

Man Singh's *Manakutuhala* and the *Dhrupad*

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The Turkish invasion of India and the establishment of their empire in the thirteenth century had far-reaching effects on the cultural set-up of northern India. The traditional life of the people underwent a transformation, which was also experienced in the field of art and literature. The seats of learning and arts had till then been mostly confined to the courts and temples. Both these institutions were completely shattered and scholars and artists had to flee in search of new places of respite and shelter.

Whatever may have been the nature of Turkish rule in India, there is little doubt that circumstances forced them to come into close contact with the local people. Despite divergent ideologies the forces of reconciliation emerged and a search for a common meeting ground was begun. This was initially provided by the Sufi Saints on the one hand and the Yogis on the other. Though there is a formal injunction against music in Islam, the Sufis discovered ways of circumventing it, and music and dance came to form an integral part of their worship. For instance, they had regular musical meetings called *sama-s*.

The later Turkish sultans also patronised music. There was a regular influx of musicians into their court from the countries of the Middle East and with them came Irani music into India. In fact, music flourished even in the courts of bigoted sultans like Alauddin Khilji and Firoz Tughluk.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were three distinct currents in music in northern India. There was a very influential class which patronised only Irani music; there were some independent or semi-independent Hindu rulers and temple complexes which patronised traditional classical Indian music, and there was a third category which endeavoured to create a new form by blending these two great streams of music. Amir Khusru belonged to the third category. His admiration of Indian music is openly expressed in the *Nuh Sipehr*, where he states that Indian music is the best in the world. But he also mentions that this music is difficult to learn and that even after prolonged effort, outsiders find it almost impossible to master its melodic structure and intricate rhythm. He, therefore, struck a middle path. He wrote erotic *ghazal-s* meant for the singers of the courts of the sultans and invented new melodies in which Irani tunes were blended with Indian classical *raga-s*. *Kawwali-s* and *ghazal-s* became extremely popular, leading to the neglect of classical Indian music, which faced virtual extinction in northern India.

But the invasion of Timur at the end of the fourteenth century gave a death blow to the Indian empire of the Turks. India was divided into provincial kingdoms. Not all of them were ruled by Muslim rulers. The Ranas of Mewar and the Tomars of Gwalior firmly established themselves as indepen-

dent rulers. In both these kingdoms Indian classical music found powerful patrons. In the middle of the fifteenth century a serious attempt was made in northern India to reassess and rejuvenate ancient Indian classical music and dance.

Rana Kumbha (who ruled Mewar from 1433 to 1468) was a great patron of the arts. Two long treatises on music (*Sangeeta Raj* and *Sangeeta Mimansa*) were written in his time. Mewar also produced the *Nritya Ratna Kosha* which dealt with the dance. But beyond producing these volumes, the Mewar Court was not able to establish a living tradition. This was achieved by the Tomars of Gwalior.

The credit for the revival of Indian music, in fact, belongs to the master-singers of Gwalior, who were famous in this field even before the Tomars established themselves at Gwalior. Firoz Tughluk patronised *khayal* music and the largest number of *khayal* singers in his court came from Gwalior. It was this local talent that was successfully nourished by the Tomar rulers of Gwalior.

During the reign (1425-1459) of Dungarendra Singh Tomar a systematic effort was made to revive Indian classical music. Dungarendra Singh was in touch with the famous sultan of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abdin. He presented two books on music, entitled *Sangeeta Shiromani* and *Sangeeta Chudamani*, to the Kashmir sultan. We do not know whether these two books were originally written in the court of Dungarendra Singh. But it is certain that *Sangeeta Chudamani* contained a detailed discussion of music, musical instruments and dance forms and it can be assumed that music and dance were patronised by this Gwalior ruler. We are told that Dungarendra Singh presented his friend Zain-ul-Abdin with a volume containing songs, probably composed by the musicians of Gwalior. Dungarendra Singh is also credited with composing Hindi *Vishnu pada-s*, songs in praise of God. Dugarendra Singh thus occupies an important place in the process of the revival of Indian music at Gwalior. The two treatises on music, which he presented to the Kashmir sultan, were written in Sanskrit, but he was the originator of the idea of adopting Hindi songs for Indian classical music. It was this *Vishnu pada* style of singing which was passed on to his great-grandson, Man Singh.

Dungarendra Singh's son, Kirti Singh (1459-1480) continued the sober traditions of his father. He had to shoulder the responsibility of defending Gwalior from the onslaughts of the Delhi, Jaunpur and Malwa sultans. But he left behind him a consolidated kingdom and a full treasury for his pleasure-loving son, Kalyanamalla (1480-1486).

During the life-time of his father, Kalyanamalla served as Gwalior's ambassador to the courts of the sultans of Malwa, Delhi and Jaunpur. He came into close personal contact with their musicians and artists, and was attracted to the musical tradition of the Sharqis of Jaunpur. We do not know whether Kalyanamalla made any tangible contribution to the development of music or dance at Gwalior. But he did give shelter at Gwalior to Lad Khan

Lodi, who was Governor of Ayodhya and a great patron of music. Kalyanamalla wrote two books in Sanskrit for the benefit of his friend Lad Khan. One is the *Anangaranga*, a treatise on the *Kamashastra*; the other is *Sulaimachcharita*, a love story. But then this is not music.

While dealing with the times of Kalyanamalla, it is not possible to ignore his court poet Narayanadasa, who wrote a romantic epic in Hindi named *Chhitai Charita*. Raja Kalyanamalla had selected Daud and Hazrat Sulaiman as heroes for his Sanskrit poem *Sulaimachcharita*; Narayanadasa made Alauddin Khilji the hero of his poem. The character of Alauddin is depicted with such delicacy, that it compels respect from the reader. This new trend in Hindi poetry was of immense cultural significance. But here we are mainly concerned with the fact that the whole of *Chhitai Charita* reverberates with music; there is in it a detailed description of Indian musical instruments and *raga*-s. Even the great musician of the thirteenth century, Gopala of Devagiri, is introduced as a character in the story.

It appears that Man Singh (1486-1516) was born during the lifetime of his illustrious great-grandfather Dungarendra Singh and came of age during the reign of his grandfather Kirti Singh. Kirti Singh constructed an immense dam at Barai and the young prince Man Singh had his *Ras* (or *Raach*) constructed on the banks of that tank. (For a description of this *Ras* or *Racch*, refer to the *Quarterly Journal of the National Centre for the Performing Arts*, Vol. V No. 3, September 1976.) Man Singh had also the good fortune to meet the Afghan noble Lad Khan at the court of his father. He inherited and imbibed the traditions established during the time of Dungarendra Singh and Kirti Singh. Those traditions made him conscious and proud of the great Indian heritage. He also profited by the catholicity of his father and developed a sense of tolerance towards all religions, including Islam. He even appointed a Jain as his prime minister, and also took counsel from Sufi saints. When he constructed the palace, now known as the Gujari Mahal, he allowed one of these Sufi saints to place a blessing in Arabic traced over its entrance door.

In the field of art, Man Singh's main object was to re-establish the lost glory of classical Indian music. He was aware of the immense popularity of the hybrid music styles prevalent in the various courts of the sultans and also in the *sama*-s of the Sufis. He undertook the task of making Indian music more dignified and popular than the *khayal*, *chutkula* and other styles of contemporary music. His first step was to do away with the traditional Sanskrit songs and replace them by Hindi ones. He himself composed a large number of *pada*-s and asked the musicians of his court to do the same. He had three volumes compiled, one of *Vishnu pada*-s, the second of *dhrupad*-s and the third of *hori*-s and *dhamar*-s. These *pada*-s were sung with such gusto in classical *raga*-s that all the earlier styles became obsolescent. His court attracted the best musicians of his time. Baiju, Bakshu, Gopala, Mohamud Lohang, Karna and Pandviya left a lasting mark on the history of Indian music. An illustrious *dhrupad* school of music was firmly established at Gwalior and throughout India. In the courts, in Sufi *sama*-s and in Hindu temples, *dhrupad* singing became the fashion of the day. The

Gwalior school of *dhrupad* dominated the whole of India for a few centuries after the death of Man Singh and is still regarded as one of the great achievements of Indian musical history.

The contribution of Raja Man Singh in the field of music can best be appreciated by an analysis of the Persian translation of the *Manakutuhala*. The original *Manakutuhala* was written in Hindi verse around 1488 A.D. It is significant that while all the treatises of the time (on Indian music) were composed in Sanskrit, Man Singh alone considered it worthwhile to write his work on music in Hindi, a language understood by all. Man Singh sought to give to Indian classical music a popular style. A work on music written in Sanskrit would have held no appeal for the common people, particularly the Muslims. The *Manakutuhala* is actually the first work on Indian music written in Hindi. It was a bold and revolutionary step in times when even the Malik Sultan of Kara Manikpur (near Allahabad) had a treatise on Indian music prepared in Sanskrit (1429). Man Singh's attempt reaped rich dividends for it helped to make the new style of music extremely popular.

Manakutuhala

Man Singh's intention in writing *Manakutuhala* (Man Singh's quest for learning) was to facilitate the teaching of Indian classical music. Unfortunately for the history of Indian culture the original *Manakutuhala* has not yet been discovered. In 1941, I learnt of the existence of this work and I began to search for it. In 1945, through Syed B. L. Zaidi, the Diwan of the former Rampur State, I procured a copy of the work *Raga Darpana*, written by Fakirullah Saifkhan in 1665-6 A.D. when he was Governor of Kashmir. In fact, it is not an exact translation but a free Persian rendering of the *Manakutuhala* of Man Singh, with some additions, annotations and comments by Fakirullah. I prepared a translation of this work in Hindi and published it in 1956 under the title *Man Singh aur Manakutuhala*. Since then I have made every possible effort to discover a copy of the original *Manakutuhala* but without success. I learnt that there was a copy of the *Manakutuhala* in the Library of the former Datia State, but on the formation of the new Madhya Pradesh, the copy seems to have vanished in a mysterious manner. Fortunately, in Bikaner, Agarchand Nahta discovered a chapter of the original *Manakutuhala* and we now know that the original work was in Hindi verse.

Even during the time of Fakirullah, copies of the *Manakutuhala* were rare to find. In *Raga Darpana*, he specifically states that in Hijri 1073 (August, 1662 A.D.) he discovered a copy of the *Manakutuhala*. This was when he had just been relieved of the governorship of Agra. He states in his book that a few others also had copies of the *Manakutuhala*, but adds that all those copies were incomplete, his own copy being the only complete one.

I have my own doubts whether Fakirullah translated the whole of the *Manakutuhala* for it is possible that he left out at least one or perhaps two chapters on the *tala* and dance. In the court of Man Singh the concept of *Sangeeta* could not be divorced from the dance. Besides no work on Indian music is said to be complete without a detailed chapter on *tala*. But

all this is mere conjecture. It is possible that Man Singh did not include dance within the ambit of the *Manakutuhala* though, of course, the same cannot be said of *tala*. In any case, Fakirullah Saifkhan recorded valuable information, not merely about the contents of the original *Manakutuhala*, but also data regarding the history of music from the time of Raja Man Singh Tomar to the reign of Aurangzeb.

The Contents of the Manakutuhala

Fakirullah divided his work *Raga Darpana* into ten chapters. In the first chapter he states that in the Hijri year 1073 (August, 1662 A.D.) he discovered a book entitled the *Manakutuhala*, which was copied during the life-time of its author. This work was based on *Bharat Mat* (that is, the Bharat school of music). Fakirullah then states that Man Singh, the ruler of Gwalior, was very well-versed in the art of music and that his fame was unparalleled. The origin of the *dhrupad* is attributed to him. There were great master musicians in his court and he used to hold discussions with them. The names of his famous musicians were Nayak Bakshu, Nayak Pandviya, Mohmud Lohang (whose voice was of high quality) and Nayak Karna.

According to Fakirullah it dawned on the Raja that musicians of such high calibre had assembled at one place after much difficulty and a great lapse of time. He believed that this was an appropriate moment to prepare a treatise on music, giving in detail the number of *raga-s* and their nature. It would help students of music to overcome the obstacles encountered in their studies. With this in mind, the book was written in the name of the Raja. It included a detailed description of *raga-s*, *ragini-s* and their derivatives.

Fakirullah writes that since the book was an authentic study of the subject, he translated it (into Persian). He also added some topics from other books to make it more exhaustive. Fakirullah particularly mentions that he also took some *raga-s* from two books the *Nritya Nrityi* and the *Chandravali*.

In fact, out of the ten chapters of the *Raga Darpana* of Fakirullah, only eight include topics dealt with in the original *Manakutuhala*. The first chapter, as has been mentioned above, is introductory, while the tenth gives a description of earlier musicians, or of those who were contemporaries of Fakirullah. In the remaining eight chapters Fakirullah's objective was to interpret Indian classical music to readers who were well-versed in the Persian language and Irani music. At appropriate places, he mentions the achievements of the masters of Irani music like Amir Khusru. This peculiar method of dealing with the subject has to some extent reduced the value of the work as a translation of *Manakutuhala*, but has added to its significance as a history of Indian music, including that of Man Singh and his times.

The second chapter of *Raga Darpana* bears the heading "Description of the *Raga-s* according to the *Manakutuhala*". This chapter is typical of the manner in which Fakirullah deals with the *Manakutuhala*: After describing the six main *raga-s*, their *ragini-s*, *putra-s* along with the mixed

raga-s, Fakirullah goes on to give an account of some *raga-s* according to the *Raga Sagara*, the *Raga Prakasha* and a treatise written by Mansoor Shah. The innovations made by Amir Khusru, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria and Sultan Hussain Shah Sharqi are also described. Nayak Bakshu, Tansen and Baz Bahadur are also credited with the invention of some new *raga-s*. In the end Fakirullah also takes the credit for inventing some new *raga-s* himself, though he says in the same breath that he is nothing more than a translator.

The stray remarks of Fakirullah need to be collected and organised in a coherent manner. They serve as excellent source material for a reconstruction of the history of Indian music in northern India, particularly in the time of Man Singh.

In the third chapter, while describing the six seasons of the year and the *raga-s* relating to each season, Fakirullah remarks that this distribution is worked out by the gods through master-singers (Nayaks), the chief of these being Nayak Bakshu and Nayak Gopala. From this uncorroborated statement, one cannot immediately conclude that the two court musicians of Man Singh, Bakshu and Gopala, were the originators of the theory of connecting a particular *raga* with a season. But it can safely be assumed that Bakshu and Gopala successfully demonstrated the desirability of such a classification.

In the fourth chapter Fakirullah describes the seven *swara-s* and the forms of different *geeta-s* (songs). The earlier part of this chapter is a verbatim translation of the original *Manakutuhala*, but in the later part Fakirullah sheds light on the great contribution made by Man Singh and his court musicians in the field of Indian music. He also explains the nature of the service rendered to culture by fifteenth century Gwalior. It was a time when the development of Indian classical music was being retarded by the influx of Irani music, with its light and popular tunes. Besides, since the traditional musicians continued to adhere to old forms and songs, their art ceased to attract listeners. The first change introduced by Man Singh and his court musicians was that they discarded Sanskrit verses as the basis of their music. They composed songs in Hindi and these not merely swept away the Sanskrit songs, but also surpassed the charm of *ghazal-s* and *kawwali-s*. Fakirullah has described this process in his own inimitable manner.

In his account of the *geeta-s* (songs), Fakirullah starts with the various types of compositions in Persian which were then prevalent in India. These included among others the *masnavi-s*, *kasida-s*, *ghazal-s*, *rubai-s*, *mukhamma-s*, *musajja-s*, *kata-s* and *mustajad-s*. These verse forms were popular among the Sufis, in the courts of the Muslim rulers and among their courtiers. While dealing with Indian classical music, Fakirullah divides its songs into two categories: the *margi* and the *dhrupad*. The language of the *margi* songs was Sanskrit, while that of the *dhrupad-s* was Hindi. Man Singh not only adopted Hindi as the medium of expression for sentiment, but also employed and elevated certain folk-tunes. *Dhamar* and *hori*, which were, in fact, folk in origin, became two branches of *dhrupad* singing. Though the tradition of the ancient classical mode of singing remained to

some extent undisturbed, certain changes were made in its approach in order to make it popular both among Hindus and Muslims. Hindi was known to both these classes. Amongst the master-singers of the court of Man Singh, Baiju, Pandviya, Karna and Gopala were Hindus, while Bakshu was a local Muslim and Mohamud Lohang was an Afghan who had come to Gwalior with Lad Khan during the time of Man Singh's father Kalyanamalla. What Fakirullah applauds is the joint effort of these master-singers. He writes:

"*Margi* remained in vogue in India, till it was replaced by the *dhrupad*. It is said that Raja Man Singh sang *dhrupad* for the first time. Nayak Baiju, Nayak Bakshu, lion-voiced Muhammad and Nayak Karna sang the *dhrupad* in such a manner that all other types of songs lost their lustre . . . The art of music shall ever remain grateful to Man Singh for his wonderful discovery. Now that two hundred years have passed, maybe in future some other master-musician like Man Singh may be born and be able to compose music like the *dhrupad*. But at present it appears to me that this is an impossibility".

In addition to this great contribution in the field of music, the team lead by Raja Man Singh made Gwalior the centre of refined and standard Hindi. The basic concept of *dhrupad* was its Hindi *pada*-s, and with the popularity of the *dhrupad*, the language of Gwalior gained in prestige. Fakirullah writes :

"By *Sudesh* I mean Gwalior, which is the heart of the kingdom of Agra, and which extends in the north to Mathura, to Unnao in the east, Unj in the south and Baran in the west. In India the language of this region is the best. This region in India is like Shiraj in Iran".

Such is the tribute paid by the translator of *Manakutuhala* to Gwalior, which could produce Raja Man Singh and singers like Baiju, Bakshu, Gopala, Mohamud Lohang, Pandviya and Karna. It should not be forgotten that Fakirullah's father had come to India from Turan and that he was extremely proud of Iranian culture.

The fifth chapter of the *Raga Darpana* is important in its own way. It appears that this is a close translation of the original *Manakutuhala*, with some annotations by Fakirullah. This chapter describes musical instruments. Fakirullah, where possible, includes the names and descriptions of similar Irani musical instruments.

The first category of musical instruments comprised those of the string variety: the vina, rabab, sarmandal, sarangi and tambura. The second category included those which were made of hide or skin: the damru, pakhawaj (mridanga), dhol, dholak and khanjari. The third category included instruments which emitted sound by striking a metal: the manjeera and jaltarang. The fourth category comprised those instruments which were blown by mouth: the bansuri and sarna.

These musical instruments were known in fifteenth century Gwalior and even much earlier. For instance, a relief carving on a temple-lintel from

Pawaya (ancient Padmavati), about 30 kilometers south-west of Gwalior, shows that many of these musical instruments were used in this part of the country as early as the fourth century A.D. But that is a different topic.

The eighth chapter deals with the qualifications of master-singers (Nayaks). The standards laid down were very high. The Nayak was to be well-versed in the actual practice of singing, acquainted with the principles of music, and capable of composing songs. Above all, he was expected to understand the trends and mood of the time. This chapter highlights the rigorous standards that Man Singh had fixed for the master-musicians of his time.

The ninth chapter of *Raga Darpana* tells us about the concerts which took place during the time of Man Singh. The first part of this chapter appears to be a translation of the relevant part of *Manakutuhala* which deals with *vrinda-s* (concerts). According to this chapter, the best *vrinda* consisted of four master-singers, eight singers of medium order, twelve sweet-voiced damsels, four flute players and four mridanga players. A concert of thirty-two artists performing in unison must have been a thrilling experience. There were *vrinda-s* of exclusively women artists, the best among them consisting of two master-singers, two medium singers, two flute players and two mridanga players. Thus a women's concert could not exceed sixteen members. According to the *Manakutuhala*, *vrinda-s* with a larger number were *kolahala-s*, that is a riot.

At the end of this chapter Fakirullah takes the liberty of comparing the music of the imperial court of Akbar with music in the court of Raja Man Singh (who ruled over a territory hardly one hundred kilometers in length and breadth). Fakirullah says that the musicians of the imperial court could hardly bear any comparison with the master-musicians of the Gwalior court. Imperial musicians, including Tansen, were *atai-s*, who did not understand the principles of the art. It would have been really difficult to agree with Fakirullah had his observations not been corroborated by other sources. Ajam Khan, who compiled the *dhrupad-s* of Bakshu at the behest of Shah-jahan, declared Man Singh and Bakshu to be superior to all singers, including Tansen. Jagannatha Kavirai, a famous *dhrupad* singer and a contemporary of Tansen, has written a *dhrupad* in which he has enumerated the *dhrupad* singers of the fifteenth and sixteenth century in order of merit.

सर्वकला सम्पूरन, मति अपार विस्तार,
नाद को नायक 'बैजू' 'गोपाल' ।
ता पाछै 'बक्सू' बिहंसि बस कौन्हौ, 'महमू' महिमण्डल में
उदोत चहु चक भरौ, डिढ़ विद्या निधान,
सरस धरु 'करन' डिढ़ ताल ॥
'भगवंत' सुरभरन, 'रामदास' जसु पायौ,
तानसेन जगतगुरु कहायौ, 'धौधी' बानी रसाल ।
'सुरति विलास' 'हरिदास डागुर' जगन्नाथ कविराय
तिनके पग परसिवे कौं स्याम राम रंगलाल ।

(The best amongst the *dhrupad* singers, according to Jagannatha Kavirai, were Baiju and Gopala and next to them were Bakshu and Mohamud. Karna was famous for being firm in *tala*, then came Bhagwant and Ramdas. Tansen comes after them, though he is called the preceptor of the world. After him are placed Dhaundhi, Surati Vilas and Haridasa Dagur.)

Perhaps Jagannatha placed these musicians in a chronological order, but this seems improbable. It is known that Baiju, Gopala, Bakshu, Mohamud and Karna were contemporaries. The use of the words *ta pacche* after Baiju and Gopala indicates that Jagannatha enumerated the names of these musicians in order of merit. Though Jagannatha Kavirai was not exactly a contemporary of Baiju and Bakshu, he was hardly young when these mighty musicians flourished and his opinion, therefore, carries weight.

Dhrupad

Fakirullah states that the *dhrupad* was invented by Raja Man Singh of Gwalior and it was he who, for the first time, sang the *dhrupad*, but this sweeping statement has to be accepted with caution. The *dhrupad* was not a *raga*; it was only a distinct class of songs. The *Sangeeta Ratnakara* mentions *dhruva prabandha*-s. The couplets sung in these *prabandha*-s were termed *dhruvapada*-s. If we examine the collection of the *dhrupad*-s of Bakshu compiled during the reign of Shahjahan (edited by Dr. Premalata Sharma of Kashi Hindu University) and also the available *dhrupad*-s of Baiju, it is clear that they are to be recited in the traditional *raga*-s, *ragini*-s and their *putra*-s and are governed by the traditional time-beat. Thus Man Singh did not deviate from the conventions of classical Indian music, but he made two significant changes. The *pada*-s or *chhanda*-s of the *raga*-s were invariably to be in the Hindi language. In the eighteenth century Bhavabhata in his *Anupa Sangeeta Ratnakara* has defined the *dhrupad* as a song composed in Madhyadeshiya Hindi, having four couplets describing the love of man and woman, with *anuprasa* and *yamaka* at the end of the couplets. This is not a description of any particular *raga*, but of the verses which were sung in different *raga*-s. Thus what Man Singh did was that he substituted Hindi songs of four couplets for the Sanskrit songs or *Chhanda*-s of Indian music. To counter-balance the influence of the *ghazal*, these songs sought to embody the sentiment of human love. The change of language had the desired effect. The mode of singing started by Man Singh became popular not only with the traditional Hindu singers, but also attracted the Sufis and the courts of the Muslim sultans.

How popular the *Vishnu pada*-s, *dhrupad*-s, *hori*-s and *dhamar*-s of Man Singh became with the Sufis is best illustrated by a Persian book recently discovered by Dr. Akhtar Abbas Rizvi. Abdul Wahid Bilgrami (1509-1608) wrote a book named *Haqayake Hindi* in the year 1566. The object of the book is really curious. The *Vishnu pada*-s, *dhrupad*-s and *hori*-s of Man Singh were recited with great devotion in the musical meetings of the Sufis. Those songs contained references to Saraswati, Ganesha, Krishna, Radha and others. It was natural for the orthodox Muslims to object to such songs. Bilgrami has in his work come forward with a new dictionary indicating

the meanings of these words. He writes that whenever 'Krishna' is mentioned, it should be deemed to be a reference to Hazrat Muhammad, and so on. At least one thing is clear. The songs, written in the court of Man Singh, were sung in the devotional congregations of the Sufis and any objection from the side of the orthodox Mullahs was explained away.

The scene shifts to the court of Akbar. Abul Fazl has enumerated thirty-six master-singers of the imperial court. Out of these as many as fifteen are from Gwalior, the foremost amongst them being Tansen. Again out of these fifteen at least two, Tansen and Baba Ramdas, took their first lessons in music in the court of Raja Man. The doubts raised by some scholars whether Tansen ever attended the musical performances in the court of Raja Man Singh can now be dispelled. But this topic need not detain us now. It is certain that all these fifteen master-singers of the imperial court were *dhrupad* singers of the tradition handed down by Man Singh and his master-musicians and they were proud to belong to this tradition.

The famous Ibrahim Adilshah (1580-1627) of Bijapur was fascinated by the *dhrupad*; he worshipped Ganesha and Saraswati and wrote Hindi *dhrupad*-s in their praise in spite of protests from the Mullahs.

A branch of Gwalior's music and dance migrated to Brajbhumi. Swami Haridasa took the *dhrupad* and *Ras Lila* of Man Singh to Brindavan. The great poet Surdasa sang *dhrupad*-s in the temple of Shrinathji at Gokul. Mathura adopted the *Vishnu pada*-s of Dungarendra Singh.

For centuries Muslims and Hindus waged bitter battles in the field of politics and religion. The *dhrupad*-s of Raja Man of Gwalior forged a common bond between the two communities. The *dhrupad*-s of Man were popular with both the Sufis and the Vaishnava saints; they attracted in equal measure the admiration of Hindu and Muslim rulers. Man Singh Tomar and his Gwalior school made a valuable contribution in the field of Indian music, but of even greater significance is their achievement in the social field. A sound basis was created, perhaps for the first time, for the establishment of a composite culture in India.

Man Singh was a devotee of Krishna, yet he had a Muslim saint carve out a blessing in blue tiles on the entrance door of the Gujari Mahal; it represented the mark of the neck of Shiva after the churning of the ocean. Thus he himself became the *Nilkantha* who had swallowed the poison of religious bigotry. His gesture reaped good dividends. Muslim saints and rulers began to respect Krishna, Ganesha and Saraswati. When we see in a Moghal painting a sandal mark on the forehead of Emperor Akbar, we are reminded of the Arabic blessing incised in the porch of the Gujari Mahal; when we hear Adilshah seek the blessings of Saraswati and Ganesha, we are reminded of the respect which Man Singh, a century earlier, showed towards Islam. Man Singh's *dhrupad*-s were not only a phenomenon in the field of music, but a great event in the cultural history of India.