

Indian Music and Mian Tansen

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Indian Music and Mian Tansen' is a highly informative small book about Hindustani music, written by **Pt. Birendra Kishore Roy Choadhury**, self published in the late 1950's. He explains much about the traditional lineages in North Indian music.

About the Author

Pt. Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury was from a family of wealthy zamindars (landowners) in East Bengal, what is now Bangladesh. The estate was called Gouripur, in the Mymensingh district. His father, Brajendra Kishore Roy Choudhury, was renowned as a patron of musicians. His son not only continued this tradition of the patronage, but became the disciple of many of the great musicians of his time. The list was long which include Mohammed Wazir Khan, the great Binkar of Rampur and the last descendant of Tansen's daughter Saraswati ; Mohammed Ali Khan who was the second son of Basat Khan; Imdad Khan, founder of the lineage of sitar represented today by his grandson Vilayat Khan; Allauddin Khan, father of Ali Akbar Khan and Annapurna Devi and guru to Ravi Shankar, and Hafiz Ali Khan, the great sarod maestro. Birendra Kishore Roy Choudhury was a master of the Dhrupad style, especially in instrumental music, and played the Bin, the Sursringar and the Seni Rabab.

AUTHOR'S APPEAL

I hereby express my hearty thanks to Dr. S. N. Ratanjankar, Padmabhushan for his appreciation of my musical studies and also to Sri Krishnakali Bhattacharyya, a distinguished educationist for his sincere encouragement and kind Co-operation for the publication of this book for and on behalf of "GOURIPUR MUSIC TRUST."

My labour will bear proper fruits if the learned lovers of Indian music give little time to go through its contents.

Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury

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Chapter One

THE HINDUSTHANI CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Indian classical music had a divine origin according to the ancient seers of India. Both the vedic and the Gandharva systems of music were nurtured in the hermitage of Rishis. Of course the kings who were the disciples of those great teachers give proper scopes for the demonstrations of their musical teachings.

After the end of Pouranic period a vast culture of music and arts grew up in India as integral parts of the temple worship. The same culture was propagated by the kings in the royal courts as those notable men were devoted to the deity of the temples. Thus the development of the classical music or Marga sangeet of India lay in the hands of the priest classes attached to the temples with the patronage of the kings. The demonstrations took place both in the temples well as in the royal palaces. These temples and palaces contained spacious hall for staging demonstrations of the music, dance and the theatres. The kings used to preserve the lines of top ranking artists attached to the temples and courts by providing fixed allowances and rent - free pieces of lands handed over to them for their hereditary possession and enjoyment. The traditions of Hindu kings partially preserved by the Pathan Emperors and Sultans who used to retain musicians of Indian and Persian culture. Allauddin Khilji had a very famous Darbar of music, in which Nayak Gopal demonstrated his creative qualities in Dhrupad, while Amir Khusroo showed his remarkable genius in the kawali style of music. These demonstrations were done before distinguished people attached to the court, as well as the eminent people of education and culture. The first North Indian music conference was organised by Sultan Hussain Sarki of Jaunpur, who invited many Dhrupadias, Kawals and musicologists, who certified the Ragas made by the Sultan, namely : Jaunpuri tori and Hussaini Kanada as genuine and authentic.

Raja Man Tomar of Gwalior established a illustrious musical institution containing four great sangeet Nayakas. Raja Man used to call meetings of the great musicians for demonstrations of music and discourses on musical theories in the presence of the distinguished people. The golden period of the Hindusthani classical music followed the reign of Raja Man, when Akbar the Great invited Mian Tansen from the court of Raja Ram Baghela to form a musical association containing the nine gems of music. Although Akbar was Mughal by birth, he was a cosmopolitan in his outlook and encouraged all existing religions. He thoroughly revived the temple culture including music and dance and gave the predominant place of Dhrupad in the sphere of classical music. Although the most elevated specimens of classical music demonstrated by Mian Tansen and other gems were conducted in his special chamber, that is Dewan-e-Khus attended by talented personages, yet the public obtained opportunities of listening to some of the top class demonstrations in the great public hall, that is Dewan-e-Um. The ideals of the musical Darbar, were followed by Mahammad Shah, the last great Mughal Emperor, as well as by the famous music loving rulers.

The History of the Darbars of Jaipur, Lucknow, Benares, Betia, Bishnupur, Gowalior and lastly of Rampur containing the golden traditions of Mughal court with regard shows to the high standards of music displayed by the master musicians, who were patronised by the Kings and Nawabs. With the advent of democracy in India and with the progress of education among the masses, the public of this present century are getting more and more music minded.

Unfortunately not only the courts of the ruling princes are in desolution, but many important lines of creative musicians are now non-existent due to lack of encouragement as well as accidents and deaths. It will go for ever to the credit of the immortal Pandit Vatkhandeji in the annals of Indian music for his great attempt to reconstruct the Hindusthani classical music out of the ruins of the first liquidating princely courts of India. He not only established institutions and colleges for the propagation of classical music, but installed many musicians of well known Gharanas in those institutions, which saved those talented people from pecuniary difficulties. His sincerity of purpose inspired those existing ruling princes like Nawab of Rampur, Gaikowar of Baroda, and a few others who have still been maintaining Darbars of music) to give substantial financial aids to Vatkhandeji, to popularise classical music by organising All India music conferences. These conferences were meant for the mass appreciation and understanding of classical music. The music conferences held in Baroda, Delhi, Benaras and Lucknow, were characterized by very high standards of musical demonstrations. The standard of music of those days, was of course, higher than what is prevailing now-a-days. Although people may differ in their opinions, yet the musical standard set up by the Vocalists like Alabonde Khan, Nasiruddin Khan, Radhika Goswami, Gopeswar Banerjee, Alladia Khan, Faiaz Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, Chanda Choube and the instrumentalists like Fida Hussain, Enayet Khan, Keramatullah Khan, Barkatullah, Jamaluddin and Hafezali and Allaiddin in their best form, as well as the form of the female artists like Kersarbai and Hirabai in their prime, will always be remembered by the posterity.

After the departure of Pandit Vatkhandeji, music conferences in some important centres of India, like Calcutta, Allahabad, Lucknow and Bombay have been organised by the great patrons of music with the donations of rich business men. The people have all along got the chances of listening to the demonstrations of the famous musicians of the day. For some of the musicians there have been extraordinary demands from the box offices as they have earned immense popularity by whatever means. In spite of the desolation of the princely orders and the impoverishment of the music loving Rajas and land holders, the mass contributions and the donations from the businessmen, have maintained the artists of music and even enriched some of the lucky musicians. But there cannot be any standard of public fancy.

During the later days most of the music conferences have given up holding musical symposiums or discussions on the standards of music for the education of the public, who are often led by the fascinations of advertisements.

Recently, during the last few years, the All India Radio has been organising Radio music conferences in the centre, as well as in different important stations, in which the intellectual and educative elements of music are getting access. Specially in Delhi the annual Radio symposiums are tape recorded and broadcast throughout the country. These records will be of extreme worth for the cultural developments of the future. Demonstrations of the Radio music conferences are scheduled in such a way as to give scopes to many musicians of different schools to show their

worth. The Selections we done by rotations in a manner by which no particular set of musicians can get under recognition to the detriment of others. The representative music conferences, which are mostly held in Calcutta, should also give proper scopes to the worthy artists. Specially those, who are the torch bearers of great traditions and who suffer much, due to the lack of publicity as they are ignorant of the arts of self advertisement.



Chapter Two

THE FOUR BANIS OF THE DHRUBAPADA

During the period of the SHASTRIK Sanskrit music, the basic RAGAS which were called "GRAMA RAGAS" Were sung in five different styles. Thus we find the mention of the term "PANCH GEETI in the famous treatise like "SANGEET RATNAKAR." These were termed as:-

- (1) "SUDDHA GEETI" in which the "SWARAS" or the notes were used in straight lines, but in a soft and melodious way.
 - (2) In the "VINNA GEETI", the notes were used in curved lines, but with sweet and subtle "GAMAKAS" or vibrations.
 - (3) In the 'GOUDI GEETI", the notes were frequently used in the three octaves with steady poise following some vibrations,
 - (4) The "BESORA GEETI" in which notes were used in quick tempo with quicker and quicker vibrations.
- "SADHARANI GEETI" which indicated the fifth variety, had no speciality of its own, but was a mere combination of the other four.

After the period of the Sanskrit music, "HINDUSTHANI" musical system was evolved containing main principles of the sanskrit classical music in different forms. In the "HINDUSTHANI DHRUBAPADA" music we find the names of four different BANIS which indicated four different styles of "DHRUBAPADA" songs. The different DHRUBAPADAS were composed to contain these four different styles. Of course some DHRUBAPADAS had two, three or even four styles combined in their compositions.

The names of the four "BANIS" of the "DHRUBAPADA" are as follows :

- (a) "GOUDHAR BANI". It resembles the SHASTRIK SUDDHA GEETI. "DHRUBAPADAS" of the "GOUDHAR BANI" according to the teachings of MIA TANSEN, are sung in a pure and melodious way containing "MEENDS" in straight lines according to the structure of the RAGAS. MIA TANSEN himself was a master of this style although he was proficient in other style as well and in the line of his youngest son, BILASH KHAN this style was mainly used.

(b) "DAGORE BANI". It resembles the "VINNA GEETI". It contains MEENDS in curved lines with sweet and subtle "GAMAKAS" or vibrations. "DAGORE BANI" is a very charming exposition of "DHRUBAPADA" music which was used by the disciples of HARIDAS SWAMI in "BRINDABAN" and also by SARASWATI DEBI, the daughter of Mia Tansen. She was wedded to the celebrated VEENA player, Misri Singh.

(c) "KHANDAR BANI". It resembles "BESORA GEETI" as it contains quick "GAMAKAS". This style in the vocal music by BAJ BAHADUR and also by Misri SINGH in his songs and VEENA recitals. Later on the descendants of MISRI SINGH used both DAGORE BANI AND KHANDER BANI.

(d) "NAOHAR BANI" To some extent it resembles tlke "GOUDI GEETI". It contains "CHHUT ALANKAR" That is the jumpy notes with the "GAMAKAS". This BANI is always used as a part of the "DHRUBAPADA" of some other Bani. It is said that SRICHAND, a disciple of HARIDAS SWAMI, was a master of this style.

In a famous song beginning with the PADA BANI CHAROKI BAYOHAR SUNO LIGIEA composed by MIA TANSEN, the merits of these four BANIS have been discussed. In this song he stated that the king of all BANIS was GOUDHAR. The KHANDER was the general. The minister was DAGORE and NAOHAR was the menial officer. Thus TANSEN gave the first place to the GOUDHAR BANI. But he admitted the necessity of all the four BANIS and placed them in their proper status.

Up to the age of MIA TANSEN, the composers of classical songs in India, put proper values of the poetical aspect of the songs.

As in the case of the Sanskrit 'PANCH GEET' in the HINDUSTHANI DHRUBAPADAS also the value of the words that is the poetical expressions or words had proper considerations. The BANIS of the songs indicated the words which were used in accordance with emotion or "RASAS" contained in the RAGAS and with their appropriate styles in the music. Thus the words emotion, RAGAS and styles of music were chosen to fit with one another. In the DHRUBAPADA of the GOUDHARBANI, those RAGAS were chosen which expressed the emotion of peace and calmness, that is SHANTA RASA. In the DAGORE BANI, the poems and the RAGAS expressed either sweetness or pathos, that is "MADHURA RASA" and "KARUN RASA." The KHANDERBANI expressed the heroic spirit and valour, that is "BIR RASA" and NAOHAR BANI surprising movements of the notes expressed "ADBHUTA RASA". The RAGAS chosen for these BANIS expressed the emotions suitable for them. But this uniformity of the BANIS or words, the RAGAS, the RASAS and the style was not particularly observed some-times after the golden age of MIA TANSEN and the DARBAR of AKBAR the Great.

After the end of the Moghul Empire, we find the growth of some famous "GHARANAS" of "DHRUBAPADA" each specialising some of the four BANIS of DHRUBAPADA. But inspite of these specialisations, rules were not observed with too much rigidity. Thus we find that each GHARANA of DHRUBAPADA, while specialising in one of these four BANIS also adopted other BANIS in their musical demonstrations. Some GHARANAS specialised in more than one BANI.

In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries Mia Tansen's descendants formed three GHARANAS or lines of musicians. The SENI GHARANAS of JAIPUR specialised in the DHRUBAPADA of the DAGORE BANI. In Lucknow, Banaras and Rampur two lines of SENI GHARANA became very famous. The line of BILAS KHAN led by JAFFAR KHAN, PYAR KHAN and BASAT KHAN specialised in the DHRUBAPADAS of GOUDHAR BANI although they also took up the DAGORE BANI to some extent. The seni Musicians of the line of MISRI SINGJI were specialists of the DAGORE and KHANDER BANI. Among other Gharanas of DHRUBAPADA which grew up with the teachings of the Seni musicians or of the disciples of Haridas Swami, the musicians of BETIA based their DHRUBAPADAS on the KHANDER BANI and the famous musician of Bishnupur made GOUDHAR BANI the basis of their music. The vocalist of MATHURA, mainly sang DHRUBAPADAS of DAGORE BANI. Another famous Gharana of DHRUBAPADA led by OSTAD BAHAM KHAN, flourished in RAJASTHAN. This Gharana is still predominant in India as it has now revived the popularity of DHRUBAPADA and has put it again into its proper exalted position. The Gharana of Bahram Khan is stressed back from the period of SWAMI HARIDASJI and is now called the DAGORE GHARANA. The vocalists of this Gharana however, have combined the DAGORE and the KHANDER BANI in the execution of their songs. All of these musicians used NAOHAR BANI as a variation.

I shall now illustrate the use of these four BANIS, in four PADAS of different DHRUBAPADAS.



Chapter Three

TANSEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

During the epoch of the most glorious period of the Moghul Empire the musical culture of North India rose to the Zenith. Mian Tansen, the greatest disciple of the saint and musical seer, Swami Haridas of Vrindaban, was the central figure around whom a renaissance of Hindusthani music took place. The new features added during this period could never be brushed aside, for in the teaching of Tansen could be found the key that incorporated and federated the musical arts of India and the Middle East through a rhythmic pattern that was however India's own creation. In the past, the spirit of this synthesis had incorporated Greek and Arabian melody types into the Indian scheme. The creation of such a scheme was a triumph for the musical genius of India. This was the ancient spiritual ideal of India of creating unity in diversity. In fact, this is the cosmic way, so to say, and as such its long history in the practical concerns of Indian achievements is a matter of supreme interest for the world. Mr. Fox Strangways is right when he says, "India has had time to forget more melodies than Europe has had time to learn."

I propose to furnish an outline of the traditional gifts of the Tansen school of music of which little is known till now to the world at large. This school although based on the inspiration of Indian Rishis, drew materials to enrich itself from the music of Arabia and Persia.

I have come into touch with the original sources of the teachings of Tansen handed down through generations of his descendants.

The royal courts of Rampur and Jaipur which patronised and respectfully retained the descendants of Mian Tansen established the teachings of his School. The Nawabs of Rampur were themselves great connoisseurs of music. The late Nawabs Haider Ali Khan, Hamid Ali Khan and Chhamman Saheb were great masters of vocal and instrumental music and had in their Darbar the immortal Bahadur Hossain Khan, Sangeet Nayak Wazir Khan (the Guru of Allauddin Khan) and Mohammed Ali Khan of the Tansen line. Wazir Khan himself was not only a great musician but was also great musicologist who wrote the Risala Mousibi, a voluminous work with notations. Chhamman Saheb also wrote several valuable manuscripts including Risala Tansen, Nurul Hawdayak and on the philosophy of music, all of which are carefully preserved in the court of the late H. H. Nawab of Rampur. Being a disciple of the late Mohammad Ali Khan and also of the son of Wazir Khan, I have received the original teachings contained in these works.

Among the Seni musicians, that is, the descendants of Tansen of the 19th and 20th centuries, we find two mighty figures who were given the title "Sangeet Nayaka" by the royal courts. In the 19th century, Basat Khan, the celebrated vocalist and Veena player, was an outstanding figure who trained many disciples and wrote some valuable books on music. The famous work "Nagamat-e-Asarhi" contained his teachings. Another book named "Nagamat-e-Niamat" written by the great sarodiya Niamatullah Khan who was one of his disciples, contains his musical theories. Md. Ali Khan who was my Guru, was the second son of Basat Khan. He and Wazir Khan flourished during the earlier part of this century and the latter trained Allauddin Khan,

Mustaque Hussain Khan and Hafez Ali Khan. The immortal Pandit Bhatkande also took initiation from him in Seni music.

I have found complete identity of views in the teachings of Basat Khan and Wazir Khan in the theories of Hindusthani music. Both of them have propagated the basic principles on which the entire structure of music of Tansen and his descendants stands. The tradition of Tansen brings us in close touch with the legendary origin of the Indian music as rich as well as the historical accounts given by Sarangadeva.

The theories of Tansen accept the view of the Sangita Ratnakara that Brahma created the Marga style of music out of the contents of the Samaveda which used to call the learning of music as the Nadavidya, the embodiment of the eternal spirit. The God Mahadeva was the original teacher of this Vidya and Parvati and Sarasvati received this divine knowledge from him. The mention of God Ganesa, Narada, Hanuman come next. The celestial beings of the heaven that is the lesser gods, Ghandharvas, Kinnaras and the celestial nymphs learned this divine music from Narada and Hanuman. In the teachings of Tansen we find accounts of the Puranic personalities like Ravana, Valmiki, Lava, Kusha, Hanuman, Arjuna and others. Then there are references of Bharata, Matanga, Sarangadeva and Kallinatha.

Tansen based his theories of music according to the Shiv Mata and the Hanuman Mata in which the expositions of the characteristics of the six main Ragas namely (1) Bhairav (2) Malkosh (3) Hindol (4) Shree (5) Megh (6) Dipak and their Raginis and the Raga Putras were given. In Sanskrit works like Sangitadarpana correlation of the ragas with Raginis seems to be based on imaginary grounds or fictions. But both Basat Khan and Wazir Khan in their musical manuscripts, have rearranged the relations between Ragas and Raginis which they ascribed to Tansen's theories in a way satisfying both reason and science. These two great musicians accepted the theory of twelve Melas and showed that the six main Ragas belonged to the six main Melas and there was correlation between the Ragas and Raginis according to the similarities of Melas, Vadi, Samvadi and Amsa Swaras. Later on Pandit Bhatkande established the theories of ten Thats of the Hindusthani Sangit Paddhati. Bhatkande also became the disciple of Wazir Khan and collected many Dhrupads of the Tansen School.

Tansen was acclaimed by Empeor Akbar as the greatest musician of India after the age of Bharata. We find evidence to this in the work of Abul Fazal. The descendants of Tansen expressed the view that the musical teachings of Tansen, especially those on the structure of the Ragas, have been carried down through lines of the Gurus and disciples. Tansen himself was a disciple of Baba Ramdas of Oadh and Svami Haridasji of Vrindaban, both of whom regarded God Siva as the creator and Hanuman as the propagators of Ragas and Raginis. Tansen also assimilated some of the basic principles of the of the Middle East.

The origin of the Arabic and the Persian music may be traced from Greece. But it should be remembered that the Greeks were indebted to Egypt on the one hand and India on the other for the development of their philosophy, music, science and the various arts. Tansen however received the influence of the Arabic and Persian music from Mohammed Ghous, the celebrated Pir of Gwalior who was also one of the spiritual guides of Tansen. Tansen was the son of a Gaudiya Brahmin of Benaras and was initiated by Haridas Svamii in the Brahma Vidya and

Nada Vidya and later on was initiated by the Pir of Gwalior in the cult of sufism. Although by his marriage with a Muslim lady he embraced the Islamic religion, he did not forsake the teachings of the Vedic cult ; rather he combined the philosophical principles and the practices of the Vedas and the Bhakti Sastra of India with the Sufi cult of Persia. The songs composed by him bear evidence of his true devotion to the gods and "avatars" of India as well as to the prophet Mohammed. Regarding the traditions of the music of the Middle East which inspired Tansen, we find the following account in the manuscripts of Wazir Khan.

About the origin and history or legends of music, the ancient Persians believed that this art had originated from the melodious notes of a bird which they called Mausiqar. The beak of the bird has seven holes in it and through each hole it used to sound a different note. This ultimately led to the foundation of seven fundamental notes.

The Persians and the Arabic scholars mention the name of Pythagoras as the first authentic writer on music. Pythagoras wrote a book entitled Mausike in the Greek language in about 500 B. C. Mou in Greek means air and sike means knot and the word mousike meant "tying a knot in the air". Persians and Arabs call music, "Mousike", Pythagoras was known as a student of Sankhya Philosophy and many believe that he learnt also the fundamental principles of Indian music.

After Pythagoras, we find mentioned in the traditions of Tansen's School, the name of Aras-Ta-Talis of the Greek period who had three Arabic disciples who were both musicians and physicians: (1) Hakim Sukharat, Hakim Bokharat, and (3) Hakim Jalinus.

During the reign of King Marun Rashid of Persia, Mutirbin-Kundi, was a renowned musicologist who followed the traditions of the three Hakims mentioned above and translated the work of Pythagoras into Arabic. The great sage Abu Ali Sina then gave it a practical shape.

During the reign of Khalifa Harun Al Rashid of Baghdad the Arabians got free from the taboo on music and several Arabic musicians like (1) Sayeb (2) Ashib (3) Tyayib (4) Nasir (5) Ibrahim Bin Musli and (6) Ishakh Bin-Ibrahim emerged on the scene.

The Pir Saheb of Gwalior who was one of the Masters of Tansen school received the knowledge of this line which flourished in Arabia. The Arabic inspiration of this line shines as the milky way in the firmament of Tansen music.

Hazarat Md. Ghouse, however, was not the earliest exponent of Persian and Arabic music in India. The influence of Turkish music had been carried to the Northern parts in India by the Sakas and the Hun tribes even in the Hindu period. The music of Turkistan was similar to that of Persia. Later on during the Pathan period Amir Khusru, the renowned poet and musician, introduced the Persian system of music in the Delhi Durbar. He composed numerous songs in the Persian style known as "Kwawali". The Persian system was based on the theory of the twelve Moqamis (Main Ragas), twenty-four Subhas (Raginis) and forty-eight Gussas (Uparagas). Amir Khusru composed also many new Ragas by combining the tunes of India and Persia.

Baiju Bawra, a musician saint who was a contemporary of Amir Khusru, created the Dhrupad style of Hindusthani music in accordance with the lines of Sanskrit "Prabandhas" and "Dhruva

gitis." Baiju Bawra was an exponent of theory of Ragas and Raginis. But the Dhrupad Paddhati introduced by him, although it received the highest respect in the temple of music, never held a dominant position in the courts of Pathan Emperors who placed the Kwawaii system in a position superior to that of the Dhrupad Paddhati.

After the fall of the Pathan Empire, Raja Man-Tomar of Gwalior established a musical association in his court and retained four great musicians, (a) Bham, (b) Charju, (c) Dhundhibar and (d) Chanchal Sashi who were given the title 'Sangita Nayaka'. With their co-operation Raja Man revived the glory of the Dhrupad-system of music and gave it a status superior to that of the Kwawali.

The Pir Ghouse of Gwalior was a friend of the Raja and although he imbibed the Persian culture in music and religion, he accepted the Dhrupad-system of Indian music and was also an admirer of the Bhakti cult of India.

At that time Swami Haridas of Vrindaban was regarded as a great saint and musical genius of remarkable creative power. He followed the style of Baiju but gave an extremely melodious and colourful style of presentation of Dhruvapada music. As Tansen's musical genius was developed by his direct teachings it was evident that Tansen would become an exponent of the Dhruvapada Style. In fact, the Pir of Gwalior also encouraged Tansen to develop the Dhruvapada style although he made him well versed in Persian music. Thus Tansen based all his musical creations on the Dhruvapada Paddhati while assimilating some beautiful forms of the Persian music.

Akbar the Great made the ideal of his policy to combine the different cultures of India. Tansen as the Guru of Akbar followed the same ideal in the creation of his music, both the Emperor and Tansen raised the status of Dhruvapada as the highest expression of music. Thus in the Mogul court unlike the Pathan Court the Kwawali type of music, was given only a secondary position. Akbar established an association of nine gems of musicians (Navaratna) with Tansen as its leader. Tansen created many new ragas which, uptill now, are regarded as the foremost ragas of Northern India. Some of these are noteworthy, e.g. Darbari Kanada, Darbari Todi, Miya ki Malhar, Miya ki Sarang etc. Tansen composed about one thousand Dhruvapadas which are even now remembered not only for the wonderful exposition of the Ragas contained in them but also for their very high poetic value. There are many songs of devotion to the Supreme Divine and also to the Gods. We find also many outstanding songs composed by him in praise of the Kings and the Emperors. And these songs contain remarkable synthesis of the Vedanta, the Bhakti Sastra and the mysticism of the Sufi cult.

Tansen reshaped the entire of Dhruvapada music by the addition of new ornamentations in Meend, Gamaka etc. which were lacking in them. His songs had special charms and emotional appeal. As the Guru of Akbar, he received the highest honour from all and established a permanent school of Dhruvapada music. In the field of instrumental music also he had valuable contributions in the development of the Rabab (Rudra-Veena) and the Hinduathani Saraswat Veena. It is remarkable that his music was kept bright in the line of his descendants also.

From the period of Akbar upto the beginning of the present century the descendants of Tansen who were called Seni musicians were regarded as authorities on Hindusthani classical music.

Some of his descendants created new Ragas which have permanent value, e.g., Vilaskhani Todi, Tilak-Kamod, Puria Kalyan, Kausiki Kanada etc.

These musicians preserved and developed the Dhruvapada music introduced by Tansen containing the four Banis or styles : (1) Gouhar Bani containing melodious sliding notes. (2) Dagar Bani containing melodious Gamakas and curved lines. (3) Khander Bani with quick vibrations. (5) Naohar Bani with jumpy notes. These Banis contained five main Rasas: (1) Santa (2) Sringara (3) Karuna (4) Vira and (5) Abdhuta. The classical instrumental music of Northern India was also developed on the same lines through the instruments, the Veena, the Rabab, Surasringar and Sitar. The celebrated musician, Shah Sadarang was also a descendant of Tansen and it was he who invented the Hinduathani classical Kheyal by combining the techniques of the Dhruvapada and the Kwawali with the system of Ragas following the tradition of Dhruvapada.

Now-a-days we come across many musicians who claim to belong to different schools of music of the North. But all these schools were founded by musicians who were directly or indirectly the disciples of some descendant of Tansen. Thus what we know about the classical Hindusthani Music, is originated from the line of Tansen. If we sincerely aspire to revive the glory of the classical music of the North, we have to turn our attention to researches on the music of Tansen's line and for that purpose the establishment of centre for research on the Tansen School of music is urgently required.



Chapter Four

TANSEN'S DESCENDANTS IN VARANASI

Varanasi is the holiest of all holy cities of India. It is regarded as the abode of the "Mahadeva" the great lord of the universe who is also the world teacher or the "Jagatguru". Sastras say that all divine and mundane knowledge emanated from "Mahadeva". As the teacher of all beings he imparted the divine knowledge and other learnings including the "Gandharva Vidya" the musical art to the various gods and goddesses; the celestial beings and the "Risis". With this tradition glowing throughout the ancient period and the middle ages, Varanasi has always been a great centre of spiritual culture, learnings and arts. It has also been a centre of the highest type of classical musical culture. Most of the historians say that Mian Tansen, whose name was Ramtanu in his early days, was born and brought up in Varanasi. His father Makaranda Pande was a Kathak Brahmin who used to sing mythological songs in the temples of Varanasi. Ramtanu Pande was initiated in Gandharva Vidya or classical music by Swami Haridas of Vrindavana and later on got initiation in the Sufi cult from Hazrat Md. Ghous of Gwalior. Ramtanu was named "Mian Tansen" by the Emperor Akbar when he was acclaimed as the greatest musician of India and the authority of Dhruvapada and was posted in the Delhi Darbar as his musical 'Guru'. After the death of Mian Tansen, his descendants also adorned the court of Delhi for a long period. But from the days of Mian Tansen all the musicians of his line paid regular visits to Varanasi as their original home.

During the end of the eighteenth century gradual disintegration of the Moghul Empire was taking place. At that period Tansen's descendants were divided into three Gharanas of musicians. The Gharana founded by his eldest son Surat Sen took its final abode at Jaipur. The musicians of these Gharanas used to sing in Dhruvapada style and play instrumental music on the Sitar. The illustrious Gharanas formed by Tansen's youngest son, Bilas Khan and son-in-law, Misri Singhji, were in close connection with each other all along. The Descendants of Bilas Khan were specialists in the Dhruvapadas of "Suddha Bani" and in the instrumental music of "Rabab". (The descendants of "Misri Singhji were regarded as the authorities in the instrumental music of 'Veena' and they used to sing Dhruvapadas in the "Dagor Bani " and "Khander Bani". During the later part of the eighteenth century Jaffar Khan, Payar Khan and Basat Khan were three brothers of great reputation representing the Gharana of Bilas Khan. They used to play on the 'Rabab' and sing Dhruvapadas. On the other hand Nirmul Shah was a great Veena player, representing the line of Misri Singhji. All these musicians representing the two Gharanas made Varanasi their home as they left Delhi during their early years. . Their houses were situated in the Kabir Choura Mahalla of Varanasi. They were attached with the court of Lucknow and used to pass most of their time at Lucknow. But during the Puja holidays, they always used to reassemble in their home at Varanasi. They had also connections with the Darbar of the Kashi Raj and whenever called by the Raja, they used to give demonstrations of their music in the Darbar of the Raja, who gave them lands free of taxes. Jaffer Khan was a great instrumentalist in "Rabab". This instrument had its lower part covered by the skin parchment and strings used in it were made of the "Guts".

It's display had no parallel in the "Jod" style and Tar - Peran, but In the "Vilambita Alap" and "Jhala" this instrument of Veena was unrivalled. Although closely related, Jaffar Khan had to compete with Nirmul Shah in the demonstrations of instrumental music in the courts of Lucknow and Kashi. In order to equal the charms of the Veena which was displayed with great skill and sweetness by Nirmul Shah, Jaffar Khan invented the instrument of Sursringara, in which the lower part was made of hollow wood and steel plates were set in the upper part and the strings used were of steel and brass. It was in Varanasi that Jaffar Khan first made his Surasringar and gave his first demonstration of this instrument in the court of Raja Udit Narayan Singh of Kashi. His display was very highly appreciated by the Raja and also by Nirmul Shah, the Veenkar.

After the invention of Surasringar by Jaffar Khan, Payar Khan, his next brother specialised in this instrument and added some fascinating ornamentations in the style of its display. After the death of Nirmal Shah, Omrao Khan, his nephew took up the position of the greatest Veena player of his time. It was he who invented the instrument "Surbahar" and taught Golam Mohammed Khan its mode of display. Varanasi saw many friendly Duels of instrumental music between Payer Khan and Omrao Khan in Surasringar and Veena. The next brother of Payar Khan, Basat Khan was a great Vocalist in Dhruvapada and also a great Rababi. He learnt Sanskrit from the Pandits of Varanasi and later on obtained the title of "Sangita Nayak" in the Sabha of Raja Hera Kumar Tagore at Calcutta. After the Sepoy Mutiny, the Lucknow Darbar was dissolved. Basat Khan, with his two illustrious sons, Ali Md. Khan, the Surasringar Player and Md. Ali Khan, the Vocalist and Rebabi settled finally at Gaya. But Sadek Ali Khan. The son of Jaffar Khan and his brother Misar Ali Khan became attached to the court of the Raja of Varanasi. Sadek Ali Khan was a great musicologist and excelled in Rabab. He could play Veena also very efficiently. He also was intimately associated with the Sanskrit Scholars of Varanasi and was an erudite Scholar in Sanskrit and Persian languages. The Raja had a great respect for him. It is said that Sadek Ali Khan had no equal in the improvisations of "Ladi-Jod" "Lad Guthao" In the Tarparan he could beat any Mridanga player. He lived like a saint and had a religious temperament. He could not tolerate the music of lighter moods. He taught Rabab only to his younger brothers. But he had many disciples of Dhruvapada and in the instrumental music of Veena and Sitar. The most outstanding of them was the Sitarist Bajpayeeji. Mahesh Chandra Sarkar and Methailalji were his disciples in Veena. Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansadev, when he went to Varanasi on pilgrimage, listened to the Veena of Mahesh Sarkar and was absorbed in "Samadhi."

After the death of Sadek Ali Khan, Ali Md. Khan, the eldest son of Sangeet Nayak Basat Khan was appointed by the Raja of Varanasi as the chief musician of his court. At that time he lost his father at Gaya and he came to settle at Varanasi. His residence was in Ramnagar, where the place of the Raja was situated. Ali Md. Khan was a very liberal minded musician and used to play on his Surasringar before his disciples without any reservation. He had profound knowledge of Ragas and could develop any Raga for hours without any repetitions of the Tanas. He trained up Pannalal Jain, Arjundas Vaidya, a practitioner in the Ayurvedic Medicines and Gaya Prasad Misra in Surasringar. Syed Mir Nassir Khan of Jalandhar was his most accomplished disciple in Surasringar. He also imparted lessons on the local music of Dhruvapada and instrumental music on Veena and Surasringar to the great Veena Player, Wazir Khan Saheb of Rampur, who during his early youth visited Varanasi frequently to meet Ali Md. Khan, who was related to him closely. Ali Md. taught the famous Bengali musician, late Hari Narayan Mukherjee many Dhruvapadas and Sargams. Another Bengali gentleman of aristocratic family received kind

attention from the great Ostad. He was the late Taraprosad Ghosh, who was well known in Calcutta for his charities towards the musicians. Taraprosad learnt many songs from Ali Md. Khan. Md. Ali Khan, the younger brother of Ali Md. who used to stay at Gaya frequently visited his elder brother for lessons on Rabab. Both these brothers outshone all other famous musicians of that period who used to visit Varanasi. After the death of Ali Md. the great vacuum in the sphere of classical music of Varanasi could not be filled up. The remaining few musicians of Tansen's tradition were settled in the states of Rampur and Jaipur. It is a great pity that, with the disappearance of the descendants of Tansen the culture of the Dhruvapada music and Veena gradually disappeared from Varanasi. The last of the Dhruvapadias was the late Hari Narayan Mukherjee and of the Veena Players was the late Mithailalji.

Varanasi even now is a centre of all traditional culture. There are the multifarious institutions to continue the studies of various subjects of ancient Indian Culture. We do hope that in Varanasi the culture of the classical Dhruvapada music and the classical instrumental music of Veena and Rabab would not remain neglected forever.



Chapter Five

SENI GHARANA AND RAMPUR STATE

During the past two decades, when music conferences became very popular, every musical artist proclaimed that he came front a particular famous Gharana, that is, a particular line of hereditary musical tradition and particular school of musical styles created or followed by great music teachers and their disciples.

Actually, there were two main Gharanas of Hindusthani music worthy to be considered, during and after the reign of Allauddin Khilji, the Pathan Emperor of Delhi. These were : --

(1) The kalawanta Gharana, founded by Baiju Bawra and propagated by Nayak Gopal which included the singers of the Dhrubapada style of music and the instrumentalists who played on Saraswat veena in accompaniment to the vocal Raga Alap and Dhrubapada songs.

(2) The kawal Gharana, founded and propagated by Amir Khusru and later on by Sultan Hussain Sarki of Jaunpur.

These Gharanas included the singers of Kawali songs and the instrumentalists who played on Sitar in accompaniment to the Kawali songs and Taranas. Later on, a third Gharana was formed by the instrumentalists who used to play on Sanhai and Tabla. With the increase of the number of female singers and dancing girls in the Court, there arose a fourth Gharana of instrumentalist accompanying them. The Ostads of the third and fourth Gharana were called Mirasis and Dhadis.

SWAMI HARIDASJI OF BRINDABAN

During the reign of Md. Adil Shali at Delhi, there were more than one hundred musicians in the Court, who were mostly the Kawals, Mirasis and Dhadis. After the fall of the Pathan Empire, Haridas Swami, the great saint of Brindaban was the main personality in the golden age of Hindusthani music, when the system of Rag-Alap and the Dhrubapada style of music founded by Baiju Bawra, attained perfection of expressions, and was held in the highest estimation by the royal courts existing in that period.

Under the influence of his inspiration, Raja Man Tomar of Gwalior brought four Nayaks or authorities of Dhrubapada Hindusthani music in his court, who were named - (I) Bhanu, (2) Chharju, (3) Dhundi. (4) Chanchal Sashi. Really, the Gharanas of Hindusthani classical music were formed by Swami Haridasji and these four Nayaks, who were all Kalawantas.

During the reign of the Emperor Akbar, Mian Tansen, the disciple of Swami Haridas, was called the greatest of all musicians and was the main centre of a great musical upheaval. All the disciples of other Nayaks became his disciples and his style of Alap and Dhrubapada was

regarded and accepted as the best ever known. He enriched the Dhrubapada style with some Persian ornamentations. Mian Tansen was the leader of a group of famous musicians, namely :-

- (1) Khoda Bux,
- (2) Masnad Ali,
- (3) Ramdas,
- (4) Chand Khan,
- (5) Suraj Khan,
- (6) Khande Rao,
- (7) Suragnan Khan,
- (8) Jagapat (Mridangi).

SAINT HARIDAS'S DISCIPLE - MIAN TANSEN

Mian Tansen was the greatest disciple of Swami Haridas and a foster child of Pir Md. Ghaus of Gwalior while others were either his colleagues or disciples of other Nayaks of Gwalior. All these musicians were attached to the Court of Delhi. The other notable disciples of Haridas Swami were (1) Brija Chand. (2) Gopal Lall, (3) Maharaja Samokhan Singh of Ajmir, Singhalgarh, who was the greatest Veena player of that period. From the period of Akbar, notable Gharanas of Northern India were formed by the descendants or disciples of the above-mentioned musicians. But as Mian Tansen was accepted as the greatest of all musicians by Emperor Akbar, his influence on other musicians was paramount. He formed the main Gharanas, that is, the Seni Gharanas of Hinduathani music.

After the death of Mian Tansen, three Gharanas representing his traditions were notable. The first Seni Gharana was formed by his youngest son, Bilas Khan (Tan Tarang) at Delhi Darbar. This Gharana represented the choicest Dhrubapada style in Goudi Bani. The second Seni Gharana was formed by another son of Tansen named Surat Sen, who used to sing Dhrubapadas in Dagar Bani and whose descendants subsequently settled at Jaipur,

The third Seni Gharana was formed by Misri Singh, the celebrated Veena player, who was the son of Maharaja Samokhan Singh and married Saraswati Devi, the daughter of Tansen. His descendants formed the main Gharana of Veena music and used to sing Dhrubapadas in both Dagar and kahandar Bani.

Besides these three Seni Gharanas, the other famous Gharanas were formed by Brija Chand and Suradas at Mathura, whose disciples were the Brahmin priests while Chand Khan and Suraj Khan were the founders of Tilmandi Gharana of Dhrubapadas in Punjab.

We find the name of the Agra Gharana specializing in Dhamar style formed by Hazi Sujan Khan, Which was famous during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan. With the decline of classical music, musicians of all the Gharanas underwent severe hardships during the reign of Aurangjib. But Mahammad Shah Rangile, the Badsha, revived the Delhi Darbar in the early eighteenth century with the musicians of all Gharanas assembled at Delhi.

GREAT VEENKAR AFTER TANSEN

Niamat Khan Veenkar who was a descendant of Misri Singh (son-in-law of Tan Sen) and later on received the title 'Shah Sadarang' in the Darbar of Md. Shah is ranked as the second great musician of India after Mian Tansen. He was the high priest of Md. Shah's Darbar and invented new techniques of the veena music and Dhamar. He also created the classical Kheyal and founded the famous kawal Gharana through his disciples, whom he taught classical Kheyal. The Kawal Gharana thus formed, was regarded as the authoritative line of Kheyal. Other Gharanas like Agra Gharana and Gwalior Gharana of Kheyal, grew up from the main Kawal -Gharana.

During the latter part of eighteenth century, progressive disintegration of the great Mughal Empire was followed by the provincial Subadars and the subordinate Rajas becoming virtually independent and the Emperor of Delhi had only the symbolic possession of supreme authority and honour.

As the financial position of the Delhi Darbar became precarious, the most famous musicians of Delhi took shelter in other courts. At this stage the Seni musicians who came attached to different courts of India, devoted themselves more and more to the culture of instrumental music. Although they were authorities on the Dhrubapada songs, they were divided into two camps.

The descendants of Bilas Khan and Niamat Khan made Banaras their home town, but were attached to the courts of Lucknow and other states. They were called Eastern musicians.

The other camp which was formed of the descendants of Surat Sen settled at Jaipur and were called Western musicians. The Eastern musicians of the Seni Gharana used to play on Rabab and Veena beside singing Dhrubapadas while Western Seni musicians specialised in Sitar and Veena and also sang Dhrubapadas. The kawal Gharana was for a period attached to the Delhi Court.

THE MAIN GHARANAS

During the middle of the eighteenth century, the main Gharanas of Hindusthan, which were founded by the Seni musicians and their disciples took final shape. The main Gharanas were as follows:

- (1) Seni Gharana of Dhrubapa and Rabab, formed by three great brothers, Jaffar Khan, Payar Khan and Basat Khan of Lucknow and Banaras.
- (2) Seni Veenkaras, laid by Nirmal Sha of Lucknow. (3) Kawal Gharana laid by Bade Md. Khan Kawal, of Lucknow and Gwalior.
- (4) Gwalior Gharana of Kheyali formed by the three great Kheyali brothers;- Huddu Khan, Hassu Khan and Nathu Khan.
- (5) Agra Gharana of Kheyali and Dhamar, formed by the descendants of Hazi Sujan Khan (Dhamar) and who later on became disciples of Shah-Sadarang.
- (6) Betia Gharana of Dhrubapada formed by the disciples of Haidar Khan seni of Lucknow, who were the kathaks of Banaras, as well as Muslim Ostads of Kalpi.
- (7) Bishnupur Gharana of Dhrubapada formed by Bahadur Khan Seni, through his disciple Ramshankar Bhattacharjee.
- (8) Tilmandi Gharana of Punjabi Dhrubapada singers.
- (9) Lahore Gharana by Punjabi kheyalias, disciples of Shah-Sadarang.
- (10) Ataruli Gharana of Dhrubapada and Kheyali founded by the Brahmins of Mathura who embraced Islam later on.
- (11) Dagar Gharana, founded by Bairam Khan, a great scholar and Dhrupad singer, who was a descendant of a priestly line of Mathura.
- (12) The Seni Gharana of Sitar of Jaipur, founded by the celebrated Amrita Sen.
- (13) The Sarod Gharana of Saharanpur, disciples of Omrao Khan, a son of Nirmal Sha Seni.
- (14) Sarod Gharana founded by Niamutulla Khan, a disciple of Basat Khan Seni.
- (15) The Sitar Gharana of Lucknow founded by Golam Md. Khan, a disciple of Omrao Khan Seni.

BIRTH OF RAMPUR GHARANA

Now we come to the origin of Rampur Gharana which is the latest and last of the greatest Gharanas of India.

After the end of the Sepoy Mutiny, Wazed Ali Shah, the great patron of music settled at Calcutta from Lucknow. He brought with him here great musicians like Sadeque Ali Khan, Kasem Ali Mian of the Tansen Line and Murad Ali Khan and Taj Khan of Kulpi School and some outstanding kheyalias also.

Among the other great musicians of the Tansen line, Sadeque Ali Khan, the great Rababi and scholar, settled in Benaras and trained some priestly musicians like Mithailallji and Bajpayeji. Benaras thus became a prominent centre of classical music.

But there were two shining luminaries of Hindusthani music were invited with great respect and promise of princely allowances by Nawab Kalwe Ali Khan of Rampur State (U.P.), which was founded by the Pathans of Rohilkhand. These luminaries were named Bahadur Hussain Khan (Bahadur Khan of Bishnupur) and Amir Khan.

Bahadur Hussain was a nephew of Payar Khan Seni, the celebrated Surasringar player, while Amir Khan was the son of Omrao Khan Seni, the renowned Veenkar. Thus he first used to play on the Surasringar and the second on the Veena. Both, however, were the masters of Dhrubapada singing of the Tansen Line. Bahadur Hussain concentrated more on the instrumental music and had such a charming style of play that people used to say that his fingers were made of diamonds. Not only the lovers of classical music, but even uninitiated laymen were overwhelmed with rapturous joy by the sound of his instrumental displays. He introduced many new Alankaras (embellishments) in the instrumental music and variations of Jhala or Jhankar which are unequalled even up to now by any instrumentalist of India playing Sitar or Sarod.

CUCKOO-VOICED SANADA PIYA

Amir Khan Veenkar, on the other hand, had a very melodious voice and though originally an instrumentalist his concentration was on vocal music. In the Rampur Darbar, he seldom played on Veena in the presence of Bahadur Hussain Khan who, by the way, was his uncle-in-law. But he used to sing in the Darbar, vocal Alap, Dhrupads and Dhamars. In that period classical Thumri was created by the famous composers Kadar Piya, Sadar Piya, and Sanada Piya, who were attached to the Court of Lucknow during the reign of Wazed Ali Shah. With the departure of Nawab of Lucknow to Calcutta the Lucknow Darbar broke up and Sanada Piya accompanied Bahadur Hussain and Amir Khan to Rampur. Sanada Piya had a voice like that of the "cuckoo" or Kokil and his style of Thumri was very fascinating. But Amir Khan sang Dhamar in such a way that the charms of his voice and styles, overpowered even the best specimens of Thumri.

Amir Khan not only used Meend and Alankaras, but also used some Alankaras which sounded like Murki and Firat.

RAMPUR GHARANA'S SPECIAL CHARMS

The Rampur Gharana of music founded by Bahadur Hussain and Amir Khan, was characterised by some special charms in the use of Alap, Dhrupad, Dhamar and in the instrumental music which were not found anywhere in India. Both of these great musicians gave all their theoretical and practical knowledge to Nawab Haidar Ali Khan, a brother of the then ruling Nawab of Rampur. Haidar Ali was a unique musician in the vocal and instrumental music and had a very valuable collection of musical scripts containing the teachings of the great masters. These collections are still carefully preserved in the court of Rampur.

Rampur State, during the time of Haidar Ali Khan had a galaxy of musicians. All of them became disciples of Bahadur Hussain or Amir Khan. Although they belonged to other Gharanas before they came to Rampur, they changed their old style and were influenced by the styles of their masters and thus became identified with the Rampur Gharana. Bahadur Hussain composed many Taranas, which were demonstrated by the kheyal singers of Rampur State.

SOME GREAT MUSICIANS OF TANSEN SCHOOL

The following outstanding musicians became initiated in the Tansen tradition by Bahadur Hussain or Amir Khan

1. Md. Hussain (Veena)
2. Nabi Bakash (Veena)
3. Kutubuddaulla (Sitar)
4. Enayet Khan (Kheyal)
5. Ali Hussain (Veena)
6. Bakar Ali Khan (Kheyal)
7. Assad Khan (Surasringar)
8. Fida Hussain Khan (Sarod)
9. Boniat Hussain Khan (sarangi)

All these musicians of different styles of music adopted the Raga system and the ways of execution of Tansen Gharana. So, the Rampur Gharana may be said to be a special formation of the original Tansen Gharana. During the early part of this century Nawab Hamid Ali Khan of Rampur emulating the examples of the previous musical Darbars, formed a unique musical association presided over by Sangeet Nayak Wazir Khan, son of Amir Khan (Veenkar). Wazir Khan learnt Veena from his father and Surasringar from Bahadur Hussain in his prime and Nawab Haidar Ali Khan as his guardian, developed his extraordinary musical genius. Wazir Khan also learnt Dhrupad, Dhamar and was both a melodious vocalist and a great instrumentalist. Nawab Chhamman Saheb, the son of Nawab Haidar Ali, was a colleague of Wazir Khan and excelled in Dhrupads and Surasringar display.

WAZIR KHAN OF RAMPUR

Thus Wazir Khan and Chhamman Saheb were the successors in the line of music of Amir Khan and Bahadur Hussain. Wazir Khan by musical teachings built up the musical career of the following outstanding musicians.

1. Allauddin Khan (Sarod)
2. Hafiz Ali Khan (Sarod)
3. Mehdi Hussain Khan (Dhrupad & Kheyal)
4. Mustaque Hussain Khan (Kheyal)
5. Pramathanath Bandopadhyaya (Rudraveen)
6. Jadabendra Mahapatra (Surbahar)
7. Pandit Vatkhandeji (The great Musicologist)

It may be noteworthy that Wazir Khan who was in Calcutta in his youth, had special liking for the Bengalees and helped a good deal for the development of classical music in Bengal. Nawab Chhamman Saheb also gave lessons to Pandit Vatkhandeji. Among the Nawab's other disciples we may cite the names of :

1. Raja Nawab Ali Khan of Lucknow-(Sitar).
2. Girija Sankar Chakrabarty of Bengal-(Dhrupada, Kheyal and Thumri)

In conclusion, we should not forget the fact that the Vatkhande College of Music, Lucknow, which is now the Centre of Vatkhande University, got tremendous support from Nawab Hamid Ali Khan of Rampur, and Nawab Chhamman Saheb, who helped this great institution both financially and also with the precious teachings of the Rampur Gharana. For every song and each

Tana and each Dhrupad he (Raja) gave a crore of rupees to this musician (Kalavid), namely Tansen, who was the embodiment of the art of music. Though these statements of Badaoni and that of the author of the Virabhanudaya Kavyam seem to be exaggeration, to some extent, yet it is clearly understood that Rewa and even its adjacent places were famous for the culture of classical type of Prabandha-Gitis.

VRINDAVANA'S CONTRIBUTION

Vrindavana was also a famous seat of culture of Prabandha-Gitis. From the history of Bengal Vaishnavism we come to know that most of the Vaishnava savants were headed by Swarupa-Damodara, Ray Ramananda, Swami Krishnadasa, Swami Haridasa, Krishnadasa Kaviraja, Raghunathadasa Goswami, Thakur Narottamadasa and others were well-versed in the lofty or sublime Prabandha type of Gitis.

It is said that Thakur Narottama devised the Padavali-Kirtana on the ideal of the classical Dhruvapada, in slow tempo at Khetari, West Bengal. It might be the fact that Vrindavana drew its inspiration and impetus of the culture of Dhruvapada from Gwalior and its adjacent places, but yet it cannot be denied that Vrindavana and afterwards Mathura, created the schools of their own. And those schools were maintained by a host of Kalavids like Krishnadasa, Haridasa and others. These celebrated exponents of music were all upholders of Dhruvapada.

BIJAPURAS CENTRE OF CULTURE

Bijapur was also a seat of culture of classical music, and specially of Dhruvapada. Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur was a contemporary to the Emperor Akbar. He devoted the best part of his life to the cause of classical music, in which he took interest from his early age.

From Asad Beg's mission to Bijapur, we learn that Bijapur was so famous for its culture of classical music that Akbar was also attracted to this kingdom. From the editorial comments of the journal, Lalitakala, April 1955 - March 1956 and Joshi's article on 'Asad Beg's Mission,' in the 'Potadar Commemoration Volume', 1950, we come to know that Asad Beg went on his Mission in 1603-1604 A.D. It has been stated thus:

"Speaking about the events of 1603-04, Asad Beg says that he was invited to the royal palace to bid farewell to Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur on the night of 27th Sh'aban. A grand music party had been arranged for the occasion. Asad Beg found Ibrahim so rapt in listening to music that he could hardly reply to Asad Beg's question. The conversation for sometime was mainly concerned with music and musicians".

It should be remembered in this context that Dhruvapada the most prominent feature of musical culture of that time i.e. in the sixteenth - seventeenth century A.D.

Dr. Nazir Ahmed has written as follows in the Introduction to the book, Kitab-i-Nauras by the said Sultan :

"Ibrahim was a master of Dhrupada and his book in the same style became so popular as to attract even the Moghal Emperor Jahangir, and the Emperor claimed the Kitab-i-Nauras to be in form of Dhrupada which Sultan learnt from Baktar. It has been stated that about four thousand skilled musicians thronged on an occasion, and the Sultan wished that skillful musicians should always adorn his court by their presence."

From the fact it is proved that Dhrupada used to play a prominent part in every musical function not, only in the royal court, but also in the kingdom of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. The Emperors Jahangir and Shahjahan were also great patrons of Dhrupada. The names of Jagananath Kaviraj, Dirang Khan. Gunasamudra Lal Khan, the son-in-law of Bilas Khan are worth-mentioning. in this connection, as noted exponents and connoisseurs of Dhrupada Prabandha.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century A.D. when Mohammed Shah was on the throne of Delhi, Dhrupada was also held in high esteem in his court. The name of Mohammed Shah's court-musician, Niyamat Khan Sadaranga is worth-mentioning. in this connection. Niyamat Khan Sadaranga was a Veenkara as well as a Dhrupadiya. Though he devised a new style of Kheyal in slow tempo, yet he was noted as an exponent of Dhrupada of the pure Seni school. The decadence in the culture and appreciation of Dhrupada came probably during the British rule in India. It came to a climax, when the last titular Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II ascended the throne of Delhi, and granted by a Firman, the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company.

VISHNUPURAS CENTRE

Vishnupur (Bankura) and different parts of Bengal were also recognised as the Seats of culture of Dhrupada. When the noted musicians of the Seni school found no help and support from the Emperor, Shah Alam II they began to seek refuge in the Durbars of other ruling Princes including those of Lucknow, Banaras, Betia and Bishnapur. Before the end of the eighteenth century, Bahadur Khan of the Seni Gharana and Peer Bux, the Pakhowaji, were invited by Raja Raghunath Singh II of Bishnapur and were appointed in his court. And from that time onward the intensive culture of Dhrupada, started in Bengal.

HERITAGE OF PRE-CHRISTIAN ERA

It may, therefore, be said that the Prabanda type of Giti undoubtedly originated during the pre-Christian era, and evolved out of the ancient Jatiraga and different Gramaragas as depicted in the Natyasastra, Brihaddeshi, Sangita-Samayasara, Sangita Ratnakara, etc., through ages, and attained development, assuming novel modes, new names and phases. It still survives in the form

of modern Dhrupada i.e Dhruvapada, though lacking in its pristine glory and traditional ideal. The term "Dhruvapada" connotes sacred or celestial Giti or song; for "Dhruva" means 'sacred' or 'that which Is everlasting and celestial' and 'Pada' means Giti or Gana.

Originally its literary composition or Sahitya was graceful, majestic and contemplative by nature. It breathed an air of sublimity and grandeur in laudation of the gods and goddesses, and the Father in Heaven, though in later days, it lost that lofty ideal to some extent.

During the time of Akbar the Great, the four styles or methods of presentation of Dhruvapada centered on the regional utterances or Vani (Bani), and as a result thereof, different Vanis such as Khandara Vani, Dagar Vani, Naohara Vani and Lahar Vani evolved. They were merely the outward features or "Nibaddha Prabandha Gitis. However, Dhruvapada of Dhrupada require to be maintained and sustained in all their characteristic purity, supreme value and importance, even in these days, so as to preserve the glorious heritage of classical music, and to enrich the priceless treasure of art and culture of India.



Chapter Six

TANSEN AND RABINDRANATH

Great creators and personalities appear and disappear in the eternal space and time of the Universe. But there are a few great ones, who shine like eternal luminaries to illumine and inspire the mind and soul of the mankind. Their creations are imperishable and their memories are carefully preserved in the subliminal depths of human consciousness. The glorious examples of such great creators have been recorded in the history of mankind and in this connection we may mention the hallowed names of Valmiki and Vedavyas, Plato and Pythagoras, Shakespeare and Kalidas, and lastly Tansen and Rabindranath. On this issue I am dealing with the special contributions in the field of music of the great creators, Tansen and Rabindranath.

Tansen was acclaimed by Abul Fazal, (the celebrated historian adorning the court of Akbar the Great) to be the greatest Indian musician since the time of Bharat. Rabindranath on the other hand, is universally regarded as one of the greatest poets of all times. In India his position as the greatest lyrical poet is admitted by all. But Tansen was not only a great musician and a wonderful creator and composer of music, but his songs have their poetical worth as well.

Rabindranath's poetical masterpieces also combined charming composition of musical notes. As such we find that both Tansen and Rabindranath, combined poetry with music. Rabindranath was a practical musician also with an exquisitely charming voice. In fact, in his prime when as a young poet and musician he adorned the house of Maharshi, nobody could foretell in whither way the flowering of his genius would take place and that whether he would be a great musician or a great poet.

Tansen had no parallel in the melodiousness of the voice and Rabindranath also was gifted with a shrill and enchanting tone. Of course Tansen absorbed his soul in quest of Nada. He reached the fountains of the Ragas which are the embodiments of the cosmic melodies. He gave the most profound and richest expressions of Raga melodies through the system of the Hindusthani Dhrubapada. Rabindranath in his prime followed the footsteps of Tansen in his superb compositions of Bengali Dhrubapada music. He assimilated the spirit and forms of Tansen in giving expressions of Bengali classical music most of which fall in the category of "Brahma Sangit". But these songs, although containing influences of Tansen's music, were in no way mere imitations of the past great Master of music. Rabindranath during his long career has composed thousands of lyrical songs of all types of music prevalent in North India and specially in Bengal. The vast field of his musical creations include not only the songs in which the Ragas find their beautiful expressions but also the dramatic songs, lyrical songs, folk songs, kirtans and others. He has not left anything untouched. He was a versatile genius and had no bound of self expressions. He was not only a great poet but also a great dramatist, novelist, essayist, philosopher and critic. Besides his greatness as a writer he also shown in exceptional glamour as a great actor, singer and a painter. However we are dealing in this little article only about his musical genius which also had manifold expressions in keeping with the lines of his manifold personalities. Tansen's genius of course, found its expression predominantly in music; but as a poet also his contributions have eternal worth. The exact modes of his songs are not easy to

discover and are confined to the Gharanas of his descendants and disciples. But the compositions are still there and we can easily determine their poetical values which are sublime indeed ! The greatest lyrics of Rabindranath as well as the songs of Tansen, have been devoted to their spiritual realisations. The adoration of one supreme divine inspired both of them. Thus the essence of the Vedantic teachings is the basis of the realisations of both these great masters.

In the Islamic religion embodied by the prophet Mahammad, we find the same monism of the Vedanta, and Mian Tansen discovered the unity of the Vedanta and the Islam in the adoration of one supreme God. But he also assimilated the Truths of the Pouranic religions and Sufism with their rich emotional expressions.

On the other hand, Tagore also while following the unitary truth of upanishad, adopted the symbols of Pouranic cults in the expressions of his sublime emotions. In fact, we find an ideological synthesis of all religions in both Rabindranath and Tansen. Akbar the Great accepted Tansen as his Guru not only for his sublime music but also for propagation of a liberal synthesis of all the religions and philosophies which were flourishing in his time. Akbar's ideal was to establish an Indian Empire in which people of all cults and religions would unite in fraternity with one spiritual goal inspite of the variation in the ways in attaining it. To-day in the middle of the 20th century India is faced with far different circumstances with vaster problems for solutions and in this critical moment of the human history, the problems of religions

are not so acute in the modern world, but the problems of the nations and the systems of life are extremely acute. These problems need a spiritual solution and here we find Rabindranath standing with message of the spiritual Brotherhood of mankind and the peace of the world. He has shown to us that beauty and joy of life are essentially spiritual and men must be free from hatreds and mutual distrust to attain a happier state of existence in love, joy and beauty. Thus it is perfectly befitting for India watch is trying to establish an international order of fellowship and brotherhood to commemorate the centenary of the treat Tagore in a befitting manner.

