

Glossary Of Carnatic Music

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Glossary: A

aadi - a common taaLa, which is catusra jaati tripuTa taaLa. It has 8 beats, with a catusra laghu (beat and 3 finger counts = 4) and then two drutams (beat and wave times 2 = 4). It may be also performed with double the beats per cycle, giving 16 beats.

aaditya - the 12th and last cakra, with melakartas that have M2, R3, and G3, comprising numbers 67-72

aahatam - a gamaka or decoration of a note which takes the form of 2 consecutive notes, such as SR RG GM MP ...

aalaapanai - one of the manOdharma sangeetam forms, same as raaga (2)

aananta - meaning "peace" or "ultimate happiness," this is the word used in singing of taanam

aandOLam - a gamaka or decoration of a note which takes the form of going up and down in sequence, as in SRSG, SRSM, SRSP ...

aarati - a song or ritual performed with a flame and/or turmeric to drive away evil spirits. Aarati songs are usually in mangaLa raagas

aarOha - the ascending scale of a raga (S R G ...), consisting of 4, 5, 6, or 7 notes.

aatta varnam - another name for a pada varnam

aavartana - one cycle through the rhythm or taaLa. For example, in aadi tala, one aavartanam is 8 beats. Two aavartanas are 16, etc.

abhyaasa gaanam - a type of music which is often used in practice or musical exercise. This includes the varisais, geetams, swarajatis, jatiswarams, and also varnams

afternoon raaga - a raaga to be performed in the afternoon, from about 1-4 pm, such as mukhaari or bEgaDa

agni - meaning Fire or the God of Fire, it is the 3rd cakra, with M1, R1, and D3, comprising melakartas 13-18

akaaram - using aaaa... to sing raaga or a musical phrase instead of words or swaras. One may also use vowels like eee, ooo, ayyy, aii, ohhh, etc. Aakaaram is usually indicated by dots, ex: ka...ma...kshee...

akshara - a single note, designating the number of notes per beat. Usually there are 2 notes per beat at normal (1st) speed, but at 2nd speed, there are 4, and at half-speed there may be only 1. Other speeds may use 3 or 5 aksharas per beat. (also swarakshara)

aksharakaala - the amount of time it takes for 1 akshara or one swara to be performed. So pdpmgrs is 7 aksharakaalam

alaarippu - a dance style, which uses solkaTTu swaras - it is a beginning piece, often the first taught to dance students. It allows for expert gestures and intricate footwork coordinated in a strict manner in a fast-paced performance. Typically, the songs have no actual words, only solkaTTus

alankaaram (1) - meaning a beautiful arrangement of swaras, it used to be a term for gamaka in the times of Bharata (from Adukku Ani)

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alankaaram (2) - refers to the sapta alankaarams, exercises in some of the 35 taaLas (found here)

alpa nyaasa - a swara that is just touched and not stressed within a raaga or phrase. For example, in saavEri, ri is only touched in some phrases

alpatvam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

alto - the second highest voice in Western harmony

amsam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of raaga

anaagata - a vishama graham in which the music begins AFTER the start of the taaLa

anga - any of several taaLa movements, such as laghu, drutam, or anudrutam

antara gaandhaaram - the highest of the 3 types of ga, G3. It corresponds to E natural of the Western key of C.

antara maargam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga (see maargam)

antiphony - a system where one person sings and a chorus of voices follows, often used in Indian music (especially with bhajans). Palanquin bearers, tribes of Africa, New Zealand, North America, and Egypt use antiphony

anudrutam - a type of taaLa movement which is a beat of the hand on the thigh. Its symbol is U. Considered a small (anu=small) drutam, it is equivalent to 1/4 maattirai

anu mandra staayi - the octave below the mandra staayi (two octaves below the middle octave). Indicated by 2 dots below the note (or here, beside to the right n..n..)

anupallavi - usually the second section of a song, after the pallavi and before the caraNam, often of 2 lines. After this, the pallavi is repeated. Since anu means small, this is like a small pallavi.

anuswara - a grace note or decoration of a note. The small (anu=small, atom) anuswaras bring out the beauty of a raga.

anya - notes taken from the scale of a different raga from the melakarta of the current raga. example: M1 in saaranga. A raga may have up to three anya swaras and no more. Anya swaras are indicated by an asterisk M*

apanyaasam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of raaga

apoorva taaLa - a taaLa that is not in the suladi sapta taaLa system, which uses the other angas, such as guru jhampa

ardha kampita raaga - a raaga in which only some swaras can have kampita gamaka, ex: kuntala varaaLi, compared to muktaanga kampita raagas

arpuda - a particular rasa or feeling in a song or raaga, for example in saaranga or hindustaani behaag

ashTapadi - literally "eight steps," this is a musical form, a type of sabhaa gaanam, also used in dance. Each has eight stanzas, plus one. The most famous is by JayadEva and usually composed in devotion to Krishna

aTa - one of the sapta taaLas, which has the form laghu, laghu, drutam, drutam (symbol ||00). With the varying 7 laghus, this gives seven forms. When the laghu number is not specified, it is catusra jaati aTa taaLa, which is laghu(4), laghu(4), drutam(2), drutam(2), for 12 beats

aTa taaLa varnam - a varnam set in aTa taaLa, which usually has a repetitive nature to the phrases before the muktaayi swaras and which has many caraNas

aticritatama maargam - a taaLa path that uses 1 swara or 1/4 maattirai, used in kritis

ati melivu - same as anu mandra staayi

atita - a vishama graham in which the music starts before the beginning of the taaLa

ati taara staayi - the octave above the taara staayi (two octaves above the middle octave), indicated by 2 dots above the note (or, here, an apostrophe on a capital note PDNS"N)

ati valivu - same as ati taara staayi

audava - meaning 5, this indicates ragas which use only 5 notes instead of 7 in either the ascending or descending scale (or both), leaving out 2 notes. mOhanam is an audava-audava raaga because it uses only S R G P and D going both up and down.

audavam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga, dealing with whether it is an audava raaga in either the ascending or descending scale

avarOha - the descending scale of a raaga (S N D ...), consisting of 4, 5, 6, or 7 notes.

Glossary: B

bana - the 5th cakra, with melakartas that contain M1, R2, and G3, comprising numbers 25-30

bass - the lowest voice in Western harmony

bhaashaanga - refers to raagas which take swaras (anya swaras) from raagas other than the parent mElakarta. For example, saaranga takes a M1 which is not in its parent raga kalyaaNi. A raaga may take up to 3 such swaras.

bhaashaanga kanDam - the 3rd section of a raagaanga raaga lakshaNa geetam, in which the names of the bhaashaanga raagas of the melakarta in which the geetam is sung are given in the saahitya

bhaava - bhaava refers to a raaga or song's general expression, a collection of mood, tone, and the gamakas, which create a unique effect. In combination with prayogas, sancaarams, and other aspects of raaga, it allows two raagas to be distinct even when they have the same swaras in their scales, ex: darbar and naayaki

bhagutvam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

bhajan - a devotional song, often sung in groups and in religious settings.

bhakti - a rasa, or feeling, of devotion to a god portrayed in songs or raagas, usually. Most Carnatic songs have bhakti rasa.

bhayanaka - a rasa, or feeling, of fear in songs or raagas, shown in raagas such as punnaagavaraaLi

bhu - the 4th combination of da and ni in a cakra, with D2 and N2 or dini, representing the 4th melakarta in any cakra

bibatsa - a rasa, or feeling, of disgust in songs or raagas, shown in raagas such as aThaaNaa

Brahma - god of creation, knowledge, consort of Saraswati

brahma - the 9th cakra, with melakartas having M2, R1 and G3, comprising numbers 49-54

briga - a type of moorcanai gamaka, in which the aarOhana and avarOhana are combined and sung VERY fast

Glossary: C

caapu - a group of taaLas which traditionally consisted of a beat and a wave. It can be in counts of 3, 5, 7, or 9. The most common is mishra caapu (3+4=7 beats, takiTa takadimi), and khanDa caapu (2+3=5, taka takiTa) is also used occasionally. When no number is specified it is mishra caapu

cakra - a grouping of the melakarta raagas into groups of six raagas. They are grouped according to which combination of ri and ga they have. Within a cakra, the first raaga has D1 and N1, the second has D1 and N2, the third has D1 and N3, the fourth has D2 and N2, the fifth has D2 and N3, and the last has D3 and N3. There are 12 cakras, 6 with M1 and 6 with M2, giving (6 * 12) 72 melakartas. The cakras are indu, nEtra, agni, vEda, bana, rutu, rishi, vaasu, brahma, disi, rudra, and aaditya. For details, go here

caraNam - literally meaning "foot," it is the root of the song (which is like a tree). This is the end section of a song, sung after the pallavi and anupallavi. A song may have multiple caraNas. In songs which have no anupallavi, there is often a samaashTi caraNa, which combines the two

caraNam swaras - another name for citta swaras in a varnam

Carnatic - pronounced kar-naa-tik, it is the South Indian form of classical music

catshruti - meaning the little shruti, this is lower than satshruti but higher than shudda types of ri and da.

catshruti dhaivatam - this is D2, the second of the 3 types of da. It corresponds to A natural of the Western key of C.

catshruti rishabam - this is R2, the second of the 3 types of ri. It corresponds to D natural of the Western key of C.

catush kalai - kalai of 4, where there are 4 swaras per kriyaa or movement

catusra - refers to the number 4. catusra jaati is 4 beats in the laghu

cents - a unit of relative frequency, used to show relative pitches of notes

chaaya - another name for the swaropam of a raaga, but which describes the general sound or look of a raaga (its character)

chaayaalaga - raagas in which you can find the chaaya of another (one other) raaga at times, such as sowraashTram which may have the chaaya of cakravaakam, or saaranga, which may have the chaaya of kalyaaNi

chromatic scale - a Western musical scale, which uses ALL the swarasthaanas. It usually begins at C and has the following note sequence: C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C (backwards in the descending), and would be equivalent to a scale in Carnatic that was: s r1 r2 g2 g3 m1 m2 p d1 d2 n2 n3 S

citra maargam - a taaLa path which uses 8 swaras or 2 maattirais

citratama maargam - a taaLa path which uses 2 swaras or 1/2 maattirai

citratara maargam - a taaLa path which uses 4 swaras or 1 maattirai

citta pallavi - another name for the caraNam in a varnam

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citta swara - a section of swaras set in taaLa sung after the anupallavi before singing the pallavi and again after the caraNam. In a varnam, many citta swaras are sung only after the caraNam, usually with the form that the 1st and 2nd take 1 aavartanam, the 3rd and 4th take 2, and the 5th take 4 (also called ettukaaDi swaras or caraNa swaras)

comma - a comma indicated 1/4 eDuppu or one aksharakaala. Thus if srgm becomes s,rg then sa is extended from one to two counts

cowka kaala - a slow speed or kaala

cowka varnam - another name for a pada varnam

Glossary: D

da (1) - abbreviation in singing, same as dhaivatam

da (2) - an abbreviation for shuddha dhaivatam (D1)

daatu - a gamaka which uses a base note and goes to other notes, ex: sr sg sm sp sd sn sS

daaTu - a gamaka which involves jumping from one note to another, ex: sg rm gp md pn dS

daaTu varisai - a series of phrases for singing and playing for early music practice, which uses daaTu gamaka style swara combinations, in a jumping or non regular fashion. It is also called taanDu varisai

daivika kOmali - a divine Joker, who supposedly sings the kONangi Daru

dakshina maargam - a taaLa path that is equal to 32 swaras or 8 maattirai, used only in pallavi

Damaru yati - a type of rhythmic pattern of swaras or words resembling a Damaru, a type of drum that is narrow in the middle and wide at the ends. It is a combination of srotovaaha and gOpucca yati. ex: sndp-ndp-dp-p-dp-ndp-sndp, orsrgrsrsgm (matya taaLa)

dana - the pa (2) combination, the first mela in any cakra having D1 and N1

dani - the sri combination, the second mela in any cakra having D1 and N2

danu - the go combination, the third mela in any cakra having D1 and N3

daru - same as daruvu

daruvu - a particular type of musical form (sabhaa gaanam), which relates a historical or puranic incident or ancient story, expressing love or the greatness of a generous person. It is often in madhyama kaalam, with pallavi, anupallavi (not always), and more than on caraNam, with a mixture of jatis. It is often used in dance dramas as an introduction (such as Arunaacala Kavi's RaamanaaTakam). There are 8 types of darus: pravEshika, varnanai, samvada, swaagata, utara pratiuttara, jakkini, kONangi, and kOlaaTTa Daru

dasavida gamaka - the 10 forms of gamaka, listed here

deergha - swaras that are often long and extended (with a comma) in a raaga, such as ri and ma in aarabi, often corresponding to the jeeva swaras

dEshaadi - originally a taaLa with 3 beats and a wave, this is now performed as aadi taala which begins after 1/2 beat

dEsya (1) - a raaga whose swaropam is brought out by just aalaapanai, for example kaanaDaa, hameer kalyaaNi, hindustaani behaag

dEsya (2) - raagas that were brought to South India from North India, for example paras, maanD, jhinjoTi, and shenjuruTTi

dhaivataantya - raagas that range only up to the madhya staayi dhaivatam, without touching ni or the taara sa

dhaivatam - the 6th note, equivalent to la of Western do re mi syllables. It occurs in 3 types: shuddha dhaivatam, catshruti dhaivatam, and satshruti

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dhaivatam, which correspond to G#, A, and Bb respectively in the Western key of C

dhruva - one of the sapta taaLas, which has the form laghu, drutam, laghu, laghu (symbol |0||). With the 7 types of laghus, there can be 7 forms of this raaga. For example, sankeerna jaati dhruva taaLa is laghu(9), drutam(2), laghu(9), laghu(9) for a total of 28 beats

di - an abbreviation for catshruti dhaivatam (D2)

dini - the bhu combination, the fourth mela in any cakra having D2 and N2

dinu - the ma combination, the fifth mela in any cakra having D2 and N3

disi - the 10th cakra, which uses M2, R2 and G2, comprising melas 55-60

Divine Art - music is often referred to by this term because it is considered linked to God

divya prabhandam - a musical form, a type of sabhaa gaanam, see nalayira divya prabhandam

do - in the Western do re mi system, the first note or swara, equivalent to sa

dOlakam - a gamaka, same as aandOLam

dot - dots are used in notation. A dot over a swara indicates it should be sung in the next higher octave (taara staayi), 2 dots indicate an even higher octave (ati taara staayi), a dot below indicates the lower octave (mandra staayi), and 2 dots below indicate the even lower octave (anu mandra staayi). A string of dots next to a word or syllable indicate aakaaram, continuing the singing of the word

druta laya - a fast, quick speed or tempo

drutam - a taaLa movement which includes a beat and a wave (or a beat with the palm and a beat with the back of the hand), counting for 2 beats

du - an abbreviation for shatshruti dhaivatam (D3)

dunu - the sha combination, the sixth (and last) mela in any cakra having D3 and N3

durbala - swaras that are not good to lengthen or dwell upon in a raaga, for example ga in aarabi

durita kaala - this is the 2nd speed or kaala, which can hold half the number of swaras of the same speed as in 1st kaala if the taaLa is changed. Since the taaLa is held constant within a song, when one changes from madhyama kaala to durita kaala, double the number of swaras will be sung because they are sung faster. Thus if in first speed 4 swaras are sung per beat, in 2nd speed 8 swaras will be sung.

dwi kalai - kalai of 2, where each kriyaa takes 2 swaras

dwitiya pancaka raaga - a type of ghana raaga, including raagas such as kEdaaram, naaraayaNa gowLa, saaranga naaTTai, bowLi, and reeti gowLa

Glossary: E

early morning - ghanakaala raagas meant to be sung in the early morning before sunrise (4-6 am), such as bhoopaaLam and bowLi

eDuppu - the place in a taaLa from which a song or a line or phrase from a song is begun. Songs may take sama eDuppu, starting at the beginning of the cycle, or (vishama graham) start a few swara counts (usually 2, 4, or 6) before (atita) or after (anaagata) the start of the taaLa cycle. A comma , represents 1/4 eDuppu. A semicolon ; represents 1/2 eDuppu. The combination of these ;, represents 3/4 eDuppu in notation

Eka - one of the sapta taaLas with the form of a single laghu (symbol |) so that there will be seven forms by varying the laghu. For example, catusra Eka taaLa will have four beats, a single beat with the palm and then movement of the outer three fingers in one cycle. When the laghu is not specified, Eka taaLa is tishra Eka

Eka kalai - the 1st kalai where there is 1 swara for each kriyaa or movement

equal temperament - see scale of equal temperament

ettukaaDi pallavi - another name for the caraNam of a varnam

ettukaaDi swaras - another name for the cittai swaras of a varnam

evening raaga - a ghanakaala raaga suitable for singing at the end of the day in the evening (4-7 pm), such as shhanmugapriyaa, kalyaaNi, aananda bhairavi, vasantaa, naaTTai kurinji, and poorvi kalyaaNi

Ezhisai - a term for god as the incarnation of sounds, as is often considered

Glossary: F

fa - in the Western do re mi, the 4th note, equivalent to ma

fifth - a jump from one note to the fifth note above it (8 half steps, inclusive). sa to pa is a perfect fifth, as is C to G

first speed - the 1st kaala, usually using 1 swara per beat in musical practice. However, it may use more swaras per beat (usually 4 in concerts and for kritis), thus changing subsequent speeds (each successive number doubles the number of swaras per beat)

flat - a note that is lower in pitch by a half-step, in Western music. Thus B is equal to C-flat (Cb). The opposite of sharp

forenoon - raagas meant to be sung before noon, from 9am up to noon, including such raagas as asaavEri, saavEri, and dEva manOhari

fourth speed - the 4th kaala, usually using 8 swaras per beat in musical practice (32 in concerts). If first kaala uses 4 swaras per beat, for example, 4th speed uses 32 in relation)

Glossary: G

ga (1) - an abbreviation of gaandhaaram

ga (2) - abbreviation for shuddha gaandhaaram (G1)

gaandhaaram - the 3rd syllable, which is of 3 types, shuddha, saadhaaraNa, and antara. It corresponds to mi of the Western do re mi system.

gamaka - a shake or oscillation of a note, also known as bending the pitch. It is a deliberate decoration of wavering of a note to add grace and beauty. There are over 10 types of gamaka, listed here

gati - the gait, or the number of subdivisions or swaras per beat. There are 5 types: tishra, catushra, kanDa, mishra, and sankeerna. It may also take 11, 8, etc. and is formed by taking the beat and multiplying by the number (ex: aadi taaLa in catushra gati is 8 times 4 = 32 beats). Not to be confused with naDai or jaati

geetam - an abhyaasa musical form or "song" considered the simplest musical form, created by Purandara Daasa in order to introduce taaLas in combination with lyrics. Geetams have no absolutely defined divisions of pallavi, anupallavi or caraNam though these may be observed in many cases. Geetams last 10-12 aavartnams from beginning to end with no break. They often have no sangatis, with each swara taking one syllable. Some geetams have sancaarams in mandrastaayi poorvaangam and taara staayi uttaraangam. Topics are usually on God. There are 3 types of geetams: sancaari or samanya, lakshana, and suladi.

ghanakaala - raagas meant to be sung at a particular time of day. Each raaga is associated with at least one time of day (some are sarvakaalika - any time). The times are early morning (4-6am), morning after sunrise (6-9am), forenoon (9am-12pm), midday (noon-1pm), afternoon (1-4pm), evening (4-7pm), and night (7-10pm)

ghanam - another term for taanam

ghana pancaka raagas - one type of ghana raaga (as opposed to dwitiya pancaka raagas), which is heavy and elaborate. It has five members: naaTTai, gowLa, aarabi, shree, and varaaLi. These 5 raagas are often used in pancaratna kritis

ghana raaga - a heavy and important raaga, in which the swaropam is brought out by taanam (ghanam) or madhyama kaalam. They can be ghana pancaka or dwitiya pancaka raagas

gi - abbreviation for saadhaaraNa gaandhaaram (G2)

gO - part of the mela mnemonic, a word to represent the 3rd combination of danu (D1 and N3) in the 3rd melakarta in any cakra

gOpucca yati - a rhythmic pattern or swaras or words meaning cow's tail (go=cow), which has a broad beginning and narrows at the end. For example: pera bhayam, abhayam, bhayam

graha bEdam - the act of shifting the tonic note (sa) to another shruti (another note) in the middle of a song. It is usually done briefly to show the ability of one raaga to become another by this shift but is not done for long enough periods that the audience forgets the original raaga. Also, the gamakas of the new raaga must be taken on while preserving the steadiness of the original raaga's sa and pa. It is rare in concerts, but when done can be a treat

graham - same as eDuppu, it can be sama graham or vishama graham. One of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

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graha swaras - these are swaras with which a kriti in a certain raaga may begin. For saavEri, for example, a song or section of a song may begin on sa, pa, or da (rarely, ga as well)

gu - abbreviation for antara gaandhaaram (G3)

guru (1) - this is a taaLa movement which has the symbol 8 and has eight beats. It is formed by a beat of four counts and a wave of the hand for 4 counts (or by a sarpini, making a looping eight with the hand horizontally)

guru (2) - a teacher of music or any other learning

gurukula vaasam - the system in which students of music (or any other learning) stayed with their guru to learn, rarely in wide practice today with the advent of music schools and easy transportation

Glossary: H

half-step - in Western music, the smallest distance from one note to the next (for example, on the piano), or the distance from one swarastaana to the next. s to r1, r1 to r2, m1 to m2, etc. are all half-steps. Two half-steps are equivalent to a whole-step. Half steps in Western notes are, for example, from B to C or from E to F

hampitam - a rarely-used gamaka which uses the sound hoom (oo as in good) repeatedly

harmonic minor - in Western classical, a scale that is equal to the minor scale but that the 7th note is increase by a half-step in both the ascending scale and descending scale. This converts N2 to N3, making this scale equivalent to gowri manOhari

harmony - often used in Western music and other music forms, it is the practice of singing in parts, where each person has a part (often of different pitches) and sings or plays that part. The sounds become blended together though of different pitch to give a uniform, beautiful sound. Harmony usually has 4 sets of pitches: soprano (the highest), alto, tenor and bass (lowest). The highest voices are for female singers and the lowest for male singers, most often. Harmony is rarely used, if at all, in Carnatic music

hasya - a rasa, or feeling, of laughter in a song or raaga, seen in raagas such as mOhanam, kEdaaram, and hamsadwani

hecu staayi varisai - phrases for practice singing up to the taara staayi pa

Hindi - the primary language of India. Few Carnatic songs are in this language

Hindustानी - the main system of Classical music performed in North India

Glossary: I

ili - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for pancamam (abbreviated yi)

indu - the 1st cakra, with melakartas that contain M1, R1, and G1, comprising melakarta numbers 1-6

iraical - the opposite of isai, it is a Tamil term for sounds that are not beautiful and are disorderly

irangu niral - a Tamil term for avarOha

iraTTai kOvai varisai - another term for janTa varisai

iraTTai kural - another term for taara sa

iravu paNN - in the PaNN system, an evening raaga

isai - a Tamil term for music, a system with beautiful sounds in an orderly fashion which is pleasant to hear

Glossary: J

jaaru - a gamaka which involves a slide or glide from one note to another

jaati - refers to the number of beats in the laghu (a division of the laghu). It can be tishra (3), catusra (4), khaNDa (5), mishra (7), or sankeerna (9). These varieties of laghu make the sapta taaLas into 35

jaavali - a musical form (sabhaa gaanam), a type of song that is usually a love story with the characters naayaki (heroine), naayaka (hero), and tOzhi (close friend) and performed as classical dance (bharatanaaTyam). The compositions are often lively in madhyama kaala, expressing love through colloquial words (like the Hindustani ghazal). Some have no anupallavi, but all have pallavi and caraNams. They are composed in common and dESya raagas

jakkini Daru - a Daruvu or song where the first part of the saahityam is full of jatis and THEN the words are given. It also contains madhyama kaala prayOgams. Sometimes apoorva taaLams like guru jhampa are used

janaka raaga - same as mElakarta, opposite of janya

janaka raaga lakshaNa geetam - a lakshana geetam in a melakarta raaga, which can tell about the swaras of the raaga and the janyas of the raaga in the saahitya. It was previously known as raagaana raaga lakshaNa geetam (which has 3 parts, see raagaanga raaga lakshaNa geetam)

janTa varisai - a series of musical phrases for early musical practice, in which swaras are sung in pairs, ex: ss rr gg mm pp dd nn SS. Also called iraTTai kOvai varisai

janya - a raaga derived from a melakarta, but which does not have the exact characteristics of the melakarta. It may be missing swaras (varja), have a crooked scale (vakra), have additional notes from another melakarta raaga (bhaashaanga), or even have some small change in the way it is performed

janya raaga lakshaNa geetam - a lakshaNa geetam in a janya raaga, which tells about the swaras of the raaga and the melakarta from which the raaga is derived in the saahitya

jati - a phrase used in place of swaras or words (alongside them), usually such as dheem, takita, taam, tOm, often used in tillaanaas and dance-related songs

jatiswaram - a type of abhyaasa gaanam, similar to a swarajati, often called a swara-pallavi. It has no saahityam at all, but instead combines jatis. It is used often in dance. Some jatiswarams are in cowka kaalam or are raagamaalikas

jeeva - swaras that are vital to a raaga (give it life). For saavEri the jeeva swaras are ri, ma, and da

jhampa - one of the sapta taaLas, with the form laghu, anudrutam, drutam (symbol |U0). With the 7 varieties of laghu, it has 7 forms. For example, khaNDa jaati jhampa taaLa, which is laghu(5), anudrutam(1), drutam(2), has 8 beats.

just intonation - see scale of just intonation

Glossary: K

kaakali nishaadam - the third ni (of 3), N3 (the note just below high Sa), which corresponds to B natural in the Western key of C.

kaakapaadam - a taaLa movement of 16 beats, with a beat (4 counts), a wave upward (4 counts), a wave to the left (4 counts), and a wave to the right (4 counts). Its symbol is + and it is equivalent to 4 maattirais

kaala - this refers to the speed at which a song or portion of a song (or swaras) is performed. For singing in 1st speed, there can be 1 note per beat in practice (4 notes in concerts and when singing kritis). In second speed, there are 2 notes per beat in music practice and 8 in concerts, in 3rd speed 4 notes per beat in practice and 16 in concerts, and in 4th speed 8 notes per beat in practice and 32 in concerts (rare!). However, if the kaala of the TAALA itself is changed, the slower speeds will accomodate MORE swaras, not less, so though 1st speed is 4 swaras per beat, if the taaLa kaala is changed, 1/2 speed can now hold 8 swaras per beat because the beats are longer.

kaarvai - a pause or sustaining of a note while performing

kadinava - the first line in the katapayaadi formula, which has 9 letters ka kha ga gha nga ca cha ja jha nya

kaikilai - ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for gaandhaaram

kaisiki nishaadam - the second ni of 3, N2, which corresponds to Bb (B flat) in the Western key of C.

kalai - a fractional unit of an aksharakaala, the number of beats per movement of a taaLa, or the number of swaras per kriyaa. Thus if aadi taaLa is sung in kalai 2 in 2nd speed (kaala), it still has 4 swaras per beat but instead of eight beats there are now 16 (each movement doubled). It can be Eka kalai (1 swara per kriyaa), dwi kalai (2 swaras per kriyaa), or catush kalai (4 swaras per kriyaa)

kalpanaa swaram - the part of a performance or song when swaras are improvised to fit the taaLa and return to the pallavi or first part of another section of the song. It is usually done at the end of a song, but may also be done in the middle. The main performer and non-percussion accompanists take turns doing kalpanaa swaras and show their skill and knowledge of the raaga

kalpana sangeetam - see manOdharma sangeetam

kalpita sangeetam - music that is written in notation or generally fixed in how it should be performed (as opposed to kalpana sangeetam). Created music instead of creative music

kampa vihina raaga - a raaga with no swaras that have kampita gamakam (opposite of sarva swara gamaka vaarika raaga). Examples are katanakutoohalam and sindu raamakriyaa

kampitam - a type of gamaka which involves swinging a note between two others, for example singing ri as srgsgsg... The symbol for kampita gamaka is a wavy line over the swaras

kanam - another name for kshanam

kanDam - a section or part of a raagaanga raaga lakshaNa geetam (also see khaNDika)

KannaDa - a South Indian language spoken especially in the state of KarnaaTaka. Many South Indian songs are in this language

<http://www.karnatik.com>

karnaaTaka - raagas that have their origin in South India, as opposed to dEsya (2) raagas. Some karnaaTaka raagas are bhairavi, aananda bhairavi, neelaambari, and kEdaara gowLa

KarnaaTaka - one of the states of India, this is where the name karnaaTik or carnatic came from, because many prominent composers, such as Purandara Daasa came from this state. The word is still used to refer to the Carnatic tradition

karnaaTaka sampradaayam - refers to the traditions and culture of Carnatic music

karpanai isai - another term for manOdharma sangeetam, or creative music

karpanai swaras - another name for kalpanaa swaram

kartaraagam - same as mElakarta

karuNaa - a rasa (or feeling) of kindness and generosity in a song or raaga, found in the raagas sahaanaa, naadanaamakriyaa, and kaanaDaa

katapayaadi - the formula used to determine the number of a melakarta from its name or vice versa. The first two syllables of the melakarta name are used, each representing a digit, and the number that results is reversed to give the melakarta number. It has four lines, the first line starting with ka (kadinava, 9 letters), the second ta (tadinava, 9 letters), the third pa (padipanca, 5 letters), the fourth ya (yadiashTa, 8 letters). Each of these ka + ta + pa + ya di add up to make the name of this formula

kaTTai - the pitch at which a performer performs. A kaTTai of 5, for example, is G in Western notation

keertana - a sabhaa gaanam, a Carnatic song, usually of a devotional nature (vaidika gaanam). It has a saahitya to praise god or beg pardon, sometimes connected with puraanic incidents. The saahitya is more important in keertanas and it is said to have existed before the kriti. It has a pallavi, may or may not have an anupallavi, and has at least one caraNam, each usually of the same pattern (even the same pattern as the pallavi!). Keertanas are usually in familiar raagas

keezh staayi - the mandra staayi

keezh staayi varisai - same as takku staayi varisai

khaNDa - refers to 5, as in khaNDa jaati (5 beats in the laghu)

khaNDa caapu - a caapu taaLa with 5 beats (2 + 3), a beat and a wave, counted as taka takiTa

khaNDika - the division of a song into sections such as pallavi, anupallavi and caraNam. Each section may be called a khaNDika

kOlaaTTa Daru - a Daruvu that is a song sung during the time of dance

kONangi Daru - a Daruvu that is a song supposed to be sung by a daivika kOmali (a divine Joker)

koodal - one of the 4 musical forms of isai-tamil (see tEvaram)

kOrvai - a rhythmic phrase of several taaLa cycles, usually having a repetition of 3 within it, which may be sung, played, or performed on a percussion instrument

kOvai - an ancient Tamil term for swara

kOvai varisai - another Tamil term for sarali varisai or swaraavali

Krishna - an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (preserver of the universe), known as a cowherd, beautiful flautist, a great King of Dwaaraka, and for his mischief around the gopis, his many female admirers

kriti - a type of sabhaa gaanam, one of the most important types of songs with broad scope for neraval, kalpanaa swaras. They have a pallavi, anupallavi and at least 1 caraNam (or may have a samaashTi caraNa) with the same or different swara patterns in the caraNas. They can be either about God or about worldly matters and range over 1 1/2 to 2 staayis. They can have any eDuppu (sama, before or after), and are there to understand the swaropam of the raaga. They may have sangatis, madhyama kaala saahitya, citta swaras, swara saahitya, solkaTTu swaras, swaraksharams, gamakas, gOpucca yati, srotovaaha yati etc. as embellishments

kriyaa - meaning action, it is any single movement within an anga, such as a beat or a movement of a finger, or a wave. Thus a khanda jaati laghu will have 5 kriyaas

kshanam - the smallest unit of time, the time a needle takes to pierce one petal in a pile of 100 lotus petals together (also kanam)

ku - abbreviation for kural (1)

ku-kai - abbreviation for kural kaikilai

kural (1) - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for sa

kural (2) - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for notes that are of lower pitch (such as shuddha notes)

kural kaikilai - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for saadhaaraNa gaandhaaram

kural taram - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for kaisiki nishaadam

kural tutam - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for shuddha rishabam

kural uzhai - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for shuddha madhyamam

kural vilari - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for shuddha dhaivatam

ku-ta - abbreviation for kural taram

kutcEri - the name for any Carnatic concert

ku-tu - abbreviation for kural tutam

ku-u - abbreviation for kural uzhai

ku-vi - abbreviation for kural vilari

Glossary: L

la - in the Western do re mi system, the 6th note or swara, equivalent to da

laghu - a taaLa movement that involves a beat and then counts on the fingers starting from the little finger and moving inward (when the counts are more than five the counts go back to the little finger). They can be tisra (1 + 2), catusra (1 + 3), khaNDa (1 + 4), mishra (1 + 6), or sankeerna (1 + 8). Its symbol is | and it is equal to 1 maattirai

lakshaNa - an essential characteristic of a raaga. There are 13 such lakshaNas for every raaga (see triOdasalakshaNa)

lakshaNa geetam - a type of geetam which tells about the raaga in which it is sung, as opposed to samanya geetam. They are of the type janaka raaga lakshana geetam and janya raaga lakshana geetam

lasya - the female or feminine aspect of dance and music (usually associated with the goddess Paarvati). Its complement is taaNDava

laya - the speed or tempo, another name for taaLa or rhythm. It has 3 forms, vilambita (slow), madhya (medium), and druta (fast) laya

lines - sometimes lines are placed over swaras or words to indicate that they should be performed faster. A single line doubles the speed of the swaras, and a double line quadruples the speed of the swaras. (see also vertical line)

Glossary: M

ma (1) - an abbreviation for madhyamam

ma (2) - the 5th combination in a cakra, corresponding to the 5th raaga within a cakra, which has D2 and N3 (dinu)

maargam - meaning path, there are 6 ways to render taaLa correctly (the shanmaargams): dakshina, vartika and citra maargams, used only in pallavi, and citratara, citratama and aticitratama maargams used in kritis. One of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

maataa - meaning mother. Shruti is often called the Maataa, the mother of music

maattirai - a unit for reckoning musical time. The anudrutam is 1/4 maattirai, laghu is 1 maattirai, and kaakapaadam is 4 maattirais

madhyaadi - a taaLa originally composed of 3 beats and a wave, but which has become aadi taaLa that begins after 3/4 beat

madhya laya - medium speed or tempo

madhyamaantya - raagas that range only up to madhya staaYi madhyamam, not going up to pa, da, ni or taara sa

madhyama kaala - the 1st speed or kaala, with 4 swaras per beat

madhyama shruti - singing without the pa, so that the tambura or shruti box is set to play only sa, ma, and Sa (instead of s P S). This can be done with raagas that have no pa but which have a ma in their scales. In singing, ma is taken instead of sa as the basic note (rare)

madhyamam - ma, the 4th note, equivalent to fa in the Western do re mi system. There are two types of ma, shuddha madhyamam and prati madhyamam.

madhya staaYi - the middle octave (as opposed to the lower or higher ones), also known as sama mandilam. This is the octave in which most of a performance will take place. Madhya staaYi swaras usually have no dots accompanying them, and are often lowercase

maguDa saahitya - words for the maguDa swara

maguDa swara - swara that comes after every part of a raagamaalika, sometimes with saahitya

major diatonic scale - the predominant scale used in Western music, with approximately the notes of shankaraabharaNam. It can begin at any pitch, but for example, a starting pitch (sa) that begins with the note F (shruti of 4) is F major. Thus C major, F major, D major etc. will all be in the same raaga

major scale - the major diatonic scale

MalayaaLam - a South Indian language, spoken especially in the Indian state Kerala. Some compositions are written in MalayaaLam

mandilam - an ancient Tamil word from Silappadigaaram for staaYi

mandram - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

mandra staayi - the lower octave, below the main octave (madhya staayi). It is indicated by a dot below the note (or to the right of the note here, n.)

mangaLa - a raaga suitable for singing invocations and benedictory verses (aarati, mangaLam), such as sowraashTram, shuruTTi, madyamaavati, or yadukula kaambhOji

mangaLam - a song that is an invocation to the gods thanking them for a good concert and to remove the evil eye and any bad karma caused by improper singing of raagas (for example, singing a morning raaga at an evening concert, etc.). It is sung at the end of a concert

MaNipravaaLam - a language that uses a combination of other languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu, KannaDa, or other ancient languages, used almost exclusively in compositions and not in actual conversation

manOdharma sangeetam - literally creative music (also kalpana sangeetam), as opposed to created (kalpita) music. It is created by the artist instantaneously on stage without precise preparation beforehand. There are 5 types of this creative, improvisational music (usually improvised during the performance, requiring great skill): aalaapanai, taanam, pallavi, neraval, and kalpanaa swara. Known in ancient Tamil as karpanai isai

matya - one of the sapta taaLas, with the form laghu, drutam, laghu (symbol |0). It can be made into 7 forms by varying the counts of the laghu. For example, tishra jaati matya taaLa will be laghu(3), drutam(2), and laghu(3), for a total of 8 beats

mEla - (or mElam) abbreviation for mElakarta

mElakarta - a main raaga, consisting of all seven notes in order in both the descending and ascending scales. There are 72 such raagas. To qualify as a mElakarta, a raaga must have all 7 swaras ascending and descending, they must be in the regular order, they must be of the same type (swarastaana) ascending and descending, they must be used only once up and only once down, and both ascending and descending scales must contain the high sa

mela mnemonic - a useful set of phrases to remember the order of the raagas within a cakra. The combinations are pa (dana, 1), sri (dani, 2), go (danu, 3), bhu (dini, 4), ma (dinu, 5), and sha (dunu, 6). Their numbers are according to the katapayaadi formula

melivu mandilam - ancient Tamil for mandra staayi

melivu mandila varisai - same as takku staayi varisai, varisais to get to the mandra staayi pa

melodic minor - in Western music, the minor scale with the 6th and 7th notes shifted upwards by a half-step (one swarastaana) in the ascending scale only. This gives a scale with the aarOha of the mela varuNapriyaa and the avarOha of kharaharapriyaa

melody - the singing of a tune, without harmony or part singing, where all voices and instruments perform the same relative pitch (a pitch or its octave)

mElstaayi varisai - same as hecu staayi varisai

men's shruti - usually a man's shruti is at a pitch of 1 to 1 1/2 (equivalent to C or C# in Western notation)

mi - in the Western do re mi system, the 3rd note, equivalent to ga

midday raaga - a raaga suitable for performing in the middle of the day (around noon to 1 pm), such as madyamaavati, maNirangu, or shree raaga

minor third - in Western music, the interval between 4 notes or swarastanas. This would be, for example, the jump from sa to g2

minor scale - the second most common scale in Western music, it is the equivalent of kharaharapriyaa raaga. It corresponds to the major scale by shift of sa downwards by 2 notes (4 swarastanas, sa to d2), or a minor third. It is also called the Aeolian mode of the major scale

mishra - meaning 7, it is used in mishra jaati (3 + 7) in the laghu or as mishra caapu (a taaLa of 7 beats)

mishra caapu - a taaLa of 7 beats, 3 plus 4, with the sound taka takiTa, formed by two quick beats (2) with the back of the hand, a pause (1) and then two slow beats (2 + 2)

mishritam - using a mixture of different types of gamakas

mode - a Western classical concept, in which at least one of the 7 notes of the major scale is changed (raised or lowered) to create a new scale. In this way, different scales can be formed, creating a subset of scales similar to raagas. There are many modes. The Aeolian mode of the major scale gives the minor scale. Modes are very similar to raagas and were originally used in Gregorian chants

moorcanaakaaraka - such a raagam's tonic note (sa) can be shifted to another note (such as ri, ga, ma, pa, da, or ni) to give a different raaga. For example, dhanyaasi is a moorcanaakaaraka raaga, because its ni can be taken as sa, and if its sa is taken as ri, ri taken as ga, etc. it becomes salagabhairavi (a janya of kharaharapriyaa, 22). There are also moorcanaakaaraka mElas

moorcanaai - a gamaka that involves using the proper shaking required in the raaga that is being performed

morning raaga - a raaga suitable for performing in the morning (6-9 am) after sunrise (after the early morning raagas), such as bilahari, kEdaaram, or dhanyaasi

mridanga yati - opposite of Damaru yati, this is a rhythmic pattern of swaras or words which is narrow at the ends and wide in the middle (a combination of srotovaaha and gOpucca yatis). ex: pdn-mpdn-gmpdn-mpdn-pdn

mudal naDai - one of the 4 musical forms of isai-tamil (see tEvaram)

mudra - the signature(s) a composer may use in compositions, woven into the song. It may or may not have anything to do with the composer's name. Not all composers have mudras. For example, Dikshitar's mudra is "Guruguha"

mudritam - a gamaka which involves humming, as in mmmm...

muktaanga kampita raagas - raagas in which all swaras can be sung with kampita gamaka, also known as sarva swara gamaka vaarika raagas. These include kalyaaNi, mOhanam, and tODi

muktaayi swara - a section of swaras sung after the pallavi and anupallavi of a varnam

munnaar baagam - from Silappadigaaram, an ancient Tamil word for poorvaangam

Murugan - also known as Lord Subramanya or Shanmuga, he is a son of Lord Shiva (destroyer of the Universe), famous for his quick quips as a young boy and for his perseverance and love for music. He emerged from the forehead (fire from the third eye) of Shiva and was raised by 6 young women Shiva created. He is famous for bringing the tribal groups of rural India into Hinduism by having married one of the tribal women

<http://www.karnatik.com>

music - English, from the Greek word MOUSA, for Muses, music was thought to be inspired by 3 Muses. However, music is thought to originate in India because the Greek Strabo says that the famous scientist and mathematician Pythagoras learned music from Indians

musical force - a force which uses breath and sound to add emphasis to a note, for example to the second note of an identical pair (ss') or to a note in a string of notes (ni in pdn'd)

Glossary: N

na - abbreviation for shuddha nishaadam (N1)

naabhitam - a gamaka that involves swelling a note in volume and roundness, like a crescendo

Naada Brahmam - Brahmam is god, and naadam is sound, so god is often considered the same as music

naadam - Sanskrit for isai or even oli, or any sounds that are orderly, beautiful and pleasant

naDai - refers to the tempo at which a song is sung, especially of how many aksharas are in a beat. Tishra naDai means that in each beat, there are 3 swaras or aksharas. Not to be confused with gati

nalayira divya prabhandam - a type of sabhaa gaanam which is a collection of 4000 hymns composed by 12 Vaishnava saints (Pogai Alwar, Bhutatalwar, Peialwar, Perialwar, Tirumazhisai Alwar, Tirupanalwar, Tirumangai Alwar, TinDaradipodi Alwar, Nammalwar, Madurakavi Alwar, KulasEkara Alwar, and AaNDAaL and compiled by Nadamuni in the 10th century. The hymns are very devotional and considered as highly as the Vedas among Vaishnavites. These have their own ragas (paNNs) and the 4000 are divided into 4 groups of 1000 each

NaTaraaja - god of dance (bharatanaaTyam), who dances the taanDavam and shakes the worlds when he dances. An incarnation of Shiva, he is said to have killed demons by dancing upon their heads

natural minor - same as the minor scale

navagraha - meaning 9 planets, the navagraha kritis are 9 songs, each composed on a different planet. The most famous are by Dikshitar

naya - a raaga in which the swaropam is brought out both by aalaapanai and taanam, for example tODi, bhairavi, kaambhOji, shankaraabharaNam, and kalyaaNi

neraval - singing a single line or phrase from a song with varying tunes. This is usually done in the middle of a song, taking a particular phrase and expanding it, while still keeping the words split properly. It may also be performed in various raagas as a raagamaalika

nEtra - the second cakra, which has 6 melakartas that contain M1, R1 and G2, numbered 7-12

ni (1) - abbreviation for nishaadam

ni (2) - abbreviation for kaisiki nishaadam (N2)

night raaga - a raaga meant to be sung only at night time, from 7-10 pm. This includes raagas such as neelaambari and kEdaara gowLa

ni-kai - abbreviation for nirai kaikilai

nirai - refers to a higher pitch of swaras relative to one another, an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram

nirai kaikilai - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for antara gaandhaaram

nirai taram - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for kaakali nishaadam

nirai tutam - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for catshruti rishabam

nirai uzhai - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for prati madhyamam

nirai vilari - an ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for catshruti dhaivatam

nishaadaantya - raagas which range only up to the madhya staayi nishaadam, without touching the taara sa

nishaadam - ni, the 7th swara, corresponding to ti of the Western do re mi system. There are three types of ni, shuddha, kaakali, and kaisiki

nissabda - as opposed to sasabda, these taaLa movements make sounds (beats, for example the anudrutam). It is found in sapta taaLas

ni-ta - abbreviation for nirai taram

ni-tu - abbreviation for nirai tutam

ni-u - abbreviation for nirai uzhai

ni-vi - abbreviation for nirai vilari

nonvivaaDi - 32 melakartas are not vivaaDi

note - a note or "English note" is a composition usually composed in the raaga shankaraabharaNam and created with swaras (some also have saahitya). They are called such because the melody sounds very Western. In fact, some are simply Western tunes with Indian lyrics

notes - in Western music, there are 7 basic notes: A B C D E F G, which can be increased by a half-step (sharp, #) or decreased by a half-step (flat, b) to give the full range of notes. A B C D E F G are the white keys on the piano, while intervening notes (A#=Bb, C#=Db, D3=Eb, F#=Gb, G#=Ab) form the black keys. The notes are of defined pitch or shruti

nu - abbreviation for kaakali nishaadam (N3)

nyaasa - swaras on which a phrase in a kriti in a certain raaga may end. sa is a universal nyaasa swara for any raaga. For saavEri, for example, nyaasa swaras are ma, pa, and da

nyaasam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga that describes what nyaasa swaras the raaga has

Glossary: O

octave - same as staayi, the jump or the range from one note to the same note (same pitch) but sung higher. Thus sa ri ga ma pa da ni Sa is one octave

oli - Tamil word for sound

one-fourth eDuppu - symbolized by a comma , it is starting a song 1/4 beat after or before the samam

one-half eDuppu - symbolized by a semicolon ; it is starting a song 1/2 beat after or before the samam

Glossary: P

pa (1) - an abbreviation for pancamam

pa (2) - part of the mela mnemonic, a word to represent the 1st combination of dana (D1 and N1) in the 1st melakarta in any cakra

paana - a MalayaaLam poetic style written in couplets

padam - a particular type of musical form or composition (sabhaa gaanam), meant for dance, that brings out the relationship of naayaka-naayaki (hero and heroine) as well as tOzhi (close friend) to tell important truths. The words are written through the mouth of the naayaka, naayaki or tOzhi, explaining the joy, sorrow, and other feelings of love. They indirectly refer to god, since the naayaka is said to represent the "paramaatma" (Great Soul, God), the naayaki represents the jeevaatma (human soul, man), and the tOzhi represents the guru (teacher), so the words of each is thought to help the audience reach mOksha (heaven). In Telugu, padams often have Lord Krishna as the naayaka, while Tamil padams often have Lord Subramanya (Murugan) as their naayaka. Padam has pallavi, anupallavi and at least one caraNam (all with the same pattern of swaras), with few sangatis and with easy prayOgams, while still bringing out the swaroopam of the raaga. Some padams begin from the anupallavi. Performed mainly in dance concerts, they may also be at the end of vocal and instrumental concerts. The first padams in Sanskrit were composed by Vasudeva kavi who adorned the court of king Sarfoji of Tanjore. In dance, padams include more graceful movement than footwork. They require slower-moving grace, expression, and emotion, involving the hand gestures, eyes, and face for expression rather than fancy steps

pada varnam - a varnam that has rhythmic elements like a padam, meant for classical dance. It has cowka kaala (some madhyama kaala) swaras suitable for footwork, and saahitya for abhinayam at the muktaayi swaras as well as all the caraNas. Performed in aadi taaLa, roopakam and others. Also called cowka varnam or aatta varnam

padajati varnam - a varnam which contains some jatis in it, often meant for classical dance

padipanca - the 3rd line in the katapayaadi formula, with 5 letters, pa pha ba bha ma

pagal paNN - ancient Tamil name (in PaNN system) for morning raagas

pallavi (1) - meaning sprout or bud (or leaf) in the comparison of a song with a tree, it is usually the first section of a song, which may be repeated again after the anupallavi and caraNas. It is usually short (1-2 lines)

pallavi (2) - a musical form (sabhaa gaanam) in which a phrase or line is taken in raagam taanam pallavi (RTP) for expounding the raaga and words, to do neraval and manOdharma sangeetam

pancamaantya - raagas whose scales range only up to madhya staayi pancamam, without touching da, ni, or taara sa. It also refers to raagas such as naadataarangini, which have scales like spmrgs - Spndpmgrs that return to the madhya staayi sa

pancamam - pa, the 5th swara, used as a drone note along with sa (a perfect fifth). It has only one form like sa and unlike the other swaras. It corresponds to so in the Western do re mi system

pancama shruti - the standard shruti setting in which sa is the basic note, with pa being played along with sa

pancaratna - means 5 gems, referring to 5 songs set in ghana raagas, they are 5 songs on a specific subject or deity. The most famous pancaratna kritis are by Tyaagaraaja

PaNN - the forerunner of raaga, before the split of Hindustani and Carnatic raaga. It consisted of audava, shaadava and sampoorana types with bhaashaanga types as well (with anya swaras). Formerly there were 103, with 23 used in TEvaram

paNNiruru nilam - ancient Tamil name for swarastaana

paNNiruru veeDu - ancient Tamil name for swarastaana

perfect fifth - see fifth

perfect third - see third

pinnar baagam - ancient Tamil name from Silappadigaaram for poorvaangam

plutam - a taaLa movement which has 12 beats, a beat, then a wave to the left and a wave to the right. Its symbol is ^8.

podu paNN - ancient Tamil name (in PaNN system) for midday raagas

poorvaangam (1) - the first four swaras S R G M of the octave (as opposed to uttaraangam 1)

poorvaangam (2) - the combined set of pallavi, anupallavi and muktaayi swaras in a varnam

poorva melakarta - the 36 melakarta (1-36) that use shuddha madhyamam, the shuddha madhyamam melakarta

prastaaram - meaning spreading out, it is a splitting of an anga into all of its possible component parts. For example, catusra laghu can be split the following ways:

1. |
2. U0 + U
3. 0 + 0
4. 0 + U + U
5. U + U0
6. U + 0 + U
7. U + U + 0
8. U + U + U + U

prati madhyamam - the higher ma, M2, used in the second 36 melakarta and their janyas, which corresponds to F# of the Western key of C

prati madhyamam melakarta - the uttara melakarta

pratyavaatam - a gamaka using paired notes in succession in the descending scale ex: Sn nd dp pm mg gr rs, often considered one of the most important gamakas

pravEshika Daru - a Daruvu that is sung for introducing the actors and actresses of a musical play at the very beginning

prayOga - a particular phrase that is characteristic of a raaga. It helps show the uniqueness of the raaga when performed and may also contain anya swaras not present in the raaga scales

pushpaanjali - literally an offering of flowers, it is a traditional dance or song that is used as an offering, invocation, and welcome to the lord (usually Ganesha), gurus/teachers, and the audience. Flowers are offered and the performers begin the concert

Glossary: R

ra - abbreviation for shuddha rishabam (R1)

raaga (1) - a particular type of Indian scale, containing a defined combination of swaras (especially which is pleasant to hear). It is very similar to the Western concept of mode (see mode) - a set of notes with defined relationships with one another. For example, the Western major scale is equivalent to (but not exactly because of gamakas) the shankaraabharaNam raaga, while the minor scale is equivalent to the keeravaaNi raaga. Scales such as harmonic and melodic minor, as well as scales that omit some notes or vary the order of notes are also raagas. One characteristic of all raagas is that they are not dependent on the starting note. Just as C major and G major are still both major scales, shankaraabharaNam is also shankaraabharaNam whether one starts at C or D. No two raagas have the same structure, but there are potentially hundreds of thousands of possible raagas, of which over 5000 have been used

raaga (2) - this is an exposition of the scales (raaga 1) that are being performed. A performer will explore the raaga first by singing lower octaves then moving up to higher ones and touching various aspects of the raaga while giving a hint of the song to be performed. This is usually done in aakaaram (saying aaa.. instead of words or swaras). This is also the first section in raagam taanam pallavi. Also known as raaga aalaapanai or simply aalaapanai

raagaanga raaga lakshaNa geetam - a previous name for the janaka raaga lakshaNa geetam, which had 3 parts, a sutra kanDam in which the letters of the swarastaanas are placed in order in the saahitya, an upaanga kanDam in which the names of upaanga janya raagas of the melakarta are given, and a bhaashaanga kanDam in which the names of bhaashaanga janya raagas of the melakarta are given in the saahitya

raaga gnaanam - (pronounced raaga nyaanam) an aim of music, to know a raaga fully so that one can play or sing it and distinguish it from other raagas

raagamaalika - literally "garland of raagas," this is a composition in which different sections are performed in different raagas. Improvisations such as neraval, taanam, and kalpana swaram may also be done in multiple raagas. It may have pallavi, anupallavi, caraNam, citta swara in the same raaga as the pallavi, viloma citta swara, maguda swara, maguda saahitya. Raagamaalikas are found in geetams, swarajatis, varnams, keertanais, used in raagam-taanam-pallavi, aalaapanai, sLOkas, virutams, and at the end of pallavi

raagamaalika varnam - a varnam in which each section (pallavi, anupallavi, muktaayi swaram, caraNam, and each of the citta swaras) is in a different raaga. They can be taana varnams or pada varnams

raagam taanam pallavi - abbreviated RTP, this is a piece in which raaga (2) is sung, followed by taanam, then singing of the pallavi or a song, followed by neraval and karpanai swaras. RTP is the only form that uses all 5 types of manOdharma sangeetam

raagamudra - the signature name or other name of a raaga, which may be given in the saahitya of a song or section of a song in that raaga

raagataaLamaalika - a sabhaa gaanam musical form in which each part is in a different raaga AND a different taaLa. The saahitya gives both the raagamudra and the taaLamudra. It is a difficult composition, and the most well known is Raamaswaamy Dikshitar's 108 raagataaLamaalika

rakti - rakti raagas are core raagas that are often performed and important in Carnatic music. Some rakti raagas are sahaanaa, yadukula kaambhOji, mOhanam, aananda bhairavi, shuruTTi, and reeti gowLa

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range - the number of swaras or octaves a singer or instrument can cover. A singer should be able to reach easily from the mandra staaayi pa to the taara staaayi pa, while instruments like the violin can easily be performed for 2 1/2 octaves (mandra staaayi sa to taara staaayi pa)

ranjaka prayOgas - prayOgas or phrases that bring out the melody and beauty of a raaga

rasa - a feeling or emotion portrayed by a raaga or song. Bhakti rasa (devotion), karuNaa rasa (kindness), veera rasa (braveness), and shringaara rasa (love) are the most common. Some raagas and songs have more than one rasa

rasika - someone who appreciates (music), an audience member

re - in the Western do re mi system, the 2nd note or swara, equivalent to ri

ri (1) - an abbreviation for rishabam

ri (2) - abbreviation for catshruti rishabam (R2)

rishabam - ri, the second swara, which has 3 types, shuddha, catshruti, and shatshruti. It corresponds to re of the Western do re mi system

rishi - the 7th cakra, containing melakartas with M1, R1, and G1, numbered 37-42

roopaka - one of the sapta taaLas, which has the form drutam, laghu. With the 7 types of laghu, it has 7 forms. When no laghu is specified, it is catushra jaati roopaka taaLa, which is laghu(4), drutam(2) for six beats and often abbreviated by 2 beats of the palm of 2 beats each and a wave of the hand for 2 beats

rowdra - a rasa, or feeling, of anger portrayed in a song or raaga. Raagas such as aThaaNaa and aarabi can show anger

ru - abbreviation for shatshruti rishabam (R3)

rudra - the 11th cakra, containing melakartas with M2, R2, and G3, numbered 61-66

rutu - the 6th cakra, containing melakartas with M1, R3, and G3, numbered 31-36

Glossary: S

sa - an abbreviation of shadjam

saadhaaraNa - meaning normal, this refers to the "ordinary" version of a raaga or a swara, especially gaandhaaram

saadhaaraNa gaandhaaram - the second of 3 ga's (G2), which corresponds to E-flat (D#) in the Western key of C

saadhaaraNa geetam - same as sancaari geetam

saahitya - the lyrics of a song (as opposed to the notes or swaras of the tune)

sabhaa gaanam - musical forms for concerts, including varnam (a link to abhyaasa gaanam), kritis, keertanais, tEvaram, tiruppugazh, divya prabhandam, tiruaruTpa, tirukkuraL, padam, jaavali, tillaanaa, raagamaalika, taarangam, ashTapadi, Daruvu, and pallavi

samaashTi caraNa - a caraNa (last section of the song) combined with the anupallavi. It may have slow and faster speed sections, and is performed after the pallavi in the absence of an anupallavi

samam - the first beat of the taaLa cycle (irrespective of where the song begins)

sama eDuppu - beginning a song (words, swaras, etc.) at the samam, at the first beat of the taaLa, as opposed to vishama graham

sama graham - same as sama eDuppu

sama mandilam - another name for madhya staaayi

samanya geetam - same as sancaari geetam

sama yati - one of the rhythmic patterns in a taaLa where all the angas are of the same magnitude (if, for example, in aadi taaLa, all angas take 4 swaras)

sangati - a particular variation of a phrase in a kriti or song with slight or large changes in tune and gamakas. Each phrase maybe repeated with different variations or sangatis

sampoorna - raagas having a full complement of swaras (sa ri ga ma pa da and ni in both ascending and descending scales) without any absent

sampoorna raaga - another name for a mElakarta raaga

sampradaayam - tradition or the way things have been done in the past

samudaaya kriti - kritis or songs composed in a group on a particular subject or deity, such as pancaratna kritis

samvada daru - a daruvu that is a song that brings out a discussion between two people. In Arunaacala Kavi's RaamanaaTakam, "manninil metta arasar pOl" in kalyaaNi describes the discussion between Raama and Parasuraama

sancaaram - same as sancaari

sancaari - (also sancaaram) a collection of phrases and swaras that completely describe the major characteristics of a raaga, including the nuances and possible anya swaras not included in the scales. They may also refer to elaborations of a single line or phrase in the song. When used in dance, they can specify the elaboration of the same line portrayed in different ways. Each different line, whether in dance or music, is a sancaari or sancaaram

sancaari geetam - a geetam that uses sancaaris in mandra staayi poorvaangam or taara staayi uttaraangam. Also called saadhaaraNa or samanya geetam. This type of geetam has simple lyrics

sankeerna - meaning 9, this is applicable to laghu, which would use 1 beat and then 8 finger movements to give sankeerna jaati. Also, sankeerna caapu has 9 beats (4 + 5)

sankeerna raagas - raagas which show the chaaya of more than one other raaga, ex: aahiri, which shows the chaaya of dhanyaasi and naTabhairavi, dwijaavanti, which shows the chaaya of sahaanaa, kEdaara gowLa, and yadukula kaambhOji, and ghanTa, which shows the chaaya of dhanyaasi and punnaagavaraaLi sometimes

Sanskrit - an ancient language of India, which is usually used only in songs, prayers (slokas), and scriptures. Many composers have composed in Sanskrit

sanyaasam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga. Sanyaasam means asceticism

sapta - meaning 7

sapta alankaarams - the 7 types of taaLas, each with a different set of movements (angas) and order (see intro to taaLa). These use only 3 angas, the anudrutam (U), drutam (O), and laghu (I). They use sasabda and nissabda movements

sapta taaLas - the sapta alankaarams

sarali varisai - a series of phrases that begin with the low swaras and move upwards, allowing students in the early phases of learning to match their swarastanas and learn music. These are phrases such as, sr sr sr gm sr gm pd ns. Also known as a swaraavali

Saraswati - goddess of music and learning, consort of Brahma

sarva kaalika raagas - raagas that can be performed at any time of day, such as bhairavi, kaambhOji, shankaraabharaNam, and kalyaaNi

sarva swara gamaka vaarika raaga - these are raagas in which any note can be oscillated, even if all notes need not be oscillated. Thus, in kalyaaNi, any note can be oscillated, but G MUST be oscillated to give the feeling of the raaga. Also known as muktaanga kampita raagas, ex: mOhanam and tODi

sasabda - a taaLa movement which makes sound, found in the sapta taaLas. ex: visarjitam

scale of equal temperament - the scale used in Western music, where notes are exactly equally spaced with even intervals (for example, a piano) and played with little variation. The values of notes (in shankaraabharaNam or the major scale) in cents are: s 0, r 200, g 400, m 500, p 700, d 900, n 1100, S 1200

scale of just intonation - the scale used in Indian classical music, where notes are not equally spaced but are slightly offset (for example, violin), performed with variations and gamakas. The values of notes (in shankaraabharaNam or the major scale in cents are: s 0, r 204, g 386, m 498, p 702, d 906, n 1088, S 1200. These values are not precise because of gamakas

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second speed - the 2nd kaala, usually using 2 swaras per beat when 1st speed uses only 1 (in early musical practice). However, if 1st speed uses 4 swaras per beat, for example, 2nd speed will use 8. In concerts, the 2nd speed usually uses 8 swaras per beat

sei - another name for a janya raaga

semicolon - a semicolon indicates the equivalent of two commas, so that it is one-half eDuppu or two additional aksharakaalas. Thus if srgm becomes s;m then sa is first one count but in the second phrase it takes 3 counts

sha - an abbreviation for du-nu, the combination of D3 and N3 found in the 6th raaga of all 12 cakras (found in 12 raagas out of the 72 melakartas)

shaadava - meaning 6, this refers to raagas that have only six notes in either the ascending or descending scale (or both), meaning that they are missing one swara compared to sampoorana raagas

shaadavam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga, to describe whether the raaga is a shaadava raaga

shaanta - a rasa, or feeling, of peace or calmness in a song or raaga. Raagas like vasantaa, shyaamaa demonstrate this rasa

shadangams - the 6 angas, U (anudrutam), 0 (drutam), and | (laghu) which are used only in the sapta talas as well as 8 (guru), ^8 (plutam), and + (kaakapaadam) which are used in the 108 taaLa system

shadjam - sa, the base note or tonic note, which is also a drone note (in the background). There is only one form of sa, though it is usually sung at 2 octaves only (low and high). It corresponds to do of the Western do re mi system

shanmaargams - the 6 maargams (see maargam)

sharp - in Western music, a note that is a half-step (one swarastaana) higher, indicated by the symbol #. Thus B# is equal to C. Opposite of flat

shatshruti - the highest note of three, applicable to rishabam and dhaivatam

shatshruti dhaivatam - the highest of 3 da's (D3), which corresponds to B-flat (A#) in the Western key of C

shatshruti rishabam - the highest of 3 ri's (R3), which corresponds to E-flat (D#) in the Western key of C

shishya - a student, one who learns (see guru)

Shiva - god of destruction, whose dance shakes the heavens. Also known as NaTaraaja

shOdasangams - the 16 angas formed by adding the viramam anga to the 6 existing angas

shringaara - a rasa, or feeling, of romantic love or compassion in a song or raaga. Raagas such as asaavEri, bhairavi, husEni, kaanaDaa, kalyaaNi, kamaas, sahaanaa, and shuruTTi show shringaara rasa

shrOtovaaha yati - a river-like rhythmic pattern of swaras or words that is narrow at one end and widens, the opposite of gOpucca yati. For example, in the phrase dn-pdn-mpdn-gmpdn-rgmpdn-srgmpdn

shruti (1) - the musical pitch, especially of sa, pa, sa that is used, or the key. It can also be any particular pitch (for example, the shruti of ri in a raaga, or the shruti at which a violin's string is set). Men usually sing at a shruti of 1 to 1 1/2, while women tend to sing at shrutis of 4 1/2 to 5

shruti (2) - in tune, for example "always be sure you are singing in shruti"

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shruti bEdam - the same as graha bEdam, but not necessarily involving only the tonic note. Shruti bEdam may also involve shift of another note in the scale of a raaga to create a different one

shruti box - an electronic or mechanical device that recreates the effect of the tambura by creating the sounds of sa, pa, and sa. Usually it can be tuned or played for any pitch. Instruments such as the harmonium may also be used as shruti boxes.

shruti maata laya pita - a saying, "shruti is mother, laya is father" which shows the sanctity of the union of melody and rhythm in Carnatic music

shuddha - meaning pure or good, this is a term used in raaga names and also in the first (lowest) forms or rishabam, gaandhaaram, madhyamam, and dhaivatam

shuddha dhaivatam - the lowest of 3 da's (D1), which corresponds to G# (A-flat) in the Western key of C

shuddha gaandhaaram - the lowest of 3 ga's (G1), which corresponds to E natural in the Western key of C

shuddha madhyamam - the lower of 2 ma's (M1), used in the first 36 melakartas, which corresponds to F natural in the Western key of C

shuddha madhyama melakartas - the 36 lower (1-36) melakartas with M1, also known as poorva melakartas

shuddha raagas - raagas in which the caaya is well brought out by playing swaras without any foreign notes (anya swaras), for example mOhanam, maayamaaLava gowLa, madyamaavati, and shree ranjani

shuddha rishabam - the lowest of 3 ri's (R1), which corresponds to C# (D-flat) in the Western key of C

Silappadigaaram - an ancient story in Tamil literature which describes many aspects and terms of South Indian music

slesha - double-meaning or pun, sometimes used by composers to lend multiple meanings to the same line of a song

sLOka - a prayer or portion of a scripture used as prayer, often set to tune. It may also be sung as a raagamaalika

so - the fifth note, a perfect fifth from do, in the major scale and the do re mi system in Western music

solkaTTu - (also sollukaTTu) - literally spoken-sounds, these are sometimes called jatis. They are sounds intended to imitate percussion, such as the sounds of the mridangam. Common sounds are tAm, ta ki Ta, tOm, dhIm, tatanu, tarikiTa, janu, and dhirana, among others. Sometimes they are combined with swaras like sa ri ga ma etc.

solkaTTu swara - singing of swaras without the swaraksharas but instead with jatis such as taam, dheem, tOm, etc., as often used in tillaanaas

soprano - the highest voice in the Western system of harmony

spuritam - a gamaka which uses repeated notes, in twos, for example ss rr gg mm pp dd nn SS. Musical force from the first note is given to the next note for emphasis

sri - the combination da-ni, or D1 and N2, found in the 2nd of 6 raagas in all 12 cakras (12 raagas out of the 72 melakartas)

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staayi - the octave (range of notes from sa to higher sa) at which a composition is performed. The mandra stayi is the middle octave and taara staayi is the higher octave

suladi - (from suda, an Indian word for geeta) a composition very much like the Bhagavad Gita in musical structure and arrangement. However, it is a taaLamalika, each section being in a different talas. Each section is independent by itself. As a result, the pallavi usually is not sung at the end

suladi geetam - similar to a geetam, it can be a taaLamaalika, with each kanDam or section in a different raaga or it can be sung as a devotional song. It is often taught after alankaarams in many languages

suladi sapta taaLas - sapta means 7, so these are 5 times 7 = 35 taaLas, created from the 7 major taaLa types by incorporating the different possible laghus (see intro to taaLa for more information). Also known as sapta alankaarams

suraaga - a good raaga, which removes the evil eye and wards off bad karma to the performers and audience for performance of raagas at other than the specified times (ex, singing a morning raaga at an evening concert), as well as for any other improper deeds during the concert. Suraagas such as madyamaavati are usually used for the mangaLam song at the end of a concert because of this quality

sutra kanDam - one of the parts of the raagaanga raaga lakshana geetam, in which the letters of the swarastanas come in order in the saahitya of the song. For example, if the geetam were in kalyaaNi, it could have ri (R2), gu (G3), mi (M2), di (D2), and nu (N3) coming into the words in that order

swaagata Daru - a Daruvu that is a song where a person speaks to himself (a soliloquy)

swara (1) - a type of musical sound that is a single note, but which is not of a defined frequency. Instead, a swara defines a relative (higher or lower) position of a note. There are seven swaras, sa ri ga ma pa da ni which correspond to Western do re mi fa so la ti, respectively. sa and pa are the drone notes that play in the background and are invariable but the other swaras have multiple forms. The swaras are sung by name in improvisations and in forms such as varnams

swara (2) - see kalpanaa swaram

swara (3) - the part of a song that defines the tune, composed of swaras (swara 1). The swaras usually have a saahitya

swaraantara - a raaga having only 4 swaras in either or both of the scales (ascending, descending) ex, srgpS Snmgs is a swaraantara-swaraantara raaga. A swaraantara scale is missing 3 swaras, and this is the smallest possible size of a raaga (smaller ones are very difficult to sing and are not usually pleasing)

swaraavali - avali means line or order, so this is a line of swaras, a regular set of swaras, also known as a varisai such as sarali varisai or kOvai varisai

swaraakshara - the use of the word sa (when singing) for the note shadjam, ri for rishabam, etc. This also applies to combinations of notes, singing nidha for N D, for example. It is sometimes used in kritis, for example "sarigama ..." so that they are in the context of the lyrics

swarajati - an abhyaasa musical form, which is helpful before learning varnam. It has pallavi, sometimes an anupallavi, and at least one caraNam. The themes are on bhakti, love, and courage. It is composition which usually has a pleasing melody and can be suitable for singing both in early lessons and in both musical and dance concerts

swara names - these are 16 even though there are only 12 swarastanas, because 4 of the swaras (the vivaaDi ones) overlap in their pitch at times with others of the 12, and thus are distinct

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swara-pallavi - same as jatiswaram

swara saahitya - using swaras in the saahitya of a kriti in place of words

swarastaana - the particular frequency of a swara in a given raaga. It is also the development of the seven swaras into their varieties, giving 12 swarastaanas (which have 16 names). Performers must make sure their swarastaanas are precise to ensure that the raaga is correctly elaborated

swaroopam - the form or spirit of a raaga, related to the caaya

Glossary: T

taaLa - the beat set for a particular composition (a measure of time). taaLas have cycles of a defined number of beats and rarely change within a song. taaLas have specific components, which in combinations can give rise to the variety of taaLas that exist (over 108), allowing different compositions to have different rhythms

taaLam - (same as taaLa) from taal and am, indicating that taaLam was played originally with the legs

taaLamaalika - a type of sabhaa gaanam, a garland of taaLas, a composition in which each section is performed in a different taaLa. The taaLamudra of each taaLam is found in the saahityam of a taaLamaalika. It is also used in manOdharma sangeetam especially in pallavi. TiruvOtriyoor Tyaagaiyyar is said to have been well-versed in taaLamaalika

taaLamudra - the name or abbreviation for a taaLa. It may be expressed in words in the saahitya of a song or section of a song set in that taaLa

taanam - the second section in a raagam taanam pallavi in which the raaga is elaborated rhythmically (traditionally without rhythmic accompaniment) using the word "aananta." Taanam may be performed as a raagamaalika as well.

taana varnam - a varnam, named as such for its taanam-like rhythmic qualities. It has saahitya only for the pallavi, anupallavi and caraNam. It is practiced in 2 to 3 speeds in aadi and sometimes other taaLas, often used in beginning training but also sung in concerts

taaNDava - the male or masculine aspect of dance and music (usually associated with the god Shiva). Its complement is lasya

taanDavam - the cosmic dance of the Universe, danced by NaTaraaja or Shiva

taanDu varisai - same as daaTu varisai, so named because taanDu means to play, and one jumps during play, so these swaras jump around as if in play

taaram - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga, which indicates its ability to reach higher octaves

taarangam - a type of sabhaa gaanam, a musical form

taara sa - the high sa above the middle sa, also called iraTTai kural or uyar kural

taara staayi - the higher octave in which a composition is sung (as opposed to the mandra staayi, the middle octave), indicated by a dot above the note (or, here, as a capitalized note, as in pdnS)

taaTu varisai - same as daaTu varisai

taay - same as a melakarta

tadinava - the second (ta) line in the katapayaadi formula, which has 9 letters, Ta Tha Da Dha Na ta tha da dha na

takku staayi - also known as keezh staayi, this is the lower octave or mandra staayi

takku staayi varisai - phrases (varisais) to practice in reaching the low mandra staayi pa

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tambura - an instrument used as a drone to set the pitch for a performance. Its (often) 4 strings are tuned to the mandra staaYi pa, middle sa, middle sa, and taara sa

Tamil - also tamizh, this is a language of South India, particularly the state of Tamil NaaDu. Many compositions are in Tamil, and several great poets of Tamil literature exist

tani aavartanam - literally a separate taaLa cycle, which is a section of a concert when the percussion instruments perform alone, without melodic accompaniment. If more than one percussion instrument is present, they first perform long solos then come together in beat and alternate to create intricate rhythms. It usually occurs after kalpanaa swaras of a main song. When it is done, the main performer picks up the melody and finishes the song entirely

taram - ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for nishaadam Telugu - a language of South India, particularly the state of Andhra Pradesh. Composers such as Tyaagaraajaa composed primarily in this beautiful language, and so there are many compositions in Telugu

tenor - in Western harmony, the 3rd highest voice, higher than bass but lower than alto

tEvaram - a musical form, a type of sabha gaanam. These are a group of hymns in Tamil composed by 3 Saivite saints Appar, Sambandar (both 7th century), and Sundarar (9th century). It means a divine song, considered one of the 4 musical forms of Tamil (mudal naDai, varnam, koodal, and tiral). These songs were composed and sung by their composers and considered the earliest musical compositions of India, from a time when there was no division of North and South Indian music.

third - in Western music, the jump from one note to another 5 half-steps away (covering 5 swarasthaanas). For example, C to E, or in Carnatic, s to g3. Also called a perfect third (as opposed to a minor third)

third speed - 3rd kaala, which typically uses 4 swaras per beat in musical practice. If the first speed uses 4 swaras per beat (as in concerts and kritis), the third speed becomes 16 swaras per beat in relation

three-fourths eDuppu - symbolized by ;, it is a gap of 3/4 beat before beginning the song (or starting the song 3/4 beat before the sama)

ti - a Western note in the do re mi system, the 7th and last note, equivalent to ni

tillaanaa - a type of sabhaa gaanam, a musical form or composition that uses jatis (such as dheem, takiTa, taam, jham) as rhythmic phrases instead of words. It is composed to create a sense of enthusiasm and joy (the meaning of tillaanaa), and said to have originated from another composition called "tri-tillaanaa." It has crisp, attractive swara patterns, with saahitya containing both jatis (solkaTTus) and words, performed in madhyama kaalam. Some contain only pallavi and anupallavi, while others have only pallavi and caraNam, each section with different swara patterns. Pallavi and anupallavi have jatis, while the caraNam may have swaras, words, and jatis. Tillaanaa is usually the 7th or last piece in a bharatanaaTyam dance performance and one of the last pieces in a vocal or instrumental concert, giving a dramatic flourish to the end of the performance

tiral - one of the 4 musical forms of isai-tamil (see tEvaram)

tiruaruTpa - a musical form, a type of sabhaa gaanam

tirukkuraL - a musical form, a type of sabhaa gaanam

tiruppugazh - a type of sabhaa gaanam, a musical form. One of the most famous is by Arunaagirinaatar which introduces many taaLas of the 108 taaLa system

tishra - meaning 3, this is one of the jaatis for the laghu, so that the laghu is one beat with the palm and then 2 finger counts. It may also be tishra caapu (rare), which would be 1 + 3=4 beats

tribhinnaM - a gamaka which uses chords (simultaneously played notes, usually 3), restricted to instrumental performers such as violinists

triOdaSa lakshaNaS - the 13 lakshaNaS (essential characteristics) of a raaga. These are grahaM, amsaM, taaraM, mandraM, nyaasaM, apanyaasaM, sanyaasaM, vinyaasaM, bhagutvaM, alpaM, antara maargaM, shadaVaM, and audavaM

tripuccaM - a gamaka which uses triples of notes, such as sss rrr ggg mmm ppp ddd nnn SSS

tripuTa - one of the sapta taaLas, which has the form laghu, drutaM, drutaM (symbol |00). With the 7 laghu varieties, it has 7 forms. When no laghu is specified, it is caushra jaati, which is laghu(4), drutaM(2), drutaM(2), for eight beats.

tutaM - ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for rishabaM

Glossary: U

upaanga - a raaga which does not use any swaras other than those from its parent mElakarta (no anya swaras)

upaanga kanDam - the 2nd section of a raagaanga raaga lakshaNa geetam, in which the names of the upaanga raagas of the melakarta in which the geetam is sung are given in the saahitya

upapallavi - another name for the caraNam in a varnam

uttaraangam (1) - the last four swaras of the ascending scale, P D N S as a group (as opposed to poorvaangam)

uttaraangam (2) - the combined set of caraNam and caraNa swaras in a varnam

uttara melakartas - the 36 melakartas (36-72) that use the higher prati madhyamam (M2), also known as prati madhyamam melakartas

uttara pratiuttara Daru - a Daruvu that is a song containing a conversation between two people

uyar kural - an ancient Tamil term for the taara sa

uzhai - ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for madhyamam

Glossary: V

vaaDi - same as nonvivaaDi, these the original 12 swarastanas and not the 4 vivaaDi swaras

vaaDi mela - the 32 perfect melakartas, which are made only from the original 12 swarastanas and do not include the 4 vivaaDi swaras. The melas that are in this category have the numbers 8-11,14-17,20-23,26-29,44-47,50-53,56-59, and 62-65

vaasu - the 8th cakra, with melakartas containing M2, R1, and G2, comprising numbers 43-48

vaidika gaanam - a sacred (devotional) musical form, having some aspect of bhakti (devotion), including kritis, tEvaram, divya prabhandam, tiruppugazh, tiruaruTpa, and kaavaDi cindu

vainika - an artist who plays the veena instrument (see Instruments)

vajra - a raaga in which one or more of the 7 swaras is missing in either the ascending or descending scale. The missing swara is a vajra swara. For example, in SRGPDS, ma and ni are vajra

vakra - a raaga in which the order of one or more of the 7 swaras is out of place (not in regular ascending or descending order by its frequency). The swara that is out of place is called a vakra swara. For example, in SGRGMPDPS, ga and da are vakra

valivu - another term for taara staayi

valivu mandila varisai - another term for hecu staayi varisai, which practices singing up to the taara staayi pa

varisai - a type of abhyaasa gaanam, a regular set up of swaras in a line or order (also swaraavaLi)

varnam - one of the most important pieces, often the last in the early training period of music. Varnam is the link of abhyaasa and sabhaa gaanam. It gives the important sancaarams of the raaga and is good for practice. It is a composition with given swaras set up in the following form: pallavi, anupallavi, muktaayi swaram, caraNam (upapallavi, ettukaaDi pallavi, or cittaipallavi), and successive citta swaras (caraNa swarams or ettukaaDi swaras) that are sung before returning to the caraNam. The pallavi, anupallavi, and caraNam are sung usually without the swaras and with only the brief saahitya in concerts. Varnams are often the first piece in the concert because they are fast and grab the audience's attention. They are useful for practice and are sung in multiple speeds, from slower to faster. There are 4 types of varnams: taana varnams, pada varnams, padajati varnams, and raagamaalika varnams

varnanai Daru - a Daruvu that is a song that describes an event, some natural scenery, or a person's character. In Arunaacala Kavi's RaamanaaTakam, a Daru beginning with "kalyaaNa bherigai aDitaar" in mOhanam vividly describes the marriage of Seeta

virtika maargam - a taaLa path that uses 16 swaras or 4 maattirais

vEda - the 4th cakra, with melakartas containing M1, R2, and G2, comprising numbers 19-24

veera - a rasa, or feeling, or braveness or courage portrayed in a song or by a raaga. Raagas such as bilahari, dEvagaandhaari, hamsadwani, and bEgaDa portray courage

vertical line - a vertical line usually divides sections of a phrase by parts of a taaLa, by separating the angas or sections. A double vertical line indicates the end of the phrase and of the aavartanam (taaLa cycle)

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vilambita kaala - a slower kaala (speed), compared to madhyama kaala, which is 1/2 kaala. In a taaLa taken slower than madhyama kaala by half, this speed uses 8 swaras where previously only 4 could fit. When the taaLa is constant, however, vilambita kaala can only accomodate 1 swara per beat when madhyama kaala uses 2

vilambita laya - a slow speed or tempo

vilari - ancient Tamil term from Silappadigaaram for dhaivatam

vilOma - a caapu taaLa which is like mishra caapu in having 7 beats but which has reversed order of 4 + 3. It is not often used

vilOma citta swara - citta swara in the raagamaalika which is reversed

vinyasam - one of the 13 lakshaNas of a raaga

viramam - another anga, which allows combining of 2 angas, for example U and 0 are written with U above O as below:

U
0

This gives another 10 angas, for a total of 16 (the shOdasangams, from anudrutam to kaakapaadam)

virutam - a type of musical form that praises a god or goddess, usually sung before a song or separately. It is very devotional and is sung without taaLam

visarjitam - a wave of the hand (as in the second part of the drutam)

vishama graham - the eDuppu that is NOT sama eDuppu, but can be either before or after the taaLa begins (atita or anaagata)

vishama yati - a yati in which the angas can be without definite order, ex: |(4) U |(4) 0 U |(4) 0

vivaaDi - meaning inimical, this refers to the unpleasantness of the swaras because two types of the same swara come close together. VivaaDi swaras are the 4 swaras other than the original 12 swarastaanas that make a total of 16 swarastaanas. These are shatsruti rishabam (R3), shuddha gaandhaaram (G1), shatsruti dhaivatam (D3), and shuddha nishaadam (N1). These swaras have the property of sometimes taking over the place of another swara. Thus sometimes R3 takes over G2, G1 takes over R2, D2 takes over N2, and N1 takes over D2. For this reason, these pairs are not found in the same melakarta, but even though they are unusually close to other swaras, they are found in 40 melakartas

vivaaDi melas - the 40 non-vaaDi melakartas, which use at least one of the 4 vivaaDi swaras. These have the numbers 1-7,12,13,18,19,24,25,30-43,48,49,54,55,60,61,66-72. There are 8 more vivaaDi melas than vaaDi melas. These raagas must be handled with vakra prayOgas and gamakas to avoid their vivaaDi character

Glossary: W

whole-step - in Western music, two half-steps, or a jump of 2 swarastanas, for example from C to D, D to E, F to G, G to A, A to B. In Carnatic, this would be for example from s to r2

women's shruti - women usually sing at a pitch of about 4 1/2 to 5 (F# to G in Western notation)

Glossary: Y

yadiashTa - the fourth (and last) line of letters in the katapayaadi formula, with 8 letters, ya ra la va sha shha sa ha

yati - a rhythmic pattern of swaras, words, or beats in a taaLa. The types are: sama, gOpucca, srotovaaha, Damaru, mridanga, and vishama

yEru niral - a Tamil term for aarOha

yi - abbreviation for ili