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Four different styles of Dhrupad developed each specializing in a different part of the music. These schools in Dhrupad are called Bani. Today, there are two Bani that have remained: the Dagar Bani and the Khandar bani. The Dagar Bani perform both on the Rudra Veena as well as vocal music. The Khandar Bani use only Rudra Veena in the last 50 years. The different Bani also merged together to form new gharanas within Dhrupad. Such are the Darbhanga gharana represented by the Mallick family and the Bishnupur gharana from Bengal. The original lineage of the other Banis have merged within the Senia gharana for instrumental music and the Gwalior gharana of Khyal.

The vocalists in the Dagar Bani of the last 100 years were the senior and junior Dagar Brothers who trained Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar and the Gundecha brothers. You have read about their family. The Been or Rudra Veena players of the family were under the tutelage of Zia Mohiuddin Dagar who trained his son Ustad Bahauddin Dagar and many other accomplished Beenkars in India but also in France, Germany and the United States of America.

The main performer of the Khandar Bani was Ustad Asad Ali Khan who was the fourth generation of this Bani. He trained fewer students than the Dagar Bani and none of them continued the complete Khandar Bani.

The Dhrupad performance structure, finds its roots in the oldest descriptions of Alap. The Sangeet Ratnakar of the 12th century, described the Anibaddh (unbound) and Nibaddh (bound) forms of music. The Alapti descriptions of other old treatises, also show how the concept of Alap is very old.

The Dagar Bani focussed on the Alap development into a depth that is unique to this Gharana. Today, many Rudra Veena players have no direct link to a Dhrupad Bani, but take elements from instrumental sitar gharanas and Dhrupad Bani alike. The only Dhrupad Bani that still exists and teaches according to the principles of old times today, is the Dagar Bani. The deep sonorous alap is something that has mesmerized audiences from all over the world.



The 19th generation Dagar septuplet.

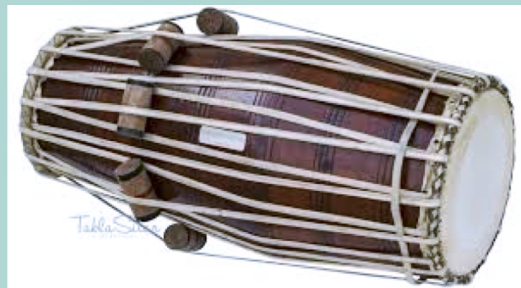
Darbar Sangeet and the Moghul Empire: 1500-1857

With the rise of courts in India, and especially under the great Moghul ruler Akbar's reign, Darbar Sangeet or Court Music, came into being. Music was performed for kings in their courts and composed often to sing praise of the kings that gave employment to the musicians and composers. At the same time the different styles of music performed at the temple took a back seat in North India since more and more musicians were employed as court musicians.

Man Tomar Singh: Dhrupad

Raja Mansingh Tomar of Gwalior (1486-1516 AD) was the driving force behind introducing Dhrupad, a form of Hindustani music that is performed even today making it the oldest form of Indian Classical music. Raja Mansingh replaced the traditional Sanskrit songs by songs in the languages of his day, Hindi and Braj Bhasa and composed three volumes of songs: (i) Vishnupadas (songs in praise of lord Vishnu), (ii) Dhrupads, and (iii) Hori and Dhamar songs associated with Holi. Today, these 3 collections together are known as Dhrupad. The word Dhrupad consists of Dhruva and Pada. 'Dhruva' is text and 'Pada' is rhythm and it explains the structure of the poems used in Dhrupad. That structure fits perfectly in Chautal of 12 beats. The Dhamar is performed in the tala Dhamar of 14 beats. When the poem is about Krishna and the Gopis playing Holi, it is called Hori or Hori Dhamar. Dhrupad was performed by the Beenkars. The Beenkars were musicians of the highest status at the Royal courts and carried the title 'Kalavant'. The famous Tansen was a Beenkar. To make matters confusing, there are different names for the Been. It is also called the Rudra Veena. Today, most people call it the Rudra Veena. This name shows the connection with the Veena named in the Natya Shastra. The name Been shows the connection with the artist community at the Moghul courts, the Beenkars.

The percussion accompaniment with Dhrupad is the Pakhawaj. We met the Pakhawaj in the book Vadya. It looks like this:

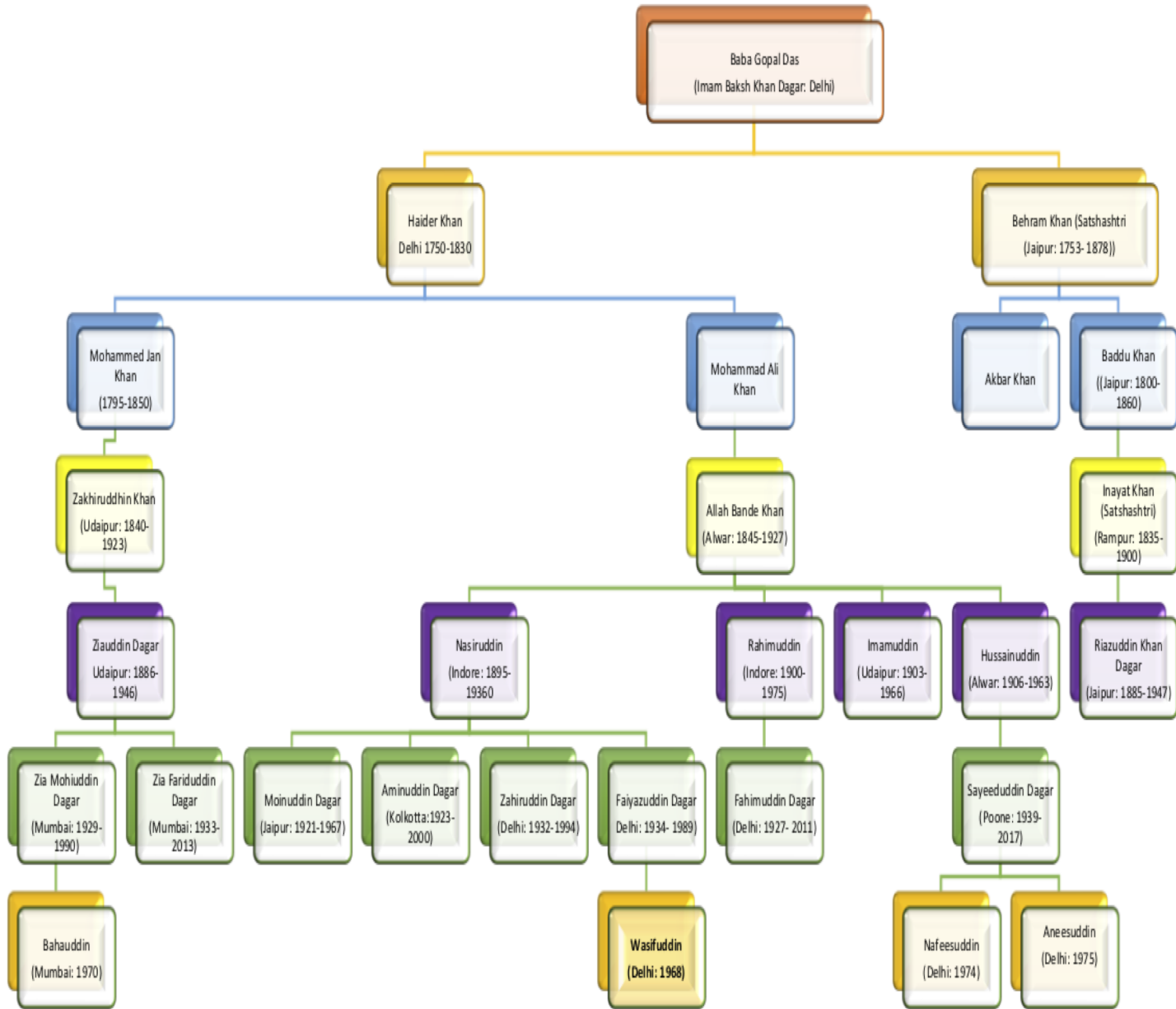


It is historically related to the drum mentioned in the Natya Shastra, the Mridangam. The main drum in Carnatic music is also called Mridangam.

In the book Vadya, Pakhawaj is depicted as the mother of the Tabla twins.



The Family Tree of the Dagers



The Dagar family's contribution to the perpetuation and enrichment of Dhrupad, while preserving its original expression, has been an invaluable contribution to music. The history of this family can be traced back for 20 generations without a break. The Dagar family in itself represents a microcosm of the history of Indian classical music.

The Family history



Ustad Behram Khan Dagar was the most famous and learned musician of his time in the 18th and 19th centuries. During his long and fruitful life, he applied himself to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the Sanskrit sacred texts and devoted the greater part of his life to the rigorous analysis of these texts in order to translate the formal musical rules into a pragmatic teaching method.

Ustad Behram Khan Dagar is now credited with propagating the style of Dagarvani singing, the gayaki to the current prevalent form, as well as preserving it at a time when dhrupad forms were fast disappearing.

We learned about the history of Dhrupad. Now let us learn about the music. Let us have a look at a few pakhawaj patterns, the Theka in Dhrupad with the correct drum language syllables, Bols.

The Theka of Chautal is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
Clap		Wave		Clap		Wave		Clap		Clap						
X	0	2		0		3		4								
Dha	Dha		Dhin	Ta		Kite	Dha		Dhin	Ta		Tita	Kata		Ga	Na

The Theka of Dhamar is:

1	2	3	4	5		6	7		8	9	10		11	12	13	14
Clap		Clap		Wave		Clap										
X	2		0	3												
Ka	Dhi	Te	Dhi	Te		Dha	-		Ga	Ti	Te		Ti	Te	Ta	-

The Dhrupad compositions are composed in four parts:

Sthaayi (Base) - Named as the artist returns back to it after every part of the composition

Antara (Different / Intermediate) - This comes between Sthaayi and Sanchari. It now means the part in the high octave.

Sanchari (free flowing) - In this section, the singers have freedom to sing it in any register & hence its name.

Aabhog (Completion) - This feature the poet/writers name.

Other talas used in Dhrupad are: Jhaptāla (10beats), Sūltāla (10beats) and Tivrā (7 beats). You can find out what the Bols are of these Talas yourself.

We will learn a beautiful Dhrupad composition in raga Yaman in Chautal.

You can find the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDPBA6vnT24>

Dhrupad: Adhar Lagayi....[Raag Yaman]

Asthayi

Adhar lagayi ras pyayi

Bansuri bajayi

Mere naam gaayi

Haaye jaadu kiyo man mein

Antara

Natkhat naval sughar

Nand nandan ne Kairike achet chet Hari ke jatan mein

Notations

Chautal:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
							^{NR} N	^G R	^m G	^{GD} m	^N D
							A	dha	aa	ra	la
^D N	N--D	P	^G R	^G R	^R G--R	S #					
ga	-	yi	ra	sa	pya	yi					
							m	D	N	R	-G
							Ba	n	su	ri-	-
G	G	-	G	R	S	-					
ba	ja	-	aa	Aa	yi	-					

Mere - na..aama gaa...yi

Pa MaMa Ga Ma Ma Ma Ga | Pa --- Pa---

Haa ye jaa - du -.. ki yo mana me..... (Adhar Lagayi....)

Ma Ga | Pa Ma | MaDa ...Pa Ma... | Re.. Ga | Ga Re Sa

Natkhat na..... va la -- su-gha-ra

Ma Da Ni Sa... | Sa....Sa ...Sa Sa Sa | Sa Sa Sa

Nan,,,da | nan..... | da na. ...ne

Ni Ni Da Ni Ri Ga Ga.. Re....Sa—

Kairi---- ke- ache..ta che...ta

Ni Ni Da | Ni Sa Ni....Sa. Ni.....Pa

Ha...ri...-... ke. Ja..ta...na mein

Pa...Ma Da | Pa Re Ga Re Sa....

Read about Dhrupad:

Websites:

1. Dagarvani.org
2. Dhrupad.info

Books:

1. Ritwik Sanyal and Richard Widdess: Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music, Volume 1 and 2, Ashgate, 2004
2. Humra Quraishi: Divine Legacy: Dagers & Dhrupad, Niyogi Books 2015

Learn Dhrupad:

Many Gurus today teach online as well as at their Gurukul or home. Everyone can learn music and benefit from the thorough musical foundation that the study of Dhrupad provides. If you are interested in learning Dhrupad, you can contact us and we can connect you with a Guru in your area.

If you want to learn from Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar directly, you can contact him as well on his social media: <https://www.facebook.com/wasifuddindagar/>



19th generation of the Dagar Vani

