

sustain and ravish us,
return us to that place
we never discovered,
where grace alone abides,
horizon and heaven.
Anugraha is all:
with East and West erased,
farewell turns to summons:
Come, embody the art
of Natarāja,
divulge Pythagoras' dream:
reveal the mystery
ever invisible.
Not matter – music weaves
the substance of the world.

Notes: Ananta Raga

Ananta: endless, eternal. Also the name of the world-serpent on which Vishnu rests.

Rāgā: neither melody nor mode, a Rāgā is rather a melodic structure that rises or falls, a constellation of notes having specific ratios to their tonic. It is thus the configuration upon which the sitār player improvises; comprising both pattern and passion, each Rāgā corresponds to a specific color and mood, a time of day, and a season of the year.

Abhinavagupta: (950-1020 AD) leading exponent of Kashmir Śaivism, referred to by his disciples as Mahamaheśvara, "great devotee of Śivā." The core of his philosophy, Pratyabhijñā ("recognition"), is that liberation consists in realizing that the Lord's real presence resides in all things: the soul, *ātman*, is thus an image or mirror of the divine. The epigraph is from his *Tantrāloka*, I.192.

Alāp: The musical invocation or unveiling of the Rāgā's form. Ravi Shankar has referred to it as disclosing "the face of the Rāgā," and as an "unfolding, like describing a beautiful body."

Five syllables: the "five syllable mantra" is *Śivāya namah*, "Hail to Śivā." Its repetition is held to lead to the direct awareness of the unity of opposites.

Lotus throne: *padmāsana*, indicating spiritual purity, divinity. In yoga, the "lotus pose."

Purusha and *prakriti*: respectively, spirit and nature, day and night, essence and form, the male and female principles.

Tāla: the rhythmic structure of Indian music, expressed by the tablā or hand drums.

Rasavant: A work of art possessing *Rasa*: beauty, essence, flavor, also implying color and mood, and often identified with the divine. *Rasa* is the essential element in traditional Indian poetry, not meter or rhyme. The lover or connoisseur of art is *rasika*. See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*.

Chidambaram: As Natarāja, Lord of the Dance, Śivā danced in Chidambaram or Tillai, the Golden Hall at the center of the universe, which is the human heart. He is represented with his four hands moving, one holding the drum whose rhythm creates the cosmos, another the flame that destroys: his dance burns away darkness, ignorance and evil, and releases the seeker from the fetters of illusion.

Vīrabhadra: An avatar of Śivā as both protector of sages and fierce warrior who battles against demons. In this form, Śivā dances on the ghats among incinerated corpses, goblins and ghosts, the dance of destruction, complement and counterpoint to Natarāja's cosmic dance. One of Vīrabhadra's several temples is located in Bangalore.

Ardhanārīshvara: The form of God that is female on the left, male on the right, according to Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. Literally, the Lord (*īśvara*) that is half (*ardha*) woman (*nāri*): God and his grace are indivisible.

Garbha: womb. *Garbha grha* refers to the innermost sanctuary of a temple.

Anugraha: divine grace, favor.

Kalidasa: (ca. 350-420) considered the greatest poet of classical Sanskrit, he composed both epic poems and dramas incorporating music and dance. According to legend, he received his gift from the goddess Kali, the mother-aspect of Śivā.