

The Alluring and Immemorial Practice of the Art of Khol in Barpeta Satra

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Abstract

Barpeta Satra, established in 1583 AD by Mahapurush Madhav Dev, is a prominent place of worship for the Vaiashnavites of Assam. A vast auditorium Rangiyal Griha was also built in the vicinity of the Satra at the time of its inception. In this Rangiyal Griha religious and mythological dramas, devotional songs and related musical instruments have been rehearsed and performed relentlessly for the last 434 years. In the later periods, some portions of these art forms were made part of the daily prayers. To ensure continuity as well as regularity and standard, certain clans residing in places adjacent to the Satra were entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the task of exercising and preservation of original forms. These clans are still bearing the said responsibilities.

Out of the above mentioned art forms, Khol is a Satriya percussion leather instrument and it plays an essential role in the whole business, as, it is indispensable in Borgeet (devotional song), Satriya Classical dance, and Bhaona (Satriya drama). As the knowledge and instructions of playing on Khol is being handed over orally, from generation to generation, there is very little written information and scholarly exploration. Modern documentation has also not been done in this regard.

In the recent years, the present researcher has made extensive attempts to describe and record the notations of this performing art, so as to establish its heritage, riches, uniqueness and also to help preserve it for future learners who need to have the proper guidance about the pure form. In this present paper, attempts will be made to present before you a brief description of the performance of this instrument, though similar to some other Indian percussion instruments, can claim its uniqueness.

Key words: *Khol, Notation, Satra (Vaishnavite place of worship)*

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