Chapter 3 - Raga grammar, usage, and approach to interpretation.

Brief summary:

There are no precedents or records available to indicate that the tradition of Carnatic music or any part of Kalpita or Kalpana sangita can be disassociated from the term Raga. Hence, Carnatic music is also known as ‘Raga’ music. This chapter deals with this and other related aspects in the following manner:

1. Definition and origin of the word Raga
2. Technical terms and classifications of sruthis, swaras and swara groups (gamakas) and swara usages (graha, amsa, nyasa etc.)
3. Understanding the term ‘Raga’, ‘Raga Lakshana’ and a brief look at the texts associated with them.
4. Ancient and Modern usages – how Raga and Raga alapana have been looked at earlier, and how they are treated today.

Understanding Raga

A raga (Sanskrit राग, literally "colour, hue" but also "beauty, melody"; also spelled raag, raaga, ragam) is one of the melodic modes used in Indian classical music. It can be classified as an absolute mode, i.e., one form of music which can exist by itself. The individual notes and the raga forms have been referred to as divine beings (Swara devatas and Raga devatas).

“Ranj” or to be dyed in or to glow, or to colour is the root of the word Raga.

“Ranjayathe iti Ragah” is a common expression. Raga can be taken to mean “feeling”, as the ‘colour’ of the mind is emotion.

38 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raga
Bharata Muni has used the word “Jati” in the Natyashastra to indicate a basic array of sruthis or notes. Further, based on the use of murchanas and kramas, he has indicated the emergence of specific melodic patterns, or Vikritha Jatis that have been renamed as Ragas. That Indian music existed in a highly advanced form earlier to Bharata has been acknowledged by non-Indian authors too.

Brhaddesi of Sage Matanga is the first extant text (available in parts only as of today) to describe Raga, to introduce swara notation, an approach towards concepts like Desi (subtle sound) Nada (vibration) which is prevalent in all types of performing art. Shruthi, Swara, Grama, Murchana etc. are also explained to establish the concept of Desi and its counterpart Marga. Varna and Alankara (melodic repetitive patterns) are described as ways to beautify the raga or the melody. Sthayi, Arohi, Avarohi and Sanchari are the concepts for the elaboration and they are used to ‘colour’ the Varnas in a cyclic or repetitive fashion (alankara) to get the impetus of creativity. Matanga also describes the progenitor Jatis to some extent. Sage Matanga was the first to have used the word “Raga” and the definition given by him is “That which pleases and enamours one through the swara varnas and their intonation or expression through different rasas”. The association of Swaras with emotions like heroism or valour, compassion, romantic appeal etc. has been described both by Bharata Muni and by Matanga.

In another period, around 1200 AD, the Sangita Ratnakara of Sharangadeva continues in the same approach of sruthis, swaras and rasas, but also gives a multi stage method of Raga elaboration i.e., the stages Akshipthika, Vidari, Ragavardhani Sthayi, and Nyasa are allied concepts to explain the method of elaboration of each stage.

In general, it can also be observed that any raga uses a series of five or more musical notes upon which a melody is constructed. Four note ragas have also been conceived and performed, but such ragas are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to remember that the way the notes are approached and rendered in musical phrases and the mood they convey are more important in defining a raga than the notes themselves. In the

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Indian musical tradition, Ragas are associated with emotions, as well as different times of the day, or with seasons. Indian classical music is always set in a Raga. Even non-classical music such as popular Indian film songs and ghazals sometimes use Ragas in their compositions, which show that Ragas convey emotions very well.

Joep Bor of the Rotterdam Conservatory of Music defined Raga as "tonal framework for composition and improvisation." Nazir Jairazbhoy, chairman of UCLA's department of ethnomusicology, characterises Ragas as separated by scale, line of ascent and descent, transience, emphasized notes and register, and intonation and ornaments.

A look at some technical terms used in describing Raga

**Swara, Shruthi, Swarasthana, Shuddha Swara and Anuswara.**

The term Swara denotes the musical note or in scientific terms, the frequency. Shruthi is the term used to generally indicate the position of the note (again frequency) which is heard (or being considered). Thus Swara and Shruthi are often used as synonyms. Though Swara is used to refer to larger values or semi-tonal level ones, whereas shruthi is used for values that are closer to quarter tonal values.

Swarasthana refers to the placement of the note (meaning its precise value in terms of frequency). Hz (Hertz) is a common unit used to measure the frequency.

Basically, the swaras are 7 – sapthaswaras, meaning that they are called by the seven short names sa, ri, ga ma, pa, dha (henceforth referred to as da, for simplicity) and ni. Even in Hindustani music, they are called by the same names, with the exception of ri being called as ‘re’. Their abbreviations are given hereafter as s, r g, m, p, d and n in the printed form.

The ‘shuddha’ swarasthana or sudhaswara refer to the situations where the note in consideration can be rendered as dirgha or elongated, and also un-ornamented with gamakas. Thus, 2 unchangeable or avikrutha notes sa & pa + the 10 vikrutha notes (2 varieties each of ri, ga ma, da and ni) thus make for 12 swarasthanas, Dirgha (elongation) and Shuddha (unadorned) are the 2 key attributes.
Anuswaras are typically those swara that are basically dependent on a shuddha swara, and occur in the course of a movement. For e.g., ri in Saveri raga is often rendered as the combination s..r repeated many times in quick succession. (s..r s..r s..r s..r). Here it can be noted that s is the dirgha shuddha swara and r is the hrsva (short)anuswara. In slow speed, the anuswara shruthi values are rarely used like shuddha swaras in Carnatic music. Mostly, they occur plain and unadorned only in fast passages. Another point of interest is that the anuswaras as a rule, occur in between 2 shuddha swaras and in the slow raga usages they almost always commence and end with shuddha swaras.

The frequency values of the shuddha swaras and the anuswaras vis a vis the frequency of the adhara shadja are derived and discussed in Chapter 4.

**Gamakas**

The Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini (SSP) of Subbarama Dikshithar is one of the later authentic and widely followed repositories of the knowledge about Raga Lakshana that has and is being used extensively to understand and describe Raga. It describes 15 gamakas in detail as played on the veena.

Gamaka is the general term given to describe raga usages, or a grouping of swaras in the course of the raga rendition. Different gamakas (even when based on the same swara) portray different shades and this is one of the factors that helps one identify ragas uniquely and also differentiate between similar ragas.

Yet again, the swaras can be classified in terms of their occurrence during Gamaka i.e. oscillated as part of a phrase:

- **Kampita swara** – Swara that occurs as an oscillation, using the shuddha swaras and any of their associated anuswaras.
- **Hrasva swara** – Swara that occurs for a very short interval of time.
- **Dirgha swara** – Swara that can be elongated (either as a long and single unchanged note or as an oscillating swara).

Swaras can be further classified into many categories in the context of describing Raga, when a sangathī – or a phrase in the raga is formed and sung.
- Graha swara: the swara commencing the melody.
- Amsa swara: the predominant swara that either formed the tonic note Sa or one that frequently occurred in the melody.
- Tara swara: the swara in the higher register up to which the melodic movement could ascend.
- Mandra swara: the swara in the lower register up to which the melodic movement could descend.
- Nyasa swara: the swara on which a song (or series of phrases) finally conclude.
- Apanyasa: the swara on which a section of the song can conclude.
- Alpatva swara: the swara, which should be sparingly used or rendered weak.
- Bahutva: swara, which is strong and frequently used.
- Śhaḍava swara: the swara, which could be omitted to render the Jati (or raga) in six notes.
- Auḍuva swaras: those two swaras, which could be dropped to render the jati in five swaras.

**Raga Lakshana – a detailed overview**

Raga has many meanings as a Sanskrit word. The definition of Raga in the musical context can refer to both the analysis of melody as well as the feeling it evokes. Raga Lakshana generally means describing the grammar of the Raga, as arohana and avarohana swaras (ascent and descent) along with other rules like prayogas (typical usages) and gamakas (permitted ornamentation or movements of the swaras). When Raga is sung, it is the result of the Vidwans’ intellect (Lakshana) and his imagination (Lakshya). A brief look at what important texts on music prescribe is necessary.

**Which came first – Raga Lakshana or Raga Lakshya?**

Swami Prajnanananda gives an interesting narrative:

In the primitive, prehistoric and Vedic periods, we do not come across the use of the microtones. But their existence cannot be denied even in those times, and it can be said that in those periods men did not feel it necessary to determine them in their musical systems. (So the use of microtones may properly be assigned to the beginning of the classical period in the
period 600-500 B.C., when the Vedic music (sama gita) was falling out of practice and the laukika Gandharva type of systematic-cum scientific music gaining ascendency over it. In Greece, the microtones were devised in the beginning of the classical period by the Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, and the system was developed by the Pythagorians. In India, it is said that the microtones were devised by Brahma or Brahmabharata, the first promulgator of the Gandharva type of music, and afterwards it was made perfect by Narada of the Shiksa (1st century, A. D.) and Bharata of the Natyasastra in the 2nd century A. D. Narada has mentioned about 5 basic minute tones dipta, dyata, karuna, mridu and madhya, and he has called them 'shrutis'.  

Bharatha’s Natya Shastra give detailed explanation of each Jathi and the gramas. Raga has been written, for example, in the SangIta Sampradaya Pradarshini (circa 1905). It is also a known fact that written manuscripts were not freely available or accessible as they are in the modern internet revolution. Hence, can we conclude that process of describing Raga Lakshana was elaborated at a later stage, over millenniums, and simultaneously musicians performed ragas (for e.g., Anandabhairavi, ancient Raga) based on their observation, intuition and feeling.

This statement can be further derived from the way a musician begins to sing a raga. In most cases, the traditional method of moulding a musician was Gurukula vasa (meaning a stay – or apprenticeship with the teacher) wherein, he observed the Guru perform many a time (either in the company of peers or in the concert). Reference to ancient manuscripts elucidating detailed Raga Lakshana, or the method of analysing the raga – with the relevant rules was quite a rarity. This should be borne in mind, before attempting to analyse Raga Lakshana or Raga Lakshaya in detail.

Raga Lakshana can also be called as the technical boundary of the raga or as the Raga grammar. There are various factors that determine the Lakshana of a raga — in many cases, old treatises mention the Lakshanas of a Raga – the descriptors.

41 Swami Prajnananda, A History of Indian Music, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1963, page 16
Some of them are:

- Murchana (the life breath – as it were, of the raga) based on its Arohana and the Avarohana (the ascending the descending order of the scale),
- Sancharis - characteristic phrases of the raga,
- Visesha prayogas - the special distinguishing usages.
- Gamakas peculiar to a particular raga and so on.

In earlier times, study of music followed the “Guru-Shishya” tradition, and rarely did exist any written text. First classical music began as abhyasa, and it was only later that shastras were studied. It is probable that only during the period of Bharata (300 BC) were the theories of Sangita documented for the first time, and this was termed as “Natya Shastra”. For a considerable period of time it was one of the only authoritative treatise (Pramana Grantha) for the whole of India. After that, independent growth of classical music occurred across different parts of India, in different forms.

Sharngadeva’s Sangita Ratnakara is the first documented work on South Indian classical music, written around the year 1200. He hailed from Devagiri, which was at the time a part of Carnatica (but is now Daulatabad, province of Hyderabad). Later, in 1350BC, South Indian classical music obtained a well-defined structure through the works of Madhava and Vidhyaranya. Apart from strengthening the SangIta shastras (Sangita Shastra pravartane) by writing “Sangita Saara”, they were also ministers of the Vijayanagara Empire, and Heads of Shringeri Mutt.

Carnatic music saw renewed growth during the Vijayanagar Empire by the Kannada Haridasa movement of Vyasaraja, Purandara Dasa, Kanakadasa and others. Among the Haridasa movement, Purandara Dasa who is known as the Sangita Pitamaha (the father of Carnatic music), is credited with the founding of the system of teaching Carnatic music. Others of the Haridasa movement, helped shaped the music of their time and prepared for the future by influencing some of the composers who came after them. Thyagaraja acknowledges the influence of Purandara Dasa. Tulajaji, the Maharashtra ruler of Tanjore (1729-35 A.D.), writes of the music of Haridasas in his book Sangita Saramrita, and venerates Vyasaraya and Purandara Dasa as great composers.
Around 1650 AD, Raghunatha Nayaka wrote “Sangita Sudha”, where he has quoted a lot about “Sangita Sara” by Madhava-Vidyaranya. There is another view that the work was authored by Govinda Dikshithar, who was a minister in the court of King Achyuta Nayaka of Thanjavur.\textsuperscript{43}

Govinda Dikshitars’ son was the renowned Venkatamakhin, who is credited with the classification of ragas in the Melakartha System, and he wrote his most important work; \textit{Caturdandi Prakashika} (c.1635 CE) in Sanskrit. Kshetrajna who wrote “Shrungara padas” (which also deals with theory of Sangita Shastra) was also living at this time (1650). During the time of Vidhyaranya, there were 15 Melakartha ragas, which became 72 during the time of Venkatamakhin. Apart from above mentioned theorists, many other theorists like Kallinatha, Ramamathya, Somanatha, etc. have contributed a lot to the development of Carnatic music. Thus the development of Carnatic music from Sharangadeva to Venkatamakhin (a duration of 650 years) resulted in its further expansion and establishment.

Treatises on music pertinent to the scope of this thesis

Bharatha’s Natya Shastra

The \textit{Natya Shastra} (Sanskrit: नाट्य शास्त्र) is an ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts, encompassing theatre, dance and music. It was written during the period between 200 BC and 200 AD in India and is traditionally attributed to the Sage Bharata.

The Natya Shastra is very wide in its scope. While it primarily deals with drama, it has come to influence music, classical Indian dance, and literature as well. It covers stage design, music, dance, makeup, and virtually every other aspect of stage presentation. Thus, it implies that Natya Shastra is the foundation of the fine arts in India and very important to the history of Indian classical music, mainly because it is the only text which gives such detail about the music and instruments of the period. Abhinavabharati by Abhinavagupta is the most authoritative commentary on the Natya Shastra.

\textsuperscript{43} S. Subrahmanya Sastri, Sangita Ratnakara of Sharangadeva, with Kalanidhi of Kallinatha and Sudhakara of Simhabhupala, Vol I, page xi, The Adyar Library, 1943

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After the Samaveda, which dealt with ritual utterances of the Vedas, the Natya Shastra was the first major text that dealt with music at length. It was considered the defining treatise of Indian classical music until the 13th century, when the stream bifurcated into Hindustani classical music in North India and Pakistan, due to the influence of Persian and Arab music, and Carnatic classical music in South India, the stronghold of the Hindu kingdoms.

While much of the discussion of music in the Natyashastra focuses on musical instruments, it also emphasizes several theoretical aspects that remained fundamental to Indian music. Establishment of Shadja grama as the first, defining scale or grama. The word Shadja (ष) means born out of the sixth note “dha”, refers to the fact that once this note (often referred to as "sa" and notated as s or S) is fixed, the placement of other notes in the scale is determined. 22 is the number of clearly distinguishable microtones (sruthis) in an octave.

Principle of Consonance: Consists of two principles:

- The first principle states that there exists a fundamental note in the musical scale which is Avinashi (अविनाशी) and Avilopi (अविलोपी) i.e., the note is ever-present and unchanging.
- The second principle often treated as law, states that there exists a natural consonance between notes; the best between Shadjam and Tara Shadjam, the next best between Shadjam and Panchamam.

The Natya Shastra also suggest the notion of musical modes or jatis which are the origin of the notion of the modern melodic structures known as ragas. Their role in invoking emotions is emphasized; thus compositions emphasizing the notes gandhara or panchamam are said to be related to tragedy (karuna rasa) whereas Shadjam and rishabham is to be emphasized for evoking heroism (vIra rasa).

In the chapter on “Flute” in Natya Shastra, Bharata Muni explains how the full open hole of the flute produces a Shadja swara of 4 sruthis, and how partial opening produces a note of 2 sruthis, and alternate opening and closing a swara of 3 sruthis. Thus, he can said to have
looked at swaras as to be sung envelopes of sruthis, rather than just as a single shruthi being held for a long time. The concept of sthana, or the important or resting place of the swara at any shruti, makes up the word swarasthana, often used even today.

Jatis are elaborated in greater detail in the text Dattilam, composed around the same time as the Natyashastra. To prove the utility of shrutis in music, Bharata Muni, while explaining Shadja grama and Madhyama grama in chapters 28 and 30 of Bharat Natya Shastra, expounded the Sarana Chatushtai – the only experiment according to Bharata to obtain the correct physical configuration of Sruti Swara arrangement to Shadja Grama notes on any musical instrument (Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni Sa, corresponding to 4-3-2-4-4-3-2, totalling 22 shrutis in a Saptak (an octave). In the other words, the three gramas are put together with the Sruti intervals between the swaras for comparison:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sa grama</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ga grama</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma grama</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 Sruthi intervals in the 3 gramas.

This is the conclusion arrived at by A.H. Fox Strangways.

Another perspective is provided by H.A. Popley, another author of note in the early twentieth century.

The Sruti values of the intervals of the Sa-grama were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sa</th>
<th>Ri</th>
<th>Ga</th>
<th>Ma</th>
<th>Pa</th>
<th>Dha</th>
<th>Ni</th>
<th>Sa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ma-grama is formed by interchanging the Sruti values of the intervals before Dha and Ni and then starting on the Ma. Then it will be as follows:

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The Natyashastra also suggests several aspects of musical performance, particularly its application to vocal, instrumental and orchestral compositions. It also deals with the rasas and bhavas that may be evoked by music.

**SangIta Ratnakara of Sharangadeva**

The Sangita-Ratnakara of Sharangadeva (thirteenth century) is one of the most important musicological texts from India, which both Hindustani music and Carnatic music regard as a definitive text.

The text is also known as Saptadhyayi as it is divided into seven chapters. The first six chapters, Svaragatadhyaya, Ragavivekadhyaya, Prakirnakadhyaya, Prabandhadhyaya, Taladhyaya and Vadyadhyaya deal with the various aspects of music like Swara, Raga, Prakarnika, Prabandha, Tala and Vadya (musical instruments) while the last chapter Nartanadhyaya deals with dance.

The SangIta Ratnakara is a very important work since it is very comprehensive and maybe the longest work too. It takes into account the various works of that time and the author describes himself as “nissanka” or free of doubts. Many commentaries on this work, especially those by Kallinatha and Simhabhupala have been made. Also, the SR has been quoted and referred to in many later musical works like SangIta Sudha etc.

Some special features are that this work talks about the concepts of Swara and shruthi with reference to the Natya Shastra and also about jatis, murchanas and the various gramas like Shadja, Madhyama and Gandhara grama. Tabulations have been made of the various murchanas with the shruthi intervals mentioned too, in all the 3 gramas.

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It is also very interesting to note the appending of the chapter on Swara prastharas or swara elaboration. Starting from the single notes, and proceeding on to the two note combinations within an octave, like sr, rs, rg, gr, gm, mg, mp, pm, pd, dp, dn, nd etc., Sharangadeva next exhaustively lists all combinations that are possible using 3 notes for e.g., 6 combinations like srg, sgr, gsr, rsg, rgs and grs. Then it goes on to elaborate the same for 4 note, 5 note, 6 and finally the 5040 ways in which all 7 notes can be put together to make combinations.

Figure 3.2 Sruthi names and their distribution among the 3 gramas in Sangita Ratnakara

This work was written by Sharangadeva in the end of thirteenth century. The author mentions about his ancestry and that he was the son of Sodala, He was attached to the court
of Yadava King Singhana, whose capital was Devagiri (the present Daulatabad, in the South Maharashtra).

**Caturdandi Prakashika of Venkatamakhin**

Venkatamakhin first received his formal training under his elder brother, Yagnanarayana Dikshithar and later on under later under Danappachariar, alias Venkata Sarma.

Caturdandi Prakashika is an important landmark in Carnatic music. The name means 'Exposition of the four pillars or channels’ through which a raga manifests itself’. The word Caturdandi has been probably chosen as it denotes either the four parts of a raga alapa - stayi, sanchari, aroha and avaroha, or as four forms of singing, which have been referred to in the text as Gita, Prabandha, Taya and Alapa.

Venkatamakhin claims to have devised the 72 melakarta scheme. The ten chapters are: Veena Prakarana, Sruti, Swara, Mela, Raga, Alapa, Thaya, Geeta, Prabandha and Anubandha Prakaranas. Venkatamakhin has mentioned about one more variety of veena: Eka Tantri. These are themes that have been highly focussed upon by Venkatamakhin.

The first and comparatively most important part of the work is Vina Prakarana, which deals with fretting of the veena – basically of the 3 types of arrangements, shuddha mela, madhyama mela and Raghunathendra mela veenas. We can see that some arrangements described like shuddha mela veena, where the mandra shadja is on the first string, and the madhya shadja is on the third string are not being followed today.

The second, third, fourth and fifth prakaranas deal with shrutis, swaras, melas and ragas. The seventh and eighth prakaranas speak about alapa, taya and gita. It is important to note that the derivation of the sruthis is done after the swaras are established through lakshaya.46 In Sangita Saramruta 935 verses of Caturdandi Prakashika have been given. From here one gets an idea as to how the seventeen svaras of Caturdandi could be played on a veena and how they could be executed by the vocalist. In Ragaprakarana he elaborates the ragas which originate from the melas. His suggestion marks a shift from Tamil tradition.

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Venkatamakhin’s formula introduces a shift in the thinking. He made a very profound and path breaking attempt to systematically codify the ragas under the melas. He first defined the swaras as 16 varieties. But, later he grouped together certain sruthis under some swaras to reduce the total swaras as 12, and by manipulating the swaras mechanically, it is possible to derive 72 melas, or the Sampoorna (linear) mela paddhati.

Caturdandi Prakashika is most relevant today in the context of the melakarta system of classifying ragas. Besides the musicology, Venkatamakhin has also composed geethams and prabandhas, 24 ashtapadis in praise of Lord Thyagaraja of Tiruvarur.

It is noteworthy that Muthuswami Dikshithar followed Venkatamakhi and the Asampoorna Mela paddhati of classification of Ragas. The most prolific composer Thyagaraja is said to have studied an extant text “Swararnavam”. Legends attribute the text being gifted to him by the Sage Narada.

A perspective on Shruthi-Swara-Jathi-Murchana-Krama-Varna-Alankara

K. Vasudeva Sastry, a scholar at the famous Saraswathi Mahal Library in Tanjore, provides an interesting perspective in his 2 books\(^{47}\) which are summarised below:

- All texts like Natya Shastra, Dattilam, SangIta Ratnakara before 1200 AD and a few of them after 1700 AD like SangIta Sudha, and Caturdandi Prakashika emphasise the 4 dandi (Caturdandi) method of getting to know Raga delineation, viz., Alapa, Sthayi, Gita and Prabandha, and looks at the Jatis as a progenitor of the various Ragas.
- Sastry categorises Sthayas as different categories of well-defined musical phrasings in each Raga and Prabandhas as the early musical compositions, which are extant now, and have been replaced by krithis, kirtanas and padas.
- The texts and the practical experiments in them, like Sarana Chatushtai or tuning a 22 stringed veena, elucidate concepts of a maximum of 22 sruthis possible in an

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octave. Swaras are movements or envelopes of sruthis, with a final resting sthana, as opposed to just holding on a particular frequency, like a horn or like a note on the piano.

- The shruthi intervals within and in-between the swaras which create the Samvadi-Anuvadi-Vivadi for the Vadi, are very important in raga phrasing. He gives a very illuminating example of rgmphrasing being the Raga Chaya or the life force of Huseni raga, while another phrasing rgmdp with the Panchasruthi ri which has the samvadi in the d1 is equally important.

- Murchanas need to be thoroughly understood. The shadja grama, for example has 7 murchanas, each starting from a different note.

- Each Murchana has a basic rasa, or main emotion of the situation, based on the note of origin of the murchana.

- Within each murchana, exists the 12 krama patterns, each originating in a different note, and that defines the Chaya or the subservient upa-rasa

- Within this particular krama, the Graha, Apanyasa, Nyasa, Amsa are identified.

- The performer has to look for the Samvadi-Anuvadi-Vivadi patterns after determining the nyasa or the resting point in each krama.

- Sangita Ratnakara and other texts mention Lakshana or characteristic for every Ragas. Raga is given the Varna or colour by the usage of patterns. The colouring, as it were, can be done as Arohi (ascent), Avarohi (descent), Sthayi (in a single swara) or as Sanchari (combination of ascent/descent/stationary)

- Alankara, which is also described in the Natya Shastra, as but a variety of Varna, cab be usually associated with patterns of notes, like threes of fours or further combinations. The early lessons of all music students include a chapter on Alankaras, usually practised with the associated thalas too.

- Alankara can also be as sthayi, which means the use of the volume modulations like ebb (Prasada) and flow (Tara) in the singing of a single swara. This is done in seven different ways (combinations of ebb and flow) like Prasannadi (ragas like Bhairavi, Yadukula Kambhoji and Sri Raga), Prasannanta (Manji and Khamas), Prasannadynanta (Mukhari and Kambhoji), Prasanna Madhya (Huseni and Nattaikurinji), Krama virechita (Sahana), Prastara and Prasada.
Thyagaraja has not only been a very spiritually oriented composer, but a brilliant musician too.\textsuperscript{48} An evidence of the validity of K. Vasudeva Sastri in his above observations can be seen in his krithi “Vara Raga Layagnunu taamanucu”. Here, he decries the ‘pretenders’ as it were. “Even though people might not have experienced the differentiations of swara, jati and murchana within themselves, they go about prattling that they are masters of Raga and Laya.”\textsuperscript{49}

The important points to note in the elucidation of the Shruthi-Swara-Jathi-Murchana-Krama- Varna- Alankara system is that:

1. Formation of mela systems of Raga classification may have ignored certain aspects like murchana and kramasancharas

2. Concepts like Rasa and upa rasa and Sthayi swara alankara may have been lost due to the dark ages in the Indian musical history (Periods of invasions by the Mughals in North and South India) and subsequently have not been understood or have been ignored by theorists.

3. Hence, the new systems may have seen the introduction of the development of Ragas note by note, as it were – a concept that was not accepted by the old school practitioners like Thyagaraja and found expression in his songs like “Vara raga Laya”

A look at Gamakas and their varieties

There are many different types of Gamaka systems. Sharangadeva lists 15 gamakas, while Ahobala describes 17. SSP provides a detailed look at the 15 Gamakams. The various gamakams have symbols designated to them and the method of playing them on the veena has also been given.

\textsuperscript{48} His 8 – day delineation of Yadukula Kambhoji as given by Prof Sambamurthy, Great Composers, Thyagaraja, The Indian Music Publishing House, 2002

\textsuperscript{49} The krithi ‘Vara Raga Laya” in Chenchu Kambhoji as explained in http://thyagaraja-vaibhavam.blogspot.com/2007/12/thyagaraja-kriti-vara-raaga-laya-raga.html
Kampitam: again this can be subdivided into linam, andolitam and plavitam. Also seen are the other gamakams Sphuritam, Pratyahatam, Nokku, Ravai, Khandippu, Vali, Jaru (both Etra Jaru and Erakka Jaru), Orikkai, Odukkal

Given below is a snapshot (From an English translation) of how SSP uses a system of symbols to describe the gamakas (based on the handling of the notes on the Veena.

### Symbols used in Saṅgīta Saṁpradāya Pradārṣini

- Gamaka Symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gamaka name</th>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kampitam</td>
<td>~~~</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sphuritam</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pratyāhatam</td>
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<tr>
<td>nokku</td>
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<td>Ravai</td>
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<td>kandippu</td>
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<td>vali</td>
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<tr>
<td>ētrajāru</td>
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<td>erakkajāru</td>
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<tr>
<td>odukkal</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orikai</td>
<td>γ</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The book uses another symbol, ‘’~’ over a svarām, as in ‘d, which is not used in this English edition (please see our footnote in section 2.0.5 for an explanation).
- Besides ‘,’ (comma) and ‘;’ (semicolon), other symbols that we use are h (flat), h, and i.

Figure 3.3 Gamakas and their varieties as given in SSP

Some passages in the SSP explain the gamakas in detail, keeping the play of the veena in mind. A snapshot is seen below.

(12) tribhinam

While playing the vīrā sometimes this gamaka is employed to create enjoyment by placing the left hand index finger or middle finger or both flat and hard on the fret of any of the navarathānams of the mandrā, pāncamaṃ and śīrvāni strings and using the fingers of the right hand and plucking on the above three strings either with a single pluck or with separate plucks is called tribhinam.

(13) mudritam

The graces of notes produced while singing with the mouth closed is called mudritam. It is said that this gamaka applies only to vocal music.

(14) nāmitam

The graces of notes that are produced when subtle tones are sung or played on the vīrā by reducing the volume of sound are called nāmitam.

Figure 3.4 Gamakas – detailed explanation as given in SSP
An illustrious ancestor of Subbarama Dikshithar was Muthuswami Dikshithar, who refers to Goddess Meenakshi as ‘dasā Gamakakriye’ in the krithi “Meenakshi me mudam dehi”. There are two or more meanings in the phrase:

1. The name of the Raga is Gamakakriya
2. Goddess Meenakshi is the primordial creator of the gamakas
3. There are ten (dasā) important gamakas which occur (all together or in groups in the course of a Raga phrase)

We can summarise the information about the gamakas by noting the classification of gamakas in the SSP. Even though SSP details 15 types of gamakas based on their rendering on the veena, we can abbreviate them to 10 main types in following way:

1. Aroha- notes in ascending order
2. Avaroha-notes in descending order
3. Murchana- completion of an octave length from each note (simply, aroha and avaroha together).
4. Jaru-different notes reached keeping one note constant
5. Sphurita- repeating same note twice e.g. (ss or rr or rss, grr etc.)
6. Kampita- oscillation of a note from a shuddha swarasthana to an anuswaram (either above it or below it) and the return back to the shuddha swarasthana. For e.g., the phrase (d..dnd..) repeated often in Kambhoji raga. Here d is the shuddha swara and n is the anuswara above it.
7. Ahata-pairs of notes. First note of subsequent pair will be the last note of predecessor sung in the ascending order (e.g. SR-RG-GM)
8. Pratyahata- This is Aahata in descending order e.g.(RS – SN – ND)
9. Tripuchcha – one note occurring thrice (SSS or RRR etc.)
10. Andolita- mix of hrasva and dheerga swaras (P……D…PG…R in Mohanam etc.)

In the absence of the concept of audio recording at the beginning of the 20th Century, when SSP was written, this system of classification of Gamakas and the symbols was the only way for the author Sri Subbarama Dikshithar to describe the Raga Lakshana of many ragas taking them in order of the Melakartha system (both the individual melas and their
janyas) in detail. Attempts are being made now by others to re-interpret the notations in an audio fashion, in order to study and compare them with the current day usages.

**Raga Lakshana**

**A look at the Raga Lakshana of Todi**

First, the Lakshana as explained in SSP is looked at:

**Todi raga as explained in SSP.**

![Lakshana Details](image)

**Figure 3.5 Todi raga as given in SSP**

This information can be classified in the following headings:

1. The “raganga” or Melakartha number of the raga
2. The chakra and the mela number in that chakra
3. Its mnemonic (the concise description of the individual notes in the raga)
4. The full name according to the katapayadhi sankhya
5. The lakshana shloka of the raga – giving the characteristic information about the raga in a verse or two, in Sanskrit.
6. The murchana (the life breath of the raga) – which is the description of the ascent and descent of the raga
7. The lakshana details explained with reference to the swaras and gamakas.
An attempt is made to explain and expand on the information given in the SSP.

The mela and the status of the raga

The Raga is 8\textsuperscript{th} in the 72 mela scheme, and “netra sri” means that this is the second raga in the second (netra) chakra.

The raga number 8 is derived from its name. In accordance with the katapayadhi sankhya, the prefix “Jana” indicates the numbers 8 for Ja and 10 (or 0) for na. The calculator for the syllables is given below:

\begin{array}{ccccccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\
ka & kha & ga & gha & gna & cha & Cha & ja & jha & ~na \\
ta & tha & da & d’ha & Na & tha & Tha & dha & Dha & na \\
pa & p’ha & ba & bha & ma \\
ya & ra & la & va & sha & Sha & sa & ha & LA
\end{array}

Todi is considered as a Raga that came to South India from the North – note the reference in the SSP as “Auttara” (meaning north) ragam.

However, the raga has been evolved to a very advanced stage in the hands of the composers – Thyagaraja (more than 25 krithis), Dikshithar and Shyama Sastri have composed in varied ways, with different tempos, with different starting points (Graha swaras) and with different thalas and with variety in sahithya bhava too.

Bhairavi thaat of Hindustani music corresponds to Todi. (Note that Todi has been referred to as an Auttara (northern) raga. It has always maintained the status of a major parent raga, giving rise to a number of janya ragas.

The swaras

The swaras are Shadja, shuddha rishabha, shuddha gandhara, shuddha madhyama, panchama, shuddha dhaivata and kaisikhi nishada.

The well-distributed svara intervals of this scale, R1–G1, G1-M1, M1-P, D1-N1 & N1-S: chatushruti interval;

S-R1 & P-D1: dvishruti interval.
There are 5 chatushruti intervals and 2 dvishruti intervals and no tishruti intervals.

Also, it is one of those uttama melas having samvadi pairs for all the svaras, like S-M1, S-P, R1-D1, G1-D1, G1-N1 and M1-N1. There is so much of samvaditva or consonance inherent in its structure. Hence the raga is so appealing to the senses and it instantly ushers in a mood of sublimity.

If we look at the purvanga and the uttaranga, the SRGM is identical to the PDNS, thus creating an instant familiarity with the form of the raga (Raga swaroopa).

**The lakshana details** (With information incorporated from the playing of the sancharis, lakshana geethams and the krithis as given in the SSP).

Todi is a Tristhayi raga, meaning that it can be rendered elaborately in 3 octaves. Thus it offers to vocalists a medium to show off their voice capabilities provided they have the needed range. There is also tremendous scope for alapana in a variety of colours, depending upon the composition to follow.

Though all the svaras contribute equally to the raga’s rakthi or essence, sa is the main jiva and nyasa swara. Ga, ma, pa, da and ni are the jiva or amsa swaras in Todi. Of these, ma, pa and to some extent da are used as nyasa or ending svaras. All the swaras except sa and pa can be used with Gamaka, and in the case of pa varja prayogas (usages without pa) the notes can be sung with very little ornamentation, and in the case of sa and pa varja, the notes can be rendered as plain notes. Thus, both in the highly ornamented compositions like ‘Rave himagiri’ and in the ‘plain’ sangathis of compositions like ‘Jesinadella’, the swaras contribute largely to the ranjakatva or the widespread appreciation of the raga.

Todi can be called as a sarva svara gamaka varika rakthi raga, and that too a major raga giving endless scope for elaboration. But, there are certain restrictions when it comes to the gamaka patterns.

Ga functions as an important jiva or amsa svara. No delineation of this raga would be complete without highlighting the importance of g. It is common to hear shadja varja and panchama varja prayogas (phrases eschewing s and p) both in the ascent and descent, as seen in the beginning of the Muthuswami Dikshithar krithi “Sri Subrahmanyo”. Combinations like...
rg~m, pmg~rs etc. are commonly employed to add beauty. Ga can also be used as a graha swara, as in the case of the compositions like “Karthikeya gangeya” by Papanasam Sivan or “Ananda Natesa” by Ramaswamy Sivan.

Ga is also one of the most characteristic notes in this raga, with phrases like g….grr..s..... But there are so many variations for ga, and they should all be carefully understood through the compositions. “rave Himagiri kumari” is one of the magnum opus compositions – a swarajathi by Shyama Sastri and he shows the multiple uses of ga in the first swara – sahithya “nata jana paripalini” as dnsrgrg...gmgrsr….rsnsd…. s….n (Rave Himagiri). The different ga usages are:

1. dnsrgr.. Here the ga is the usual kampita swara, involving the sadharana gandhara as the base note, and the downward oscillation to the anuswara value of shuddha sadharana gandhara. Note also the Vadi – samvadi of d -g
2. rg…. Here the g starts of from the dvishruti rishabha and reaches ma and then finally oscillates between shuddha madhyama – ma and the shruthi value of the anuswaram of shuddha sadharana gandhara
3. gm ..... Here this phrase gm again is split into two parts - mg and mgm .....and the shruthis are shuddha madhyama for ma and the shruthi value of shuddha sadharana gandhara
4. grsr…. Here ga is further split up as mgm (same shruthi values as in the previous instance gm, and ri is msr, with the r taking the eka shruthi rishabha value. Note again the Vadi –samvadi of m-s in this phrase.

Thus, the very classical and proportionate melodic structure of the raga Todi has been brought out by the brilliant composer. This sedateness is balanced by the gambhIratva that is created by the strong shuddha notes of pa, ma and of course sa. The svasthana gamaka in these two svaras (SR.,S and PD.,P) are beautiful, and they bring about the usages of the anuswaras as movements and the contrast with the shuddha swaras.

The extent of oscillation in ga, da and ni are variable. It is either rendered plain (as in mdmgmdndm and grmgdmndm) or with either ardha kampita or dirgha kampita together (as in srgrgmg..r, pdndpd…, and pdndSnSn…d), or with dirgha kampita alone when it is combined with panchama pg…..m, and when combined with sa as in srsn..d etc.
Other general remarks and inferences

It is not uncommon to hear plain svaras in this raga, especially in the dhatu prayogas like ni-rl-ni- da-ni-da., d-ri-ri –ni da ma or ni-ga-ri. In slow speed, phrases like ni – rl – ni occur with kampitham on all swaras. Hence it is to be noted that the same phrases can have different prayogas (usages) depending on the speed of execution.


Janta swara phrasings are also very apt for this raga, as in dd nn SS or mm dd nn or rr gg mm or other combinations based on janta and dhatu like mdd dnn nrr or gdd, nmm, dgg and mnn. It is to be noted that the shuddha swaras are used in such prayogas in Todi raga.

Besides ga, da is the next important nyasa swara, and it also can be used as a graha swara – “Emi Jesithe” of Thyagaraja, “Rave himagiri” the swarajathi by Shyama Sastri and “Tamadamen” by Papanasam Sivan are prominent examples of the amsa importance and the usage as both graha swara as well as a nyasa swara as in the case of prayogas like g,, m,,, d,, or d d, n ndd.

Samvadi and sthayi combinations like sp, sm, sS, Sp, etc. as well those like gd, mn, dR etc. are abundantly found in this raga.

Todi can also be called as a panchasvara murchana kaaraka mela. If the tonic note is shifted to ri, ga, ma, pa or dha, the resulting ragas would be Kalyani, Harikambhoji, Natabhairavi, Kharaharapriya and Shankarabharanam respectively.

This Tristhayi raga is a parent of numerous janyas such as Hindolam, Ahiri, Asaveri, Bhoopalam, Dhanyasi, Desiya Todi, Ghanta, Punnagavarali, Revagupti and Shuddha Seemantini etc.

Of these Janya ragas, very few like Hindolam are “popular” as in public perception or ranjakatva, mainly because of the restrictions in using the shuddha swarasthanas, and also because the notes of Todi itself are all minor, and represent feelings of pathos and introspection and sadness mainly.
It is to be noted that in light music or film music etc., Todi is mainly used in devotional or semi–classical genres, as the modern classical conception of Todi has a reduced delineation of the important Jiva swaras ga and da as shuddha swaras, except occasionally for s and p varja phrases like rgmdn or mndmgr or mdnRGRnd. Since g and d occur in the middle of the two main sections srgm and pdnS, the importance of ornamentation, and especially the correct usages as exemplified in krithis by major composers cannot be over emphasised. It is this very important ‘stumbling block’ that perhaps has not made Todi very popular in film or light music.50

It can be said that Todi is now one of the most utilised ragas in Carnatic music. This raga readily accommodates any kind of musical creation, be it elaborate and ornamented like “Kaddanuvariki” or simple like “Re manasa Chinthaya”, both of Thyagaraja and semi-classical or both in kalpita and manodharma sangIta, and would suit any emotion, any tempo – viLamba, madhyama or durita. It is not surprising that there are innumerable compositions in this raga by all composers, as well as usages in Ragam Tanam Pallavi suites too.

Having looked at the concept and importance of Raga Lakshana, the other aspect of Raga – which is Raga Lakshaya is looked at next.

**Raga Lakshaya**

This can be refers to the ideals or aesthetics in music. Some views refer to the notational aspect of music as Lakshya, but this thesis deals with notation and quantification in a different chapter on Quantification of gamakas. While many books have been written explaining the Raga Lakshanas, not many books have been written exclusively dealing with Raga lakshaya, or aesthetics, because Raga aesthetic is something that can be felt or experienced only and it cannot be explained.

Rakthi ragas are the ragas where not every combination of swaras as Janta or dhatu or alankara will give ranjana or artistic appeal. For e.g., Ritigowla or Dhanyasi can be sung

50 S.Rajam, Music appreciation notes, Sruthi magazine
http://www.sruti.com/download/content1/Music%20Appreciation%20Notes%20by%20S.%20Rajam%20(Reproduced%20from%20sruti%2023-23S).pdf
extensively, but maybe the shine the best with a few choice and apt phrases that capture the rakthi of the raga.

A perspective given by one author B. Subba Rao\textsuperscript{51} goes thus

\begin{quote}
A Raga or Melody in Bharatiya Sangeet is the arrangement of groups of swaras or notes, which, by being rendered in a special way, gives the Raga its personality or swaroop or Bhava. Without the Raga Bhava, the swaras or notes by themselves are ineffective in presenting a Raga personality or constructing a Raga edifice.
\end{quote}

Figure 3.7 Raga personality in the view of B. Subba Rao.

Raga bhava or the emotion of the raga is an elusive feature that needs to be assimilated carefully. As in the case of Todi, SSP recommends that such rakthi ragas need to be carefully looked at using the gitas, varnas and other compositions for the correct swara sancharas (swara usages)

Another perspective given by K. Vasudeva Sastri\textsuperscript{52} is shown as follows in the following page: He talks about the aspects like Anahata Nada – the unheard sound, meaning that which is heard by the performer alone (in his heart). He considers that this is an essential aspect of creativity which makes the ahata (heard by all) music of the performer resonate in all creatures.

This Anahata nada, in the opinion of this researcher, is obtained after due initiation into the process of ‘meditation’, as it were, on the form and beauty of the Raga. Every performer intuitively makes an ‘appeal’ or prayer to the ‘Divinity’ or personality of the Raga to ‘shine forth’ in his or her delineations.

\textsuperscript{51} B. Subba Rao, Raganidhi, page ( iii), The Music Academy, Chennai, 1980

MUSIC DEFINED

Music therefore can be defined as the succession of sounds which more or less resembles in quality, the unstruck music of the heart or ‘Anāhata Nada’ and enables us by the resonance it creates, to hear that unstruck music and experience the joy which is inseparable from it. That is why a particular succession of sounds alone is able to give us joy and not others. The more closely the music of the musician resembles the music of the heart, the more effective will it be in rousing the joy in his own heart and in the hearts of those living beings who hear it. We use the word ‘living beings’ advisedly because the self resides in the heart of every living being, and that music which is a perfect pattern of Anāhata must be able to rouse the joy in the dullest of creatures.

Figure 3.8 Raga personality in the view of K. Vasudeva Sastry.

An example to prove the above is: we can have the knowhow to produce sugar (from sugarcane) and many books can be written, many machines can be designed and built that can further refine and enhance the process of making sugar. We can have machines that can analyse the chemical composition and physical characteristics of the sugar made, but we ourselves (like wine tasters) have to experience the sweetness and taste of the sugar, and comment.

T.N.Rajarathinam Pillai is considered as the master Nadaswaram artiste, whose Raga delineations even today stand out brilliantly. His expertise and erudition has been such that his name is synonymous with Todi Raga. He has these perspectives to offer (In an interview to All India Radio circa 1951):

1. Existence of Bani or Style in Carnatic music cannot be confirmed in the music texts. Lakshanas of music have been described in the ancient texts, but there is no mention of Bani or style in any of them.
2. Carnatic music is divine. It has been there since time immemorial. Banis may come and go…but the greatness of music remains always. He again reiterates later in the interview that the term bani compartmentalizes or restricts the scope of music.
3. Carnatic music is a Dharma (way of life) for many and can be considered as a spiritual pursuit. It can thus be said that Bani is a creation or an additional feature created by the listeners and analysts. According to the circumstances in time and location or the artistes themselves, the styles change. He gives the examples of the time unlimited opportunities to expound Raga alapana or Pallavis etc. (Temple processions in the night etc.)

4. Rasikas or listeners can be of two types, one wedded to analysing using Raga Lakshhanas, and other as the layman type, where the appreciation of beauty is created in the heart of the listener by constant exposure to good music. Whereas good music finds instant appreciation amongst the paamaran (simpletons) and pandithan (the erudite), intricate laya cannot be enjoyed by one and all.

5. The expectations of a rasika are by and large, sweetness, comfort, gamakam, happiness etc. The manobhava or the mind-set of the listeners are also conditioned by location (he goes on to extol the rich musical atmosphere in the erstwhile Tanjore district – Kaveri delta regions., and the great composers and vidwans, the Temples and festivals and rulers, the Nadaswara china melam and periya melam styles etc.).

6. The general public was exposed to Carnatic music in various forms as Nadaswaram recitals, Bhajana sessions and Bhagavatha melas, Street plays, Drama halls or theatres

7. Carnatic music is inclusive in that traditions like Harikatha, Dindi, Abhangs, Javalis(dance music), Hindustani music, even Western music and instruments have been incorporated, as long as the methodology and the purity of notes was maintained. The refined sum total of all this has been commonly accepted as Carnatic Bani.

8. He enumerates many great Vidwans who have adorned the Tanjore tradition, starting from his Gurus like Veena Dhanammal and Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer, who, contributed greatly to the development of the art, and by example, were all discerning rasikas who could appreciate greatness and give credit where it was due.
9. He also emphasises the predominance of vocal music over instrumental music, and takes pride in his music being compared to vocal music, or considered as akin to vocal music.

10. He also does not consider as proper that vocal music should be considered or compared to instrumental music. The introduction of ‘life’ in an inanimate instrument is a goal that should be aimed for by all instrumentalists.

11. That the presence of different tempos in exposition of music has led to creation of rasikas for each ‘bani’ or type.

12. He gives importance to the use of “Chowka kalam” or slow tempo in the manifestation of good music, as this requires knowledge of a very high degree.

13. Proficiency in Chowka kalam gives the foundation for getting fluidity, gamakam and brika (fast phrasing) and aesthetic and beautifully ornamented notes in the medium and high tempos. He concludes with the example of his discipleship with Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and the instruction to him to look for the life or ‘Jeevan’ in every swaram.

14. To get going in this direction, he exhorts the aspirant to develop his Gnanam (wisdom), Gurukulavasam, (discipleship) and good association etc.

In the view of V.Subramaniam⁵³, an insight into the thoughts of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, a contemporary of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar is seen:

“Yo Asou Dhvani Viseshastu Swaravarna Vibhooshitaha
Ranjako Janachittanam Sacha Raga Udakritaha”

Thus, the raga should not only be a sound adorned by swaras but also be satisfying and pleasing to the human mind. Any combination of swaras technically perfect and intellectually conceived, but devoid of aesthetic appeal cannot be considered a raga. Many ragas have been conceived by the Trinity and other composers, and have come to us through their kritis. “

“While describing ragas Sri Semmangudi would say that each raga is an entity with a distinctive character and personality, the swara structure thereof, being only a skeletal framework.” And he continues “Sri Srinivasa Iyer always emphasises the predominant role

⁵³ V.Subramaniam, Carnatica article, http://www.carnatica.net/semmangudi3.htm
of lakshya gnana in raga alapana, as he believes that only this would allow the uninhibited flow of imagination. Over-dependence on lakshana would prove counterproductive in this respect, as it inhibits the singer from attempting new raga phrasings. This does not play down the importance of lakshana gnana and it is highly essential for the artiste to acquire it too. Sri Semmangudi always advises a correct blend of both lakshya and lakshana.”

**Importance of Rasikathva**

Also, a look is necessitated at the epic reference in the Soundarya Lahari of Adi Shankara, in the 66th shloka “Vipanchya gayanthi”.

\[
\text{vipanchya gAyantI vividham-apadAnaM pashupateH}
\]

\[
tvayArabdhe vaktuM calita-shirasA sAdhu vacane /
\]

\[
tadIyair-mAdhuryair-apatapita-tantrI-kalA-ravAM
\]

\[
nijAM vINAM vANI nichulayati cholena nibhRtaM // 66 //
\]

The detailed explanation of the above shloka is given by the Paramacharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi of Kamakoti Peetam, Kanchipuram, in his lectures encoded in the book “Deivathin Kural”\(^54\)

In short, the shloka above describes, how Saraswathi was singing praises of Shiva sweetly to her own accompaniment of her Veena (Vipanchi) and how Parvathi expressed her appreciation by saying “sadhu” and how much sweeter this was. In sheer embarrassment, humility and rasikathva, Saraswathi stopped and covered her Veena with the cloth.

The meaning of the shloka makes us realise that in factors like sweetness of tone and aptness or timing of the raga phrase, there is always an ideal (the Supreme) existing above all of us, and that we should be ever attentive to rasikathva (cognisance of much higher ideals than ours), so as to obtain the Divine Grace and elevate ourselves and our music. In other

\(^54\) [http://www.krishnamurthys.com/profvk/gohitvip/DPDS71-75.html](http://www.krishnamurthys.com/profvk/gohitvip/DPDS71-75.html)
words, negation of the ego and cognisance and surrender to the Supreme is a very important component of one’s musical ‘development’, as it were.

This explanation is considered by many as the utterance of one who has attained the goal of Self-realisation and combines the bhakthi marga (approach via devotion) with the lakshaya marga (the concept of aesthetics).

However, this concept of aesthetics is not entirely unapproachable or unattainable even for every musical aspirant. This is where the concept of Guru and Gurukulavasam comes in. The close constant mentoring and observation of the student and the exposure to different facets of music stimulates the student to think for himself and develop his own guidelines on the concepts of beauty in music.

Rasikathva is another term used to describe the ability to appreciate or enjoy any artistic work. In terms of music, we can note that this relates to the unconscious urge to appreciate, by nodding the head, or saying a ‘sabhaash’ – which is basically a term in Sanskrit for appreciation by a peer or an equal, or ‘bhale’ – a ‘Bravo!’ with which a junior greets a senior, or the applause which occurs at the end or in the course of an item.

Simply put, only when one is able to appreciate good in others, will one be able to enjoy his or her own music too in a genuine fashion. This appreciation, in turn, spurs the artiste to greater heights. Also to be noted is that excess rasikathva of one’s own music can lull an artiste into self-aggrandisement and a careless attitude too, and good musicians/artistes usually aim at reducing self rasikathva and take the appreciation from the others only to a small extent. They usually have their own strict mechanisms of appreciation and learn not to get ‘over-awed, as it were.

Also of importance is the ability to analyse the various melodic possibilities during a phrase and explore the beauty in them, thereby leading to a process of discovery and to new avenues of artistic creation.

It can be concluded that it is a happy blend of the technical knowledge of Raga Lakshana and that of the Raga Lakshaya – the ego sublimation and the inner urges (rasikathva) that contribute to the development of a good musical style.