

INTRODUCTION

by
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THE VEDIC OCTAVE AND EXTRACTS FROM SANGITA SARA
IN
ABHINAVA BHARATA SARA SANGRAHA
[Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore].

The Research Board of the Śrī Varalakṣmī Academies of Fine Arts was constituted to meet a long felt need for conducting research in Indian Music. The contributions of eminent savants and scholars to Indian Musicology have, hither to, been the results of the efforts of individuals and some institutions in India and abroad. But a proper co-ordination of the various efforts has not been attempted; still less is there any attempt to delve systematically into original sources or to trace the evolution of Indian music on a sound chronological basis. Vague assertions, reliance on second hand sources, subjective valuations, biased opinions and generalisations can have no permanent value. Musical experience may have its emotional or purely subjective considerations. Musicology demands different but co-ordinated methods – artistic, critical, scientific, philosophical, historical, psychological, experimental, empirical, eclectic and systematic. As Seashore says the analytical approach to arts may not give the whole truth but nothing gives the whole truth – from all points of view. But the science of music in a sense, has existed all along with the art. Music as a branch of knowledge forms a legitimate field of investigation. The study of the discovery and systematisation of knowledge concerning music is a vital necessity, not only

for its antiquarian interest but for the appreciation of the present trends and future line of progress in the living art of music.

The Research Board of the Academy has addressed itself particularly to the problems and methods of historical research in Indian music. The collection and evaluation of the original sources and the application of the historical method are fundamental and foundational. Of these sources the archaeological and material remains like instruments, paintings, monuments, sculptures and reliefs in temples etc., may be deemed to be more important because of their greater degree of chronological exactitude, than the literary sources like written records in various Indian languages, historical works and documents, etc. The field of research in Indian music being vast, the Board, for the present, has undertaken a limited range of subjects for investigation. The historical method involves a consciousness of the problem, its scope and definition, evaluation of the data and finally the co-ordination and integration of the results arrived at with the broader and more general aspects.

A scientific methodology demands a search for the relevant data and material; accurate verification and reference to ensure correctness of facts and prevent duplication of effort; the analysis of the data with the textual criticism; a constructive reasoning and synthesis of pertinent details, neither suppressing uncomfortable truths, nor insidiously suggesting falsehoods; and a final estimate.

With the limits of its humble resources, the Research Board has attempted to maintain a high level of research work in conformity with the above standards. Two contributions on vedic (particularly Sāma) music and new source – material are presented in this first bulletin of the Research Board.

Each contributor is personally responsible for the conclusions arrived at by him.

The article on "The Vedic Octave" by Sri M. Raja Rao, who has to his credit a long list of research publications in Indology, is full of erudition and constructive imagination. He has collected the original sources bearing upon the particular aspect of the problem and has attempted to restore some sort of order in the apparently conflicting authorities. His interpretation of the crucial words *Yama* and *An-antaram* is the basis for his conclusion that the Vedic Octave consisted of five major tones and two semitones. He has suggested a line of evolution, from the recognition of the consonance of true fifth, to the full seven degree scale. By tonic shift and some modifications he derives twelve basic Rāgas and sixty possible tunes. He proceeds to interpret the ancient Tamil scale on the same basis of five major tones and two limmas, but flattening the Pythagorean major seventh and *prati-madhyama*. He assumes that the Tamil rāga was not defined by the tonic but by the first svara or the kural. However, as Vipulānanda has shown, Kural meant the tonic and also a svara. A full discussion of the various assumptions made by the author must be deferred for the present.

Sri. R. Satyanārāyana has brought to light certain extracts from *Sangīta Sāra* quoted in "*Abhinava Bharata Sāra Sangraha*", compiled in the time of Mummaḍi Cikka Bhūpa, a Pāḷeyagar of Bijjāvāra - Madhugiri. The extant manuscript nowhere explicitly mentions *Sangīta Sāra* as the work of Vidyāranya but the probabilities have been discussed. He has drawn attention to the differences in the nomenclatures of śrutis, mūrchanās, svaras etc, to facilitate a comparative study.

The Research Board will publish in the future issues of the Bulletin further studies on these and kindred problems. Comment and criticism by

competent scholars would be welcomed. The Board trusts that all lovers of Indian music will extend full cooperation in this cultural enterprise.

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