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Arts

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ODISSI MUSIC: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Niladri Kalyan Das*

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Music is the best of all the fine arts. Odissi music is a separate system of Indian classical music and is having all the essential as well as potential ingredients of Indian Classical form. The present form of traditional Odissi music is no doubt the outcome of the continuous evolution of the earliest Indian classical music. Music tinged with religion, attained mass appeal and royal patronage. As such the royal patronization of Art and Culture made the Odishan music so developed and enchanting for enjoyment of both Gods and Goddesses and human beings as well. This tradition is still continuous in its different manifestations.

Music is the best of all the fine arts. Though there is no evidence of how and when music developed in India the archaeological findings indicate that about five thousand years ago the standard of music in India was highly developed. Indian music is Veda- related. It is known as Panchama Veda . Sama Veda is said to be the origin of Indian music. Odra Desha or the then Odisha had many similarities with the bordering regions of Odra- Magadhi countries (as called in the past). As such Odishan Music is said to be related with the then Odra Music. It is said that in second and third century Bharat Muni categorized Odisha under the 'Odra Magadhi' category on the basis of geographical, life-style of people, literacy, linguistic, interests of people, mannerism and behavioral point of view. Utkal is considered as the land of arts and the music of this land shall remain forever.

Odissi music is a separate system of Indian classical music and is having all the essential as well as potential ingredients of Indian Classical form. The existing dance and musical tradition of Odisha is the cumulative experience of the last two thousand and five hundred years and can broadly be grouped under various varieties. The figures of dancers and musicians carved on ancient temple walls speak of Odisha's rich musical heritage. Since, there is the dearth of recorded evidence to prove the exact time of the advent of the earliest form of the Indian Classical Music into this land inflow during the period of Aryanisation of this land. There are historical evidences in the form of sculptural evidences, i.e. musical instruments, singing and dancing postures of damsels in the Ranigumpha Cave in Khandagiri and Udayagiri, Charya Geetika written between 7th to 12th centuries mostly by the poets of Odisha.

The present form of traditional Odissi music is no doubt the outcome of the continuous evolution of the earliest Indian classical music. One may reasonably believe its inflow during the period of Aryanisation of this land. Possibly Aryan culture crept into this land during the Age of Brahmins when bulk of Indian peninsula came under the Aryan influence. Music tinged with religion, attained mass appeal and royal patronage. As such the royal patronization of Art and Culture made the Odishan music so developed and enchanting for enjoyment of both Gods and Goddesses and human beings as well. This tradition is still continuous in its different manifestations. The inner voice of our history speaks a lot about the great music traditions of this country. In the second century B.C. king Kharavela, during his third year of rule, had taken several measures for promotion and propagation of music and dance education and instrumental music organized various cultural and musical extravaganzas throughout the state, which have been mentioned in the inscription of the stone carvings of 'Hati Gumpha' (The Hathigumpha Inscription consists of seventeen lines in a Central-Western form of Prakrit incised in a deep-cut Brahmi script on the overhanging brow of a natural cavern called Hathigumpha in the southern side of the Udayagiri hill, near

Bhubaneswar in Odisha)caves of Khandagiri, Udayagiri, these ancient pictorial stone carvings indicate that the music of then Odisha had a mass appeal among the people. The ancient monuments Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, Pushpagiri built during the rule of king Bhouma indicates about various musical forms of that era. As per the historical evidence, there was much appreciation for the music education and its propagation in the period of 10th and 11th century during the rule of famous 'Somavansi'(The **Somavamshi** or **Keshari** dynasty ruled parts of present-day Odisha in eastern India between the 9th and the 12th centuries) empire. The ancient stone inscriptions of various temples in those days indicated about the people's love for the music. In the subsequent period the king of 'Somavansh', 'Ganga-vansh', 'Surya-vansh' were also said to have love and appreciation for the arts of music and dance. It is evident from the ancient traditions of 'Devadasi' dance, 'Gitagovinda' songs which were performed in those days on the premises of 'Shri Mandira' or lord Jagannath temple.

The systematized and developed form of music which has been sung in the world famous temple of the Lord Jagannath at the sacred Puri-Dhama in its different festive occasions as a part of the temple services, and cultured in the 'Jaga-Akhadas' of Puri and 16 Sasanas, 36 Karavada (Brahmin villages) as well as other rural areas in the district, is known as Traditional Odissi Music. This tradition is also having a long and glorious history of its own for more than 2500 years. Odisha could imbibe all the waves of classical music beginning from Sama-Gana to Raga Prabandha Gana, but finally it assumed the present form of "Ragaksyudra-Geeta-Prabandha-Gana". This system is popularly styled as traditional Odissi music. It is performed deftly in the shape of Raga-Ksyudrageeta-Prabandha-Gana a form of Indian classical music by the illustrious and celebrated poet Sri Jayadeva in Odisha. The treatise of Bharata, a pioneer of music and dance in India refers to the musical tradition of Odra substantiated by archaeological finds from the times (1st century BC) of Chedi dynasty.

The innumerable sculptures of musical instruments depicted on the walls of temples from 6th century AD to 13th century AD testify to the glorious tradition of music and its patronage by successive kingdom in Odisha. The antiquity of Odissi music is traced through historical evidence, i.e., the dramaturgical treatise Natyashastra (c. 200 BCE to 200 CE); sculptural, architectural, and inscriptional evidence beginning in the 2nd century BC, and found in such places as Puri, Konark, and Bhubaneswar; the 12th-century song-cycle Gitagovinda of Jayadeva; various regional treatises on music and dance written in Sanskrit, beginning most substantially perhaps with the sixteenth-century Gitaparakasha.

The Odissi music was born out of a cultural synthesis of several musical traditions: Jaga Akhadas of Puri district, Pala

in coastal districts, Gitinatya (Musical Drama), Daskathia (Daskathia, once a popular art form confined to Ganjam, has spread to all other Districts of Orissa. 'Dasa' means a devotee. 'Katha' means two wooden pieces played in tune with the prayer of the devotee.) etc. as various folk traditions prevalent in the region. All these forms of music had a tradition of thousands years.

Around the first century B.C., Odissi music was possibly known as Gandharb Veda, which was popularised in the Kharavela Yuga (a great king of Odisha). Charya Geetika (poems of Buddhist literature) written between 7th and 12th century, Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra written in 2nd to 4th century AD. (referred to the Odra Magadhi style of music and dance), Sangeet Ratnakar (Odra Magadhi style of Music), Odia Charyagitika by different Odia Sidhacharyas in 7th to 11th century, Gita Govinda by Sri Jayadeva in 12th century, Sangita Sara by Hari Nayak in 14th century to 15th century, Rasavaridhi by Brundavan Das in 15th century, Odia Mahabharata by Sarala Das in 15th century, Rasakallola by Dinakrushna Das in 16th century, etc. were authentic manuscripts of Odissi music.

Books written in later years like Sangita Darpana, Sangit Kalpadruma, Sangitarnava Chandrika, Baidehisha Vilash, etc. had promoted Odissi music further. Hence, it is ascertained that Odissi music is more ancient than its counterparts like Hindustani or Carnatic.

The artists sing the songs in Odisha's major temples or at the courts of princely estates, composed in the Odia language from about the 16th to early 20th century. The Sanskrit songs like Jayadev's Gitagovinda are also performed by the singers. The meanings of these songs is very often based on the events of the "divine lovers" Radha and Krishna. Odissi music is now performed in music concerts in urban areas and occasionally on the local All India Radio station. Odissi music is heard during Odissi dance and drama. The three vital components of any classical music are tradition, codification and application. As explained above, we have inherited our musical tradition since the time of king Kharavela. Even Mahari tradition and singing of Geeta-Govinda in the temple of Lord Jagannath since the time of King Pratap Rudra Dev in the 15th Century proved our rich tradition. The kings from 'Bhanja-vansh' royal family were also fond of music and dance. The sounds of Odishan music also used to echo those days inside the temples of viz. Parsumareswar, Mukteswar, Rajarani, Lingaraj, Kapileswar, Brahmewar, Megheswar, Sobhaneswar etc. situated in Bhubaneswar (The Capital City Of Odisha). The 13th century old Konark temple and its 'Natyamandap' is the most lively witness of music study and it stands as the pride of Odias forever.

Then evidences about the traditions of music in Odisha have been found in the 16th century old almanac called 'Madala Panji'. A number of Odia poetry and 'Chaupadi' poetic stanzas, written during, the period of 15th century till the 'Radhanath' era, were based on specific 'Raga-ragini'. Some prominent temples in the ancient period were regarded as the centres of music-appreciation. Several musical conferences were held in the 'Natyamandir' on the temple campus. Besides this many 'Rajdurbars' or courts of kings provided platforms for musical events. Debates and discussions about music were held regularly in the royal court of kings. 'Rajdurbars' of Keonjhar, Ganjam areas, the residences of Binjharpur and Kendrapara Zamindaars as per the sources. Odissi music, originated in Odisha, is based on four classes of music namely Dhruvapada (first line or lines to be sung repeatedly), Chitrapada (arrangement of words in a poetic style), Chitrakala (use of art in music) and Panchal (a collective term for a variable range of artisanal Indian caste groups). Odissi music involves several genres of songs as well as performances that are structured and composed in different ways depending on the context and function of the performance. At present, a solo vocalist

begins with an alap (a relatively freeform introduction to and elaboration of the raga); moves into song text and tala, accompanied by percussion (drumming); and finishes with tans (improvisations) and variations on the given melody and text. Odissi music is unique by its "medium speed (it does not utilize the extremes of slow and fast tempos found, for example, in Hindustani music), the syncopated rhythms of the Madalapanji (*Madala Panji* is a chronicle of the Jagannath Temple, Puri, Odisha, India. It describes the historical events of Odisha related to Jagannath and the Jagannatha Temple. The *Madala Panji* dates from the 12th century) and its use of ornamentation that often gives its melodies an undulating cascading feel".

Sri Gitagovinda, Anirjukta Pravaddha, Divya Manusi Prabandha, Chautisa, Chhanda, Chaupadi, Champu, Malasri, Sariman, Vyanjani, Chaturang, Tribhang, Kuduka Geeta, Laxana and Swaramalika are the various sub-forms, which individually or collectively constitute the traditional Odissi music. These sub-forms of the traditional Odissi music can be categorised under the classical music of Odisha. Odissi music has codified grammars, which are presented with specified Ragas. It has also a distinctive rendition style. It is lyrical in its movement with wave-like ornamentation. The pace of singing in Odissi is not very fast or too slow, and it maintains a proportional tempo which is very soothing. Odissi music is so ancient that different sages had opined different tales about the origin of Odissi music, being a very ancient art, has a very long, unbroken tradition behind it. Elements of Odissi Music are neither completely Hindustani nor Carnatic. Odissi music has its own unique style of composition and performance which is typical to this classical art form from the eastern state of Odisha is Odissi music. Even several learned researchers and noted historians have not been able to ascertain the actual period of the origin of Odissi music, Odissi dance and musical instruments. Although the origin of Odissi is unknown, still it's splendid with its own splendour and it is completely distinct. It can be asserted that Odissi music is the pride of great Jagannath culture. Alike its tradition and discipline, the application of Odissi music is equally rich in nature. It is noteworthy that the application of any classical music is more important as compared to its tradition and discipline or principles. From this point of view also Odissi music is splendid, as its application is much influential.

In any form of classical music there are two specialties. On the basis of functioning range of Odissi music, it usually transforms itself into a smooth and beautiful form during presentation and thus it maintains its uniqueness.

Odisha claims some unusually ancient and impressive evidence of its musical traditions, and this evidence is almost always cited by local writers on Odissi music. For example, an inscription in Udayagiri, a complex of caves near Bhubaneswar, dating from the first century BCE, describes various cultural activities, including music and dance performances, under the reign of then-Emperor *Kharavela* (*Kharavela* was a king of Kalinga. He ruled somewhere around first or second century BCE. His name is also transliterated as *Khārabē*. He was the best known king of the as "Chedi dynasty" by some scholars). The Sun Temple in *Konarak*, from the mid-13th century CE, is famous for its sculptures of dancers and musicians.

In the ancient dramaturgical treatise *Natyashastra* (c. 200 CE) there is mention of an *Odra-magadhi* style of music (Odra is one of the ancient names for the region of Odisha). And from sometime between the ninth and eleventh centuries BCE there is a collection of raga-based *Charya* songs (songs used in connection with Buddhist Tantric rituals) found in Nepal, but thought to be composed by poets from eastern India (the poems are in a language related to old Bengali, Odia, and Assamese).

Likely the most famous musical work to come out of Odisha is

the 12th century song-cycle *Gitagovinda* of the poet Jayadeva, now popular throughout India. Dealing with the relationship between the deity Krishna and his consort Radha, Jayadeva seems to have specified *ragas* and *talas* for each of the songs, although there is no consensus among scholars today precisely which *ragas* and *talas* are to be used with each song (Panda, 2004).

This work influenced (and is asserted to have influenced) cultural life in Odisha deeply, and it spawned many local Sanskrit and Odia imitations.

There were a number of Sanskrit-language musicological treatises written in the region of Odisha from about the 15th to 18th centuries. The most important are probably the *Gitaprakasa* and the *Sa gitanaraya*, which are believed to define the *ragas* at the heart of the Odissi system (Pani 2004, 53).

The earliest of these is the *Gitaprakasa* (written prior to 1565 CE) of Krishna Dasa Badajena Mahapatra (Krishna Dasa Badajena Mahapatra, has been accepted as writers of 'Gita Prakasha' is a treatise on music. He was the court poet of Gajapati Mukunda deva (1559-1568 A.D.). He was probably sent as an envoy of Gajapati to the Court of Akbar, when an alliance was made between the two) The author was a poet and musician in the court of Gajapati Mukunda Deva (ruled 1559-1568 CE), and may have been associated with Mughal Emperor Akbar's court as well—a musician/poet with the name Mahapattar (Mahapatra is a common Odia name) appears in the writings of Akbar's chronicler Abul Fazal (Katz, 1987, vol. 2, 17). The second important treatise, the *Sa gitanarayana* of Gajapati Narayana Deva (c. 1650 CE), is a comprehensive compilation of, and commentary on, a large number of treatises on music available at the time. This treatise was widely circulated in Odisha, Andhra, and Bengal (Rath, 2006, 31), and was translated into Odia in the 18th century (Mahapatra 1982, Section I: 273).

Reference might also be made to Odisha's Odia-language literary tradition and its *Mahari* tradition, both of which are intimately tied to the development and maintenance of music traditions in Odisha. Music and literature are closely related forms in this region, and at least since the 16th century (see Mohanty 2006, 117) much poetry (the main form of literature from the mid-16th to mid-19th centuries)—whether narrative or descriptive, secular or devotional—has been set to particular *ragas* and *talas*.

The *Maharis*—the Odia term for, and version of, *Devadasis*—performed music in and around major temples. This included, for example, performances of the *Gitagovinda*. The *Maharis* performed occasionally in public during festivals, but their dance and music mainly found their way into the public sphere by way of *Gotipua* troupes—groups of boys dressed and performing as *Maharis*—that began performing in the early 16th century. The *Mahari* tradition began falling out of favor while Odisha was under foreign—especially British—rule and mostly disappeared in the 20th century. It was then in the mid-20th century revived as an inspiration for classical Odissi dance.

After that, the Indian history was written serially which was started first by the great philosophers like Mahavir (the founder of Jainism) and Gautama Buddha (the founder Buddhism). Odissi music is present till date, since the era of these two great religious avatars.

During the period of 6th century B.C. the vast area ranging from the valleys of Kabul to the Godavari river, were inhabited by 16 human habitats, like 'Anga', 'Magadha', 'Kashi', 'Koshaal', 'Bakkri', 'Malla', 'Chedi', 'Vasta', 'Kuru', 'Anchal', 'Matsya', 'Shurasen', 'Avanti', 'Gandhar' and 'Kamboj'.

During that period 'Kalinga' was a vast and independent state. As mentioned in 'Natyasashtra', the inhabitants of 'Toshali', 'Koshaal', and 'Mosaal' were called as the people of Kalinga.

Between the periods of 558 B.C. to 530 B.C. Persian emperor Cyrus, occupied the north-western region of India. In 327 B.C., Greek warrior Alexander invaded India. During the period from A.C 1000 to 1027 Mahmood of Ghajni invaded India, seventeen times. In A.C 1175 Mohammad Ghori, occupied then Multan region of India invaded Delhi in A.C 1190/91.

In 1296, Alauddin Khiljee occupied the throne of Delhi. In A.C 1526 Moghal ruler Babar started Moghal rule in India. Hence the cultures of Greece, Persia, Iran, Mohammedan and Moghul had eclipsed the Indo-Aryan culture and impacted it. But, Utkal (Odisha) was independent till the year of 1568. No foreign power except the Indian had its control over Utkal. So, naturally the Odishan culture that had no impact of non-Indian culture and music.

In 13th century during the rule of Alauddin Khiljee, Kalinga was independent. Ameer Khusro, a noted lyricist and musician who served then in the durbar (royal court) of Alauddin, had initiated a new musical trend by blending Indian music with Iranian and Persian music, which later transformed itself and was termed as the system of Hindustani music. Ameer Kushiro's musical trend called 'Mee' did not get the opportunity spread in Kalinga; rather it was the Utkalian music of Gopal Nayak which enchanted Ameer Khusro.

The poetry book 'Gita prakash' written by Krushna das dates back to the year 1565. After that many books on Odissi music have been written till date and we also come to know about the singing style of this music. Even before, 1565, there was a healthy tradition of Odissi music.

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