

Tracing the Origin and Nature of Gandharvas and Apsaras

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Abstract

Generally, the class of Gandharvas and Apsaras is referred to heavenly musicians, servants, and entertainers. This class of entertainers has been mentioned not only in religious texts but also in other ancient written records. The present paper attempts to define these divine beings and their duty and also to trace the origin of gandharvas and apsaras mentioned the ancient religious and other texts.

Keywords: India, Religious Text, Gandharvas and Apsaras

Tracing the Origin of Gandharvas and Apsaras

Early Hindu mythology mentions Gandharvas as a minor deity but in later Rig-Vedic text it is described as semi-divine being. Vishvavasu, the composer of Rig-Veda was probably the first-born Gandharva mentioned with the name Vishvavasu DevGandharva (Singh, 2003:165). According to Taittiriya Upanishad there are two categories of Gandharvas: The first is Manushya-Gandharva or human Gandharvas and the second is the Deva-Gandharvas or heavenly Gandharvas. According to the Vedic conception there are many realms on the earthly globe which are distant from the reach of human's existence and the ordinary humans related with only three of them (Sastri, 1903: 612).

According to the Vishnu Purana, Gandharvas were the sons of Brahma. "The Gandharvas were next born, imbibing melody; drinking of the goddess of speech, they were born, and thence their appellation (gāṃ dhayantah, 'drinking speech')." In other place the same Purana mentions it as the descendants of Kashyapa and Arishta, therefore, they were the grandsons of Brahma. According to Padma Purana they are the children of Vach (the Hindu goddess of speech) Williams 2003: 499-500).

Gandharva is also considered a bright heavenly being which is sometimes called as living with his wife Apsara in the waters. Various assumptions have been made by various scholars. Some considered Gandharva as wind spirit, other thought Gandharva represents the rainbow, some others regarded Gandharva as a virtuosity of the moon and rising sun and cloud spirit etc. (Macdonell, 1898: 136).

The Gandharvas as a class of gods were for the first time mentioned in Vedic literature, presented as sky-beings associated with the preparation of Soma. According to Atharva-Veda, they were six thousand three hundred and thirty-three in number. The later mythology mentioned them as the offspring of kashyapa-prajapati and his wife Arishta. While Harivimsa, an appendix to the Mahabharata, stated that they came from the nose of the Brahma. They were skilful in music and acknowledged as heavenly musicians (Williams, 2003: 131).

Gandharvas are mentioned with their residence in Lanka, in the different kingdom of Yaksha and Rakshas in Himalayas and beyond the Himalayas in the Uttar kuru kingdom. Mahabharata mentioned their residence in the Sarasvati basin with the reference of Balarama visit to Sarasvati. They guard the gold mines of Yakshas under the leadership of Kuvera/ Kubera (Hewitt, 1889: 295).

Apsaras are Hindu (Vedic) water spirit known as dancers, musicians, defensive deities of gamblers, deities of good fortune and may also bring insanity (Micheal, 2004:26). Apsaras are the wives/ Partners of Gandharvas,

the dancers of the Indra's court and the churner of the milk ocean (Samarasinghe, 1996: 135). According to Macdonell Apsara signified a kind of nymph which is mentioned only five times in Rig-Veda. Rig-Veda (10, 123) stated her as she enjoyed with her cherished Gandharva in the highest heaven. Rig-Veda (9, 78) describes the Apsaras of the waters as blended with water and flowing to Soma juice. According to Rig-Veda (10, 136), the long-haired ascetic who had semi-divine power can move on the path of the Gandharvas and Apsaras. The Apsara of sea is mentioned by Rig-Veda (10, 103) as the wife of Gandharvas in the waters (Keith, 1989: 199).

Atharva Veda (2, 2) mentions their abode in seas where they come and go in no time and those goddesses that were connected with Vishvasu Gandharva are defined in connection with stars, lightening and clouds. The Apsaras were called as the wives of the Gandharvas, fond of dice and confer good luck at play. Atharva Veda (4, 37) stated that they were requested to leave the vicinity of human and set off to the river or bank of rivers. The Atharva-Veda (16, 118, 1-2) have mentioned three Apsaras named; Rastrabhat, Ugrampasya and Ugrajit while Urvasi and Menaka were mentioned by Vajapeya Samhita (15, 15-19).

Sakuntala, the mother of the royal family of Bharatas and Urvasi are mentioned in Sathapatha Brahmana. The Apsaras are termed in Satapatha Brahmana (11, 5 and 1) that they transform themselves into a kind of seabird.

The post Vedic texts describe the Apsaras as the frequently visitors of rivers and forest lakes in special reference to river Gangas and they are living in the Varuna's palace inside ocean. According to Yaska's Nirukita (5, 13) the probable etymological meaning of the word is "moving in the waters" (Macdonell, 1898: 134). The oldest conception regarding Apsaras was described in the early Vedic text where they were described as celestial nymphs of waters and the wives of Gandharvas. But in later literature like Samhitas they are describes in connection with earth in special reference to trees.

Atharva Veda (4, 37) mentions them as living in banyans and fig trees where their musical instruments resound. The mentioned trees are also mentioned by other texts as the abodes of Gandharvas and Apsaras. According to Atharva Veda (40, 2) the Gandharvas and Apsaras in such trees are plead to be hopeful to a passing wedding procession.

The Sathapatha Brahmana (II, 6, 1) describes the Apsaras as the dancers, singers, and musicians. Post Vedic literature mentions mountains, either actual or mythical as their beloved resorts. Atharva Veda (2, 35 etc) mentions that people were feared of Apsaras can do magic and can cause mental disorder against them (Ibid: 135). The Sathapatha Brahmana (13, 4 and 3) describes that the love of the beautiful Apsaras were sometimes also hired by men. The union of man and Apsara is only once mentioned in Vedic text. While the Sathapatha Brahmana (10, 10) mentioned the Gandharva and the aqueous Apsara as the parents of Yama and Yami.

The association of Gandharva with the water spirit is a usual marriage; therefore, he is connected with the wedding ceremony. He is also connected with Soma therefor the unmarried girl is said to belong to Soma. In later literature, Vishvasu Gandharva is regarded as the rival of the husband of new wedded girl during the first days of marriage which indicates Gandharva's love for women. The Gandharvas and Apsaras are prayed for offspring because they are also believed as fertility god and goddesses (Macdonell, 1898: 136). According to Atharva-Veda (4, 34, 3) Yama is enjoying the company of Apsaras in another world and these Apsaras are connected with Soma. The Apsaras decorate the court of Yama and Varuna before meeting with Indrasabha (Ibid: 137).

The Vedas did not mention Apsaras as a class but Urvasi and some other mentioned by its name. Manu mentioned it that Apsaras were created by the seven Manus and the ancestors of the mankind. Their origin is attributed to churning of the ocean by the Epic poem "Ramayana" and Puranic account is also agreed on their origin. It is generally believed that when they arose from the waters the gods and Asuras would not wed them,

thus they became the common property of both classes. The Apsaras occasionally called the “wives of the gods” and “daughters of pleasure” (Wilkins, 1900: 482).

Fourteen ganas/classes of them are mentioned in Vayu Puraanas while Hari Vanci mentions seven classes of Apsaras. Apsaras are divided into two categories i.e., “Daivika or Divine” and “Laukika or worldly.” The divine ones are said to be ten and the worldly are thirty-four in number. They are believing as the heavenly charmers who fascinating the heroes, alluring the ascetic sages from their devotion and self-flagellations. According to Kasi khand they are forty-five million but only one thousand and sixty are the principal one. The Apsaras then be a magical and be a fairy-like beings, beautiful and sensuous. They are the wives or mistresses of Gandharvas and not prudish. They have numerous amours upon earth, and they are the rewards in the heaven of Indra for those heroes who fall in the battle. They bestowed with the power of changing their forms and give good luck the favoured ones (Ibid: 483).

Vishvasu DevaGandharva:

Vishvasu was probably the eldest Gandharva mentioned with the name of Vishvasu Dev Gandharva in early Hindu mythology. It is believed that Vishvasu composed the Rig-Veda (10.139). Vishvasu was existed during the Ram’s era. In Valmiki Ramayana the incomplete genealogy of Ruru is given according to which Ravana’s grand uncle Malyavan had married his daughter Anala to Vishvasu. Thus, Vishvasu should be one generation prior to Ram. His daughter Pramadwara, who was raised by sthulakesha rishi and married to Ruru Rishi. According to this genealogy Ruru rishi is the descendant of Gritsmada rishi who was 20-25 generations prior to Ruru rishi while the genealogy mentioned 12-13 names. The given names go thus Gritsamada->Sucheta->Varcha->Vihavya ->Vitatya ->Satya-> Santa ->Shrava ->Tama ->Prakash -

>Vageendra ->Pramati ->Ruru. In Rig-Veda (1 0.85), Vishvasu is described as a protector of virgins and transfers his role at the time of marriage to another (Singh, 2003:165).

The wedding poem from Rig-Veda (10; 85.22) is translated by O’Flahert; “Mount the world of immorality, O Surya that is adorned with red flowers... Prepare an exquisite wedding voyage for your husband. "Go away from here! For this woman has a husband.” “Thus, I implore Vishvasu with words of praise as I bow to him.” “Look for another girl who is ripe and still lives in her father’s house.” “That is your birth right find it.” “Go away from here, Vishvasu, we implore you as we I bow.” “Look for another girl, willing and ready.” “Leave the wife to unite with her husband.” “May the roads be straight and thorn less on which our friends go courting.” “May Arya man and Bhaga united lead us together.” “O Gods, may the united household be easy to manage.” “I free you from Varuna’s snare, with which the gentle Savitr bound you.” “In the seat of the Law, in the world of good action, I place you unbanned with your husband.” “I free her from here, but not from there.” “I have bound her firmly there, so that through the grace of Indra.” “She will have fine sons and will be fortunate in her husband’s love” (Chawla, 1994:2824).

Atharva-Veda (2, 2.1) mentioned Vishvasu as a heavenly god and having his abode in the heaven. He is one among the divine Gandharvas, the lord of the creatures, the only Gandharva who is praised and venerated by men. In Atharva-Veda (2, 2-2) he is mentioned as bright as the sun, and he take away the wrath of the gods. While in Atharva-Veda (2, 2-3) he is describes as living in union among the Apsaras and he is faultless (Shende, 1949: 331).

One hundred such units of delight which the Manushya Gandharva has make the delight of the deva Gandharva. A sage loaded with disclosure and free from all longings likewise has a similar bliss.” In legend of Jagannat, Manoj Das mentions Vishvasu as the Savara chieftain, devotee of Vishnu and the father of

Lalitha. According to this story Vishvasu married his daughter to Vidyapati the member of Indradyumna's court and continued to live in that charismatic forestry world. Soon he was attracted by the daily practice of home leaving with handful of flowers early in the morning of Vishvasu. Vishvasu goes daily even in cold, fog and in bad weather conditions and return after an hour. Vidyapati asked his wife Lalita about her father's routine of going daily. She was ethically bound to tell him the story about her father. She said that there is a cave unknown to anyone except for my father where there is a most sacred object of our line, and my father daily goes there to pay his submission to the sacred object daily. Vidyapati was surprised with the reply of his wife thus he asked her "was he nearing the fulfilment of his mission"? "I must have the privilege to see the object." On a lot of persuasion her father agreed that Vidyapati be led into the cave but with tied eyes that he could not see the direction.

When he was brought and his eyes were unleashed into the cave, he was amazed when see the bluish golden light. But object was in a stone casket but not in physical form. The scene made him believe that it was the divine object. Now he was in the mission to acquire the object and give it to the king Indradyumna of Puri. He entered the cave and picked up the casket. The king unthinkingly realized that the object that fetched by Vidyapati must have divine presence and must be in a physical form. He was guided in a dream to go to the beach in morning time and locate a drifting log out of which the form of the object was to be carved. The king was pleased to see a large log floating on the waters. The log was tied by his men to the boat to bring it out of the sea but in vain. More boats and men were sent but they also all in vain.

King saw Vishvasu in his dream sitting in front the empty cave in evening time without any food like the king during the whole day. And the daughter of Vishvasu was also weeping non-stop. Vidyapati led the king to the forest in the morning where he met Vishvasu and apologized for the misconduct of his envoy. He convinced him that there was a period for everything, and that the opportunity had arrived for the god in his own authority to be uncovered to all. That was the Lord's will. The Vishvasu accepted the request of the king and came along him to pull the log to the shore. When, they pull it, the log came ashore easily. The question of what the form of the deity should be was not resolved.

At Kalinga there were sculptors' experts in wood works not in rock sculpting. The king was searching for an expert of stone sculpting. One day an old man approached the king and offer to carry out the job but on the condition that no one will be allowed to see him during his until the work come to an end. The king unthinkingly accepted the offer, and a large hall was allotted. All the doors were shut, and the stranger began his work. There were many reservations from the queen Gundicha Devi's side, but the king had no distrust about the capability of the sculptor. The Gundicha Devi used to hear the work in progress daily but once, after many days she did not hear the sound and the same silence was observed again the next day too. Then she forcefully opened the doors of the hall to see the reason of the silence. The old man was shocked and disappeared suddenly. The old man was none other than VisvaKarma. The Indradyumna was so much saddened for the image was left incomplete. But the king heard a sublime voice that told him that this was the form of the object, and he should worship it. The incompleteness of the image suggests the imperfection of mankind. The object was brought and placed inside the lotus like navel of the deity. Thus, the regular worship of the enshrined deity was started (Das, 2015:180-81).

The priest of the lord was from among the descendants of Vishvasu through her daughters and Vidyapati. The object, which was worshipped by Vishvasu, and his forefathers was according to the legend, some of relics of Sri Krishna. The legend says that Sri Krishna was killed unintentionally by Jara Savara in the forest adjacent to Prabhas. His feet were mistakenly shown to Jara Savara as the ears of a deer, and he shot an arrow which resulted in the death of Sri Krishna. The last rites of Sri Krishna's death were performed together by Jara Savara and Arjuna.

The earthly remains were dedicated to the ocean while some of them were preserved by Jara Savara. Krishna no uncertainty had guaranteed him that he had done nothing erroneous and had just become an instrument of what had just been fortunately destined. He left his native place of living regretfully and reached to Kaling and settled down there in the forest known as Kantilo. The people of his clan either came along him or they joined him later, but he became the chieftain of his clan there. Thus, the relics of Sri Krishna became the stuff of worship of this dynasty for several generations up to his direct descendant “Vishvvasu” (Das, 2015:182). Some verses from the sacred Hindu literature testify that; Vishvvasu was a heavenly Gandharva, he was the leader of Gandharvas and was the guardian of Soma rasa. This category of Gandharvas make up the celestial musician and they itself entertain the higher devas and perform in the court of Indra.

Urvashi:

Urvashi was an Apsara born from the thigh of a mortal instead of her birth or creation in the heaven by divines. She was born due to the conflict between sage Narayana and Indra. According to the legend, the grandsons of Brahma from his son Dharma were Nara and Narayana. They were warming up the seat of Indra with their amazing Tapas or austerities. Indra tried to stop them from getting power by using his power, boons, fear and by temptation of his heavenly gorgeousness. The fear and boon used by Indra had no effect to stop Narayana and in response he slapped Indra’s thigh to teach him lesson. Thus, Urvashi was born from the thigh. Urvashi means the one who born from the Uru/thigh. Initially she was in excellence of all the Apsaras. On that occasion other beautiful women were also created, and all were presented to Indra. Indra left for his abode along with the new presents and his celestials and the Sage apologized by him. She was very much skillful in dancing and singing that she got eleventh position in competition in Indra’s heaven. But later, she was cursed to be born on earth. According to Devi Bhagavata she was cursed by Brahma while in Bhagavata purana she was cursed by Mitravaruna. Urvashi had heard about Pururvas, the handsome king, fall in love with him and married him. (Williams, 2003: 286).

The story is mentioned in Rig-Veda (10. 129) has been copied to Puranas. According to the story, due to the execration of Indra and Varuna, Urvashi was compelled to leave heaven. Pururavas, a human king fall deeply in love with her and she agreed on certain conditions. She said, “I have two lambs which must always remain with me both by day and night; you must never be seen by me undressed; and I must eat only ghee/butter” (Wilkins, 1900: 484). Indra soon missed Urvashi and sent Gandharvas for bringing her back to heaven. The Gandhrvas knew that she married a human king on the above-mentioned conditions. So, the lambs were pulled out by Gandharvas when they were in the bedroom. The king rushed after the lambs to rescue them while he was undressed, trusting to darkness may hide him. But at this time the sky was lit by the Gandharvas with a bolt of lightning (Williams, 2003: 286). And unluckily his body was shown by a flash of light to her, thus the condition of her living with him being broken and she returned to her heavenly abode. Pururavas was distracted at his loss and strolled everywhere in search of her. At last, he was successful in his mission to find her and took a promise from her that she would meet him yearly and present him with a son. She guaranteed him after five visits that he would succeed if he offered a sacrifice with the expressed object. He became Gandharva by following her advice and got eternal possession of his strange bride (Wilkins, 1900: 484).

Rig-Veda (10. 95.16) mentions the story of Urvashi and the king Pururva that they were in love with each other secretly for four years which resulted in marriage when Urvashi became pregnant. Soon after this she would have claimed her rights and an honorable place in Pururva’s family. The demands could not have been straightforwardly given in the Pururva’s society, and in response she made the decision of leaving his home

forever. After sometimes Pururvas came to know Urvashi has given birth to a son. Thus, he tried his best to find and persuade her for coming back to home. Their conversation is recorded in Rig-Veda (10. 95.3), where Pururvas is apologizing for his previous mistake. He further mentioned in Rig-Veda (10. 95. 17), telling Urvashi that, one must not try to separate husband and wife even if it goes against the social order. The Rig-Veda (10, 95. 17) mentions that, when Urvashi did not accept his requests, she was assured that she would be the actual owner of his wealth and property, but still she did not accept his proposal and refused to be back as his wife even in the next life (Gaur, 1974: 143). The story of Pururvas and Urvashi becomes more interesting and obscure in Rig-Veda (10. 95), which drawn the attention of many scholars and priest of those days. These priests and scholars wrote the story in their own version without any bindings and limitations. According to Geldner the story is mentioned in eight different sources, which include Katthakam, Satapatha Brahmana, Harivimsha Purana, the commentary of Shadguru Shishya on Sarvanukramani, Brhad-devata, Vishnu Purana, Mahabharata and Kathasaritsagara. Although, apart from these eight sources, the story is also narrated by Vayu Purana, Ramayana and Matsya Purana. The story got more popularity when Kalidasa wrote it in one of his best plays Vikramorvasiyam (Ibid: 142).

Early Tamil literature also mentions Urvashi. According to Tamil epic Silapadhikaram Madhavi was the famous dancer from the lineage of another Madhavi. And the second Madhavi was none other than Urvashi herself, who was born in this mortal world because of curse. She was descendant due to the exchange of loving glance with Jayanta in a divine gathering in the presence of Agastya, Indra and Narada. So, they both were cursed by Agastya. Jayanta was cursed to be born as bamboo while Urvashi to be born as mortal (Janaki, 1987: 526).

The Epic Mahabharat describes an event of heaven in which Urvashi come close to Arjuna during his visit to heaven. The same event is also mentioned in all sources of the south, Bengali and Devanagri version of the North while it is totally absent in Kashmiri version. We know about an event when Indra had observed Arjun giving unusual attention to Urvashi. Therefore, he requested Chitrasena to tell Urvashi for visiting Arjuna at evening. She went to Arjuna as was directed but he did not attract towards her. She enraged and cursed him to be live like a eunuch without specification the duration of the curse. When Indra came to know about this incident, he supported Arjuna by stating that the curse would assist him with living like a Brhannada during his term of living in seclusion/ajnatavasa. Thus, the effect of his curse was reduced to only one year by Indra (Mehendale, 2001: 198).

The story of Urvashi's cursed is mentioned in Puranas also with a difference from the above-mentioned stories. According to Puranic version of the event, it is mentioned that the sage Durvasa or Nath-yogi of later period was called to the Indra's heaven as an honors guest. A dance was organized for him and Apsara Urvashi was the dancer, but the charming concubine was discouraged: his austere expressions were in contradiction with her gorgeousness and adorn form (Misra, 1966: 91). Due to her dance out of rhythm the enraged sage cursed her to descend to earth and become a woman at night and a ghor/mare at daytime. She would only be free from the curse when she will have three and a half strikes a Vajra-weapon. In Purana version there is no love story mentioned between Urvashi and Puruvas while in above mentioned versions of the legends. In Purana she is defined as a courtesan, and she is turns into a mare due to the curse (Orsini. 2015: 338). Epic Purana also mentions her died after wandering on earth in the forest of flowers and dense trees. Dangvi, the king of Danggi-desa was informed by his gardener about the death of a beautiful mare. When he saw the beautiful mare and is smitten at once (Misra, 1966: 93-4). But when he came face to face the mare escaped. All his horsemen failed to chase her on the King was left to follow her at nightfall. He saw that the mare was transformed into a beautiful woman, and he frightened at first but did not stop to follow

(O'Flaherty, 1979:8). Dangvai brought the mare to his palace which was welcomed by the queen and bedecked it with fine dress. The mare was kept secretly in the palace and Dangvai used to spend all his time with her. Eventually one of his queens, Padmavati, came to know the truth. The Puranic messenger, Narada, informed Krishna in the meantime about the beauty of the mare and persuaded him to snatch her from the king Dangvai. To obtain the mare, Indra had sent an envoy to investigate about the truth of Narada's report. Dangvai refused that he has no such kind of mare and told the envoy that whichever elephant or horse you want; I will give it to you. Then he was threatened by Krishna that if he wants to save his horse, he should surrender up his mare (Misra, 1966:100).

Dangvai made a vow that "he will never surrender the mare as long as he is alive." He called Krishna as a bad king; whose master/ Thakura has always been seen forcibly taking someone else's wife (Orsini, 2015: 340). "Whenever a god/king behaves poorly, how can his subjects live"? If a Thakura/lord does not observe dharma, dwelling in hell is his fate. Dangvai said that what sin I have committed against Krishna that he wants to snatch my mare. He decided that I would leave the country for the sake of mare rather than to hand over it to Krishna. Dangvai was advised by each of the envoy to surrender the mare to Krishna or be ready for his wrath. He was also advised by his wives to give up the mare to Krishna and beg forgiveness. But Dangvai preferred to leave for an exile (Misra, 1966:100). Dangvai's exile took him to the several mythical beings like, Shesh-Naga, the Ocean, Kubera, Vibhishana, Yudhishtira and Duryodhana. But all of them refused to give him shelter from the Krishna because they were indebted to Krishna (Ibid: 104). After the refusal of all these beings he decided to kill himself. For this he prepared a great fire while crying loudly at the bank of river Ganga. He was going to burn himself along with the beautiful Urvashi/mare. Fortunately, in the meantime Subhadra the half-sister of Krishna and wife of Arjuna has come for getting bath in the river. Profoundly struck by seeing such misery, she enquires after his destiny and afterward sets out to support him, whatever the results (Ibid: 110).

Conclusion:

Gandharvas are mentioned as a class of gods in Vedic literature where they are sky-beings linked with the preparation of Soma. They are celestial musicians and dancers and living with Apsaras. They are also mentioned in Vedic literature as the assistants of Indra against many sages and rakshasas. In later mythology they are the off-spring of Kashyapa-parjapati and his spouse Arishta. In Mahabharata they were born from the nose of the Brahma while in Vishnu-Purana they are the sons of Brahma. In Upanishad the two categories of Gandharvas are the human Gandharvas/ Manushya Gandharvas and heavenly Gandharvas/ Dev-Gandharvas. No specific abode is mentioned for the residence of Gandharvas. While they were described living in many abodes of Yakshas and Rakshas, living in Himalayas, beyond in the Uttarakuru's kingdom and in Sarasvati basin. They were the guardians of the gold mines under the leadership of Yaksha Kubera.

Apsaras were described in Rig-Veda as residing in heavens with Gandharvas, water-spirit, semi-divine beings while in Atharva-Veda they live in the waters, linked with stars, lightning and clouds, fond of dice and the protective deities of gamblers. According to Satapatha Brahmana they can transform themselves into a seabird. They are believed in post Vedic literature as the regular visitors of forest lakes and rivers and their abode is inside the ocean in the Varuna palace. Apsaras were believed as the protector deities of virgin girls and fertility goddesses.

Gandharvas and Apsaras are beauty and melody of nature around us. Their presence is reflected from the natural beauty and music of water, wind and cloud. It is also reflected through rainbow, moon and rising sun. They are dancers and musicians whose abode is tress where they reside hoping for a passing procession of

wedding so that they can also participate in the celebrations. Thus, they not only live within the heavens to entertain gods and goddesses but also live around humans and celebrate with them. They are also associated with the preparation of Soma juice and are also considered the bringers of good fortune and even fertility. They are symbols of happiness.

As per the textual evidence the Gandharvas and Apsaras can be found from the time of the Vedas and thus it can be concluded that these celestial beings have their origin right from the beginning when the bases of Sanathana Dharma or Hinduism were being laid.

As the primitive tribes might have had leaders, workers and entertainers so was developed for the pantheon of gods. And, thus, the entertainers (Gandharvas and Apsaras in our case) were there right from the vague establishment of the bases of the religion (Indian religions in our case).

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