

TĀNAM IN VEENA

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Abstract: One of the most important aspects of manodharma sangita in carnatic music is Ragam Tānam Pallavi. Each concept is unique in its own way. This article gives an insight about what is Tānam and the different types of tānam in carnatic music. The study is taken on how it's being implemented in stringed instrument "The Veena". This information is gathered through various research methodologies and a compilation from various research articles.

Key words: Tānam in Manodharmam, Types of tanam

I. INTRODUCTION

'Tan' in Hindustani music means "to stretch", hence is a way of stretching a swara. Taan Is a fast tempo improvisational expansion of notes that are woven together. In the book Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini of Subbarāma Dīkṣitulu Volume I, "Tāna means elaboration or expansion (of Mūrchanā); a particular type of creative singing or playing employing mainly the middle tempo³. Expansion or multiplications of swaras are mainly mentioned to as tāna". When embellishments are portrayed in one raga it is called as Śuddha tāna and embellishments shown in two rāgas are Kūṭa tāna, as mentioned in SSP Volume I. "Kūṭa tāna's definition of two rāgas are a contradiction as some say it is possible only in bhāṣāṅga rāgas whereas Venkatamakhi said two rāgas are essential from which one can infer"¹.

"Tānam is interpreted as an abbreviation of Sanskrit word 'aanantha' or 'ananta' which means happiness"⁵. Thus in a tānam, the word tāna is repeated often and in a stretched form to provide special melodic effects of a raga.

Tānam in Manodharma

Tānam is a component of Manodharma Sangita. An article from the journal by Dr.R.S. Jeyalakshmi explains, "Tānam is also known as Madhyama Kalam"ⁱⁱ. It is not sung as a swara but is based from swara. Only syllables Anantha, Nomtha with vowel elongations are used to render Tānam. It is based on different patterns formed with the svaras. Though Tānam is not bound by Tala, there is a rhythmic flow in rendering it.

E.B.Saraswathy in her Research Theses on The Study on Chitta Thānas mentions, "The Nagaswara vidwans said to have introduced the playing of tāna as a part of manodharma. A device known as rakti which sought to present ragam in a quick tempo was introduced to keep the listeners alert to prepare for the pallavi. This was adapted by vainikas and later on became the main ornamental factor in a Vīṇa concert"⁶. In present day tāna may be based on raga and laya. By showcasing a variation in speed/tempo in rendering tāna in madhyama kāla or occasionally slowing brings its characteristic out. The above researcher also mentions that the text is incorporating syllables ta & nam alternatively stressing on the *metu* with two, three, four, five and six phrases, improvised through permutation and combination of these phrases⁷.

Tānam playing

From the techniques of Vīṇa, playing of Tānam has seemed to have evolved. A unique feature of vīna is the presence of Tāla strings, which are used for tānam playing. The quality of music produced by Vīṇa has enhanced by sounding the Tāla strings for both drone and rhythm maintaining the continuous flow of melody.

In recent texts, Book IV of South Indian Music book by Prof. P.Sambamoorthy, mentions as followsⁱⁱⁱ;

There are various varieties of tāna that are categorized based on group patterns of swaras that can be presented in a particular style of exposition. Eight being recognized out of which six of these varieties have been given the names of the animals and birds which attribute the characteristic gaits and which are interesting form the point of view of rhythm. The 8 types of Tānam are as follows:

- *Manava tāna*
- *Aswa tāna (Horse)*
- *Gaja tāna (Elephant)*

- Marakata tāna (Monkey)
- Mayura tāna (peacock)
- Kukuta tāna (Cock)
- Manduka tāna (frog)
- Chatra tāna

How can each of these Tānam be differentiated is based on the plucking of the string otherwise called the meetu of strings. These meetu's are classified as;

- Sadha meetu
- Jalra meetu
- Ottu meetu
- Karthari meetu

There are other types of meetu a few to discuss;

- ✓ **Goti:**
The definition of this includes the downward plucking function of either index or middle finger. The special name for index downward pluck is redundant
- ✓ **Vali**
The SSP English translation, January 2011 edition specifies only usage of index finger. There is no term found for an upward middle finger pluck.
- ✓ **Kuta**
This is a special meetu in terms of both the number of fingers and strings, bringing a different quality to the resulting sound. Another category of pluck with thumb nails is also included in kuta. The sound quality of the nails would be different from the pluck by the three fingers mentioned. There is no reason why it should be only thumb nails.
- ✓ **Kanishtika**
(Laya pakka) This meetu has an important time-keeping function; the quality is due to the conglomerated sound of the side strings, indicating the strong beats of a tala cycle. The term vidi is described as the individual pluck of the main strings for special effect; but there is no such term for individual plucks for the side strings. Suggestion: vidi could probably include individual plucking of any string for effect. But still there is nothing special about the quality of the pluck; it simply sounds the tonic and the fifth in different registers⁸.
- ✓ **Pattu**
(Idai, aDDa is a unique mittu bringing a distinct sound quality to finger plucking. This includes also a middle finger pluck followed by an index finger stop and pluck. Tunai or Kutra or tODu: This technique only specifies the - alternating character of the index and middle finger in the downward plucking mode. It does not affect either the middle or index finger pluck quality.
- ✓ **Katri**
This is a unique pluck to produce double sounds. Its equivalents, sama and jodu (equal) suggest that the two fingers are together. Though the two fingers are together there is a time delay in the resultant sound because they are plucked one after another in quick succession. The name karthari or katri, on the other hand, suggests the image of a pair of scissors (its Tamil meaning), and gives the extended meaning of a broken sound quality characteristic of the technique. Abaddha mittu does not have any quality to it. It does not have any meaning for a listener who cannot comprehend the language. Also TaDai mittu does not bring any quality to the pluck. It simply describes how a particular phrase is dealt with in terms of plucking. Each one can find his own way to dealing with such phrases.

All these right hand techniques are used in tānam playing and also gives the required effect based on the usage of the meetu. The five nadai namely tisra, chaturasva, khanda, misra and sankima are played in tānam. Dr.K.Shobana mentions in her Theses, "Among the tānams only a few types of tānams are in use today. Some of the playing techniques are briefly explained below".

❖ **Chakra tāna:**

This is a combination of swaras taken in a cyclic pattern
eg; MPD-PDN-DND

- ❖ **Vakra tāna:**
Progression of swaras in Zigzag pattern
eg; MND-GDP-RPM-SMG
- ❖ **Misra Tānam:**
Combination of swaras in set of three, four, five and six
eg: RGM-RGMP-RGMPD-RGMPDN
- ❖ **Gambira tāna:**
Tānam producing a deeper tone rendered in the lower octaves (mandra stayi).
- ❖ **Malika Tānam:**
Played in different raga's (ragamalika tānam)
- ❖ **Viduta tāna:** (viduta meaning lightning)
Tānam rendered in a fast tempo
- ❖ **Tānam tāna:**
this is the Playing of tānam in Adhara Sadja using various meetus and gamakas
- ❖ **Ahata tāna:**
Stress on the first swara of each pattern is played
- ❖ **Pratyaahata tāna:**
Usage of janta prayogas in playing of tānam (Two swaras)
- ❖ **Gotu tāna:**
Mainly consists of playing chords using palin notes (3 notes at a time)
- ❖ **Manduka tāna:**
Tānam rendered jumps like a frog as it means frog
- ❖ **Gamaka tāna:**
This is in contrast to Gotu tāna as the tāna is played using Panchadasavidha gamakas.
- ❖ **Kukkuta tāna:**
Played like the sound of a cock
- ❖ **Bhramara tāna:**
Sound of a beetle
- ❖ **Mayura tāna:**
Played like sound of a peacock
- ❖ **Sarpa tāna:**
Like that of a snake
- ❖ **Aswa tāna:**
Like the gait of horse
- ❖ **Gajagamana tāna:**
Tana played in the gait of elephant
- ❖ **Meetu tāna:**
Playing each swara with a separate meetu
- ❖ **Sanchari tāna:**
The sancahram of the scale is often indicated many a times while rendering the tāna
- ❖ **Dwandva tāna:**
The tānam played on one stayi is repeated in the other stayis
- ❖ **Monaka tāna:**
To produce an enchanting musical effect using the gamakas of different ragas, the tānam is played
- ❖ **Kuta tāna:**
Combination of variety of strokes is called kuta tānam
- ❖ **Hamsa tāna:**
Resemblance of sound of swan used in the playing
- ❖ **Sivalasya tānam:**
This tāna imbibes the essence of all the other tānas in different speeds and tempo.
- ❖ **Thayi tāna or Makuta tāna:**
Repetition of a particular set of swaras at the end of tāna in different sthayis.
- ❖ **Chitta tāna:**
Tānas that are already crystallized and written down that is to be learnt and practiced for aspiring vina students.

Conclusion

These types of tānas can be used in vocal practices also. 'As mentioned by vina S.V.Arangasami Aiyangar in Sangita-Sat-Sampradaya-Dipika this term chitta tāna was mentioned else this term wasn't there and earlier references weren't available in this context'^{iv}. This had been taught to students systematically after a course in basic lessons and this practice of teaching chitta tānams still exists. It is said that with the practice of chittathanas, students improve their fingering technique and later get the ability to improvise spontaneously. These musical phrases are based on popular ragas such as shankarabaranam, kalyani and gana panchaka ragas. Vainika Sikamani Veena

Seshanna of Mysore has composed several chitta tānas^v. They do not have sahitya. Also if practiced in trikala and shatkala it helps in flawless and fast tempo rendition of such tānas.

The study reveals the different types of tānam and the use of the particular type of tānam in the present. Just as ettugada svaras in varnas, the citta svaras in krtis are useful guides for singing the kalpana svaras, the chitta tānas are useful guides for singing tāna. A course in these forms would help the students to develop the svara kalpana, alapa and tāna and enable them to improvise on their own. Thus these are the preludes for extemporization and improvisations.

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