

A CONTEXT OF SEVEN MUSICAL ACCENTS IN VAYUPURANA-A REVIEW

Pratyusha Ghosh¹

When Dr E. Felber goes to trace the origin of music, he remarks, “ Speech and music have descended a common origin, in a primitive language which was neither speaking nor singing but something both...”¹ I like to point out what Rabindranath Tagore said about music. The gist of his words are that he who has heard the ancient voice, has wafted the boat of his heart, regardless of this earth and his own self and the tumult of this mundane world.

The same echo we can hear from shakespeare who sang out in regard to music,

“The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stragems, and spoils,
The notions of his spirt and dull as night,
And his offections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted, mark the music,”²

¹ M.Phil Research Scholar,Visva – Bharati University,Santiniketan

1. *The Indian Music to the vedic and The classical period, Dr.Erwin Felber, 1912.*

2. *The Marchant of Venis, Act V, Scene I*

The point under my discussion in this article is the context of seven accents in Vayupurana and its review. Of the eighteen voluminous puranas, music has been dealing many puranas such as vayupurana, Markandiyapurana, Agnipurana, Brihatdharmapurana, Visudharama Harapurana, Lingapurana etc. Here the very context of seven accents as technical terms of Gandharba music as described in vayupurana is dwelt upon by me.

Before entering into the depth of discussion, we need to know what ‘accent’ is. In the case of emmboding accent, kohol, a savant of music, cited,

“ātmeccyayā mahitalād vāyu rudyānnidhāryate.

nādībtittau tathākāśe dhvariruktaḥ svarah smṛtaḥ.”³

So to say the air that rises from the deep core of the heart is taken care of and the sound that rises out of that air through larynx is called accent.

Kohol has gone father to trace accent and viewed,

“ūrdhvanadīprayatna sarvabhittinighaṭṭanāt.

mūrcchito dhvaniramurdhnaḥ svarosau vyāpakāḥ parah”⁴

3. ‘Brihodeshi’ Sri Rajyeshvar Mitra, P-16-17 kohol has gone farther to trace accent and viewed,

4. ‘Brihodeshi’ Sri Rajyeshvar Mitra, P- 16-17

The sound that comes to the upper palate through the care of the upper impulse and urg through out the vocal system is abundantly and widely reflected.

In the field of accent the work of Ahabal, a renowned music pedant known as ‘panditprabar’ shall be worth quoting here,

“ rañjayati svataḥ svāntam śrotṛṇamiti te svarāḥ”⁵

According to him, what attracts the heart of listener is called accent.

What the vayupurana states in reference to the seven accents runs this way,

“ Sapto svarāstrayo grāmā murcchanāstvekaviṃśtiḥ”⁶

The fact is that the Vayupurana admits of the existence of seven accents.

In the Mahabharata we find that accent is the asset of sound. That is to say that the creation of accents occurs out of the friction between the sky and the air. The composer of the Mahabharata maid and observation in reference to it,

“ tatraikaguṇa ākāśaḥ śabda ityevaśa smṛtaḥ.

anya śabdāya vakṣyāmi vistareṇa bahūn guṇan.

ṣadjarṣabhaḥ gāndhāro madhyamaḥ pacamaḥ ṣmṛtaḥ.
 ataḥ paraṃ tu vijñeyo niṣādo dhaivatastathā.
 iṣṭāścāriṣṭśabdaśca saṃhataḥ pratubhanavān.
 ebaṃ bahubidho jñeyāḥ śabdaḥ ākāśśambhavaḥ.” – (Asvamedhik, 53/52-54)

5. 'Sangeet parijata' Ahabal pandit, P-10-11

6. Vayupurana, Panchanan Tarkaratna, 86 th chapter, P- 519

What is endorsed by the vayupurana in regard to the seven accents runs thus,

“sadjarṣabhau ca gāndhāro madhyamaḥ pañcamastathā
 dhaivatacapī vijneyastathā capī niṣadavān”

Gandhara, Madhyama, panchama, Dhaibata and Nishada. In relation to this context, sharangadev, auther of Sangit Ratnakar, has given an additional difination of accent in his book. His findings are as follows,

“ teṣaṃ saṃjñāḥ sarigamapadhanītyaparāmataḥ”⁷

What he seeks to mean is that the fine and acute name of the second definition is – sa,Re, ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, and Ni. Bharat, the author of 'Natyasastra', too has admitted The extstence of there seven accent

“ṣadjasca rṣabhascaiba gāndhāro madryamastathā,

pañcamo dhaibatascaiba nisadaḥ sapta ca svarāḥ.”⁸

The allusion is that he has alluded to sadja, rsabha, gandhara, madhyama, pancama, dhaibata, nisada.

In regard to the edition of accenticity of seven accents Kohol has viewed,

“ ṣaḍjaṃ vadati mayūra ṛṣbhaṃ cātako vadet.

ajā vadanti gāndhāraṃ krauñco vadati madhyamam.

puṣpasādhāraṇe kāle kokilah pañcamam vadet.

Pravṛṭkāle tu samprāpte dhaivatam darduri vadet

Sarvadā ca tathā devi niṣādam vadate gajah.”⁹

7. *Sangeet parijata, Ahabal pandit, P- 16*

8. *Sangeet and Samaskriti, Swami Pranjanan (in the succeeding part)- and a , p- 237*

9. *Brihaddeshi, Rajyesvar Mitra, P-18*

The sum and substance of the slokas cited above is that peacocks cackle the accent of saraza . Skylarks screege in the accent of rsabha Goats bleat in gandhara, the bird croucha squeak in the accent of madhyama, in spring when cyckoos’ sing out, Pancama the fifth accent is reflected, in Rainy season when forogws creak, the accent ‘dhaipata’ is felt and elephants always trump in nisada’.

Here I like to mention that Ahabal, the great Sanskrit pedant, has also approved of the presence of seven accnts the trace of which is vividly visible in the following two lines of his sloka,

“ṣadjarsabhau ca gāndhārastathā madhyamapañcamau.

dhaivataśca niṣadoyamiti nāmabhirīritah”¹⁰

Respectively the seven accents are sadja rsbhah Gandhara, madhyama, Pancama , dhaibata and nisada

Another scholar ahabal did not heisted, nor maid any miserly effort to admit the colour of seven accents. Which are endorsed by the following slokas composed by him,

“ kamalābhaḥ svarah ṣadjah ṛsabhah piñjarah svarah.

hātakāmastu gāndhārah kundābho madhyamah svarah.

pañcamastu svarah śyāmo dhaivataḥ pītavarṇayuk.

niṣadāḥ karvuśceti svarāṇām varṇanirṇayah”¹¹

10. sangeet parijata, Ahabal pandit, p-10-11

11. Sangeet partijata, Ahabal Pandit, p- 16

Sadja corresponds to the colour of pink lotus, rsabha to green as palmtree, gandhara to golden yellow, madhyama to white as kunda flower, panchama to black, dhaibata to yellow and nisada signifies ‘karbuk’ which suggest multiple colour, such as monster, gold, black, violet, variety, water and blood, This way the colour of accents has been suggestd. Apart from colour, sangeet prabar Ahabal, has largely dwetl, upon accent in his book sangeet parijata’. Among those descriptions, pendigree, race, native

land, island , seers and sages are noticed. He has pointed to the rythem of accent also. As to sadja, he points to ‘anesthuv’ rsabhah rhymes with ‘Gayatree’ Gandhara is similar in rhyme to ‘Trishtuv’, Madhya ma similarises ‘Brihatee’ Pancama rhymys with ‘Pangti’ Dhaibata and nisada rtyme with ‘Usnick’ and ‘Jagatee’ respectively.

In context of accent one point that is stated elsewhere is that each of the accent has a wave. Infact music is the summation of sound wave and colour wave. In this context prof. Tzen has maintioned that Helmholt has scientifically distinguished accents in the following way,

“An increase of speed and diminution of length in the waves are sufficient to determine the vidrations which our sensation of clour under goes in passing from red to violet... Helmholtz distinguishes the following successive colours red, orange, golden, yellow, pure yellow, green, blue of water, cyanic blue, indigo, violet and ultra violet,”¹²

Sa re ga ma pa dha ni are the seven accents that are called pure and perfect accents. Of these pure accents ‘Sa’ and ‘pa’ are different from other five accents. As the other five accents maintain a difference in there accent.

12. Sangeet prasanga, Mobarak Hossian Khan, P-43.

‘Sa’ and ‘Pa’ do not go through any distortion. Hence they two accents are called passive accent while other five accents go through difference and distortion. This is why they are called active accents.

Vimalakanta Roychowdhary, in his book 'Bharatiya samgeetkosha' has given a five account of seven accents in clear way. In his opinion 'Sadja' is the prime accent that has no distortion and change. 'rsabhats' the second of the seven accents, has distortion. The third accent, gandhara, maintains distortion 'madhyama' the fourth of the seven accent is called so because it exists in the middle of the seven accents. Pancama, the fifth of the seven accents is strongly. Dominant without any distortion is the sixth of the seven accents. Of the seven accents nisada lies in the seventh position.

In the concluding part of my article. I like mention that music has been discussed in 86th and 87th chapters of vayupurana. The music, as described in vayupurana, comes to be known as Gandharva sangeet. Only the technical terms of Gandharva sangeet have been given in vayupurana. Of those technical terms, an effort has been made to describe the seven accents in the article under discussion. The author of the vayuprana has only referred to the names of seven accents such as sadja, rsabha, gandhara, madhyaama, pancama, dhaibata and risada. Bharatamuni, the author of 'natya-sastra' the great scholar Ahabal, Matangamuni etc have echoed almost the same view. The discussion is presented in turn with the main topic, though the help has been taken from various sources.

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