



History Of Music In India With Reference To Buddhist Period

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Abstract: Indian music is considered to have divine origins in Indian mythology. The first sage to be told the laws of music was Narada. Narada is credited with creating the oldest musical instrument, the Veena. The original vocalist was Tumburu. The goddess of music and education was Saraswati, and Bharata was the first to create the rules for theater, of which music was a significant and essential component.

There are three main periods in Indian music history: ancient, medieval, and modern. The slokas that were set to music were found in the Sama Veda, which is where Indian music first began. Through the steady development of its own musical traits, Indian music evolved from ritualistic music in conjunction with folk music and other Indian musical traditions. Originally, music was an essential component of Indian socio-religious life. The result was the division of Indian music into two schools, the Carnatic and Hindustani systems, in the fourteenth century. These two branches developed and solidified their positions. The ideas of Raga, Tala, and musical genres were enhanced by the influx of countless musicologists and composers during this time.

Based on ancient and medieval literature and customs, this essay explains how music fundamentally facilitates Hindu religious experience. It is made clear by giving numerous examples how the classical songs offer a greater understanding of the various musical genres that are currently prevalent in the Hindu and Yoga worlds while also containing the wisdom of Hinduism.

Keywords: Sargam, Music, Buddha, History

Introduction

In India, the history of sound and music can be traced back to the beginning of the cosmos. In Hindu mythology, the Naadbrahma (Brhma as Sound), which permeates the entire universe, is said to be the initial sound. Considered to be unstruck, it is the purest sound in the cosmos. According to another tale, Shiva and Onkar's Tandava is where sound (and dance) first appeared. Then, the sage Narada is claimed to have brought music down from heaven. In India, music, like dance, originated from devotional hymns and was primarily utilised in temples for religious and ceremonial purposes. This then evolved alongside Indian folk music and other musical genres, eventually giving rise to its own distinctive melodic traits¹.

The history of music is as old as culture. A few types of drums on terracotta figurines, pictographs on seals, and musical instruments like the arched or bow-shaped harp demonstrate the Indus Valley Civilization's musical and dancing traditions. The dancing girl figurine further supports this. We have no idea, though, what kind of dance or music was popular at the time.

1 <https://www.studyiq.com/articles/evolution-of-indian-music>, Published On November 20th, 2023.

MUSIC IN ANCIENT INDIA

Indian music has a long history that dates back to the Vedic era. During the Vedic era, the idea of Naadbrahma was widely accepted. The earliest known type of organised music may be found in the Sam Veda, which is where all organised music gets its start. The Sam Ved is the source of the oldest raga. Samgana, a type of music that was essentially a chanting of the verses in melodic rhythms, was popular throughout the late Vedic Period. The song then took a slightly different turn. The epics were told in ~Jatigan,~ which are melodic tones². A type of music known as Prabandh Sangeet, which was composed in Sanskrit, gained immense popularity between the second and seventh centuries AD. With Hindi as the medium, this form gave rise to a more straightforward one known as Dhruvpad.

Panini was the first to mention music in 500 BC, while `Rikpratisakhya` was the first to introduce musical theory in 400 BC³. The first documented work on music that clearly divided music into twenty-two keys and octaves was likely Bharata's Natyashastra, which comprises several chapters on music from the fourth century AD. `Dathilan`, the next significant treatise on music, also asserts the existence of twenty-two srutis per octave. Only these twenty-two srutis can be created by humans, according to an old belief. The 9th-century AD work "Brihaddesi" by Matanga, which attempts to describe Raga, and the 11th-century AD work "Sangeeta Makaranda," which lists ninety-three Raagas and divides them into species that are male and feminine, are two other significant works from this era⁴.

During the Vedic era, priests wrote hymns to the nature gods that were required to be chanted or sung during religious sacrifices. As a result of this tradition, a substantial corpus of devotional poetry—known as Shruti Literature—was composed. The Vedic hymns, also known as Richās, were passed down orally from generation to generation via word of mouth rather than being recorded in written form. The richās of the Vedas are therefore organised according to the priestly families who wrote and recited them. The Yajurveda and Samveda were composed in accordance with the Rig-Veda. The Samveda has the hymns that can be chanted by those who are reciting them, while the Yajurveda describes the steps involved in the sacrifice⁵. A samhita, or collection, of richās or their sections from the Sakala Sakha of the Rig-Veda is essentially what the Samveda is. Sām is the term for how these Rigvedic richās should be sung. Sāmgana is the song performed in this way, whereas Sām is the creation of Rig-Veda richās in the shape of notes. This type of music is known as Vedic music. It is evidence of how closely music and religion are related in India. Additionally, the instrumental music was part of the sāmgana. Among the most common instruments in Vedic music were the talav, bhoomi-dundubhi, dundubhi, veena, and tunav⁶.

Origin of Sargam

Udatta, anudatta, and svaritaz were the first three notes in Indian music. After experimenting with a greater number of notes, the Samaveda ultimately decided on seven: krusht, pratham, dwitiya, tritiya, chaturth, mandra, and atiswār. What we now refer to as the seven Svaras developed from this⁷. Indian mythology claims that Indian music has divine origins. The laws of music were first revealed to Narada, a sage. Invented by Narada, the Veena is the earliest musical instrument. The original singer was Tumburu. The goddess Saraswati was associated with learning and music, and Bharata was the first to create the rules for theatre, of which music was a significant and essential component.

As the fundamental notes of an octave, the seven Svaras are called Ṣaḍjaṃ, Riṣabh, Gāndhār, Madhyam, Pañcham, Dhaivata, and Niṣād (Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha and Ni), in that order. They are collectively referred to as Sargam. Saptak is another name for a set of the seven notes⁸.

2 History & Evolution of INDIAN MUSIC, by Smt. Khushboo Kulshreshtha, Page no. 14, Shree Natraj Prakashan, First Edition : 2010, New Delhi - 110002

3 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330723740> (PDF) Sacred Music and Hindu Religious Experience: From Ancient Roots to the Modern Classical Tradition by Guy L Beck, 2018.

4 <https://www.academia.edu/38253862> (PDF) Hindu Sacred Music: Evolution from Ancient to Modern Practice by Guy L Beck, 2019.

5 A History Of Indian Music by Swami Prajnananda, Publication date 1860 Book Source: Digital Library of India Item 2015.58556

6 <https://egyankosh.ac.in/123456789/68571/1/Unit-4.pdf> D:\JUNE 2020\SOE VANKAT\NIRADHA

7 <https://indianraag.com/> History Of Music In India – Ancient Period To Modern Period By Utkarsh Tiwari/August 26, 2024

8 <https://academic.oup.com/An-Archaeological-History-of-Indian-Buddhism> | Oxford Academic

MUSIC IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

The influence of the Muslims during the Middle Ages changed the character of Indian music. The two separate genres of Hindustani and Carnatic music began to gradually emerge from Indian music around this time. The only time these two musical traditions began to differ was in the fourteenth century AD. The Northern Indian music style was significantly altered by the Persian influence⁹. The traditional form of singing, known as Dhrupad, evolved from the religious Dhruvapad in the fourteenth century AD. The eighteenth century AD saw the development of a new singing style known as the Khayal. In contrast to Hindustani music, which places more emphasis on musical structure, Carnatic classical music, also known as kriti, is primarily based on Saahitya, or lyrics. In contrast to Carnatic music, which still uses the old octave, Hindustani music adopted the Shudha Swara Saptaka, or Octave of Natural Notes, format. Both Carnatic and Hindustani music exhibit a strong capacity for assimilation, assimilating folk tunes and regional traits while also promoting many of these tunes to the level of ragas. Consequently, there has been reciprocal impact between these two musical systems¹⁰.

Music in Maurya Era – Buddhist and Jain Sources

The depiction of Yakshas and Yakshis in Buddhist sculptures makes it clear that the music of the Mauryan era was wonderfully flourishing. Although music developed during that time, Buddhist religion viewed it as a distraction.

Differences in Music within Buddhist Sects

The four prevalent forms of Buddhism in our society today are explained by Master Chin Kung, a teacher and student of Buddhist philosophy for over fifty years¹¹ --

- authentic Buddhism
- religious Buddhism
- philosophical Buddhism
- external Buddhism

Numerous things, including religion, have changed over the years to encompass a wide range of lives and purposes for the weekly or daily practice. Similar to how each individual is distinct and different, each religion can also be seen as unique and different, even though there may be certain commonalities (such the general term "Christianity" or "Buddhism").

Religions in the same location might differ from one another, even though there are significant distinctions amongst religions worldwide. Therefore, we cannot overlook the fact that every sect has variances, sometimes little. Buddhism is not an exception to the rule that music and sound-making are important components of religion. Their musical styles differ from one another, much as their religious beliefs do¹².

Ge Zhuang writes in the journal Chinese Studies that "different religions feature their own integrated doctrines, canons, rituals, and organisational forms" in his paper "A Survey Of Modern Buddhist Culture In Shanghai." Music frequently changed to accommodate and adapt to various cultural and historical influences among the many forms of Buddhism. Consequently, the ways that various Buddhist sects use music vary, and they are :

- Theravada Buddhism
- Mahayana Buddhism
- Tibetan Buddhism

History of Buddhism

It is crucial to comprehend the distinctions among the many Buddhist sects before delving too deeply into their histories. To ascertain these distinctions, we shall take a cursory look at Buddhism as a whole. All Buddhist sects emphasise the pursuit of a true understanding of ultimate reality and human nature, which is a common theme among them. The primary Buddhist teacher was Buddha, also called Siddhartha, who

⁹ <https://edukemy.com/> Bhartiya Sangeet Ka Itihas – Origin Of Music In India

¹⁰ <https://www.researchgate.net/> Studies in the History and Culture of Ancient Indian Buddhism, edited by Birendra Nath Prasad, April 2022.

¹¹ <https://selfstudyhistory.com/2015/09/14/Spread-of-Jainism-and-Buddhism-Part-I-SELF-STUDY-HISTORY>

¹² <https://www.culturopedia.com/indian-musics/>

around 2,500 years ago became the first person to discover and experience enlightenment¹³, which is a condition of complete comprehension, contentment, and tranquility. The primary goal of all Buddhism is to assist one another in becoming enlightened, just like Buddha.

Three Types of Buddhism

Buddhism comes in three primary forms: Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana (Tibetan).

- In the fifth century CE, Vajrayana (also known as the "Diamond way" or "Thunderbolt Vehicle") originated in India and made its way to Tibet, where the Dalai Lama's office was located. The goal of the Vajrayana is to transform the poisons of greed, violence, and ignorance into wisdom so that, with the assistance of the current Lama, who is already enlightened, the mundane world can be better separated from enlightenment¹⁴.
- With monastic practice dating back to the 4th century B.C.E., Theravada, also known as "Southern Buddhism" or "Teaching of the Elders," is the oldest branch of Buddhism still in existence. According to Theravada, the goal of life is to become an arhat, a flawless saint who has attained nirvana and will never experience another birth. This is not at all like Mahayana.
- In the first century C.E., Mahayana (also known as the "Greater Vehicle" or "Greater Ox-cart") became a more liberal and approachable form of Buddhism since the "path" to enlightenment was accessible and attainable by people from all walks of life, not only monks and ascetics. In contrast to Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism holds that being a bodhisattva—a saint who attained enlightenment by selflessly postponing nirvana in order to assist others—is the ultimate goal of life¹⁵.

In addition to the fact that Tibetan Buddhism is dominated by the world-famous Dalai Lama, who "has an enormous following" in the Tibetan world, contrary to other Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist schools of thought, its geographical distance from China and other Buddhist regions forces a researcher to study them independently.

Buddhism has developed over time in response to various situations and geographical distances. As religious beliefs evolve, so do practices. Even within the same religion, variations in practice lead to variations in the significance, use, and emphasis of music¹⁶.

Buddhist Music History

As Buddhist music developed into what it is today, it had numerous traits throughout history. Yun said, "The foundation of Buddhist music is the necessity to adapt to societal shifts in order to offer the most appropriate and suitable ways to help purify the hearts and minds of the public." Buddhism's founding myth begins in India during the Maurya Dynasty (317–180 BCE), when King Asoka diligently propagated the religion's doctrines, leading to a period of significant advancements in Buddhist music from that time on. "Inclusion of copper gongs, drums, flutes, conch horns, and harps in Buddhist ceremonial music" was a feature of Buddhist music during the Mauryan Dynasty¹⁷.

As Buddhism gained popularity, it started to have an impact on Tibet around 641 CE, when Tibetan Buddhist customs "encouraged the use of song and dance in certain ceremonies." Instruments including drums, windpipes, spiral conchs, and trumpets were also used by Dalai Lamas.

It is not surprising to find such a vast range of religious practices in Buddhism, as it, like all religions, has its sects and peculiarities. There are many commonalities amongst Buddhist sects, but the most significant one is the employment of instruments and chants. The wide variety of musical instruments used in Tibetan Buddhism is unmatched by any other branch of Buddhism. Despite variations in music-making across

13 History of Indian Buddhism By Professor Karam Tej Singh Sarao (Former Professor, University of Delhi) Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Sarnath, Varanasi.

14 <https://selfstudyhistory.com/2015/09/14/Spread-of-Jainism-and-Buddhism-Part-I-SELF-STUDY-HISTORY>

15 [https://academic.oup.com/ An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism | Oxford Academic](https://academic.oup.com/An-Archaeological-History-of-Indian-Buddhism-Oxford-Academic)

16 <https://www.culturopedia.com/indian-musics/>

17 [https://academic.oup.com/ An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism | Oxford Academic](https://academic.oup.com/An-Archaeological-History-of-Indian-Buddhism-Oxford-Academic)

Buddhism, the usage of music remains largely consistent. As stated in the Treatise of the Perfection of Great Wisdom, one of the Buddha's teachings is that the bodhisattvas employ lovely music to soften people's hearts in order to create a pure land. People are simpler to educate and change through the teachings when their hearts are softened because their minds are more open to the lessons. Music has been formed as one form of ceremonial offering to the Buddha because of this¹⁸.

Some of the unusual instruments have also been discussed in literature related to Jain theology. Bhambha, mukund, machal, kadamb, and others are among them. It's possible that some of these are folk music instruments.

Later Development of Indian Music

Indian art and culture during the Gupta era are renowned for their excellence in every area. Music during the Gupta era is mentioned in the writings of Kalidasa and Vatsyayana, among others. Some instruments have names that Kalidasa has authored, such Parivadini Veena, Vipanchi Veena, Pushkar, Mridang, Vamshi, and Shankha. Aside from a few technical terminology like Murchana, Swarasaptaka, and Tana, he has also talked about several song genres including Kakaligeet, Streegeet, and Apsarogeeti¹⁹.

Among the 64 Kalas (arts) that Vatsyayana enumerated in his masterpiece Kamasutra are singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments.

During the Gupta era, Fa-hien visited India and saw that music was quite common in Indian culture. Temples played a variety of Indian music styles starting in the Gupta era.

After the Guptas, Harsha, who was also a vocalist, brought about a significant advancement in literary art. In his dramas "Nagananda," "Ratnavali," and "Priyadarshika," the creation of music is discussed.

Brihaddeshi

Matanga Muni wrote a significant book in Sanskrit called Brihaddeshi during the post-Gupta era, only after Natyashashtra. The earliest literature to discuss rāga and differentiate between the two types of music—Marga Sangeet (classical music) and Desi Sangeet (folk music)—is Brihaddeshi. Prior to Islam influencing Indian music, Brihaddeshi was another significant work in the field. Brihaddeshi was based on the Natyashashtra itself and has provided clarification on a number of points that were unclear in the text of the Bharata²⁰.

Influence of Islam

India was firmly established in the Sufi tradition by the ninth century. Sufi mystics are well-known for their admiration of music and their tolerance of numerous native traditions. During the 1324 AD, Nizamuddin Chishti's followers incorporated the "Basant" and "Rang" festivals into their religious rituals. For the same reason, both Hindi and Farsi songs were used in performances during Kaikubad (1287–1290 AD). By the 12th century, Indian music was greatly influenced by Islam. Persian and Arabic components were added to Indian classical music by Amir Khusrau, the "father of qawwali." He created the classical music styles of Tarana and Khayal. However, Man Singh Tomar combined the Dhrupad form of classical voice music²¹.

Impact of Bhakti Movement

Through the Ashtachap and Haveli sangeet, as well as the Bhajan and Kirtans, the Bhakti Movement had an influence on Indian music. Saint-composers used the local language, Braj, Avadhi, or whatever, as a medium to reach individuals in social classes who would not have otherwise been impacted by art and music. Composers such as Jayadeva (11th century), Vidyapati (1375 AD), Chandidas (14th–15th century), Bhakta Narasimha (1416–1475 AD), and Meerabai (1555–1603 AD) provided the literary foundation for the music. During the Bhakti Movement era, the Dhrupad, Khayal, and Tappa were introduced; dance and music were separated; and the pakhawaj gave way to the tabla²².

18 <https://edukemy.com/> Bhartiya Sangeet Ka Itihas – Origin Of Music In India

19 <https://www.researchgate.net/> Studies in the History and Culture of Ancient Indian Buddhism, edited by Birendra Nath Prasad, April 2022.

20 <https://egyankosh.ac.in/123456789/68571/1/Unit-4.pdf> D:\JUNE 2020\SOE VANKATNIRADHA

21 Cultural History of Indian subcontinent; with special reference to Arts and Music, Author: Raazia Hassan Naqvi, Lecturer Department of Social Work (DSW) University of the Punjab,

22 <https://www.researchgate.net/> Studies in the History and Culture of Ancient Indian Buddhism, edited by Birendra Nath Prasad, April 2022.

Mughal Era

Temple music was mostly eclipsed by the Darbar Sangeet during the Mughal era, particularly during Akbar's rule, where the music was mostly written to praise patrons. Many Indian and Persian musicians were employed by Akbar's court. There were seven orders among the musicians. For every day of the week, there was one. The renowned Tansen led the group, which included 19 singers, three chanters, and a number of instrumentalists. The sarmandal, been, nay, karna, and tanpura were the primary instruments, according to Abul Fazal's reports²³.

Akbar's reign is renowned for a full synthesis of Indian and Persian musical traditions. Sincere in his enthusiasm in music, Jehangir generously supported the art form. Shahjahan was no exception. Puritan Aurangzeb, however, outlawed the court music. Nonetheless, some musical literature was created during his lifetime, such as Makutuhul's Persian version.

Aurangzeb's death caused the Mughal authority in Delhi to wane, and a rapid succession of kings followed. However, the renowned Muhammad Shah Rangile's rule (1716-1748 AD) encompassed a rather extended period of musical prosperity.

Many musicians found him to be a kind and generous patron. The Mughal imperial court reintroduced Qawwali, which spread more quickly than ever throughout South Asia. It was accompanied by several increasingly popular instruments, including the Tambura, Veena, and Tabla, as well as the Sarod, Surbahar, Sitar, and Sursingar²⁴.

Two musicians at Muhammad Shah Rangile's court, Niyamat Khan (Sadarang) and his nephew Firoz Khan (Adarang), popularised khayal. Even though Khayal was already there, it gained such much popularity that it nearly supplanted Dhrupad later on.

19th century

In the 19th century, thumri, a type of romantic and devotional music, also gained popularity. We got a new genre called Bengali tappa from Ramnidhi Gupta, also known as Nidhubabu. This incorporated Bengali music's lilting beat and Hindustani music's Tappa characteristics.

20th century

The most significant contributions to Hindustani classical music during the early 1900s were made by Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pandit Vishnu Narayana Bhatkhande.

VD Paluskar²⁵

In 1901, the first music college, the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, was established by Pandit V. D. Paluskar (1872–1931 AD). In the bhajan Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram, he sung the original version. He offered music education and dissemination a completely different viewpoint. At that time, music was only performed in temples and palaces, hence he is credited with leading Saurashtra's first public concert. Music and artists were raised in the social structure thanks to his efforts! In contrast to royal patronage, his Gandhrava Mahavidyalaya was accessible to anyone and among the first in India to operate on contributions and popular support.

V.N. Bhatkhande²⁶

The introduction of an ordered musical system that reflected contemporary performance techniques was pioneered by V.N. Bhatkhande (1860–1937 AD). Hindustani classical music's first contemporary treatise was written by him. His most famous contribution was the categorisation of the Indian Rāgas. The Rāgas were first divided into three categories: Putra (children), Ragini (female), and Rāga (man). Bhatkhande reclassified them using the Thaata system that is in use today. He documented and studied performing traditions and gathered data on music. His music literature is still unmatched today and is crucial to a methodical examination of Hindustani art music. He used his system to categorise 1800 pieces from the various gharanas that were available to him, putting them into ten thaats.

23 <https://www.culturopedia.com/indian-musics/>

24 [https://academic.oup.com/ An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism | Oxford Academic](https://academic.oup.com/An-Archaeological-History-of-Indian-Buddhism/Oxford-Academic)

25 <https://egyankosh.ac.in/123456789/68571/1/Unit-4.pdf> D:\JUNE 2020\SOE VANKATNIRADHA

26 <https://egyankosh.ac.in/123456789/68571/1/Unit-4.pdf> D:\JUNE 2020\SOE VANKATNIRADHA

MUSIC IN MODERN INDIA²⁷

A fall in court arts occurred after the British arrived in India. The majority of musicians were forced to switch to other professions since the majority of nawabs and noblemen lost their fortune and lacked the funds to squander on artists. But some gharanas were able to live and carry on. Nonetheless, Indian music generally lost prominence, and the resources and attention needed to support this art began to wane. The emergence of newer media forms was a parallel process that began to take shape at this period. Indian music therefore began to absorb Western influences with the introduction of television, radio, and other media. The popularity of "pop" or popular music was growing, and this trend grew as films became more widely available. In the 1960s, there was an attempt with fusing Indian classical music with Western music, and classical music also began to be exported from the nation. Fusion music, as it is well known, is the result of this. The Indian music scene was introduced to pop and disco in the 1970s and 1980s. In India, the pop movement gained even more popularity in the 1990s. The proliferation of information technology and the globalisation of society have led to the emergence of a wide variety of musical genres in modern India, including jazz, hip-hop, and rock. In addition to these western musical styles, traditional Indian music styles like Khayal, Ghazal, Geet, Thumri, Qawwali, and others are also included in modern music. Throughout the nation, bhajans and kirtans, two distinct genres of religious music, are also frequently sung. Alongside classical music, folk music has persisted throughout India's musical history.

Modern trends in Indian classical music²⁸

Numerous Indian classical artists and vocalists are still well-known and respected in modern times, despite the fact that classical music is unquestionably not the preferred genre among the general public. Even though classical music necessitates intense practice and dedication, it has managed to endure. The Indian guru-shishya system, in which a teacher or guru is accorded the highest respect and students or shishya follow his teachings, is thought by some to be the only factor responsible for this survival. Other reasons for its longevity include the music's aesthetic appeal, melodies, and undeniable spiritual component, as well as its highly scientific framework that allows a musician to work with complete freedom.

Indian classical music was revived in a number of ways following Indian independence. An effort was made to bring music back into the mainstream. But over time, newer media started to progressively being absorbed by modern culture. Despite persistent efforts by the Indian government to revitalise the classical arts, the current trend has fundamentally changed the landscape of Indian music. Indian classical music is sometimes perceived as being "too cerebral" or "too heavy." In recent years, however, there has been a renewed interest in the field. Classical music has had a resurgence in popularity due to the rise of fusion-loving performers and the expansion of organisations devoted to promoting the tradition's richness. Indian classical music has persevered through numerous hardships and is being practiced today.

Conclusion

An uninterrupted chronicle of the contributions made by numerous Lakshanakaras, commentators on these Treatises, famous composers, musicians, and benefactors is the history of Indian music. Modern communication and electronic media technologies have greatly aided in the dissemination and preservation of music and musicology. Indian music gradually but subtly evolved from basic Vedic scales to a highly developed art form. The study will show that the approach of reciting Vedic hymns and the rich legacy of music are actually the fundamental ideas that underpin all subsequent advancements in music as a fine art. In a word, this introductory chapter will demonstrate the significance of musical legacy. The evolution has gone through several phases, from the Vedic era to the present. In areas such as ragas, musical forms, talas, musical instruments, notation, and other areas, there is a lot of progress.

27 <https://academic.oup.com/> An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism | Oxford Academic

28 <https://www.culturopedia.com/indian-musics/>

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