

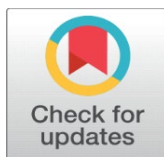
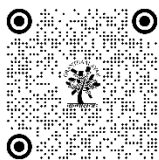


## AN OVERVIEW ON MANIPURI NATA SANKIRTANA TALA SYSTEM

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### ABSTRACT

Nata Sankirtana is a form of worship, considered as a Purvaranga. It is the cultural soul of Manipuri society from birth to death which is performed using five different areas such as rituals, pung consisting of taalās or rhythm, songs, dance, and story in worshipping the lord. These different aspects utilized are of a complex nature. At present, these are not found in any part of India except in Manipuri Nata Sankirtana ritualistic performance. Such uniqueness is clearly visible in punglons, the drum-beat used in Sankirtana since long time. This taala shastra system is not found nowadays in Desi Taala shastra too. Many scholars gave their view that the different aspects of the Margi taala have long been ceased to exist from the Indian soil, except a few mentions in the Shastra. It is the pride and practice of India that such types of Vedic talas found nowhere in India today have long been kept nourished and flourished within the folds of a tiny state like Manipur. It is being felt that some research works are needed to fill up the vacuum that had been created earlier in academic inputs thereby bringing out the real essence and beauty of Nata Sankirtana. This Paper focuses on Manipuri Nata Sankirtana Tala system.

**Keywords:** Purvaranga, Sankirtana, Shastra, Punglon, Vedic, Tala, Desi

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The foundation of the Manipuri Nata Sankirtana is the devoted accomplishment to Sri Krishna. The predominant characteristic of the Nata Sankirtana lies in drum, song, and somersault in Gandharva learning. The tradition of the Nata Sankirtana has divided the Sri Hari Sankirtana prevalent for so many years into two distinct categories as the Sankirtana and the Kirtan. It has been understood that the Raga Swadhin has separately been categorized as the Kirtan whereas the first five Raga which are the parts of the Purvaranga invoking gods (doing avahan) along with the Raga Vijay, the last sequence, altogether thus six parts as the Sankirtana. The name i.e., Raga Swadhin itself implies that is free from other Ragas and relaxed from all the formalities of worship including the bowing down. Many parties of singers have

sung Kirtans of various modes of the theatrical tastes of the play of Sri Krishna in their respective turns in singing the holy and divine name the excellent divine quality, the Kritans of the divine play (Leela Kirtans) like the sholonam, the Astanam, etc. along with the singing of other exceptional modes pertaining to ardent longing (Lalsa), teaching about the soul (mansiksha), prayers, (prathanas) etc. Precisely speaking, all the modes of kirtans have themselves been combined and have been sung in a Shri Hari Sankritana. And for the Kritan, as in the Sankritana, it commences employing a suitable melodious tune other than the sizeable melodious tune and employing a melodious tune of the song as passing down to kartik Sanchar, and playing the drum which is accompanied with the chanting of religious and ritual words, all the rhythmic measures of the musical play of the drum (Taalas) of the intended continued and connected composition (Prabandha) have been presented as the form of divine name, virtuous quality of pre-eminence or the Kirtanas of the divine play. And finally singing songs of ardent longing and of the teaching about the soul, the Kirtan has been concluded with the singing of the Chali Prathana. Whereas other parties of the singers have continued the singing of the song of the Kirtan, the next singing party, before singing the modes pertaining to ardent longing, teaching about the soul and prayer for departure and during singing, the conversational part of the Kirtan, has to take a turn playing a new melodious tune of the drum. The tradition of the Nata Sankritana has generally taken this part of the Kirtan as the most important part played by the drum, the song, and the somersault. Really, as concisely described here, many beautiful, connected compositions of rhythmic measures composed by the departed and well-versed Adi Gurus and the modes of singing like symphonic singing, singing regulating rhythmic tunes, etc. composed by the famous vaisnavite poets have still been conventionally singing in singing the Kirtan. And thus, rather the famous Maharas, Kunjaras, Basantaras, Divaras and Nityaras of Manipur have become the beautiful artificialities of the Kirtan.

In fact, all the features of the rhythmic measures applied in Manipuri Nata Sankirtana are not easily simple and ordinary at all. When we have carefully examined the conventional sounds of the drum of the Sankirtana prevalent from the olden days, we have vividly seen that they are the rhythmic measures, which will be very difficult to trace out anywhere in India, of the Vedic Age. It is a fact that the rhythmic measures of the Nata Sankritana has been thought disappeared many years back, and only some negligible forms have been surviving according to some scholars. In their opinions, the surviving forms were the rhythmic measures of the Margiya Sangeet. Therefore, we may have either hardly seen the real feature of this measures if we have to look at it from the angle of the measures employed in the Deshi taal shastra as it has been employing all over India today or it may have totally been vanished from all sights and sounds, It is, for the whole of India, very lucky, and it is to the credit of Manipur that this valuable measure has been found still preserving and adopting in the land of Manipur averting from the tune of complete disappearance. For the preservation and far-sighted adoption, I heartily congratulate those departed and well-versed Adi-Gurus first of all. And secondly, my due acknowledgement and gratitude goes to those who recomposed through ages new facts and modes of this system of rhythmic measures of the drum with inherent skill and dexterity for the sake of posterity. Lastly, I heartily extend my obligations to those eminent teachers who encourage me on this branch of learning or art giving full opportunity to write down the article even though based on the oral traditions or so. I bow down my head again as a token of my respect to all of them.

From historical record books, we learnt the life stories of devotees from different sections of society from Prachin Bharat who prayed to God in the form of Kirtan or Sankirtan. Indians still remember the Bhajan, Kirtan and Sankirtan of

Meerabai, Tukaram, Chandidas, Tulsidas, Jayadev and Chaitanya Deva. This traditional culture of worshipping Gods and Goddesses by offering music, song, and dance through Sankirtana is a unique feature of Hindu Vaisnavite followers.

It was on the 18 th February, 1468 that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born as a form of abhirbhav on the full moon day at Sridham Nabadwip. All the lost Vedas, Vedantas, Shastras, Upanishads, Puranas, Darshans and Bhakti Strotas were unearthed and revived. Re-read and digested. He revived the art of Sri Hari Sankirtana by adding some of the bidhi bidhan taken out from Bharata Muni's Natya Shastra. He also showed the people and made them realized that one and only way to attain Lord Krishna is to perform Hari Sankirtana. From this concept, all the Vaishnav regarded him as The Sankirtanapitara, the father pioneer of Sankirtana. The Holybook of Hindu- Srimad Bhagavat which had been lying neglected till then started to attract many devotees from different sections of the society and could redirect them to their religious practices. Such great influence too reaches the state of Manipur leading to the development of Manipuri Nata Sankirtana ritualistic performance creating a unique taala system.

## 2. INTRODUCTION TO TALA

The implication of form (Roop), gamut (Swar), metrical cadence (Chhanda) and poetical or lyrical compositions (Kavya) expressed by various modes of drum, song and dance is in its root in the features of the rhythmic musical measure of the tune of the drum. The rhythmic musical measure has glaringly been shown by playing the drum producing various sounds and tunes in exact measures.

The song has been sung in proper musical cadences and rhythmic measures of the drum (Tal) in various notes and accents describing the poetical or lyrical compositions. The dance delineated the regulated rhythmic measures of the drum (Tala) by producing the accurate forms and figures of the body with twists, curves, outlines, and bodylines. Thus rhythmic musical measure of the drum has become the sole and stable foundation of drum, song and dance so wholesomely.

This rhythmic measure is presumed as a shining idol created by the mankind to represent the eternity of time throughout the world. The human has created or made many forms and textures of the rhythmic measure of the drum just as they have molded the idols of gods and goddesses they have faithfully and devotedly worshipped in different sizes and dimensions, and have undoubtedly employed them for their own interest. The tradition of the Nata Sankirtana has composed or created the rhythmic musical measures or tune of the drum, accented or unaccented, entirely depending on the admissible and applicable rules and guidelines in connection with the Tanmit (monosyllabic tune), Mihul (Pulse), Mihul Mapi (big pulse), Nimesha (twinkling or blinking of the tunes), Ghat (smallest stroke), Tantha (striking of rhythmic measures), Haidokpa (stretching out), yet (right), Oi (left) and Pada (a line of tune), etc.

**Mihul (Pulsating):** The Mihul of the rhythmic musical measure denotes the art of rising and falling pulsating mobility of the measure in regular feature seemingly with the tune Ting-Ting. There are different scales and sizes of the Mihuls, whether smaller or larger. They have been measured by means of the Tanmit. [Haorokcham \(2004\)](#)

**Tanmit (Monosyllabic):** Tanmit is symbolically denoted the time taken in producing the clear sound or tune when the fingers of the hands play the drum in quick succession. The easiest example to know what the Tanmit is the sound of the bell produced in quick succession due to its rising and falling oscillation.

**Dhruva:** Dhruva (stability) is the smallest and the first unit of the Tanmit having a constant position. A Tanmit cannot rise or fall due to lack of time interval for successive oscillation. Therefore, there are many units of Mihul developed in the desired effect. Among these units, all the Tanmit in the odds have been combined together with the first one to make units like the Mihul of Diguns (two qualities), Chouguns (four qualities), etc. as expanded as the Dhruvas having their fixed and constant positions, and this cannot be further broken into two units. That is why they are known as the Dhruvas.

**Five Nimeshas:** (twinkling and blinking of tunes): The first five Dhruvas, from among the varieties of the Dhruvas has been known as the five Tanmits. The Mihuls of two Tanmits has been known as, The Tanchap Mapi (compressed rhythmic measures of two Tanmits), the Mihul of three Tanmits as the Menkup Mapi (large rhythmic measures of three Tanmits), and the Dhruv as of measures of five, seven and nine Tanmits as the Misra Mapi respectively.

**Sankirnadhruva:** (Stability in complexity): All the remaining Mihul Mapis of the rhythmic musical measures of the drum subtracting or taking out all Tanchap Mapi, Menkup Mapi of three Tanmits and large measures of five, seven and nine united Tanmits have been known as the Sankirna Dhruva Kalas. (Sanakhya Ebotombi Haorokcham, 2004:53)

**Ghat:** (causative Stroke): The Mihul of the rhythmic musical measure is of many varieties. The differences in their sizes and textures have been known as the differences in the Ghat by the tradition of the Nata Sankirtana. The Taal Shastras have known the Ghat as the Loi as well. [Haorokcham \(2004\)](#)

**Setughat:** (double momentum causative stroke): The Mihul enlarged taking Dwigun twice from a particular Mihul has been known as the Setughat. The Shastra has known this as the Chitra Marga as well. [Haorokcham \(2004\)](#)

**Berighat:** (four momentum causative stroke): Enlargement for four times taking Chougun from a particular Mihul has been known as the Berighat. The Shastra has known this as the BarttikMarg as well.

**Lambighat:** (eight momentum causative stroke): Enlargement of a Mihul for eight times from a particular Mihul has been known as the Lambi Ghat. The Shastra has known this as the Dakshina Marg as well. And the Natya Shastra has known the three as the Drant, Madhya and Bilambit Lois of the concerned Mihul as well.

**Tantha:** (The stroke of the rhythmic musical measure of the drum): keeping aloof the rhythmic measure of some Mihuls of Tanchap, Tankup, etc. side by side on the right and on the left in two opposite locations and then striking the rhythmic measures for some Mihuls has been known as the Tantha.

**Haidokpa:** (unstretching out): Before the commencement of the Tantha, unstretching out for a while or some moments, has been known as the Haidokpa. The image of a rhythmic measure has been taken care of by both the Tantha (Tali) and the Haidokpa (unstress).

**Yet (right):** Keeping aloof some Mihuls of the Tanchap Mihuls in two separate locations, one on the right side and the other on the left side, and then striking on the first Tanmit of the first Mihul has been known as to be striking the Right Tantha.

**Oi (left):** Likewise, striking the rhythmic measure on the first Tanmit of the first Mihul on the left has been known as to be striking the Left Tantha.

The number of the Mihul, the Tantha and the Haidokpa included in the right has been equated with the number of the Mihuls, the Tantha and the Haidokpa in the left. However, when the names of the rhythmic measures have been enumerated one after another as Aktal, Duital, Tintal, etc., it has made known only from the number

of Tantha marked in the right side and the measures in the right side are meant only to back the measures. It is noticeable that both the right Tankok (som) and the left Tankok have not been stretched out in any manner or position. The origin of the measures has unerringly and distinctly been ascertained on the parameter of these two bases.

**Athaba (abandonment):** When a rhythmic measure which has repeatedly been presented has been given up instead of further application, such measure has been known as Athaba, i.e., abandoned and never to be applied. [Singh \(2013\)](#)

The right Tankok has been stricken during this time. The Bharat Natya Shastra has abruptly calls the organs for building up an image of the rhythmic measure as Kastha.

**Pada (Verse, a line of the music):** Two Mihuls of the rhythmic measure have constituted a Pada of the rhythmic measure. When such a pada has been kept on the right as well as on the left, then it has become a constant image of the measure. Tanchap, Menkup, Misra, Sankirna, etc. together with the measures of the Mihul have been known as a whole as the Akpadis. It is to be pointed out that one Mihul can never stand as the image of a measure. The Akpadis comprising of four Mihuls, eight, Mihuls and sixteen Mihuls have been formed and enlarged by taking the Dwigun and Chougun consecutively from the feature of the first rhythmic measure. Thus, with the various kinds of Akpadis of the Tanchap, Menkup, Misra and Sankirna along with their number of Tanthas stricken in the right, various kinds of measures of the Akpadi have become known as Aktal, Duital, Tintal, etc. [Haorokcham \(2004\)](#)

**Mel (Connective or concord):** The tradition of the Nata Sankirtana has recognized the special feature of the measures being kept in separate locations in the right and in the left-with the Pada associated with a Dhruva Mihul as the Dhruvanul or Mel.

The Sanskrit word, Mel, generally implies association, relationship living together, etc. Thus, the feature of the rhythmic measure together with a Dhruva Mihul in association with a Pada has been known as the Dwipadi Mel.

**Chatuspadi Mel:** The Mel in which one Dhruva Mihul and two Padas have been kept together has been known as the Chatuspadi Mel. No Dhruva Mel cannot be put up above the Chatuspadi as precedence in order of importance or status, and thus the Dhruva Mihul associated with the Dwipadi, Tripadi and Chatuspadi has been taken to be a complete Pada and therefore, to keep them either at the Tankok or at the Tanmei has been conventional till today. Only one Tantha has been stricken for the Dhruva Mihul and other Padas in Dwipadi, Tripadi and Chatuspadi Mels. So far as they have enlarged and expanded themselves as far as practicable taking Dwigun, Trigun, etc. they have not been accepted to strike considerably more than one Tantha as done in the Akpadi, and they are allowed to strike only one Tantha for the Dhruva Mihul and other Padas for this reason here stated, there is a Chartal in a Chatuspadi Mel.

In this manner, from Aktal to Tintal for Tripadi Mels and from Aktal to Duital for Dwipadi Mels generally implies association, relationship living together, etc. Thus, the feature of the rhythmic measure together with a Dhruva Mihul in association with a Pada has been known as the Dwipadi Mel. [Singh \(2014\)](#)

**Tripadi Mel:** The Mel in which one Dhruva Mihul has been kept together in association with two Padas has been known as the Tripadi Mel. [Singh \(2014\)](#)

**Akpadi Achappa:** The feature of the rhythmic measure kept modified the Mihuls of the Akpadi of Menkup, Misra and Sankirna in the Mihul of Tanchap Ghat has been known as the Akpadi Achappa. In such Akpadi Achappa, there are three



Mihuls of the Tanchap Mapi, five, seven and nine respectively in the Pada of the Misra Mapi. Similarly, there are eleven, thirteen and fifteen Padas of the Sankirna Mapi in the Mihuls of the Tanchap Mapi.

### 3. TALA IN THE SAME FOUNDATION (HOUSE)

Though it seems that there are differences between the measures of Menkup, Misra and Sankirna and the measures their Aktal, Dwital, etc, they have been known as the measures of the same foundation. The special feature of the drum, the song, and the dance of the tradition of the Nata Sankirtana is the Prabhandas (continued and connected compositions) composed by inter-mingling the measures of the drum of the same foundation. There are many beautiful Prabhandas of Menkup, Misra and Sankirna Akpadis having measures of the drum of the same foundation.

### 4. THE RAGA OF THE PUNG (DRUM)

The tradition of the Nata Sankirtana has known the Prabhandas of Akpatis, Dwipadis, Tripadis, Chaturpadis, etc. inclusive of measures of their Dwigun and Chougun as the measures of the same foundation as the Raga (melodious musical tune) of the drum. [Haorokcham \(2007\)](#)

### 5. RAGA TABA (COMMENCEMENT OF MELODIOUS MUSICAL TUNE AS INVOCATION)

The Prabandha bringing the Mihuls of a measure of the drum starting from Misra Achouba through the Mihuls of the five Nimesha to the Mihul of the Tanchap Mapi has been known as the Raga Taba. Thus Ragamel, Raga Tanchap, Raga Menkup, etc. have been the Prabandha of the Nata Sankirtana tradition in their own distinct identities. [Singh \(2013\)](#)

**Anuwa (repetition):** The sound or tune of the drum has been composed by dividing into four divisions of rhythmic measures of the Mihuls, of the Pada, of the right side and of both the left and the right side in combination, and then, the playing of the drum in repetition on the left side by returning back at the same time from the right side has been known as the Anuwa Punglon.

**Mapum (intact):** The cumulative intact of the playing of the drum playing on both the right side and the left side has been known as the Punglon Mapum. [Singh \(2014\)](#)

**Alangkar (rhytoric, ornament, etc):** When the Mihul of a certain measure or the tune of the Pada Punglon mingles with the Anuwa or Punglon Mapum, such rhetorical mingling has been known as the Alangkar punglon. [Singh \(2014\)](#)

**Paring:** There peated playing of Anuwa or Punglon Mapum has been known as the Paring Yeiba. Thus, if a certain Punglon has played a Paring, another Punglon has played a Paring in response to a gesture to play it. [Singh \(2014\)](#)

**Akhara (playing in series):** playing of different Punglon Mapum in sitting position in series has been known as Pareng Punglon or Akhara. [Sharma \(1965\)](#)

**Athaba (Separating):** A Pareng Punglon has generally been concluded with the playing of the drum either in Athaba or Akhaiba Punglon jointly with an Ingeet Punglon. And thus the Punglon of the Tankok or the Punglon of the Mihul in playing a Punglon Mapum has been known as the Athaba Punglon. [Sharma \(1965\)](#)

**Bhanga (Playing of cymbal mihul wise):** Just the playing of the cymbal in every Mihul of the measure or in every Tanmit has been known as the Bhanga Tantha. [Haorokcham \(2004\)](#)

**Tanbi Thaba (playing of the cymbal at every point):** The playing of the cymbal at every point or place of playing it to distinctly show the feature of the respective measures of the drum has been known as the Tanbi Thaba. The modes of singing by the Nata Sankirtan tradition in the mode of singing combining different modes in singing the Padabali, a series of connected lines, composed by the Vaisnavite poets in Sanskrit, Hindi, Brajabali, Bengali and Manipuri to sing accompanied with the musical and melodious tunes and measures of the drum and the cymbal as Sheikonnadabi, Tangonnabi and Tangonnadabi have conventionally been in Vogue till today.

**Sheikonnabi (Synchronization of tune of drum and song):** The mode of singing is strictly adjusting the tunes and cadences of the drum, lyric of script of the song, and the rising and falling intonation in beautiful art of composition has been known as the Sheikonnabi. The drum and the song, though properly adjusting the measures, cannot be free in their own discretion in such a Prabhandas of the song and the drum. That is to say, the drum cannot be played playing an intended tune on its accord. Similarly, the song also cannot be sung by singing as vestedly desired and intended. So, this standard mode of singing has become and accomplished composition of the celebrated Gurus with all the preferable scripts or words of song previously and meticulously planned.

The connected lines, composed by the vaisnavite poets in Sanskrit, Hindi, Brajabali, Bengali and Manipuri to sing accompanied with the musical and melodious tunes and measures of the drum and the cymbal as Sheikonnabi, Sheikonnadabi, Tangonnabi and Tangonnadabi have conventionally been in Vogue till today.

**Seikonnadabi (Unsynchronization of modes of drum, song, and cymbal):** The free mode of singing, on the other hand, sung freely in any intended manner, of singing repeating words and lines in the composition but strictly maintaining and adjusting the accurate rhythmic measures of the drum in the respective free activities has been known as the Seikonnabi. Thus, free manner of singing playing the drum, playing the cymbal, and jumping of the somersault excitingly occurs during the singing of Sheikonnabi.

**Tangonnadabi (Concord in tunes in common limit):** A composition in which both tunes of the cymbal and the drum have been in a common fixed limit and extent tightly bound each other inter- minglingly has been known as the Tangonnabi.

**Sheikon-tangonnabi (Intertwining of tunes):** A mode of composition in which the tune of the drum, the song and the cymbal embracing inter-twiningly and inseparable has been known as the Sheikon-Tangonnabi. Really speaking, the clattering or playing of cymbalin this manner is a fine and prominent composition of the celebrated gurus as this mode of composition can glaringly display all the skills and knowledges of playing the cymbal.

**Tangonnadabi (Exceptional activities of drum, cymbal, and somersault):** The Tangonnadabi has been known to be an exceptional composition which does not try to display any kind of the rhythmic measure, but only the actions of the drum, the cymbal, and the somersault. The action of the cymbal becomes indirect as it primarily activates itself to display definite measure by playing or clattering the Bhanga Tantha. However, this Tangonnadabi may give meaningfully a bit of respite in the junctures of tight situation due to connected advances of the sequences like

the Sheikonnadabi, Tangonnabi and Sheikonnadabi and these gloriously beautify the feature of presenting a measure and give the time for the ceremonious performance of the worships for the worshipping gods and goddess being itself a recess moment of respite. Thus, the tradition of the Nata Sankirtan has considerably reserved a comfortable berth for this presentation. As the drum, the song, the cymbal, and the somersault, etc, cultivating from the commencement of the Raga till the Vijay are the creative formations of these four modes, they have become the milestones of the Gandharvam solemnized for the propitiation of worshipping gods and goddesses.

## 6. THE PROBLEM IN THE NATA SANKIRTANA TAALA TODAY

One of the most serious problems facing now-a-days in the context of the rhythmic musical measures of tunes (Taals) of the drum is the lack or non-availability of books comprehensively written covering a wide range of topics to be basically learned and specifically employed in the Sankirtan in vogue ceremoniously in Manipur. A situation has really come up now to respond the complex question likely to be asked by the norms and terms of the Sankirtan and to unlock perplexing and puzzling riddles likely to be put by the musical tunes of the drum which are being piled up and accumulated in the store-house of the Sankirtan as hidden treasures because of lack of standard books on the measures of the drum. Sometimes, it so happens to a professional artiste of this art that he is not in a position to introduce himself to his fellow artistes due to his inferior complex.

It is generally known that some pioneer gurus of the past worked hard practising and employing the norms of rhythmic measures of the drum of the Deshi Sangeet system to remove this chronic problem. They imported various norms regarding the length of time required to pronounce a short vowel in music i.e, Mattra in the world of the rhythmic measures of the drum of the Sankirtan. Really speaking, most of the gurus fully realized that the concept of Mattra was out of sight and out of mind in the tradition of Sankirtan in Manipur.

Though the import and introduction of Mattra was a general consensus, there is the reason that it more marred the feature and characteristic of the measure of the drum. Thus, the tradition of Sankirtan lost its own way midway. One of the appropriate examples is that there came a change to forcibly insist on saying that Menkup Mapi which has been employed from a long time back is the Tanchap because of the concept of the imported Mattra. It is quite inferable that somebody may accuse those gurus of changing the name of the measure of Tanchap as Menkup Mapi out of ignorance and so. Really speaking, those gurus rightly named it with clear understanding that it was the Menkup Mapi, a measure of the drum as expanded and embodied by taking the Dwigun and the Chougun by means of the art of the Menkup Mapi. But today, it is in a way to transform it into Tanchap on account of the concept or seemingly on account of the true knowledge of the Tanchap. Secondly, we all have seen that there are uncompromising two schools of opinions with regards to Rajmel on account of the Mattra. Lastly, it is to be noted that the Raga has always been an intact measure of the drum from the beginning to the end, it cannot be reverted sporadically. How should we say that it is of four Mattra or of eight Mattra measuring from some first Punglons? Really Matra is a concept of song and quantity of a tala of the Deshi Sangeet.

This concept has still been controversial among the people embracing the Desi Sangeet. Some say that it is the Varnakal while some others say that it is the Pancha Akshar Kal. And again, some others say that it is the time of four Akshar. To be warned, any effort to make this concept of Mattra which has no consistent



perpetuality and a conceptualized principle of the rhythmic measure of the drum will be a complicated and puzzling gimmick.

On the other hand, some famous scholars have been making untiring efforts to standardize the principles of the measures being cultivated by the tradition of the Nata Sankirtan with the help of the books like Narda Panchamsar Samhita, Sangeet Damudar, Geet chandradoy, Bhakti, Ratnakar, among other books, with the unerring thought that any form or principle of the Nata Sankirtan should be within the purview of Vaisnav Sangeet Shastra as it is directly concerned with the interest of the Vaisnav Sampradaya. But really speaking, the odd situation in this regard is mainly due to the fact that most of the books are the books much related to the principles of the Deshi Sangeet though they are written by the devout Vaisnavites. As they are quite contrary to Margay Sangeet (style and diction of mu-sic), they cannot explicate in detail the measures of the drum. For the time being, we cannot confirm and affirm that all the efforts are successful. Because no books explicating all the forms and principles of the song and music have been scripted and brought out at present. And therefore, we have to eagerly wait for the publication of a book which can appropriately unlock the perplexing riddles of the rhythmic measure of the drum of Sankirtana in vogue from time immemorial.

## 7. FEATURE OF THE VEDIC TAAL IN THE TAAL OF THE SANKIRTANA

It is very necessary to discuss as to why the tunes of the drum of the Sankirtana are said unmistakably the features of the rhythmic measures of the drum of the Vedic measures. The first and foremost point I would like to put is particularly regarding the nomenclature of names related to the rhythmic measures of the drum such as Raga, Raga Taba, Raga Mel, Saachar, Dhruva Mel, among others, the most predominant terms of the Sankirtana. These terms will not be come across in the books mainly discussed about the principle of the measures of Deshi Sangeet. To speak the truth, these terminologies are the archetypal and prototypal much cohesively attached and sticked to the principles of Vedic music. And the second but very important point is that the tunes of the drum for the measures of the drum itself as the measures of the Sankirtan are exactly in the features of Dhruva Pada in close examination, and further, we fix measures comprising of one Chastupada together with one Dhruva, i.e., the measure comprising of four Padas.

Taking factually that there is the feature of Pranab (divines) in this feature of Chatuspada, it (divinity) denotes that the measures have cohesive relation with the prayer and worship of gods and goddesses whose divine qualities have enormously been described in the principle of the Vedic music and song.

Embodying three Padas in the Raga of the Nata Sankirtana and succeeding by the Dhruva, the feature of the Pranab has distinctly been reflected.

The feature of Raga Achouba, the first Punglon, is furnished here with.

+

|     |     |     |     |   |      |   |          |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|------|---|----------|
| Ten | ten | ta  | Tak | - | tang | - | -        |
| Ten | ten | ta  | Tak | - | tang | - | -        |
| Ten | ten | ta  | Tak | - | tang | - | gina gra |
| dhe | -   | dhe | -   |   |      |   |          |

0

|      |     |     |     |      |      |   |          |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|---|----------|
| Ten  | ten | ta  | Tak | -    | tang | - | -        |
| thet | -   | -   | -   | dhen | -    | - | -        |
| Ten  | ten | ta  | Tak | -    | tang | - | Gina gra |
| dhe  | -   | dhe | -   |      |      |   |          |

It is found that all the Punglons of the Raga Taba, Mel, etc. are the Punglons preceded by the Dhruva. And the leading Punglon of the Tintal is also furnished here under: -

|      |      |       |     |   |                         |
|------|------|-------|-----|---|-------------------------|
| +    |      | 2     |     | 3 |                         |
| Dhin | then | tenta | Tak | - | dhen takgin dhenginagra |

It is also to be noted that the feature of the Dhruva Chatuspada will vividly be seen when we glance a look at the Punglon of Chartal of the Sankirtana. The punglon of the chartal macha presided by the Dhruva are the three pada.

|                |                         |                          |   |                         |     |                       |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| +              |                         | 2                        |   | 3                       |     | 4                     |
| Dhin Ginnagra  | Dhin Ghin               | tat tak                  | - | tat                     | tat | tak - Tata tata khita |
| Ta khara khara | Tak khrang khit ginagra | Dgin -dhen taghin dhenta |   | Dhin dhen taghin dhenta |     |                       |

Next, the feature of Chatuspada of the Pungba of the Rangamel has been furnished here under, as:

|         |      |             |              |
|---------|------|-------------|--------------|
| +       |      | 2           |              |
| Ginagra | Dhin | dhin Dhenta | ta Dhin Tang |
| Ta      | Tak  | ta Thenta   | ta Tak: Tang |

Thus, we have vividly seen the gulf of differences between the rhythmic measures of Sankirtana in vogue from time immemorial and Deshi Sangeet (indigenous ornate system of song and music).

And the reason why they are the features of the rhythmic measures of the Vedic measures is that they played the drum distinguishing the measure of the right rhythmic measure and the left rhythmic measure. However, this principle of drumming has seldom found in the Shastra of the Deshi Sangeet.

The principle or norm seems to be mainly for Tankok (sam) and Tantha (Tali) other than other measures. However, it has been denoted in the feature of the Vedic Taal that all the measures should compulsorily be distinguishing as the right and the left measures. The number of measures of the left side and the right side should be of the same number, the difference is only with regards to the Punglon, the tune of the drum. This guideline or norm can distinctly be seen in the measure of the tunes of the drum in the measure of the Manipur Nata Sankirtana. [Singh \(2002\)](#)

## 8. CONCLUSION

It is to be notably observed that a lot of valuable concepts have been found and expounded systematically and theoretically in the present context of Manipuri Taala system. As a result, the detailed discussion expressed here has solved the problem on the conventional measures which is in vogue from time immemorial in respect

of the tunes of the drum in the Manipuri Nata Sankirtana. The unique features and identity of rhythmic measures of the tunes of the drum of Vedic Age presumably thought to be extinct or faded away, and cannot be seen anywhere in India, but nominally existing can easily be traced out and reinvigorated consequent upon the helps and contributions rendered and reserved for the sake of posterity by the eminent departed gurus in respect of tunes and measures of the drum in Vedic tradition through the use of this performing art form taala system. Further it can be cited as glaring example that Panchapagani, Layantarita, Vardhamanak, Asarita, Panika, Sanchar, Shatpitapurtak, Sampakestak, Udaghatita, etc. are almost in the vanishing scene, can be revived again by thoroughly discussing and performing this art form. Thus, as for now, there are every opportunity for the revival of the features of the drum in full advancement and flourishing though the clues for them cannot be explored and discovered for a long time. And therefore, the new dynamic movement and transformation may be ushered in the recent future with the success of the ventures to revive all the features of the measures of the tune of the drum in Nata Sankirtana tradition of Vedic sources. With high hope and aspiration, I wholeheartedly rendered prayers in the count of cores in honour of and dedicated devotion to Shree Shree Govindaji for his divine grace to revive the all the measures of musical tunes of the drum by dint of the Manipur Nata Sankirtana. This detailed discussion of the Manipuri Nata Sankirtana taala system taking various references from different shastra texts will clearly justify in preserving the Margi taala system again making a reviving unique musical art form and we can see the Vedic taala system newly.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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