

Vedic Mantras and Classical Music

Dr. Sangeeta Gorang

Associate Professor in Music (Instrumental)

(Affiliated by Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra)

KVA DAV College for Women, Karnal (Haryana) India 132001

Introduction

In the research of therapeutic potentiality in Indian Classical Music, a brief review of Indian ancient literature is inevitable, as the origin of Indian music is found in the Vedas. The Sama Veda is 'Geya' that can be recited musically. The Samveda is a Sanskrit word from Saman means "song" and Veda Means "Knowledge". The meaning of Samveda is the Veda of melodies and chants. It is an ancient Vedic Sanskrit text, and part of the scriptures of Hinduism.

Among the four groups of Vedic literature viz. Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanisads the text belonging to the first group (except the Kathaka and the Kapisthala samhita to us in a completely accented form. The text belonging to the other groups are not completely accented. Among the Bramanas Satapatha. Brahmana of the Sukla yajurveda, in its two recessions (the Madhyaandian and the Kanva) is accented.

As it has been mentioned, most of the Vedic texts in their different recessions follow some systems of accentuation for their recitation. These systems vary from text to text recession to recession and sometimes form samhittato Btahaman text. From the survey of all the accented texts it can be said that in the time of these texts several systems of accentuation were prevalent. Among them five are regarded as most prominent.

1. Four note system (Catuhsvarya)
2. Three note system (Traisvarya)

3. Two note system (Dvi-svara)
4. One note recitation system (Eksruti or Tanasvara)
5. Seven note system (Saptasvara)
1. **Four note system (Catuhsvara)**

In this system the mantras are recited in four notes. This system is ;prevalent in the Samhitas and the Tattiriya Brahmana including its Aranyaka and Upnisad. Under the four note system come four svaras viz Udatta, Anudatta, Savarita and Pracaya. It also refers to Pracaya svara. There it is mentioned that this pracaya as accepted the sakalya and Anythareyam not by the saisriyas Two recensions under Tattiriya followed the four note recitation is Anudatta, Udatta, Savrita and Pracaya as in supeasasah in case, the word is consisting of three notes, then the sequence would be Anudatta, Uddatta and Swarita as inGananam. If a word is consisting of the two notes then again first would be Anudatta dn second would be Udatta as in Agnim. If there are Udatta and dependent swarita in a word then Udatta would be recited at first as Indra. It is mentioned that swarita and prcaya never come after anudatta. Similarly Udatta never comes after swarita or pracaya. If Udatta comes after swarita or pracaya then these are changed into anudatta.

2. **Three note system (Traisvarya)**

Three swara system is that in which Udatta, Anudatta and Swarita notes are used. This

system is similar to Catuhswar system. Only difference is in the *pracaya*. In three note system *pracata us bit* recited independently. Though *pracaya* is there but it is recited with *Udatta sruti* that is why it is not considered as an independent note. The sequence of the *swaras* is same for the rest three notes as in *catuhswavarya* system. In the recitation of *Regveda*, *Madhyandin* and *Kanva samhita* of *yajurveda*, *Arcika samhita* of *samaveda* and *Atharveda*, three notes are used. The *Khandideya* and *Aukheyas*, two branches under *Taittiriya*s followed both system in their *Brahmanas*, while the other schools of *Taittiriya*s followed only three note system of accentuation in their *Brahmanas*.

3. Two note system (Dvi-svara)-

The two note system of accentuation was prevalent in the *Brahmanas* of *Vajasneyins* (in their two recensions viz *Madhayandina* and *Kanva*). In this system there is only two *swaras* viz *Udatta* and *Anudatta*. There is no *svarita* or *pracaya* at all in this system. This system is known as *Bhasika svara*.

4. One note system or monotone system (Ek or Tanasvara)-

The monotone system of accentuation which is known as *Eksruti* or *Tanasvara* has been employed in the *Brahmanas* of *Aitareya*, *Asvalayana* etc. *Paanini* and *Katayana* has prescribed the use of monotone system of accentuation at the time of calling one from a far and in the recitation of the *mantras* with exception to *subramaya nigad*, *japa*, *nyunkha* and *samans* during the sacrificial performances. This however seems to be a later innovation.

7. Seven note system

The seven note system was prevalent in the chanting of *Samanas*. The system of chanting is very old, is evident from the fact that it has been referred to in the *Smhita* itself. But which are those *awaras* in nowhere mentioned in *samhita* literature. For the first time the *samavidhana brahamana* and the *samhitopnias*, *Brahmana* give the names of seven *swaras* as *krusta*, *Prathama*, *Divtiya*, *Tritiya*, *Caturthaa*, *Mandra*, *Atisavara*. At present we find four song books of *samaveda* viz *Gramegeyangana*, *Armyageyagana*, *Uhagana* and *Uhyaganana* being chanted in seven notes. By the time of *Patanjanli* there were one thousand recension of *samaveda*.

The impact of vedic chantings on classical music

The origin of classical music can be traced to *Vedas*. The *Sam Veda* contained *mantras* chanted in form of hymns with certain pitch and tones. The roots of Indian Classical music can be traced to *Sama Veda* and its upveda *Gandhrava Veda*, the science of music. All the later music is *Sam gayan*, recital of the vedic period where the special priest sang the hymns.

Vedic Mantras has all the cycles and rhythms of the psychology, hormonal secretion, metabolism, cardiac rhythm, and more which keep the mind and body in tune with rhythm of nature. The basic *swaras* of *Vedic chanting* are *udatta*, *anudatta* and *swarita*. The *udatta*, *anudatta* and *swarita* are stress accent as well as the pitch accent word. *Udatta* refers to sound produced from above the palate, and the acutely accented (*Uchchaih*). *Anudatta* was gravely accented (*nichaih*). And *Swarita* is combination of *udatta* and *anudatta*, with *udatta*

in the first half. It is called a circumflexed accent. These three accents Anudatta, Udatta and Swarita are defined by ancient scholars as lower, upper and middle pitch. However some scholar have later interpreted the position of swarita as not the middle pitch between anudatta and udatta but as higher than that of udatta and contend that the position of swarita as the middle pitch may be considered only from the linguistic point of view. These accents may be equated to Ni, Sa and Ri of the contemporary Indian musical scale, a supported by actual practice.

According to the Naradiya Shiksha, the seven musical swaras developed from the three Rigvedic accents during the period of Samaveda.

- Nishada and gandhara originate from udatta.
- Rishabha and dhaivata from anudatta
- Shadja, Madhyama and Pachama from Swarita.

Naradiya Shiksh also refers to the original names of the seven swaras of Sama vedic era as Prathama, Dvitiya, Tritiya, Chaturtha, Madra, Atiswara and Krushta.

These vedic swaras gradually developed into seven musical notes in the singing tradition of samaveda and the more musical chanting of the samaveda make use of five, six or seven tones and is said to be the source of later classical music.

Benefits of Vedic Mantra Chanting

When a Mantra is chanted in a musical rhythmic tone with ups and downs, they create a melodious effect in the body. The chanting of Vedic Mantras improves our mental and physical health. When we chanting vedic mantras puts pressure on tongue, vocal chords, lips, palate and other connecting points in the body. The vibration from the mantra stimulates a gland called hypothalamus. And it is responsible for the regulations of many body functions including immunity, and some happy hormones. According to a research who chanted mantras correct, musical and proper manner they had better concentration and learning power. Because chanting of mantras helps stimulate the body Chakras, also known as the energy centre helps in the smooth functioning of different body organs. Therefore the practice of music and recitation of mantras should be incorporated in the field of Vedic Studies.

Reference

1. Dr. Pranjape ,Bhartiya Sangeet ka Itihas
2. Vedic Sahitya Prishilan
3. Nardiya Shiksha
4. Dr. Radha Krishan, Dharam aur Samaj
5. Dr. Ishwari Parshad , Bhartvarh ka Itihas
6. Samveda- Wikipedia