

Appreciating Carnatic Music
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Lecture - 15
Gamaka-II

Gamaka as I said, it can transform the swara. This ri (Singing Starts: 00:31) (Singing Ends: 00:34) this is ga (Singing Starts: 00:35) (Singing Ends: 00:36) it is quite transformed. Now I will demonstrate another set of notes, so they say how transformation happens in stages. The notes that, I am going to take, is different set of notes.

(Singing Starts: 00:53) (Singing Ends: 01:02). The only difference between this and previous set of notes is that, ri is the lower verity, ri one (Singing Starts: 01:12) (Singing Ends: 01:16) and I am using pa also. (Singing Starts: 01:20) (Singing Ends: 01:45).

This is a more or less staccato, rendition of swaras, some combinations of the swaras, but the swaras rendered and in staccato fashion. (Singing Starts: 01:57) (Singing Ends: 01:59), that discreet. Now, let me apply, some kind of gamakas, and you can see how it is different (Singing Starts: 02:08) (Singing Ends: 02:45) now the same set of swaras, I will apply, very different kind of gamakas, and see how different it sounds, (Singing Starts: 02:55) (Singing Ends: 03:51) what I sang last, was raga Thodi, which is a major raga in Carnatic music.

Before that, the other kind of, gentler gamakas, are applied, that would-be raga called sindhu bhairavi. Which is actually a very popular raga, used in films and other such genres like music and also we have songs in carnatic music also in sindhu bhairavi. Point of this, was to show that the gamakas completely transforms the sound, (Singing Starts: 04:34) (Singing Ends: 04:43) it is completely different.

So gamakas, are, as I said not optional, in the context of raga, all notes do not have gamakas. The same note, may have different gamakas, given the context of the phrase. And the gamaka has a internal rhythm, internal tempo, which is very important, and the gamaka actually

transforms the swara, so much, so that you do not know, where is the swara and where is the gamaka, they are one integrated whole.

And it almost seems, not quite comprehensible. Why we are given that movement, for that swara. (Singing Starts: 05:33) (Singing Ends: 05:36) The only reason, why we are calling it ga is, that between ma and ri, the actual pitch of ga, may not be heard at all, in the gamaka.

Gamaka, also finds mentions in many in Lakshna Granthas, remaining of our text Sanskrit Lakshna grantha tradition, we have, a definition of gamaka in thirteen century text called sangitasamayasa. The verse go like this swas srutis sthana sambootha yam chayam srutya anath arshayam swaro yathgame geethe gamacau naroopitha yah.

When in music, a tone moves from its own pitch to towards another. So, that, the second passes like shadow over it, it is called gamaka. Though, we don't find references to gakkama's, as such in earlier texts. The word gamaka does not appear in the musical context.

The Naradiya shiksha, which I have mentioned earlier, is one of the earliest text, that talks about music. Naradiya shiksha has, an idea similar to this gamaka, it says in the context Samaveda chanting, samaveda is one of the four Vedas, and there is a very unique stylized way of rendering the saman hymens. It is a common place, to assert that Indian music, carnatic or Hindustani as actually evolved from samaveda.

How it has actually evolved, that story as not been told. So, it seems uncritical to simply assert that, our music has come down from saman. Certainly, samaveda chanting is quite musical. There is an element of music in it, and it is possible to think, that we may able to trace our music back to saman, samaveda music.

But in any case, Naradiya shiksha, talks about, something bordering with concept of gamak, in the context of sama veda chanting. It says this, that one should proceed from one note to another, from one swara to another as shadow recedes, when sunlight advances.

So here clearly, the suggestion is that, moving from one swara to another must not be staccato. There should be continuity, and this is essentially the idea of gamaka. Though, the word gamaka, is not used that, you see the similarity between what Naradiya shiksha says and what sangitasamayasa says thirteen centuries later.

Now, ornamentation or gamaka is not unique to Indian music. It is not unique to Carnatic music or Hindustani music, we have ornamentation in other forms, other musical traditions of the world. In fact, if you listen to Greek music, the sound is totally close to Indian music, to Carnatic music, the ornamentation that they use.

The general sound of the music, is very close to, Indian music, what can be said about gamakas in the context of Carnatic music is, one, that it is pervasive, that is ornamentation, is not occasional, gamakas are not occasional, the music is pervaded by gamakas.

We have ornamentation all through. There are of course points, where you have plain note singing. But even there, movement from, to that notes and away from that note, will usually be, it would not be discrete or it would not be staccato.

So one thing is, ornamentation, gamaka are pervasive and the second thing is that, the second point to be made is that, gamaka transform the swara. There is a swara, then you add something to it, whole swara, the ornamentation and swara become more one whole, so that swaras so called transformed.

And finally, we have many kinds of gamakas documented. They are documented, our Lakshana Grantha speak of many kinds, fifteen kind of gamaka, ten kinds of gamakas and so on and in contemporary practice also. We have clear understanding of kind of gamakas, that we are used.

In general, when we say that, in Carnatic music, most characteristic gamaka, ornamentation is what is called kampitha gamaka. Which you hear and it sits it out, set it apart quite clearly. This (Singing Starts: 12:08) (Singing Ends: 12:18), this is gamaka, this is kampitha this kind of oscillation (Singing Starts: 12:21) (Singing Ends: 12:38). This is called kampitha.

We would take another raga, (Singing Starts: 12:49) (Singing Ends: 13:21). This is kampitha. Hindustani music, also is pervaded gamakas. The most striking gamakas, or the most characteristic gamaka, of the Hindustani music is, if I were to take the same swara, what I just sang was raga Kalyani in carnatic music. If I take raga with same swaras in hindustani music that is called Yamen. (Singing Starts: 13:57) (Singing Ends: 14:14).

Now, this kind of gliding movement (Singing Starts: 14:20) (Singing Ends: 14:31) instead of that (Singing Starts: 14:32) (Singing Ends: 14:46). Not that, other gamakas are wrong. But the most characteristic, most often encountered gamakas in carnatic music is the kampitha. The oscillating one, in Hindustani music be most characteristic gamaka again is meend or jaaru the gliding movements from one swara to another.

This actually sets, these two music musical traditions apart, that you hear carnatic music with so much of kampitha. You immediately know that this is carnatic music. Were as in hindustani music because of meend and the jaaru with the gliding movements. It has a very different texture

(Music Starts: 15:45) (Music Ends: 28:02)