Rāga is the melody of winter, (ii) Vasanta is the melody of spring, (iii) Bhairava of summer, (iv) Panchama of autumn and (v) Megha of the Rainy season, while (vi) Naṭa Nārāyana is of early winter. Evidently the convention of singing melodies only in the allotted seasons must have been fluid. The musician was given certain options to follow his own inclinations. Prof. O.C. Ganguly quotes from the 'Sangīta-darpana' a description of the relation of the six rāgas to the six seasons; and then he writes —

"Although the six rāgas are assigned to six different seasons, there is no immutable rule, or prohibition to sing any of them in seasons not assigned to it... Singers have the option to sing any of the rāgas in all seasons for the sake of pleasure." 16.

It is interesting to trace how the melodies came to be associated with the different seasons. Unfortunately there are no clear cut traces of evolution which show how the 'gitis' came to be transformed into the Rāgas. It is surmised that the songs or gitis were associated with the different religious festivals occurring in the different seasons. Since most of the songs existed long before the evolution of the rāgas, they are the

16. Ibid. Pg. 82 (Foot-note 1).
indigenous sources of the association of music with the seasonal festivals. After the musical system became more complex, particular ragas came to represent particular seasons.

The associations of seasons, and festivals to the daily events in people's lives and particularly to love had become a literary convention as early as the classical age. (e.g. Ritu Saṁhāra: Kalidasa).

The 'Bāramāśā' paintings developing more fully in the eighteenth century also reflect this same convention. The inherent idea of 'rasa' or true emotive value is the real basis of inspiration which links the ragas to the seasons. Thus Bhairava which reflects the 'raṅgara rasa' is the summer. Vasanta the amorous mood is the spring. Hindola another raga which is also associated with spring depicts the swing or the Jhulan festival that had grown round the cult of Rādhā and Krishna and is observed in the spring. The 'Śrī Rāga' as the name denotes is supposed to depict Lākṣmī (but Brahmā is sometimes depicted). The worship is connected with the festival of harvesting and thus the Rāga is attributed to autumn. Another interesting Rāginī is Desakha, it depicts a circus. The explanation is probably to be found in a festival like 'Chadaka'. The musical modes develop their picturesque qualities, as seasons, moods, festivals all clamour to be expressed through music.

The Rāgas are also classified according to hours and times of the day. It is in the 'Saṅgīta Nakaranda' that this
classification occurs for the first time. According to this
treatise, the melodies are divided into morning, noonday, after­
noon and night. Based on this hypothesis other classifications
have followed in the later years. According to musicians and
theorists of music it is the assemblage of notes which decide
how the melody is to be rendered, and suitable hours bring out
the mood of the songs clearly. The texts lay down the injunctions
that the melodies should only be sung in appropriate hours, except
on the occasions of marriages, gifts and hymns to deities. Even
in these 'Bhairava' is never to be sung except in the early morning.
According to 'Sāṅgīta Makaranda' the classifications are as follows:

(i) Morning Melodies : Gāndhāra, Deva Gāndhāra, Dhannasi
Saindhavī, Nārāyaṇī, Gurjarī, Vāṅgālā, Paṭamaṇjarī,
Lalitā, Āndola-Śrī, Saurāstṛīya, Jaya-Saksika, Malhāra,
Sāma-vedī, Vasanta, Sūdha-Bhairava, Velāvalī, Bhūpāla,
Soma-rāga.

(ii) Moonday Melodies : Sāmkara-bharama Pūrva (?), Vālamhamsa
Deśī, Mānohārī, Sāverī, Dombulī, Kaṃbhojī, Gopi Kaṃbhojī,
Kadikī, Madhu-Mādhavī, Vahulī, Mukhari, Māgala-Kausīka.

(iii) Afternoon Melodies : Gauḍa and the derivatives therefrom.
(iv) Nocturnal Melodies : Suddha naṭa, Sāranga-naṭi, Suddha-
varātika, Gauḍa, Mālava Gauḍa, Śrī Rāga, Āhari, Rāma-
Kṛti, Ranji, Chāyā, Sarva-varātikā, Dravatikā, Deśī,
Nāgā-varātikā, Karnāta, Haya-Gauḍī.

These classifications are not uniformly applicable in all
cases, but are only generally maintained. Rarely however are
afternoon melodies sung in the evening or the early morning Ragas late at night. In this as in every other aspect of music the 'rasa' or the emotive value is fully assessed. The paintings however while depicting the 'Ragas' and 'Raginis' do not paint any particular hour. Rather than this, the paintings depict a particular gesture or an amorous situation which does not often reflect the time, but conveys the general mood of the musical mode.

Mood: The Raga-Raginis paintings are striking in their similarity to the Nayaka-Nayika bheda pictures. In both a strong note of amour is introduced. Dr. Anand Krishna writes about this —

"Although the Ragas-Raginis first came into vogue as early as the 15th century, the true Rāgamalā spirit with its warm amorous feelings is absent. This is borne out in the Rāgamalā by Nīshkarna (Saka 1431 or A.D. 1509) and another text of the same name by Pundarika Vitthala (A.D. 1576) yet as the decades rolled by personal attributes grew more vivid and specific settings came to be associated with each 'Raga' and 'Ragini'.”

M.S. Randhawa in an article discussing the Kangra Rāgamalā paintings has classified the Rāgas and Rāginīs according to their amorous moods.

"Love in separation: Guṇakāli, Gurjāri, Vairavī, Asāvari, Ahirī, Dhanaśrī, Devaṅgāndhārī, Vairaṭī, Seehurti, Sindhuri, Patameṣjari, Kamōdi, Gurjāri, Gaudi, Sāveri, Todi, Madhu-mādhavi. Women in distress at being separated from their lovers are depicted by the — Rāgas Mādhavi, Lalit, and Pancham.”

Love in union is represented by rāgas — Venod, Nevād and Prabāl.

The Sringara Rasa (amour) played a very important part in Sanskrit poetics. It has been the guiding note of Sanskrit literature from the classical to the medieval period. As art in different media came to be dominated by this amorous mood, it became conventional to bring love and the aesthetically beautiful together. Subjects both human and divine became motifs expressing love. Dr. A. Krishna, in commenting on the similarity between the Rāga-Rāginī and the Nāyaka-Nāyikā bheda pictures writes —

"The Rāgamālā paintings represent a matured movement. . . . Where usually the actors appear as lovers in colourful surroundings. Thus Rāgamālā paintings from the 16th century onwards resemble the Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bheda. Despite their semi-divine attribution, the Rāgas and Rāginīs (or their sons and daughters in law) are human in their reactions, though their world is confined to the spectacle of love. They are described as such in the Sanskrit and Hindi texts accompanying the illustrations and represented likewise in painting." 19

The relation of the Indian love lores to the dhyanas of the Rāgas is expressed clearly by Mr. O.C. Ganguly —

"The imageries and ideas borrowed from Indian poetics and love lores and incorporated in the contemplative verses (dhyanas) describing the Indian rāgas stand however on a very different footing. They are by no means a description of the musical values but an indication of the rasa — the nature of the emotions for which the melodies stand. They are not strictly speaking literary explanations, but a correlation and a parallelism with imageries which arose out of the experiences of life common to musicians and poets. It is really in the pictorial versions that an attempt has been made to interpret presiding rasa of every raga in elaborate forms in appropriate environment and atmosphere with illuminating vision and sympathetic intuition." 20

Certain small variations are introduced into the pictorial motifs, as they move through the Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bheda to

Ragamala and then to the 'Baramāsē' paintings. The dominant mood is love and all the delights which accompany it.

Places: The names of the Rāgas and Rāginis provide interesting information regarding the geographical origins of the musical modes. It also throws important light on the ancient geography, and the socio-economic conditions of some old tribes. Some of these ancient people gave their own names to the songs which later evolved into Rāgas still carrying their memories. Sāka, Pulinda, Ābhiri and Sāverika are definitely drawn from the names of tribes. Mr. O.C. Ganguly writes —

"Three of the earliest rāgas a) Mālava with its derivatives Mālavikā Mālavasri, Mālava-Pancama, Mālava-Vesara, Mālava-Kauśika vulgarised into Mālakausa, Andhri and Gurjari may have come from ancient tribes known as Mālavas, the Andhras and the Gurjaras respectively."

The three tribes are well known from ancient times and bear historical authenticity. The Andhras were a dravidian sect, playing an important role in South India, while the Gurjara-Pratiharas became significant in North India as empire builders.

Important towns and provinces have also given their names to the Rāgas as — Vangālā, Gaugā-mallār (from Bengal), Takka, Saurāṣṭri and Saindhavi are from Takka desha, Saurashtra and Sindhu desha, i.e. the modern Sind. "The Rāgini Khāmbāvati" an ancient melody writes Mr. O.C. Ganguly — "derives its name from the city of the name of Cambay."

21. Ibid : Rg. 72.
22. Ibid : Rg. 74.
It is assumed, that the appearance and social characteristics of the various tribes mentioned, also the landscape of the different provinces found in the names of the Rāgas and Rāginīs would have a pictorial representation. But this is hardly seen. It is therefore quite clear that name of place and tribes found in the Rāgamālās only point to the origin of the musical mode. It is important sociologically. No convention of depicting landscapes according to dictates of Geography was formed in painting. The descriptions and the depiction of the background follow the usual pattern set in the Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bheda pictures. Palaces and woods are only ideal places of tryst. It has no particular name or geographical characteristics except in the imagination of the artist.

Rāgas as Deities:

The semi divine character of the Rāgas and Rāginīs are clear from the initial stage of their visualisation. They are pictured with different implements usually ascribed to the gods often they represent. Some of the well known Brahmanical deities as is seen in the case of Śrī-Rāga who is often represented as 'Brahmā'. The legendary association of the musical modes to either of the holy trinity dates back to an ancient past. The Rāgas however, if not a deity by their own right are creatures of that twilight zone between heaven and earth which is peopled by the nymphs and the fairies. Thus they closely resemble the Gandharvas and Kinnaras who played an important part in the imaginary world of men.
Like all abstract concepts, music also developed on extremely complex lines of thought. Each Rāga or musical mode is supposed to have two forms. One is their audible sound form i.e. the Nāda Māyā Rupa and its archetype or divine essence its image form known as devata māyā-rupa. Each Rāga or the main musical mode has a family which the musicologists have termed Bhāsās and Vibhāsās. These are considered as the feminine aspect of the melody i.e. the Rāginīs. About this Dr. Amanḍa Krishna writes —

"It appears that the classification between male Rāgas on one hand and the female Bhāsās and Vibhāsās on the other as seen in the Brihaddesi was further developed in the sultanate period. Bādranācharga Suddhakalasa's Sangītaprīṣhad Sarodhara A.D. 1350 appears so far to be the earliest known text where these 'Bhāsās' are classified on the same basis as employed in the later Rāgamalas. Here there is a system of six Rāgas (Śrī, Vasantā, Bhairava, Panchama, Megha and Nāṭanārāyaṇa) which was used unaltered by some painters later on. Similarly each Rāga has six Bhāsās making a total of forty two. Moreover the author has described their rupa and varpa (forms and complexions). They are with the iconography of Brahmānical deities. For example Śrī Rāga has the characteristics and attributes of Brahmā. However it is made clear that Śrī Rāga appears as a second Brahmā and thus can not be identified with the creator. Here are the beginnings of the association of semi divine characters with the melodies." 23.

The super human characteristics of the Rāgas and Rāginīs have been suggested by the legends, and established by written dhyānas found in the texts on music. Closer or more significant association with any cult deity can be noticed in certain circumstances which adds a new note to the interpretation of the illustrations. Swami Prajñānanda in his book connects the Rāgas and Rāginīs particularly with the Tāntric system

of worship. The reference found in some of the musical treatises of the birth of the ragas from the mouth of Śiva and Gouri leads him to surmise, that the iconographical conception of music is intimately connected with the Śiva-Sakti worship. He writes —

"In some of the ancient rock-cut temples, Śiva has been depicted as a five-faced God. The names of the five faces are Sadyojāta, Vāmēma, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Iśāna which are again the five aspects of the Sun. The mythological interpretation of the origin of the ragas relates to the five mouth and the five ragas have been conceived to correspond to these five mouth cum gods." He further adds "the five premordial elements like earth, water, fire and other have been conceived as the symbols or signs of the above mentioned ragas. The premordial elements are signified by the Vijamantras. . . . In tantra seats for the Vijamantras have also been conceived and they are known as Cakras (force centres or plexuses). The Cakras are possessed of different colours and presiding deities. The five Tantric code language (Vijamantras) plexus (Cakras) and colours (vārṇas) have also been taken as the symbols, i.e. icons of the five ragas." * 24.

This theory is extremely interesting in so far as the author has taken great pains to develop the reasonings which connect the iconography of the rāgas to the Tantric system of worship (which became an all embracing philosophy from the seventh


* They are as follows : Ibid -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five faces-cum-mouths of Śiva</th>
<th>Primordial Element</th>
<th>Vij Mantra</th>
<th>Plexus</th>
<th>Raga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sadyojāta</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Iam.</td>
<td>Mulādhāra</td>
<td>Śrī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vāmēdeva</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Yam</td>
<td>Svadhīsthāna</td>
<td>Vasanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aghora</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Ram.</td>
<td>Manipura</td>
<td>Bhairava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tatpurusha</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Vam</td>
<td>Audhāta</td>
<td>Pancāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Iśāna</td>
<td>Ether</td>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Vasudhā</td>
<td>Megha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
century A.D. onwards). The medieval period particularly saw the growth and the waning of this philosophy. As such it is not perhaps improbable to assume that the conception of the ragas had at its back the inspiration of the Tāntric rituals. The association of the musical modes with Śiva and his consort is well accepted and borne out by many legends. But it is to be doubted whether the artists were conscious of any particular religious significance attached to the Rāgamālā paintings which they depicted. Nor is the Tāntric ritualistic formula of colours properly applied. In fact no fixed norm is seen to be guiding the artists. This is totally unlike the sculptures of the deities inspired by the Tāntric dhyānas (meditations). The rigid discipline noticed in the plastic artists of the earlier period when depicting religious themes are not clearly present in the miniature painters. This leads us to presume that whatever be the influences exerted by Tantricism on the conception of the rāgas the execution of the paintings owe little to them.

The association of Krishna with the Rāga-Rāginī paintings is an interesting matter of conjecture to most observers. Krishna is often depicted as a raga personified (Eg: Meha Rāga or Hindola Rāga) often there are no accompanying inscriptions. The beginning of this convention which associates 'Krishna' with the Rāgamālās is difficult to trace. The Rāgamālā texts (which are considered to be the main basis of the illustrations) barely mention the deity. Though some Rāgas however can be connected in a remote manner to the cult of Krishna. The Rāga Hindola, for
example, represents the 'Swing festival' — a festival connected solely with the cult of Radhā and Krishna. The only literary source for this new kind of Rāgamālā painting is to be found in Surdās's poetry. W.G. Archer writes about this work —

"The work of Surdās was of special importance for in one of his compositions, he took each of the thirty six traditional modes of Indian music but instead of celebrating them as separate musical characters appended to each a love poem about Krishna." 25

This then might be the beginning of a convention which found its way into painting.

Except the illustrations of Sur Sāgar, few illustrations have been found which bears the verses of Surdās (describing Krishna) on the formal. This leads us to assume, that the popularity of the Krishna cult had left an impression on all branches of the creative arts. Krishna became a symbol of love. Krishna also became the ideal Nāyaka, (princely lover) who combined all the required qualities in his person. He alone came to represent the many moods. In the Nāyaka-Nāyikā bheda paintings this aspect of Krishna becomes clear, as he replaces all the ordinary human heroes in different amorous situations. The medieval world of armour found its true expression in the love sports of Radhā and Krishna and a mystic character was added to the portrayal of the many moods of earthly love. The Rāgamālā paintings bear a close similarity to the Nāyaka-Nāyikā bheda paintings in the depiction of the general background. The dominant note of both being love, it is easy to see how 'Krishna' stepped from one set of paintings

to the other as the central motif. In this way Megha, Hindola and Vasanta rāgas are represented as Krishna. Some Reginis which evoke particular moods are also depicted through the love sports of Rādhā and Krishna. The explanation is really to be sought in the statement made by W.G. Archer —

"Krishna the God was rarely celebrated and it was rather as the best of lovers that he was sometime introduced into pictures."

Ragas and Reginis in Painting:

The tradition of depicting 'Musical Modes' was not totally new in the Indian plastic arts. The profusion of Rāgaṭālā illustrations in medieval painting suggests the growth of a convention. This is absent in sculpture. 'Music' as a motif first became important in the Deccani and Rajasthani schools. In the Western Indian paintings of the Jaina texts, certain decorations are found, which portray dancing men and women. A Kalpasūtra Ms. which was published in 1956 brought to the notice of the art world miniature of about 42 male and female gods and semi-divine creatures. These had no connection with the main body of the text. It became clear from the attached inscriptions that they were supposed to represent the musical modes. On the basis of the pictorial style, this Kalpasūtra Ms. has been relegated to the end of the 15th century. From this evidence it may be surmised, that this was the precursor to later Rāgaṭālā illustrations of the Rajasthani Schools. No similarity either in composition, motif or colour can be found with these paintings and the later

Illustrations of the Ragas and Raginis. Miss Vidya Sarabhai Nawab has recently published a book solely devoted to illustrations of Indian dance and music in Western Indian style. But these illustrations though based on texts of music are by no means 'Ragamalās'. They depict the component parts of music such as tones, metre, sound etc. Here the deification is completely different from what is represented in the paintings of the Rāgas and Rāginīs proper.

The earliest known dated text of an illustrated Rāgamalā is considered to be the Chawand Rāgamalā set of 1605 A.D. Two sets of Rāgamalās, which are not dated, are discussed by Dr. Anand Krishna, and Professor Norman Brown. The pictorial style indicates that they should be considered earlier in date than 1605 A.D.

28 The Rāgamalā set published by Prof. Norman Brown (belonging to the collection of Sri Vijayendra Suri) is now considered an important evidence in the discussion of the origin of the Rajasthani schools of painting. It is considered to be similar in style to the 'Chauṛa-panahāśīkā' (collection of Sri N.C. Mehta) group. Prof. Norman Brown considers it to have belonged to the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Describing the illustrated Mss. he writes —

The Mss. bears no date, but a guess concerning its period is not too difficult to make. The style of the painting is only a degree more advanced than that of the transitional style of painting from early W. India to Rajput shown in the Ms. of the Uttardhyana Sutra. New Haven 1941. . . . . . The style of the page and its ornament also adds to the impression that the paintings were executed in or about the first quarter of the seventeenth century. 29.

The language of the inscription he considers to be close to Braja. This set is incomplete. It contains the depiction of only twenty Rāgas and Rāginīs. The size of the paintings are also smaller than the usual Rāgamālā illustrations of the seventeenth century. Here the colophon measures \(10\frac{1}{2}\) by \(4\frac{1}{2}\) inches in dimension. The colours used are also quite simple mainly vermilion, green yellow, white black, and medium blue. Professor Brown writes that — an occasional salmon and light brown are used.

While discussing the Indian paintings belonging to the first half of the sixteenth century, Dr. Moti Chandra and Mr. K. Khandalwala has reconsidered the date of this Rāgamālā set. 30. According to them it should be dated 1525-1575 A.D.

A Rāgamālā set, acquired by the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras is considered by Dr. Anand Krishna to be of the early seventeenth or late sixteenth century in date. According to

29. Ibid., Pg.
him this set is another proof which may help to settle the controversy of the pre-Akbari origin of Rajasthani paintings. Comparing the Bharat Kala Bhavan Rāgamālā with another Rāgamālā set reserved in Sri Sarabhai Nawabs collection, an undated Madana-Kumāra-Rāti-Sundari Kathā, an illustrated Ms. of Parsvanāth Vivāhalu, the Samgrahāṇī Sūtra, the Uttarādhyāṇa Sūtra and finally the Gīta-Govinda of the late N.C. Mehta collection, Dr. Anand Krishna comes to the conclusion, that on the basis of style, the Rāgamālā should be considered earlier in date than 1583 A.D. (the date of the Samgrahāṇī Sūtra Ms.). In fact he considers the date 1575 A.D. to be most justifiable.

The Ms. is described by him to be in the traditional Indian horizontal format, each folio measuring about 4.5 by 9.5 inches. The inscription on top is in Sanskrit couplets describing the Rāga or Rāginī. The Bhairava rāga is illustrated along with five rāginīs which follow, mainly — Nāda Bhairavi, Nāṭa, Gauri, Pata maṇjarī and Lālitā. Then follows Mālava Kauśika with Toḍī, Khāmvāti mālava, Rāmakari and Gunakari. The next illustration is of the Hindola Rāga with Bilāvala, Madhu-mādhavī, Dēsaka, Gāndhāra, and Andhīrī. The Nāga Dipak is illustrated, along with Dhyānasrī, Vasanta, Kārṇāta, Desi Varāḍī, Varātī. The Megha rāga is illustrated followed by rāginīs Gauḍī, Vibhāsa, Mālasṛī, Śrī rāga and Gurjarī. The last is the Malhāra rāga with rāginīs following it are Sāranga, Kākubha, Kāmoda, Āśāvari, Bangālā.

32. Ibid. Pgs. 368-369.
In form the human figures are close to Western Indian Mss. illustration but here the further eye is missing. The clothes resemble a pre-Akbari fashion prevalent in the region. The drawing and composition seem to be in a rudimentary stage of skill. The colours used are mainly — dull and raw yellow, crimson, lapis lazuli, green, black and other primary colours.

The names of any particular poet and artist are not mentioned in the set.

The interesting point of this Rāgamālā lies in its similarity to the school of music ascribed to Bharat. But there is a slight variation. The Bharat school contains the main Rāgas of Bhairava, Malkausa, Hindola, Dipak, Śri and Megha. The Bharat Kala Bhavan set contains the additional Rāga Malhāra. There is also a slight variation in the grouping of the Rāginīs from the usual grouping found in the Bharata school.

Similar in date to these two early Rāgamālā sets is a 'Bhairavi' Rāginī in the collection of J.C. French and now reserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. 33 This is considered by Mr. K. Khandalwala and Mr. Moti Chandra to belong to the — limited number of paintings comprising the so-called 'Kulādhār Group'.

Thus it becomes quite clear, that thematically Rāga-Rāginī paintings were being depicted, even while Rajasthani

33. Khandalwala, K. and Chandra, Moti : New Documents of Indian Painting - a reappraisal, Pg. 89.
painting was in its earliest formative stage. With the technical advancement of painting in Rajasthan, the illustrations of Raga-malas seem to gain in popularity.

The earliest dated Ragamala is considered to be the Chawand set. It also marks the beginning of the Mewar School of painting. Mr. G.K. Kanoria in a published article drew the attention of the art-lovers to this very interesting set. Though the set is incomplete, the number of paintings contained in it are known from the last folio — the Maru Rāgini. This is marked 42. It also bears the following inscription at the bottom — "Samvat 1662. Verse Vaisakha Sud 2 likhita Misardi Chandra Madhye." The size of the paintings in general are about 8 inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches including the border. At the top of each painting the name of the Rāga or Rāgini illustrated as well as the relevant Sanskrit verse is given. The iconographic interest of this Rāgamālā set lies in the increased number of the Rāgas and Rāginīs illustrated. About this Mr. G.K. Kanoria writes —

"On two examples of the set the verses are in Rajasthani dohas and not in Sanskrit slokas. The numbers on these two examples are 21 and 42 which being multiples of seven show that at least from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, in some sets each rāga had begun to be painted with six wives in place of the usual number of five. In the absence of Sanskrit slokas for the new sixth wives Rajasthani dohas were coined." 35.

No definite text of this kind has yet been discovered which makes the illustrations important, even in the field of the science of music.


35. Ibid., Pg. 1.
An interesting feature of this set lies in the discovery of the artist. Nisardi was evidently a muslim painter who was probably patronised by the kings of Mewar. He must have resided at the court at Chawand (where Rana Pratap had shifted his capital) during the reign of Amar Singh I. Mr. G.K. Banoria writes about the artist —

"This Nisardin may possibly have belonged to one of those families whose professions for many generations was painting and who after embracing Islam during the 14th-15th centuries, continued to paint in the tradition in which they were born and bred." 36.

Some scholars have conjectured that Nisardi was probably employed earlier by the Mughal court and had his training elsewhere from Mewar. But Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray have pointed out that this conjecture is baseless. It is absurd to assume that an artist in search of employment would arrive at Mewar. The one state in Rajasthan, whose dwindling resources and war ridden history was known to all.

The composition and colours used in this set of paintings show a close similarity to folk art. The broad juxtaposition of bright colours, the similarity in form found with Western Indian figures, coupled with a degree of dalliance found in the general tone of the paintings, mark it as an important addition to the illustrations of the Rāgamālās. The folk character seems to be further enhanced by the introduction of the Māru Rāginī. This painting draws heavily upon the popular legend of Dholā-Māru.

The illustration shows a man and woman on the back of a spirited

36. Ibid., Fig. 1.
camel. According to Mr. G.K. Kanoria, a Hindu element is noticed in the use of Dhoti, absence of beard, black wrist bands and sandalwood paste on forehead, with beads as adornments on neck. 37 — The Chawand set thus forms a landmark in the field of illustrated Rāgamālā texts.

Another important set of Rāgamala illustration belonging to the Mewar idiom is a set painted in Udaipur by the artist Sahibdī. It is dated 1628. Most of the pages of this set were in the collection of Mr. Moti Chand Khajanchi of Bikaner, now it is transferred to the National Museum, New Delhi. The most interesting example of these, is a Megha Mallārā rāgini. — This shows a dark green background, which is lighted up by a streak of white, showing flying cranes. Krishna dressed in a chakdar Jama (the six pointed dress made fashionable at Akbar's court) is seen dancing with his arm round a woman. He is attended by two women with drum and cymbol. Here the symbolisation of Krishna as Rāga Megha Mallar is complete. The mood of the Rāgini seems to have been captured fully by the artist. The drawing and colour composition of the entire set shows a great deal of advancement from the previous Chawand Rāgamala. "Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray commenting on the pictorial style writes —

"A comparison of this Rāgamālā with that painted at Chawand, some twenty years earlier admirably demonstrates the nature of the impact which final submission to the Mughal made on the Mewar artist." 38

37. Ibid. Pg. 3.
In fact, not only was Mughal courtly dress adopted, the entire character of the draughtsmanship underwent a change. The paintings became more finished and sophisticated in drawing and application of colour.

The next important Ragamala set of the Mewar idiom is the 'Gem palace Rāgamālā' now reserved in the National Museum, New Delhi. Some very interesting paintings are found in this set. It contains the name of the Rāga or Rāginī at the top format with an inscription describing the Musical mode. The colours used are mainly dark, red, green, Indian red along with light and pastel shades of pink mauve, blue etc. The set is dated c. 1650 A.D.

The most interesting depictions of this set are the Māru Rāginī, the Soraṭha Rāginī, the Sārang Rāginī and the Rāmgiri Rāginī. The Māru rāginī depicts two incidents together. On the upper level a woman is seen to be offering a cup to a man, below another woman is seen feeding the camel. This motif also seems to have drawn the descriptions from the popular tale of Dholā Māru. The decorative interest of the painting is heightened by the floral complet on which the man and women are seated.

The Soraṭha Rāginī shows a woman peeping through a window. In front a man is seen on horseback aimed with bows and arrows, proceeded by a man with a spear on foot. The intermixture of colours, sap green, and white with red, blue and yellow is extremely interesting.

The Sārang Rāginī is interesting iconographically. It shows Krishna, four armed with Sanikha, Chakra, Gadā Padma attended
by a standing woman with a bowl in one hand. Below this are seen cows grouped together.

The note of amour, becomes clear in the Rāngiri Rāgini. This shows a woman with the face turned towards the right, with probably a beetle leaf in her hand. A man on the left is seen kneeling in a supplicating position. At the door stands a woman with a bowl of beetle leaves.

The Gem palace Rāgamālā shows a mature technique of painting. By 1650, the Mewar idiom had quite clearly assimilated the impact of Mughal court art. Now it turned this acquired skill to the depiction of motifs, which sprang from their own experiences. The Rāgamālā illustrations become specially rich in quality and number during this period. The illustrations in the other Rajasthani schools of painting also became quite profuse in production.

The fragmentary painting from a scattered Rāgamālā set, marks the beginning of the Bundi school. Of these the Bhairavi Rāgini is in the Municipal Museum, Allahabad, while the Deepak Rāga is reserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras. Both these paintings have been discussed by scholars, mainly in the context of chronology and provenance. The paintings show certain archaic features. The figures, specially the Bhairavi rāgini has a heavy face with large features. But the colouring is extremely interesting. **Messrs. Barret and Gray have greatly praised these paintings.**

According to them the artist has been influenced by certain elements

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39. Ibid. Pg. 134.
in Mughal painting of the late Akbar period which has made the
treatment of natural forms more precise. They also notice a
certain similarity with the Chauwand Ragamala in the formal charac-
teristics of the human figures. Mr. Promode Chandra has dated
these paintings to be about 1625 A.D. This date is now generally
accepted.

That Rāgamālā illustrations were quite popular in the
Bundi School is borne out by discoveries of several fragmentary
sets of Ragamalas in various collections. A fragmentary set in
the collection of Sm. Madhuri Desai and another in the collection
of Mr. G.K. Kanoria may be mentioned for their interesting use of
colour and clear composition. The G.K. Kanoria Rāgamālā is
dated about C. 1660 A.D. by Messrs. Barret and Gray.

An early series of Rāgamālā painting is reserved in the
collection of Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. This was painted
at Pali by an artist named Virji. The inscription which gives
the date Samvat 1680 (1628 A.D.) and the name of the artist is
found on the thirty-fifth illustration of the Rāgamālā — the
Nātā Rāginī. The language is found to be a mixed Sanskrit and
Rajasthani. Kumar Sangram Singh was kind enough to publish this

    Pg. 2. (As I have already mentioned in Ch. II p. 54)
41. Barret and Gray : Painting of India. Pg. 140
42. Sangram Singh : 'An Early Ragamala Ms. from Pali' in Lalit Kala, No. 7,
    April 1960 pg. 76. (Mentioned already in Ch. II p. 44).
According to him, these paintings should be considered as an important evidence in determining the origin of the Marwar school of painting.

The set is complete with thirty six illustrations with an extra painting of the Maru Rāginī. The average size of each illustration is 8" x 6", and they are painted on very thin paper. The colour scheme of the paintings are quite mellow in tone. The dominant colours are yellow, mauve white and blue. Kumar Sangram Singh writes —

"The sky is black in all the illustrations. The earth has been shown light brown and in those where rani is depicted green." 43

The costumes and figure types are very interesting. The features resemble general Marwari characteristic. The women are shown wearing mlanga, baisrā, dupattā, kachalā but no choli. Kumar Sangram Singh writes that even now the use of cholis are absent among a large number of village women. The male figures are shown with Jahangiri style turban and Jāmās with four or six points. The peacock feathers are used as head gears. Kumar Sangram writes —

"The peacock feathers on the head gear, and peacock motifs have always remained favourite features of art in Rajasthan." 44

Probably this is because the bird is as common as the household hen, in Rajasthan.

Though Kumar Sangram Singh writes that this set was painted — "at the court of one of the most important and

43. Ibid. Pg. 80.
44. Ibid. Pg. 80
chivalrous thikendars, namely Bithal Dās of Pāli', the style is very close to folk tradition. The inscription is mixed Sanskrit and Hindi, and the addition of the Maru Rāgini act as further evidence to the influence exerted by common popular taste. The Rāgamālā becomes appealing because it springs not from bourgeois patronage, but because it reflects the artistic urge of the people who belonged to the soil.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Rāgamālā painting became profuse all over Rajasthan. It was considered as a very important theme by all the Schools of painting. Jaipur, Bikaner, Malwa all became centres from which Rāgamālā illustrations developed. The prevalence of music in all feudal centres of art, seemed to cast its shadow upon men, who turned with great interest to the pictorial version of this popular art.

A very interesting painting by the artist Ruknuddin of the Bikaner idiom, is found in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh. It is dated about 1680 A.D. The illustration shows the Deepak Rāga. The man and woman are seated on a red divan. Gold is used in the decorations of their clothes and ornament. In the dark and glossy background candles are shown throwing their lights. The whole painting is extremely careful in the rendering of details. It leaves a lasting impression upon the viewer.

A large number of Rāgamālā illustrations have also been found from Malwa. The earliest is a dispersed set, whose date and

place of origin is still a matter of controversy. According to K. Khandalwala, it should be considered as modern Nasirgarh, but this point is refuted by Dr. Anand Krishna. Apart from this, the National Museum possesses fragmentary sets of Rāgamālās painted in about 1650 A.D., 1660 A.D., 1680 and 1690 A.D. The Bharat Kala Bhavan, also possess an interesting Rāgamala painted in 1680 A.D.

Discussion of Rāgamala sets remain incomplete without the mention of the 46th Rāgamālā. This set is still a subject of controversy. The Rāgamala set is now reserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Its discovery, among the Persian mss., presented by Bishop Ladd, startled the scholars.47 The hunt then began, to find its place of origin. There are eighteen pictures. Each is surmounted by a title in Persian. The Rāgas and Rāginīs depicted are — Malhār, Maligora, Guriakalī, Bhivasa, Kanhārā, Bhairon, Āsāvari, Dhanaśrī, Nāta Hindola, Mālkaus, Syēma Gujari, Pancham, Varāri, Bhairavi, Devakali, Bilāwal and Vasārt.

The colours used show a uniform pattern. Pale yellow wash seems to be used for the general background, and the sky is rendered pale blue. Bright colours of orange, red, mauve and


47. Bishop Ladd is known to have been a scholar and teacher at Oxford from 1594-1641 A.D. In 1630 he became the Chancellor of the University. He was said to have a great deal of interest in Oriental Studies.
yellow are used for clothes. While the buildings show white walls, pink supporting pillars, dark red doors and canopies with variegated roofs which sometimes have pale green tops.

The costumes used, show the prevalence of the chākhār Jāmā.

The controversy round provenance, mainly grew up when Binyan in the 'Court Painters of the Grand Mughals' (1921) referred to this series as being Hindu in style. Mr. Karl Khandalwala in his study sums up the controversy. According to Mr. N.C. Mehta and Dr. Noti Chandra, this set should be considered Deccani while Dr. H. Goetz has called it of early Kachwāh school of Amber and dated it 1570-1680. Mr. Basil Gray differing from these opinions, has termed it Rajasthani. According to him it should be dated 1600-1610 A.D. Mr. Karl Khandalwala however considers it to be of Deccani origin and dates it about 1625 A.D.

An unpublished Rāgamalā set belonging to the Pratap Sangrahālay, Udaipur is extremely interesting. It belongs to the Jaipur School. The date is considered to be about the end of the Seventeenth century. The size of the paintings are 6" x 8" inches. The whole set is finely painted. It is as sophisticated as the Pahari miniatures with delicate finish, and rendering of minute details. Gold is also used in a fine manner. There are about 37

paintings, and the set seems complete. Though the yellow margin on top leaves space, only the names of the Rāgas are inscribed; sometimes even this is left vacant.

The interesting point of this set lies in the variations it offers to the usual Rāgamālā text. In general it seems to follow the school of Kallināth — with Śrī, Vasanta, Megha and Panchama. But instead of the Rāga Nāta-mārāyāpa it depicts the Deepak Rāga.

Another incomplete set of Rāgamālā showing interesting variations is a set reserved in the Central Museum, Jaipur. According to Mr. Satya Prakash this belongs to the Jaipur sub-school and should be dated late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. But Mr. Mohan Lal Gupta (Superintendent of the Museum and Archaeology) informed us, that he considered it to be an example of the eighteenth century Deccan school.

The interesting point of this set lies in its iconographic variations in the grouping of the Rāginīs. It shows the Bhairava Rāga, with Rāginīs — Bhairavi, Mālārī, Paṭmañjari, Lalitā and Nār. Śrī Rāga with Rāginīs Pancham Rāga, Kamod set mālār, Aśāvari and Kedār. Mālakaus's Rāginīs are Gauḍakari, Gauḍī, Māṇvati, Guṇakali, and Khambāvati. Megha mālār's Rāginīs are — Mālava Gaurī, Kākubha Gujarī, Bairārī, Wasant and Des Barārī and Hindol's Rāginīs are — Madhu mādhavi, Deva Gandhārī, Todi, Deśākh and Bīlāwal.

This grouping is not found in any ancient text.

A study of the actual paintings reveal a great deal of variety. In very few cases, can a set be said to adhere to a particular text. Moreover local demands are often seen to create local treatises on music. Thus mixed languages are seen in the inscription as in the case of the Rāgamālā from Pali in Kumar Sangram Singh's collection. This variation is the example of the inventing spirit existent among the artists. This touch of imagination, introduces the medieval artist as an individual. The student of art is touched by a direct contact, for which he remains grateful.