

Gauriya Kirtan Paddhati

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Some of the statements made on this page are semi-conclusive or inconclusive - those with further information are requested to confirm or refute - by providing an alternative "details".

Those who wish to further represent these styles are suggested to create video which provide a clear picture characterizing the style (ie 100% pure samples of singing and khol vadya of a particular style - whereby anyone can distinguish one style from another)

Gauriya Kirtan Paddhati

paddhati : system, method, school

Gauriya kirtan paddhati/methods are mainly comprised of Singing and Khol vadya.

Khol is the name of the clay barrel drum of the Gauriya Vaishnava sampradaya at Bangal and Odisha. It is also called Mrdanga (but not to be confused with the more abundant - Mrdangam of dakshin Bharat).

There are (were) :

3 Classical / Original Gauriya kirtan paddhati/schools

Garanhati, Manoharsahi and Mandarini

2 Semi classical Gauriya kirtan paddhati/schools

Reneti and Rarhiya

and

1 Sub classical Gauriya kirtan style

Dhap kirtan also known as : Lila kirtan, Pala kirtan

- Non classical Gauriya kirtan / modern kirtan

much modern kirtan - ie most Iskcon origin kirtan - which are in no way related to ancient Gauriya kirtan paddhati

"Classical styles "are the first generation and 100% systematized methods : paddhati/schools

"Semi classical styles" are the second generation and or less systematized,/ simpler styles : paddhati/schools or with some folk influence

"Sub classical styles" Dhap kirtan is more or less systematized yet heavily influenced by Hindusthani and folk music and thus on the fringe of Gauriya kirtan.paddhati

"Non classical kirtan" are the opposite to paddhati - having as their basis perpetual individual improvisation.

Gauriya Kirtan Paddhati history

Gauriya kirtan is thought to have been very simple during the time of Sri Caitanya (-1633ce) - comprising of "naam kirtan" (for example "haraye nama krsna yadavaya namah" - and songs probably were not "sung" to tune-rhythm.

In about 1570ce - 3 Gauriya Vaishnava from Bangal and Odisha named : Sri Srinivasa, Sri Narottamdas and Sri Shyamananda returned from Sri Vrndavan, having studied Gauriya sastra and created the kirtan of the Gauriya sampradaya.

Sri Narottamadas founded the original Gauriya kirtan paddhati - combining simple kirtan method of Bangal at the time and the classical Drupad system of North India (from Sri Vrndavan).

Several styles of kirtan thereafter were derived from this form.

Garanhati - Sri Narottamdas

The oldest and foundation of the other kirtan styles. Garanhati was formalized and sung by Sri Narottamadas himself and introduced at the first Kheturi utsava in about 1575ce. Drupada influence (from Sri Vrndavan) is apparent - and like Drupada it is a slow and highly ornamental/complex kirtan style.

Garanhat (?) was the name of the pargana to which Kheturi was within - where Sri Narottamadas resided.

Manipuri Gauriya Vaishnava are in line of Sri Narottamadas and the Manipuri kirtan style is likely directly derived from Garanhati.

recent proponents : Sri Advaitadas babaji of Navadvip, Sri Haridas babaji of Navadvip (d. c. 1990ce)

Manoharsahi - Sri Srinivasa

The founder of this style is said to be Sri Jnanadas an initiate of Sri Jahnava devi and of same age as and living at Kandra in proximity to Sri Srinivasa at Jajigram. It was derived from Garanhati and is a considerable step simpler and faster than the former. Sri Balaramdas a disciple of Sri Srinivas was an early exponent of this style.

Kandra was in the Manoharsahi pargana and thus the name.

Mandarini - Sri Shyamananda

Sri Venidas is said to have been the pravartak of this style.

No other conclusive information is available (to the person writing this) apart from :

One source claiming that Mandarini (or the present style) was derived from or similar to Mangal gaan : Mangal Gaan [sample](#). The kirtan of the Shyamananda parivar appears similar to this and (thus i would) conclude that the style was originally called Mandarini (or perhaps that is just the name by which Bangla people called it / as the line in Odisha dont seem (?) to use that name.

Mandaran was one of the Mughal Sarkar - a Sarkar being the largest local Mughal administrative unit. The outline of this Sarkar is on the map.

The style of the Sri Shyamananda parivar with headquarter at Gopiballabhpur may have extended to the southern portion of the Mandaran sarkar - resulting in the origin of the name.

Some in Bangal (Babludas) say the style is extinct / or atleast corrupted at present from its original form - but this may just mean that Bangla people are not privy to it (as if a style of Odisha).

If Mandarini is actually Not the style of the Shyamananda parivar then Mandarini would have been a totally different style based at Bishnupur and probably did actually became extinct - after the end (of patronage) of the Mallabhum kingdom in about 1800ce.

The Garanhati, Manoharsahi (and Mandarini if the name of the kirtan of the Shyamananda parivar) began in the late 1500s, were in vogue during the time of "Prabhu traya" and are considered as "classical/original Gauriya kirtan paddati"

A further 2 styles can be considered "Semi classical Gauriya kirtan paddhati" and of slightly later origin, ie the early 1600s ce and stylistically less systematic(Reneti) and or have some folk influence (Rarhiya) than the earlier styles. (Mandarini if actually corrupted at present would also fit into this category)

Reneti

The pravartak of this style was Sri Vipradas Ghosh, said to be a resident of Devipur; perhaps then within an administrative division of nearby Ranihati (or some say because it became popular at Ranihati itself)

Prema vilas (early 1600s ce) talks about "a" Sri Vipradas : disciple of Sri Narottamadas, resident of Pa(n)chpara near Gopalpur - there are many such village combinations in Bangal, with one pair in the Ranihati area. If they are same Sri Vipradas then, Devipur would be the residence of a proceeding famous exponent of the style : Sri Vijaykrshna Bisvas also said to be from the town.

Renetir Padkarta, by Kshetranath Banerjee in "Birbhum" periodical, Asadh 1321 Bangabda, pp.129- 47 - a article in Bangla written in 1915ce, would contain other information.

The style is comparably much more simple and faster than Manoharsahi (and Garanhati). (simple = ornamentation and variety)

Rarhiya

It is the style of the Rarh region west of Bangal, to the west of Bishnupur.

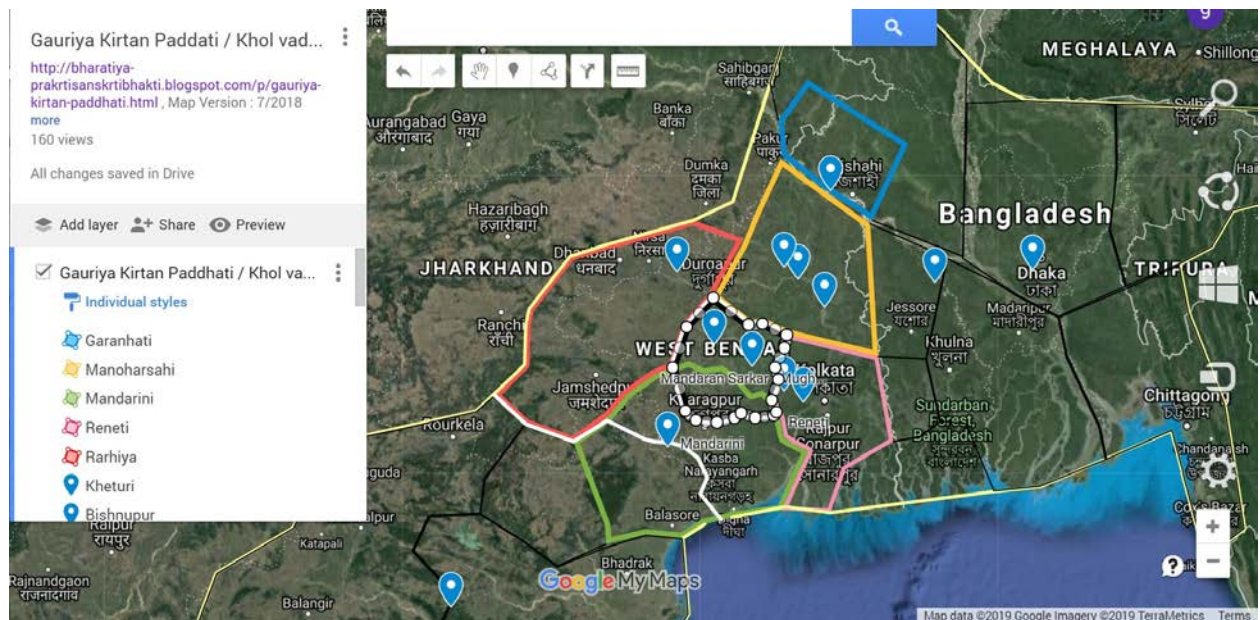
It is also called Jharkhandi style as well as Marai kirtan.

Online "sources" not stating the origin - say that the founder of the style was a Sri Gokul / Gokulananda "Kavindra" while the Gauriya Vaishnava Abhidhan claims that Gokulananda Kavindra was a disciple of Sri Srinivasa and further claims that Bhaktiratnakar states that he first resided at Kaduigram (which cannot be found in any record) and then resided at Shergarh near Panchakot - which is on the east end of the region of Rarha. It is possible yet not conclusive - as a Sri Gokulananda is also said to have been the accompanying vocalist of Sri Narottamadas, If it happens to be the same person then it is unlikely that he created the kirtan style himself (as it has much folk

influence and very different to Garanhati) and thus may have been created by someone else in contact with his kirtan - while he was living at Shergarh.

This thesis [link](#) discusses various artforms of the region including Rarhiya/Marai kirtan.

Ancient centers of Gauriya kirtan paddhati :



Refer to: <https://bharatiya-praktisanskrtibhakti.blogspot.com/p/gauriya-kirtan-paddhati.html> for interactive map.

Bishnupur

Vishnupur apparently was a center - junction of kirtan styles. When Sri Srinivas, Sri Narottamadas and Sri Shyamananda first came/returned to Bangal from Sri Vrndavan - their cartload of books were stolen by the king of Mallabhum (gateway to Bangal) - whom after meeting their caretakers - adopted Gauriya Vaishnava dharma. The king named his capital as "Vishnupur" and became of patron of Gauriya Vaishnava culture, building many temples and holding utsava.

as can be seen on the (below) map : Bishnupur is the junction of the Manoharsahi, Mandarini, Rarhiya and Reneti styles.

Gauriya kirtan paddhati during the British period (1775-1947 ce)

Advent of Sub classical Gauriya kirtan

Dhaap kirtan / Lila kirtan / Pala kirtan

Dhap kirtan is the original name, Lila kirtan and Pala kirtan are modern names, the later derived from "pada kirtan".

In circa 1750-1800 ce - Dhap kirtan was created by Sri Rupchand (Varuni Bhatia 2017) - combining Hindusthani music (from Chapra, Bihar) with Gauriya kirtan (supposedly Manoharsahi) and folk Tappa kirtan of Bangal - from which its name is derived. While the proponents of this form claim it as being Manoharsahi (to thrive on the stature of the former) - it is not Manoharsahi and such propaganda is an threat to the former. After Sri Rupchand -- a Sri Vaishnavadas (c. 1800ce) was a proponent of Dhap kirtan and maybe also his associate Sri Uddhavadas.

Dhap kirtan usually does not go by that name at present - though it is the only name by which it is referred to in historical literature.

Female Dhap kirtan

Female Dhap kirtan may have began in circa 1850 ce (British period) by Sri Madhusudan Khan from Jessore whom "wondered about singing Dhap kirtan to the accompaniment of his male and female family members" - Madhusudan is credited with popularizing Dhap kirtan in Bangal (ref "Kirtan in Bengal" below link)

Gauriya Kirtan paddhati festivals/competitions

Kirtan festivals/competitions began in the mid 1800s ce, primarily as a medium to revive-rejuvenate-support the traditional kirtan styles. In 1838 ce the first "Dhulot" festival was held at Navadvip - organized by Sri Totaramdas babaji and funded by a Sri Manmadhav Datta. It lasted 13 days wherein kirtan groups from far and wide would perform and at the end of which the crowds would roll in the dust = dhul. The Dhulot

festival of Navadvipa was observed by/throughout the British period (with number of days and sponsors varying). Ref : Varuni Bhatia 2017. The Dhulot festival has not been performed since the 1980s ce - the "self ruling" governments since make no support towards culture. Other similar festivals can sporadically still be found throughout Bengal and are always held for multiple days (3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15)

Gauriya kirtan paddhati at present

The classical styles of kirtan are said to have flourished until the advent of the British in Bangal (starting c. 1775-1800 ce), albeit via patronizing of Vaishnava kings. In the late 1700s ce the British and Bardhaman kingdoms annexed most of the smaller kingdoms of Bangal.

Manoharsahi, on account of its moderate simplicity and being geographically in the center as well as including the area of Navadvipa - became and is the most common/prevalent Gauriya kirtan style (in West Bangal). The basic system of singing of Gauriya pada in Bangal is according to this paddhati.

Garanhati is almost extinct on account of the fast pace of modern culture in contrast with solemn complexity of the style (like Drupad); and in the absence of patronage in modern times (ie ability to dedicate to learning it). The base area of the style becoming part of Bangladesh (and exodus of most Hindu from the region) may also factor in its decline.

be-aware of Dhap kirtan proponents claiming to represent Manoharsahi.

present exponents :

(comment with address and sample to have name included here)

Garanhati

Sri Babludas (Svarupganj, Navadvip) is the foremost (or atleast most well known) proponent of this paddhati, yet almost all of what he teaches is Manoharsahi paddhati - as Garanhati is only possible for advanced students. He has a voluminous collection of books containing mantra of the paddhati and intends to publish them.)

A "Brajamadhuri Sangha" group reportedly maintains this style (mention of it can be found online from a 1974ce source, but may still exist in Kalkata).

Reniti - performers are known to exist.

present exponents :

(comment with address and sample to have name included here)

Radhagovinda Pal (teaching in the Navadvip area since the 1990s)

Rarhiya

the style of kirtan is prevalent in its base region and a Rarha kirtan festival/competition appears to be held yearly (see youtube).

present exponents :

(comment with address and sample to have name included here)

this thesis [link](#) notes several kirtan groups in the region that may represent the original Rarhiya.

Mandarini

no first hand information of this style is known (to the author writing this) If it refers to the style of Sri Shyamananda then it is flourishing either in its original form or in some form at present.

(comment with address and sample to have name included here)

Advent of non Gauriya kirtan and the present

The teachings of the Gaudiya sampradaya reached the entire world by the missionary activities of Sri Bhaktivedanta Svami "Prabhupada" in the 1960-70s. Yet by the time of his demise in 1977 Gauriya Vaishnava culture and Varnashrama dharma had as yet not been imbibed by his followers resulting in the establishment of a Western - Gauriya hybrid culture and kirtan. While followers of Iskcon in rural Bangal maintain basic form of Gauriya kirtan paddhati - the majority of Iskcon followers - whom "represent the Gauriya sampradaya" throughout India and the planet - perform a hybrid Western-Gauriya kirtan - with moderate to nill Gauriya Kirtan paddhati/methodology. A further severely degraded "kirtan" exists of freefare modern speculative improvisation, often with film genre or any type of music influence : which No Gauriya Vaishnava in the previous 500 years history of the Gauriya sampradaya would condone or appreciate. Some Gaudiya Math have also adopted the latter (as a result of aversion to the orthodox Gauriya society).

While Dhap kirtan has been eclipsing Gauriya kirtan paddhati for the last 150 years, the recent Western hybrid kirtan has eclipsed traditional Gauriya kirtan paddhati

everywhere outside of Bangal.

glossary :

pargana - mughal administrative unit, smaller then to the same size as a modern tehsil
sarkar - large mughal administrative unit, made up of many (10-50) parganas, about the size of to larger in size of modern districts

ref and further reading :

[Kirtan of Bengal](#), by Sivananda Svami link

Bhatia, Varuni 2017 : [Unforgetting Chaitanya: Vaishnavism and Cultures of Devotion in Colonial Bengal](#)

<http://halleys-scribble.blogspot.com/2015/07/padavali-kirtan-birth-and-death-of.html>