

## Dhruva Giti-s: A musical composition in Sanskrit Drama

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### Dhruva Giti-s: A musical composition in Sanskrit Drama

**Abstract:** Music plays an important part in Sanskrit drama. Indian drama especially classical, can never be conceived without 'tauryatrika', music, dance and instrumental accompaniment. The prologue of a Sanskrit drama reveals that its enactment can never be effective without a sufficient tinge of music. There are certain songs in the uparūpakas in which music plays a dominant factor in the development and denouement of the story. Poeticians beginning with Bharata have dealt with music and drama in detail. There are several texts which describe about music -The *Kuttanīmata* of Damodaragupta, *Malatīmadhava* of Bhavabhūti, *Vikramōrvaśīya* and *Śakuntala* of Kalidasa, *Gītāgovinda* of Jayadeva. *Mr̥cchakaṭika* of Sudraka, *Rāghavavijaya* and *Maricavadha* based on *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bhoja's work etc. are the ones wherein the references to music warrant a probe since exhaustive and analytical studies on musical patterns in classical drama has not so far come out. The songs in drama are called Dhruvā-gana.

**Keywords:** Tauryatrika, Uparūpakas, Dhruvā. Prāveśiki, Prāsadiki, Ākṣepiki, Naiskramiki, Antārā.

#### Introduction

Music is an integral part of Sanskrit drama. Indeed, Indian classical drama can never be conceived without 'tauryatrika' music, dance and instrumental accompaniment. The prologue of a Sanskrit drama reveals that it is meant to be enacted on the stage and therefore, its enactment can never be effective without a sufficient tinge of music. There are certain songs in the uparūpakas in which music plays a dominant factor in the development and denouement of the story.

#### Scope of the Topic

The music has two divisions- Instrumental and Vocal. The music of drama consists of the song and instrumental background. The songs in drama are called Dhruvā-gāna. In South Indian dance drama, there is no need for the

entry of a character and the music in drama is sung without the entrance of the appropriate character. There are three dhruvās in between entry and exit i.e., 1. Prāsādiki 2. Ākṣepikī and 3. Āntara. The dhruvās which is seen in some of the dramas- *Anargharāghava* of Murari, Rajasekhara's plays, *Ratnāvali* of Harsa. The importance of dhruva music is that they were composed always in prākṛt language. They were generally composed in Śauraseni prākṛt. And some are found in Sanskrit also. The celestial characters use Sanskrit with high grammatical usages. Human beings can use the languages half Sanskrit mixed with Prakṛt. These were sung by the musicians from behind the curtain. It has melody and rhythm of essential aspects.

### **Dhruvā**

The leader of the drama troupe (nāṭyācārya) incorporated a set of songs in the play – which supplied the mood of the situation over and above that created by the dramatists. These were called dhruvā songs.

ध्रुवा गीत्याधारो नियतः पदसमूहः ।

Without any colour the drawing should not become good, likewise nāṭya could not perfect without the song-

यथा वर्णादृते चित्रं न शोभोत्पादनं भवेत् ।

एवमेव विना गानं नाट्यं रागं न गच्छति ॥

The definition of Dhruvā-s are mentioned by Bharatamuni in chapter thirtytwo of his

*Nāṭyaśāstra(NS)* -

ध्रुवासंज्ञानि यानि स्युर्नारदप्रमुखैर्द्विजैः ।

गीताङ्गानीह सर्वाणी विनियुक्तान्यनेकशः ॥

या ऋचः पाणिका गाथाः सप्तरूपाङ्गमेव च

सप्तरूपप्रमाणं हि तद्ध्रुवेत्यभिसंज्ञितम् ।

Trayaśratāla with six kalās and caturasratāla with eight kalās are the characteristics of dhruvā songs. These above mentioned tālās are the vital energy to Dhruvā gīti-s.

According to Bharata, the words, tempo, Jati, notes and time beat in them were regularly (dhruvam) connected with one another. So that it is called dhruvā songs. Abhinavagupta emphasis that they stabilise, so to say or form a firm means dhruvam foundation of the production or their themes and hence are called dhruvā-s. According to Rajasekhara, in the prastāvana of *Bālarāmāyaṇa* dhruvās are the vital breath of a dramatic performance-

ध्रुवा हि नाट्यस्य प्रथमे प्राणाः ।

Kinds of Dhruvā Songs. There are five kinds of dhruvās and their situations of employment are charted below-

Dhruvā Songs	Situation of Employment
Prāveśiki	Sung at the entrance of important characters
Naiṣkrāmiki	Sung at exit of important characters
Prāsādiki	Sung to develop or enlarge the mood of the situation
Ākṣepiki	Sung to change the mood of the situation
Āntara	Sung to cover the faults or mishaps or bad lucks

These songs were always sung by the vocalists of the musical orchestra. Sometimes the performer also joins with them. Each of them has different situations for their employment. The names of these five Dhruvās are based on the names given to human beings in order of genealogy, family and customs etc. Saradatanaya also mentions five kinds of dhruvās . They are -

अधिका चापकृष्टा च प्रवेशिक्यावसानिकी ॥

अन्तरा चेति पञ्चैता ध्रुवा नाटकसंश्रिताः ॥

These are not explained in detail. But he discusses only the names of the above dhruvas.

The dhruvās described in *NS* are discussed in detail-

#### 1. Prāvesiki Dhruvā

In prāveśiki dhruvā-song, a character enters with different meaning and rasa. This is not used when a character is in a situation of calamity, wonder, tension, crying etc. The situations that happen in afternoon are supposed to be described in this dhruvā.

तवास्मि गीतरागेण हारिणा प्रसभं हृतः ।

एष राजेव दुष्यन्तः सारङ्गेणातिरंहसा ॥

[Meaning: The ravishing melody of your song I was forcibly carried away, like King Dusyanta here by an antelope of extreme fleetness.]

Here the entrance of the king Dusyanta is portrayed by Kalidasa.

## 2. Naiṣkrāmiki Dhruvā

This is occurring in the exit of one character at the end of an act or when a character makes his /her exit from the scene. The situations that happens during day and night are described in naiṣkrāmiki. In this dhruvā, vādyā is used with music. If a character enters on the stage with tension, fear and pleasure music is applied along with this.

गच्छति पुरः शरीरं धावति परचादसंस्थितं चेतः ।

चीनांशुकमिव केतोः प्रतिवातं नीयमानस्य ।

[Meaning: Body goes forward, (but) the restless heart runs backward, like the chin cloth of a banner which is being borne against the wind ]

Here Kalidasa portraits the exit of King Dusyanta.

## 3. Prāsādiki Dhruvā

Prāsādiki means a character who is in good mood. In the context of memory, vanity, happiness, request, ṣṛṅgāra, adbhuta rasa etc. prāsādiki dhruvā is employed.

रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुराश्च निशम्य शब्दा-

नपर्युत्सुको भवति यत्सुखिनो/पि जन्तुः ।

तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वम्

भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरसौहृदानि । ।

[Meaning: When on seeing charming objects and hearing sweet sounds, a being, although possessed of happiness, become longingly anxious, then, indeed, he remembers in his heart, without consciousness beforehand, friendships of other lives, that are permanent through mental impressions.]

When the king hears music of Hamsapadika, Dusyanta thinks of his past golden memories.

## 4. Ākṣepiki

Ākṣepiki is used in the speed and slow tempoo. Each movable things are described in this dhruvā. It is in adbhuta and bhayānaka rasa. The situations like anger and fury are the reason for adbhuta and bhayānaka rasa.

कः पोरवे वसुमतीं शासति शासितरि दुर्विनीतानाम् ।

अयमाचरत्यविनयं मुग्धासु तपस्विकन्यासु । ।

[Meaning: Who is this that is practising rudeness towards innocent hermit girls, whilsta descendant of Puru, the chastiser of the ill-behaved, governs the earth? They are separately talking. But not meeting each other].

Here Kalidasa wants to change the situations that the hermit girls can meet

the king.

#### 5. Āntarā Dhruvā

This is used in between the other four. Fainting, sadness, wearing dress, arranging the costumes etc. occur several times during the performance of the play. To overcome these situations, intervals are given. When a character is in anger wound, he or she relieved from the stage, the director uses antarā dhruvā in order to change the situations in speed tempo.

भव हृदय ! साभिलाषं सम्प्रति सन्देहनिर्णयो जातः ।

आशङ्कसे यदग्निं तदिदं स्पर्शक्षमं रत्नम् ॥

[Meaning Heart! Be full of longing, now the solution of doubts is accomplished. What you fear to be fire is here a gem capable of being touched].

According to Bharatamuni one can use these dhruvās in accordance to the emotions.

यत्र प्रत्यक्षजं दुःखं मृताभिर्हतदर्शनम् ।

#### Different Metres for Dhruvā Songs

Generally different types of meters are not used for dhruvā songs. But the metres that have quality and blessedness are only applied. Māla, Vaktram, Puṭam, Viśloka, Cūlika, Udgata, Aparavaktram are considered as good. Above all *NS* enumerates many situations, tempos, meters and syllables to evoke a particular rasa in which a dhruvā song employed. To indicate capture, fall, attack, illness, swoon, on seeing someone killed etc. Ākṣepiki dhruvā was used with pathetic or karuna rasa in slow tempo. To show impatience, dissimulation, weariness, anxiety, lamentation, depression, despair, calamity etc., the ākṣepiki dhruvā with the above mentioned same rasa and note are employed in fast tempo.

#### The Different Occasions

The different occasions for the employment of dhruvās as follows-

वस्तु प्रयोगं प्रकृतिं रसभावावृतुं वयः ।

देशं कालमवस्थां तु ज्ञात्वा योज्या ध्रुवा बुधैः ॥

There are several rules in relation to the presentation of dhruvā-s .

In morning- Sukumāra or gentle style

In Noon- Deepti

After-Noon- Medium Dhruvā

Evening or Dusk- Sorrowful Dhruva.

Moreover, another peculiarity is that, among gita, vadya, nrta a proper order

should be maintained. First follow gīta then vādyā and after that nṛtta must be performed.

पूर्व गानं ततो वाद्यं ततो नृत्तं प्रयोजयेत् ।

### Conclusion

Music being an integral part of Sanskrit drama, its employment in it is brought in to effect by several subtle factors. It is the chief factor of entertainment in drama, the other two being rhythm and acting. All these three factors constitute the concept of tauryatrika. Bharata allots a separate chapter, that is, chapter thirtytwo, for the treatment of dhruvā gīti-s in Sanskrit drama. He discusses a particular sequence when dhruvā gīti-s were put to use. The primary concept of drama in Sanskrit was in the form of an entertainment or kridanīyaka. But the elaborate treatment of Sanskrit drama in *NS* and other important dramaturgical texts underline the fact that the drama, as tragedy to Aristotle, was considered the most serious form of theatre art in Ancient India. Dramatic art was treated with much gravity as life itself because life is often conceived as a play that is being enacted continuously. The dhruvā music is played to create a particular dramatic mood among audience. In modern play production with regarding to Indian classical drama are beset with several subtle musical patterns, the tradition of which is embedded in the views of Sanskrit authors.

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<sup>1</sup> Gita, vādyā and nṛtta are called tauryatrika.

<sup>2</sup> Nāṭyasāstra, Hindi translation, L- 1-2, p.618.

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 VI *Bhāvaprakāśa* , VII, V.189, p.287.  
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 X *Ibid*, V, V.9, p.325.  
 XI *Ibid*, I, V.20, p.50.  
 XII *Ibid*, English Translation, re-edited by Pravin Pralayankar, I, V.25, p.142.  
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