

AN ANALYTICAL EVALUATION OF THE GURU-SHISHYA RELATIONSHIPS AS PUT TOGETHER IN THE VEDIC ERA.

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ABSTRACT

We spend most of our waking lives in handling relationships. This is subsequently determining fartherers with the people of the society as whole. Of all relationships that we cherish, that between a teacher and a student has always been special. The lesson that a student learns when in childhood from a teacher may influence decisions decades later. This indicates the importance of a teacher in a student's life. Moreover, it also indicates the level of responsibility on the part of the teacher. The teacher may make or break the future of a student. This could be irrelevant in a technology-obsessed world where lessons may be learnt in the absence of a live teacher. This may seem to signal the death of traditional learning with a personal human touch. But all is not lost. The guru-shishya tradition in India is unique in many ways. We have literary sources that speak of the guru-shishya relationship in various contexts, both spiritual and secular. The Veda(s), dharma shastra literature, purana literature, and ayurveda literature are but a few of these. The current education system may be revitalised with lessons from these. This paper will touch upon some instances of descriptions of the guru-shishya relationship in ancient India. It is hoped that these lessons may not only help teachers to improve their relationships with students, but also help students to understand what they may miss if they choose not to interact with live human teachers.

Keywords: God, disciple, guru, shishya, Vedic, respect, regard, era.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian perspective says that the aim of human life is to grow by inner and outer experience till man lives in God, realises his spirit, becomes divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of his being. In the course of achieving this transforming experience, the guru holds a special place. The guru-disciple interaction touches deep and regressed layers of the two main features of the relationship, surrender of the shishya and intimacy with the guru. Real teaching is believed to occur when the disciple has disciplined himself and is tuned to the wavelength of the guru. Teaching, example, and influence play significant roles in mentoring. One very distinctive characteristic of guru-shishya relationship is its poly-variant nature. It indicates the all-encompassing quality of this relationship. Dynamics of the relationship indicate that its basis was a complete transformation of the shishya by the guru.

In the world of Indian Music, the place of a Guru has been considered as the highest of all which has been well described in the following couplet:

Gururbrahmā Gururviṣṇuḥ Gururdevo Maheśvaraḥ.

Guruḥ Sakṣat Parabrahma Tasmaĕ Śrī Guruve Namaḥ.

Guru Shishya Parampara has been the most ancient and is also known as the best system. From the times of Veda as for example, music education has been given by the Guru orally which is known as Guru-mukh. The student while living in a Gurukul would offer services to the Guru and at the same time, living under a stringent discipline, spending moderate lifestyle and perpetually practicing whatever education has been given to the student by the Guru and learning by heart was the only way to receive knowledge. The description on music education that we get from the Vaidik Yuga shows that there were no names given to any school or even there were no niceties on the numbers of students in each class. Whatever is available through passim sporadically they point to the fact

that education of music and other art forms were taught giving personal attention and this precisely has been defined as Guru- Shishya Parampara. In this way knowledge of music was provided via guru-mukh. But whatever literature or material is available in context to art forms of Buddha Period, therefrom, a few names and information of universities come to light. The competency and scholastic commitment in Indian music is incomparable. The credit of constant development of this music goes categorically to the system of Guru Shishya Parampara. The knowledge gained by the Guru through sheer hard-work, practice and experiments- all of it was delivered to the students. In lieu, on the same principles, anything and everything learnt by the dedicated students from their Guru was saved, polished and the same was practised and experimented which made it bloom and develop. To acquire correct knowledge of any form of lore the best possible way would be to

understand by the agency of Guru-mukh, that is why this is known as obtaining knowledge 'Guru-mukhi'. It is an undisputable truth that knowledge of music can only be acquired through direct contact with the Guru because music being a practical based subject, books and notations etc. had proved to be unnecessary. Literally, the ancient Guru-Shishya Parampara only, has made Indian music prosperous and Accom Parampara.

Origins and Evolution of Indian Guru Shishya Parampara.

The Indian Guru Shishya Parampara has its roots deeply embedded in the ancient spiritual and philosophical traditions of India. Its origins can be traced back to the Vedic period, dating back over three millennia. The Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism, contain hymns and rituals passed down orally from generation to generation, forming the basis of a teacher-student lineage (Saraswati, 2013). Over time, this oral tradition evolved into a formalized system of guru-disciple relationships, known as the Guru Shishya Parampara. The Indian Guru Shishya Parampara, deeply rooted in ancient scriptures and spiritual traditions, embodies a sacred bond between the guru (teacher) and shishya (disciple). Central to this relationship is the guru's role as a spiritual guide, imparting not only academic knowledge but also moral, ethical, and spiritual wisdom. The guru is revered as a figure of authority and often regarded with profound reverence and devotion by the shishya. This dynamic fosters a sense of humility, surrender, and reverence in the disciple, who seeks not only intellectual enlightenment but also spiritual liberation through the guru's teachings. The relationship extends beyond the classroom, encompassing various aspects of life, and is characterized by a deep sense of trust, loyalty, and lifelong commitment. In contrast, the Western Teacher-Student Relationship, influenced by enlightenment ideals and modern educational frameworks, is typically characterized by a more formal, transactional dynamic. Teachers are seen as facilitators of knowledge acquisition, focusing primarily on academic instruction and skill development within a structured curriculum. While respect for teachers is upheld, it often lacks the profound spiritual or personal dimension found in the Guru Shishya Parampara. Students engage with teachers on a more egalitarian basis, with emphasis placed on critical thinking, independent inquiry, and individual agency. The relationship is primarily intellectual and professional, with limited expectation of lifelong devotion or spiritual transformation.

Guru- Shishya Parampara

History says that traditions have kept the institution of Indian music alive due to which there has been a continuity observed in the development of the music. Traditions bring-in a balance, perseverance and persistence in Indian music. A lot of importance has been given to the system of Parampara, which is a well-known truth, and the fact that without keeping Parampara of music in mind we cannot ever imagine to learn Hindustani Classical music. That does not mean there is no scope to do new experiments and inventions; in fact, they have always been a part of this. But all these were always inside the boundaries of ancient traditional music. The existing Guru- Shishya Parampara in the world of Indian music which consists of all the three aspects: Gayan, vaadan and nritya have meandered through different forms and phases which later were efflorescent of originating Gharanas. Gharana system has a great importance in the music domain. The system of Gharana is found in all the above three aspects of music. Today also a student of music has to mandatorily learn from a Guru. But, the reason of slow and steady origination of narrowness in the relationship between the Guru and the Shishya was because Guru's tendency to hide the special qualities of that particular Gharana resulted into a drastic change in the past thirty to forty years. Eventually what has happened is that the ancient knowing has desolated from us which is indeed an enormous loss. But still there are many who want to reincarnate and involve themselves in the metempsychosis of the very admirable Parampara. That is why many intellectuals play an important role to bring forth the utility of this Guru-Shishya Parampara. To re-live the same, a very serious endeavour was made by Indian Tobacco Company- Sangeet Research Academy (I.T.C. - S.R.A., Kolkata). It is an effort by ITC which is offering service in this direction since a few years. They have tried to create an environment which was quite similar to the Gurukul Paddhati. Here, the student lives in juxtaposition with the Guru who takes care of the student.

Merits of Guru-Shishya Parampara.

1. The Gurus had enormous knowledge and knew how to teach the most arduous of the things.
2. This Parampara used to take its time and due to this the students used to come out in a very perfect manner.
3. They used to inherit a certain style and had the efficiency in it.
4. In this the student was well trained and he had the full authority for his art form.
5. The student used to have very humble respects for the Guru and discipline was pursued due to this they got the opportunity to learn the good points of the attitude and art.
6. They were taught directly or face-to-face and there were lot of benefits of this style of teaching.
7. The environment provided to the student was made sure the he would come out an artist.

2. CONCLUSION

The education given under ancient Gharana Parampara and today's Gharana Parampara is that there is no restriction as per Gharana is considered and thus independent styles are coming up and performers mostly see what audiences want them to sing. In olden period there was more stress given in teaching orally and now not only oral but many new aspects such as, writing, documentation, research and theory are also given weightage. Also, stress on overall intellectual personality development is given. New techniques like, usage of technical appliances and equipment, Microphones, sound system, recording, video recording has changed the outlook of overall performance which has surely changed the traditional recognitions but also provided new directions into music. The era of singing without a Microphone has disappeared and thus its usage has in-turn given a new feature of learning techniques of voice-culture as well as pleasantness of voice. This is important because presently there are very sensitive microphones which easily catch the defects of the performer's voice, a player's touch of his instrument or the tatkaar of a dancer.

There is a lot of improvement in the techniques and trends, whether it is listening to music, learning music or its documentation. The availability of facilities has become easier to access. Such an environment has been produced that a lot of new possibilities have been created and will positively keep ornamenting Indian Classical Music which is unique of its own.

3. REFERENCE

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