CHAPTER III

VARNAM AND ITS VARIETIES
The Varnam is steeped in classicism. Being a fairly rigid form, it is able to preserve the essential features of the raga in an objective manner. The other major form that serves to preserve the raga is the Kriti. The form of the Kriti is more elastic and allows more scope for the subjectivity of the composer to creep in. The raga, the lyric, the mood of the words and the beauty of the images are all fused and often it is an inspired and impassioned outpouring. Thus raga is portrayed in an exquisite fashion in many kritis but only certain aspects of the raga are to be found.

The word Varna has multifarious meanings. Amarakosa defines the term as follows:

Varno dvijaaduusuklaadu stutau varnam tu vaaksare

Varna indicates Dvija (Brahmin and other castes, white and other colours, praise and the alphabet).

In Tamil, Varnanai means description and it is derived from the verb 'Vrnooti' in Sanskrit which means 'to describe, to delineate, to illustrate'. This
seems to be an accurate comment on the function of the Varnam which describes the subtleties of raga and laya in a way that can be easily understood by the lay person. All these various definitions are pertinent when we consider the Varnam as a musical form.

Varna in the sense of a Varga (caste) with its rules and behavioural norms is obviously a good interpretation of the word in the present context. The varnam as a musical form has a definite and clear cut structural tradition and it has changed very little in its basic form over the years. The craftsmanship has to adhere to fairly rigid rules regarding the format. Perhaps like the hierarchy of the ancient Hindu caste system, the Varnam has also been apportioned a particular grade in the world of music. Its status lies somewhere in the middle, lower than the Kriti and Pallavi of course, but somewhere higher than the Javali and the Viruttams. Its functions are also different as will be explained later.

The word Varna as colour, would be an apt way of indicating that after the unidimensional and elementary forms such as the Gitam and the Jatiswaram, the Varnam is multidimensional and chronomatic. In the
progressive learning of music, after the simple black and white sound pictures of the elementary forms, we get complexity and a gamut of colours inclusive of black and white. The gitas limit itself to simple correlation of svara and sahitya (lyric) distributing one syllable to one note.

The Jatiswaram attempts solfa patterns of more complexity and variety. The Swarajati which is taught to the beginner is a more complicated arrangement of swara and sahitya, but is structurally simpler than the Varnam. After the comparatively simpler forms, the Varnam appears on the scene, rich in textual expression of ragasvarupa, incorporating both vigour and delicacy i.e. both the Tandava and Lasya qualities of the raga. The student is now on a more difficult level. He has to cultivate an awareness of the raga in its Vilamba Kala gati (slow speed) and in its madyama (medium) and Druta Kala (Fast speed) movements. While doing this he absorbs the various shades of the raga, the colour of the raga. The Tamil scholar Adiyaarkkunallar has stated that the name Varnam was apt for this musical form since the term meant colour, and the Varnam was full of colours. The
The word Varna also means alphabet and many alphabet books for children are even now called Varnamala.

Varna means syllable, as for example, 'Panchavarnesvara' which means the Lord invoked by the five syllables Na mah si va ya. The alphabet of a language constitutes the building blocks out of which a whole system of communication and expression is created. The most profound concepts in philosophy, or the sciences plus the most trivial gossip use the same building blocks. And the building blocks remain constant although the ideas expressed keep changing. Could we not say that the Varnam by preserving the integrity of the raga svarupa in its basic form serves the same purpose in the genre of music? For instance, the Bhairavi Ata tala Varna Viriboni gives the skeletal form of Bhairavi and can be said to function like the alphabet of this raga. The evolution of this musical form can be traced back to the ancient prabhanda 'Varna', a composition having rigid rules. The modern Varna is believed to have originated during the 17th century.

The word Varna in its meaning as stuti (praise) is also relevant because as far as the sahitya
of a Varna is concerned it is almost invariably in praise of one deity or in praise of a king or patron.

Bharata in his Natya Sastra used the term Varna for a type of a gana kriya (melodic movement). This was the age of the yazh or harp, so svara patterns rather than gamakas established the identity of a melodic mode. These svara patterns of various kinds were called alankaras. The alankaras were based on four types of varnas or svara movements.

- **Sthayi**: Notes that are stationary
- **Arohi**: Ascending order of notes
- **Avarohi**: Descending order of notes
- **Sanchari**: Circuitous motion over various notes

Since these four types of varnas or melodic movements are skilfully incorporated into the Varnam according to the personality of the raga, this musical form is rightly named Varnam. This original idea of varna is significant because the gait of a raga, the rhythm of its patent phrases, the ascending and descending notes, the notes that are to be held stationary, all these are deliberately built into a
Varnam. The dominant role of the svara and the way in which the svaram is used to delineate the raga svarupa makes the Varnam the glorious link between the classical system of Bharata's days and today.

The Brihaddesi of Matanga also states the close connection between varna and raga expression.

Yo'sau dhvaniviseshastu svara varna vibhusitah
Ranjakah janacittanam sa ca raga udahruthah

A raga is that which is beautified by tonal excellence of svaras and varnas and pleases the mind of people. Learning a Varnam is getting acquainted with the physiology of the raga and it is a study of a living breathing organism in action. Each raga has its own peculiar way of moving - straight, curvaceous zigzag, convoluted, simple and innumerable other ways and also in a combination of all these many gaits. In a Varnam this can be studied in slow motion as the Varnam can withstand the glare of close scrutiny.

Amongst the compositions of the technical group (Abhyasa gana) the Varna takes the first rank in
importance. Varnas are practised and learnt with great care and assiduity by both vocalists and instrumentalists. The practise of Tana Varna in three degrees of speed strengthens one's laya jnanam. The profusion of vowels in Tana varnas help one to render the gamakas in a smooth and polished manner.

It is said that Pandit Ratanjankar, one of the leading names in Hindustani music and musicology, was so impressed with the varnam as a musical form that he composed a lyric in Sanskrit for the Kalyani, Adi tala Varnam Vanajakshi. The lyric begins with the words Ganesam vande.

The Varnam is taught to music students prior to the Kriti but the teaching of Varnams is continued along with that of the Kriti since its use as abhyasa gana are so valuable. Thus the Varnam caters to the special needs of the beginner as well as the advanced student.

The merit of a varnam can be adjudged by the following qualities.

1. Pre-eminence of raga bhava
2. Absence of stereotypedness
3. Existence of design
4. Skilful application of principles of omission
5. Absence of artificial structure

Varnams that have stood the test of time like Viriboni, Bhairavi, Ata have answered the requisite qualifications to a large degree.

While composing a Varnam the raga phrases and svaras are visualised first and the composer then selects the appropriate combinations that will portray raga svarupa. He is not much concerned about the lyric or the mood. While learning a Varnam, the svara is mastered and the exact fidelity of the Sahitya to the svara is expected. In a Kriti such an emphasis on the svara is not encouraged either while composing or while learning since this is likely to spoil the sahitya effect and the raga of the piece. The preponderance of svara sequences in a Varnam makes it an ideal medium for learning raga and laya. While singing in the vilamba kala, the gamaka is followed accurately, the madhyama kala gives tana practice and the dhruta kala helps to make the voice pliable. The pauses that occur
in a Varnam are governed by rhythmic tightness and their duration is strictly controlled. The Varnam is technically rigorous and consequently learning a Varnam is a challenge to the powers of memory and concentration. The paucity of the syllables in a Tana Varnam is deliberate so that the sahitya is easier to negotiate in double and quadruple speeds.

Structure of Varna

1. The purvanga or the first section consists of the pallavi, the anupallavi, and the muktayi svara. The word muktayi is derived from the word mugimpu (conclusion) and it indicates the end of the first edition.

2. The Uttaranga or latter section consists of the ettugada pallavi and the ettugada svara passage succeeding it. The word ettugada means the beginning and here it indicates the start of the uttaranga.

Although the Varnam has the structural divisions of Pallavi, Anupallavi (with muktayi svara) and Charana, as in kriti, in actual singing, the musician does not treat the Pallavi as an independent
piece. He starts with the Pallavi, continues through the Anupallavi and the Muktayi svara, and only then comes back to the opening words of the pallavi. The first movement starting with pallavi ends with the muktayi svara. After this, the ettugada pallavi (also called up a pallavi or citta pallavi) which consists of the sahitya line of the charana is sung. This is followed by the svara passages in sequence. After each svara passage, the charana line occurs as a refrain. Thus we can see that the Varnam actually has two major divisions which make it a binary form.

Although the pallavi and the anupallavi are lumped together while singing they can be distinguished structurally as two different sections because of the following reasons.

1. The musical pattern of the pallavi is totally different to that of the anupallavi. Usually the first two avartanas (avartanas is one complete cycle of a tala) constitute the pallavi. In these two avartanas, the Varnam explores the madhyama sthayi (the middle octave) and the melodic sthayi (lower octave). In the subsequent two avartanas, which constitute the
anupallavi, the phrases go into the tara sthayi (upper octave) similar to the musical patterning of the anupallavi of a Kriti.

2. The second reason for making the division into pallavi and anupallavi is the Dvitiyaksara prasam.

a. Dvitiyaksara prasa: The second syllable of the first word in the pallavi rhymes with the second syllable of the first word in the anupallavi e.g. Pakkala nilabadi rhymes with Chukkala rayuni. Chesinadella rhymes with as a Konnati.

b. Prathamaksara prasa: The first syllable of the first word of the pallavi rhymes with the first syllable of the word in the anupallavi for e.g. Chakkani raja rhymes with Chikkani palu. This is also known as Anuprasa.

In varnams there is evidence of dvitiyaksara prasam in the first and the third avartanas which makes the division into pallavi and anupallavi logical.

3. The third reason for making the division is because the first two avartanas thus forming the pallavi. The
third avartana starts with a fresh sentence and the prosodical requirement of prasam is seen in the sahitya at this point.

The Bhava associated with the Nava rasas (the nine basic emotions classified in Indian aesthetics) is based on particular emotional states like sorrow or anger. This kind of bhava is not stressed in the Varnam since the sahitya is not important and again there are no series of sangatis (melodic variations of a phrase) to bring out the nuances of the words. However there is a rich concentration of raga bhava.

Raga bhava is induced when the shape and the movement of a raga is mirrored accurately. This is a deeply moving experience which puts us in a state of heightened sensitivity. At this point our emotions are subtle and multidimensional and there is an accompanying feeling of profound inspiration. For example, when we are moved to tears by a particular phrase or movement of a raga, the tears are not an expression of grief nor of joy. The important fact is that there is no theme or meaning to tie our minds down to any one particular emotion. Our response to sheer
raga movement is a subjective amalgam of our deepest thoughts and feelings at that moment.

The Varnam is expected to show the typical gamakas, the pauses, the gamut and gait of a raga. It puts each of the svaras under a microscope so that we can sense the texture of each and watch the various shapes it assumes in combination with other svaras. In a varnam, the raga looks at itself as if in a mirror. It looks at its own svara substructure. Even a mediocre Varnam is expected to do this.

The Varnam attempts to project the total raga form in an assimilable manner. It draws out attention to the murchana (patent phrases) and emphasises the appropriate graha svara (starting note), Amsa Svaras (the important notes which should be prolonged), the hrasva nyasa (the last note of a phrase which should be shortened) and the alpa nyasa svara (a note which is used as a mere touch for ending a phrase) of a particular raga. The Varnam also tries to show the raga ranjaka prayogas, vishesha sancharas, permissible apurva prayogas, Janta, Dhatu Varisha prayogas.

The beginning note is of importance as each raga has its own particular starting note for its
individual phrases. The starting note of the pallavi is significant because especially in the Varnam the first phrase endeavours to catch the flavour of the raga or establish the identity of the raga. For example, in the two Varnams Saranga (Intamodi) and Kedaragula (Samidaya), the start is on tara Shadjam and the phrase has a descending order of svaras. From this it is to be inferred that in these ragas the identity of the raga is established better in the descent or avarohana especially in the madhya sthayi. In the second avartana of the pallavi, the tara sthayi notes above shadja are touched. This is also an indication that these particular notes or phrases bring out the raga svarupa well. In ragas like Bilahari, the raga is expressed better if the phrases cover a range of notes. In common parlance such ragas are called 'running' ragas which means that the tempo is faster than in the tempo of the leisurely elaboration of the major ragas like Sankarabharanam or Bhairavi. It also means that the phrases run through more notes and cover a more extensive range per phrase in order to identify themselves. This is quite obvious in the pallavi of the Bilahari varnam, Intachauke, in which the phrases go up and down the scale rapidly touching the tara shadja and tara rishabha three times. Conversely, in the Arabhi,
Adi tala Varnam, Sarasijamukhi, the svara patterns do not go beyond the dhaivata of the madhya stayi but go down to the mandra madhyama building up the dhaivata of the lower octave to great effect. In most Varnams, however the tara shadjam and occasionally the tara rishabha is touched but the elaboration remains within the madhya sthayi and the mandra sthayi.

The Adi tala varnam Eranapai, in Todi starts with the tara sthayi shadja and is patterned in avarohana while the Todi Ata tala varnam, Kanakangi, is in Arohana krama (ascending order). The Kalyani Adi tala varnam Vanajakshi starts in the tara stayi and weaves patterns around this note while the Ata tala varnam Vanajakshi in Kalyani starts with the middle octave panchama and goes down to the lower octave. The major ragas like Todi, Kalyani, Bhairavi, Sankarabharanam and Pantuvarali are very expansive and are capable of being expressed in various sthayis. Thus many varnams have to be written in these ragas in order to give an adequate definition. In the Ata tala varnam Bhairavi, Mohanam, Todi, Ritigaula, Sriragam, Kamboji and Pantuvarali the eight units before the beginning of the Varnam are filled with akara. This akara phrase is
articulated when pallavi is repeated the second time before going on to the anupallavi.

In the anupallavi, the madhya sthayi is covered and the first avartana of the anupallavi in the Ata tala Varnams usually ends with a pause on the tara shadja. In the Adi tala varnams also this is to be seen, and at times the pause is shortened so that the tara shadja is just touched instead of being made into a launching pad for the foray into the higher reaches which follow in the second half of the anupallavi. The long pause on the tara shadja can be seen in the following Ata tala Varnams, Kanakangi - Todi, Nenarumchi - Dhanyasi, Vanajaksha - Ritigaula, Nenammiti - Kanada, Sarasijanabha - Kambhoji, Sarasijakshi - Mohanam, Cheliya - Pantuvarali and Manini - Arabhi.

There is a short pause on the tara shadja in the following Varnams:


In Inta tsala, Begada, Adi and in Sami ni pai, Anandabhairavi, Ata, there is a pause on the madhyama at the end of the first avartana of the anupallavi. In Vanajakshi, Kalyani, Adi and in Sami ninne, Nata, Adi, the Panchama is the focus at this point. This part of the structure serves as the take off point into the upper register and the pause especially on the Shadja serves this purpose very well.

The second avartana of the anupallavi reaches into the gandhara and madhyama of the upper octave. The phrases are patterns with the Sa, ri, ga and ma of the tara sthayi. The anupallavi consists of two avartanas normally, the exceptions being Inta tsala, Begada, Adi and Sarasijamukhi, Arabhi, both of which have four avartanas. The latter half of the second avartana tries
to give rhythmic emphasis and a suggestion of a finale by the arrangement of the svara phrases. As stated earlier, the mudra of the composer occurs in the second half of the anupallavi and it is highlighted by singing this portion once in the beginning after the pallavi and once towards the end after the anubandham. If we bear this in mind, the logic of giving the suggestion of a finale at the end of the anupallavi can be understood. This is in the form of muktayippu with a Karvai (pause) on the sa pa sa or any other important notes of the raga, or there is a sweeping enunciation of the arohana and avarohana.

On the whole, it appears as if the Varnam concentrates on the patent gamakas and murchanas of a raga in the pallavi and the anupallavi and is less concerned at this stage with complex rhythmic patterns. The emphasis given at the end of the anupallavi is not as dramatic as the later rhythmic variations. Innovations in rhythm usually begin towards the end of the muktayi svara.

The muktayi Svara is like an epitome, a miniature of the pallavi and the anupallavi. Usually it consists of two avartanas but we find that in the
following Varnams it has four avartanas; The adi tala vanams - Sarasuda - Saveri, Inta Tsala - Begada, Sami ninne - Pantuvaralai, Sarasija - Arabhi, Jalajaksi - Hamsadhvani, Inta chauka - Bilahari, Taruni - Kambhoji. In the Ata tala varnam there are only two avartanas. The muktayi svara is also called chitta svara in common parlance. The opening note of the muktayi svara in most varnams will be the same as the opening note of the pallavi and in many cases the first svara phrase of the muktayi svara is also the same as the first svara phrase of the pallavi in a slightly modified form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varnam</th>
<th>Pallavi 1st Phrase</th>
<th>Muktayisvaram 1st Phrase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarasuda, Saveri, Adi</td>
<td>S R G r g R</td>
<td>S r g r s R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tsalamela Durbar, Adi</td>
<td>p m r G G r s r p m r g r s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninne Kori Kanada, Adi</td>
<td>P M G; G g m R</td>
<td>p p m G g m r</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninnu Kori Mohanam, Adi</td>
<td>G G R s s r r G g r s R</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inta Cauka Bilahari, Adi</td>
<td>S s n d p d</td>
<td>S s n d p d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarasijaksi Mohanam, Ata</td>
<td>D P G r R</td>
<td>d p g g r</td>
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The rhythm changes in the muktayi svara. After the meandering movements of the pallavi and anu-
pallavi in which the weight of the gamaka and the pulling and stretching between notes are depicted, the gait now has greater flow and there are no more sarva laghu phrases (groups of short notes, even rhythm). The first avartana (or two avartanas if the muktayi svara consists of four avartanas) weaves patterns in the madhya sthayi up to the higher octave towards its end. A deliberate effort is made to incorporate alankaras such as yati sequences (progressive increase or decrease of svara groups) datu (skipping notes) and janta (doubling) notes.

Jhanta svara : m m p p d d n n p p p d d d n n n s s r
(Viriboni, Bhairavi, Ata)

Dattu svara : gR g ś R D s P
(Ninnu kori-Mohanam, Adi)

rr m r r p m m m p p s
(Celimi, Gaula, Ali)

Srotavaha yati : d n p d n m p d n g m p d n r g m p d n s r g m p d n
(Tsalamela, Sankarabharanam, Ata)

In the second part of the muktayi svara, tara sthayi phrases are incorporated similar to the manner in which the tara sthayi is explored in the anupallavi. Nearly all muktayi svaras end with a pronounced
rhythmic stress that is like a finale. At times a S P S sequence is used as in Sarasijanabha, Kambhoji, Ata; ḍṛ ṣ, nd mpd P, mgr sr S ṅp ḍsrg (Sarasi)

This kind of svara design is to be seen in Viriboni, Bhairavi, Ata and in Taruni, Kambhoji, Adi. The Sa Pa relationship is firmly stated at the end of the muktayi svara in majority of Varnams. The following S D M sequence occurs in Ninnukori, Vasanta, Adi : ṛ ś nd mnD mg dM g rs

The justaposition of the phrase gRs in two sthayis is the finale for the muktayi svara in Sarusuda, Saveri, Adi : gRs gRs nd rs ndmgrsd (Sarasuda)

In the above patterning we can see the cascading descent of notes at the end. In some other Varnams the finale is emphasised by a cascade of notes going up and down the scale at the end of the avartana. Sami ninne, Sankarabharanam, Adi : ŠP ṣndP mgr SR gmpdn (Sami ninne)

The Varnam which expressed itself as akara and as sahitya syllables in the pallavi and the anupallavi enunciates each svara in its dynamic mobile
form in its various shapes and inter relationships in the muktayi svara. The consciousness of the svara sound becomes sharper for us when it is articulated as svara. During vilamba kala (slow speed) svara articulation, it is possible to notice the exact movement of each svara. The opening svara phrase of the muktayi svara in sarasuda-saveri, Adi: S rγ rs R sgrs ñd pd R. This phrase when it is sung is actually to be sung so that it sounds like: s r mg gr s sR s sg rs sñ d dpd DR

This notation only gives a rough idea of the actual melody. It is difficult to transcribe all the nuances of the svara phrases and the gamakas. However, this dynamic picture of raga movement can be heard explicitly in the svara phrases of the muktayi svara. The muktayi svara is like being on firm ground after hovering in the air of the akaara and we get a concrete feel of the movement of svaras. In the above phrase we can experience the weightage given to the risabha. The magnetic pull between the mandra and the madhya can be felt in the svara sequences of the first avartana here. The deletion of the Shadja in the phrase ndpd R enhances this effect. The saveri ri in descent sounds like m gR as for instance in dpR mpd. The gandhara in this raga is peculiar because it is always pulled from
another note and even when the notation indicates only ga it is always enunciated as sg, mg, dg and so on. The long pause on the Pa and on the Dha at the end of the first two avartanas is a hint that these two notes are important landing notes or dirgha nyasa svaras. There is a special relationship between the dha and the ma in this raga and in the phrase ndp M P the svaras should sound like sn dp dM p making sure that the ma is pulled down from dha and not from pa.

In the Ata tala varnams the commencement will be from the second finger count. The charana line has a peculiar problem. It is started on the second finger count whereas all the ettugada svara passages which follow start on the beat having same eduppu. This is resolved by leaving out eight units of the charana line at the end so that the svara passage can start at the samam (start on the beat of the tala). Structurally the ettugada svaras are constructed so that, although they start on the beat they do not end on the beat. They continue for eight units beyond the samam leading right upto the second finger count which is the starting point for the charana in the Ata tala varnams. The svaraksara at the beginning based on a amsa svara is to be seen in the Ata tala varnams also. Since the Ata
tala is much longer than the Adi tala, the flow of the phrases is more evident here. At the end of the Ata tala avartana where the charana line ends, we get a prolonged note which is stretched further till the end of the avartana before taking up the ettugada passage. For eg. Nera nammiti, Kanada, Ata,

/ \ , , , , , , , s, s, s n r s p , , , / sa ra su da
/ m p d n d d p m d p m p m p g, m r s /
ni ne san ta ta mu ko ni ya
/ r n, s r g m d / n s r n s, , r // s n p m g m d
du tsu na nu ra ------

In the above charana line, the avartana ends with the tara ri, when the ettugada svara passages are taken up the shadja is prolonged giving it a karvai of four units instead of three thus eliminating the ri. The sahitya ends with koniyadu and the syllables tsunannura are also eliminated. The complete sahitya is sung only in the beginning when the charana line is repeated and at the end when after singing all the svara passages the charana line is sung in conclusion. It is necessary to prolong up so that there is a pause at the end of the charana sahitya. The last svara
phrase of the charana line has a rhythmic springness and usually happens to be a tisram (block of three svaras) or a Khandam (block of five) or misram (block of seven) e.g.

Ending phrase of ettugada pallavi

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>dpn</th>
<th>dpmp</th>
<th>(Misram)</th>
<th>Sarasuda, Saveri, Adi</th>
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<td>la-</td>
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<tr>
<td>nS</td>
<td>sndpm</td>
<td>(khandam)</td>
<td>Eranapai, Todi, Adi</td>
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<tr>
<td>hasa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Melara</td>
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<tr>
<td>mpmgr-</td>
<td>mpd</td>
<td>(khandam fol-</td>
<td>Sarasi, Arabhi, Adi</td>
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<td>owed by Tisram)</td>
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<tr>
<td>rna</td>
<td>dpm-</td>
<td>gmpdn (2 Khandams)</td>
<td>Vanajaksi, Kalyani, Ata</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>dp-</td>
<td>grg srg (3 Tisrams)</td>
<td>Sarasi, Mohanam, Ata</td>
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<td>a</td>
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The charana line seems like an unfinished sentence or like a phrase in many of the traditional varanams. For e.g: Chiru navvu momuna is the charana line of Viriboni, Bhairavi, Ata and Vanajaksi, Kalyani, Ata. Nirajaksi ni pai in sami ninne, Sankarabharanam, Adi. Pagavarini bhodana vini, Begada, Adi.
CLASSIFICATION OF VARNAM

The two major categories in varnam are tana varnam and pada varnam, the former an essential form in music as the latter in dance. The tana or concert varnam is developed with its verbal and solfa passages to contain all the characteristic phrases, twists and turns of a raga. The dance varnam or pada varnam (as it is sometimes called) similarly attempts to include all the nuances of an erotic mood and the rhythmic patterns that will embellish it.

Tana varna derived its name on account of its brisk svara movements in Tana style having a regular pulse movement and even tempo. In order to give the tana sequence, they are usually rendered in madyamakala but while learning Tana Varnas are taught in both Vilambita and dhrutha laya. The grammatical aspect and salient features of raga are fully revealed in Tana Varnas. Only Pallavi, Annuallavi an Charana will be having sahitya and the other angas Chittaswara and Charana swaras have swara passages only. The characteristic swara prayogas giving stress to Graha, Nyasa, Amsa as well as hriswa dirgha prayogas can be abundantly found in Tana Varna.
Pada Varna as the name suggests can be considered as a combination of Pada and Varna. This is ideally suited for dance. Hence it gives scope for Abhinaya. This is to be rendered in vilambite laya enabling the dancer to perform Abhinaya for sahitya interspersed with appropriate cholkkettus, Tirmanas, and poses. Unlike Varna, Pada Varna will be having sahitya for all the angas.

PADA VARNAM AND TANA VARNAM - SIMILARITIES

1. The overall structure is the same. Both have Pallavi, Anupallavi, Muktayi svara in the purvanga and ettugada pallavi with ettugada svara passages. Both the forms have a mixture of sahitya and solfa passages.

2. The theme in both the forms are similar, dealing with the Deity's name or the patron's name is invoked in the sahitya. Both are secular forms, with emphasis on sringara rather than bhakti.

3. In both the mudra occurs in the second avartana of the anupallavi generally.

4. The ettugada svara passages increased progressively in length and more complex.

5. The opening note of the Varnam is an important note of the raga and it is usually used with Karvai (elongation).
6. The first note of the pallavi is the same as the first note of the muktayi svara.

7. Tana varnam is usually rendered in two speeds. The uttarangam is accelerated.

8. The anupallavi pauses on the tara shadja at the end of the first avartana and goes into the tara sthayi in the second avartana.

9. The muktayi svara is an epitome of the pallavi and anupallavi.

10. Each ettugada passage concentrates on a particular aspect of the raga.

11. The characteristic feature of the last ettugada passage are similar in both forms.

PADA VARNAM AND TANA VARNAM - DIFFERENCES

1. The pada varnam has sahitya for all its parts. This is mandatory in the pada varnam while in the tana varnam it is optional.

2. In the pada varnam the rhythm in the sahitya portion has a mixture of tempos and the evenness of the tana pulse is not evident.
3. In a Tana varnam the rhythm stresses the tattakāyam ś (splitting of the svara phrases according to the raga svarupa) and not the words. The syllables of the words are used as stress points for the tattakāyam ś. In a pada varnam the words are preserved and the meaning is expressed.

4. In slow tempo, the pada varnam has a rhythm like that of raga alapana or like the padam. The Tana varnam has the tana rhythm which is madhyamakala enunciating each vowel sound unit evenly.

5. The Tana varnam does not give scope for manodharma and especially not for niraval or sangatis. When the pada varnam is used for dance, the sahitya is repeated innumerable times with sangati variations and on occasions when the dancer illustrates an incident in great detail, niraval of a modified type is done. Modulation as in alapana is used.

6. There are more words in a pada varnam, so there is less stretching of vowels.

7. The Grammar of the raga is of secondary importance in a pada varnam. In the Tana varnam it is of primary importance and it tries to incorporate as many details about the nature of the raga as possible.
8. The svara is dominant in the tana varnam even in the sahitya portions and it controls the lyric.

9. In a pada varnam the rhythm is geared to the rhythm of the dance movements. The rhythm of the raga phrase is overwhelmed by the rhythmic patterns of the jatis which control the movements of the dancer. Thus in a pada varnam the rhythm is governed by (a) the rhythm of the sahitya; (b) the rhythm of the dance jatis. In a Tana varnam the rhythm and the tattakarams bring out the patent gait of the raga.

10. There is a qualitative difference in the manner of presentation. The emphasis in the Tana varnam is on raga and laya; in the pada varnam (presented in a music concert) on raga and sahitya. In a dance pada varnam, the laya and sahitya are more important.

11. The pada varnam uses a limited number of Rakti ragas like Khamas, Athana, Kambhoji, etc. In a Tana varnam the range and variety of ragas is more. Minor ragas like Kannada, Ahiri or Balahamsa are also used and the Tana varnam serves as a grammar for these.

12. The Tana varnam is specially constructed for abhyasa and facilitates practice in several speeds.
13. The Tana varnam uses the Adi and the Ata talas. The pada varnam uses a variety of talas and even the shorter talas like Rupaka or Tisra Eka.

14. Among the old Varnams, almost all the Tana varnams have an anubandham and very few pada varnams have this extra section.

15. The form of the pada varnam is more variable. At times there are innovations like multiple charanas (Entani Ne delupudu, Khamas, Tisra Eka)

16. Although both are secular forms with the emphasis on srngara rather than bhakthi, the Tana varnam veers towards a scholarly educative mode, while the pada varnam is a source of refined classical entertainment.

Chronologically the Pada varnam seems to have come earlier in the history of music. The Tana varnam shares a common ancestry with the pada varnam and it has inherited two significant features from the latter. The tana varnam continued the pattern of having a srngara theme, it has vestiges of the court and courtesan culture. It also has a predominant rhythmic element.
The pada varnam has synthesised the qualities of the padam and the varnam. It has taken the following qualities from the padam.

1. The mood of the piece is important. The words refer to incidents and characters. The emotions inherent in them are expressed by articulating the words clearly.

2. The vilamba kala is preferred since it gives depth to the item, because it is deliberate and evocative.

3. The melody is deeply classical as the ragas are enunciated with long drawn out gamakas.

4. The tala is not obvious although it is present. The melody does not demarcate itself at the tala sections but flows over it. There is no resounding emphasis on the rest of the tala.

5. There is a mixture of tempos in the phrases.

6. They are based on sringara rasa. Even where the central character is the Lord, the Nayaka - Nayaki bhava of madhura bhakthi is adopted.

Two well known composers of pada varnams are the Tanjore Quartette and Swati Tirunal. The latter's
pada varnams are called stava varnams where the lyric is the description of a deity and describes the different names and attributes of the deity. The pada varnam with amorous themes are called srinagara varnams.

It is worth noting at this point that the Tana varnam is not the central piece in the music concert. It is dispensed summarily, whereas the Kritis and the pallavis are elaborated with sangatis, niraval and kalpana svara.

Sometimes a Tana varnam is adapted for dance (Viriboni, Bhairavi, Ata). When this happens the Tana varnam is expanded by repeating the sahitya many times with sangatis. Additional sahitya and jati patterns are incorporated and even though the words are meagre the dancer has these enunciated clearly so that the meaning is brought out. The words serve as a take off point for the dancer and as there is a rich store house of mythological Gods and legends associated with them. The artist and the rasika both have their imaginations stimulated by the mere mention of a word. The paucity of a cogent sentence is not really felt by a person within the culture, because our minds are already peopled with the images created by the words Viriboni.
or Sami Sri Rajagopala and the meaning of the sentence is registered whether or not the sentence is complete.

The Tanjore Quartette while composing pada varnams have included multiple sahityas for the same varnam. The chauka varnam Mohamana in Bhairavi has two separate fullfledged sahityas in Telugu - Ni Sati Doraleni and Nerajanudani. In the same sahitya, the words were transposed and made to address variously the Supreme Lord, or the King or a Minister according to exigencies of the performance.

The Daru varnam can easily be distinguished from the Daru. The former has jatis in the place of sahitya and sometimes both jatis and sahitya. The Daru varnam has a varnam structure with ettugada pallavi and ettugada svara passages. They are very similar to the pada varnam and are eminently suited for dance choreography. Muttiah Bhagavatar has composed Daru varnams in Vasanta, Kapi, Sahana and Khamas in the Chapu and Adi talas. The Khamas Daru varnam, 'Mate Malayadhavaja pandya sanjate' is a popular varnam. The muktayi svara in this Daru varnam has a complete line of sahitya and a complete line of jatis corresponding to the svara.
Raga Malika Varnams

Ragamalika varnams can be either in the Tana varnam or in the pada varnam mode. The skill of the composer is seen in the way the raga svarupa is brought out within one or two avartanas clearly distinguishing it from the next raga. The traditional idea is that the ragas used in Ragamalika should match and blend rather than offer sharp contrasts. In the well known Navaragamalika varnam 'valachi' the ragas Kedaram, Sankarabharana, Kalyani and Begada occur in succession. Kedaram and Begada are Janya ragas of Sankarabharanam and have common svaras, and gamakas, and thus have a close resemblance. In the charanam, Kambhoji is followed by Yadukulakambhoji and Mohanam is followed by Bilahari. The ragas within each of these sets also share common characteristics as they are closely allied ragas belonging to the same parent ragas. It finishes with the Sriraga.

'Inta Kopa', Adi is a Ghanaragamalika set in the ghanas ragas. The ragas occur in the following sequence: Nata (Pallavi), Gaula (Anupallavi) Varali and Arabhi (Muktayi svara) Sri raga (charana line)
Narayanagaula Ritigaula, Saranganata, Bhupalam and Kedaram (ettuguda svara passages). The varnam Dinaragamalika, Adi is set in eight ragas following the sequence of the ragas according to the time theory. It is structured in the following way; Bilahari (morning raga - pallavi Dhanyasi (forenoon raga - anupallavi), madhyamavati (noon raga - muktayi svara), Kalyani (early eve ning - charana), Purvikalyani (eve ning - ettugada passage), Kedaragaula (late evening - ettugada passage), Mohana (midnight raga ettugada passage), Bhupala (dawn raga - ettugada passage). It is called Dinaragamalika since it is a compilation of ragas used during a whole day.

The Naksatramalika varnam is in 27 ragas set to Adi tala. In each avartana the first half is set in one raga and the second half in another raga which makes two ragas in one avartana. The 27 ragas indicate the 27 constellations of the zodiac.

The Graha bheda varnam covers the four ragas that occur when the modal shift (graha bheda) is done in the raga Madhyamavati. The transition of ragas from Madhyamavati to Hindolam, Sudha saveri, Suddha Dhyanasi and Mohanam is performed with a modal shift of the tonic note or adhara sadja.
In the Ragamalika varnams the rhythmic combinations of svaras are not much in evidence. There is a pronounced break in the flow of the music on account of the frequent raga changes. The purpose of these varnams is often academic and they help in demonstrating certain aspects of raga lakshna (the main features of a raga) or other facts concerning music.

Ragamalika pada varnams are quite popular. The ragas are chosen with an eye for their janaranjaka (mass attraction) qualities. Swati Tirunal's Suma sayaka, Karnataka kapi, Tisra Eka, proceeds in a single raga, viz. Karnataka kapi, till charana and the three ettugada svara passages. In the final ettugada passage, the last four avartanas are set in Kalyani, Khamas, Vasanta and Mohana respectively. Mohanam, Bhairavi has a similar structure incorporating different ragas at the end. There is a wide variety in the way the ragas are presented in the Ragamalika pada varnam. The dance genre perhaps require more novelty. Swarasthana varna is a variety of Tana Varna in Todi Raga. This can be as a Pada Jathi varna wherein we come across excellent examples for swarankshara
prayogas.

Among the prominent composers who have attempted this form include Sonti Venkata Subbiah, Pattanam Subramania Iyer, Swati Tirunal, Muthiah Bhagavatar, Veena Kuppiar, Ramnad Srinivas Iyengar, Shatkala Narasaiyya, Shatkala Govinda Marar etc.