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राज्य मंत्री मा० मुख्यमंत्री  
एवं प्रोटोकॉल,  
उ०प्र० शासन लखनऊ



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## Music in Valmiki Ramayana

□ DR. V. JANAKA MAYA DEVI\*

### ABSTRACT

The epic period of Indian history is dated several centuries before Christ. The development of scale is an important milestone in this period. Ramayana is considered as the biggest composition (Song) which comprises of 24000 verses. Valmiki taught these compositions to Lava and Kusa and these were performed widely by them. There are lots of Musical techniques in these compositions which covers the basics of Indian Music. Hence the study of the music composition in this period is an important aspect. This article takes up the analysis of music during the Ramayana period and the content constitutes evidence for

- Svaras
- Taas - rhythm, laya
- Words – sâhitya, language
- Compositional type – song, musical form

And other inevitable supportive parts for singing, such as

- Musical instruments
- Gâyaka guGas and
- Gâna kâla

Precisely, this study throws light on the evolution of music in the Ramayana period

#### Introduction:

In the history of South Indian music, ancient period may be divided into two, the first one is pre-historic period i.e., Vedic period and the second one is Ramayaga and Mahabharata i.e., Epic period. Music in Valmiki Ramayana is selected for analysis for four main reasons.

- The first reason is a demarcating line which has been drawn in the history of Indian music between Vaidika music and the Laukika music at this time.
- The second reason is that Valmiki RamayaGa, the complete kavya was sung.
- The third one is that Gandharva music was evolved, which paved way for Shadja, Madyama and Gandhara Grâmas and resultant jatis.

- The fourth one is that, RamayaGa is the very first source, which gives the references on Gana Kala, the composition with the rasanubhava and so on. Moreover, the study of the music in RamayaGa period is more important, because epic like RamayaGa is the main source for tracking the evolution of music of ancient period.

#### Music:

Music is the only art which gives joy, the moment it is heard. Also of all the beings, human being is gifted by nature to cultivate music and blessed with not merely a speaking voice but also a singing voice.

According to sage Bharata,

*Yat tu trantrikrtam proktam nana todaya samasrayam |  
Gandharvam iti taj jneyam svara –taa –padatmakam ||*

(Natyasastra- Chapter –XXVIII-8<sup>TH</sup> sloka- English translation by Unni. N.P )

Which means music or Ganam or Gandharvam (song) comprises of Svara, Ta7a and Pada (wordings).

Svaras are the basic necessary components to build raga. Raga gives music or tonal quality. Taa raises the conformity and the words provide the Sahitya bhava for a musical form. Though the words or Sahityas are the inevitable part of the music composition, the musical form Jatiswaram is an example for music without sahitya. In general, a composition possesses three elements called Raga, Taa and Sahitya. By these elements musical compositions attain their quality. The inclusion of various types of the above elements and varieties create different types of compositions.

**Music in VALMIKI RamayaGa:**

RamayaGa is an epic, written by the sage Valmiki. The name RamayaGa is a compound of Râma and ayaGa, which means the (journey) path of Rama. It is said that Rama lived in Tretayuga. The verses (slokas) are in Sanskrit language and composed in a complex metre called Anustubh. The verses are in 32 syllables of four padas, each of eight syllables, which is in samavrutta. It consists of 24,000 verses in seven KaG as and also 500 Cantos (sargas) and conveys the story of Rama. The individual chapters are called sargas. These chapters or sargas are grouped under the headings called KaGas. The chapters (KaG as) are as follows:

S. No.	Kanda	Chapters
1	Bala Kanda	77
2	Ayodhya Kanda	119
3	Aranya Kanda	75
4	Kishkindha Kanda	67
5	Sundara Kanda	68
6	Yuddha Kanda	128
7	Uttara Kanda	111

**Ramayana - a Composition:**

To construct a composition, the following elements are needed. They are

a) Musical aspects, b) Rhythmic aspects, c) Wordings (as mentioned in introduction).

Kavya itself carries the evidence stating that Ramayana was sung with raga and tala. Following is the proof that it was rendered as a Composition.

*Pathye geye cha madhuram PramaGaistribhiranvitam |*

*Jatibhi: saptabhiryuktam Tantri –laya Samanvitam ||*  
(4<sup>th</sup> sarga - 8<sup>th</sup> sloka)

*Rasai: cerongara - Karuna hasya – raudra – bhayanakai: |*  
*Veeradibhi rasairyuktam Kavyametadgayatam ||*

(4<sup>th</sup> sarga - 9<sup>th</sup> sloka)

*Tautugandharva – tattvajnanau Sthana – murcchana – kovidau |*  
*Bhratarau svara – sampannau Gandharvaviva – roopinau ||*  
(4<sup>th</sup> sarga - 10<sup>th</sup> sloka)

*Tatastutau Ramavaca: pracoditavagayatam:*  
*margavidhana sampada |*

(Bala Kanda - 4<sup>th</sup> sarga - 36<sup>th</sup> sloka)

Valmiki also says that,

*Sa muktavan narasreshto gitamadhurya muttamam |*  
*Susrava Rama caritam tasmin kale yathakramam ||*

*Tantree laya समयुक्तam tristhana karaGanvitam |*  
*Samskrtam lakshaGopetam samataia samanvitam ||*

(Uttara KaGda - 71 sarga – slokas -14, 15)

The Saramsa of the above slokas are: Ramayana is sweet to learn and sing. It has three pramanas, it is sung in seven Jatis (ragas) accompanied by Tantri and laya. Ramayana is soaked and sung with all the rasas like ceongara, Karuna etc.

Valmiki appreciates Lava and Kusa for their expertise in Gandharvatattva and their ability to perform Sthana, Murchana and for their good voice. Moreover, he says that they look like Gandharvas. It conveys that he adopted the 'marga style' of music. Rama caritam was formed as a G+ti, sung pleasingly (madhuryam) in three sthan, the language is Samsk[ram and was set to Sama taa.

From the above - 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> slokas of Bala Kanda and 71<sup>st</sup> sarga – slokas - 14 & 15 of Uttara KaG a, it explains how a composition must be formed, what criteria is to be incorporated and how the quality and personality of the singers should be.

Precisely, the following will explain how Ramayana possesses all the characteristic features of a composition with the help of above slokas.

**a) Musical elements:**

To set a poem or wordings in a tune, it needs- Svaras; Svara Sthana- the actual places of Svaras; Sthayis- construes lower (mandra), middle (madhyama), and higher (tara) i.e., to show the range or scope of the raga.

ii a singer has the potential or caliber, they can do Murchana. Murchana means - shifting the Adhara svara

into other notes, by which various ragas can be evolved. These ragas are named as, Murchana karaka ragas or otherwise the ragas which can be given scope to do Murchana and it is named as Murchana karaka ragas. Râmâyana incorporated all the specified Musical elements. They are:

- Sus svara
- Svarasthana
- Seven Jati ragas
- Three sthayis
- Murchana – i.e., model shift of tonic
- Marga style
- b) Rhythmic elements: To sing a composition in a controlled format or in conformity, here comes the rhythm or *taa* to help. Ramayana was set to the following:
  - Tantri laya
  - Sama taa
  - Three kala pramanas

c) Wordings: To form a lyric or words or sahitya for a Composition, language is the key factor. The next basic requirement is the theme, which carries one rasanubhava or more than one. The composition should be fixed up in one complete section or more than one section. Ramayana was written in Sanskrit language with Rama Caritam as theme which comprises of 24,000 Verses (Seven sections (Kanas) -500 sargas or cantos) and with Rasas (CERòñgâra, KaruGa, Hâsya, Rraudra, Bhayânaka, Veera).

Compositions, other than Ramayana:

*SruGum: kimidam svapne gita bandhana muttamam |*  
(Uttara Kana-71 sargasloka21)

*Abhigitamidam gitam sarva gitishu kovidau ||*  
(Bala Kana-4<sup>th</sup> sarga-27<sup>th</sup> sloka)

Geta is the term used to denote the nibaddha music – which is bounded by raga, taa and words. RamayaGa is itself a composition and apart from that compositions were vogue under the terminology 'Gita'. Gita is one of the compositions utilized during RamayaGa period.

Musical Instruments:

There are so many evidences scattered in all the Kannas about few musical instruments in Valmiki *RamayaGa*. A few of them are listed below:

SNO	Kanda	Instruments	Sarga	Slok.
1	Bala Kanna	Dundubhi, Mrudanga, Veena, Panava	5th	18th
		Dundubhi	18, 73	17, 29, 37
2	Ayodhya Kanna	Muraja, Panava	39th	41st
		Dundubhi	91st	25th
		Veena	91st	26th
3	Aranya Kanna	Dundubhi	27th	8th
4	Kiskindha Kanda	Noopura, Kanchi	33rd	25th
		Noopura, Kanchi, Mrudanga	6th	43rd
5	Sundara Kanna	Pataha, Veena, Vipanchi, Mrudanga, Panava, Dindima	10th	39th - 44th
		Mrudanga, muraja and chelika	11th	6th
		pataha, sankha, and kalaha	95th	35th
6	Yuddha Kanna	Turva, kanchi, noopura	128th	10th
7	Uttara Kanna	Tantri (stringed instrument-Veena)	71st	15th

The epic Ramayana contains many important references to music as it does to the three pramanas, the seven jatis – set to the music and time. It also depicts various rasas like love, mirth, tenderness, anger; heroism and terror. For the Ramayana gana, the wandering bards, Lava and Kusa were taught to sing with pure type of Jati ragas. They were seven in number and were known as the 'gandharva music'. The different types of Compositions in RamayaGa period were: a) RamayaGa b) Gitis c) Gita.laya was supported by Tantri and various taas like *Sarala tâ7a*, *Zamya taa*, *sama taa* and so on. The notations of the song, the method of reckoning the taas for the specified compositions are not available.

Music is mentioned in many places - during birth and wedding of Rama, to entice the Rishis, kings (in the court of Rama and Ravana), besides having a definite place in all ceremonial observances and recreations of the prince. It was customary for the king to be awakened by sweet strains of music. Other than these, there are evidences that Ravana was awakened by the sounds of the Saman chant and praying to Zankara with Sama veda. Armies marched both in peace and war, with the military band. References to funeral music are met with in the Ramayana. In Ramayana, we come across the importance of music, the instances where songs were sung, the references about the musical terms, utilization of the musical instruments and vocal exercises to maintain voice and so on. Precisely, the involvement of Music in Ramayana is enormous and we have inherited a lot of techniques from the Epic period.

Reference :

Sreemad Vaalmeekeeyaramaayanam,  
Moolamaatram, Gita press, Gorakhpur, India

