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To trace the *Gharana* maestros, ever been in Princely Tripura

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Abstract

The exclusiveness of Gharana has made Hindustani classical music different from Carnatic and other branches of North-Indian classical music. Ragas, the integral part of Indian classical music, have been a prevailing Cultural Tradition through the expression of various musical forms. The practice of Hindustani classical music is rightly executed by the Gharana representatives and those styles have enriched Indian art and culture. There had been many native lands or estates under certain kings or rulers before their inclusion into India. Most of the rulers possessed good sense and knowledge of art and culture. The formation of Court music was the consequence of their patronage to Indian classical music and dance. Princely Tripura was also blessed with Gharana maestros along with music personalities of other genres.

This article inquires about those Gharana maestros who were somehow related to the Tripura Royal Court music and any sustainable development thereof.

Keywords: Raga; Indian classical music; Cultural tradition; Hindustani classical music; Court-music; Gharana.

Introduction: India is a diverse land; people of different languages, food habits, clothes, religions, castes and creeds live here. Inhabitants of this land have their own belief and prejudice irrespective of different ethnic groups, tribes and other castes. History supports of many outer nations attack to India and afterwards their settle down as well as acculturation on this land. Different groups of people with their different parallel concepts and views have woven the social structure. Despite many differences, some sort of subtle resemblances are also observed due to prolonged co-existence. The historians have acknowledged the blood mixing between the *Dravids* and the *Aryans*; and their cultural assimilation thereof. The formations of *Shaabari*, *Goand* or *Goandkiri* etc. define such ancient *Ragas* in Indian classical music, which shows the effect of cultural assimilation between them (Mitra 6, 31). Many folk and tribal tunes (structures of musical notes) have been taken into account as *Raga* elements. The *Ragas Tripuravati* and *TripiSarang* may be referred to this connection, which were formed with certain modification of the tunes, practised among the *Kokbarak* speaking Tribes of Eastern hilly Tripura (DebBarman 39-41).

Innumerable examples may be drawn for the formation of *Ragas* (Indian melodies) which have enriched the repository of Indian classical music. But, all the *Ragas* do not possess equally charming and the inbuilt capacity that will live forever. So, many a *Ragas* have thus gone aside or lost from the conventional common practices. These *Ragas* are called *Achhop Ragas* or rare *Ragas* and are restricted to some specified people or certain *Gharana* maestros. *Ragas* like *Yaman*, *Darbari Kanada*, *Miyan Ki Todi*, *Miyan Ki Malhar*, and many others have such everlasting effect that are still in use. There are more *Ragas* to mention which are someway related to some particular places and might have been developed by certain professional maestros or the musicologists. For example, *Bhupali*, *Jaunpuri*, *Multani*, *Bhupal Todi* etc. may be considered. Similarly, *Hussaini Kanada*, *Ramdasi Malhar*, *Surdasi Malhar*, *Bilaskhani Todi* etc. are such *Ragas* which have deep association with some music maestros as creators.

Raga is the base of Indian music and it plays an indispensable role in the performance of Classical music. Indian classical music refers to organised and high class musical exposition through proper articulation of sounds with definite embellishments of musical notes and rhythm. *Raga* is the compound of the powerful ingredients of Classical music which expresses specific moods. The evolution of Classical music, journey from its inception such as *Gaandharva* or *Marga Sangeet* (music), *Deshi Sangeet* to *Hindustani* and *Carnatic Sangeet*, describes various old and new *Ragas* through several musical styles. This music, undoubtedly, denotes development towards music that did not occur a day. Perseverance, rigorous practice and strong dedication led the musicologists (those, having logical erudition on music) and the music professionals to accomplishments.

The practice of Vedic music became obsolete in the Classical period that begins at about 600—500 B.C. (Prajnanananda 44). An extensive research on the development of Indian music as well as *Ragas* and their classifications was initiated from this time. The *Gandharvas* are considered to have established *Gaandharva* or *Marga Sangeet*. In fact, the *Gandharvas* took the leading role to accomplish the successful progression of Indian classical music.

Before the beginning of the Christian era, music was divided into *Marga* and *Deshi* (Prajnanananda 44). *Marga* or *Gaandharva Sangeet* was bounded with certain rules of *Raga* (melody), *Taal* (beats), *Chhanda* (rhythm), *Dhatu* (tune), *Matu* (lyric), *Geeti* (articulation) and remained unchanged irrespective of regions. On the contrary, *Deshi Sangeet* expressed its regional trait and was devoid of excessiveness of musical elements like *Gaandharva Sangeet*. *Deshi Sangeet*, having modified with some musical elements of *Gaandharva Sangeet*, appeared as *Abhijaat Deshi Sangeet* and was named as *Prakirna* in Sanskrit or *Pakinnak* in native language. The *Prakirna* songs were further modified and the new form was called *Biprakirna*. Both *Prakirna* and *Biprakirna*, the two forms of *Abhijaat Deshi Sangeet*, were in vogue till the Christian era (Goswami Preface: 10).

Gaandharva Sangeet became obsolete just after the Christian era. *Biprakirna* songs were modified again and in course of time *Prabandha Sangeet* evolved. *Prabandha Sangeet* was

basically of three types; namely *Suda*, *Alikrama* and *Biprakirna*. With the advancement and demand of time, many a classical musical styles were developed in different forms and shapes out of different *Prabandhas* irrespective of North India and South India. *Dhrupad* and *Khayal* are the derivatives of *Prabandha*, prevalent in North India which considered two ideal *Hindustani* classical musical forms, being properly executed by the *Gharana* representatives.

Cultural tradition of India: Classical music stands for perfection and the *Ashram* (hermitage) of some ancient Indian *Rishis* (saints) was the seat of perfect learning. Thus a long tradition, known as *Guru-Shishya Parampara* (a tradition of Trainer and disciple) developed. The position of a Guru (trainer or teacher), according to Indian tradition, is next to God. The Acharyas' (Gurus') had a great deal of contributions to build up the society and the nation as well through the holy Acharya-Shishya Parampara. The Acharyas' used to generate a number of wise and dedicated Shishyas' (disciples) ; engaged themselves into writing manuscripts and various research activities related to different branches of education. The Acharya-Shishya Parampara, in fact, was the foundation of ancient education system of our country.

Ancient education and culture were nurtured by the *Acharyas* through *Gurukul* (residential) system. These saintly *Acharyas* believed in plain-living and high-thinking. The impact of their noble ideas enriched Indian music and culture. The *Acharyas* rendered free services to the society as their moral duty instead of professionalism. Hanking after money and wealth were immaterial to them. Royal patronage enabled the *Acharyas* to carry on the *Acharya - Shishya Parampara* independently. They used to put down their innovations and experiences on various subjects along with music through manuscripts. Logical discussions and scientific analysis of those subjects were entertained very cautiously in the *Parampara* and inferences were taken unanimously in the presence of the King. Theories of the ancient music, as expounded by the musicologists, had maximum resemblances and minimal controversies in most of the cases (Ghosh 94).

There was another stream of *Gayak-Vadak-Nartak* (performers of vocal music, instrumental music & dance), simultaneously prevalent with the *Acharya-Shishya Parampara*. They were entertainers and professional performers. They adopted the music, being performed and taught in the temple under *Acharya-Shishya Parampara* through imitation. They had access to the Royal courts and the public domain throughout (Ghosh 94).

The period of the *Sultanate* (1192 A.D. – 1526 A.D.) and the period of the *Mughals* (1526 A.D. – 1757 A.D.) are considered to be the medieval periods of Indian history. Muhammad Karam Imam, the historian referred to his book '*M-uadan-Ul-Musiki*' (1854 A.D.) that the performers of *Khayal* (a *Hindustani* classical musical form) were recognised as *Quawaal* and that of *Dhrupad* (another *Hindustani* classical musical form) as *Kalavant* during the periods of Sultan Alauddin Khilji (1296 A.D. – 1316 A.D.) and Akbar, the

Mughal emperor (1556 A.D. – 1606 A.D.) respectively. The performers got much importance and honour during those times (Ghosh 99).

From 15th Century A.D. onwards, Indian music began to be divided into *Hindustani* and *Carnatic Sangeet* with several musical forms. During these periods, the *Acharya-Shishya Parampara* was about to dying in North India and the *Acharyas* managed to settle down to South India. The *Acharyas* concentrated on the developments of the *Deshi Sangeet* therein. *Carnatic* classical music was thus developed. With the abolition of the Temple-oriented music and the *Acharya-Shishya Parampara*, the contemporary Court-music came into prominence. The *Gayak-Vadak-Nartak Parampara* or the professional performers began to be popular and inevitable especially in North India. Those professional performers used to stay in different places of North India. Not only in Classical music, but had their efficiency in Folk music also. They were vocalists, instrumentalists and dancers. They were responsible to recognize themselves as the followers of certain *Gharanas* from the last phase of 18th Century A.D. (Ghosh 99).

Dhrupad was modified, practised and initiated by *Raja* (King) Maan Sing Tomar of Gwalior (1486 A.D. – 1516 A.D.) and some of his Court-musicians and there from flourished throughout Northern India. *Khayal* was elevated to Court-music and gained its popularity from the reign of Shahjahan, the Mughal emperor (Mitra Preface: 12). The spread of modern style of *Khayal* also started from Gwalior and the credit is bestowed with Shakkar Khan, Makkhan Khan, the disciples of Ustad Ghulam Rasool, and their descends. Their style was known as *Quawaal BaccheKi Gayaki* (Mukhopadhyay 78). In course of time, the term *Gharana* was introduced both in *Dhrupad* and *Khayal* styles among the Court-musicians. *Gharana* deals with professional performers and the forms of *Hindustani* classical music.

Gharana: what is it about?

Hindustani classical music is exclusive for its inclusion of *Gharana* system, which is missing in *Carnatic* and other branches of North-Indian classical music. *Gharana* evolves from the Persian word ‘*Ghar*’ which means family and it stands for music professionals under one family or certain school of music who follow definite style of singing, instrument playing or dance. *Gharana* talks about innovative styles in presentation, powerful improvisation and consistent variety of features, maintaining certain steps called *Silsila* (Ghosh, 99-100). There are certain common traits irrespective of all *Gharanas*, but differences of applications make the originality as well as identification of the *Gharanas* themselves. The *Gharana* system gradually crossed the barrier of lineage and extended to the trained disciples from generation to generation (Roy, 3).

Gharana does not entertain a mere imitation; it survives through *Taleem* (expertises) and proper improvisations. *Gharana* is usually named after a person or a place or a family. There are a number of renowned *Gharanas* such as *Gwalior Gharana*, *Agra Gharana*, *Kirana Gharana*, *Patiyala Gharana* etc. which were named according to different places. *Alladiya Gharana* is an instance of a *Gharana*, named after Ustad Alladiya Khan. Again,

Seni or *Senia Gharana*, *Quawaal Bacche Gharana* etc. are ideal *Gharanas*, for example, named after the families of Miyan Tansen and the Quawaals respectively.

Gharana is classified into vocal music, instrumental music and dance. *Katthak* is the only *Hindustani* classical dance form. *Dhrupad* and *Khayal* are the *Hindustani* classical vocal musical forms under which the recognised *Gharanas* are categorised. *Baaj* is meant for different styles of the musical instruments, played in different *Gharanas*. Either *Dhrupad* or *Khayal* style is used for the *Baaj* of stringed and wind instruments. Different rhythmic patterns are used as *Baaj* in case of drummed or percussion instruments. *Tappa*, *Thumri* etc., though primarily sung by the folk singers, were adopted by the *Gharana* exponents as Semi- classical musical forms after implementing certain classical embellishments and improvisations.

Gharana signifies a long term evolutionary process of Classical music in Northern India. It also talks about the evolution of social and cultural attitudes among the professional music practitioners. In fact, professionalism was gradually prioritized rather than old traditional values in the *Acharya-Shishya Parampara*. In old tradition, theory and practice were equally important and complementary to each other. In music, theoretical as well as analytical thoughts began to lose its glory day by day and the place of practice rapidly started rising up with the advent of the *Gharana* concept. As the *Gharana* system deals with professional performers and as their prestige, popularity and livelihood depended on the performances, it was observed in many times the shifting of the *Gharana* performers under the sponsorship of different patrons.

Tripura: Cultural Setup: Princely Tripura had been a separate territory before its inclusion into India in 1949. The kings of Tripura had contribution to some extent for the practice and patronisation of Indian classical music and dance. Indigenous music and culture might have been in practice during the period of the earlier *Manikyas* (the kings), but a consistent practice and patronisation of Indian classical music and dance was noticed from the reign of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (1862A.D.—1896A.D.). This trend continued even among the successor rulers. The later kings of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya were Maharaja Radhakishore Manikya (1896A.D.—1909A.D.), Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya (1909A.D.—1923A.D.) and Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya (1923A.D.—1947A.D.).

There were many other contemporary *Riyasat* (native lands or estates) under the kingship of certain rulers on the eve of the independence of India. The Royal Courts of Lucknow, Gwalior, Rampur, Jaipur, Betiya, Baroda etc. may be taken as instances where the rulers had been playing the good role of the patrons for the development of Indian *Art and Culture*. *Nawab* Wazid Ali Shah (1847 A.D. -- 1854 A.D.) of Lucknow Royal Court, *Raja* Daulat Rao *Sindhiya* and his descendants of Gwalior Royal Court, *Nawab* Kolbe Ali Khan and his descendants of Rampur Royal Court and many a rulers of other Royal Courts patronised many performers of *Hindustani* classical music (Chakraborty, 2004). Many of the rulers had keen interest and taste to different branches of Indian *Art and Culture*. Some

of them were skilled in different genres of Indian classical music and dance. Maharaja Birchandra Manikya, the successor rulers and some Royal family members of Tripura were fond of Indian classical music and dance very much and patronised the same out of their deep inclination to Indian *Art and Culture*.

The monarchs of Tripura ruled over for several centuries. It took many years for the *Tripuri* (inhabitant of Tripura) chieftains to uplift themselves as powerful kings. They had to pass through hostilities. So, they could not fully succeed to set up peaceful cultural environment at the initial and middle phases of their administration. After shifting the kingdom at *Nutan* (new) *Haveli*, the kings of Tripura had ample scope to excel in the cultural field. Krishna Kishore Manikya (1830A.D.—1850A.D.), the king of Tripura, shifted his kingdom from *Puratan* (old) Agartala to *Nutan* (new) *Haveli*, which at present is known as Agartala. Krishna Kishore and his son Ishan Chandra Manikya (1850A.D.—1862A.D.), the later king of Tripura, put their marks in the administrative field rather than patronising *Art and Culture*. It was Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (1862A.D.—1896A.D.), brother of Ishan Chandra Manikya and the later king of Tripura, who patronised a large number of artists, poets, singers, instrument players, dancers in his Court. It was indeed a great step taken by the Maharaja, because a wide range of literary and musicological works have been accomplished as a result.

The early kings of Tripura, accustomed to simple living, came into contact with the *Bengalees* (inhabitants of Bengal) and other communities. By degrees, they adopted many good qualities and became habituated with the complex or developed culture. All these helped the *Tripuri* kings to be connected with the greater world. Moreover, the relation of some good friends and well wishers with the kings brought about great changes in the administrative, social and cultural fields of Tripura.

Performers of *Hindustani* classical music & the *Gharana* Maestros: Their relationship with Tripura Royal Court.

As the *Gharana* pedigree matters to the Performers of *Hindustani* classical music, utmost endeavour has been taken to make the list of the Maestros with reference to other representatives of the same *Gharanas*.

Jadunath Bhattacharya (1840 A.D. – 1883 A.D.), popularly known as Jadu Bhatta was closely associated with Maharaja Birchandra Manikya and Tripura *Raj Darbar* (Royal Court) for almost last six years of his life. Maharaja Birchandra Manikya himself heard Jadu Bhatta at the Tagores' residence of Jorasanko and delightfully invited him to Tripura. He was awarded the title 'Taanraaj' for his excellence in music by the Maharaja (Mukhopadhyay, 359-360).

[Jadu Bhatta, started learning *Dhrupad* from Ramshankar Bhattacharya of Vishnupur *Gharana* for few years at his childhood and afterwards went on training of *Khandar Vaan* (an exclusive style) *Dhrupad* from Ganganarayan Chattopadhyay, belonging to the *Gharana* that was originated from Noor Rang (Roy, 161).]

Jadu Bhatta, during his staying at Tripura Royal Court, used to visit Kolkata (Calcutta) and others irregularly. The practice and progress of *Dhrupad* in Bangladesh remarkably rose due to his excellence in music as well as long stay in Tripura (Mukhopadhyay, 361). **Nagendranath Bhattacharya** (1856 A.D. –1933 A.D.) of Ranaghat, a well-known performer of *Dhrupad*, *Khayal* and *Tappa*, learnt especially the lessons of *Dhrupad* from **Jadu Bhatta** for about five years in Tripura (Mukhopadhyay, 367). **Jagannath Mukhopadhyay**, disciple of **Rammohan Chakraborty** of Vishnupur, used to accompany *Pakhwaj* with Jadu Bhatta while staying at Tripura *Raj Darbar* (Mukhopadhyay, 159).

Ustad Qasim Ali Khan was not only an excellent *Veena* and *Rabab* player, but also a noted vocalist of *Senia* or *Seni Gharana* (Nadkarni, 67). Before joining at the Tripura court he discharged the duty of a Court-musician of Nawab Wazid Ali shah at Metiaburz. He had also experienced the Court-musicianship of Nepal and Rampur.

Ustad Qazam Ali and Ustad Sadiq Ali, his father and uncle respectively, made him proficient in playing *Rubab* and *Veena*. Ustad Qasim Ali Khan got an appointment as a *Veenkar* (*Veena* player) at Nawab Wazid Ali shah's Metiaburz court after the death of his father where Qasim's grand-father Ustad Basat Khan had been holding the position of the *Sangeet-Guru* of Nawab himself. Ustad Qasim Ali had ample scope for learning various lessons of *Dhrupad* along with several *Ragas* from him.

After the termination of the Metiaburz court, Ustad Basat Khan went off to Gaya and **Ustad Qasim Ali** accepted the invitation of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (Roy Chowdhury 110).

It is heard that Maharaja himself learnt a few lessons from Ustad Qasim Ali. Jadu Bhatta was also taught by him. Ustadji left Tripura for an unwanted reason and went under the shelter of Maharaja Rajendranarayan Roy of Bhawal Estate (now in Bangladesh). He spent rest of his life there (Roy Chowdhury 110).

Besides these two great maestros, a bunch of names is claimed as Court-musicians of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya in printed form (Choudhury 12-14; Chakraborty 240). But information is inadequate about the period of their staying as well as the *Gharanas* they belonged to. The names are given as follows:

1. **Kulandar Baksh** of Kashmir, as an excellent *Katthak* dancer or the *Natyacharya* (dramatist), skilled in dance ;
2. **Haider Khan** of Gwalior, skilled in *Sursinger* and *Esraj* player ;
3. **Nisar Hussain** of Uttar Pradesh had much command over *Surveena* and *Sitar* ;
4. **Panchanan or Panchananda Mitra** was familiar as Paanchu Babu. He came from Chandannagar of Bengal and joined as a *Pakhawaj* player in the court. He was a real scholar and also had a great deal of command over English language. He was dear to Maharaja Birchandra and accomplished the duty of a Private Secretary.
5. **Kshetamohan Basu** as a *Dhrupadiya* ;

6. **Keshab Chandra Mitra** of Kolkata was a high class *Pakhawaj* player. His playing enchanted the audience of Maharaja Birchandra's court.
7. **Ramkumar Basak** of Dhaka was a famous *Pakhawaj* player. He got the patronage of other kings of Tripura even after the death of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya.
8. **Nabinchand** or **Nabinchandra Goswami** as a *Sitar* player ;
9. **Bholanath Chakraborty** was famous for *Khyal* and *Tappa* ;
10. **Raghunath Bhatta** as a classical vocalist (singer) ;
11. **Harish Chandra** , also known as **Haridas Pagla** of Burdwan was a *violin* player ;
12. **Sadhu Tabalchi** of Dhaka as a *Tabla* player ;
13. **Mitthu Khan** as a *Khyaliya* (*Khyal* singer) ;
14. **Tasaddak Hossain** as a *Khyaliya* ;
15. **Husnoo Khan** was famous for *Tappa* ;
16. **Ahammad Khan** as a *Sarod* player ;
17. **Imani** or **Inami Baiji** came from Rampur. She was earlier attached to Rampur court. She spent many years as a court musician at Tripura court.
18. **Chaanda Baiji** came from Varanasi. She was got a very sweet voice in spite of her ugliness and old age. It is said that Maharaja Birchandra heard her voice in *Behag-Khumbaj Raga* and appointed her as a court musician. She spent many years at Puratan Agartala and breathed her last there.

A few names from the above are easily recognized as *Gharana* Maestros or *Gharana* representatives. **Keshab Chandra Mitra** (1822 A.D.? – 1901 A.D) was the follower of *Mridangacharya* (*Pakhawaj* maestro) **Ram Chakraborty** and earned fame in Bengal for his performance in *Pakhawaj*. He was the elder brother of Sir Ramesh Chandra Mitra, the Judge of Kolkata High Court and one of the founder members of *Bhawanipore Sangeet Sammilami* of Kolkata (Sen Gupta and Basu 113).

Ramkumar Basak was an exponent of Dhaka *Pakhawaj Gharana* and the disciple of **Khairati Jamader** (Roy, 172).

Ahammad Khan alias **Ustad Ahammad Ali**, son of **Ustad Abid Ali Khan** represented Rampur Sarode *Gharana*, from whom **Ustad Alauddin Khan** also learnt (Roy, 159).

Imam Baandi was well known in the field of *Hindustani* classical music and perhaps she might have been misinterpreted as **Imani** or **Inami Baiji**. She got the privilege of being a Court-musician of the Maharaja of Kashi and Nawab Wazid Ali shah (Goswami 35). She learnt from **Ustad Shadi Khan**, son of **Ustad Gammu Khan**. They were the Maestros of Lucknow *Gharana* (Roy, 159).

There is uncertainty about **Haider Khan** and **Nisar Hussain**. One Haider Khan has been traced, who was a renowned *Dhrupadiya* (*Dhrupad* singer) as well as *Veena* player of *Seni Gharana*. He was a Court-musician of *Betiya* and Lucknow. He trained Raja Ananda Kishore (1816 A.D. – 1832 A.D.) of *Betiya* and Ali Nakki Khan, Diwan of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow. He was the second son of Jeevan Khan of *Seni Gharana* (Nadkarni, 65). **Nisar Hussain**, perhaps, was the exponent of Saharanpur *Sitar Gharana* (Roy, 167).

Mitthu Khan and **Tasaddak Hossain** both were well known Maestros of *Khayal*. **Mitthu Khan** was an exponent of Tilmandi *Gharana* (Roy, 157). **Tasaddak Hossain**, son of Ustad Kallan Khan, was familiar as ‘Binode Piya’ and was an exponent of *Agra Gharana* (Mukhopadhyay 130)

At the end of the ruling period of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya, it seemed to be difficult to upkeep a huge number of Court-musicians and many of them had to leave for this reason. But, the local musicians who had once got opportunity to undergo some training from the renowned court musicians, tried to stir the trend of classical music up. The significant point is that the zeal and practice of classical music among the people was noticed in the reign of the later kings, though the previous grandeur of Tripura court music faded away.

Tripura Royal Court was also adorned with some *Gharana* Maestros in the reign of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya (1923A.D.—1947A.D.), mentioning a few of them were **Ustad Alauddin Khan**, **Ustad Inayat Khan**, **Ustad Muzaffar Khan**, **Ustad Mazid Khan**, **Ustad Adam Baksh**, **Ustad Munna Khan** etc. who became renowned and attained their excellence in the post-independent India (Choudhury 19).

Ustad Ali Ahmed Khan (d.1912), grandson of **Ustad Sahab Khan** of *Seni Gharana*, used to sing *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar* and *Khayal*. He was a Court-musician of Agartala and Nepal. He stayed in Calcutta for a long time (Nadkarni, 115).

Shyamcharan Dutta, a famous *Dhrupadiya* of Comila, had deep connection with Tripura Royal court. He was a Court-musician of Tripura. He achieved some *Taleem* (lessons) of *Seni Gharana*. He also learnt *Dhrupad* from Hari Ustad and Haricharan Karmoker of Dhaka. He got further *Taleem* in *Dhrupad* from Ranganath Jadu Bhatta (1840 A.D. – 1883 A.D.) through the recommendation of Maharaja Radhakishore Manikya (shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in. 85).

Ustad Aftabuddin Khan (1862 A.D. – 1993 A.D.), brother of **Ustad Alauddin Khan**, learnt Tabla from **Ramdhan Shil** and **Ramkanai Shil** of Bangladesh at Bangora village of Brahmanbariya. From one source, they were brothers and perhaps the exponents of Tabla of Dhaka *Gharana* (Sen Sharma 522). In another source, **Ramkanai Shil** alias **kanai Shil** is identified as **Ramdhan Shil’s** son. **Ramdhan Shil**, a *Kirtaniya* (Kirtan singer), was attached to Tripura Royal Court as an employee during the reign of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (DebBarman 22).

Aftabuddin was adept in flute playing. He was innovative minded and created some unique stringed instruments. He used to stay at some of his disciples’ residence of Tripura and Sylhet districts in order to train them Tabla. During that time he learnt Esraj playing. He earned fame in music (Sen Sharma 523).

Ustad Alauddin Khan (1881 A.D. – 1971 A.D.) got immense *Taleem* of *Seni Gharana* under **Ustad Wazir Khan** (1860 A.D. – 1927 A.D.), the Court-musician of Rampur. **Alauddin** introduced Maihar *Gharana* by his expertise in Classical music which is an off-

shoot of *Seni Gharana*. He also learnt some lessons on music from **Ram Kanai Shil** at *Prabhu Badi* of Agartala.

Ustad Ayet Ali Khan (1884 A.D. – 1967 A.D.), brother of Ustad Alauddin Khan, was initially trained in *Sitar* and *Surbahar* by **Alauddin** himself and got further *Taleem* of **Ustad Wazir Khan**. **Ayet Ali** was proficient in playing *Sitar*, *Surbahar*, *Flute*, *Clarinet* and many other musical instruments. He was skilled in making musical instruments also. His performances as well as teaching music to Birendra Kumar Chakraborty and other talented disciples gave him much popularity throughout Tripura district by that time (Bhattacharya 50-51).

Ustad Alauddin Khan and **Ustad Ayet Ali Khan** both earned mastery and fame in instrumental music. They took their first musical lessons from their elder brother **Ustad Aftabuddin Khan** (Rashid par. 3.)

Thakur Anil Krishna Deb Barman of Tripura had a good deal of knowledge about Indian classical music. He was trained up in *Sitar* and other lessons of Indian classical music by **Ram Kanai Shil** and his son **Radhacharan Shil** (Deb Barman 19).

Anil Krishna was the Court-musician of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya. Not only that, he had the privilege to give some musical training in *Sitar* to the Maharaja. He was the authorised person to take care of all the particularities about the Royal Cultural Programmes in relation to music performance, guests and delegates. Thakur Anil Krishna, thus, arranged Classical Concerts for **Ustad Alauddin Khan** and many other renowned performers during the reign of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya (DebBarman 25).

Some names of the performers are found as reference in this case. They were **Ustad Imdad Khan** and his son **Ustad Inayat Khan**; **Pritam Giri** or popularly known as **Peetam Gir**, the *Sitar* player; **Ustad Aluddin Khan**, the renowned *Sarode* player and his brothers **Ustad Aftabuddin Khan** and **Ustad Ayat Ali Khan**; **Ustad Gul Mohammad**, a devotee of Goddess Kali and his son **Ustad Ali Aahammad Khan**; **Gauharjan**; **Akhtari Bai**; **Upendra Basak**, son of **Ramkumar Basak** and **Prasanna Banik**, the *Pakhawaj* players; **Timir Baran Bhattacharya**; **Jatindranath Basu**; **Munna Khan**, the *Sehnai* player and so many (Choudhury 26).

Conclusion: The Court-musicians were basically Professional Performers. They counted on performances and sought Patrons. They underwent *Taleem* of a *Guru* following particular *Gharana*. *Taleem* enables a performer to present *Ragas* properly through a certain Classical musical form. So, *Taleem* was taken with special care among the *Gharana* representatives.

In *Hindustani classical music* we come across some particular ragas with more than one or more variations due to changes of melodic structures of musical notes, difference of *Thaats* (seven chronological notes under which certain derivative ragas may be found), difference of *Angas* (use of particular Phrases) in the leading *Gharanas*. These differently usage of the same ragas, so to speak, definitely have enriched the concerned *Gharanas* as well as the world of Hindustani classical music.

In the post-independent India, the practice of *Hindustani* Classical music has remarkably increased with the establishment of Professional Colleges and Universities of Music. But it is to be kept in mind that only generalisation will not enable to hold up the standard of quality education and research. The versatility of the leading *Gharanas* still have been latent within a very few number of Scholars cum Music Practitioners.

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