

# FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE AN ANTHOLOGY

VOL. I

*Chief Editor*

HEMANGO BISWAS

*Associate Editors*

KHALED CHOUDHURY

GAGAN DUTTA

SANAT KUMAR BOSE

SAMIK BANDYOPADHYAY

RANAJIT SINHA

ABANI ROY



FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
CALCUTTA

October 1, 1967

*Published by*  
Khaled Choudhury  
*On behalf of*

Folk Music and Culture Research Institute  
21A North Ramp - Calcutta 17 - India

*Printed by*  
Debnath Nath M.A. B.L.  
Sambhata Press Private Ltd  
76 B B Ganguly Street - Calcutta 12

*Price*  
Rupees 10.00  
25 Shillings  
\$ 4.50

*Distributors*  
KATHASHILPA  
19 Shyamacharan De Street  
CALCUTTA 12 - INDIA

*Cover Design*  
*Illustrations & Maps by*  
Khaled Choudhury  
Cover - Folk Musicians  
Terracotta panel (1694 A.D.) from a Temple  
in Bishnupur, Bankura, West Bengal

## FOREWORD

The Folk Music and Folklore Research Institute, Calcutta, came into being only three years back. The awareness of an impending crisis in folk music impelled us to form this Institute. This crisis in folk music has set in in the form of its gross commercial distortion and consequent falsification.

A folk melody is not merely a literary or a musical work, but a product of the continuous process of life of a people. Folk tunes grow and develop in this process. Songs, ballads and lores growing out of new experiences are constantly enriching the rich folk tradition.

It is unfortunate that folk music and folklore, as yet, has remained just a branch of special study for a handful of academicians or enthusiasts. Moreover, in our country studies in folk music till now have been primarily limited to the spheres of sociology and literature, but almost nothing has been done so far to study the musicological characteristics that distinguish folk songs of one region from those of another. Our primary emphasis in this volume has been on the musicological aspects of folk music.

The scope of the volume, however, has been somewhat expanded by the inclusion of a number of articles on general theoretical problems and folk music traditions abroad. But this volume has been primarily limited to a study of the folk songs of the North Eastern region of the country—a study which is admittedly anything but comprehensive. We however sincerely regret that we have failed to obtain a single article on the rich folk songs of Orissa, Manipur and many other regions, in spite of our best efforts.

We have been compelled to publish the Anthology in English for easier communication. But we have been aware all along of the difficulties involved in translation and that it is practically impossible to capture in translation the delicate nuances of the folk lyrics. A few articles originally written in languages other than English have had to be edited when translation proved difficult. Some of these articles have suffered in the process and we owe a sincere apology to the authors who had worked so hard on them.

We have used two systems of notations for every song referred to, the Staff Notation, and the Bhatkhande system of Notation using Roman letters. We were compelled to go in for this double system of Notation for a number of reasons, viz., the general lack of familiarity in this country with Staff Notation, outside a limited sphere of experts.

Maps, wherever used, indicate not geographical regions but regions distinguished by a particular style of folk music or dialect.

The selective bibliography at the end covers publications on the folk music of North-Eastern India. The bibliography is not exhaustive. It gives a list of books that we found useful and readily available in libraries. Omissions of important titles, if any, are not intentional.

## A NOTE ON transliteration

Diacritical marks expressing distinctive sounds of alphabets of Indian languages pose a difficult problem in respect of proper transliteration. In this Anthology it was not possible to use the International Phonetic system. Adherence to a comprehensive rendering in phonetic terms all the unaspirated voiceless plosives, glide element of diphthongs etc. also gave rise to seemingly insurmountable problems more aggravated by the non availability of suitable type-faces from the printer. For these reasons, we have followed a method in which all consonant aspirates incorporating the 'h' sound are shown with the letter 'h', whereas long vowels are marked in the proper manner. Palatals like 'j' and 'ç', etc., retroflex 'r' and two kinds of short and long liquid nasalisations . - , = have been used for the convenience of the reader.

### NOTES ON INDIAN NOTATION SYSTEM

- I. Indian music scale of twelve semitones -

S R Ṙ G Ġ M M̄ P D Ḋ N N̄

'Komal' is indicated by a line below the notes and 'Kodi' madhyam by a line on top of M

- II. Octaves . Higher and lower Octaves are indicated by a dot on the top and bottom of the notes.

Higher Octave : S R G Ṁ P etc.  
Lower Octave : S Ṙ Ġ Ṁ P etc.

- III. Grace Notes . Grace notes are indicated by tiny notes at the top left and right of the main note

PM PN or MGR SG etc

- IV. 'Sruti' is indicated by tiny 1, 2 or 3 on the top right of the main note.

R<sup>1</sup>, G<sup>2</sup>, D<sup>3</sup> etc.

- VI. 'Mih' or gliding notes are indicated by a slur on the top or bottom of the relative notes.

N̄S or ḠR etc.

- VII. A cracked vocal sound is indicated by a star on the left top of the note

\*P \*R etc.

- VIII. Matrās : One single unit is one mātrā. When prolonged, it is followed by dashes as the required units to cover the duration. There will be no sound in the parallel line of the wordings when there is no dash.

| M — — | G R — |  
| 11 — — | ti (hi) — |

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

DR. TRILOKHAN PANDE M.A. PH.D.

Department of Hindi University of Gorakhpur (U.P.)

DR. K. D. UPADHYAYA M.A. PH.D.

Department of Hindi Government College Gyanpur (U.P.) Member Executive Board, Society for Asian Folklore Bloomington Indiana U.S.A. Edited *Studies in Bhojpur Folk literature*

MANIKLAL SINHA M.A. B.T.

Engaged in research on Kansai culture caste-culture-language of *Rajshahi* Founder Secretary *Bangya Sahitya Parishad* Bishnupur Bānkura (West Bengal).

PURNA CHANDRA DAS

Engaged in Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art since 1944 made important collection of antiquities for the Museum.

MANIS K. RAJIA

Research Officer Cultural Research Institute Govt of West Bengal Associated as author in publications *The Rabhas of W. Bengal*, *The Ahalas of Bankura*, *The Garos*, *The Oraons of the Sunderbans*

DR. CHARU SANYAL

Veteran authority on tribal life and culture of northern Bengal Author of publications *Rajabanshees of North Bengal*, *Monograph on The Totos* both published by the Asiatic Society

M. M. GURUNG

Regular contributor to various journals on folklore and folk music

SMT. NIHAR BARUA

Founder President Folkmusic and Folklore Research Institute, Calcutta. Collects folklore and folkmusic of Goalpara, Assam.

DR. PRAFULLADUTTA GOSWAMI

Head of the Department Tribal culture and Folklore Research University of Gauhati (Assam) Member Executive Board Society for Asian Folklore, Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A.

FILAIN LALOO

Violinist of distinction Working on tribal music of Assam

DR. HEINZ MODE

Director Archaeological Institute Martin Luther University Halle (Saale) G.D.R.

SWAMI PARAMPANTHI

Author of *Advaita Vedanta and Modern Physics*, *The Cardinal Doctrine of Hinduism* etc

PETER SEEGER

World renowned American folk-singer Associate Editor *Sing-Out*

SANKAR SEN GUPTA

Editor *Folklore* (a monthly) Author of *Folklorists of Bengal* (1965) *ABibliography of Indian Folklore and related subjects* (1967), *Studies in Indian Folk Culture* (Edited with Dr. K. D. Upadhyaya)

PIYUSH K. MAHAPATRA M.A., DIP. LIB. D. PHIL.

Edited *Dharmamangala* by Ghanaram Chakrabarty Edited *Lalan Gitika* with Dr. Moulai Das Both published by the University of Calcutta. Author *Folklore Library*

# CONTENTS

ON FOLK MUSIC AND FOLKLORE EXCERPTS	1
<i>Rabindranath Tagore</i>	
SOME BIHĀRI FOLK SONGS	6
<i>G A Grierson (1851-1951)</i>	
BHOJPURI FOLKLORE AND FOLK MUSIC	16
<i>Dr Trilochan Pande</i>	
FOLKLORE AND FOLK MUSIC OF U P	25
<i>Dr K D Upadhyaya</i>	
FOLKSONGS OF SOUTH RADH	33
<i>Maniklal Sinha</i>	
SOME ASPECTS OF FOLKSONGS OF MEDINIPUR	39
<i>Purna Chandra Das</i>	
BĀUL SONGS OF BENGAL	46
<i>Sanat Kumar Bose</i>	
FOLKSONGS OF THE TRIBALS OF WEST BENGAL	57
<i>Manis K Raha</i>	
THE TOTOS THEIR LIFE AND MUSIC	82
<i>Dr Charu Ch Sanyal</i>	
A BRIEF SURVEY OF NEPALESE FOLKSONGS	87
<i>M M Gurung</i>	
SONGS THAT GROW OUT OF A LEGEND	93
<i>Smt Nihar Barua</i>	
ASSAMESE FOLKSONGS A GENERAL SURVEY	106
<i>Dr Profulladutta Goswami</i>	
FOLK MUSIC OF KHASI AND JAYANTIA HILLS	118
<i>Filkin Laloo</i>	
ON FOLKTALES FOLKLORES AND MODERN AGE	127
<i>Dr Hein Mode</i>	

NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN AMERICAN FOLKSONGS AND FOLKLORE	136
<i>Swami Parampanthi</i>	
POPULARISATION OF FOLKSONGS IN U S A	139
<i>Peter Seeger</i>	
AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOLKLORISTIC ACTIVITIES IN BENGAL EARLY PERIOD	143
<i>Sankar Sen Gupta</i>	
THE DECLINE OF FOLKSONGS	151
<i>Jasimuddin</i>	
FOLKSONGS PROBLEMS OF COLLECTING AND EDITING	156
<i>Dr Pivush K Mahapatra</i>	
A GLORIOUS HERITAGE	165
<i>Hemango Biswas</i>	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	177

## TAGORE ON FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE EXCERPTS

Since 1899 folk songs and nursery rhymes collected by Rabindranath Tagore started appearing regularly in the pages of his monthly, *Sādhānā* and also in the official organ of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat. It may well be presumed therefore that the work of collection must have commenced a few years earlier. In 1883 while a mere youth of 22, the monthly *Bharati* published a review of his compilation of devotional songs of rural and folk origin entitled "Sangit Samgraha." In the course of this review he made a trenchant comment on the artificial tone of speech and writing affected by the England returned elite of Bengal and contrasted it with the easy flow and natural vigour of Bengali folk literature. "Universal love and such like high flown sentiments," he said, "sound quite pleasing to our ears when we hear them spoken by foreigners. Why should the same sentiments, sung from door to door by our mendicants and beggars make no impact on our mind and heart?" Concluding he observed "Folk poetry and folk songs, whatever be their subject matter and whichever the sect or community they originate from deserve to be assiduously collected by all lovers of literature in the best interests of enriching our mother tongue. They enable us to get better acquainted with our fellow men and with their hopes and aspirations joys and sorrows. It does not call for any great effort on our part to write down the songs sung by our mendicant beggars and boatmen. Incidentally if some of our readers would take the trouble of collecting folk songs of current vogue and send them on to us we shall be most pleased to publish them in the pages of *Bharati*."

The initiative taken by Rabindranath and his infectious enthusiasm for the beauty of the form and contents of folk literature and folk songs, induced the attention of our literati to the task of collecting them systematically.

Not only was his own literary creation enriched by the folk-element of Bengal's culture, his musical compositions and even his concept of the religion of man derived inspiration therefrom. In order to give some idea of this pervasive influence in the shaping of his distinctive genius let us quote below a few excerpts from Rabindranath's writings.

Patter, patter, falls the rain  
River's going to flood again

In my boyhood days this simple rhyme used to keep me spell bound. I cannot say I have outgrown that spell although I have grown in years. Unless I recall the powerful spell binding qualities of the folk rhymes and how these affect the young and old alike, I cannot have a clear notion as to what constitutes their beauty and magic. Man's stupendous efforts and strenuous intellectual exercises in such fields of literature as epic and poetry, philosophy and ethics are everyday being consigned to the limbo of oblivion while the easy flow of these effortless meaningless and incoherent jingles remains a powerful current in the stream of folk consciousness down the ages.

Why should this be so?

It is because these rhymes have in them certain elements that endure. Who composed them and in what era—is immaterial. The question of date and time



simply does not operate here. Because of their inherent abiding qualities, they become invested with immortality the instant they are born—whether they were composed today or thousands of years ago.

At times we discover foot prints of some prehistoric birds—now gone extinct, in some strata of fossilized rock which was once upon a time a beach of soft clay at the edge of some sea, now wiped out of the face of this ancient planet of ours. The traces remain where these were originally made. Nobody sculpted them or interpolated them in replica. In the same manner we may discover in these folk-rhymes many a trace of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain—coming down the ages. Entwined in their broken rhymes one may still trace many a tale of hurt and suffering. They are fragments of emotions and sentiments from the bygone days. They are like bits and chunks of an iceberg set adrift in the sea of time. Floating long distances, the waves have at last tossed these over to the shore of our present times. The instant we take them up and cherish them in the warmth of our heart, these frozen bits of forgotten woes dissolve into tears and come to life once again.

In the busy countryside, fields are tilled, ferryboats ply between one landing and another, plough shares are hammered into shape in the smithy, pounding beams are sawed and planed in the carpenter's workshop, and trinkets are fashioned at the goldsmith's. Here, deep under the surface of the act of everyday living an effort is constantly in progress to turn out a type of literature. Bits and fragments of disparate activities are being woven into a kind of unity to be offered as a garland, as it were, to the mistress of all times.

In the intervals of the variegated tasks of life, through the openings of the bamboo flute of rural existence, the wind plays a melody of sharps and flats.

As one goes adrift in the Padmā, one can hear the sharp clamour of the water birds busily disporting themselves in the sandbanks. No one would mistake their cries for the sophisticated true to scale music of the cuckoo calling. Nevertheless, it will perhaps not be inappropriate to describe this hue and clamour of the water-birds as the symphony of the Padma. Whether this music is true to scale or not, whether all the notes harmonize or not, as one goes adrift on the lazy stream, with the air so pure and the sun so genial of a winter morning, one can only describe it as a resonant song of the joy of life of innumerable feathered creatures.

Folk literature as also folk music may not soar high in their imaginative flights. They may not have the ostentation of classical music with its flourish and elaboration. But deep in their heart, there is a melody of pure joy. Besides, the poet who is able to make a song of the everyday life of the village—endowing it with rhyme and rhythm—gives voice to the inarticulate soul of the masses.

These songs are like the cry of the migrant geese on the sandbanks of the Padma. Niceties of the syntax and grammar of classical music are not for them.

What if the inspiration of the folk poet or composer operates within a strictly narrow field? The very limitation knits the neighbourhood in an intimacy of relationship. Not for him the vertical flight of a poet of imagination. In his lateral or horizontal movement he must embrace an entire countryside and his songs must send forth echoes in thousands of hearts.

Therefore if we are to accept (as we must) folk songs, nursery rhymes and folk tales—all of which powerfully affect the folk mind—as literature we must read them as an inseparable part of the life of our people in the countryside. It is they who discovered in them a vitality and a meaning notwithstanding their broken metres and lame rhymes.

*(Gramya Sahitya or Folk Literature 1898)*

We have no better product of indigenous manufacture than 'Thakurmar Jhuli', Granny's Bag of Stories compiled by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar. Until recently to our great misfortune even this granny's bag had to be made of cloth imported from the textile mills of Manchester. Our children were in danger of being fed exclusively on a diet of fairy tales of England and our company of story manufacturing grannies were on the verge of ruination and bankruptcy.

*(Preface to Thakurmar Jhuli Bengali folk tales compiled by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar 1907)*

There is no end of material that deserves to be collected and compiled. Rituals and festivals observed in Bengal differ from one region to another. Even our local social customs show wide divergence. Besides there are folk rhymes, nursery rhymes and folk songs replete with local colour that simply cry for recognition.

It is not as if we do not study anthropology or ethnology. If all our reading of text books on these subjects does not induce an enquiring spirit, a healthy curiosity to learn about the ways of Hadis, Doms, Kaivartas, Bagdis and similar sub-castes or sects who live almost next door to us, we then come to realise what a lamentable gap separates our knowledge from reality. Our almost superstitious awe of the text book does not permit us to read the book of life of which the text book is but an imperfect mirror.

*(Address to the students of the Calcutta University in 1912)*

Those familiar with my writings surely know that in many of them I have expressed my deep interest in the Baul songs of Bengal. While in *Shilaidah* I used to meet Bauls fairly frequently, I would sit with them over long hours and discourse with them on subjects of our mutual interest. A number of my songs are cast in the Baul mode. There are others in which the Baul element has mixed and mingled with the classical—by accident or design. That is proof enough.

if proof is at all needed, that at some stage of my career, I absorbed the melody and message of the Bāuls to such an extent that these became a part of my being  
*(Introduction to Md Mansooruddin's compilation Haramoni, 1934)*

I mention in connection with my personal experience some songs which I have often heard from wandering village singers, belonging to the popular sect of Bengal, called Bauls who have no images, temples, scriptures, or ceremonials, who declare in their songs the divinity of Man, and express for him an intense feeling of love. Coming from men who are unsophisticated, living a simple life in obscurity, it gives us a clue to the inner meaning of all religions. For it suggests that these religions are never about a God of cosmic force, but rather about the God of human personality.

About this time, one day I chanced to hear a song from a beggar belonging to the Baul sect of Bengal. We have in the modern Indian religion deities of different names, forms and mythology, some Vedic and others aboriginal. They have their special sectarian idioms and associations that give emotional satisfaction to those who are accustomed to their hypnotic influences. Some of them may have their aesthetic value to me and others philosophical significance overencumbered by the exuberant distraction of legendary myths. But what struck me in this simple song was a religious expression that was neither grossly concrete, full of crude details, nor metaphysical in its rarified transcendentalism. At the same time it was alive with an emotional sincerity. It spoke of an intense yearning of the heart for the divine which is in Man and not in the temple, or scriptures, in images and symbols. The worshipper addresses his songs to Man the ideal, and says .

Temples and mosques obstruct thy path,  
 and I fail to hear thy call or to move,  
 when the teachers and priest angrily crowd round me

He does not follow any tradition of ceremony, but only believes in love. According to him

'Love is a magic stone,  
 that transmutes by its touch  
 greed into sacrifice'

He goes on to say

'For the sake of this love  
 heaven longs to become earth  
 and gods to become man'

Since then I have often tried to meet these people, and sought to understand them through their songs, which are their only form of worship. One is often surprised to find in many of these verses a striking originality of sentiment and diction,

EXCERPTS FROM TAGORE

for at their best they are spontaneously individual in their expressions. One such song is a hymn to the Ever Young. It exclaims

*O my flower buds, we worship the Young  
for the Young is the source of the holy Ganges of life,  
from the Young flows the supreme bliss*

And it says

*We never offer ripe corn in the service of the Young  
nor fruit nor seed,  
but only the lotus bud which is of our own mind  
The young hour of the day, the morning  
is our time for the worship of Him  
from whose contemplation has sprung the Universe*

It calls the Spirit of the Young the Brahma Kamal 'the infinite lotus'. For it is something which has perfection in its heart and yet ever grows and unfolds its petals

*(The Religion of Man Hibbert Lectures at Oxford in 1930)*

*Original Bengali passages translated by Kshitis Roy*

## SOME BIHARI FOLK-SONGS

GEORGE A. GRIERSON

Few persons can claim to have made a greater contribution to the study of comparative Indian philology and languages than George Abraham Grierson (1851-1951). Nearly the whole of his adult life was spent in the study and analysis of Indian languages, particularly languages and dialects of Eastern India. One of his most important works "The Linguistic Survey of India" (in twenty volumes) still remains the source book for philological research for all students of Indian Linguistics. The amazing range of Grierson's scholarship and work was not limited to studies of Indian languages and grammar. His valuable contribution includes systematic collection of folk-music and folklore of different regions of Eastern India. This edited version of his article has been reprinted from the sixteenth volume (1884) of the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. The editing has been made with a view to bring to prominence his views on Bihari folk songs.

The following songs are a portion of those collected by me last hot weather, when acting as Magistrate of Patna. They were written down for me in the heart of Bihār by Babu Shiv Nandan Lal Rāy, Deputy Magistrate, a gentleman born and bred in the neighbourhood of Āra (Arrah), who takes a most lively and intelligent interest in his own beautiful native language. I have printed them exactly as they have been taken from the mouths of the reciters, a few obvious slips of the pen being alone corrected. I have allowed no theories of my own to interfere with the text obtained, and I have religiously abstained from consulting even competent native scholars as to probable or possible emendations. Natives in such cases are, as is well known, only too ready to invent readings which have never existed. *They have no reverence whatever for the words or matter of the songs in the vernacular, and feel themselves justified in making any alterations or additions on the spur of the moment, which may seem required by the metre, or more adopted to their present temperament.*

The great preservers of these songs are all the women of all classes, and it is therefore impossible for a European to obtain them direct from their storekeepers. I am hence doubly indebted to Babū Shiv Nandan Lal Rāy, who has given me these songs exactly as they have been taken down from the mouth of ladies in Shāhābād.

It may be mentioned here that Bihārī is the name which is being adopted to a considerable extent in India for the language hitherto known as Eastern Hindi. Bihārī possesses a most elaborate grammatical structure. It has three main dialects, a North Eastern (the Maithilī), a South Eastern (the Magadhī or Māgahī), and a Western (the Bhojpūrī). The first has been grammatically dealt with in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, and the extreme western variety of the

last (commonly known as Western Bhojpūri) forms the ground work of Dr Hoernle's *Gauḍian Grammar A grammar, set of fables, and vocabulary of the Magadhī dialect* has been published by the Government of Bengal and a grammar of the pure Eastern Bhojpūri spoken near Ārā, the chief town of the district of Shahabād, is in the press, and will shortly be published by the same Government

The following songs being collected in Shahabād may reasonably be expected to be in Bhojpūri dialect

I have already stated that these songs are printed *ipsissimis verbis* as they were recited by women of Bhojpūri tract This has its disadvantages The uneducated, and especially women, have a great recurrence for the unintelligible, and the love for "that blessed word Mesopotamia" is just as great in the East as it is in the West Hence many an obscure word is retained, simply because it is not understood, and finally after generations of ignorant attrition becomes a sound and nothing more, having no meaning in itself, but interesting simply from its unintelligibility A few instances of such words will be met with in the following songs

Another point to be noted in these songs is that they by no means follow the strict and complicated *metric* laws of Tulsī Das and Bīdyāpati Nor, considering their singers and preservers, can they be expected to do so Probably, when they were first written, each line may have contained its orthodox supply of long and short *matras* but now they are, and for generations they have been remembered by the melody to which they are sung and by that alone Any number of syllables, long or short, can be crowded into a line, so long as the need of a musical *ictus* is satisfied<sup>1</sup> Hence no study of the *Prākṛit Pinṅal* nor of the *Chhandodīpak*, will avail for reading these songs, though as Mr Beames so happily says, "they trip off the tongue with a lilt and grace which are irresistible

Like folk songs in other languages, these songs abound in unmeaning burdens, like the English 'Sing heigh, sing ho, the linden tree,' and similar passages unconnected with the story, common in Percy's *Reliques*

My own knowledge of modern vernacular folk songs is confined to Eastern Hindūstān and the Bengal Presidency and with regard to this tract I can assert that several songs of the class are popular in every district between Banaras and the Brahmāputra These songs are at the present day called '*Bārah Māsas*' or (songs of) 'the twelve months Their form is always the same Some woman laments the absence of her beloved or of her son Each verse is devoted in order

<sup>1</sup> A parallel example in English occurs in an extreme case in the famous couplet of Tom D Urley

Oh\_wasn't he a rascal  
who refused to allow the children of Israel to go into  
the wilderness with their wives and families to  
eat the Paschal.'

<i>Āgahan Mēn Ek Seja Suno Maīn Akeli Takati</i>	
<i>Ja Ke Pū Pardāsa Chhāe Rahōn Sakhi Keli Bī ānī Sēn</i>	6
<i>Pusa Mēn Ek Palā Parī Gaye Biraha Āi Satāwahīn</i>	
<i>Jab Jād Chhuṭata, He Sakhi, Tab Kant Anga Lagawahīn</i>	7
<i>Māgh Mēn Ek Āna Maure Māin Maraōn Boirāi Ke</i>	
<i>Sham Binā Ek Belī Phūle Kawan Sejyā Jai Ke</i>	8
<i>Phāgun Mēn Ek Rang Banatu Hai Aur Rang Banāi Ke</i>	
<i>Shām Binā Ek Main Na Udōn Jaise Udat Rang Abir Ke</i>	9
<i>Chaita Chandan Sarada Sital Agni Sital</i>	
<i>Le Chali Dal Seil Ho Ke Dhundhēn Jāi Ke</i>	10
<i>Baisākhi Mēn Mohīn Ghām Lāgat Maīn Marōn Akulāi Ke</i>	
<i>Jab Ghām Lāgat, He Sakhi, Tab Hal Maīn Kehi Sēn Kahōn</i>	11
<i>Jeth th Jeth Mās Āye, Pural Bārah Mās</i>	
<i>Ke Ehi Bārah Mānsa Gawal Rājā Rāmchandra</i>	12

- 1 The month of Asāḥ has commenced The clouds have arranged their thick army My beloved has left me deserted, and is sojourning somewhere
- 2 Pleasing is the month of Sāwan, O friend, my beloved loves the month. What deserted damsel has enchanted him? My husband cometh not home
- 3 In Bhādo a bed is being made with care,<sup>1</sup> but the sparrow-hawk and the peacock<sup>2</sup> cry, and it stings me exceedingly
- 4 Kuīr has come, but not my beloved, let me take poison and die Weeping let me my head with the water (of my tears)<sup>3</sup> and disarrange the parting of my hair<sup>3</sup>
- 5 In Kātik I am writing a letter causing tears of blood to flow (for ink) Go, O crow,<sup>4</sup> to the country where my beloved is, and tell him the tale of my woes
- 6 In Āg'han there is an empty bed, and alone I waiteth My beloved is gone and sojourns in a far country, how, O friend, can I endure?
- 7 In Pus a snow storm has fallen, separation has come and tortures me, nor will the cold leave me, O friend, till my love clasps me in his arms.
- 8 In Māgh the mango blossoms, let me go mad and die Without 'Shām' the jasmine flowers<sup>5</sup> who can (at such a season) seek her couch

<sup>1</sup> Literally, is being made and having made it

<sup>2</sup> The cry of these birds supposed to be an incentive to love

<sup>3</sup> The parting of a married woman's hair is coloured with vermilion, which is washed out when she becomes a widow

<sup>4</sup> A crow's call is said to be *Thau Thau* which means 'place' He is a great traveller Hence, by tradition a crow is always supposed to know the whereabouts of a beloved.

<sup>5</sup> The odour of these two flowers is supposed to incite love

- 9 In Phāgun<sup>1</sup> colour is carefully made ready, but without 'Shām' I fly not about, like the balls of red Abir
- 10 In Chait instead of cool sandal powder I applied, cool fire (i.e., ashes) to my head, and went to seek my husband <sup>2</sup>
- 11 In Baisākh heat oppresses me, I die overpowered by it O friend, when I am oppressed by the heat, to whom shall I tell my condition?
- 12 Jeth, the month of Jeth has come, and the twelve months (of my love's journey) are fulfilled King Rāmchandra sang this song of the twelve months to Sur <sup>3</sup>

The next song deals only with the four months of the rainy season, and is hence called a Chatur Masā. In other respects it does not demand special notice

#### CHATUR MASA

*Jeth Dīn Chhāli Gaile Beni Mādho*  
*Teth Dīn Āgi Lāgi Tan Mēn*

*Chadale Āsah Gagan Ghan Garaje*  
*Bijuli Chamkele Teth Ghan Mēn*  
*Chhuki Chhuki Chākirt Ho Ke*  
*Chitabōn Baisi Ke Soch Karōn Man Mēn* 1

*Sāwan Shām Kīnha Chhal Ham Sēn*  
*Pīriti Kīnha Jāke Kubāro Sēn*  
*Banahin Mēn Chakirt Mora Bolele*  
*Dādur Sabad Sunāwatu Hai*  
*(Arē) Nand Lāl Parān Kaise Rakhōn*  
*Dhrik Joban Morā Ehi Tan Ke* 2

*Bhādo Āgam Pantha Nāhīn Sujhe*  
*Dādur Bole Angan Mēn*  
*(Arē) Koila Ho Ke Bane Bana Phirōn*  
*Tal Sukhāil Brindāban Ke* 3

<sup>1</sup> In this month occurs the feast of the Holt—the spring festival of love. It is then customary to throw red powder (abir) on passers by in the street.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this verse is doubtful. My informant, who recited the song, did not know its meaning. Songs like the present one, which are in a language foreign to Bihar, are often learnt by rote, and only half understood. The translation given is only a guess. *Seil* I do not know the meaning of, nor is the word known to Bihar. It may be a corruption of *Selo* 'a necklace worn by mendicants', and in this case *Dal Seil* would mean 'having put on such necklace'.

<sup>3</sup> It is customary for a poet to insert his own name, and that of his patron in the last line in any of his works. The last line is hence called the 'bhanita', because it tells (root bhan) the name of the author. The poet here politely attributes his inscription to the king.



*Kuār Kusal Nāhl Pāwon Shām Kē*  
*Pātī Nahīn Ailī Madhuban Sēn*  
*Sur Shām Mohī Anī Milā Do*  
*Nāhīn To Parān Tajōn Chhan Mēn*

4

## A SONG OF FOUR MONTHS

*Refrain* What day Benī Mādho deserted me, on that fire seized my body

- 1 Asarh has commenced, the clouds of the sky are thundering and the lightning flashes therein I start in fright, look round and sit and think within my mind
- 2 In Sawan Sham has deceived me, and made love with Kubja The frightened peacock cries in the forest, and frog makes its sound heard O Nand Lāl, how can I keep my life? Shame on my life to remain within this body
- 3 Bhādo<sup>1</sup> has come, nor can we see the paths, as the frogs croak in the courtyard, let me become a cuckoo and roam from forest to forest, the marshes of Brindāban are dried up
- 4 In Kuār I receive no news of Shām, no letter has come from Madhuban Sur (sings) "Let Shām meet me, otherwise let me leave my life in an instant "

This concludes the songs of the year

Next follow Sohars or congratulatory songs sung by Domīn women on the birth of a child Domīns are the people who are employed to sing at any festive occasion, especially birth festivals and marriages They usually have a large collection of songs of various kinds, some being of considerable pretensions

*Rām Janam Sunī Aī Domīniya*  
*Māngan Lāge Badhaiyā Re* 1  
*Hirā Mānge Jawāhir Mānge*  
*Māngele Sal Dosālā Re* 2  
*Rājā Dasarath Ke Pagiyā Mānge*  
*Māngele Kamar Katariya Re* 3

- 1 Hearing of Rām's birth, the Dom's wife comes, and begins to ask for rewards
- 2 She asks for diamonds, precious stones, and shawls single and double
- 3 She asks for King Dasarath's turban, and for the dagger at his waist

Next follows a specimen of the songs sung at marriages, the present is an example of a class of songs celebrating the marriage of Sib They are very common in this style

<sup>1</sup> A very dark and gloomy month

## GIT BIBAH MAHADEVI JI KE

<i>Jaba Re Mahādeba Bāhana Chalale</i>	
<i>Sakhi Sabha Mangala Gāi Re</i>	
<i>Bhūta Pisācha Bariyatiana Chalale</i>	
<i>Sarapa Lihale Latkāi Re</i>	1
<i>Kehu Kukurana Kehu Siariana</i>	
<i>Apu Baila Asawara Re</i>	
<i>Choundi Ke Mālā Siba Galawa Laṣawale</i>	
<i>Bikhidhara Lelen Jhoriāire</i>	2
<i>Jaba Re Mahādeba Goendan Aile</i>	
<i>Ladikā Dekhale Bariyata Re</i>	
<i>Bhāgi Bhāgi Ladikana Ghara Mēn Lukaile</i>	
<i>Ab Na Dekhaba Bariyata Re</i>	3
<i>Bājan Bājelā Dhunikā Pakhauja</i>	
<i>Huraka Kaul Dhudhukar Re</i>	
<i>Jab Re Mahādeba Duarahīn Lāgale</i>	
<i>Sakhi Sabha Mangala Gāi Re</i>	4
<i>Parichhana Chalali Sāsū Madāgini</i>	
<i>Sarapa Chhāndelēn Phuphukar Re</i>	
<i>Musarā Ke Phēnkali Lodhawa Pewarali</i>	
<i>Pāchhān Ke Chalali Parāi Re</i>	5
<i>Gourā Le Ke Udab, Gourā Le Ke Būdab</i>	
<i>Gonrā Le Ke Khilaba Patāla Re</i>	
<i>Aisan Bourāha Bara (Ke) Gourā Nahīn Debon</i>	
<i>Balu Gourā Rahihen Kūnār Re</i>	6
<i>Kalasā Ke Ote Bolali Gourā Det</i>	
<i>Sib Ji Sēn Arāja Hanlāra Re</i>	
<i>Gāngwā Nahāi Siba Bhabhuti Utārī</i>	
<i>Nahār Loga Patiyāsu Re</i>	7
<i>Matī Amā Budahu Matī Amā Uдахū</i>	
<i>Matī Amā Khilahu Patāl Re</i>	
<i>Hamarā Karamavā Mēn Likhala Tapasiyā</i>	
<i>Se Katse Metal Jai Re</i>	8
<i>Gāngwā Nahalle Siba Bhabhuti Utarale</i>	
<i>Ajho Anga Chandan Chadhāi Re</i>	
<i>Kahawan Gaili Mora Sāsū Madāgini</i>	
<i>Āba Rūpa Dekhasu Hamār Re</i>	9
<i>Atimā Sumi Ke Sāsū Markhaili</i>	
<i>Mane Mane Karata Bichāra Re</i>	
<i>Bhāgi Parbala Gourā Ke Bhaili</i>	
<i>Purukh Milele Mahādeba Re</i>	10

<i>Karaha Chouka Chananawa Chadhaiba</i>	
<i>Aba Hama Karaba Bija Re</i>	11
<i>Bhaile Bija Mahadeba Phirele</i>	
<i>Saṅga Chalelt Jagata Mātu Re</i>	
<i>Guna Anguna Gourā Sabha Jāneli</i>	
<i>Aur Nūhīn Jānele Kahu Re</i>	12

## MARRIAGE SONG

## The marriage of Sib

- 1 When Mahadeb went to his marriage, the bridesmaids all sang the (marriage) blessing Ghosts and goblins formed his marriage party, and he had serpents hanging about his body
- 2 Some rode on dogs and some on jackals, and he himself on a bull Sib had a garland of skulls, which he wore round his neck, while he filled his wallet with poisonous snakes
- 3 When Mahādeb came to the village site, the boys saw the procession They ran away and hid in their houses saying they would not see a procession again
- 4 Instruments are being played — the bassoon, and the tumbrel, while the hour glass drum made a great noise When Mahadeb arrived at the gate, all the bridesmaids sang the marriage blessing
- 5 Madagini, the bride's mother, came out to welcome him when serpents emitted a hiss She threw away her wooden pestle and flung away her stone one<sup>1</sup> and ran away back (into the house)
- 6 "I will run away with Gaura I will drown myself with Gaurā with Gaura will I enter the lower world but to such a madman of a bridegroom will I not give her Better for her would it be if she remained a virgin "
- 7 Gaura speaks from behind the jar in (the cupola) "This is my prayer to Sibji O Sib bathe in the Ganges, wash off those ashes and then come back to my father's house
- 8 "Mother, do not drown yourself, nor run away with me, nor enter the lower world An ascetic has been written in my book of fate, how can it be wiped out? "
- 9 Sib bathed in the Ganges, rubbed off the ashes and applied sandal to his eight limbs "Where is my mother in law Madagini? Let her now see my appearance "
- 10 Hearing this much the mother in law rejoiced, and thought in her mind, 'Gaura's good fortune has been strong in that she is getting Mahādeb for a husband "

<sup>1</sup> These are moved round the bridegroom's head at the time of *parichhan*

- 11 "Now I will prepare the marriage platform, and anoint myself with sandal, and perform the marriage"
- 12 The marriage took place, Mahādeb returns, and with him goes the mother of the universe Gaurā knows all his good and bad qualities, and no one else knows them

Next follows a selection of jhūmars or purwis, a kind of miscellaneous song sung by women

<i>Sāinyā Atba Tūn Kawan Mahinawā Mēn</i>	
<i>Āpane Ta Jāi Piyā Nokari Uṣhanale</i>	
<i>Hāmarā Ke Chhadale Mahaliya Mēn</i>	1
<i>Dui Charī Dina Sāinyā Chhuti Le Aile</i>	
<i>Hota Bhūsarwā Bidā Bhaile</i>	2

*Refrain* My lord, in what month will thou return?

- 1 My beloved has gone away, and entered into service, me (alone) in the house
- 2 He took two or four days' leave and came, and went away at dawn

<i>Ikadiya Mārale</i>	
<i>Jhikadiya Mārāle Re</i>	
<i>Ghadilawa Phutala E Ho Hamāre</i>	1
<i>Ghadilawa Phutale Re</i>	
<i>Chunariyā Bhīnjāl E Ho Hamāre</i>	2
<i>Chunariyā Bhīnjale Re</i>	
<i>Angiyawā Bhīnjala E Ho Hamāre</i>	3
<i>Angiyawā Bhīnjāl Re</i>	
<i>Jobanawā Bhīnjāl E Ho Hamāre</i>	4
<i>Jobanawā Bhīnjale Re</i>	
<i>Balamuā Rūsala E Ho Hamāre</i>	5

- 1 My water-jar was struck with pebbles and potsherds and broke, alas !
- 2 The water jar broke, and my dyed cloak was wet, alas !
- 3 My dyed cloak was wet, and my bodice became wet, alas !
- 4 My bodice became wet, and my bosom became wet, alas !
- 5 My bosom became wet, and my love became angry, alas !

Next Follow *Jat'sars* or songs of the mill Jat is a wheat-mill, and a jat'sar is literally "a mill house" It is a class of songs sung by women when grinding wheat. These songs are always of a pathetic nature, and are sung to a characteristic melody .

<i>Gahidi Āgamī Bahe Rāma Paniyā</i>	
<i>Piyā Chalale Moranga Desawā Biharelā Rām Chharyā</i>	
<i>Jaūn Ham Janitīn E Lobhiyā Jaiba Re Bidesawā</i>	
<i>Piyā Ke Paetanā E Lobhiyā Acharā Chhipaitōn</i>	1

<i>Daha Rowe Chakawā Chakatiyā</i>	
<i>Bichhohawā Kaile Rām Balamū</i>	2
<i>Mūnha Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Surujā Ke Jotiya</i>	
<i>Ānkhī Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Amawā Ke Phariyā</i>	3
<i>Nāk Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Sugawā Ke Thorawā</i>	
<i>Bhahūn Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Chadhala Kamaniyā</i>	4
<i>Oṭha Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Katarala Panawā</i>	
<i>Ore Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Kadī Kadī Mochhiya</i>	5
<i>Banhi Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Sobaran Sōntawa</i>	
<i>Peta Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Puraini Patawā</i>	6
<i>Pūhi Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Dhobiyā Ke Patawā</i>	
<i>Goṭa Tōra Hwe E Lobhiyā Kerawā Ke Thumhawā</i>	7

*Refrain* The river is deep, and the water flows bottomless My beloved has gone to the Morang and my bosom is being cleft asunder

- 1 If I had known, O covetous one, that you would go to a country, I would have hid your *pael*<sup>1</sup> under my cloth
- 2 The Chakawā<sup>2</sup> and his mate are weeping on the lake, and Ah Rām, my beloved has deserted me
- 3 O covetous one,<sup>3</sup> thy face is like the rays of the sun, and thine eyes are large as a split mango
- 4 Thy nose is like a parrot's beak and thine eyebrows like a strung bow
- 5 Thy lips are red as clipped betel, and thy moustache is stiff
- 6 Thine arms are like golden maces, and thy stomach like a lotus leaf
- 7 Thy back is flat as a washerman's plank, and thy legs like a plantain stem<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A *pael* is a dress or cloak, worn by a man which when he is going on a journey is sent out on the way before him at an auspicious time

<sup>2</sup> *Anas Casarea* This bird is traditionally said to spend its nights lamenting its enforced separation from its mate

<sup>3</sup> This refrain in the original is repeated in all the following verses but will be omitted in the translation

<sup>4</sup> These similes, which seem absurd enough in a translation are perfectly natural to a Hindu mind.

# BHOJPURI FOLKLORE AND FOLK MUSIC

DR. TRILOKHAN PANDE

Folklore is the traditional heritage of those people who have an unsophisticated way of life in a particular society and who usually give a free expression to their sentiments through their songs, myths, legends, tales, proverbs and riddles. Out of these various folklore materials, folksongs are more important in social studies as they give us a ground to prepare their socio-cultural history. It is through folksongs and folk music that we come to know the inner life, the culture, the social and environmental set up of a community, whether living in far off jungles or in highly industrialised towns. Folk music happens to be the spontaneous outburst of their feelings and, therefore, it has to be studied scientifically to have a correct and wider approach towards their inner moods.

All items of folklore bear the region's stamp and, therefore, the folk music is always influenced by the geographical surroundings and natural environment of



a given region. Bhojpur folklore and folk music too possess this regional, geographical and environmental stamp. This region comprises at present an extensive area covering mostly the eastern parts of U.P. and some districts of the Bihar State in northern India. It slopes down from the foot of the Himalayan ranges right upto the Sarguja district of Madhya Pradesh. Benares, Ghazipur, Ballia, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Azamgarh, Shahabad, Camparan

and Ranchi are some of the main districts where Bhojpuri speaking people reside and their number is nearly two crores and seventy lacs now.

Bhojpuri folklore is fairly rich from the viewpoint of folk music with which we are mainly concerned at present and this music is to be studied mostly in folksongs and long narrative themes which are sung in various styles from village to village. These songs and ballads not only possess a rich variety of music but also depict the daily life of the common man. All his hardships, struggles for existence, joys and sorrows, rituals and manners are well represented by these themes. A careful study of these folklore items is sure to reveal some important links of history not yet known to the scholars who mostly depend on the written and documented proofs for their basic information.

Further, these songs and ballads not only reflect the cultural and economic conditions of the people but are most useful for a study of the social and religious condition of the society as a whole. The ceremonial folksongs in particular depict this aspect of the social life wherein the complete cycle of man's life from birth to death is described vividly. Some of these folksongs also have a philosophical outlook towards life but to go into the details of this aspect of the Bhojpuri folksongs will be a digression from our main point at this place.

Folk music is an essential part of Bhojpuri folklore which is to be analysed through two main channels viz, through folksongs and through folk ballads, in the present context. Folksongs can be further divided as ceremonial, seasonal, ritualistic and action songs as far as their subject matter is concerned and many of them are based on various styles of singing viz the 'Jhumar', the 'Nirgun', the 'Purbi' and so on. It is through them that the author or singer expresses his joys and sorrows and moods of love or separation. Hence these songs and ballads play a significant role in the study of folk music. We find that the music of these songs is not controlled by the elaborate intonation of classical music and long stretched 'Swaras' and 'Layas' do not obstruct or lessen its effect. Its analysis, therefore, may lead us not only to the roots of classical music but may also help us to understand the basic traits of human character.

Folk music is a permanent source of happiness and entertainment even in the day to day life of the people in modern times. Folk music or songs should not be taken as a mere expression of the illiterate or culturally backward masses. It is to be studied as a primary source of delight and encouragement of the people at large.

Bhojpuri folksongs are mostly sung in chorus though there are instances of solo songs also. The chorus presents the true picture of the folk music. Songs are usually accompanied by folk instruments of many types. Folk music is also interlinked with the folk dances and these folk dances are represented through the dance dramas of Bhojpuri, called by various names like the 'Videsia' etc. in this region. Historically speaking, folk music is to be traced to the folk ballads of the Bhojpuri dialect and not so much to the folk songs as these songs are compara-

tively of later origin. Hence to begin with, the folk music starts with the folk ballads. There is also a difference between these two forms of folklore as far as the method of presenting folk music is concerned. The ballads are sung mostly in comparatively lower tunes and slower rhythms than the folksongs which have louder tunes and faster rhythms. But all this depends upon the nature of the particular ballad or the folksong.

Bhojpuri folk ballads have many peculiarities both from the cultural and the musical points of view. They are closely related with dance and folk opera as has been mentioned earlier. Without the element of music many of these ballads appear at times even prosaic and tiresome to listen to. The 'Alha', the 'Gopichand', the 'Bharathari' and the 'Kunwarsingh' are some of the famous Bhojpuri folk ballads that possess certain musical peculiarities. The 'Alha' ballad, for example, based on the heroic events of the Bundela region, is mostly sung during the rainy season. Accompanied by a drum it begins with a slow rhythm and while the audience gets excited by the vivid narration of the text, its rhythm also grows faster and faster and the fingers of the player actually seem to dance over his drum. The excitement of the text depends on the tempo of the music. All types of folk singers are not able to sing this ballad because its singing requires extra strength of vocal chords and a good control over one's respiratory system. The theme presents a saga of bravery and accordingly the tune of the ballad evokes the sentiment of bravery in the heart of the audience.

The ballads of 'Gopichand' and 'Bharathari' are mostly sung by the Kanphata Jogis who are the followers of Gorakhnath—the famous religious leader of the Middle Ages. These are accompanied by the instrument 'Sarangi' which is particularly suited to give out melodious and sweet touches to the music. The basic theme of such ballads deals with the renunciation of the material world and with the peace of mind gained as a result of observing penance and asceticism.

The refrain is an important feature of all these folk ballads, and not only words but the same lines are repeated from time to time at certain intervals. The psychological reason for this repetition has been well remarked by Sidgwick—a noted authority on ballads, when he says that the singer's monotony is relieved by the audience joining in with a repeated phrase. The ballad does not present complicated verse forms and it is not highly advanced in techniques of singing. Prof Gummere calls these sentences—"incremental repetition," meaning thereby such forms that conclude the preceding idea and advance further the main theme of the ballad at the same time. Refrains used in Bhojpuri ballads are mainly of two types—viz., meaningful and meaningless. "Balaiyan layūn biran," "Mohan na aiyle re," "Ahi ran ban mēn" etc. are the refrains of the first type which convey certain meaning and the words like "Aho Ramā" "Re nā", "Ho nā" etc. are the examples of the second type which though meaningless, are very helpful in singing these ballads.



Folksongs cover a wider range of variety in music than these ballads in the Bhojpuri region, and the main reason for this fact lies in the variety of their expression. The songs convey the emotions of the singers in general and their tunes and rhythms change according to these emotions. Some "Ragas" and "Talas" of the classical music may also be traced in these folksongs but their presence does not mean that folk music is simply a by-product of classical music. On the contrary, scholars are now of the opinion that classical music is itself indebted to the folk music for its various elements. Whatever may be the case, these Bhojpuri folksongs present a common ground where folk music and classical music come very close to each other. The adaption and the modification of many folk tunes by the musicians like Bade Gulam Ali Khan and Kumār Gandharva in modern times is an example of how both of these forms of music have been influencing each other from time to time.

The 'Kajri,' the 'Chaiti,' the 'Birha,' the 'Kaharva,' the 'Nirguna,' the 'Jhumar' and the 'Bidesia' are some of the important folksongs widely prevalent in this region that have features of classical music to a considerable extent. The influence of tribal music can also be noticed on these songs. All Bhojpuri songs can be divided into three main categories from this point of view.

Songs of the first category comprise of those songs which have either the Paurānic and religious themes as their subject matter or which possess a devotional background. The songs of this category naturally show great affinity with the classical music because they have been greatly influenced by the 'Bhakti' movement of the Middle Ages which has left its impact on the whole of northern India. The Bhakti movement related to the Krishna worship mainly influenced all aspects of social life at that time. Among the songs of this type we may mention here the 'Nirguna,' the 'Purbi,' the 'Parāti' and 'Devi' songs and the musical contents of all such songs resemble the notes of the Ragas like 'Pilu,' 'Durga,' 'Kafi,' 'Bhairavi' etc. Sometimes the 'Tāns' and 'Ālāps' also seem to have been adopted in the traditional style of music.

Under the second category of songs we may mention the type that is more or less of independent nature *i.e.*, which is not connected with the traditions of the past but is the actual outcome of modern society. The 'Kajri,' the 'Birha,' the 'Chaiti' and the 'Bidesia' songs may be included under this category. The music of such songs may be described as "country-side music," it is generally popular among common masses. The 'Kafi,' the 'Chaiti,' the 'Kajri' songs show traces of the 'Kāmoda' and the 'Jhunjhoti' ragas that have been spontaneously used by the folk-singers.

The third category of Bhojpuri folksongs may be said to be more inclined towards the music of various tribes scattered all over this region. Tribal music has some of its own peculiarities. The ascent and the descent of the 'swaras' in such folksongs may appear at times ridiculous to the people who are accustomed

to listen to the so called 'cultivated music' but the experts in this field would be able to trace more than usual variations of twelve notes in many of such songs. For example, out of the twelve notes employed in the classical music we find about nine of them being used in the ceremonial and ritualistic songs of this region. Seven of these notes are pure notes and two are 'Komal Gandhara' and 'Komal Nisāda'. Such songs employ the notes of 'Kafi' and 'Khammaj' *thāts*. Other Bhojpuri songs, e.g., the 'Kaharva', and the songs of washermen mainly employ the notes of the 'Bilawal' *thāt* i.e., seven pure notes. The Ragas belonging to these three *thāts* viz., 'Kafi,' 'Khammaj' and 'Bilawal' are comparatively easy to grasp, hence the tribal singer adapts them easily in order to intensify his different moods of expression.

This brief survey of Bhojpuri folk music indicates some points to be noted. For instance, the harmonisation of notes, the syncopation of 'Swaras,' the change of the Ragas in the same song etc. are undoubtedly some innovations in this field of study. The 'Purbi,' the 'Chaiti' and the 'Thumri' are the songs where we find all such elements of classical as well as folk music blended together.

We may consider at this place some other aspects of folk music, viz., manners and methods of singing etc. of some popular folksongs current in this region. These are the 'Holi,' the 'Chaiti,' the 'Kaharva,' the 'Jhumar,' the 'Nirguna' and the ceremonial songs. Songs sung at the time of the 'Holi' festival are known as the 'Holi' songs or the 'Phagua' in general, as these are sung in the month of 'Phalgun' according to the Hindu calendar. The 'Phagua' singers assemble at the house of the village headman and sit in two rows, having a *dholak* and *jhanjh* instruments in hands. The leaders of each row begin the first line of the song repeated by the second row and then all the singers of the first row begin to sing it collectively. The chorus starts, and at the time of climax of the song, the music also reaches its height. Being inspired emotionally the singers even stand up on their knees and the singing scene becomes lively and attractive.

The 'Chaiti' song is sung in the month of 'Chaitra', hence this name. It is of two varieties—the 'Jhalkutiya' variety is sung in chorus in which the 'Jhal' instrument is used. The simple variety of the 'Chaiti' song is a solo. The singing of this song has some peculiarities. Each line of this song begins with the word 'Aho Rāmā' or the word 'Rāmā' only and ends with the word 'Ho Rāmā'. The name of a singer 'Bulaki Das' is associated with many Bhojpuri 'Chaiti' songs but the authorship of all these songs is never certain. The 'Kaharva' are the songs sung by the 'Kahar' people who often dance at the time of marriage parties. They carry the bride to her new home on a palanquin and sing songs of love and happiness.

The 'Jhumar' songs are sung not at any particular occasion but usually they follow the ceremonial songs at the time of the sacred thread ceremony or the marriage ceremony etc. These are sung by the women folk. The women form themselves

into groups and they swing their bodies right and left while singing. This song is usually not long, six or seven lines are enough to complete a 'Jhumar'. The 'Purbi' songs are noted for their sweet tunes and fast rhythms, hence they have a great appeal for the common masses.

The 'Nirguna' songs are full of devotion either to any local god or to any local goddess. Some 'Nirguna' songs have been associated with the great Hindi poet Kabir but in fact these are the usual compositions of village singers. The repetition of some particular lines is also found in this song.

The ceremonial songs also form an important part of Bhojpuri folklore and in number as well as in variety may be equal to all other types of songs taken together. Unlike other types of folksongs, the ceremonial songs are composed by women and are sung by women only. These are closely connected with all major events of life from birth to death. In between several rites and customs, suitable to the occasion, these songs are sung by professional women or by the women of the household. Main ceremonies in a man's life are observed at the time of child birth, head shaving (*i.e.*, 'Mundan'), putting on the sacred thread, marriage and death and all these ceremonial folksongs follow the rites and customs observed on these occasions. We do not have any distinct names of these songs except 'Sohar' which is sung at the time of a child's birth.

The 'Sohar' is one of the most popular folksongs and its origin can be traced back at least upto the Middle Ages. Poet Tufsi Das had written many 'Sohars' though in a modified form, connected with the birth ceremony of Rama—the Great Lord. It does not belong to the category of metrical songs, neither does it follow the rules of prosody. Having a set tune, all 'Sohars' are sung in accordance to that tune, no matter if words and syllables fall short at a time. The word 'Sohar' is derived from the Bhojpuri word 'Sohila' meaning thereby the desire of a married woman to have a son.

Songs of marriage are of varying nature. They display a variety of sentiments. They are most touching and become pathetic at the time of the girl's departure from her parental house. She is often compared to a bird flying into the open sky with an uncertain destination. From the point of music, it is the peculiarity of the tune that is to be noted in all such types of ceremonial songs and not the element of the 'Tala' or rhythm because the 'Tala' or rhythm occupy least significance in these songs.

The elements of 'Laya' and 'Tala' play a significant role in many Bhojpuri folksongs. Folk music is almost lifeless without the 'Laya' and 'Tala'. The 'Laya' and 'Tala' of a folksong *i.e.*, its rhythm as such are so much interwoven with the fabric of the music that the folksinger unaware of the metrical system of the 'Tala' often presents the song correctly by the knowledge of its rhythm which he acquires by constant listening to and singing the actual song. Rhythm or 'Tala' therefore, is an important factor while analysing those Bhojpuri folk music mainly which are not ceremonial in character.

Various 'Tālas' of classical music have been successfully adopted by the folk musicians in the Bhojpuri region. We find that it is comparatively easier to recognise a 'Tala' in a Bhojpuri song than to trace the elements of a particular Rāga in that song. The 'Kaharva' the 'Jat' the 'Dadra' the 'Khemta' the 'Dipchandi' etc. are some of the popular 'Tālas' used in these songs. Out of these the 'Kaharva' seems to be the most common 'Tala' being used in about eighty percent of Bhojpuri folksongs. This 'Tala' is composed of four *mātrās*. The intricacy and beauty of this rhythmic pattern can only be understood when we listen to the 'Kajri' and 'Jhumar' folksongs accompanied by the instruments *Dholak* and *Majira*.

The 'Sorathi' the 'Birha' the 'Sohani' the 'Purbi' the 'Nirguna' etc. are some of the other popular Bhojpuri songs sung in the 'Kaharva' tāla. The texture of 'Kaharva' changes according to the speed and expression of the song. Sometimes it is sung in the *Druta* laya and sometimes in the *vilambit* laya.

The 'Dipchandi' is another popular 'tāla' in which the rhythm of the folksong is unconsciously adjusted to the natural and normal flow of our respiratory system. The rhythm changes according to the tonal change and the singer is not tired of it. The 'Dipchandi' tāla is composed of seven *mātrās*. The popular Bhojpuri song 'Bidesia' is sung in this particular tāla.

Sometimes a song is sung in two different tālas that reflect artistic devices on the part of the singer, although he may not be conscious of them. For instance we may take here the 'Jhumar' song which is sung both in the 'Dadra' and the 'Kaharva' tālas. The above mentioned 'Bidesia' is also sung both in the 'Dipchandi' and the 'Jat' tālas. The 'Jat' is a popular tāla of fourteen *mātrās*. The 'Sohar,' the 'Gauna,' the 'Phagua' and the 'Holi' are some of the main songs sung in this tāla.

Thus we find that the 'Tāla' or the rhythm as such plays an important role in the composition of folksongs. If one goes out to analyse the impact of classical music on the folksongs, the knowledge of the 'Tāla', therefore, will be of greater help to him. As far as the element of the 'Rāga' is concerned, it is of less significance in the study or analysis of these Bhojpuri songs. This becomes evident when we find that the 'Rāgas' of only four *thāts* viz., the '*Bilival*', the '*Ahammāj*,' the '*Kāfi*' and the '*Bhairava*' have been used in almost all the Bhojpuri folksongs.

The element of metre is also a noteworthy feature of Bhojpuri folksongs. Some of the common metres employed are 'Sohar,' 'Jhumar,' 'Chaiti,' 'Phagua,' 'Purbi,' 'Nirguna,' 'Bīramāsa,' 'Jogia' and so on—called after the songs of the same name. It is clear that most of them are biased and named after the particular folksongs of this region as have been already discussed earlier. What we find here is the fact that the songs do not always follow the rules and regulations of prosody as observed in classical literature. This is because the metre of these folksongs depends upon the rhythm and not upon the number of words or *mātrās*.

For example, the 'Birha' metre usually comprises of four lines. Out of these four lines the first and the third lines have sixteen syllables each whereas the second and the fourth lines have ten syllables each. But this system of the metre composition depends on the manner of singing and, therefore, the singer is free to make any change in the number of lines and in the syllables used in them. Syllables in these lines may, then be either sixteen and ten respectively or may not be sixteen and ten at the same time. Similar is the case with the 'Nirguna,' the 'Jhumar' and other metres mentioned above.

The metre-composition of these folksongs, therefore present some new fields of research from the viewpoint of folk music. The deciding factor of the metre is the rhythm and the tune of the song, hence the folk singer never bothers about the actual number of syllables and words in his composition.

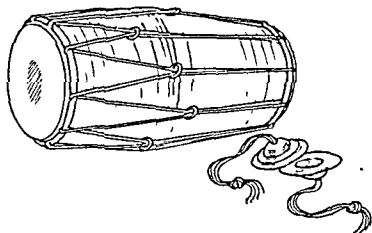
Folk instruments are closely connected with the folk music everywhere and similar is the case with Bhojpuri folk music. Without the accompaniment of these instruments folk music becomes dull and at times even lifeless. It is also a noteworthy feature that many of these folk instruments are hardly used in classical music. Some of these instruments are—the 'Dholak,' the 'Mujira,' the 'Jhānj' the 'Khartāl,' the 'Huduka', the 'Dafa' the 'Pipihari' and so on. The 'Flute' is also used sometimes.

Out of all these folk instruments the 'Dholak' is the most popular in this region. Skilled folk singers can also produce various 'talas' of classical music on the 'Dholak' and at times they may even surpass the professional tabla players in this respect. The 'Sarangi' was also a folk instrument used widely by the singers in earlier times but later on it was adopted by the classical musicians. However, it is still in vogue among the countryside singers like 'Jogis' and 'Fakirs' who often sing devotional songs and the ballads of 'Gopichand' and 'Bharathari' on it.

It is now clear that the folk music of this region has close affinity with classical music but it is still very difficult to prepare notation of these various songs. The ascent and descent of tones and the lengthening and shortening of words, etc., are quite different from that of classical music. Nonetheless, some attempt has been made in this direction by agencies like the All India Radio and by some research workers in this branch of folklore study. An elaborate plan and sustained effort to collect all the Bhojpuri folksongs are necessary before only something definite can be done to prepare their notations. This would help further, in analysing and grouping these songs under certain tune types.

Folk music is fast disappearing from this region mainly due to the increasing impact of urban modes of living on the rural life of villages. The fast growing industrial development and new means of entertainment like the cinema etc., are also making considerable changes in the styles of folk singing. This change of attitude and life in general has made the task of recording and collecting authentic and tribal folk music urgent and immediate. There is danger that the fountain source of our past traditions and cultural heritage may soon dry up. We may

gather reassurance however from the fact that folk music has certain rare aspects which can never pass into oblivion. It is the freshness and vigour of this music which will always inspire the folk poet and the folk composer. Many renowned poets of literature also base their compositions on the patterns of folk music and even folk tunes and folk metres are being employed in their poetry. Folk music will therefore, play an important role even in future. Folk music has been an important aspect of folklore everywhere and in the Bhojpur region too it needs careful handling and detailed study of the folklore material.



**DHOLAK** Percussion instrument from one piece wood rounded and hollowed covered with skin on both ends, bound with bamboo hoops to which are attached thin cords and brass rings, manipulated to make tonal adjustments. Appears to be of UP origin but equally popular in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Used by women also to accompany their songs. Accompanied on a Majra or cymbal. Produces infinite variety of rhythmic patterns.

# FOLKLORE AND FOLK-MUSIC OF UTTAR PRADESH

DR K D UPADHYAYA

Folklore is a word with a short but turbulent history. An Englishman named William John Thoms coined the word "Folklore" in 1846 to replace the cumbersome "Popular antiquities" then in vogue to designate the loving study of old customs, usages and superstitions. A talented group of scholarly enthusiasts in London formed the Folklore Society in 1878 and began publishing a journal "Folklore" which endures to the present day.

In due course of time, the word and the subject had spread to the continent and rapidly acquired a following. The Romance languages adopted the term "Folklore" while the Teutonic countries preferred the German "Volkskunde" which covers the traditional arts and crafts of the folk. "Volkskunde" embraces the total rural folk life including the physical objects produced by household artisans. Folklore usually suggests the oral traditions handed down across the centuries through human mouths. In its flexible uses, "folklore may refer to types of barns, bread molds, or quilts, to orally inherited tales, songs, sayings and beliefs, and also to village festivals, household customs, and peasant rituals. The common element in all these matters is tradition."<sup>1</sup>

In Scandinavian countries the modern tendency in folkloristic studies has shifted from oral tradition to folk life. The Scandinavian folklorists lay great emphasis on the study of the different aspects of the life of the common man. So they are publishing a research journal "Folk liv" (folk life) which is the mouth piece of their organisation. In the United States folklore has customarily meant the spoken and sung traditions but in Europe every aspect of man's life is the subject of study for a devoted folklorist.

Folklore includes the study of oral traditions—songs, tales, ballads, proverbs, riddles etc.—besides the perusal of social customs, traditions, rites, rituals and superstitions of the folk. But here we are concerned only with the folk songs and folk music of Uttar Pradesh which is one of the biggest states of India.

## A FOLK SONGS

The classification of folk songs presents a very difficult problem. Indian scholars agree only to differ. I think the best possible classification of these songs is the following:

1. Various ceremonies
2. Various seasons

<sup>1</sup> Dr R. M. Dorson—American Folklore—pp 13

- 3 Fasts and festivals
- 4 Castes and tribes and,
- 5 Various occupations such as sowing weeding spinning and grinding songs

Hindu religious books have prescribed sixteen *Sanskaras*, i.e., ceremonies which are to be performed in the life of a 'Dwija' or twice born. But the most important of these ceremonies are

- 1 The birth of a son
- 2 The cutting of the hair of a child for the first time
- 3 The sacred thread ceremony
- 4 The marriage
- 5 The Gavana—the first going of the bride to her husband's house and,
- 6 Death

In India, the birth of a son is regarded as a very auspicious occasion. We find, in ancient Indian literature, many references of festivities observed at this time. It is the earnest desire of a father that the links with his progeny should not be discontinued.

The folk songs which are sung at the time of the birth of a son are known as 'Sohar' which is a corrupt form of 'Shovan' — the beautiful. These songs are sung only when a son is born in the family. They are never sung at the birth of a daughter because she is regarded as an unwelcome guest in the family. The difficulty of the father in finding out a suitable husband for her, the large amount of money which he has to spend at the time of her marriage and the unfair and unjustified demands of the bridegroom and his father, are some of the factors which have contributed to this state of affairs. Though in some of the states of our country, it is no longer a difficult problem, yet the marriage of a daughter is a headache to her father. That is why, when a girl is born, no festivities are celebrated.

The songs of 'Sohar' may be divided into two parts

- 1 Songs in which the physical condition of the mother is described before the child is born, and
- 2 those relating to joys and happiness after his birth.

In the first category may be mentioned the pleasures of married life, the various kinds of amorous sports, the labour pain, the desire of the pregnant woman, the calling of the midwife and the lean, thin and pale body of the expectant mother. In the second class of *Sohar* songs we find the joys and happiness in the house. The grandmother of the new born baby invites the Brāhmins and gives them coins and clothes as gifts. In one of the folk songs it is mentioned that the father of the baby is giving cows to the priests and his wife is distributing alms to the needy and is feeding the poor. There is all round merriment



in the house. When the son is born the women—specially the old ones—of village gather together in the evening and sing these songs with their sweet voice.

When the child is a little older the ceremony of cutting his hair for the first time which is known as '*Mundan*' is performed. It is celebrated only in the first, third, fifth or seventh year of the child, that is in odd years. Generally people perform it in the third or the fifth year which is convenient to them. It is strictly forbidden to cut the hair of the child before this ceremony is performed.

Many women take vows before a god or goddess that if they be blessed with a son, they will celebrate the *Mundan* ceremony of their son in the sacred temple of that particular god. So they fulfil their promise when the proper occasion comes. There is a celebrated temple of *Vindhya Vāsini Devī*, the goddess residing in the Vindhya Mountains—in the district of Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh) where people flock in tens of thousands to perform the *Mundan* ceremony of their sons with due religious rites and rituals. It is a sight to see, in this temple, hundreds of children sitting in a line and the rural barbers ready to shave their heads by means of their blunt razors. This rite is accompanied with songs and music.

Those who cannot go to this temple due to their slender financial resources, perform this ceremony on the banks of a river or a pond. When the womenfolk of the village go to the river for this purpose, they sing special kind of songs which are known as "*Mundan*" songs. The various rites and rituals which are done, are the subject matter of these songs. In one of them Lord Indra—the god of rains—is requested not to shower rains. This ceremony is very important and it is observed by all men whether they are rich or poor.

The sacred thread ceremony which is known as '*Yagyopavit*' is one of the most important '*Sanskaras*' of the Hindus. Manu—the greatest Indian Law-giver—has said that a man is first born in the lowest class but it is due to ceremonies which are performed that he is called a '*Dwijā*', i.e., a member of a Brāhman Kshatriya or the Vaishya caste.

In ancient India, the sacred thread ceremony was very important for the members of the '*Dwijā*' caste. It is also called '*Upanayan*', i.e., the ceremony by which a student is brought near his preceptor or '*Guru*'. In the olden days as soon as the '*Yagyopavit*' was performed the boy used to accompany his teacher to his forest school or the '*Ashram*' where he used to learn the secrets of the Vedic Lore, tough rules of grammar and the inspiring message of Indian philosophy.

The subject matter of the songs which are sung at this time are many and varied. In one of the songs certain rites and rituals are mentioned. A boy who is to be initiated, requests his father to bring the sticks of '*Palash*' wood and asks his mother to give him money, so that he may be able to go to *Kashī* or *Kashmir* for his studies.

## B FOLK MUSIC

Music is the soul of folk songs. In order to appreciate fully the sweetness of a song one has to get oneself acquainted with the rudiments of the science of music. It is well nigh impossible to enjoy the beauty of a song without the knowledge of its music. There are seven Swaras (notes on gamut) in Indian Classical music i.e., (1) Shaḍaja (2) Rishabha (3) Gandhāra (4) Madhyama (5) Panchama (6) Dhaivata (7) Nishāda.

All the musical sounds are produced with the aid of one or several of the notes put together. In folk music we find the combination of words<sup>1</sup> and notes<sup>2</sup> blended together in a harmonious whole. I leave it to the scholars and exponents of Indian classical music, to search out whether classical music is founded on folk-music or the latter is dependent on the former. It is my firm conviction that folk-music has played a major part in the evolution of Indian classical music. We find some tunes which are common to both folk music and classical music too.

In folk music though we do not find a systematic and elaborate description of various Rāgas and Raginis yet we can discern some fine tunes which are used by classical musicians also. The tunes which we most commonly come across in the folk songs are *Kaharava*, *Khemata* and *Jat*.

The *Jat Tāl* (rhythm) is of fourteen syllables (*Mātrās*) and *Khemata* is of only six syllables. In some of the folk songs only four *Mātrās* are used in *Kaharava* tune while in other songs eight syllables also are used.

In folk music we have only four "Thāts"<sup>3</sup> which are invariably used. In *Pūri* folk songs, which are mostly sung in the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, one can find out the *Vilāval Thāt*. For example we may quote the following:<sup>4</sup>

*Jeth Baisakhavā Ke Talast Re Bhubhuriya*  
*Ho Mahendar Mtsir*  
*Chalat Mēn Godavā More Piray*  
*Ho Mahendar Mtsir*

*Chaitā* is a seasonal folk song which is sung in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). It is noted for its melodious music and exceeding sweetness. It is essentially a solo song though often sung as a chorus one. But when it is sung by a party or group of men it loses much of its charm and freshness. The rural singers are divided into two groups each facing the other. The member of the first group sings the first line of a *Chaitā* song then the members of the second group sing the second line in chorus. Thus the song proceeds and reaches the climax when

<sup>1</sup> Shabda<sup>2</sup> Swar<sup>3</sup> Thāt—Mode<sup>4</sup> Dr. K. D. Upadhyaya—Studies in Bhojapuri Folk Literature p. 376

the members of both the group sing it at the top of their voice. In *Chaitā* songs the *Khamāja Thāt* is generally used. We may quote the following *Chaitā* for instance here <sup>1</sup>

*Mānik Hamaro Herat le Ho Rāmā*  
*Jamunā Mēn*  
*Kehu Nāhīn Khojelā Hamaro Padārath Ho Rāmā*  
*Jamunā Mēn*  
*Ehī Re Jamunavā Ke Chikari Matiyā*  
*Chalat Pānv Phisilayale Ho Rāmā*  
*Jamunā Mēn*

The fast of 'Sasti Mātā' is celebrated in the bright half (*Shukla Pakṣā*) of the month of *Kārtik* i e, September-October every year. As it is observed on the sixth day of the month so it is termed as *Mother the Sixth*. Really speaking, it is a fast devoted to Lord Sun by young women who are without any issue. They worship the Sun god early in the morning and offer him oblations of milk and water with fruit and sweetmeats. They sing with their sweet voice the songs in which 'Kāfi Thāt' is mainly used. Only one example will suffice <sup>2</sup>

*Gangā Jī Ke Tīre Tīre Boalōn Māin Rāt*  
*Rājā Jī Ke Mīrigā Charīe Charī Jal*  
*E Chhathī Mātā Karabī Sevakāt*  
*Kathī Ke Re Dhenuhī Kathīe Ke Re Tānī*  
*Mārele Kavan Bhaiyā Dhenukā Chalāl*  
*E Chhathī Mātā Karabī Sevakāt*  
*Mārālā Mīrigā Parelā Muruchhāt*  
*Rainī Jitālē Āvele Kavan Deī Ke Bhai*  
*E Chhathī Mātā Karabī Sevakāt*

We have already referred to *Purvi* songs which abound in *Vilāval Thāt*. The *Thāt* known as 'Bhairav' has been used in a very popular song in which a young girl expresses the sorrow and pangs of her heart when she is married with a man who is unworthy of her.

While singing the folk songs the rules of high and low pitch (*Laghu* and *Guru*) are not very rigorously observed. The singers change the long vowels into short ones and vice versa in order to suit their own convenience. As there are no hard and fast rules for the observation of high or low pitch, so, the folk-singers adjust their voice accordingly. In order to give a musical tune to the song, the folk musician sometimes, pronounces the short syllable as the long one. So that there may

<sup>1</sup> Dr. K. D. Upadhyaya—*Studies in Bhojapuri Folk Literature* pp. 376-77

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Upadhyaya—*Ibid*

not occur a musical break-down in the song, it is considered necessary to make certain changes

*Birhā* is the song of *Ahirs*—the cowherd community which is very important in Uttar Pradesh. The *Ahirs* belong to a race of sturdy people who tend the cows and take to agriculture. They sing a song which is known as *Birhā*. While singing it, at the top of their voice, they always lengthen the penultimate vowel (*Upantya Swar*) and shorten the last one. For example—

*Pisanā Ke Parikal Musariyā Tusariyā*  
*Dudhaya Ke Parikal Bilā - - - r*  
*Āpan Āpan Jobanā Sānbharihe Re Bitiyā*  
*Raharī Me Lāgala Ba Hūndā - - - r*

Here we find that the last but one syllable (*Mātrā*) 'lā' in the second line and 'dā' in the fourth line have been very much lengthened while the last ones have been shortened. Even if the last *Mātrā* is a long one, it is shortened to suit the convenience of the singer.

I wish to draw the attention of the readers to one most important factor of folk music which is known as '*Stobha*' i.e., insertion. These insertions are of four types

- 1 The syllable insertion (*Mātrā Stobha*)
- 2 The letter insertion (*Varna Stobha*)
- 3 The word insertion (*Shabda Stobha*)
- 4 The sentence insertion (*Vākya Stobha*)

The folk singers while singing a certain song insert some syllables (*Matrās*) here and there in order to suit their convenience.<sup>1</sup> For example

*Machiyā Baiṭhal E Sāsu, Sunahu Bachaniyā*  
*Raur Bētā Morang Chalale, Kavanā Rām Avaguniya*

Here the original word is 'Kavan' (who). But in order to make it more convenient for singing, the musician has added the syllable 'ā' in the last letter 'n' making it 'Kavanā'. In some songs we find some letters inserted from outside the body of the lyric. One can multiply its instances in any number but only one example is sufficient.

*Bāv Bahele Puravaiyā, Alasi Niniyā Ailē Ho*  
*Ninī Bhatle Bairiniyā, Piyā Phiri Galle Ho*

Here the suffix 'iā' has been added to the words 'Nind' (sleep) and 'Bairin' (enemy)

<sup>1</sup> For the folksongs quoted in this article, please see—Dr. K. D. Upadhyaya—*Bhojapuri folksongs* Vol. I and II (Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad)

Collecting folk songs in Dakshin Rādh, as practically in every other place, presents certain problems. Firstly, there is a certain resistance from the singer or composer. Secondly, there are certain difficulties created by other collectors.

Since composers are usually people of sedentary habits, not many outside their immediate surroundings know or sing their songs. Even when sung, they are very seldom recorded in writing, and are forgotten over the generations, much like the proverbial flower that is "born to blush unseen and perish in the desert air."

Even though some songs do linger awhile, they usually disappear before they get a chance of finding their way into any anthology of folk songs. Many beautiful compositions are thus lost simply because there is nobody with enough interest to place them on record. Again, many an inspired composition is lost because the composer himself is shy and retiring while those nearest him, friends and relatives, are not sufficiently interested. Yet again, many songs are neglected and allowed to be forgotten simply because they do not conform to a particular style of folk music which has for some reason, managed to gain popularity. Thus, many a beautiful song is allowed to get lost.

There is no end to the problems of folk-song collection. The people who are vested with the responsibility of doing so are not, usually, trained personnel. They have little knowledge of linguistics or of anthropology, evince excessive enthusiasm, they do not bother to interest themselves in the surroundings and background of the people concerned, which is unpardonable. Sometimes they are not even accomplished musicians, and are entirely innocent of tune, rhythm, time and beat. The result, of course, is utter confusion. Yet another difficulty that the worker in this field comes across is that of language. The folk songs of every district is composed in the dialect of that particular area. To appreciate the innate beauty of the songs one has to be completely at home in that particular dialect. Unfortunately many collectors are not, and the collection of folk songs by individuals who are not thoroughly familiar with the anthropological, geographical, and linguistic background of a particular group of people does not really make much sense. For example, in many cases, no mention has been made of the instrument or instruments that are played with a particular type of song. Where there should have been an indication of a change in feeling, beat or tempo there is none. So, not only is the real character of the songs completely lost it also makes things extremely different for the serious research worker in the field.

The work of a collector of folk songs can really be worthwhile if the recording by notation is thorough, and attention is paid to details of suggestion, nuance and overtone. It is our misfortune that very few do.

Among the various types of folk song in Dakshin Rādh, possibly the oldest and certainly the most significant is the *Jhūmur*. It probably has, I feel, something

to do with jhum plantation, and is part of a fertility cult that, although now very much part of tribal life, originated in Dakshin Rāḍh

*Chūnhakī Chūnhakī Nīnd Tutali*  
*Sakhi Shyām Nā Anali,*  
*Dulio Ashar Anshe Nishi Bhor,*  
*Na Anali Pija Mor*  
*Rūgadi Chandan Chūnhā Shukali,*  
*Sakhi Shyam Nā Anali*  
*etc*

The song freely translated would mean

Friend, why is he not a coming?  
 I start in my sleep,  
 I wake and I weep,  
 Tell me, I cannot bear  
 This swinging 'twixt hope and despair!  
 Oh why is he not a-coming?  
 With sandal I've perfumed myself  
 But he is a mischievous elf  
 Friend, will he be a-coming?

*O Amār Bhangā Ghore ke Marē Bāntul,*  
*O Amār Pok Pokīye Ude Gelo kūnkda katul*

*Translation :*

My house is a broken house,  
 In it there is no mirth  
 Who is that who slings at it  
 Stones and pellets of earth?  
 My cockerel flies away  
 Growing loud in pain,  
 Nor does the cuckoo want  
 To stay to sing again

Jhūmur, a type of song that is part of the fertility cult, has travelled from the adivasis, through the different layers of society, to the sophisticated crust, where it assumed the form of Kīrtan

There are two other forms of folk song in South Rāḍh, namely, Tūshu and Bhādu. It began with a eulogy of a powerful prince, Chandravarma by name, and the prosperity that his commercial ventures brought about. The Tūshu originated in the Shushunri hills of Bānkūra and the Bhādu, in the Raghunāthpūr area, close to the border of Bānkūra and Purulia. When a young princess of Panchakot died just before her wedding, the first Bhādu song was

composed and sung. In Tūshu there are two points of interest, both related to fertility. Firstly it is a pleading to the earth for copious corn, the other, the embodiment of erotic imagery. In Bhadu it is the latter side that is more emphasized. The Tūshu does not sing of joy, nor is there in it any scope for instrumental accompaniment like strings or drums, and there is no room for dancing. Its melody is a plaintive melody.

In these two types of folk song have been mirrored the social, political, economic and moral aspects of South Rādh. Here is an example.

*Tūshu Tūshu Tūsh Tūshla Tūshlā Go Rat  
Tōmār Douloṭe Mora Chho-budī Pītha khai  
Chho-budī No-budī Gāng Shivanē Jai  
Gānger Jole Randhū Bādi, Mokorer Jol khai  
Chār Māsh Borsha Pokhorna Jai.  
Pokhorna Give Dakhī Duāre Morai  
Chhoto Moraijē Pā Dije, Bodo Moraijē Hāt Dije,  
Rat ūjho Go Jholmoliyē*

*Translation*

How you make us prosper,  
Tūshu, Tūshu, Oh !  
You give us bread galore  
And cakes by the score  
And we cook by the clear water  
Of the river oh !  
Four months have gone by  
In the midst of rain,  
We go to Pokhorna to find  
A barn full of grain  
On a sheaf of corn,  
Your hand resting poised on  
Grain filled barn,  
Tūshu, oh Prosperity,  
Are dazzling in your beauty,  
Tūshu, Tūshu, oh !

Greeting and welcoming prosperity, this is probably one of the oldest Tūshu songs that one comes by. It is written in comparatively modern Bengali and is immensely popular throughout South Rādh.

*Another example*

Ogo Tushumoni !  
Electricity, we hear, is coming to Bānkura

The roads of asphalt will be made,  
For you in gorgeous dress arrayed,  
To walk on it, dear Tūshu .

In Raḍh, Tūshu and Bhādū are most popular. In these two categories of folk music have been expressed the longing, joy, struggle and sorrow of all sections of society. Among the ferry-men and fisher folk of South Raḍh, almost a quotidian occurrence is death by snake-bite. So there are, among these people, songs eulogizing the snake-goddess Manashā. These are called Jhāpān and Bhāshān. This is probably unique, inasmuch as it is doubtful whether there is, in any part of the world, folk songs centred round the theme of death. The tune is almost a wailing and the theme usually is the legend in which Manashā is asked to give back a life which she has taken, that of the queen. These songs are favoured also by snake-charmers, who sing them on ritual occasions. Here is an example.

*Bheshe Jai Re O Benārpo Bālā,  
Abhaginīr Dāndaibār Nai Gāchhīr Tolā  
Ār Molo, Molo Benār Po, Lokhindor Bālā,  
Shoke Ākul, Bikul Holo Gondho Benār Bālā  
Kalshāp Kalkutīr Bishī Tār Korechhē Jālā  
Unehu Kopāli, Probhu khālī kāj Korīlī kī,  
Shoke Ākul Bikul Holo Gondho-Benār Jhī*

*Translation*

The merchant's daughter drifts and drifts away,  
She has no place to stay  
She has no house no home nor e'en has she,  
The shelter of a tree  
Lokhindor, her husband, he is dead,  
Her tearful eyes are red  
Lokhindor, he died of snake bite, burning,  
And, poor wretch, for ever she is mourning

The Jhāpan and Bhāshan songs of Dakshin Raḍh are based on the Pāhari, Jajayanti and Sindhu ragas, mostly in 3/4 time. Another type of song of this area is Hāpu. While Jhāpan and Bhāshan have doleful tunes, the Hāpu is a light song poking playful fun at people, with the controlled breath let out, at intervals, through the mouth, making a sound like "phoo". It is from this sound that the name Hāpu comes. During the singing (mostly by teen agers) of Hāpu, the singer keeps time by beating his heart with the closed fist of his right hand. This does not interfere with the singing, because in Hāpu, it is the rhythm rather than the melody that predominates. Here is an example.

*Ātā Ātā Lo phoo phoo,  
Kī Shāpṭa Lo phoo phoo ?*



*KāKē Khelek Lo phoo phoo ?  
 Bodār Mākē Lo phoo phoo,  
 Ke Jhāruli Lo, phoo phoo ?  
 Bāmūn kākā Lo, phoo phoo,  
 Kothai Gechhe Lo, phoo phoo ?*

*etc*

*Translation*

Custard apples, phoo phoo,  
 What snake there, phoo phoo,  
 Whom did it bite, phoo phoo ?  
 Boda's mother, phoo phoo,  
 Who was the charmer, phoo phoo ?  
 He was a Brahmin, phoo phoo,  
 Where is he now, phoo phoo ?

*and so on*

*Another example :*

*Hāṭ Gelām, Bājār Gelām, kinē Ānlām Lāu,  
 Lāu kheyē Bodār Mā korchhe Hāu Hāu  
 Hāṭ Gelām, Bājār Gelām, kinē Ānlām Tōkā,  
 Hāṭ Thekē Phirē Dekhu Boūer kōlē Jōrā Jōrā khōka*

*Translation :*

I went to the fair and to the market  
 And bought myself a gourd  
 Boda's mother, the gourd she ate  
 And then she roared and roared !  
 I went to the fair and I went to the mart  
 And I bought two new straw hats,  
 I came back home and saw with a start  
 My wife with new twin brats !

Translated by Arany Banerji

## SOME ASPECTS OF THE FOLKSONGS OF MEDINIPUR

PURNA CHANDRA DAS

'Dialect changes with every mile' The truth of this popular saying can be best realised in Medinipur which still shows traces of the influence of the neighbouring state of Orissa. After the establishment of the British rule 'Chakla Medinipur' was at first divided into two main divisions—Jaleswar and Medinipur, including portions of Bardhaman and Hugli. In the year 1787 the whole of Jaleswar was added and after 1819 this area went through several consecutive reorganisations till we find 'Bagri pargana' of Bardhaman, some areas of Hugli and the then Hugli district within its boundary. 'Medinipur jila' as it stands today represents various local forms of folk-culture between the courses of Rupnarayan and Suvarnarekha rivers. Intrinsic tendencies of this many faceted cultural complex of Medinipur are fairly expressed through the still extant folksongs and festivals.

Any discussion of the folksongs of Medinipur embodying the aspirations, hopes and understanding of the common man constitutes a vast and staggeringly large subject for a detailed and comprehensive study. For this reason, the author wants to confine himself to a short review of the folksongs and connected rituals associated with birth, marriage, death and other vital occasions of the Neguna region.

Songs associated with childbirth always form one of the basic aspects of folk-life. Medinipur is no exception to this universal rule. The Shasthi Puja is one of the important functions performed within two or three days of the birth of the newborn. This ritual is deeply influenced by the time honoured urge to adore motherhood and the natural wish for the well being of the child. It is said that 'Vidhatapurusa' writes the 'bhagya lipi' or the 'fate' of the baby during the night of the 'Shasthi Puja'. On this auspicious day a symbolic 'ghat' or earthen pitcher of the mother goddess is usually placed along with a bunch of ripe plantains, some fruit offerings and a palm leaf and a reed pen at the door of the room of the convalescent mother and the newborn child. The 'Dai ma' or the village midwife performs the puja ceremonies and undergoes a ritual fast throughout the day. Outside the room the Shasthi puja is observed in a night long singing of Shasthimangal songs mainly related to a childless king who was blessed with a beautiful son by the goddess. In these performances village women form the bulk of the audience, the Shasthimangal palas are occasionally composed in 'Medinipurna'—a typical dialect with strong overtones of Oriya influence which is easily understood by even the most uninitiated of the hearers. On some occasions the same songs are accompanied by Bengali translations.

Songs of *Shasthimangal* and *Sadhbhakshan* cited here are collected from Hrishikesh Panda of Neguna, a brahmin who performs the duties of a rural priest. He is a popular singer of Kirtan and folksongs based on the *Shasthimangal*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The date of the *Shasthimangal* songs are fixed only after the presentation of ten betel-nuts and one rupee to the leader of the singers' party which consists of six or seven persons. As in the Kirtan, here also the whole group is led by one who utters a couple of lines which are subsequently repeated in chorus by the whole party. The *Mridanga*, the *Khanjani* and more recently the tabla and even the harmonium are the instruments used in these *pala gans* or rural ballads. The song begins only after paying traditional homages to Durga, Kali, Sarasvati and Ganesa and other gods and goddesses. The story runs: Once Shasthidevi sent her maid Chandarekha for selecting an appropriate association of time, place and persons so that her power and glory can be shown and vindicated beyond doubt. She came back with the news that in the Maga country there was a childless king named Mayuradhvaj whose palace was full of riches. But there was no peace in the mind of the king and his subjects, for they had no prince. Shasthidevi appeared before the king in a dream and told him that he would be blessed with a son if he made offerings to her. Shasthupuja was then performed with great pomp and show and after a few days the queen became pregnant. At this place the song runs as follows:

*Ek Mās Dui Mās Hailo Kanākāni*

*Tritiya Pancham Māsē Hailo Janājāni . etc*

(That is, during the first two months people whispered and in the course of the third and fifth months everybody came to know about the queen's pregnancy.) After this the singer goes on to give a day to day account of the queen's condition and her desires which bear significant resemblance to the desires and aspirations of simple peasant women. Some portions of these songs are unbelievably rich in their graphic descriptions of the joys and fellow feeling and sympathy with the would-be mother who will enjoy the palatable delicacies with her friends and relations. In some areas songs satirising the pregnant woman and her poor helpless husband are sung by 'sangs' or roving jesters. These are also sung both in Bengali and in the Medinipuria dialect. Here at first we witness the husband imploring the wife to talk to him kindly. The wife presents a fantastic list of her desires as regards womanly dress, ornaments and palatable dishes. She also conveys a warning that she will not converse with her husband if he fails to bring all the things included in her list. At this point, the husband makes some angry and mischievous comments about her looks and ways till at last everything is amicably settled when he says that no one becomes angry at his words, and he himself falls at her feet.

*Pāyē Padī O Sundarī*

*Āmār Kathāy Rāg Korē Nā Keu etc*

Days pass on as the auspicious moment of childbirth nears. The majestic but painful struggle for motherhood starts. But even amidst these anxieties and physical worries the desire of the mother for a healthy child with a rosy future bursts out intensely as she prays to Vasudeva Krishna

*Dasmās Dasdin Garbhore Mū Dent Sthān  
Kī Phal Rahila Āj Mōr Garbhar  
Vasūdeva Go, E Bīpode Koro Uddhār  
Jantranāy, Prān Jāy Mohar etc*

(I have carried him in my womb for ten months and ten days. I do not know what kind of fruit remains there. O Vasudeva ! deliver me from the pains of the body and the mind.)

Now the child is born. The folk singer carries an earthen doll along with an alms bowl (in imitation of the mythical prince described above). Childless women sometimes buy this doll after making a due 'Pranāmi' or salutary payment to him.

At this stage we are astonished to find a profound sense of restraint and deeply philosophical attitude towards life in this simple folksong of the rural cultivators. This song goes on to say that the birth of a child can be anywhere yet no one knows where it will have its place in future. Here the folk singer compares human life with an earthen pitcher or vase. He goes on to say that all pitchers and vases are made in the potter's wheel yet some of them become clean and pure enough for the worship of the gods, some are only worthy to be used by the village wine seller for keeping toddy while others are used to keep clear water and are carried by youthful women. In the typical mood of a deep seated melancholy and a sense of love and sorrow for mankind, the rural poet wants to use the pitcher for drowning himself after binding it to his neck.

*Kalasi Janam Peyēchho Tūmi Chāke  
Māti Dalā Dala Kart Basālām Chāke  
Kalasi Janam Peyēchho Tūmi Chāke  
Nadir Bhitār Suta Diyā Katlam toniākē,*

In some other songs of this region we find a moving description of a father sending out her daughter after the marriage ceremony. Here she leaves the house amidst sweet and yet painful memories. The intrinsic pathos and simple charm captivates our mind. The song quoted here is collected from Sm. Sandhyarani Mañi. It describes the deep attachment of the newly-wed daughter to the household objects and pets. She thinks about the love and care that surrounded her so far and at the same time she earnestly wants to know whether she will be treated

with the same sympathy and loving care in her new household By embracing her old grandfather she wails

*Dāulā hātor Mahuta Pān*  
*Āukī Dekhūmī Ajā Janama Sthān*  
*Ke Dekhibo Mōr Ranger Chāli Gō*  
*Achchha Bahā Bela Bhangāto Badī Gō*  
*Ke Āni Dobo Motē Rangin Sadī Go etc*

At this the grandfather can not restrain himself, he also sheds tears but goes on to say that his 'Chandrā' (grand daughter competing the moon in beauty) will be happy in future and implores her to remember the old man in her sweet and happy days

In wide areas of rural Bengal we come across a unity of feeling that is woven round the Siva legend Here Siva is conceived as one of the poor but spirited cultivators who ignore all hardships of the peasant life and accept everything in a childlike joyousness In a Bengal peasant's life the day of Chaitra Sankranti is observed as the day of the marriage of Siva and Parvatī This is also a day for the Gajan Utsav of Siva Songs sung on this day present a true and intimate picture of the peasant life Here is one song collected from Sṛī Gunadhar Giri, a local cultivator. We find Siva consoling Parvatī when she weeps for a Sankhā or bangle made of conch shell The richness of the peasant life and its simple charm is caught in another popular song of this area (also collected from Sm Sandhyarani Maiti) It is called 'Dhān bhanār gān' or song of the husking ram It is generally sung by a group of three women who initiate the rhythm and movement of the body and feet as the husking ram rises and falls by the pressure of feet at its one end Here we see Siva as an eccentric and wayward husband who does not come back after completing his work in the field as a cultivator Parvatī becomes extremely worried at the continued absence of her husband At last Narada, the heavenly messenger, comes to her and asks her to take up the guise of a *bāgdī* woman to lure Siva back home When Parvatī meets Siva in the field he makes approaches to her instantly and in the absence of any other worldly possessions hopes that she will be definitely charmed by his beautiful beard The beauty and humour of the song cannot be fully brought out in translation Even then it is too charming to be left out It is as follows

*Dhēnkī De Dhumsī De*  
*Sāmā Kutē Dhān*  
*Dhēnkīr Upor Meyerā Sob*  
*Khāy pākā pān*  
*Dhēnkī De Dhumsī De*

(chorus) ... 1

*Sib Gelo Chās Karitē*  
*Durgā Railo Ghorē*  
*Sibe Nā Dekhiya Durgar*  
*Manjū Kemon Kore*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) . 2

*Bhīm Karē Lāngal Ār*  
*Sib Chās Karē*  
*Anek Din Hailo keno*  
*Ghare Nahī Ghūrē*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) 3

*Tobu Āilona Sib*  
*Bhagabatī Jāni*  
*Nārad Bolē Māmi Giyā*  
*Ānaha Ekkham*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) 4

*Sib Ke Ānitē Siba*  
*Bāgdini Hailo*  
*Kānkhe Māchher Hāndī*  
*Ār Jal Dodi Nilo*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) 5

*Hensē Hensē Sib Koy* •  
*Duti Kathā Koi*  
*Tomār Moto Bou Pele*  
*Māthāy Korē Bol*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) 6

*Hotē Pāri Buda Bor*  
*Tobu Enē Ditām Sādi*  
*Rāt Pohālē Dekhiyē Ditām*  
*Bulmuliyā Dādi*  
*Dhēnki De* (chorus) 7

Press on the husking ram, press hard,  
 The Shāma\* breaks the rice  
 The girls on the husking ram  
 Chew their ripe betel leaves  
 Press on the husking ram, press

\* The shāma is an iron ring which falls on the grain and breaks the grain open, as women press with their feet on the husking ram

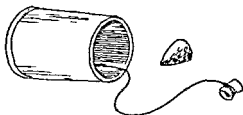
(While the dish of the young daughter-in law is full of costly items of food the poor and infirm mother is given a little of the left-over boiled rice kept overnight The heart of the old woman burns and wails in a dumb pain )

Death comes and provides a solemn and majestic finale to life's drama, a drama made of much pain and a few simple and fleeting pleasures The village singer cannot keep silent on this grave occasion and sings out in deep sorrow to ask

*"Nirab Hoye Jachchho Kōthā Mon  
Korē Bhoer Khelā Samapan" etc*

"O silent mind, where do you go after playing your part in this world? "

Translated by Santosh Bose



**KHAMAK or GUIPIJANTRA** One string instrument Body hollowed out from wood, covered with skin, string attached to bottom of the body, unattached on the other end The singer holds the body under his armpit, and produces the sound by pulling and slackening the string Striker from small coconut shell or buffalo horn Extremely popular with the Bauls of West Bengal

- 2 Siva went out to till the field  
Durga was left alone,  
Durga feels so sad  
At Siva's absence  
Press on
- 3 Bhima drags the plough  
And Siva tills the field  
And days go by  
But Siva doesn't return  
Press on
- 4 Yet Siva doesn't come  
And Bhagabati grieves  
Till Narada tells her O aunt  
You have to go yourself  
Press on
- 5 Siva's wife becomes a bagdini  
To bring Siva back home  
She takes a jar of fish  
And her ropes and her nets  
Press on
- 6 (Siva meets the beautiful bagdini )  
Siva smiles and smiles  
And says I have a word with you  
If I had a wife like you,  
I could bear her on my head  
Press on
- 7 I may be an old husband  
But I can bring you saris  
And at daybreak I could show you  
My charming beard  
Press on

The folk artiste of Medinipur is always awake to the grim side of the village life. He wails at the plight of the old and infirm mother who is neglected by his newly married son and daughter in law

*Bour Pate Saru Anna Bjanjan Sari Sari*  
*Budir thalay Amant Bhora Panta Gotā Chari*  
*Ki Jalar Kathā*  
*Jalata Uthe Budir Mone Re*  
*Ki Jalar Kathā*



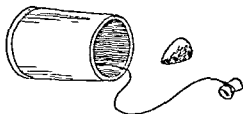
(While the dish of the young daughter-in-law is full of costly items of food the poor and infirm mother is given a little of the left-over boiled rice kept overnight. The heart of the old woman burns and wails in a dumb pain.)

Death comes and provides a solemn and majestic finale to life's drama, a drama made of much pain and a few simple and fleeting pleasures. The village singer cannot keep silent on this grave occasion and sings out in deep sorrow to ask

*"Nirab Hoye Jachchho Kōthā Mon  
Korē Bhober Khelā Samāpan"* etc

"O silent mind, where do you go after playing your part in this world?"

Translated by Santosh Bose



**KHAMAK** or **GUPIJANTRA** One-string instrument. Body hollowed out from wood, covered with skin, string attached to bottom of the body, unattached on the other end. The singer holds the body under his armpit, and produces the sound by pulling and slackening the string. Striker from small coconut shell or buffalo horn. Extremely popular with the Bauls of West Bengal.

## BĀUL SONGS OF BENGAL

SANAT KUMAR BOSE

Songs composed and sung by the Bāuls are known as Bāul songs. The Bāuls belong to a particular religious sect and are spread over the entire length and breadth of Bengal. In the present article, an attempt will be made to present before the reader the various aspects of Bāul songs.

*The importance of Baul songs lies in the fact that they represent one of the most popular and distinct forms of Bengali folksongs and this popularity is not confined to any particular region. There is scarcely any district in Bengal (including East Pakistan) where such songs are unknown. Moreover, it is not at all difficult to identify a Bāul song because, as we have already pointed out, it has some distinct features or qualities which mark it out from other forms of Bengali folksongs.*

In order to appreciate the true spirit of Bāul songs, one has to study these distinct features in their proper perspective. For this purpose, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the nature and origin of Bengali folksongs in general, and of Baul songs in particular.

We all know that folksongs of Bengal are as rich as they are varied. They represent a particular aspect of the cultural tradition of Bengal. Like other countries, Bengal too has her own cultural complex which has evolved through centuries of intermingling and admixture of the cultural traits of various races, castes and tribes who have lived in this country since the dawn of civilisation. Through all such fusions and integrations, a very rich and highly complex type of cultural life has emerged in Bengal.

This complexity is specially noticeable in her folk art and folk music. We will, however, omit discussion on folk art (as it is irrelevant for the present purpose) and confine our study to folksongs alone.

The term "Folksong" implies that there is an element of spontaneity as well as simplicity in it. It springs from the common man's natural desire to give spontaneous expression to his feelings and emotions—in so far as these can be expressed—through musical forms. It would, therefore, be improper to expect a high degree of polish or finesse either in the composition or in the melodious quality of such songs. (Of course, some exceptions to this generalised formulation are not absolutely ruled out.) We should remember that the composer or the singer of folk music emerges from the rank of the common people, and so his performances and creative abilities ought to be viewed from this perspective of his social and cultural environment. Under such circumstances his *freedom of expression is naturally confined* to certain limitations that are conditioned by those factors. His training, upbringing and mode of thinking or feeling are also guided by those conditions.

which are now in East Pakistan, both the Aktārā and the Dotārā are popular with the Bauls

The Bāul is a typical figure in rural Bengal. Like other Sannyasis, he wears a saffron Lungi and a long saffron gown running beyond his knees. Usually, he keeps long hair and long beard and is hardly seen without his favourite musical instrument, the Aktāra which has only one string to play upon. He is exclusively devoted to spiritual quests and to the upliftment of his self. To him these are of primary interest, everything else is secondary. This central aim in his life guides all his activities and expressions. That is why even the songs which he composes or sings give us an indication of his intense spiritual cravings. They are therefore not just songs based on the usual vital cravings of a social human being. A song is for him, rather a medium or means through which he seeks to attain his spiritual goal. Even his love songs do not really express feelings of sensual love but of love that is spiritual or psychic in quality, seeking its fulfilment in divine union. The song cited below, will amply bear the truth of the above statement.

*Surit, Kurti, Pirī Tī Pirīter Bhāb*  
*Jar Pirīte Je Mōjēchhe, Hoi Tār Lābh,*

*Bhober Pirī Oti Kurti, Supirī Keu Korē Nā*  
*Kon Pirīte Prapti Ghotē, Ghot Khulē Keu Dakhē Nā*  
*(Oī) Chatāchati Prem Ghotē, Tāi Dhorē Ēntē Shēntē*  
*Ār Shesh Kālete Pathē Ghātē Pheī Chōī Porē Sob*

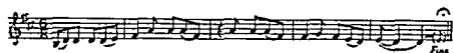
*Monē Būjhē Koro Pirī, Pirītē Hoi Ārati*  
*(Jemon) Arjunero Rothē Krishno, Pirīte Hoi Sārothi*  
*Shuddho Premē Hanūmān, Rām Podē Sōnpechhē Prān*  
*O Tār Hridpodmē Rām Nām Lekha Lekha Achhē Sob*

*Ār Ak Pirī Korechhilo Brindāboner Gopikā*  
*Tārā Krishno Sūkhī Krishno Dūkhī<sup>1</sup> Krishna Premē Rādīkā*  
*Tārā Krishno Premē Anukkhon<sup>2</sup> 10 Prān Sam<sup>3</sup>*

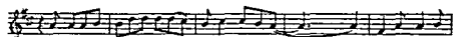
In short, psychic love can only exist between God and His devotees ]

Presto ♩ = 192

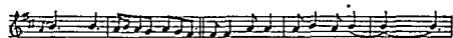
SURIT KURIT PIRIT



Su-rIt ku- -ri-t pīrit, (o)pīri-t tin pīriter bhā- - - -b.



O re mon jār pīritē je so-jechhē, ho-i tē-r



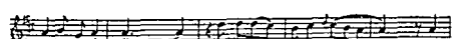
lā- - - - -bh. Bhober pīrit oti kuri- - - - -t,



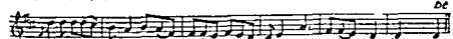
supīrit keu korē nā, Kon pī-ritē prāpti ghotē



ghot khulē keu dakhē nā, Oi chaṭēchaṭi



preṅ ghotē, tāi dhorē wāṭē shetē, Ir



e-shkālētē pathēghāte phēṭē chotē porē sob porē so- - - - b.

SURIT KURIT PIRIT

Notes	D	S	S	S	S	R	G		I	P	P	PG
Words	{ Su	—	ri	i	ku	—	ri	—	i	Pi	ri	- i

—	—	P		P	P	M	G	G	M	G	R	G
		(o		Pi	ri	i)	i	n	Pi	ri	tē	r

'R	S	—	S	—	—	—	—	—	P	P	P	D
bha	—	—	—	—	—	b}	—	—	(o-	rē	mo	n

which are now in East Pakistan, both the Aktāra and the Dotārā are popular with the Bauls

The Baul is a typical figure in rural Bengal. Like other Sannyasis, he wears a saffron Lungi and a long saffron gown running beyond his knees. Usually, he keeps long hair and long beard and is hardly seen without his favourite musical instrument, the Aktāra which has only one string to play upon. He is exclusively devoted to spiritual quests and to the upliftment of his self. To him these are of primary interest, everything else is secondary. This central aim in his life guides all his activities and expressions. That is why even the songs which he composes or sings give us an indication of his intense spiritual cravings. They are therefore not just songs based on the usual vital cravings of a social human being. A song is for him, rather a medium or means through which he seeks to attain his spiritual goal. Even his love songs do not really express feelings of sensual love but of love that is spiritual or psychic in quality, seeking its fulfilment in divine union. The song cited below, will amply bear the truth of the above statement

*Surti, Kuriti, Piriti Tin Piriter Bhāb  
Jar Pirite Je Mojechhē, Hoi Tār Lābh,*

*Bhober Piriti Oti Kuriti, Supiriti Keu Korē Nā  
Kon Pirite Prapti Ghotē, Ghot Khule Keu Dakhē Nā  
(O) Chatāchati Prem Ghotē, Tai Dhorē Ēntē Shēnte  
Ār Shesh Kālete Pathe Ghatē Phetē Chotē Porē Sob*

*Monē Būjhē Koro Piriti, Piritē Hoi Ārati  
(Jemon) Arjunero Rothē Krishno, Pirite Hoi Sārotit  
Shuddho Premē Hanūmān, Rām Podē Sōnpechhē Prān  
O Tār Hridpodmē Rām Nām Lekha Lekha Achhē Sob*

*Ār Ak Piriti Korechhilo Brindāboner Gopikā  
Tārā Krishno Sūkhī Krishno Dūkhī Krishna Premē Rādhiḱā  
Tārā Krishno Premē Anukkhon, Korē Mono Prān Samarpan  
Narān Bolē Oī Rūp Prem, Atol Podē Achhē Sob*

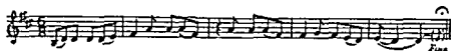
[There are different kinds of love. Each loves according to his own nature, and suffers its consequences. He does not go deep into this problem of love and tries to remain satisfied with what may be called the "worldly love." Such vital-physical love ultimately brings disaster to him and yet he clings to it.

The Sādhak-composer advises the reader to look before he leaps. He is not to confuse between true love (*i e.*, psychic love) and vital passions. The Sādhak's aim is to give expression to this psychic love. Examples of such psychic love are to be found in Krishna's love towards Arjun, Hanuman's love towards Ramchandra and that of the Gopis (women folk) of Brindaban towards their lover Krishna.

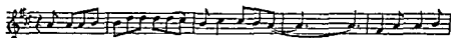
In short, psychic love can only exist between God and His devotees ]

Presto ♩ = 192

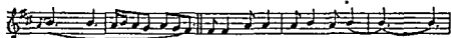
SURIT KURIT PIRIT



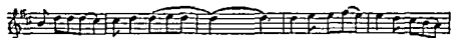
Su-rit ku-ri-t pirit, (o)piri-t tin pirit bhā- - - b.



O re mon jār piritē je mo-jechhē, ho-i tā-r



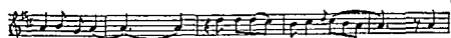
lā- - - - - bh. Bhober pirit oti kuri- - - - t,



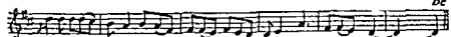
supirit keu korē nā, Kon pī-ritē prāpti ghoṭē



ghoṭ khalē keu dakhē nā, Oi chaṭṭchaṭi



preṅ ghoṭē, tāi dhorē ṅaṭṭe shetē, Īr



soṅkālētē patheghāte pheṭṭe choṭṭe porē sob porē so- - - b.

SURIT KURIT PIRIT

Notes		{	D	S	S	S	S	R	G	-	P	P	P	PG		
Words		{	Su	-	ri	t,	ku	-	ri	-	t	Pi	-	ri	-	t
			-	-	P		P	P	M	G	G	M	G	R	G	
					(o		Pi	-	ri	t)	ti	-	ri	te	-	r
			*R	S	-		S	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	D	
			bhā	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	(o	ri	ri	-	n

D Ja	S r	S pi	S ri	S te	—	D Je	N mo	—	N Je	D chhe	—
P —	—	—	—	—	—	G ho	—	P i	P ta	—	P r
PD L <sub>1</sub>	D —	—	D —	—	—	PD —	P —	M —	P —	M —	G bb))
G Bho	G be	G r	P pi	P ri	P t	P o	D ti	—	P ku	D ri	—
D —	—	—	—	—	D t	D su	S pi	—	S rit	S ke	N u
N ko	S re	—	S na	R —	S —	S —	—	—	—	—	—
S ko	S n	R pi	R ri	M te	G —	R pra	R p	S ti	N gho	D te	P —
G gho	P t	P khu	D le	<sup>o</sup> S ke	S u	N da	D khe	P —	P na	—	—
P —	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	P (o	G i
G ch <sub>1</sub>	G ta	—	P cha	P ti	—	P pre	—	D m	P gho	D te	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	S tai	S dho	S re	N —
D ēn	N te	—	NS shēn	N te	DP —	—	—	—	—	P Λ	P r
<sup>o</sup> S she	S sh	S ka	S le	S te	N —	D p <sub>1</sub>	P the	—	D gha	P te	G —
G phe	G te	R —	G cho	R te	S —	S po	R d <sub>c</sub>	—	P so	—	b
G (po	G d <sub>c</sub>	R —	S so	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	b)

As a matter of fact, it would perhaps be correct to say that a Bāul is not tied down by the usual vital strings of the society. Although he lives in society yet he tries to remain detached from its vital demands and desires, because he considers these to be stumbling blocks in his path. Unless he can overcome them, his progress will be hampered and he will remain bogged down to the level of vital consciousness alone. Naturally this is not an easy or smooth process and failures do occur from time to time. In many songs, we find expression of this inner struggle and its consequence. Here is one example.

*Bānka Nodir Pichhal Ghatē  
Opār Hobī Kī Korē  
Sathāi Kām Kumbhīr Royechhē Sadāi,  
(Bāp Re Bāp) Sadāi Hūn Korē*

*Āstī Āstē Dhīrē Dhīrē Je Korē Gamon  
O Tār Hoi Nā Re Maron  
Je Jai Tadatarī Hūdāhūri  
O Tār Prān Harābār Torē.*

*Sri Chaitanya Nityānanda Advaiter Ghūṭ  
O Tār Kibā Paripāṭ  
Dekhīe Sei Ghājer Chhobī Abāk Hobī  
Jābī Dut Bāp Batātē Morē*

*Modon Mādon Shoshan Stambhan, O Mohan Aī Pancha Shar  
O Sharer Mohimā Opār  
Jodi Sei Juddhē Jābī Tīr Chhūtabī  
Tobē Chūbī Lāgā Ghorē*

[How dare you cross this river with your feet on its slippery bank while the fierce crocodile (symbol for passionate desires) looks forward eagerly to eat you up?

He who proceeds slowly and steadily need fear no fall  
But he who seeks for rapid progress must in the end be annihilated

It is from this bank that Nityānanda, Advaitya and Sri Chaitanya started towards their goal,

and you will simply be staggered to death when you realise the real significance of this landing place

The God of Love (Modon) has five arrows with which he operates. If you are truly bent upon launching a war (against obstacles that stand in the way of



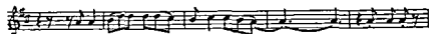
the Sadhak) then first of all put your house (i.e. passions and desires) under lock and key ]

Presto ♩ = 192

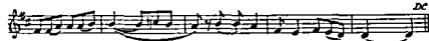
BĀNKA NODIR PICHOL GHĀTĒ



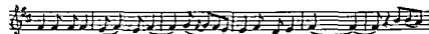
Bānka nodir pichol ghātē, (o) o par hobī kiko-rē.



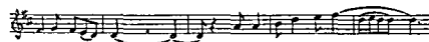
Sathēi kēkkumbhīr ro-yechhē sadhē - - - - i, bāpre bāp



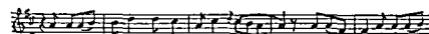
sadhēi hako-re. (o) o par hobī kiko-rē.



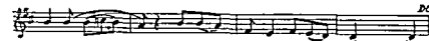
1 Āstē āstē dhīrē dhīrē je korē go-rō - - - n, Ō tar



hoināre mo-ro - - - - n, je jai tār-k-tā-ri



(o) je jai tārā-tā-ri hurē-hūri, o tār prānharābār



to-re O pār hobī kiko-rē.

BĀNKA NODIR PICHHAL GHĀTĒ

Notes	D	D	S	/	S	S	R	/	G	P	P	/	P	P	D	/
Word,	Bān	ka	—	/	no	di	r	/	Pi	—	-	chha	/	l	gha	—
	D	—	—		—	PD	N		ep	—	(PD)	{	D	P	P	
	t	—	—		—	—	—		—	—	(o)	{	o	-	Pa	-
	G	R	—		G	R	S	S	—	—	—		—	—	—	
	ho	bi	—		ki	ko	—	re	—	—	—		—	—	—	

—	—	—		—	P	P		D	Ś	Ś		Ś	Ś	N	
					Se	- thāi		kā	- m	kum		bhīr	ro	—	
D	N	—		N	D	P		—	—	—		—	—	—	
ye	- chhē	—		sa	- dā	—		—	—	—		—	—	—	
—	—	P		P	P	P		G	G	P		P	P	D	
		Bāp		re	bā	- p		sa	- dā	- i		hān	ko	—	
D	—	—		—	N	D		P	—	(PD)		ō	pār	.	
rē	—	—		—	—	—		—	—	(o)		—	—	—	
G	G	G		G	G	—		R	G	—		R	G	—	
Ā	- s	- tē		ās	- tē	—		dhī	- re	—		dhī	- re	—	
G	—	M		GMG	R	—		R	—	G		S	R	—	
—	—	—		—	—	—		Je	—	ko		rē	ga	—	
G	—	—		—	—	—		—	—	G		PD	P	P	
mo	—	—		—	—	—		—	—	n		ō	- tā	- r	
G	G	M		G	R	S		S	—	—		—	—	—	
ho	- i	nā		re	ma	—		ro	—	—		—	—	—	
S	—	(PD)		D	P	P		D	Ś	—		R	G	—	
n	—	(o)		Je	Jā	- i		Tā	- ḍa	—		tā	- dī	—	
ŚR	Ś	—		—	—	—		—	—	—		—	P	PD	
—	—	—		—	—	—		—	—	—		—	Je	Jai	
D	Ś	—		Ś	N	—		D	N	—		śN	D	P	
Ta	- dā	—		Ta	dt	—		hu	- dā	—		hu	- dt	—	
P	—	—		P	P	G		G	G	P		P	P	D	
—	—	—		o	tā	- r		prā	n	hā		ra	- ba	- r	
D	—	D		—	PD	N		ḡP	P	(PD)		ō	pār		
to	—	rē		—	—	—		—	—	(o)		—	—	—	

etc

Since these songs are devotional in character, a common central theme runs through all of them. This theme, again, may be broadly split up into three categories: it either expresses the goal to be attained, or speaks of the difficulties that have to be faced by those who take to this form of spiritual path, or lastly, it offers guidance to overcome these difficulties.

The Bāul has no written scriptures. Neither is he 'educated' (in the sense the word is understood by the intelligentsia). His knowledge springs from faith, introspection, intuition and the teachings of his Guru and the knowledge which

he thus acquires, as well as the experience which he gathers in course of his Sādhana, is transmitted to others mainly through his songs

For the purpose of communicating his experiences, he always uses symbolic words or expressions in his compositions, the real significance of which is therefore clear only to those who are initiated to this form of spiritual or Yogic practices. Hence, to a layman, many of these songs do not convey any rational sense. They apparently seem to be a mere agglomeration of a number of words placed side by side and held together by the thread of a simple tune. Again to others the superficial or literal meaning of the symbols seems to be the only criterion of appreciating the true spirit of these songs. In this connection some of the most frequently used symbols may be mentioned. These are *Phool* (flower), *Neer* (water), *Meen* (fish), *Moner Manūs* (Soul's companion), *Tribeni* (confluence of the three rivers), *Daraza* or *Dooār* (door), *Chandra* (moon), *Padma* (lotus), *Sahaj Manus* (the free and perfectly natural man) etc.

One may pertinently ask why are such unintelligible symbols used by the Bāul to express his spiritual philosophy? Why does he take shelter behind the symbols instead of resorting to plain speaking?

The answer to these questions lies in the fact that the Bāul follows a particular path to attain his spiritual goal—a path which is very different from those sanctioned and accepted by the Brāhmanical rituals. He does not believe in and defies all the accepted forms of rituals prescribed and rigorously defended by the Hindu priests who base their authority on the traditional Brahmanical canons of Hindu religion. Hence persons whose thought processes have been moulded by those traditional forms of ritualistic practices, find it very difficult to approve, appreciate or even to respect the Bāul cult. That is why we often find the Baul standing aloof from the current socio-religious streams. He is even hated by a section of our society, specially by that part of it which is guided by the Brāhmanical priesthood. This is not very surprising. Because of their class content, the Bāuls, like other sections of the so-called lower castes of Bengal, have grown out of the resultant impact of various types of cultural and religious modes that emerged through the fusion of various castes and tribes. They have never been swayed away by the exclusive influence of the so-called upper castes alone. Hence the latter refuse to accept them within their own fold. The Bāul is therefore treated as an 'untouchable' and his religious practices are decried.

But social ostracism has not succeeded in distracting him from his path which he follows with singular devotion. He tries to live in constant communion with his inner or true self—the Brahma, in his own way. He denotes this inner self by the term 'Moner Manus'. The spiritual experiences or feelings which he realises or the difficulties which he faces in course of his meditation or Sādhana are expressed through his songs not directly and explicitly but implicitly by means of symbols. He believes in what is known as "Adhikāri veda" or discrimination. That is, he would not disclose his inner feelings or his mode of Sādhana indiscri-

minately to any and every one. To do so would be harmful both for the Sadhak as well as for the listener. The true spirit of these symbols is therefore revealed *only to those who follow this particular path or who are sincerely interested in spiritual quests*, while the layman must remain contented with the surface meaning alone.

It is interesting to note that though his philosophy or its practice may not be approved or understood by the public at large yet his songs are appreciated by all sections of the people. This is possible because his songs fulfil all the criteria of genuine folksongs. The composers and the singers are all rooted to the cultural tradition of Bengal. The feelings which they try to communicate through their songs are genuine and spontaneous and the tunes or rhythms they compose are based on the traditional patterns of melodies which have been found acceptable by our common people.

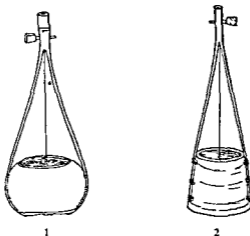
Of course the tunes as well as the themes contain stamps of local character and hence some variations may be noticed among the Baul songs of the different districts. Thus the tunes of many of these songs sung in the eastern districts of Bengal have resemblances of 'Bhatiali', in the northern region, of the 'Bhawāiya'. Those of the western parts are slightly different. They are usually very lengthy (*one song may take as much as twenty to thirty minutes to sing*) and are rather monotonous in their tonal character.

There are many Bauls for whom it is a must to visit the various fairs and festivals held at different seasons throughout Bengal. Here they spend a few days charming the people with their songs and dances. (They not only sing but also dance while singing and their dance patterns also have a distinct characteristic quality.) They sit in groups and go on singing one after another for days together with occasional breaks for food and rest. There are two notable festivals in the western parts of Bengal where the maximum number of Bauls are to be seen together, viz. the Joydev Kenduvilau festival (in Birbhum district) and the 'Ghospara' festival (in the district of 24 Parganas). The former is held during the middle of January while the latter during the festival of Doljatra (March/April).

It is unfortunate that this sect is dying out. Perhaps from the point of view of material progress of the society at large this is inevitable. But it has to be admitted that with the passing away of this sect Bengal will be losing one of her richest forms of folksongs. The decay has already set in and most of the Bauls that we see today, looking out for a professional musical programme here and there in the city or who are introduced to the city's musical circles or conferences by the 'cultural bosses' are fake representatives of their sect. Having lost their faith in their own creed, having forgotten their basic spiritual aim they now demonstrate their songs with a mere professional and mechanical attitude. The songs which now frequently pass as Baul songs lack both the true spirit and the genuine folk tonal qualities which were the characteristics of genuine Baul songs of the past. These Bauls themselves are now mainly interested in earning money and

maintaining their popularity among the urban middle class intelligentsia. As a matter of fact most of the Baul songs that we hear today (specially in the urban sector) may be termed as only one form of the modern versions of the so-called 'Palli Geeti' or folksongs which are being patronised by the official and non-official cultural societies with a view to upholding the cultural traditions of our country<sup>1</sup>

The lyrics and the tunes used as illustrations in this article have been collected from Baul Dinabandhu Das



1

2

**AKTĀRĀ** One string instrument. Body from rind of a gourd, opened both sides with goatskin covering for the bottom, from where a thin steel wire goes up to the head, a pair of bamboo strips serving for a handle are pressed at the neck to produce the rhythm while one hand manipulates the centre string to keep a continuous drone. While the first variety is used in East Bengal the second variety, common in West Bengal, has a wooden body, is manipulated by one hand and is used by the Baul singer as he dances. There are other varieties of the same instrument in other parts of the country. Used in Baul songs and songs of similar modes.

# FOLK-SONGS OF THE TRIBALS OF WEST BENGAL

## AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

MANIS KUMAR RAHA

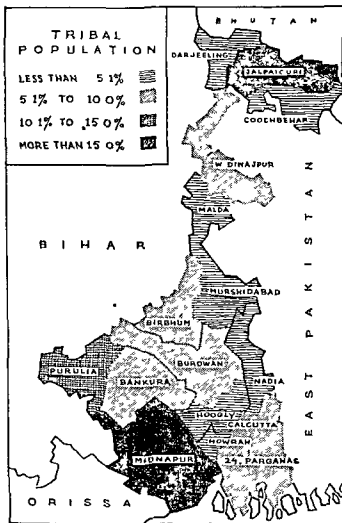
The Tribals of West Bengal live in an air of poverty, misery and sorrow. Diseases, draught, flood, famine and other natural calamities always merge them in the ocean of adversity. But in spite of all these dangers and hindrances their voice has not been choked, still they enjoy the psalm of life that often reflects the life and activity of these people.

In West Bengal there are 20,54,081 Scheduled Tribals, who are distributed in varied numbers throughout the State, their main concentration being in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Midnapore, Purulia, Burdwan, Bankura and West Dinajpur. Regionally the tribal people of this State may be divided into two groups,—the who live in the plains areas and those who live in Terai and hilly areas. On the basis of physical features, they may again be divided into two groups—*Australoids* such as Oraon, Munda, Santal, Bhumij, Kheria, Mahali and others and *Mongoloids* such as Lepcha, Bhutia, Rabha, Mech, Garo and Toto. Of these tribals the members of the former group are found both in plains and hilly areas but those of the latter group are found only in Terai and hilly areas. Of these tribal people Santals have the highest number covering 58.42% of the total Scheduled Tribe population. Then, in order, come Oraon (14.48%), Munda (7.80%), Bhumij (4.44%) and Koro (3.02%). Others have smaller frequencies.

Due to the absence of their thick concentration in a particular area in the State like Madhya Pradesh, Orissa or Bihar the tribal people of West Bengal have been living in the midst of the dominant Hindu caste groups for centuries together.

As a result of the centuries' long contact with the dominant Hindu caste people, the tribal people of this State may culturally be divided into two groups—firstly those who are more acculturated and second one are those who are comparatively less acculturated, or rather, more traditional. The members of the former groups, due to their long contact with the neighbouring dominant Hindu caste groups have, meanwhile, borrowed a large number of Hindu cultural practices by replacing their own originals, thus gradually becoming accustomed with these new entities have formed different social patterns. On the other hand the members of the other section who are living in somewhat isolated places or are able to create somewhat tribal environment like that in their cradle land or who are comparatively more conservative, still have retained their traditional customs and manners to a considerable extent.

The folk-song of a tribe is built in accordance with their cultural pattern, their manners and customs their rites and rituals. If the tribe changes its culture, the folk songs accordingly change. The same theory is applicable to the folk-songs of the tribals of West Bengal. While the less acculturated groups of tribals



have kept their folk-songs unaltered to a great extent, in the more acculturated groups the reflection of change is clearly visible in their folklore pattern as that in other aspects of their culture. Their folk songs have been modified along with the change of language and cultural pattern. In this article an attempt has been made

to show the change and persistence of tradition in the folksongs of the tribal people of West Bengal. To focus this aspect in the folksong pattern of the tribal West Bengal we would cite examples from two tribes—firstly the Santals of the central part of West Bengal living in Midnapore, Birbhum, Bankura and Purulia districts who have retained their tribal identity in a comparatively less altered form. The influence of neighbouring Hindu culture is feeble there. And secondly the Oraons living in Sunderbans areas (southern part of West Bengal) who due to their century long contact with the dominant Hindu castes in their locality and also due to cessation of all the ethno-social links with their home land in Bihar are unable to keep their own tradition and have ultimately in order to keep pace with the local environment smeared themselves with a coating of local Hindu culture. Their folksong in the similar way has been influenced greatly by the local art of music.

#### A SANTAL FOLKSONG

If a little comparison be made it would be seen that almost no difference lies between the original Santal songs and the Santal songs of West Bengal. These Santal songs have their own original theme and rhythm.

Regarding Santal folksongs, Culshaw states: A large number of the songs are spontaneous in composition and therefore ephemeral. Most of the songs are classified according to the rhythm of the type of dance or dance cycle with which they are associated. New and topical songs are continuously being composed to give poetic expression to the new experiences of the group. (1946: 66)

When any new event is marked by the Santals they at once give it a poetic expression and sing spontaneously on their way to or during any festival. When a Santal boy first marks a train or visits a town or when a *Sahib* (European) walks through a Santal path he then and there composes a song and sings it before his friends and companions.

Not only these current events are kept in mind by the Santals they always remember the past incidents, their tradition and originality and express the same through these songs. Culshaw in this connection remarks: By means of songs the Santals also keep alive the memory of past events. Many classes of songs might almost be described as history in memorable form. One can analyse history into component traditions, legends or myths but it is not at all clear how far the Santals themselves differentiate these differing elements or whether they do so at all. This is true of many songs sung at the time of different festivals, particularly the great festivals of Spring time and Harvest and the songs sung at crises in individual life such as initiation and marriage. Each festival and each occasion has its own appropriate cycle of dance with characteristic steps and rhythm and consequently its own types of melody. (Op. cit. 67)



The Santal folksongs may be divided into three major groups. These groups are (i) Songs with dance (ii) Lesser tunes, and (iii) Songs without dance (Bhattacharyya 1962: 54-61)

In Group (i) i.e. 'Songs with dance', nine principal varieties may be included. These are, *Lagre*, *Pātā*, *Don*, *Sohrae*, *Dahar*, *Bāhā*, *Karam*, *Dasae* and *Bir*

In Group (ii) i.e. 'Lesser Tunes', there are five types of songs. These are *Golwāri*, *Dāntā*, *Matnar*, *Ganjar* and *Humti*

In Group (iii) i.e. 'Songs without dance', there are three principal varieties which are *Bāplā Binti* and *Gam Seren*. Besides the above three main types, there are some minor tunes, viz., *Jharni Mantar*, *Hero Rohoe* and *Morna Seren* which the Santals sing during some occasions.

In the following pages some major varieties of Santal songs have been discussed.

*Lagre Seren* is the most common dance tune inflected by the Santals. In this dance "the women stand in one or more rows, keeping hold of each other, linking their arms, while the young men, generally, only a few, are in front of the women, each with a drum—capering, jumping, beating the drums and exhibiting themselves" (*Op cit* 55). Regarding *Lagre* songs Culshaw states, "A large proportion of the songs are spontaneous in composition and therefore ephemeral. On any moon light night, when work is slack, the younger adults of a Santal village gather together to sing the songs classed as *Lagre* and *Parob*—most of the songs are classified according to the rhythm of the type of dance or dance-cycle with which they are associated. There are for example many different types of *Lagre* rhythm" (1946: 66).

Some examples of *Lagre* songs are given here in order to assess the rhythm of the song.

*Hor Kad Diku Kad*

*Sonā Chāndom Emāth*

*Ench Da Chamdo Bām Emādinch*

*Māti Re Han Biti Re Han*

*Ench Da Chāndo Emānch Me*

*Iji Ge Chāndo Sonā Hujutnch*

(You were ploughing the stony plot below the tank. You must have been very eager for the rice gruel. You took up the goading stick and displayed it towards me. I got afraid—perhaps you were going to beat me.)

Not only this light-tuned song is present in *Lagre* type, but we see different other types of tunes in *Lagre*. Santals are often seen to sing the *Lagre* songs concerning natural conditions.

The cuckoo sings on the Peepal tree at the end of the road  
 Summer is on  
 Bull frogs croak in the tank below the vegetable plot  
 Rains are coming

When tigers growl on the low mountains  
 We may clearly presume the hot summer days are in view ;  
 Tigers go away to higher mountains  
 That indicates the approach of rains

The *Lagre* songs are not restricted to such themes only but often contains themes of their social life also. When the spring appears in the young hearts when the young boys and girls come closer to each other in their day to day contact, and when they fall in love with one another they sing

*Har Khanad Fich Red*  
*Tingun Mese Eha Māri*  
*Sedāi Reya Kāthāyan Kuli Ma*  
*Har Khanad Fich Red*  
*Bāyanch Tingun Eha Māri*  
*Sange Rege Juri Merāyā*

(You are my life Jiban  
 I am your life Jiban  
 Our lives have been bound together, Jiban  
 As leaves never fall from the date-palm tree  
 So I am not going to relinquish your mind,  
 We would support each other for ages)

In the year 1855 when the rebellion (*Huf*) broke out amongst the Santals against the British rule the *Lagre* type of songs inspired the Santals much to fight against the injustice and torture they suffered from. The rebel Santals used to sing

Saheb rule is trouble full  
 Shall we go or shall we stay?  
 Eating, drinking, clothing  
 For everything we trouble  
 Shall we go or shall we stay?

Sido, why are you bathed in blood?  
 Kanhu, why do you cry, Hul Hul?  
 For our people we have bathed in blood,  
 For the trader thieves  
 Have robbed us of our land

They fought so daringly against the British regime With their native bows and arrows and *tāngi*, they created a terror in British army Fear they did not know, death they did not care

*Sāyā Chetān Kuri*

*Lipir Lipir Sari*

• *Hayate Hilā kān Hīpir Hīpir*

*Rath Nākich Bāgiben*

*Gech Gurich Chetben*

*Bāngben Sahāo Ledā Hīram Sikir*

(We shall eat, drink and make ourselves merry This body, this lump of earth will not stay on Life slides along like water on an arum leaf This body, this lump of earth will not stay on)

The second type of songs in Group (1) is *Pata* which is also known as *Dharna Seren*. The *Pata Seren* has a simpler tune and quite similar to *Jhumur*. "The word *Pata Seren* literally means songs sung at *Pata* festival (i.e., *Chaitra Sankranti* or *Siber Gajan*) but actually is not confined to that occasion only. These songs can be sung at any time and at any place" (Bhattacharyya 1962: 55). Though some *Pata* songs depict Hindu influence on Santal culture, this intrusion of Hindu culture, the Santals utterly dislike.

*Pikhuree Pittāre Bāblā Butāre*

*Chedā Hili Han Ya Jang Kānā?*

*Rā Bāngkhāng Chekāya, Hamar Bāngkhāng Chekāvā*

*Dādām Baburey Hīramāng kān*

(Stuffing your mouth with betels looking now to right, now to left, wearing *Sari* trailing along the ground—you Jhari, move about in the market place You sing songs in the language of the Hindus You are such a fool that you do not feel that you are abandoning your religion You smile at Hindu youths Never do you care that you are turning your back to the community You will move about cawing like a market crow You will never get settled anywhere. I can see it with my eyes)

The third type of songs i.e., *Dan*, is one of the commonest types, and this is sung in all social ceremonies as it is considered as one of the most popular songs

"Owing to its high frequency there have grown up several sub-varieties—*Sohoriā*, *Dānguā*, *Budli* and *Jhikā*" (*Op cit* 56) Due to its diverse tune-structure, the last sub-variety is often considered as a separate variety. A few examples of *Don* songs are given below

•  
 I saw her in a dream and rose up  
 My mind wandered away,  
 Only the body was left behind  
 Beyond the cattle shed and under  
 The cover of the Jām trees my mind  
 Moved onward—to the spot  
 Where my beloved was

\* \* \*

*Inch Juri Kuri Hank Jānwāyen*  
*Inch Krutum Karā Hank Bāhuyān*  
*Inch Krutum Chāole Bāndi Hutu ko Lāgāoyen*  
*Inch Ge Munayānch Bejuri Har*

(The clouds are forming in the distant sky  
 Black clouds are rising up  
 Perhaps father and mother are going  
 To bring a dark son in law for me)

\* \* \*

Five Mango leaves and a pot of water  
 I do not know if you really sprinkled water over me  
 I do not know if you really wetted me or not  
 But you made me a prisoner for entire life

\* \* \*

*Chikāte Kuntti Sunumānā*  
*Chikāte Mātakam Rasāwūnān*  
*Chikāte Karā Machā Gāyār Gevā*  
*Chikāte Kuri Maclā Chinkār Gevā*

(Yes, yes give me up  
 My parents will be highly pleased  
 They will be able to settle marriage  
 Over and over again  
 But give me, throw over to me—  
 My maiden mind )

Besides the above love and social songs there are several types of *Don* songs sung in several occasions. During transplantation they sing

In Jeth the wind  
Is coming with the rain  
Where are you headman?  
Bring the two bullocks  
Put the red one to the yoke  
And we will plough  
The field below the palm tree

•            •            \*

Wealth Wealth  
O Mother Wealth  
Where was your birth?  
I was born  
In the soil  
I was born  
In the splash of rain

The Santals are often called as the sons of the nature. Their love for nature often inspires them to compose *Don* songs in praise of nature.

*Baru Jhârna Re Nakar Baha*  
*Ait Mu iderate Kander Aka*  
*Tabar Taker Tianch Su Leda*  
*Durup Durup Tianch Baha Leda*  
*Biret En Torage Masat Ena*

(The flowering tree in our yard  
Has produced flowers in abundance  
We sweep the yard even at midday  
And in the afternoon  
Still the flowers continue to drop  
Down on the ground.)

*Sohrae* songs are songs the Santals sing at *Sohrae* festival which is one of the greatest festivals of the Santals. They deal with every considerable subject and have got a lilting melody and jingling *Eadance* (Op. cit. 57). But in *Sohrae* songs love and religion have taken more prominence.

Construct a building and  
Keep your heart therein

\* \* \*

*Āben Da Juri Kuri Ātti Ben Hisālee*  
*Enchren Juri Ben Hātāo Ākār*  
*Chetān Tolāre Kāmār Menāy Lātār Tolāre Sonhār*  
*Sikari Kāy Tām Nā Sanat Jānwāya*

(Dear lover, please do not take hold of my arm,  
Dear lover, do not throw your arms across my neck,  
I have silver ring in my finger  
I have a garland of silver beads on my neck)

\* \* \*

My husband is sleeping by my side  
My secret lover is lying in wait  
Please go away secret lover  
How can I come out?  
My husband stretches himself  
Over the flank of my Saree  
He has interlaced his thigh with mine  
Please go away secret lover  
How can I come out?

\* \* \*

*Chānak Chetān Re Tirio Sāttekān*  
*Siri Muhān Ye Muruli Sāttekān*  
*Muruli Labte Gānch Lab Enā*  
*Juri Tāhen Te Ench Āttang Enā*

(Formerly you said that you would  
Retain me for ten years and  
Remember me for twenty years more  
Where are those ten years?  
Where are those twenty years?  
You have abandoned me  
Before the year is over)

\* \* \*

As previously stated, some *Sohrae* songs have a religious background. Some examples of ritual *Sohrae* songs are given below

"To-day we have taken (ceremonial) bath  
In the Duldali tank  
Tomorrow we shall offer sacrifice  
To Gods in the spacious pavilion."

Sohrae, Sohrae

It was good while you were here

It was different while you stayed

Come again in time

Joy, do not cry

Joy, do not mourn

On the due day come back

\* \* \*

Father,

For twelve years is the festival

For thirteen years Sohrae

It goes away and wanders back

Loquely as gold, father,

Is the life of a man

\* \* \*

*Dahar* songs have also much importance in Santal life. These songs have some mythological connections. These also have some connection with the *Sohrae* songs. "When a group of dancers reach the end of the road, it is customary to sing some *Dahar* songs and then start on the return journey. So also at the other end of the road. Thus an intimate connection has developed between *Dahar* songs and *Sohrae* festival and some are inclined to treat them as a variety of *Sohrae* songs" (*Op cit* 58)

"Mohuq flowers come out like claws

On the paws of the cat,

Sāl flowers sway in the breeze,

When I collect them and

Tie up in my lap,

Nectar fall in drops

It emits a smell somewhat like

Fish soup, somewhat like lotn juice "

\* \* \*

*Nāi Nāre Narete*

*Bugite Tāle Jiling Jhingā*

*Jāhte Gāth Da Māyā Gī Sānāi*

*Nutu Kāte Jam Da Nāiti Sibil*

(Such a lonely place. Even the stumps of tree strike me in terror. The roots make me afraid. Everything here is against me. And then the young man on the 'Maṣ Kalai' plot eating boiling frog. He looks menacing.)

The next important song is *Bāhā Baha* songs are connected with the great Santal festival, *Baha*. These songs are sung at various stages of the *Baha* festival. These are mostly ceremonial litanies. A few examples are given below.

Songs are going on over the fence,  
 Music is being played beyond the courtyard  
 How can I attend now?  
 How can I go out?  
 My bracelets would tinkle when I move,  
 My anklet would jingle  
 How can I attend now?  
 How can I go?  
 The father in law is in the house  
 The mother in law is at the door,  
 How can I attend now?  
 How can I go?  
 A lamp is burning within the room  
 A cord of hair is fastened to the door  
 How can I attend now?  
 How can I go?

\* Music is proceeding in Lungu hills  
 Bells are ringing ding-dong at Ghantabari  
 Why is music going on now?  
 Why are bells ringing now?  
 Music is going on so that  
 Men may assemble there  
 Bells are ringing so that  
 Men may assemble there  
 Why still music is going on?  
 Why still the bells are ringing?  
 Music is going on still so that  
 Young hens may be killed  
 Bells are ringing still so that  
 Castrated goats may be destroyed.

*B r Seren* literally means 'Forest songs'. They are the vulgarest songs imaginable couched in language of gross barbarity and accompanied by dances equally uncouth and ribald. As the name indicates the songs are not sung in the neighbourhood of human habitation but in the forests." (*Op cit* 60) These songs are generally sung during hunting festivals, attendance of women in which is strictly forbidden. Bodding is of opinion that the forest songs are mostly composed by



the divorced women (1925 II 152) From them young boys and girls learn  
Some such *Bir Seren* are given below

Under the bushes  
Which two are struggling  
The girl has caught his chest  
The boy is holding her breast  
Boy and girl, they rock together

\* \* \*

The rain is drizzling down  
Take me boy, to the back of the house  
If you care for me only a little girl  
We need not wait so long

\* \* \*

Under a tree by the rock  
We spread a cloth and loved each other  
Boy it may only be for now  
It may only be today

\* \* \*

'Grand mother, a pain  
Is twitching in me  
'At the back of the house  
You were full of your bed  
And so your trouble came'  
'I will rear the child  
If one will share ones sept'

So far we have discussed various types of Santal folk-songs which we have chosen as the representatives of those tribals who are still conservative so far as their culture is concerned, and through these songs we have seen that the Santals still maintain their own traditional folk songs. They have still retained their culture because of their keen feelings for their own community. They do not like to dance and sing before the stranger nor do they like to show their performances outside their own locality. Through many songs they have expressed their deep disregard for such behaviour, one of such songs is

We shall not go out for dance  
In the field where "Ind Porob" is being held  
We shall not dance  
Before an assembly of other communities  
We shall dance 'Don,' 'Lagre,' 'Baha'  
And 'Karam' in our village  
We shall dance only in our own village

Not only that they dislike to express themselves to outsiders or outside their own world, but also they look in contempt when any of their own tribe do so. They hate to see their girls become show-girls.

*Pukhuree Pittare Bablā Butāre  
Chedā Hili Hanm Yā Jong, Kānā?*

Stuffing your mouth with betel,  
Looking now to right and now to left  
Wearing Sari trailing along the ground  
You Jhari

You sing songs in the language of the Hindus  
You smile at Hindu youths  
Never do you care that  
You are turning your back to the community

#### B ORAON FOLK SONGS

But somewhat reverse condition is visible among another section of the tribals. It is often seen true that "when a group of migrated people settles in a new environment, it gradually accumulates values and traditions which on the other hand slowly replace their original traditional beliefs and customs etc. This process is further accelerated if the migrant group breaks off connection with its parent stock living in their original habitat" (Das & Raha 1963 viii)

This section who are mainly migrant, live in the midst of a large group of people belonging to a different caste for a long period, are directly or indirectly forced to lose their own tradition and to adopt the culture of the dominant local people. And due to this adaptation in their manners and customs, language and tradition, a bright reflection of the culture of the dominant group can be noticed for example in the Oraons living in the Sunderbans (southern part of West Bengal) areas. In this estuarine area they came as labourers about a century ago to reclaim the virgin forest and later on settled there as agriculturists. There they live "surrounded by a number of influential Hindu and Muslim castes and communities, from whom they imbibed a number of new traits gradually. They could not avert the influence of the neighbouring castes and communities as in course of time they ceased to have any ethno-social relation with their kinsmen of the Ranchu area" (*Op cit*)

It is a fact that the Oraons of this area unlike the Santals of the Western part of Bengal, do not sing and dance regularly but on occasions, except a few youngsters who are seen walking gaily through the village path singing either some light folksongs or filmsongs or some popular Bengali songs. Songs do not play important role in their life unlike their congeners living in Chotanagpur or unlike

the Santals This is mainly due to the (a) influence of the local Hindu people who according to these Oraons, do not like them singing and dancing always and (b) absence of bachelors' dormitory or *Dhumkuriā* in the Oraon villages of Sunderbans areas *Dhumkuriā* or *Jonkh Erpā*, the bachelors' dormitory is considered as the training centre of the traditional moral and culture in a Oraon village of Chotanagpur, where the unmarried boys and girls assemble every evening, get training, and sing and dance Probably these are the main reasons why the songs and dances have not been developed much among them However, these Oraons, as they have forgotten their own language *Kurukh*, sing songs either in *Sādrī* (which is a mixed language of Bengali and Hindi) or in Bengali In the forthcoming pages we would discuss some of the important folksongs of the Oraons of Sunderbans

In the month of *Bhādro* (Aug-Sept) some of the Oraons perform *Karam* festivals when they sing *Karam* songs These *Karam* songs are sung both in *Sādrī* and Bengali Some of the examples are given below

*Etā Etā Jāōā Kiā Kiā*  
*Jāōā Jāōā Jāgala Mor*  
*Dhāna Bohurā re*  
*Etā Etā Jāōā Kiā Kiā*  
*Jāōā Jāōā Jāgala Mor*  
*Gaham Bohurā re*

(Which are these seedlings?  
 These are seedlings of paddy which I planted  
 Which are these seedlings?  
 These are seedlings of wheat, which I planted)

During this *Karam* festival the house-wives and those who live far away from their near ones are eager to meet their relatives—they count days for the long-awaited meeting.

*Parilo Bhādro Mās*  
*Lāgila Nāhi-ara Āsh*  
*Rātidin Keho Nā Dekhā*  
*Mor Prān Jāya*  
*Bhādor Chalila Shirāya*

(The month of *Bhādro* has come  
 I have no other desire  
 But to see my parents  
 I see nobody in day and night  
 I am getting tired  
 The month of *Bhādro* is going away)

A very important part of *karam* songs in Sunderbans areas has been occupied by *Jhumur* songs. These *Jhumur* songs are mainly based on mythological stories or some religious themes like the *Kirtans* of Bengal, though some *Jhumur* songs also depict social and familial affairs. It is a fact that the Oraons of Sunderbans know very little of the *Krishna-Rādhā* affairs of the Hindus, still *Jhumur* songs they sing, are highly mingled with this affair. The love affairs between *Lord Krishna* and *Sri Radha*, the devotions of the *Gopas* and *Gopinies* (cattle keepers) for *Lord Krishna* are clearly visible in these *Jhumur* songs.

*Ākherā Bandanā Karī*  
*Sabere Deotū Dhārī*  
*Basanete Bandhulen Brajanarī*  
*Modhubane Jhumar Lāglo Bhārt Bhārt*

(First of all paying homage  
 To all the deities  
 The maidens of Braja  
 Started *Jhumar* in the Madhuban)

*Pjār Naile Hriday Jwale go*  
*(Āmār) Rādhā Naile Hriday Jwale*  
*Āj Bāchhiā Kusum Tulā Bane*  
*Nā Bujhiā Mālā Gānthilā Kene*  
*Āj Champak Baran Badhan, Binodini*  
*Uday Hala Chāmpak Gul go*  
*(Āmār) Rādhā Naile Hriday Jwale*  
*Balidere Bhāi Subal Akule*  
*Kulāye Rupe Bisharī Mile*  
*Ore Tore Haba Pār*  
*E Bhaba Sansār*  
*Rai Tarani Ene Dile,*  
*Pjār Naile Hriday Jwale go*  
*(Āmār) Rādhā Naile Hriday Jwale*

(My heart burns without love  
 My heart parches without Rādhā  
 Why have you made a garland  
 With flowers chosen from the garden  
 I imagine *Champakā* like *Binodini*  
 Has appeared within the *Champakā* flower.  
 Brother *Subal*, tell them that  
 I shall cross this Earth

these songs are sung in praise of *Karam* festival. Some examples are given for illustration and comparison.

Today come *Karam*  
 And was grand in the stream  
*Karam*, to-morrow you will go  
 To the banks of the Ganges

\* \* \*

*Karam* is coming  
 Shaking its branches  
 Shaking, shaking  
 Shaking, shaking  
 Mother, it comes  
 To ask for the oil  
 To ask for the scarlet  
 To ask for the oil  
 To ask for the scarlet

In the month of *Māgh* (Jan-Feb) or at the time of performing the post funeral rites, some Oraon families of Sunderbans perform *Sādhuāli* or *Sābdī*, in which *Sādhus* (ascetics) sing *Sādhuāli* hymns. These psalms are mainly composed in praise of different great Hindu gods such as *Nārāyan*, *Siva*, *Brahmā* and others. These songs are composed either in *Sādrī* or in Bengali.

*Ahu Ho Sānta Shā*  
*Chaukā Chhāri Bausu*  
*Hiyā Rākhale Bichhāye*  
*Siba Nārāyan Guru kahe, Samojāhe*  
*Siba Nārāyan Phurāt Sansār*  
*Ahu Ho Sānta Shā*  
*Choukā Chhāri Bausu*

(Hear, O you peace-loving sages  
 Come along and sit here keeping your  
 Broad mind open  
 The *Guru* (Master) says,  
*Siva* and *Nārāyan* maintain this world,  
 Realise it )

\* \* \*

O hear the glory of *Siva*  
 O hear the glory of *Nārāyan*  
*Siva-Nārāyan* have created this land

Through the beauty of Radha  
When Rai will bring the boat )

Besides the love episodes of *Rādhā* and *Kṛiṣṇa Jhumur* songs are also composed on stories of different Hindu epics. An example from *Ramayan*, the great Hindu epic, is given below

*Keṣhāḥā Dhumi Dhumi Kande*  
*Koṣhoḥā Rai*  
*Bālī Hāire Hāire Hāi*  
*Bharat Nirpati ke Bhāi*  
*Hārālī Ayodhyapuri*  
*Rāṅṅī O Chalalal Banabāse*  
*Bālī Hāire Hāire Hai*

(Alas Queen Kousallya weeps with bevelled hair  
Ayodhya has lost Rāma, brother of King Bharata,  
Alas Ram is going to the woods in exile )

The social and familial affairs, as previously stated, also take shape in *Jhumur* songs, an example of it is

*Nāhi-ārā Jābo Kāike*  
*Cheurā Mōi Kutālī*  
*Seh Cheurā Dhān Mesāi Dilāi*  
*Nāhi-ārā Jai Nāi Dilāi*  
*Bālī Hāire*  
*Sāyā Nāhi ārā Jāi Nāi Dilāi*  
*Nāhi āra Jābo Kāike*  
*Tela Kere Lukāi Dilāi, Haire*  
*Nāhi ārā Jai Nāi Dilāi*

(I have pounded chapped-rice  
So that I can go to my father's house  
But some one has mixed paddy into it  
Alas, I am unable to go there  
I have purchased oil to take to my father's house  
But somebody has hidden that oil,  
Alas, I am not allowed to go there )

Both in theme and text, rhythm and language, the *karami* songs sung by the Oraons of Sunderbans differ from those sung by their brethren in Chotanagpur where

these songs are sung in praise of *Karam* festival. Some examples are given for illustration and comparison.

Today come Karam  
 And was grand in the stream  
 Karam, to-morrow you will go  
 To the banks of the Ganges

\* \* \*

Karam is coming  
 Shaking its branches  
 Shaking, shaking  
 Shaking, shaking  
 Mother, it comes  
 To ask for the oil  
 To ask for the scarlet  
 To ask for the oil  
 To ask for the scarlet

In the month of *Māgh* (Jan-Feb) or at the time of performing the post-funeral rites, some Oraon families of Sunderbans perform *Sādhuāli* or *Sādrī*, in which *Sādhus* (ascetics) sing *Sādhuāli* hymns. These psalms are mainly composed in praise of different great Hindu gods such as *Nārāyan*, *Siva*, *Brahmā* and others. These songs are composed either in *Sādrī* or in Bengali.

*Ahu Ho Sānta Shā*  
*Chaukā Chhāri Bausu*  
*Hijā Rākhale Bichhāye*  
*Siba Nārāyan Guru kahe, Samojāhe*  
*Siba Nārāyan Phurāt Sansār*  
*Ahu Ho Sānta Shā*  
*Choukā Chhāri Bausu*

(Hear, O you peace-loving sages  
 Come along and sit here keeping your  
 Broad mind open  
 The *Guru* (Master) says,  
*Siva* and *Nārāyan* maintain this world,  
 Realise it)

\* \* \*

O hear the glory of *Siva*  
 O hear the glory of *Nārāyan*  
*Siva-Nārāyan* have created this land

Siva Narāyan are maintaining this land  
 O you all hear the glory of Siva  
 O, you all hear the glory of Narāyan

In the last day of the month of *Pōus* (Dec Jan) the *Tūsū* festival is celebrated by the Oraons of Sunderbans. Probably this festival has infiltrated in this area from Manbhum, Birbhum and Purulia districts. Though this festival is mainly for the women, still young boys also take part in it by singing, dancing, beating drums and playing flute. Womenfolk mainly sing *Tūsū* songs. "These *Tusu* songs, containing the elements of joy and pensiveness, display a key-note expressing a mixed outburst of satiety and discontent. *Tusu* is regarded as one of their own people, as daughter, through songs about her, they try to express the sorrows and joy of their own life and activities" (*Op cit* 323). These songs are all composed in Bengali. In the dawn of the day of festivity they start singing *Tūsū* songs after paying due homage to her

"*Ogo Tūsū Moni*  
*Nomi Ami Rāngā Charan Dukhāni*"

(O *Tusu*,  
 We bow at your beautifully coloured feet)

*Tūsū* they think is a little maiden who lives with them in their poverty stricken life. She lives with them in their mud built house broken and distressed in condition, suffers terribly during summer, rain and winter

*Achil Dilām Pāchil Dilām*  
*Darja Dūtē Pārlām Nā*  
*Jharjhariā Jal Chhedāilo*  
*Bhylo Tūsūr Bichhānā*

(I have fenced the house, made walls  
 But could not fit the door  
 The rain entered through it  
 And drenched the bed of *Tusu*)

In such a condition, *Tūsū* gradually grows up. When she is somewhat grown up she is sent to school for study

*Eksho Tākā Duisho Takā*  
 ~ *Tinsho Tākār Bai Hāte*  
*Āmār Tusu Likhte Jābe*  
*Engrāji Kalam Hāte*



(Taking books costing hundred,  
Two hundred or three hundred rupees  
and a fountain pen in hand, my *Tūsū*  
will go to school for study )

*Tūsū* gradually grows older and older In her course of life she comes in contact with so many wonderful things She is quite astonished when she first visits Calcutta, the wonderful city

*Path Chherede*  
*Path Chherede*  
*Tūsū Jābe Kolkātā*  
*Kolkātāte Dekhe Elām*  
*Lohār Khuṭe Bāgh Bāndhā*  
*Ei Bāghe ki Mānus Dhare*  
*Dekhbo Bāgher Tāmāsā*

(Give way to *Tūsū*  
Give way to *Tūsū*  
She will go to Calcutta  
In Calcutta I have seen  
A tiger is tied to an iron rod  
Does this tiger catch man? •  
I shall see the fun )

*Tūsū* is no more a child She has felt the ecstasies of youth. She is now conscious of it She likes to enjoy the new destiny of life, the wine of youth

*Bārīr Dhāre Phul Gāchhtāi*  
*Phule Jhatpaṭ Korlo*  
*Shesrāte Kokil Dākē*  
*Tusur Monṭā Bhulāilo*

(The flowering plant near the house  
Is bending with the heavy load of flowers (i.e., youth)  
In the late night, the cuckoo coos from the tree  
And this decoys *Tūsū's* mind)

She has reached her marriageable age Her parents think of her marriage and settle it The groom comes from a distant village and *Tūsū* gets married

*Din Kūṭe Mās Kaṭe,  
Rāt Je, Kaṭe Nā Re,  
Ghare Mon Lage Nāre  
Bihā Bara Sādh Lōge Re*

(Day passes away  
Month passes away  
But the night does not pass  
I cannot set my mind at home  
I like to get married )

Gradually this desire becomes true The marriage is settled The arrangements are made The sound of wedding music is heard

The music is heard in the village  
To-day Sahadev is going to marry  
Rub your face with powder, Sahadev  
Dress yourself new, Sahadev  
You are going to marry to-day.

Thus Sahadev goes to the bride's village for marriage The wedding procession gradually reaches nearer the village Youngsters asks their elders :

*Māgo Mā, Nadir Dhāre  
Kiser Bājanā Bājichhe ?*

(Mother, what is this music at river side ?)

The elders answer

*Rājār Betā Biha Karite Āsichhe  
Tārī Bājanā Bājichhe*

(The Prince is coming to marry  
The music of the wedding party is heard )

After marriage the bride leaves with the bride-groom for his village It is painful to the relatives of the bride to bid her farewell

*Jatadin Bhāier Ghare  
Tatadin Ālo Jwalito Je  
Ebār Phālni, Andher Holo je*

[ So long you were in your brother's house,  
The house remained well-lit  
Now Phalni, (as you are leaving you brother's house)  
The house is steeped in darkness ]

The marriage songs of the Oraons of Chotanagpur are quite different from those of the Oraons of Sunderbans. This difference lies not only in language but also in theme and rhythm. For illustration an example of Oraon marriage song of Chotanagpur is given below.

*Khoiondrka Kannan,  
Hia, Bhaiyare Sendra Tonka  
Chitra Makan Laoage  
Hoa Bhaiyare Sendra Tonka*

(The arrow brought by the son's bride  
Do take it to the hunting ground  
To kill the striped deer, brother  
Do take it to the hunting ground )

Love songs have also an important share in framing the musical aspect in Oraon society of Sunderbans. The young souls who have not yet tasted the essence of married life but feel the ecstasies of youth, often sing love songs. Beside their own composed love songs they often sing popular Bengali love songs or love songs of the popular Bengali films. However, some of their self-composed love songs are given here for illustration.

*Nadir Pāre Dankhin Dhare  
Ai Sonar Chānd Bhāsichhe  
Boyārmārīr Phalnitā je  
Bukē Āmār Nachuchhe*

(The golden moon is floating  
in the south of the river bank  
Phalni of Boyarmari is dancing  
in my heart )

The rain has come  
The rain has come  
My house is empty  
How shall I spend the rainy days  
My love, without you?

*Ai Ganger Djarer Kalo Kamli*  
*Āmar Pran Mojailo*  
*Ai Kanmarir Kalo Kamli*  
*Āmar Bil Bharailo*

(Dark Kamli by the side of the river  
 Has overwhelmed me  
 Dark Kamli of Kanmari  
 Has filled up my heart)

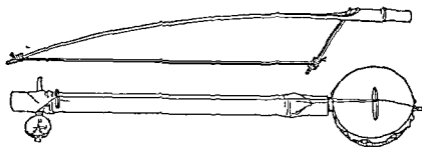
So it is seen that the folk songs in the Oraon society of Sunderbans has changed much in its structure theme and rhythm. It is clearly visible that a finer touch of Bengali culture has remodelled these aspects of Oraon folk songs and as such a mixed expression of their tradition and the regional influence characterises the present day Oraon songs. Finer theme and more inclination to consequences are the characteristics of the present day Oraon folk songs of the lower Bengal.

So in the folksongs of the tribals of West Bengal persistence and change of tradition are clearly visible. Where the change is noticeable it is due to the influence of the local ethnic groups who are mostly the Hindus. Besides modern entertainment sources i.e. radio cinema etc. have also exerted influences on their songs. The enlightened and more sophisticated section of the tribal populace are gradually inclining towards modern songs specially to the film songs and this has a great repercussion on the folk songs and folk music of the tribal world which is making them gradually disinterested in their own traditional songs.

## REFERENCES

- |                             |      |   |
|-----------------------------|------|---|
| Archer M                    | 1942 | <i>Folk Poems—A new Oraon Poems for the Sarhul Festival</i> Man-in-India Vol 27             |
| Archer W G                  | 1942 | <i>Fourteen Oraon Marriage Poems</i> Man-in-India Vol 22.                                   |
|                             | 1943 | <i>Twenty Oraon Poems of the Ranchi District</i> Man-in-India, Vol 23                       |
|                             | 1943 | <i>An Anthology of Marriage Sermon-Oraon</i> Man-in-India, Vol 23                           |
|                             | 1944 | <i>The Santal Sohrae</i> Man-in-India, Vol XXIV No-2.                                       |
|                             | 1944 | <i>More Santal Songs</i> Man-in-India, Vol XXIV No 3  |
|                             | 1944 | <i>The Illegitimate Child in Santal Society</i> Man-in-India, Vol XXIV No 3                 |
|                             | 1945 | <i>The Forcible Marriage</i> Man-in-India, Vol XXV No 1                                     |
|                             | 1946 | <i>Santal Transplantation on Songs</i> Man-in-India, Vol XXVI No 1                          |
| Archer W G &<br>W J Culshaw | 1945 | <i>Santal Rebellion Songs</i> Man-in-India Vol XXV No 4                                     |
| Bhattacharyya, S S          | 1967 | <i>Santal Songs—Different types</i> Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute Vol 1 No 2. |
|                             | 1964 | <i>Woodland Verses</i> Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute Vol 3 No 3 & 4           |

Bodding, P O	1925	Santal Folk Tales, Vol I, II & III,
Culshaw, W J	1946	<i>Santal Songs, Man in India, Vol XXVI, No 1,</i>
Das, A K & M K Raha	1963	The Oraons of Sunderbans
Das, A K	1963	<i>Lepchader Loknritya O Oraonder Lokgeeti</i> (in Bengali)
S K Banerjee & M K. Raha		Lokayana, Vol II, No 1
Ganguli, S K	1958	<i>Munda and Oraon Folk songs, Indian Folklore, Vol I</i>
Hahn F	1905	Kurukh Folklore
Raha, M K	1963	<i>Changes in the Magico-religious Beliefs and Practices of the Oraons,</i> Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute, Vol I, No 2
	1965	<i>Cultural Changes in Tribal Sunderban, Modern Review, Vol-</i> CXVI, No 5
Roy, S C.	1912	The Oraons of Chotanagpur
	1925	Oraon Religion and Custom



**BANAM** One string Santal bowing instrument, accompanying their songs and dances. Body from coconut shell, with skin covering, bamboo neck, wooden bridge. Bow from specially shaped bamboo strip and Sisol (linear) fibre.

## THE TOTOS, A SUB-HIMALAYAN TRIBE THEIR LIFE AND MUSIC

CHARU CH SANYAL

The extreme north of-West Bengal districts, formerly known as Kirāta Desa, are now the abode of many tribes. Some of them came from Nepal or Bhutan, some from ancient Kamboja situated at the junction of Burma and China—the Boḍos, and some from the south and west. Thus a unity in diversity has grown up, a synthesis and a mixture of cultures has been the result. Still a section of them has preserved the old manners and customs and from this section the ancient culture can be sought out. One part is completely transformed, one part is in the process of transition and one part retains the old form. But there is a harmony of contrasts.



I am introducing a small Mongoloid tribe consisting of nearly three hundred and seventy individuals living at the junction of India and Bhutan within Madarhat Police Station jurisdiction of the Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal—the Totos—who have retained practically the whole of the original customs but are already embarked on a process of transition. They are markedly a distinct isolated tribe and refuse to leave their own territory. They are found nowhere else in India.

When in 1946 I went to their colony I had to trek seven miles through deep forest and over dry riverbeds strewn with pebbles. They live on three small hillocks called the Tading Hills, in about fifty huts. To the east the river Toorsa flows by. Their huts (*shā*) are made of bamboo built on stilts and thatched with grass. The

floor is made of split bamboo. Only one room serves the purpose of sleeping and cooking with a small hole on one side in the floor to serve as a privy. A large split bamboo extension throughout the whole length of the room serves as a parlour. There is no regular staircase. A thick plank notched at places to anchor the feet (*kaibu*) placed inclined from the earth to the floor serves as a staircase. At night it is covered with a plain plank (*kaibu tumbā kāmāpā*) to ward off the carnivorous denizens of the nearby forest by preventing them from going up. The lower part of the house is for the pigs and the birds. The human excreta thrown on the ground through the hole in the floor of the upper chamber is at once eaten up by the pigs and the birds below and thus a natural scavenging is effected. No water is used for washing. It is done by wiping away the parts with leaves that are stored close by. Still the room is not unclean and there is no stink. Their bed consists of a reed mat and a jute mat cover. In winter a cheap woollen blanket is drawn over the body. There is no pillow and no mosquito curtain although mosquitoes are abundant. They have no well for drinking water. They carry water through half split bamboo drains (*okā*) supported on stilts, from springs near or far. They store water in long bamboo tubes (*god-ā*). They do not bathe nor wash their clothing. They do not hunt. They eat putrefied meat from animals killed by tigers in the forest. They simply boil coarse rice (*mā*), maize (*shāngiā*) or millets (*mā bē*) with this meat without any condiments and take them with salt. I saw them cooking and the stench from the pot was unbearable. But they relish this food. Probably for this reason they suffer from a skin disease Yaws. They kill cows, buffaloes, pigs and hens. They can milk a cow or a buffalo. But they do not drink milk. It is given to the pigs to fatten. They are addicted to home brewed wine (*tu*) made from rice, maize or millets. This is a must for them. They call themselves Hindus. They worship Mahakāl and Mahakālī (*ishpā*). Mahakālī is represented by two drums installed in their temple. They also propitiate ghosts either kind or harmful to them. During the worship of the Mahakālī they kill cows, pigs, cocks and hens. In all other *pujas* pigs, cocks, and eggs are offered. They are divided into twelve clans or *gotras* but all live together. Their dress (*angdung*) is home spun and hand woven cotton. The males wear two pieces of cloth, each 5 × 2½' one round the waist and the other round the body making a big pocket in front of the chest where tibbits are kept. The women wear four pieces of similar cloth, one round the waist hanging up to the knees, one round the waist to keep the lower garment tight, one round the body and one over the head. Their marriage is negotiated by the elders. When the marriage is settled the girl comes to live with her prospective husband and regular marriage is solemnised only after she is pregnant and not before. The girl lives in the house of her husband. The family is patrilineal. They never marry any other than a Toto. Any one doing so ceases to be a member of their society. Their language belongs to the Tibeto Burman group.

When I first saw them in 1946 they could understand Nepali and a little Mechi language, with whom they always came in contact. When I again visited them in

1948 they could with difficulty understand a little of Bengali. Then they were learning to bathe and wash their clothing. One of them was proud to say that he bathed once a week. When again I was with them in 1952 they could speak broken Bengali and understand it much better. After eight years in 1960 when I again visited them I could go to their colony in a Jeep. An unmetalled road was made in the meantime by the West Bengal Government. An agricultural farm was established and they were being taught ploughing of the land with bullocks instead of the *jhoom* (that is slash and burn cultivation) that they had practised so long. During *jhooming* they go through the powdery ash after cutting and burning the jungle, stabbing a hole here and there with machets and dropping in whatever seeds come to hand. Even now this practice is not fully given up. Sugarcane was grown and some Totos were found chewing the sticks and relishing the sweet juice. Vegetables (*birci erbi*) were also grown and the Totos were being taught to cook and eat them. I saw one flat bean (*Sima Dolicos Labtab*) creeping along a bamboo lattice. A wooden plough (*chu*) was also found. A wooden husking trough (*sing*) with a wooden husking handle (*dibrung*) could be seen. Stone made crushing discs (*eakoi*) were also being used. I saw a large number of areca nut trees grown to help the Totos economically as their old orange orchards died away. The old headman Dhanapati with his friends Logongshē, Chong pongshē, Tunka, Amepa and Subba came to see me. They were my old friends. Amepa was then the headman after Dhanapati. I was sorry to hear of the death of the high priest (*desaimā deisi bē*) Nure-chang bē. Subba the second priest (*chuime-deisi bē*) became the high priest. Gargapa, whom I saw as a mere pica back baby tied at the back of her mother, appeared before me wearing khaki shorts and a half shirt. He was a gentleman at large. He had changed his name to Dinesh. My Toto friends told me with pride that they bathed once even twice a week and were using washing soap to remove the dirt of their clothing. I entered Dhanapati's hut and was delighted to find two metal pitchers (*gangru*) for keeping drinking water. These he had bought from Ramjhora hat about seven miles away. I went through the village towards the market consisting of only three shops. To my dismay I saw a few huts completely burnt down. I heard that a few days before my arrival a fire had broken out and the villagers had been helpless spectators of the destruction of their houses as there was no arrangement for extinguishing the fire, and water was not plentiful. They said, '*shā ong pu na*,' meaning thereby that all houses were burnt in the fire. Next I went to the Mahakali colony (*da koshā*). Here all the Totos confine themselves for one month during the *pūja* of Mahakali. That was not the season of worship and the colony looked desolate. A small primary school just started was there, but literacy could not make any headway.

I was happy to see that the Totos were not kept as living museum specimens. Attempts were being made to bring them closer to the Indian community as a whole. I hear that by 1967 further progress has been made in this direction.

Unlike the hill tribes in general the Totos enjoy songs very little. During their



Mahakali puja they sing a song the language of which appears to be the oldest form It is this

*The Song*    *Māhākālī Dō Kō*  
*Gai Gai*  
*Tarā Mārā Dō Kō*  
*Lupu Pa Po*  
*Golē Bc Ru*  
*Dōkō Chouje*

*Free translation*    Mahakali you are great  
 We bow down to you  
 You are all powerful  
 Be pleased on us  
 Take our meagre offerings and bestow your blessings on us

The Totos have a song to be sung during the cultivation of their crops It appears that some words of the Nepalese have intruded into their language

*The song* .    *Sājung Zāma Sangjo to zādo*  
*Ipādē lumā ichung, ipāido kegāgo*  
*lumā chung kēzāgo mā dājjong zāmū*  
*Laizugo chumbē ninghe tājjako*  
*Nadā zāi pu laimo tengkā leizāgo*

*Free translation*    This day we are again going to sow the  
 millets (Kaon) Our little sprouting  
 Kaon children (plants) are all dead  
 (due to drought) Oh the gracious  
 sky be pleased to give us some rain  
 so that our little Kaon plants may come back to life

#### KALĒ SURO SONG

This is probably taken from the *Bhāi Tikā* ceremony of the Nepalese when the sisters smear unboiled rice on the forehead of their brothers This is a full edition of the *Bhratridvitiya* ceremony of the south Bengali Hindus The Totos sprinkle unboiled rice on the god Kalē Suro and then on the face of their brothers In doing so they sing as follows

*The song*    *Tōrō mōrō Kālē Suro*  
*Sāizā dand*  
*Ishmā phāizi chāmpi*

*Tōrō mōrō*  
*Chāchro pūchoi*

Tōrō Mōrō are sometimes sung as Tarā Mārā.

*Free translation*    You all powerful god Kāle Suro  
                               Take our greetings  
                               We sprinkle this holy rice  
                               On you the powerful and on our  
                               brothers  
                               Be pleased on us

When I visited the Totos in 1946 none of them told me of Kāle Suro puja.  
 Probably it is a later addition

## A BRIEF SURVEY OF NEPALESE FOLK SONGS AND DANCES

M M GURUNG

The Nepalese are a mixture of many tribes and races. Each tribe and race has its own language, social tradition and cultural heritage. The rustic folks who live in the isolated hamlets surrounded by the difficult hills and the rivers have preserved their different social traditions and culture in the language of music passing them from generation to generation through direct learning. With all the differences in the forms, patterns and language of the folk music of these different tribes, the basic character remains the same. "Balun", "Sangini" and "Bhajan" belong to the high caste Brahmins and Chhetris. "Chebroong" belongs to the Limboos. "Dhamphoo" is the music of the Tamangs. "Khirkhutay," "Gormu" and "Reb-looh" are dear to the Sherpas. "Hakparay" and "Lairani" belong to the Rais (Kirats). "Lakhay" and "Yatras" is the monopoly of the Newars. "Rodi Ghar" a hut erected for a social dance is only dear to the Gurungs.

Besides there are other songs relating to sowing, harvesting and seasonal changes which are sung in "Parbatay" the common language of all the tribes. "Asaray," "Mangsiray," "Rusia" and "Baramasay" etc. are sung in different seasons.

To the rustic folks no matter to whatever tribe they belong to, the month of "Sawan" is sacred. They believe it to be the month of meditation and quietness. No social event including marriage takes place in the villages. It is against social tradition to play any musical instruments during the month because the rustic folks believe that the gods descend down from heaven to have their annual rest underneath the earth during the month. To disturb the resting gods by merry making is to invite curse upon the crops which are ripening.

The rustic folks look upon the earth, the sun and the clouds with awe and reverence. This sentiment is depicted in the following "Maroomi" song. The raga is "Biran" the most beautiful of all the ragas of "Maroomi" or "Mādal".

"Hark ! the clouds black and foamy  
thunder in the East,  
Behold ! here come the rains,  
To the sun we shall offer  
the sandalwood of pinkish hue,  
To thee dear mother earth !  
We shall offer the garland of pearls "

The "Marooni" or "Mādal" dance is dear to each and every Nepali no matter to whatever caste or tribe he belongs to. The "Mādal" is an oblong shaped drum similar to "Mirdangam" but a bit shorter in size. It has two different "talas" on both sides. The "Maroonis" are the dancers who are males but they are attired in female costumes and are adorned with the ornaments of the females. The "Dhatwaray" (clown) represents the Siva. The Madal is the main musical instrument for the performance of the "Marooni" dance. It may consist of any number. The beats of Mādal play different 'talas' and 'layas' according to the ragas and raginis of the different songs. According to the sayings there are thirty six ragas and raginis but the main ragas are—"Sasi" which describes the origin of the Mādal and is sung in a very slow tempo. This is sung before the actual performance of the dance. The "Biranī" is normally sung in the twilight evening. "Khyali," "Tappa," "Garra," "Laharay tappa," "Khyimta," "Samala," "Churki," "Bivas," "Juhar batti," "Soroti" and "Bijaya Bharat" are the other main ragas. The latter two are actually epic poems and the dances are performed on an exclusive demand only. "Soroti" and "Vijaya Bharat" are dance dramas.

The other musical instruments played with "Mādal" are the cymbals, the flute and the gong.

The "Marooni" dance is a religious cum social dance. As the month of "Sawan" departs the lifting music of Sahanai in raga "Sanjay Kali" echoes all over the silent hills. This is actually a message to the villagers to announce the departure of "Sawan" and to welcome the month of "Vado". The rhythmic beats of Mādal suddenly come to life in the stillness of night somewhere in the village. The rustic folks now realise that the gods have arisen from their slumber beneath the earth. The marigolds have bloomed and the fields smile with a whispering sound in the moonlit night.

As "Dasai" (Dashara) approaches bringing with it all the smiles of life the beats of Mādal are heard all over the village. Joy and happiness fill the hearts of the rustic folks. The married away daughters come from afar to have a family reunion bringing "Kosayi" (presents) to their parents. "Malsiri" is sung to the rhythmic beats of madal,

"Glory to Goddess Bhairabi ! Goddess of the Gorakh  
Please do appear O "Kalikay" !

Sacrifice of goats and buffaloes are made to appease the Goddess. This festive occasion ends merrily. As the married away daughter departs towards her home, she offers marigold flowers to her brother. This means an invitation to the brother to the house of the sister for "Bhai tikka".

As already stated the Marooni or the Mādal dance is a social cum religious dance. Though the Mādal songs are sung from the month of "Vado" it is against social and religious tradition to perform the dance before the Lakshmi Puja.

Lakshmi Puja, the festival of lights is the greatest, dearest and merriest of all the festivals to the Nepalese. The huts are decorated with marigolds and the walls are painted with red soil and fresh cowdung. The cows are given special food and they are garlanded with marigold flowers. The mother of the house put *tilak* on the forehead of the cows with "Diyo" and "Kalas". In the twilight evening of the "Lakshmi puja" the young village maidens gather under a "Pipal" tree and as the first lights begin to be lit they go from house to house singing "Bhailo" the message of "Bali Raja" whom they believe have come to the earth above from the "Patal lok" after a long exile. The "Vailini" song resounds all over the peaceful dales and the valleys.

"Vailinis" have come to your courtyard,  
 at this night of the "Awsī" \*  
 So O mother ! of the house  
 clean and sweep all around,  
 because it is 'Awsī',  
 the sacred night of the cows  
 "Dhobis" and "Telis" (beggars) come always,  
 but those who have come to night  
 are the Vailinis  
 We have not come by our sweet will  
 but such is the wish of the "Bali Raja" \*

At this very moment men folks gather at the house of the "Guru" for opening the "Marooni" dance. The main performers take to fasting for this purpose. With the chanting of the mantras the "Guru" begins to play the "Mādal" in a slow tempo and different items of decorations are put on the Maroonis one by one with the chanting of songs. The Guru then plays the "Madal" rapidly followed by the others—a signal to start the performance. They also break the fast at the moment. As the party reaches the house where the dance is to be performed the Dhatwaray (clown) fixes the "Trisula" which he carries all along, at the courtyard of the house and sings the following song.

"From the East hath come a yogi  
 Behold ! he hath seated before the sacred fire  
 O mock him not ! because he is a yogi  
 It was writ in yester life  
 his fate by destiny "

The singers then begin the "Sasi" or "Sakhi" wherein the origin of the Mādal is narrated. They also invoke the spirits of Siva, Parvati, Bishnu, Krishna and of the gods of heaven and earth and offer the performance showing respect to them.

The Maroonis move their hands and feet according to the tala and laya of the various songs swirling round and round in deep pensive mood. The Dhatwaray keeps alive the spirit of the audience by cracking jokes and dancing to the tune of the music.

The songs of "Biranı" are generally full of pathos. The tune is sweet and sung slowly. The following is an instance of the "Biranı" song.

As I went down  
 I did behold a marigold seedling  
 It was so tender and it was so young  
 As I came up,  
 I did behold that it had changed  
 and had grown a lovely bud  
 As I sat in meditation,  
 I did behold that it had blossomed forth  
 into a lovely flower  
 Alas ! but who would adorn  
 this lovely flower?  
 My beloved is away in a distant land  
 If I pluck, it would droop,  
 If I keep it, it would fade and decay  
 Alas my poor fate !  
 My beloved is away !  
 Weep not O sister dear !  
 when your beloved returns  
 I shall bloom again  
 Your youth may go away  
 for ever,  
 But the youth of a flower  
 is forever  
 Hence adorn me in thy hair  
 I shall bloom again

As the night deepens the Madalays sing the "Khyali"

"From yonder the Himalayas peaks  
 flow the seven rivers  
 into the sea  
 O alas ! I could not even a pitcher fill,  
 O what fate awaits me !  
 Here I die before my youth has bloomed "

*Another instance of "Khyali"*

I shall tend and I shall reap  
 the field of the queen  
 But O Ye cruel clouds ! why don t you break ?  
 let the rains come,  
 I shall be able to see,  
 the land of my parents

One of the most enchanting songs is the "Bivas" This is sung when the light of the dawn begins to appear

Hark ! the doves are cooing  
 and the cock is crowing  
 Behold ! from the East  
 the light of the dawn descends

This song further narrates the pathetic tale of a pair of deer who are being chased by the hunters

The male asks his beloved to hurry as they run for their life He says that he has dreamt a bad dream the previous night about her She was found sleeping in a well of blood Being pregnant she cannot keep pace and is ultimately overpowered by the hunters She is hit by an arrow and dies by the wound He weeps and wails over the dead body of the beloved The hunters happen to be Rama and Laxman The pair of deer happen to be a prince and princess cursed by an angry rishi long time ago Rama lifts up the curse and they two go away happily with the blessings of Rama

They sing and dance from house to house until the advent of "Ekadasi" when they again gather at the house of "Guru" for the closing ceremony In a simple solemn ceremony the spirits of the various gods of heaven earth and seas are invoked They ask their forgiveness for any error they have made in the performance of the dance With the chanting of the following song the costumes and ornaments adorning the "Maroonis" are taken out one by one

Wipe out the vermilion from thy forehead,  
 O Marooni ! thou shall put it some other day  
 Uncover the veil that covers thy head,  
 thou shall wear it some other time  
 Take off the bodice from thy body,  
 thou shall wear it some other time  
 Take off the bangles from thy wrists,

thou shall wear them some other time  
Take off the necklace from thy neck,  
thou shall wear it some other time  
Take off the anklets from the ankles  
thou shall wear them some other time

As the last item of ornaments is taken out from the body of the Maroon, the Madal beats vigorously to announce the ceremony to be closed. The beats of Mādal then stop abruptly. All singing and dancing come to an end. The village folks who have gathered to have a last glimpse of the scene depart quietly towards home with a pang in their hearts. An utter silence seems to pervade the echoing hills. In the stillness of the night the rustic folks seem to understand the meaning of life .



## SONGS THAT GROW OUT OF A LEGEND

MAHUT SONGS FROM GOALPARA

NIHAR BARUA

### THE LEGEND

A mountain stream comes down through the dense forests of the Bhutan hills. Once upon a time in a small hut on its bank lived Jayanath a Brahmin, and Jayamala, his beautiful wife. Jayanath earned his living as a priest conducting religious ceremonies. Jayamala spun the *Porta*, the sacred thread, on her spinning wheel. The Brahmins in the neighbouring villages bought up all the thread she spun. What they thus earned was enough for the Brahmin and his wife. The food that they could save they scattered on the banks of the river to be eaten up by the birds and the beasts. In return the wild creatures of the forest brought them honeyed fruits, wild roots and edible leaves. Her husband's deep love and affection for the wild creatures—these were the pleasures of Jayamala's life.

This even tenor of their life was disturbed when Jayanath was called over to conduct the last rites of a rich Brahmin. Now this Brahmin had an only daughter, ugly, spoilt, extremely selfish and lazy. And none who knew her would marry her. The widowed mother begged the poor Jayanath to marry the girl with her rich patrimony and save her from the burden of an unmarried daughter. Jayanath resisted for a time, but the temptation was too much for him and he soon gave in. He came back to his old place with his rich proud wife. Jayamala looked at them hurt and shocked then went back to her hut.

In a few days there stood a *te mahala*<sup>1</sup> mansion beside the hut. Servants and maids and sentries kept the big house throbbing with life. Jayamala from her hut saw the prosperity and the flourishing love of her husband and her rival. The new wife would not allow Jayanath to see Jayamala. Jayamala had a new job, she had to carry water from the river to the big house. And that alone gave her some thing to live for. As she filled her rich husband's gold *jhari*<sup>2</sup> (watering can), there were occasions when they could look into each other's eyes. That was her only link with her husband. In return the maids brought her at the end of the day a handful of rice in a brass plate. But Jayamala would not taste the food doled out by her rival. She lived on fruits and wild roots ever since the day Jayanath brought in his second wife. With the plate of rice held in one hand the gold *jhari* on

<sup>1</sup> A big mansion would be traditionally divided into three *mahals* or sectors—the *andarmahal* (reserved for the women) the *barmahal* (reserved for the men) and the *kachharimahala* (for the visitors).

<sup>2</sup> The spout of the *jhari* would be shaped like an elephant's trunk.

thou shall wear them some other time  
Take off the necklace from thy neck,  
thou shall wear it some other time  
Take off the anklets from the ankles,  
thou shall wear them some other time

As the last item of ornaments is taken out from the body of the Maroon, the Madal beats vigorously to announce the ceremony to be closed. The beats of Madal then stop abruptly. All singing and dancing come to an end. The village folks who have gathered to have a last glimpse of the scene depart quietly towards home with a pang in their hearts. An utter silence seems to pervade the echoing hills. In the stillness of the night the rustic folks seem to understand the meaning of life .

# SONGS THAT GROW OUT OF A LEGEND

MAHUT SONGS FROM GOALPARA

NIHAR BARUA

## THE LEGEND

A mountain stream comes down through the dense forests of the Bhutan hills. Once upon a time in a small hut on its bank lived Jayanāth, a Brahmin, and Jayamālā, his beautiful wife. Jayanāth earned his living as a priest conducting religious ceremonies. Jayamālā spun the *Poitā*, the sacred thread, on her spinning wheel. The Brahmins in the neighbouring villages bought up all the thread she spun. What they thus earned was enough for the Brahmin and his wife. The food that they could save they scattered on the banks of the river to be eaten up by the birds and the beasts. In return the wild creatures of the forest brought them honeyed fruits, wild roots, and edible leaves. Her husband's deep love and affection for the wild creatures—these were the pleasures of Jayamālā's life.

This even tenor of their life was disturbed when Jayanāth was called over to conduct the last rites of a rich Brahmin. Now this Brahmin had an only daughter, ugly, spoilt, extremely selfish and lazy. And none who knew her would marry her. The widowed mother begged the poor Jayanāth to marry the girl with her rich patrimony and save her from the burden of an unmarried daughter. Jayanāth resisted for a time, but the temptation was too much for him and he soon gave in. He came back to his old place with his rich proud wife. Jayamālā looked at them, hurt and shocked, then went back to her hut.

In a few days there stood a *te mahālā*<sup>1</sup> mansion beside the hut. Servants and maids and sentries kept the big house throbbing with life. Jayamālā from her hut saw the prosperity and the flourishing love of her husband and her rival. The new wife would not allow Jayanāth to see Jayamālā. Jayamālā had a new job, she had to carry water from the river to the big house. And that alone gave her something to live for. As she filled her rich husband's gold *jhāri*<sup>2</sup> (watering can), there were occasions when they could look into each other's eyes. That was her only link with her husband. In return the maids brought her at the end of the day a handful of rice in a brass plate. But Jayamālā would not taste the food doled out by her rival. She lived on fruits and wild roots ever since the day Jayanāth brought in his second wife. With the plate of rice held in one hand, the gold *jhāri* on

<sup>1</sup> A big mansion would be traditionally divided into three *mahāls* or sectors—the *andārmahāl* (reserved for the women) the *bīrmahāl* (reserved for the men) and the *kūchhūrimahāl* (for the visitors).

<sup>2</sup> The spout of the *jhāri* would be shaped like an elephant's trunk.

the other, and a copper pitcher on her head, she would go out walking through the forest towards the river, giving the food away to the birds and the beasts all along the way. When she reached the river bank, she sat down to brood, tears ran down her cheeks and mingled with the river water.

The elephant king often came to drink from the same river upstream. He would come with his herd of elephants, drink from the river and play in the water. Wading through the water one day, the elephants came to a portion of the river where the water was salty and tasteless. The elephant king asked his companions, "The water upstream is so sweet, why is it tasteless downstream?" His companions replied, "Your majesty, a beautiful girl sits at the *ghat* every evening, weeping, her tears mingle with the river water, and that is the reason why the water downstream is tasteless." The elephant king waded up to the girl. The girl had just taken up the copper pitcher on her head, the gold *jhari* in her hand, and had started on her way back home. The elephant king stood in her way to stop her. On hearing her story, he asked her to leave the cruel world of man and come over to their country and be their queen. But Jayamala hesitated. Her hesitation however did not last long, for suddenly the river was flooded, waters rolled down roaring like a thundercloud, sweeping away in their stride the little hut and the great house that stood beside it. Jayamala was struck dumb, and the elephant king in a trice lifted her up on his back. Then he took her through deep forests full of the sweet scent of flowers and wild fruits. They travelled for seven days and nine nights before they reached elephantland at the foot of the Bhutan hills. There stood a huge palace of ivory with an ivory throne within. The elephant king placed Jayamala on the ivory throne, as thousands of elephants cheered the new queen and bowed before her. Then the elephant king took up the new queen once again on his head and took her to a wonderful waterfall. Their way passed between two big hills. Water streamed down the waterfall in seven streams of seven hues. The elephant king collected the water in seven jars and poured it on the head of the new queen. Her human shape at once changed to a beautiful elephant girl. The copper pitcher on her head became a sign on her forehead, and the gold *jhari* became her trunk. The elephant king announced amidst cheers—"Henceforth we shall serve you. Your word will be our law." And the queen led the elephant herd back to the elephantland.

## I

Divested of its supernatural ornamentation, the story has its basis in reality; for the chief of a herd of wild elephants is 'the Queen,' a cow elephant. She leads the herd, and the '*juthapati*' or the male leader is only a protector. The '*juthapati*'s only care is to keep away the grown up bull elephants from his harem and to expel a bull elephant from the herd once it grew up. His other duty is to provide protection to his herd.

The forests of Goalpara (Assam) begin at the foot of Bhutan. Like other regions of the Terai, these evergreen forests also are the haunts of herds of elephants. The daring operations of capturing these massive creatures are handled by the *phāndis* (the men who lasso the wild elephants, the mahuts) and their companions. Their



existence is one of risk and uncertainty. A moment's carelessness and death can be instantaneous. They often return from the forests leaving behind their closest and most trusted friends in unknown graves within the forest. Yet the call of the forest is irresistible. There is a sense of self-pity in the song sung to tame the wild elephant.

*O Mor Hūs Hastir Kanyā Re  
Khamko Doya Nai Māhutok Lagiya Re?*

1

1 O, alas, my elephant girl  
Won't you have a little pity for the mahut?

The *mahūt*, the *phandi* and their companions do not belong to any special community or caste. They come from the Boḍos, the Garos, the Rāvas and the Nepalese from the hills and the Muslims and the Rajabanshis from the plains and people from other districts in Assam. Men from Bihar and the neighbouring states also join these groups.

The social laws here are peculiar to the forests. In the forests a man is not known by his caste or community. When a man proves his courage and skill, he is recognized as a *gūrū* and becomes a *sardār* or the leader of a hunting band. The others follow his instructions and go out on their adventures with his blessings.

Preparations for the daring operations begin from the end of the rainy season and the beginning of autumn. The *shikārs* continue throughout winter. The operations cease with the beginning of summer. The brave adventurers grow homesick and brood on their wives, relations and children. They start the long journey home, back to the peace and affection of their homes.

But once again at the end of the rains and the appearance of the typical autumn cloudracks, the *māhūts* and the *phāndis* yearn for the excitement of the forests, the life and death struggles. They wait anxiously for the call of the *mahāldār* (the man who leases a portion of the forest and brings in the *māhūts* and *phāndis* to hunt for him). When the clouds roar in autumn they do not promise rains. But the mahut's wife feels the pang of imminent separation, and she sings

*O Kī O, Mōr 'Dāntāl Hatr Māhūt Re,  
 Jedī Māhūt Shikār Jāi, Nārtr Mon Mōr Jhurā Roy Re  
 Ākāshetē Nāi Re Chandra Kī Korē Tor Tārā,  
 Jebā Nārtr Swamī Nāi Re, O Tūr Dinē Āndhīhārā*

*Pushkarnitē Nāi Re Pāni Noulā Kamnē Cholē,  
 Je Nārtr Pūrush Nāi Re, O Tār Rupē Kī Kām Korē  
 O Kī O, O Mōr 'Makhnā' Hatr Māhūt Re—  
 Jedī Māhūt Ujān Jai, Nārtr Mon Mōr Kandīā Roy Re*

2

2 What do you do, O my māhūt of the tusked ('dantāl')?/ The māhūt goes out on his hunt, my woman's heart languishes / What use are stars in a sky without a moon?/ A woman without her husband is a day in darkness / How can boats move in a pool with no water?/ What use is beauty to a woman without her man?/ O what do you do, My māhūt of the tuskless ('makhnā') elephant?/ The day the māhūt moves upstream, my woman's heart weeps and weeps

When the call comes, there is nothing to hold them back home. Some choose the *melā shikār*,<sup>1</sup> others the *khedā shikār*.<sup>2</sup> But whatever the method employed to catch the elephant, the newly caught elephant is treated in the same way. It has to be intimidated and cajoled at the same time. The men rub tenderly and sing songs. The songs do not have any meaning for the elephant. But when a whole group chant these songs and rub dry leaves on the elephant's body, the elephant at first feels a consternation, but then gradually gets used to it and becomes more friendly to men. When the songs are sung, one of the men stands before it with a burning torch and swings it to keep time with the song. The leader of the chorus

<sup>1</sup> Lassoing the wild elephants from the backs of tame elephants

<sup>2</sup> Driving the elephants from cover and penning them in a large enclosure

sings a single line first, and then the others join in, repeating the same line together. They start with a song to God

*Allā Allā Bolo Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl,*  
*Kōn Mohalēr Hatt Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl*  
*Bhutan Mohalēr Hatt Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl*  
*Kon Bā Phāndur Dhorā Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl*  
 — — — *Phāndur Dhorā Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl,*  
*Kōn Māhūter Dohār Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl,*  
 — — — *Māhūter Dohār Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl*

3

3 O praise Allā-Rasūl, brothers, praise Allā-Rasūl / What mohāl does the elephant come from, O Allā-Rasūl? / It's from the Bhūtan mohāl, O Allā-Rasūl / Who is the phāndi that caught it, O Allā-Rasūl? / It was caught by the phāndi— — —, O Allā-Rasūl / What māhūt threw the second lasso, O Allā-Rasūl? / It was the māhūt— — — who threw the second lasso, O Allā-Rasūl

(The names of the *phāndi* and the *māhūt* are put in the appropriate places) When they speak of Allā-Rasūl, it is noticeable that men of the Hindu or any other community do not demur, they accept it as a convention

Then they try to arouse the pity of the elephant girl. Whether it is a bull elephant or a cow elephant, it is invariably addressed as 'hastikanya' (the elephant girl)

*Hastikanjā, Hastikanya Bāmuner Nārī—*  
*Mathāi Nijā Tāmkaṣi O Sokhi Hastē Sonār Jhāri*  
*Sokhi O, O Mōr Hāi Hastir Kanyā Re—*  
*Khāmkō Doyā Nāi Māhūtok Lagiyā Re —(the refrain)*

4

4 O elephant girl, O elephant girl, O Brahmin woman, / With your copper pitcher on your head and the golden jhāri in your hand / O Sokhi, O my elephant girl, won't you have a little pity for the māhūt?

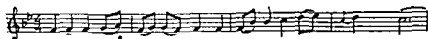
## HASTI KANYA

	S	S	S	RG		SR	RS	S	S		RM	M	P	DN		P <sup>D</sup>	P	—	—	
	Has-ti	Kan-nya				Has	-ti	Kan	nya		Bā-	mu-	ne-	r		Nā-	ri	—	—	
	—	—	—	—		—	—	—	—		MP	P	P	PD		MP	-P	DN	DP	
	—	—	—	—		—	—	—	—		Ma-thāi	Ni-	yā			Tā-mka-	la-	si		
{	M	—	—	—		—	—	M	D		P	P	S	S		DS	S	R	G <sup>2</sup>	
	O	—	—	—		—	—	So-	khī		Has-tē	So-	nār			Jhā-ri	So-	khī		

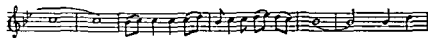
R — — —   — — G RG   S S R GR   S N P —	O, — — —   — — O Mōr   Hā - i Has - tir   Kan-nyā Re —
<sup>P</sup> N N N N S S RG SR   <sup>S</sup> P P M GM   RG GS R G <sup>2</sup>	Khā- — ni- kō Do-yā Nā - i   Ma- — hu —   — — tok la
R RN S — — — — —	gi- ya- Re — — — — —   etc

Moderato ♩ = 104

Hastikanyā, Hastikanyā,



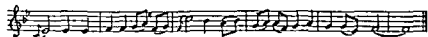
Hastikan yā Has tī- -kanyā Bā- mūne ro Nā - - - rī,



Mā- thāiNiyā Tām-kala- si O So-khī



Hastē Sonār Jhā-riSokhī O, O Mōr HāiHastīr Kanyā Re



Khā-ni-ko DoyāNā- -i Mā-hū- - - - - tokLā-giyā Re.

*Pāttirā Korīyā Kanyā Badyā Dilen Pāo,**Māthār Upor Kāl Jitī O Sokhī Korē Pancha Rāo* 5*Bālūtītul Pankhī Kāndē Bālūtē Podiyā,**Gouripurīyā māhūt Kāndē O Sokhī Ghar Bādī Chhādiya* 6*Āī Chhādīlong Bhāī Chhādīlong, Chhādīlong Sonār Pūri,**Biāo Korīā Chhādīyā Āīlong O Sokhī Alpo Boyaser Nārt* 7

- 5 You left your home on an auspicious day,  
But it was the ominous lizard, O Sokhī, that croaked above your head.
- 6 The sandpiper cries in the sands,  
The mahut from Gouripur cries, O Sokhī, for his home
- 7 I left my mother, I left my brother, I left my golden house,  
I married and then left behind, O Sokhī, my young wife

In the above staff notation, the star marked 'A' should sound quarter note below



The *māhūt* then remembers the lines sung by his young wife. He broodingly repeats those same lines:

*‘Ālāshetē Nāi Re Chondro Kī Korē Tōr Tārā,  
Jebā Nārīr Swamī Nāi Re Tār Dinē Andhūharā  
Pukhuritē Nāi Re Pāni Noulā Kamnē Cholē,  
Je Nārīr Pūrush Nāi Re Tār Rupē Kī Kām Korē’*

But then he comes back to his own sphere of activity

*Phānd Lādīlong Phādā Lādīlong Āro Lādīlong Dodi,  
Māhūt Phāndī Juktī Korī O Sokhī Choīllong Shukār Bādī  
Agādī Pichhādī Hastīr Phelāilong Bandhīyā,  
Ār Haridhīvanī Diyā Sokhī O, Sokhī Basīlām Bhudiyā*

8

- 8 We took the lasso, we took the cords, we took our ropes along,  
We, the *māhūt* and the *phāndī* planned together before we set out for the  
hunting ground  
We bound the elephant all over,  
And then with praise to Hari, O Sokhī, we sat on the back  
(An Indian girl would call her closest friend and companion her ‘Sokhī’)

## II

After these laborious operations there must be time for rest. While some of them lie down under some thatched roof, others sit round the fire to talk and sing. The songs are in various languages, various tunes, and are sung to the music of various instruments. The *māhūt* from the plains of Goalpāra has his own ‘*dotārā*’. When he sings, he forgets all the hard labour and the strains of the day. A rugged man all the day, becomes an artiste at nightfall. Memories pass through his mind—the eyes of some lonely girl in a small shaded cottage or on the bank of a river or perhaps anywhere. As he touches the strings of the *dotārā*, words composed by some unknown unremembered poet come to his lips

*Ājī Aulālan Mōr Bandhā Moyāl Re—  
Hastīr Pīstī Thakīyā Re Māhūt, Thōr Kolā Bhāngo,  
Nārīr Manēr Kathā Tomrā Kibā Jāno Re  
Rastā Chhadō Rasta Chhadō Re Joler Kalas Kanlē,  
Nārīr Mon Bhangīyā Re Māhūt Chhadīyā Jāben Mokē*

9

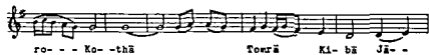
- 9 You have set in confusion my settled home,  
Sitting on the back of your elephant, O *māhūt*, you can breakdown  
the banana stalks

But what do you know of a woman's heart?

Leave my way, leave my way, O *māhūt*, I have my pitcher at my waist,  
You will break my heart, O *māhūt*, and leave me alone.

Moderato ♩ = 88

Hatir Pitit.



### ĀJI ĀULĀILAN

|| M M -M G | Ṁ M P P | DṄ P Ḋ = | Ṅ = = = |  
 || Hā - ti - r Pi | ti - t Thā ki | ya Re Mā = | hū = = = |

— — — —   DN DND *P —   P DN PD M   P — PN DN	— — — —   — — t —   Thō — -r Ko   la — Bhā —
P — — —   — — P D   N — — —   DND DND *P —	ngo — — —   — — Mā- hūt   Re — — —   — — (hē) —
P DN PD M   P — PD PD   P — — —   — — P M	Thō — -r Ko   -La — Bhā —   — — — —   — — (Ā - r) —
<sup>P</sup> N N — N   DND PM P DN   DND PM M —   M — — —	Nā rī — ra   Mo — ne —   ro — ka —   Thā — — —
— — MP PM   G M GMG R   S — S R   RM GM R —	— — — —   Tom- rā — kī-   bā — Jā —   no — Re —
— — — —   — — R <sup>RS</sup>   <sup>RM</sup> M MP PD   MP M GMG RS	— — — —   — — Ā -ji   Ā (ha)u lā -i   -la -n Mō -r
RG <sup>2</sup> G <sup>2</sup> R <sup>2</sup> RGGM   GM GMG <sup>RS</sup> S   S — — —   — — — —	Bā — -n- dhā   Mo — ya- l   Re — — — —   — — — —
S S R R   G — GMG RS   RG <sup>2</sup> G <sup>2</sup> R <sup>2</sup> RGGM   GM GMG <sup>RS</sup> S	Ā -ji Āu- lāi-   la- — -n Mōr   Bā — -n dhā   Mo — yā -l
S — — —   — — M M   M M PD P   MP M GMG RS	Re — — —   — — Ā ji   Ā (ha)u lā - i   la -n Mō - r
RG <sup>2</sup> G <sup>2</sup> R <sup>2</sup> RGGM   GM GMG <sup>RS</sup> S   S — — —   — — — —	Ba — -n dhā   Mo — yā - l   Re — — — —   — — — —

etc.

*Āji Geilē Kī Āsiben Mōr Māhūt Bondhū Re,—  
 Hastī Norān Hastī Chorān 'Kekoā' Bāsher Tolē,  
 Kī Sāpē Dongshulek Māhūtōk Koyā Jāo Bā Morē Re  
 Rojāi Jhōre Gūmnē Jhāre Dhekiār Āgāl Diyā,  
 Mūin Nārī Jhārim Māhūtōk Kasher Āgāl Diyā Re*

10

*Khāto Khuto Māhūt Re Tor Mukhē Chāp Dādī,  
 Satya Koriyā Kon Re Māhūt, Kon Bā Dashē Bādī  
 Yastī Norai Yastī Chorai, Yastīr Pāyē Beātī,  
 Satya Koriyā Kōlam Kanya Gouripurē Bādī Re*

11

*Hastī Norān Hastī Chorān Hastīr Poyē Bedī,  
 Satya Koriyā Kon Re Māhūt Ghorē Koyjan Nārī Re*

12

\* In the above staff notation mark, 'Q' above the note 'A' signifies cracked voice

*Hasti Norā Hasti Chorā Hasti Golāi Dodi,  
Salya Koriyā Kollām Kanya Biāo Nāhi Kori Re*

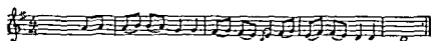
13

- 10 If you go away today, O my mahut friend, will you come back again? / You graze your elephant, you make it go round and round, under wild bamboo tree / But what snake has bit you, O mahūt do tell me The 'Rojā' and the 'gūnin' use the 'dhekiā' to purge the venom / I shall use the dhekiā of my hair on you, O māhūt
- 11 O my shortstatured mahut with your thick beard / Will you tell me the truth, O māhūt, where do you have your home? (The mahūt answers) I move the elephant, I graze the elephant I chain the elephant's feet, / I tell you the truth O girl, I have my home in Gouripur
- 12 You move the elephant, you graze the elephant you chain the elephant's feet / But tell me the truth, O māhūt how many women have you at home?
- 13 I move the elephant, I graze the elephant, I put the cord on the elephant's neck / I tell you the truth, O girl, I haven't married yet

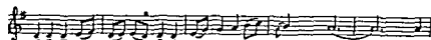
Or

Allegro  $\text{♩} = 132$ 

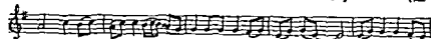
Āji Geilē,



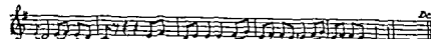
Ā-jī Gei-lē Ki Ā-si-be-n Mōr Mā-hūt Bondhū Re.



Hastī Norān Hastī Chorān Kekoā Bāsher To- - - lē, (Ki



ō Re) Ki Sāpē DongshilekMāhūtok ko-yā JāoBā



Mō-rē Re, Ā-jī GeilēKi Ā-si-be-n MōrMāhūt Bondhū Re.

ĀJI GEILĒ KI ĀSIBEN

P	PD	DP	M	M	GM	GR	<sup>S</sup> R	GM
Āji	Gei-	lē	Ki	Ā	si-	be	-n	Mōr
	RG <sup>2</sup>	G <sup>2</sup> R	S	S	S	S	—	—
	Mā-	hūt	Bon-	dhu	Re	—	—	—

S Has-	S ti	S No -	RG rān,	SR Has -	RS ti	S Cho -	S rān,	
RM Keko-	M ā	P Bā	DN sher	<sup>P</sup> D To -	P lē,	—	—	
—	—	—	P (K <sub>1</sub>	P O	—	N Re	DN —)	
PN K <sub>1</sub>	N Sā -	DND pē	PM Dong-	M shu -	M lek	M Māhū -	GM tok	
RM Ko -	MR yā	R —	—	RM —	M —	M Jāo	GR Bā	
<sup>R</sup> S Mō	—	RG rē	RS —	N Re,	—	—	RG Ājī	
SR Gei -	R lē	R K <sub>1</sub>	GM Ā -	RG si -	GR be -	<sup>S</sup> R -n	GM Mōr	
RG <sup>a</sup> Mā -	G <sup>a</sup> R hūt	S Bon -	S dhu	S Re,	—	—	—	

etc

*Godhādhorer Pārē Pārē Re—*  
*O Mōr Māutē Chorāi Hātī,*  
*Kī Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re—*  
*O Tōr Gālāi Roser Kātī,*  
*Kī Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re*

14

*Unchā Korī Bandhen Chhapor Re—*  
*O Mūln Jol Bhorite Dekhim,*  
*Kī Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re*

15

*Ūnchā Korī Bandhen Machā Re—*  
*O Mūln Āistē Jātī Dekhim,*  
*Kī Nāyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re*

16

*Doi Khoāilen, Dūdh Khoāilen Re—*  
*Māhūt Nā Khoāilen Mājā,*  
*Ebār Hāte Tuṭiyā Gelo Re—*  
*Oī Kī Āsā Jaoār Ghājā*  
*Kī Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re.*

17

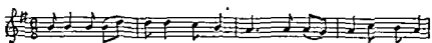
*Nā Kanden Nā Kanden Kanya Hē—  
Nā Bhāngen Roser Gāla,  
Ebār Jodī Ghūriyā Āsong Hē—  
Kanya Sonāi Bandim Gāla,  
Ebar Jodī Ghūriyā Āsong Hē*

18

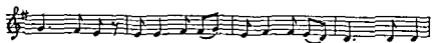
- 14 On the banks of the Godadhori<sup>1</sup> / My māhūt grazes his elephants / What a spell you have cast on me, O māhūt, / With your love beads on your neck / What a spell
- 15 Do build your hut on high, / so that I can see it when I go out to bring water / What a spell
- 16 Do place your bed on high, / so that I can see it when I go by / What a spell
- 17 You fed me on curd, you gave me milk, / But, O māhūt, you never gave me the dregs of the liquid curd / Are you going to give up from now on / your<sup>2</sup> journeys along this road? / What a spell
- 18 (The māhūt pleads) Do not weep, do not weep, O girl, / Do not spoil your sweet voice with weeping / If I come back this time, / I shall bind your neck, O girl, with gold / If I come back this time

Prestissimo  $\text{♩} = 208$ 

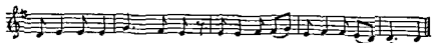
Godhādhorēr Pārē Pārē,



Godā-dhorē-r PĀ-rē PĀ-rē Re O Mōr Māutē Cho-rāi



HĀ - - ti(hi) Ki MĀ-ya NĀ - - gāilan Māhūt Re O Tōr



GĀ-lāi Rosēr KĀ - - ti(hi) Ki MĀ-ya NĀ- gāilan Māhūt Re.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Gadadhori' is the name of a river

<sup>2</sup> The girl's last stanza has a figurative meaning. She tells her lover, 'You gave me all the charms of your love, all the externals, but the deepest essence, what lies deep within, you denied me. And there lies my fear—is it a parting for ever?'

## GODĀDHORER PĀRE PĀRE

~	D	D	—		D	D	S		S	S	—		N	D	—			
Go	-	dī	—		dho	-	re	-	r	Pā	-	rē	—		Pā	rē	—	
	P	—	—		P	P	M		P	P	N		D	P	P			
Re	—	—	—		O	Mō	-	r	Mā	-	u	-	te		Cho	rā	-	t
	M	—	—		G	R	—		R	R	—		G	G	M			
Hā	—	—	—		ti	(hi)	—		Ki	Mā	—		ya	Nā	—			
	R	G	G		G	R	S		S	—	—		S	S	S			
gāi	-	la	-	n	Mā	-	hū	-	t	Re	—	—		O	Tō	-	r	
	S	R	R		R	R	R		M	—	—		G	R	—			
gā	-	la	-	i	Ro	-	se	-	r	Kā	—	—		ti	(hi)	—		
	R	R	—		G	G	M		R	G	G		G	R	S			
Ki	Mā	—	—		ya	Nā	—		gāi	-	la	-	n	Mā	-	hū	-	t
	S	—	—		—	—	—			etc								
Re	—	—	—		—	—	—			etc								

Translated from original Bengali by Samik Bandyopadhyay



**DOTĀRĀ** (lit 'two-stringed') Four string instrument, with three notes. Two centre string separate only on the bridge and provide the tonic note, the first and fourth strings provide the four notes above and the four notes below on the scale respectively. Continuous vamping with the melody, a special feature. Body shaped from one-piece wood, the belly hollowed out, and covered with the skin of a lizard of the Iguana type. Particular kind of wood used the jackfruit and the chhatim (Digitate) trees. Strings from *mūgā*, a silk variety or steel wire. Striker from ivory or buffalo horn. Used to accompany *Bhāwayā* and *Chatkā* songs of North Bengal region.

# ASSAMESE FOLK SONGS A GENERAL SURVEY

DR PRATULLADUTTA GOSWAMI

## I

The modern study of folksongs seems to have had its stimulus in Germany in the eighteenth century Johann Gottfried Herder collected some songs and wrote essays on them pointing to their importance in the literary tradition of the people Herder even coined a term *Volkslied*, to cover the various types of songs current among the lower classes and the term was later adopted in English as *folksong* Herder had to raise his voice against a conservative attitude to folksongs in general This was the case in Assam too, for when Assam's most popular folksongs, those associated with the Spring festival, came to be collected in about 1921 by Sri Nakul Chandra Bhuyan, his action was looked upon with contempt by the educated class There were however a few enlightened gentlemen who encouraged him to go on with his work



The times had their revenge on the orthodox, and the collections of Sri Bhuyan and Dimbeswar Neog came to be selected as textbooks for University students, and a quatrain like the following had the fortune to be considered as symbolizing the patriotic sentiments of the Assamese people

So dear is the Muga bobbin,  
so dear the shuttle,



dearer still is Bohag Bihu,  
how else but to celebrate it?

Ballads had been recorded much earlier, the first collections having been printed in 1903. Some of the songs came to be printed in magazines in the early part of the present century. The Spring festival Bihu sends a thrill into the heart of every Assamese, and even in the face of an advancing industrial civilisation and in spite of the thick layer of Aryanisation Bihu has remained an institution which stirs most easily the strongest sentiments. And it is to be wondered why most of the folksongs of the land are of this light and short Bihu song type. Is it because such songs suit themselves easily to a dance rhythm or is there something in the racial temper of the Assamese—the tribals inclusive—which prefers something which is not sustained and which does not demand physical strain?

If one examines Assamese folksongs for a glimpse into the social experience of the people one would find most material in the Bihu songs. I wonder if any happier picture of a self sustained and harmonious domestic life would be found than in the quatrain (the husband is the speaker)

*You would go on with your planting and reaping  
I with my ploughing  
you would set about weaving the Bihu towel  
I shall make you the loom.*

And see how the British tea planters have been pictured

*The Sahibs come and open tea gardens  
on their head are pan shaped topees  
they make Mems of coolie girls  
with cigars on their lips*

It is an uninspiring representation of John Bull. The researcher who would prepare his thesis on the rural indebtedness of the Assamese would not study these *Bihu songs* without securing some amount of evidence relevant to his subject. Many of the songs refer to spinning and weaving which have also lent imagery to the rural singer. Some of the songs extol the virtues of singing and dancing, thus indicating the social appreciation of these art forms.

Parallel to the Bihu type, erotic songs are also found among Rabhas and Miris at two extremes of the land. Miris call such songs *Ai nitam* or Sad Song. These also express the two chief sentiments—yearning and frustration—characterizing Bihu songs. In matters of popular culture the so-called tribals

and the Hindu Assamese have much in common. Here are a few typical Aṅ nitam songs

Just as one does not get water when one is thirsty so also  
I cannot see my darling though I yearn to do so  
Just as the Brahmaputra flows unceasingly so also thoughts from  
my tender body flow towards you

\* If I had wings or I had been a bird I would go to have a look at you

The third song utilises the bird motif a common device in folk poetry also seen in this Bihu song

To see you in a flash I am no lightning  
nor am I a flowing river,  
flying to see you I am no bird  
with two wings to my two sides

More than a thousand Bihu songs have been printed. They are still being composed, but not with the same zest as in earlier times. Songs are a spontaneous growth. They thrive best in agricultural and pastoral settings. As the tiller of the soil comes away from his natural setting and tends to lose his older values and modes, the seasonal changes do not work upon his mind as before and the festival songs also are supplanted by other modes of music. The Bihu songs were born close to the soil at the Spring festival. Insufficient crops, dearth of cultivable land, influx of immigrants, want of yarn and cloth, influence of westernised education, the indifference of the richer class towards the culture of the folk, social mobility characterizing modern life—all these have tended to do away with the dances and songs of the Bihu festival. The sadness that is associated with such a turn of events is well expressed in the following song

The birds peck at the paddy, O my fellow,  
the crumbs get scattered,  
our very dear Bihu ground  
the dubari grass has covered

The Bihu festival further was a sort of fertility ritual and prepared grounds through its songs and dances for the choice of life partners. Influence of Hinduism has been there in making it lose its functional character, though, it must be admitted, it has been able to retain its use as a cultural festival of a general type.

Songs connected with marriage and the small pox goddess are innumerable and characterized by a tenderness which is all their own. Marriage songs sometimes throw light on the rituals performed at a marriage ceremony. For example, in the district of Kamrup, the day before the marriage, a present of oil and other

things known as 'telar-bhar' is taken to the bride's place. The present is in charge of some close relation of the bridegroom and a number of women always accompany it. A 'telar-bhar' song goes thus (one of the songstresses is addressing her companion).

O my dear lady, carry this curd, milk, ghee and honey,  
 (For) at Chaudhury's house is a maid as lovely as the pomegranate,  
 We wanted a ripe pomegranate but you give a 'bel',  
 This 'ari' fish is wriggling so, it might hurt our fingers,  
 Let it go into the 'telar bhar' along with the ornaments,  
 Our maid splits areca nuts in the form of 'sengeri' blossoms,  
 She is born of respectable parents,  
 Hearing of her our young man has sent these ornaments,  
 It is the 'telar-bhar' day, to-morrow is his marriage,  
 His father is sitting amidst a number of persons,  
 Going there you will find the gate of Rukmini,  
 There put down the 'telar bhar' present,  
 Rukmini would ask. Whose it is say, From Dwaraka has  
 it been sent

This song tells us a lot about the marriage. Things that go in the present, including the fish which is a symbol of fertility, the bride's capacity for splitting areca nuts, a virtue in Assamese society, the ornaments which have been sent by the bridegroom and the wearing of which would indicate that the betrothal is complete, characterization of the bride as Rukmini, Srikrishna's wife—all these and more are found in the song.

These songs show a tenderness and concern for the bride, the family's pet

Our maid is so tender,  
 she is just the sprout of a banana frond,  
 she knows not how to tighten the knot of her skirt,  
 she does not know how to do up her hair  
 She sways over her loom, makes wreaths on a saucer,  
 our girls know only such work,  
 she cannot bear to hear words from others,  
 she keeps herself to herself

References to spinning and weaving are common in Assam's folk songs, thus indicating the status that weaving had reached and still retains. Popular imagination is at its best in some of the songs—it is refined, tender and creative. It can endow the commonest subject with attributes of the rarest things that have been created by a poet's talent. The girl is the loveliest possible, her hair reaches down to her

waist, she must have the best of clothes—such that dry in the shade and so fine that they can be hidden in the clasp—perhaps a memory of the silk which was once a home made product, the flower she will take must be divine and rare—the parijat. She has a loving brother who would go to any length in order to satisfy her.

This quality of tenderness is evidenced further in the nursery rhymes, which are, like the marriage songs, probably composed by womenfolk. A popular nursery rhyme has the form of a formula tale having parallels in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. A formula tale has a simple situation but the various stages in it develop according to a certain pattern and there is much repetition. The rhyme goes thus

O Flower, O Flower,  
 • Why don't you bloom?  
 The Cow eats my shoots,  
 Why should I bloom?  
 O Cow, O Cow,  
 Why do you eat the shoots?  
 The Cowboy does not tend me,  
 O Cowboy, O Cowboy,  
 Why don't you tend the Cow?  
 The Cook does not make rice,  
 Why should I tend?

In this way questions are put to the Cook, the Fueller, the Smith, the Charcoalman, the Cloud and finally the Frog

O Frog, O Frog  
 Why do you croak?  
 The Custom of my forefathers—  
 Why give up?

The matter cannot be pursued beyond this point. Plants and animals frequently figure in the nursery rhymes, thus forming a kinship between the child mind and the world around.

Tenderness for the baby has been fruitful in creating nursery rhymes among the tribal population in the land. The Dimasa Kacharis of North Cachar have such a rhyme

My pet, you are crying,  
 Is there too much smoke?  
 O you are crying  
 The chullies are stinging, aren't they?

You are crying, let the other people sleep,  
 There are visitors,  
 When they depart I shall bring you galou (?)

The song gives a glimpse into the life led by the Kachari Smoke in the cottage, burnt chillies in the fire, the busy housewife looking after her guests—all these are there The Lotha Nagas also have a rhyme of this type

"My little one why are you crying so much?  
 Is it because you want a drink of madhu that you are crying?  
 I will give you well kept madhu to drink  
 Do not cry much "

The children's rhymes and game songs are also an interesting subject

It is not possible in a short essay to describe and give specimens of the many types of songs that are found among the Assamese speaking plainmen and among the tribals We can only allude to the philosophical songs found in the countryside, some of them having an Islamic, rather Sufi, content It is sometimes difficult to determine whether such a song is Vaishnavite, Tantric or Sufi in inspiration, for the idiom is common and the content typically Indian dehar bharasha nai—you cannot depend on your body worldly affairs have no significance, turn inwards to your soul—not 'the man of the mind' of Bengali Baul songs, but 'the bird within the cage' The Islamic songs are attributed to Ajan (Azam) Pir, a Muslim saint of the seventeenth century, and known as Zikr—a Sufi term

Folksongs of a more sustained core—ballads—have a more dignified status in the folk-literature of the world Ballads all the world over possess certain common characteristics They tell stories dealing with love heroism the supernatural, or some tragic happening The narration of the story is forthright and vibrant with action There is plenty of repetition, and some of them have refrains reminding one of the choral throng which echoes them when the balladist recites a ballad

Two important Assamese ballads have as their staple romantic and supernatural incidents 'Prince Phul is made up of a ride on a magic horse and the hero's securing of a princess At the touch of the prince a withered garden revives and he enters the princess's chamber disguised as a bumble-bee 'Maid Jana' similarly describes such incidents as the hero's throwing his adversary into the sky and the latter's body changing into trees and swamps Such magical incidents are frequently met with in fairy tales These ballads are composed of quatrains of the Bihu song type

Love does not seem to be a major motif in Assamese ballads There are historical ballads, especially 'The Barphukan,' which describes the Burmese invasions of the early nineteenth century The narration is vivid, though not as rapid and dramatic as in the Border ballad 'Chevy Chace. The ballad gives interesting

information of the confused political situation of the times competitiveness among nobles, flight of Badanchandra Barphukan, Viceroy at Gauhati, to Burma, the atrocious ravages carried on by the invaders, helplessness of the people etc There are patriotic touches too

What has come to happen  
The tree  
What has come to happen  
The tree of Assam is uprooted !

'Pagala Parvati' is a beautiful fancy and has certain interesting resemblances to the British ballad 'The Two Magicians' and parts of the Bengali metrical romance 'Manikchander Gan'. The Assamese ballad may be summarised thus. A wife is saying to herself "I am stretching the warp of my loom, but I've forgotten to bring the comb (with which to smooth the warp). Only for this would Pagala thrash me. Let me go to my mother's." Pagala apparently overhears her and declares, "You are going to your mother's, Parvati, I would lie in ambush on the way and catch you." "You would lie in ambush on the way and catch me, Pagala, I would run off into the forest." "You would run off into the forest, Parvati, I shall set fire to the forest and catch you." "You would set fire to the forest and catch me, Pagala, I would go up with the smoke." "You would go up with the smoke, Parvati, I would catch you with a hooked pole."

Thus they go on. If she falls into the lake he catches her with a fishing contrivance, if he catches her with a fishing contrivance, she becomes a shell, if she becomes a shell he burns her and eats her up as lime, if he eats her as lime she stings both his cheeks, if she stings he cures the pain by rubbing his cheeks with oil, if he rubs oil she takes birth as mustard seeds, if she is born as mustard seeds he presses them, if he presses them she taken birth as oil cake, if she takes birth as oil cake he throws it away into a corner of the garden, if she is thrown away she turns into a large tree, if she turns into a large tree he fells it and makes a boat, if he makes a boat she drowns him in the middle of the waters.

So ultimately the victory lies with the woman ! Though it seems to be a fancy, yet its core is realistic and it in fact gives glimpses into the life led by the poor peasant.

'Barphukanar Git' tells us how the minstrel used to eke out his living

Let my lord give me five quarter rupees,  
I sing of the Barphukan,  
It is my fortune  
My lord I've met here

In olden times, there was not much difference between the intellectual attainments of the richer class and the people in general, the feudal lords could be of use to

the balladist. It is not often that we hear of ballads being composed in recent times, what with the lack of patronage of minstrels and what with newer modes of amusement diverting the mind of the people. During the days of India's national struggle village people used to compose songs and ballads under Gandhian inspiration. These are rarely heard nowadays, but here is one that has a beautiful rhythm.

This fellow says, that fellow says—  
 Let's have a look at Gandhi,  
 Friend, let's have a look at Gandhi,  
 If I stand on the railway embankment  
 I can have a glimpse of Gandhi,  
 Let's have our eyeful of Gandhi

About twelve years ago two mishaps—an air disaster and the fall of a jeep into the Brahmaputra—inspired two short ballads in the Palasbari area, to the west of Gauhati. One of them, not a finished product as it may be after some years if it does survive, goes somewhat like this

Up in the sky flies the flying-ship,  
 Down below are the houses,  
 Striking against bamboo clumps  
 The aeroplane crashes

One dies cut by broken glasses,  
 Two are burnt to death,  
 In the field of Tarapati  
 There is a river of blood

Give up showing off, 'driver',  
 Give up showing off,  
 You burn because you show off,  
 This you've realised now

A respect for the raj or public and reverence for music are two traditional values long cherished by Assamese peasants. A Bihu song records both these values beautifully

It was God who planted the seedlings of songs,  
 it was Brahma who tended them,  
 forgive me, people, if an unbecoming song comes out,  
 first I sing of love.

This respect for music is not seen in sophisticated society. It may be that music and dance at one time were handmaidens of religion and carriers of values which gave shape to culture. In earlier times Buddhist and Vaishnavite preachers used to study music seriously and though the tradition has been almost lost, the memory of that music survives in a diluted form in the countryside of lower Assam. Some of the tunes used by the Oja Pali choric singers have the forcefulness of folk music as well as the sophistication characterizing the classical tradition. The dignified Bargit music of the sixteenth century is echoed in the popular songs of Kamrup. This combination of the two modes has given to the folk music of lower Assam an unusual richness and variety.

Bihu songs are the special property of upper Assam. They have a ready appeal, being plaintive and also exciting in a peculiar way. They start on a low scale, but rise towards the end, to be briskly followed up by the drums, pipes and other instruments. Some meaningless particles are added to the verses in order to put the lines in the melody pattern. The plaintiveness observable in Bihu songs, perhaps a contribution of the earlier Mongoloid inhabitants of the land, has made itself felt also in other types of songs. A type of modern songs known as Bangit has simply adapted Bihu tunes. Adaptation of older tunes to new contents is nothing unusual in the history of folk music, though most of us seem to find a special charm in old tunes with old contents.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- P. Goswami, *Asamiya Jana sahitya*, 1948, 1954, 1965  
 „ *Folk-literature of Assam*, 1955, 1965  
 „ *Bihu Songs of Assam*, 1957  
 „ *Ballads and Tales of Assam*, 1960  
 „ *Bara Mahar Tera Git*, 1962  
 „ *The Springtime Bihu of Assam*, 1966



SOME RHYTHMIC AND MELODIC VARIATION IN A BIHU SONG

Oti-koi cenehor Mūgā re mohūrā  
 Oti-koi cenehor mākö  
 Tātoko-i cenehor Bohāgor Bihuti,  
 Nepati keneko-i thāko ?

Animato ♩ = 120

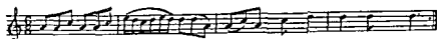
Oti-koi Cenehor Mūgā Re Mohurā, O-ti- koi Cene ho - - - - - r  
 Māko (o) Tāto koi Cenehor Bohāgor Bihu- - - - - ti,  
 (o) Nepā-ti Ke-ne- - - - - ko- -i Thāko.

1

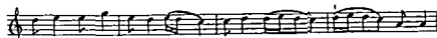
[	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-			
	O	-	ti	Ko	-	i	Ce	ne	-	ho	-	r							
[	G	-	M	P		P	-	M	P		P	-	-	-	-	-			
	Mū	-	gā	-		Re	-	Mo	-	hū	-	ra,	-	-	-	-			
[	P	PDP	P	M		M	M	GM	PM		GM	PM	GM	PM		M	M	-	-
	O	-	ti	Ko	-	i	Ce	ne	ho	-	-	-	r	Ma	Ko	-	-		
	-	-	-	S		S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	(o)		Tā	-	tō	Ko	-	i	Ce	ne	ho	r				
[	G	M	M	M		M	PM	GM	PM		GM	PM	GM	PM		S	-	-	-P
	Bo	hā	go	-	r	Bi	hu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		ti	-	-	(o)
[	M	P	P	P		PM	GM	PM	GM		PM	GM	PM	GM		S	G	S	-
	Ne	pā	-	ti	Ke	-	ne	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		Ko	-	i	-
[	S	S	-	-		-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-					
	Thā	-	kō	-	-	-	-	-	-										

All Vivace ♩ = 154

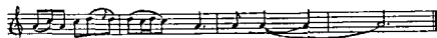
2.



Otikoi Cenehor(O - - Aitā) Mū- gā Re (nū) Mo- hū- - rā.



Tā-to koi(nū) Cene-ho- - r Bo-hā-go- - - r (O- - - - Ai-tā.)



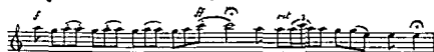
Tā-to koi(nū) • Cene- - - hor Bi- hu.

2

S	S	G	S	S	G	PM	GM	PM	M	M	S
O	ti	koi	Ce	ne	hor	(O	—	—	Ai	ta)	—
S	G	S	G	M	M	M	—	M	M	—	—
Mu	—	ga	Re	(nu)	—	Mo	—	hū	rā	—	—
M	P	P	P	D	—	P	M	M	PM	M	G
Tā	to	—	koi	(nu)	—	Ce	ne	—	ho	—	r
G	M	M	MP	M	G	MP	M	G	S	S	—
(Bi	hu	—	o	—	—	O	—	—	Ai	ta)	—
S	G	S	G	M	MP	M	GM	G	S	—	—
Ta	—	to	koi	(nu)	—	Ce	ne	—	ho	—	r
S	S	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(Bi	hu)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Vivace ♩ = 168

3.



(Ē)Otikoi CenehorMūgaReMohurā, (Ē) O-ti- koiCenehor Mā- ko,



(O)TātokoiCenehorBohāgor Bihu-ti, Nepātikene- - -koi Thāko.



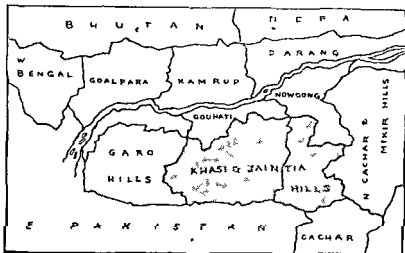
# TRIBAL MUSIC OF KHASI & JAYANTIÁ HILLS

AN INTERVIEW WITH FILKIN I ALOO

**Q 1** How has Khasi & Jaintia traditional music been affected by the incoming of christianity and the missionary activities consequent upon it?

**A** As in the plains our music was previously associated with the different animistic rituals as well as with the various traditional social festivals. So long as our society remained cut off from the rest of the world our music also retained its old characteristics. Variations if any, took place within the narrow framework of our special and spiritual beliefs.

The first foreign impact on our society came through the Western church and its missionary activities. Hence it is only natural that the later should leave a lasting influence in all our social and cultural activities. As a result of this, certain changes inevitably took place in our cultural values and attitude due to which our traditional music got moulded and transformed in certain aspects.



As a consequence most of our traditional musical tunes or forms have almost become extinct and evidences of their times become fewer and fewer with the passing of time. It can be safely stated that our present day hill music has been deeply influenced by Western specially, by church music.

This Western influence can be broadly classified under the following categories

- (a) Music coming through the Welsh Mission church in the forms of hymns These are mostly composed in the Major chords
- (b) Music coming through the Roman Catholic church which are mostly composed in Minor chords and are of Italian, Hebraic and Middle East origin

Western musical instruments which came to us along with these types of music are Violin, Piano, Piano Accordians, Spanish Guter, Mandolin etc

**Q. 2** What are the surviving forms of traditional music still available in the Khasi and the Jayantia hills? Could you give us some idea about the general characteristics of the surviving traditional music from social, literary and musical points of view? What in your opinion, is the most striking and unique features of the Khasi & Jayantia traditional music?

**A.** In spite of the different external influences that have come to stay, and moulded our present day music, it can be said that traces of evidences of our traditional forms of music are still there. They have survived the onslaught of foreign influences and are still being sung by our people at traditional social gatherings. I mention some of these traditional forms

"Shad Suk Mynsiem" This is a community dance usually held once a year. It is accompanied by such instruments as "Tangmuri" (pipe), drums and cymbals. The accompanying music is fast and quick in tempo.

Quick Tempo

'SHAD-SUK-MYNSIEM'



1 At Jowai (in the Jayantia hills) you will find what is known as "Beh Dein Khlam" festival. During this festival, the music is played in a quick tempo, similar to that of music played for "Shad Suk Mynsiem."

2 Also there exist in Jayantia Hills a dance known as "Shad Laho," the music accompanying this dance is known as "Keih Ke," it is moderate in tempo and all the notes used are of Major chords. Its peculiarity is that

the male voice sings the verse then both the male and female dancers join the chorus. Mostly the Lyric are impromptu. The music is as follows

Moderato

(+1++2++3++4++)

'KIEH KE'

Chorus,

There is also a type of singing in the Jayantia Hills known as "Kyn Dei". It is a group singing led by one male singer and the whole group join him in the chorus. Its verses are of Ballad type the singers compose the verses impromptu. This type is of Minor chords.

Quick Tempo

(+1++2+3++4)

'KYNDEI'

Chorus,

QUICK TEMPO

KYNDEI

S { P — — P | P — — M | P — P M | G — M P |  
 | M — — G | R — S — | S — — — | — — — S } ||

CHORUS

	S — R —	— R S —	N — N —	— — Š R
S — — N	D — P —	P — — —	— — S —	
P — — P	P — — M	P — P M	G — M -P	
M — — G	R — S —	S — — —	— — — —	

'Surloom —A form of cowboy songs or melodies played on flutes in many parts of Khasi & Jayantia Hills

Moderato

'SUR LOOM'

MODERAT

SUR LOOM

S || G — M G | N — — — | — — — — | S — — Š |  
GR S S —	S — — S	S — P P	N — P P
M M̄	P — — —	— — — M	G — S S
NP N N —	N — — S G — S S	S — — —	

"Sur Duitara" — This is a form of ballad singing and is basically romantic in character. It is sung with the accompaniment of "Duitara."

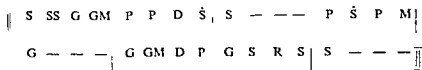
Slow, (1+2+1+2)

'SUR DUITARA'



SLOW

SUR DUITARA



We also have "mourning music" which is played on what is known as "Ka Sharati"—a flute with ten holes. The songs are known as "Sur iam Maikha":

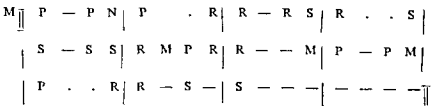
Very Slow  
(+12+12+3)

'SUR IAM MAIKHA'



VERY SLOW

SUR IAM MAIKHA



Along with these, we also have shad—"Nih Nih" Its tune is quite similar to that of the tune played for Shad Suk Mysyiem. But only its rhythm is quite similar to that of Rhumba of the Latin American Music.

These are some of the forms of our traditional music.



**Q. 3** What is the scale (number of notes and their fixity) usually followed in Khasi and Jayantia music? What instruments are generally used for accompaniment? Which of the Western instruments have been adopted in Khasi traditional music? Do you think harmonisation which is practised in the Khasi modern Westernised music, is possible in your traditional music also?

**A.** As you know, folk music in general, usually do not require much variations in scales or notes and ours is no exception. I may say, that our music is basically melodious (like any other Indian music) and not harmonic in character. Our people are not used to splitting up our tunes or songs into different harmonic parts as is done in the West. Neither do they sing in the way church music is sung. Moreover, unlike harmonic music, our scales are not very rigid or precise.

*Thus, it may be frequently found that when we start playing a tune with, say, a Major chord, you will often find that Minor chords come up accidentally and we again go back to the original Major chord.*

Similarly, in music composed of Minor chords, Major chords come up, again unconsciously. We do not practise these interfusions of chords consciously. Herein our music differs from that of the West.

With regard to the number of notes and their fixity, I will give you one or two examples to illustrate their nature. In the Duitara music (which is romantic in nature), most of the tunes are very melodious and sometimes they are composed on only four notes.

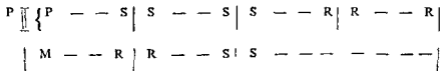
Quick Tempo

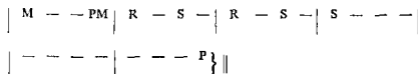
( Tune based on 4 notes )



QUICK TEMPO

(TUNE BASED ON 4 NOTES)





In the same tune we find five notes

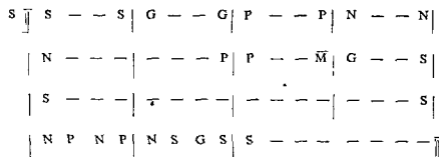
Quick Step,  
 (+1+2+3+4....)

(Tune based on 5 notes)



QUICK STEP

(TUNE BASED ON 5 NOTES)



The most common and popular instruments are the following the Tangmuri (pipe) drums cymbals, the Ka Sharati (a flute with ten holes), Duitara etc

As regards Western instruments, I must admit that some of them have been accepted by our people and are now looked upon as our own instruments The Spanish Guitar for instance, has become so popular that it can no longer be considered as a foreign element Besides the guitar, we are also familiar with the Piano, Violin, Piano Accordion and the Mandolin

But we still play these instruments in the way they are played in the West This is not proper because as I have already told you, basically our music is different from that of the West So I think we have to devise new methods of playing whereby these instruments may be made to serve our purpose To clarify this point, I will give an example The Spanish Guitar is very popular with us Its range and quality of tone are much more than

that of our Duitara. Now if it is played in the way a Duitara is played then it becomes more effective than the latter. And it will be perfectly in conformity with our concept of melodious music.

In spite of these advantages, however, the introduction of Western instruments have not been an unmixed blessing. But it has to be admitted that they have come to stay in our country because our people have accepted them.

From technical point of view, I do not think harmonisation of our music is absolutely impossible. But from experience I have found that it kills the very beauty and spirit of our music. When harmonised, it sounds too much Western and does not smell of the soil from which it emerged. In harmonising our music, you will have to do away with some of the chords because all of them can not be harmonised. Besides, when Minor chords get accidentally mixed up with the Major chords—and this does happen in many of our compositions—there is no possibility of harmonising. If you still insist on doing that, then the music loses its originality and appears like, say, Italian, Hebrew or Welsh Melodies.

For these reasons, I do not approve of attempts to harmonise our music on a large scale.

- Q. 4 In reviving traditional Khasi music, what problems do you have to face? What is the process of such revival? Is it in the form of an organised movement? Is there any possibility of foreigners' resistance to such movements for reviving traditional music?
- A. These problems are controversial as well as complicated. At present, there is no such organised movement. So far as I can see first of all there must be some among us who would take the lead and show the way out. These leaders be primarily men of creative ability connected with the traditional culture of our people. That is, they must emerge from our own society and not be imported or imposed from outside.

In view of the deep Western influence on our music, these men should be acquainted and learned with Western as well as Eastern methods of music. Obviously, such reformation cannot take place in 'research laboratories' on the basis of directives from above or abroad. Music springs from the life of people, so the reformers must also come from our own folk.

To achieve this end, some organised efforts are definitely needed. But by organised efforts, I mean that the organisers collect and get acquainted with those traditional forms of our music that are still extinct and recreate new tunes based on them and then take back these new compositions to the villages for the entertainment of the common people. That is these tunes or songs should be widely popularised. For this purpose it will be necessary

to keep in view the present day tastes and needs of the people vis a vis folk music. Mere revival of the old forms or tunes, even if it be possible, to do so is not enough. As I have already said, certain changes have taken place in our social and cultural outlooks and these should be kept in view.

In connection with starting a "new-song" movement, we have to take note of the popularity of film songs. Thanks to the inroads of film music from Bombay even into our remote rural areas, the impact of Western monopoly is fading away and at present, our music is in a flux. Though most of the Hindi film songs are cosmopolitan in character and a comic admixture of Western and Eastern forms yet we must agree that a good number of them are based on Indian classical and folk tradition. And since a vast number of our people have swung on to them it gives us an opportunity to start a 'new song' movement.

I do not think there is any possibility of foreigners' resistance to such movement for reviving our traditional music. On the other hand, opposition might come from a section of our own people. On account of the so called "Civilising" effects produced by the works of Religion and education, also, people who have been influenced by the church or converted to Christianity, have ceased to look upon our past cultural heritage with pride. They are not proud of our traditional music and have not much interest in reviving them. To this educated section of our people, the traditional music is a symbol of our "primitive" past. Hence they are unwilling to associate themselves with our traditional music or with those who stick to these forms with pride. Hence our task would consist of "re-educating" them, so that they may appreciate and feel proud of our own cultural heritage.

But inspite of these difficulties, I do not think however, that our task is impossible. Because these adverse reactions of some people to traditional music do not spring from their heart and hence they cannot be lasting.

Assam hills are astir with a new movement of self-determination, and vast masses who were once so slow-moving have now been engulfed in a sweeping political turmoil. If progressive composers compose songs with robust themes of humanism, patriotism, international brotherhood and peoples' unity based on our traditional tunes, these will, I am sure, immediately catch the imagination of our people.

## ON FOLKTALES, FOLKLORES AND MODERN AGE

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR HEINZ MODE

**Q. 1** Archaeologist as you are, why have you taken so much interest in the folktales of Bengal?

**A.** I have taken interest in the folktale of Bengal because as an archaeologist I think research in the field of folktales, folk-art and folk music is not a subject of current interest only. I think all these tales recorded earlier and transmitted from a very ancient past, form a part of the historical picture of bygone ages. So, as an archaeologist and art historian, concerned with the historical development of Art and Archaeology, I have been drawn very much to these types of folktales research for I think many new points of view can be won from these materials. So far very few people have examined folktales from this particular point of view. Of course, why I have chosen Bengali folktales is a different question. I have been attached to Bengal for a long time. I was a student here in my young days and I like Bengal very much. India is a very large country and if you want to do work on Indian folktales or folk art you have to begin somewhere and you have to specialise in some kind of thing. I have specialised in Bengali folktales for the reasons I have just stated. I also think that Bengal, considered from the general historical and archaeological points of view, is a particularly good place for collecting and researching on folktales. Bengal is that place of India, I would say where the oldest traditions have been reserved best and most intact. Historically many of the movements originating in the Western or Northern parts of India ended in Bengal. Bengal and the North Eastern part of India were the last places of refuge for these old movements. Buddhism for instance. Buddhism as an Indian religion spread in different parts of India but it has been followed and maintained in Bengal for the longest period of time in the whole of India. Some of the folktales of the most ancient past have also been preserved best in Bengal. That much I would say about why I have chosen this subject and this place as an archaeologist.

**Q. 2** What kind of historical materials have you found in the folktales of Bengal?

**A.** As a matter of fact, folktales are not historical tales and so they cannot give direct evidence of history, but they contain elements which can be classified historically. If, for example you find in a folktale that there is a king ruling in his big kingdom with many officials at the court, you may conclude that it could not possibly have originated at a time earlier than

that of the beginning of kingdom. That much this tale is dated by its very content. Some particular instances of historical evidence in Bengali folk tales may be pointed out. For example, the attitude of the early people towards their neighbours is revealed in the Bengali folktales. In the Bengali folktales you will find neighbours often described as 'rakshas' or some vile monsters. Why? Because the more civilised people who told these folktales considered them different in their customs, habits and attitude to life. Actually they reflect the same relation as we find even now between the villagers and the Adivasi tribes around. Because of some habits which they have and which are different from those of the settled villagers they would describe them as something strange or dangerous. The folktales in certain cases also describe these people as very friendly and protective and helpful to other people. Thus we find both the facts.

This gives you the historical geographical background of folktales, and in the particular field of Bengali folktales this historical geographical background is very rich because as you know, in this eastern part of India tribal background is the richest. That is only one example. I could give you further examples. For instance the one particular attitude I have pointed out in some of my articles before. I mean the attitude of the villagers to the forest.

As we know from the history of the early tribal people, the tribal huntsman looked upon the forest as his dwelling place, the place where he found his food and every aspect of which was familiar to him. He knew every animal, for he had to live with them, whereas the villagers who lived outside the forest always thought of the forest to be a rather dangerous place, sinister and mysterious, where strange people lived or strange, even supernatural powers stayed and could affect their well being. If you contrast these two aspects of the estimation of the forest you will find that this also provides much historical material because they suggest the early stage of the tribal huntsman who had confidence in the forest to protect him, and the other stage of settled villagers who looked upon the forest as mysterious and dangerous.

Another question is that of gradual change in man's attitude to animals. The attitude of the present-day people towards animals I need not describe. We have become very much estranged from animal life. Of course we do need animals for food, or may be not, but anyhow we do not know much about them. In the earlier stages of mankind the tribal hunters knew the animals very well because he had to know everything about them. He had to know how they moved, where they moved, where they would go, where they drank—everything, because they hunted them. They had to live with them and they felt that somehow they were associated with them. In fact, they felt that they were one and the same creation. Man or animal

other new forms and features, but they were based like every process of human development on older, more archaic tales. The real revolutionary change came at that peasant stage for all forms of folk-art. You can thus draw historical conclusion from folktales, and in Bengal you get a very good material from which to draw such conclusion.

Now, the question may arise how there could there be harmony when one was the hunter and the other hunted. To this I would say that ever since human beings came to this earth they have been struggling on. There was not only a struggle between human beings and animals but also amongst the human beings themselves. In the earliest stage a small community considered every other community as barbaric and inimical. This is a different aspect. That does not mean that *ideologically* they took them as unequal, but they were all for themselves, striving for themselves, *fighting for their own existence in a very barbaric manner*. Therefore, it is rightly described as the barbaric stage. But that does not mean that religious deductions were made which gave to one group sort of the height of God and to another group the position of Devil or even lower. This ideological difference between groups of men and between men and animals or other objects could only appear at a time when there was a division-ridden society, when there was different distribution of economic wealth and power within the human society. At that moment new thoughts led to different classifications within the natural world. Therefore, I think that though there was harmony in early time, factually spoken, there may have been much fighting for existence. The tribal tales tell us how people killed men and animals.

But they did it for their very necessity, and not by intention nor with the wish to get power, nor because they thought there was an inequality amongst men. They did it only for their defence and daily needs. When a tribal hunter hunted animals he did not go out like a modern sportsman-hunter just shooting. He took that as much of the animal life as he needed for his daily living. One may see in the old paintings of the pre-historic caves how they tried to compensate for that. They had, I would say, no ill will against animals, for they felt they were killing their own kind whom they loved and knew intimately. There was no difference—men were considered as animals and animals considered as men. For a long time it went on like that. It seems there was a magical situation, there being no definite social structure, or a structure of inequality between men and the beasts. This is a very important point, and I insist on it because it is a much discussed question. As you know, there are many theories about the origin of the folktales. Some people say that there were, first of all, myths of the gods and goddesses and that all the folktales were derived from such myths. They maintain that folktales are only degenerated forms of these mythical

stories I do not accept it, for there could not be any myth of gods at a stage which could not differentiate between gods and men. So this mythology and metaphor came into human history rather late, whereas the tribal tales on the relation between men and animals as well as the old paintings in the prehistoric caves are earlier than these myths. The folktales of the later peasant stage are also of great social importance, because these types of folktales were at that time not only a mere artistic and aesthetic pleasure but also had much social bearing. They are much more than of mere aesthetic or literary interest, for they meant that the people telling these tales were trying to give their thoughts certain hold on life. In all these folktales we find one distinct feature. Whatever may happen, marvel or misfortune, the end will always be a good one with the hero, however much he may have to struggle, coming out victorious at the end. When we interpret such ideas, such ideological background we find that the people, who told these folktales and who were told such folk tales, preserved a very sound optimism. They told such tales to face some of the miseries of their life, which appear in the tales also. But towards the end it is the 'just cause' which wins invariably. This belief in the victory of the 'just cause' is a particular aspect of the folktales and a very important one, from the point of view of history. Of course, we cannot call it revolutionary because by telling a tale, in which the hero somehow wins at the end, you do not make a revolution. Therefore I will not connect it with later revolutionary movement, but I would say it is the predecessor of later revolutionary thought, because it contains elements of optimism regarding the ultimate victory of the 'just cause' of the common people. This is what the folktales have preserved from a very early age.

- Q. 3 Have you noticed any resemblance in respect of theme and form between Bengali folklore and German folklore or European folklore in general?
- A. About a hundred years or more ago the famous German Indologist Benfey as you all know, published a translation of the 'Panchatantra' and wrote the commentary on it, and he was the first person to collect voluminous material for that compilation. He had the idea that all the folktales of Germany or France or Italy were derived from Indian folktales. Benfey was recognised by some as a very great scholar, but others tried to decry him and his theory. Discussion on his theories still go on in the field of folktales research. My personal opinion is that Benfey's contribution to the study of folktales is very great, and that many of his critics only plunder his knowledge and thereby spoil his reputation. Naturally they do not like to give him the credit for what he has done. There is another reason for this. Benfey was one of the greatest Indologists of the 19th century. Certain prejudices have been raised against him because he was



## NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN AMERICAN FOLKSONG AND FOLKLORE

SWAMI P. PARAMPANTHI

In recent years there has been a growing interest in America in Folksongs and Folklore. There are more than 40,000 pieces of recorded folk music in the Archive of American Folksong in the Library of Congress. A few years ago the Library of Congress mentioned in a list 1500 recorded folksongs made by twelve commercial companies. There are many Folklore societies in this country, one of the main organisations called The American Folklore Society was founded in 1888. Quite a few states have their own Folklore societies (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas etc etc). In every year many folk festivals are held all over the country attended by thousands of people.

There is some confusion about what a folksong is. Everybody knows that a ballad is a song that tells a story. Yet a ballad may be a folksong but a folksong may not be a ballad unless it tells a story. Folksong is an inclusive word encompassing various music of the peoples from all walks of life. A sailor's work song of the sea is a folksong, a negro spiritual is a religious folksong, the Blues, a melancholy type of jazz, can be a folksong. Ray M. Lawless says that "there are folksongs of every occupation, railroading, war, canal life, mining, herding cattle, domestic life, robbery and bad man activities, slum life, pioneering, and so on" (Folksingers and Folksongs in America, p. 5).

The same author quotes with approval the following definition of a genuine, traditional folksong (or folk tune, for it may be instrumental) - it is "music that has been submitted to the process of oral transmission, it is a product of evolution, and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation and selection" (p. 6).

The Negro spiritual, an important branch of American folksongs, fulfils this definition in every way. The first African slaves came to Virginia a year before the arrival of the Mayflower in America. By the early 18th century there were more than 75,000 slaves in the colonies, a century later there were about a million slaves in this country. The Africans had a natural skill for expressing their feelings in rhythm, melody and dance. They brought from Africa various types of African drums. Gradually they introduced into the Colonies certain traits of African music - "syncopated beats, shifting accents, variety of rhythm, and call and answer format of voodoo chants" (Panorama of American Music by David Ewen, p. 53).

The African often sang and danced during the working hours, for, he found peace in his songs and dance in the midst of a cruel world. Slowly he came into

contact with European melody and harmony and his natural music soul was effected by them Eventually his music tried to combine European idioms with the African rhythm In Christianity, the Negro found an escape from his oppressed existence In it he discovered a dream, and the promise of a new life He began to identify himself "with Christ who had been crucified" His songs took on deep religious colouring and a profound spiritual depth Sometimes his songs were "sorrow songs"—the profound lamentation of an oppressed people, sometimes there were "shouts"—the outbursts of religious ecstasy

The Negro spiritual has techniques and methods that set it apart from other American Folksongs It changes from major to minor "without the benefit of formal modulations" It has rhythm and intonation, it involves the injection of notes like the flattened third or seventh which is foreign to the formal scale It has marked variations of the rhythmic pattern

The spiritual was created by groups—not by any one person or persons Therefore, it is sung chorally having not only melody but also the harmony David Ewen states that spiritual, specially the "shout" was frequently produced spontaneously, "inspired by the excited emotions of the moment" (Ibid, p 55)

There are three classes of Negro spiritual One has the call and answer method found in the African tribal songs One sentence is thrown out by a leader and is answered "by a repetitious word, phrase, or sentence by a group of voices The tempo is fast, the melodies are spirited, the mood intense and passionate" (p 55) Examples "Shout for joy," "The Great Camp Meeting"

The second type has a slower tempo and a profounder movement and a great beauty A long sustained phrase is the core of the melody—as in "Sometimes I feel like a motherless Child" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

The third type of spiritual is the most famous It consists of a "highly syn-copated melody made up of snatches of rhythmic patterns" Examples "Little David Play On Your Harp," "All God's Chillun Got Wings"

The story of crucification inspired quite a few profoundly moving Negro spirituals The sorrow expressed is restrained here, this makes it all the more poignant Examples "Never Said A Mumbaling Word," "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord"

Similarly, the stories of the Old Testament struck a responsive echo in the hearts of the slaves In the captivity of the Jews in Egypt the Negroes found a counterpart of their own slavery The call "Let My People Go" in "When Israel Was In Egypt Land" very clearly expresses the call for freedom of the slaves In those days the Negro slaves could not openly voice their desire for freedom So they expressed their feelings for freedom through songs like these "Steal Away To Jesus, steal away home" "I ain't Got Long to stay here; "I am bound for Promised Land"

The first Negro spiritual appeared in printed sheet music in Philadelphia in 1862. It was the famous song entitled "Roll, Jordan Roll." In 1867, the first collection of Negro spirituals appeared in the Port Royal Islands entitled "Slave Songs of the United States." By 1871 the Negro spiritual received general popularity throughout the country.

I have gathered the materials for this article from the following books: *Folksingers and Folksongs in America* by Ray M. Lawless; *Panorama of American Popular Music* by David Ewen. S P P.

## THE POPULARISATION OF FOLK SONGS IN THE U S A.

PETER SEEGER

'The trouble with so many of us folklorists,' the late J Frank Dobie of Texas once told me, "is that we dig up dead bones from one graveyard just to go bury them in another"

Though American folklorists had been collecting such songs as Negro spirituals, cowboy songs, mountain ballads, and the music of dozens of ethnic minorities, ever since the late 19th Century, it is true that by mid 20th Century most of their collections were still gathering dust on their library shelves

Attempts to introduce folk songs through schools often met with negative results the children ended up disliking the very name of folk music Why? Partly because it was beyond the ability of the average music teacher to convey the great sense of style which a traditional performer might have A tune which sparkled on the strings of a country fiddler often sounded flat and uninspired on a classroom piano Self-conscious city bred vocal chords could not have even simulate the powerful rasp of a Negro work song And more than this the songs were often selected and re written to take all the healthy sense of sex and protest out of them

Trained musicians and music schools often took a condescending attitude towards native American home made music They were more interested in exploring the complexities of symphonic music, than the subtleties of an unaccompanied ballad singer

The field of commercial popular music was not so snobbish As in all past centuries it was eager to exploit any idiom that could be turned into cash But recording companies and radio stations tended to want to adapt country music to fit their own customary forms by adding orchestral accompaniments, or again toning down the words so as not to offend any customer Tragedy was turned into sentimentality Biting humor would be turned into patronizing triviality It was a lucky exception, when a coal miner's song like 'Sixteen Ton' swept the country in 1951

'Sixteen ton, and what do you get?  
Another day older and—a deeper in debt I  
St Peter, don t you call me 'cause I can t go ,  
I owe my soul to the company store "

In the late 1930 s and early '40 s the curator of the Archive of Folksong in the Library of Congress, Alan Lomax, started making determined efforts to make

My own guess is that 999 out of a thousand of the new songs will be forgotten, as are most popular songs. But a few of the best one will live and grow. And future generations, recalling them, will know that in these crisis years of the second half of the Twentieth Century, young Americans were struggling to understand the world and themselves, and seized upon a form some people called "folk music" as a medium for communication.

*Note* As with most articles about music, the reader will feel somewhat at a loss without being able to hear the music under discussion. If any reader can locate a radio station, USIS library, or university with some of the following record labels, they may be able to document the story I have outlined above. Folkways records, Vanguard, Electra, Folk Library Records, Columbia. As to performers, in addition to the names mentioned in the above article, look up songwriters Tom Paxton, Len Chandler, Phil Ochs, Buffy Saint Marie, Pat Sky, and the traditional performers, Doc Watson, Mississippi John Hurt, and the female singers, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, and Odetta. There are many, many more. The magazine *Sing Out*, 165 West 46 St., New York, N. Y., has for fifteen years documented this story in detail.

# AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOLKLORISTIC ACTIVITIES IN BENGAL : EARLY PERIOD

SANKAR SEN GUPTA

The study of folklore began in Bengal, and in India, not in response to academic needs, but to serve administration and to satisfy enthusiasts. So it has made little progress in academic research in comparison with the West. The blame must, to a great extent, go to an inadequate policy, and a neglect of the subject by persons whose opinions matter in the academic world. It is still an optional subject of study in the Post Graduate classes, in some universities in India, and that too as a part of either literature or anthropology, but not as an independent discipline. It is no doubt a good sign that in spite of the apathetic attitude, serious and selfless workers, enthusiasts and students are getting interested more and more in the study of folklore in Bengal.

There are various schools of folklore study

1. *Indic-School* The members of this school are generally Sanskrit scholars. They are both linguists and humanists and deal with their subjects from the viewpoint of traditional scholarship. Their knowledge of Sanskrit enables them to trace many folk materials to their classical sources. Scholars like Maurice Bloomfield, Theodor Benfey, Henry F Colbrooke, Rev James Long, William Jones, F. Buchanan Hamilton, Richard Francis Burton, H H Wilson, Rabindranath Tagore, R P Chanda, Nagendranath Vasu, Hara prasad Shastri, Rajendralal Mitra, Radhagovinda Basak, S K De, R D Banerjee, N K Bhattasali, Sukumar Sen, J N Banerjee etc belong to this school.

2. *Anthropological school* Anthropological study became a distinct academic subject in the nineteenth century. Members of this school derive their inspiration from field and laboratory studies. Boas and Frazer are recognized, besides E B Tylor, who introduced the term 'culture' in 1865 and defined it in his book entitled "Primitive Culture" (1871). Morgan's "Ancient Society" appeared in 1877. Frazer's "Golden Bough" (1922), Boas' "Some Problems of Methodology in Social Science" (1930) are frequently quoted by the social and cultural anthropologists and also an earlier book on anthropology, which appeared as early as 1843, "The Natural History of Man" by James C Prichard. Folklore serves as an excellent tool for the analysis of the people, their culture, norms, behaviour etc, in the hands of scholars of this school. They have also utilised folkloristic materials in their field investigation in order to establish rapport with the rural and tribal folks. The folkloristic materials they use are sorted out by them under the head 'material culture'. In their village, tribal, ethnographic and other studies, quite a number of social and cultural anthro-

pologists make use of folklore. Scholars of this school include Andrew Long, E T Dalton, H Risley, Rev Sherring, W H R River, T C Hodson, C G Seligman, J Shakespear, W Crooke, P R T Gordon, P O Boddington, John Hoffmann, S C Roy, S C Mitra, B S Guha, D N Majumdar, B N Dutta, J B S Haldane, K P Chattopadhyaya, R K Mukherjee, N K Bose, P C Biswas, M N Basu and others.

3 *Aarne Thompson School* Members of this school are primarily interested in comparative study and are busy in the study of European and American folktales. They are particularly interested in collection, classification and comparative study of folklore and emphasising the importance of obtaining numerous varieties of a particular tale or any other piece of folklore. The scholars of this school are Stith Thompson himself, his student Jonas Balys, C W von Sedow, Archer Taylor, Alan Dundes, R M Dorson, K M Briggs, Heinz Mode, D C Sen, Dusan Zbavitel, Mozharul Islam, Sukumar Sen, Ralph Troger, Asutosh Bhattacharya, Savitri Sarin and others. In the field of comparative mythology Maxmüller's "Chips from German Workshop" is an important remainder. It should also be pointed out that while translating 'Panchatantra' in 1859 Theodor Benfey first claimed that the source of European folktale is India. This is known as 'The theory of Indian origin of folktale'. Fiske's "Myths and Myth Makers" (1878), C W Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations" (1870) also support the view that India is the homeland of the myths of the world. Of late a reputed scholar like Andrew Long contradicted this theory in his "The Indian Origin of Popular Tales" (The Academy, 1892). Here an important book "The Oral Tales of India" by Stith Thompson and his student Jonas Balys published in 1958 from the Indiana University, Bloomington, USA may be recommended to the serious scholars besides Thompson's 'The folktale', (New York, 1951).

It may be pertinent to point out another school as the Linguistic School. Members of this school have directed their studies to the academic and humanistic sphere. The scholars of this school are many. To name a few we should start with Rev James Long, G A Grierson, S K Chatterjee, Muhammad Saïdullah, Abdul Hai, J Koffmann, Van A. Emelen and others.

In Bengal the history of folklore study developed in two distinct lines, the literary and anthropological and the popular. Here we are concerned primarily with popular and academic compositions, not with the work of fiction writers or poets, who have utilised folklore in their creative writings. But it is hardly possible to distinguish the folk literature of Bengal from medieval Bengali literature, especially the *Mangal Kāvya*s, the *Pāñchali*s and other forms. Kabikankan Mukundaram wrote his epic more around folklore than mythology. In the study of the *Mangal Kāvya*s, the *Pāñchali*, the *Pūn̄thi* and similar materials a number of scholars have distinguished themselves. The history of the *Mangal Kāvya*s has been written by Asutosh Bhattacharya who has also edited a book on *Manasā Mangal*. Sukumar Sen, Tomonashchandra Dasgupta, Jatundramohan Bhattacharjee

*Unnatī* (1915), *Ravater Kathā* (1926), *Palli Prakṛiti* (1928), *Grambasidiger Prati* (1930), *Deshar Kāj* (1932), *Araṇya Debatā* (1938) and the songs composed by him

Among others we must mention Satischandra Mukherjee of Dawn Society who wrote several important essays on caste, Mrs Annie Besant also contributed articles on this subject from 1903 to 1905. Another important name is Kaṅgāl Harinath who did marvellous work on the peasant life of Bengal. Acharya Brajendranath Seal delivered the inaugural address on The meaning of Race Tribe Nation at the first Universal Race Congress in London in 1911. Acharya Ramendrasundar Trivedī wrote 'Bāngalākṣmīr Vrata Kathā' (The Vrata rituals of the womenfolk of Bengal) and a scholarly introduction to the book "Kḥukumanir Chhada" 1899 (Nursery Rhymes) by Jogindranath Sarkar. Acharya Girindrasekhar Bose the noted psychologist has also some essays on folk psychology. Bhūpendranath Dutta's anthropological and folkloristic papers are of a very high standard and have received wide appreciation. Besides, Haridas Palit's "Addyer Gambhīrā" (1912) Benoykumar Sarkar's "Folk element in Hindu culture" (1917) deserve mention.

"Bengal Peasant Life" (1874) by Lal Behari Dey was first published under the title "Govinda Samanta or the History of Bengali Raiyat", printed in two volumes. Here the peasants of Burdwan district are described. His "Folktales of Bengal" (1881) won him world fame. Folk tale collection began in Bengal as early as 1838 when the information of folktales came primarily from travellers. This was the trend up to 1870. From 1870 to 1920 the British officials, European missionaries collected folklore from their interest in the native life, language and culture. From 1920 onward matured scholars appeared whose use of comparative methods opened new horizons of folklore study. During this time Dineshchandra Sen, Gurusaday Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, Dakshinarājan Mitra Majumdar, Sibratan Mitra, Nishikanta Sen, and others rendered useful service. To dwell on the study of folklore in Bengal in the earlier period we may divide the subject in the following manner: (i) Western scholars (ii) Indian scholars in the pre Independence period.

#### WESTERN SCHOLARS THE NUCLEUS

In Bengal, folklore has merely meant a study of folk literature. But there is quite a lot of misconception here as to the scope of folklore studies. There is also lack of agreement about the aims and methods of folklore study among scholars and workers themselves. As literary scholars or enthusiasts have taken the lead in folklore study in Bengal most of them are not prepared to expand their idea and conception of folklore much beyond folk literature.

There is no doubt that the pioneer work of folklore study in Bengal and in India began with the Western scholars, administrators, missionary workers and travellers. Dr Mazharul Islam of the Rajshahi University, Eastern Pakistan, has



made a study entitled "A history of English folk tale collection in India and Pakistan" from the Indiana University in 1963 where he divides the study into three periods

(i) when the information about folktales come from travellers,

(ii) when British Officials and European Missionaries collected folklore to know the people from their roots, and

(iii) when scholars applied the comparative method

Folkloristic work started in Bengal at the end of the 18th century, particularly after the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. Twenty years later in 1804, the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded. After a gap of another twenty five years, in 1829, The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland was founded. The journals of these Societies published important materials on folklore and associated topics and they gave impetus, inspiration and encouragement to Indian and Western scholars alike. The journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay was published in 1886, and from this time on many journals like the Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society (Bangalore), Journal of Bengal Behar and Orissa Research Society (Bikanir), Man in India (Ranchi), Epigraphica Indica (published by the Government of India, Dept. of Epigraphy), Indian Antiquity (started in Bombay in 1872 under the editorship of J. Burges) and many other English and regional language journals roused the interest of scholars in the study of Indology which virtually inspired the workers of folklore. It is well known that the study of folklore came into being in India as a branch of Indology. We should also remember that the Orientalist Thomas Bacon brought together and published in 1842 a series of folk tales, legends and historical romances. Some objective studies are also available in "Asiatic Researches", the first volume of which appeared as early as 1788. We are profoundly indebted to some Christian Missionaries, civilians and their wives and travellers for their invaluable service to our history, folklore and other branches of Indian studies. Some of their studies were made during their stay in India or after they had left the country. Rev. Morton was perhaps the first compiler of Bengali proverbs in 1832. The credit of calling public attention to the investigation of sociological science and the collection of folklore is justly attributed to Rev. James Long. His "Prabandmala", a collection of two thousand Bengali proverbs illustrating native life and feeling, appeared in 1868. He had collected more than 5000 proverbs from the *J nāi ā* (womenfolk) of Bengal and his "Oriental Proverbs in their relation to folklore, history and sociology" was first published in 1875. "Eastern Proverbs" by Long appeared in 1881 and 500 questions on the subject requiring investigation in the social condition of the natives, first published in 1862, has just been reprinted in India in 1966. Sir Henry M. Elliot's "Memoirs of history, folklore and distribution of the races in Western Provinces of India" appeared in 1869. Abbe J. A. Dubbois' "Hindu manners, customs and

ceremonies' was published in as early as 1816. Others publications include E. T. Dalton's "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal" (1871), W. Hunter's "Statistical Account of Bengal" (1877), R. C. Temple's "Wide Awake Stories" (with F. A. Steel) (1884), C. Swynnerton's "Indian Nights Entertainment" (1839), H. Risley's "Tribes and Castes of Bengal" (1891), W. Crooke's "Religion and folklore of northern India" (1826), P. O. Boddings "Santal Folklore" (1926) "Tradition and Institution of the Santals" (1942) "Folklore and Santal Parganas" (1909) by C. H. Bompas "Bengal Household Tales" by William McCulloch (1912) W. D. Monro's "Stories of Indian Gods and Heroes" (1911) D. A. Macenzie's "Indian Myth Legend" (1913) Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita)'s "Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists" (1913) "Cradle Tales of Hindustan" (1907) and many others.

As has already been said, it was due to the effort of the western scholars and administrators that the manners, customs, ceremonies, folklore and associated features of Indian life came to be known in and outside India. Here we have hurriedly mentioned some of their contributions. This trend has ultimately widened the scope of folklore research. What we now need is a scientific approach and a philosophy to guide its study.

#### PRE-INDEPENDENCE DAYS

Lal Behari Dey is perhaps the first successful scholar in this field. His "Bengal Peasant Life" (1874) is an important portrayal of the peasantry of the Burdwan district of his time. His next popular work "Folk Tales of Bengal" (1881) earned for him a world reputation. S. C. Mitra was an eminent scholar of Bengal folklore; he contributed as many as four hundred articles on various aspects of folklore to different learned and academic journals. He was a lawyer by profession and for some time was also connected with the University of Calcutta in the department of Anthropology. S. C. Roy, who was also originally a practising member of the legal profession, had done much to bring the government to appreciate the specialities of the tribal land laws, religions, customs, etc. of folk life and founded "Man in India" in 1921. This is a quarterly journal which is rendering a very useful service to tribal and anthropological studies in India. It is impossible to evaluate Tagore's role in the folklore movement in this country in our limited compass. His "Lok Sahitya" (Folk Literature) appeared in 1907. The attention of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, was drawn to the wealth of the folklore of Bengal and in this he could secure the services of an able scholar, Dineshchandra Sen, who was a versatile genius and the Professor of the Department of Modern Indian Languages in the University of Calcutta. His four volumes of *Mymensingh Gitika* and its English rendering as "Eastern Bengal Ballads of Mymensingh", (1920-1932) *Danofār Puranāri* (1939) (Womenfolk of Bengal), *Gopichandrer Gān* (Songs of Gopichandra)

and other works won him an international reputation. Gurusaday Dutt, a civilian, will be remembered as the founder of the Bratachari Society, initiating a movement of folk dance and physical culture in Bengal. His wide range of activities and scholarly contributions on folk art, folk dance, and his collection of folklore materials will be remembered with gratitude by folklorists of Bengal. The contributions of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, the most popular juvenile writer of Bengal, collected in his "*Thakurmar Jhuli*" (1907), "*Thakurdadar Jhuli*", (1909), "*Thandidir Thali*" (1913) are remarkable and he is almost a household name in Bengal. Another important person in this field is Jogindranath Sarkar who brought about a revolution by his book "*Khukumanur Chhada*" (Nursery Rhymes), "*Hasi-Khusi*" (Laughter and Joy). He is equally popular today even after a century of his birth. Upen-drakishore Roy Chaudhury's "*Tunjunur Bai*", Abanindranath Tagore's "*Bratakatha*", (Vrata Ritual), Indradevi Chaudhurani's "*Banglar Stri Achār*" (Marriage customs of East and North Bengal), Kshatimohan Sen Shastri's "*Banglar Bāul*" (1954). S. K. De's "*Bangla Prabod*" (1951) and his P. R. S. thesis "*Bengali Literature in the 19th Century*" (1954), Sunitkumar Chatterjee's "*Origin and Development of Bengali Language and Literature*", (1926), Amarendranath Roy's "*Bangalir Puja Pārban*" (1939), Manindramohan Basu's "*Sahaja Sahityā*" (1930), Mohummad Monsuruddin's "*Hāramām*" (1943) (the first edition of this folk song collection was published from the University of Calcutta but is now going to be published from Dacca and so far eight volumes of this book have been published), Dakshinaranjan Shastri's "*Origin and Development of Ancestor Worship in India*" (1963), Srikumar Banerjee's brilliant piece on *Rūpakathū* (Fairy Tales) are noteworthy.

Among the collectors of folklore Chandrakumar De, his *guru* Kedarnath Majumdar, Basantaranjan Roy, Rajanikanta Gupta, Brajasundar Sanyal, Mokshadaranjan Bhattacharya, Prabaschandra Bhattacharya, Jibendrakumar Dutta, Biswaraj Dhanwantari and many others are important. Nishikanta Sen, a contemporary of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, collected and published a number of books on folktales of Bengal. Sibratan Mitra is another important name who has published his very valuable collection in "*Nishur Katha*", "*Sānjer Katha*", (1939) and in other works.

Important materials can be gleaned from R. C. Dutta's "*History of the Civilization of Ancient India*" (1889-90), M. C. Dutta's "*Folklore of Bengal*" (1893), K. N. Banerjee's "*Popular Tales of Bengal*" (1905). Sreeshchandra Bose published "*Folk-tales of Hindustan*" in 1908 under a pseudonym 'Chuli Shaikh', Maharani Suniti Devi's "*Indian Fairy Tales*" (1922), J. N. Banerjee's "*Some folk gods of ancient and medieval India*" (1938), Panchanan Mitra's "*Pre-historic India*" (1923), B. S. Guha's 1931 Census Report, H. C. Chakladar's "*Problems of Racial Composition of Indian People*" (1936), R. P. Chanda's "*Indo Aryan Races*" (1916), B. C. Law's "*Some Kshatriya Tribes of Ancient India*" (1924), S. B. Dasgupta's "*Obscure Religious Cults As The Background of Bengali Literature*", (1945), Niharranjan Roy's "*Bangalir Itihas*", Ajit Mookerjee's "*Folk Art of Bengal*"

(1945), Debiprasad Chattopdhyaya's "*Lokayata Darshan*" and many other books and monographs of this type are important. The names of Kalidas Nag, Radhakamal Mukherjee, Tripurashankar Sen Shastri, the Maharaja of Natore and Annadashankar Roy are also important in this connection.

This provides a broad outline of folkloristic activities in this State. It has already been said that in the rigid sense of the term there is no folklorist in Bengal. But a great many scholars, eminent persons and diligent workers have devoted much of their time to collection, selection and publication of folklore materials and as a result we have works which are of great value. As a whole this account of folkloristic activity will go to substantiate the fact that folkloristic works and activities have had fairly long tradition here though a scientific approach is not particularly evident.

Within this short space we have tried our best to mention all the leading works and their authors in this field. Our list may not be exhaustive for which we beg to be excused.

in such entertainments do not bother and follow the multitude blindly. In any case they are only few in number. Most of the villagers capitulate to the vulgarities of the towns the day they arrive.

It is doubtful if foreign domination has harmed any province more than Bengal. Calcutta, Bengal's capital, is a city built by foreigners. It does not reflect of Bengal's art and music in any manner as do the capitals of other provinces. The other provincial capitals, if they are old towns, have bases of arts, music and dances of the country around. British rule has, it is true, somewhat weakened them but has not destroyed them altogether. Moreover, the older towns or capitals, enjoyed, in many instances, the patronage of the rajas and nawabs which encouraged and thereby helped the traditional music and other age-old artistic avocations to survive. This explains how the singers and dancers of other provinces, who are comparatively well off because of feudatory or princely patronage, have been able to come to far away Bengal and even influence her distinctive music. Denied such opportunity, the folk singers of *Bāul*, *Bhātūālī* or *Kīrtan* have not been able to spread any influence in Calcutta.

Today the dances and the arts of Bengal are hidden from the public view and the artists are more concerned with Japanese art, Italian art, Ajanta art, Moghul art and what have you than with Bengali art. With a lot of fanfare and expense the artists of Bengal go to other countries to learn foreign art and collect encomia. The current changed taste of the people has opened up for these artists avenues of wealth. But the folk painters and sculptors (the image makers) and the carpenters (those who sculpt in wood) have become destitute. It is true that Abanindranath, Nandalal Bose and Gurusaday Dutta are trying to rescue and resuscitate the arts of Bengal but their efforts are still a fraction of what is required. It is quite common these days to find non-Bengali singers earning money in Bengal by singing Hindusthani and Gazal songs. Imitating them and singing in like fashion a few Bengali singers are also earning some money. But the *Kīrtan Bāul* or *Bhātūālī* singers of Bengal literally go about in the street and earn their living as street singers. *Kīrtan* songs perhaps, get some patronage but compared to the patronage of Hindusthani songs it is very little.

The reason is that the Bengalis as a race are forgetful of themselves. A Bengali thinks himself superior to persons from other provinces merely on the strength of having imitated the Europeans to a greater extent. There are literary societies in Bengal but they do not conform to traditional norms. Outside Bengal a large number of *Mūshairās* are held. The poets are invited to participate in these meetings. A poet reads his poems in the light of the lamp handed over to him—the *Mūshairās* take place at night—which he then passes on to the next poet. In this way the lamp goes round. The enthusiasm that one finds in these gatherings are not found in our literary meetings. The *Mūshairā* rather than the latter is national in character and form.

Many persons desirous of learning the songs of Bengal are unable to do so

because of lack of opportunity. There is hardly any arrangement in the towns for teaching *Bāul*, *Kirtan* or *Bhāitālī*. And who will take the trouble of going round the villages and taking pains to learn them?

The villagers have little opportunity of earning money in the towns by singing. For one thing, one will require money at the beginning. There are other obstacles. Through association with the British we have become overconscious about the value of time. Our preoccupations have increased and we have little time for enjoyment. One cannot enjoy folk songs in short spells of time. In the villages people used to have plenty of leisure. They did not become impatient even if the same song was sung over and over again. The *Jātrās* (folk theatre) are night long affairs. *Lakshman* (brother of Rama) is hit by the *Saktisel*<sup>1</sup>, the *jūds* (chorus) immediately break into a song which lasts two hours, then the violinist starts who takes an hour and a half before stopping, then comes *Rama's* long ululation of grief, then *Sita's*, then *Hanūmān's*—where is the listener to sit through such a performance these days? While the composition and attitude of the audience have changed, the form and method of singing folk songs have not changed. That is why people flock to the theatre rather than to the *Bhūshān* or *Jātra* performance. If someone could prune and shorten the length of folk songs he might be able to propagate folk music successfully.

Most of those belonging to the cities who sing folk songs make many mistakes. This I have found out from personal experience while trying to teach folk music to a few such singers. For one thing they are not sufficiently respectful towards the subject they wish to learn. They are not prepared to devote even a fraction of the time to learn folk music that they are prepared to devote for learning other kinds of music. The famous dancer Isadora Duncan wrote in her autobiography "It has taken me years of struggle, hard work and research to learn to make one simple gesture and I know enough about the art of writing to realise that it would take me again just so many years of concentrated effort to write one simple beautiful sentence."

Those who have had to devote lifelong practice and training to gain recognition in the field of classical music want to be famous by learning folk music for a few hours only. They refuse to acknowledge that unless there are long years of preparation and discipline no branch of education can have any worthwhile influence. Folk songs have to be learnt by years of practice and diligence. At the same time the audience—who, in the cities have become used to listening Hindusthani and *Gazal* songs—must also be made to acquire a sense of respect towards folk music. It is easy to follow a well trodden path. But only those artists will achieve distinction who are able to create themselves anew in the mind of the listener.

Recently one does find people who are eager to listen to folk songs. But they

1 *Shaktisel*—A deadly weapon used by Ravana against Lakshman.

are being duped by the adulterated product which like *Khaddar*<sup>1</sup> made in Japan, is turned out by an admixture of a few *Bāul* and *Bhātālī* tunes in the hybrid songs of the cities. The false can rarely succeed in beguiling the people for any length of time. The immediate effect however is likely to be a general disrespect and indifference towards folk music.

The nuances in folk tunes cannot be properly reproduced in the harmonium. How harmful this instrument is for a proper recital of folk songs has been very well stated by Professor A. B. Baker in a recent article. And yet many of our singers cannot sing without the harmonium. The result is that the folk songs we hear in the cities are hardly of the pure and genuine variety.

Classical music has some sort of cerebral effect. Bengali songs, on the other hand, appeal mainly to our emotions. Take for instance the *Bhātālī* song. Some of its long in-between notes have such fine and delicate variations that without years of listening they cannot be detected. But even when not noticed they touch the mind all the same. If a few well-chosen accomplished singers from the villages are given a little instruction as to the ways and tastes of the urban audience it may help the popularisation of folk music. Gramophone companies and the radio authorities can also be of help in this respect. In fact the Hindusthan Record Company has taken some steps in this direction. With their help and encouragement we recorded a flute recital by a peasant boy from a village. If in this manner some place is found for folk music in the cities it may be possible to prevent the extinction of rural festivals and entertainments. For the speed with which our villages are imitating the cities it seems that before long the festivals will die out.

About one hundred and fifty years ago the Muslims of our country were affected by a wave of revival and regeneration. This was the Wahabi movement which, like the Protestant movement, reshaped Muslim society. As a result of this movement the influence and power of the priests increased considerably. They pronounced anathema on songs, music and dances. In the name of the Holy Quran—where, incidentally, there is no injunction against music—they spread their hold over the ignorant common people to such an extent that musicians got beaten up and were socially boycotted. Even today the priests wield considerable influence and their persecution have forced many people to give up music altogether. Those who have not done so, have, in many instances been forced to follow and be attendants of lower caste Hindus, as for instance the *dhūlis* (drummers) and *shenāi*<sup>2</sup> players. Some have of course secretly continued to cultivate music.

The bigotry of the muslim priests has, to a certain extent, been responsible for the decline and disappearance of folk songs. Recently, however, many muslim leaders like Maulana Akram Khan have given their opinions in favour of music. The young muslims have also advanced somewhat in this direction. But it will

1. *Khaddar*—Hand spun cloth introduced by Mahatma Gandhi.

2. *Shenāi*—A wooden wind instrument.

Some time before society is rid of the influence of the Mullahs which incidentally has not been uniform in all the districts of Bengal. The Mussalmans of Dacca, Mymensingh and Chittagong have not followed the dictates of the Mullahs strictly.

Sri Dinesh Chandra Sen has written in the preface of his Mymensingh Gitika that the Brahminic influence has harmed the folk music of Bengal considerably. Sri Chaitanya's<sup>1</sup> influence did the same to many kinds of folk songs. Formerly Gajan festivals were celebrated at every nook and corner of Bengal. To the accompaniment of the grave rhythm of the drums the Gajan sanyasis used to sing the *astagans* of *Chaitrapuja*. After they became *Vaisnavas*<sup>2</sup> the people have given up observing these festivals. These days we do not seem to find any more the *Dhrupti* dance, the *Kali* dance, the *Dasavatara* dance or the *Gypsy* dance. Because of recent communal animosity at some places the Muslims have boycotted the fairs connected with Hindu festivals. Formerly they used to participate enthusiastically in rowing matches or *jari* songs. These are now becoming things of the past.

Then again the folk singers used to get encouragement from the landlords and other rich people. Many big zaminders used to form amateur singing troupes. But now the zaminders are mostly residents in towns. Even when they visit their village homes for wedding or other festive occasions they get theatrical troupes from Calcutta. During *Kali Puja* they get dancers from Calcutta. The village singers get no encouragement from them.

Besides the above, the absence of competent composers has also been responsible for the decline of folk songs. Formerly highly educated persons used to compose the folk songs as can be seen from *Kabi Kankan Chandi*<sup>3</sup> or Bijay Gupta's *Padma Puran*<sup>4</sup>. Now a days the songs written or composed by the educated have hardly any connection with folk music.

There is yet another reason. Most of our songs are associated with one kind or other of religious rites. At present people are losing their faith in such rites. In fact those who observe or have belief in them are looked down upon in modern society as have, for example, been the cases of *Bairāgis*, *Bāuls* and *Nerā Fakirs*.<sup>5</sup>

Those who are interested in the propagation of folk music should keep in mind the reasons discussed above. To remove the obstacles it is very necessary to create a strong body of public opinion in favour of folk songs and folk music. If and when the people learn to love them truly the obstacles will disappear.

Translated from Bengali by Kiranmoy Raha

1 Sri Chaitanya. A propounder of Vaishnava Religion (1486-1533)

2 Vaishnavas. Worshippers of Lord Vishnu

3 Kabi Kankan Chandi. Chandi Mangal Kavya (Narrative poems) written by Kabi Kankan Mukundaram Chakravarty. Kabi Kankan is a title.

4 Padmapuran. Narrative poems eulogising Manasha, the snake goddess.

5 Bairāgis, Bāuls & Nerā Fakirs. Three different religious mendicant sects akin to one another in their faiths.



## FOLKSONGS · PROBLEMS OF COLLECTING AND EDITING

DR. PIYU SHIKANTI MAHAJAPTRA

Society is a complex of groups in reciprocal relationships within a geographical region having socio-cultural forces as a basis of life activities. The basic framework of society is folklore and the society grows having folklore as the guiding force in social institutions and cluster of individuals. An individual human being is not only a biological entity, he is also an organic partner of society and heir to the traditional culture within the context of groups and matrix of culture. The basic necessities of man are the same in all structures of societies but the fashion, the way of living, the standardization of life activities, natural and supernatural, differ from age to age and country to country.

The folk community is a distinct pattern of society, which preserves the older tradition, traditional social institution and rigid social organisation. The transmission of thought, tradition, songs, festivals, superstition, beliefs are oral. As these societies are far from urbanisation and sophistication, the products of the culture-complex are spontaneous. The tradition survives in life-activities.

Folk songs are transmitted through oral traditions which continue to live in the memory of the people through ages. These are created by individuals or groups, but generally without the identity of the authors, and are the products of a society or region. The particular feature of the songs is that, the songs lack the style, personality and idiosyncrasy of the authors, which are attributes of the literature of the sophisticated society. The folk songs are, therefore, the expression of the simple mind having primitive impulses and these are creation of a society associated with different life activities.

In the study of folk songs one should first enquire about the origin of folk songs and the different aspects of their diffusion over a geographical region through ages, their mutual influence, interrelationship among the multi-ethnic groups, culture-complex of different social institutions and social organisations.

Folk songs are the literary products of the people of anonymous identity. These literary products may be personal product or community product, but their authorship is generally unknown. The spirit and character of folk songs are retained in these products, even though personal authorship is known. The folk songs survive through ages intact or with some regional variation. The tradition of folk songs flows through oral transmission, spontaneously from person to person, community to community, may be with regional colour and character.

The subject matter and the sources of inspiration of the folksongs may vary. It may be free personal expression of human feeling or expression of the group-attitude towards life. Folksongs may be sung individually or may be sung in a group to commemorate a community festival. The folksongs are associated with the life activities of individual or community. These are the oral testimonies of the traditional literary thoughts depicting the socio-literary background of the societies still retaining the 'primitive mind' living in the unsophisticated way of life.

In modern times the folksongs are collected and found in written form. Thus the songs are dissociated from the music, melody and tune of the songs which are essential companions of the words spoken or written. Apart from this fact, as the materials of socio-historical studies, the folksongs constitute an essential and valuable document.

The people of our country are of various ethnic origins. Different ethnic groups settled from ancient times and the groups mixed and also segregated even in a complex racial blending. Although the geographical characteristics, behavioural patterns, folk pantheon, magic-religious rites, ritualistic customs and even social institutions are different in different regions, the basic spirit, nature and character of folklore reflect a cultural unity. It has been possible because of superimposition of thoughts, interrelationship and assimilation of different cultural patterns. The regional cults, customs, beliefs, social features sometimes preserve their regional character, but these manifest the spirit and character of the folklore.

Another factor is the ethnic element in the population in a region. The social customs, religious beliefs, ritualistic pattern, ceremonial rites, cults and social institutions vary according to the heritage peculiar to the ethnic groups. The process of change in social customs and mutual relationship among the communities have the impact on folksongs in different ways. Another factor is the origin and development of religious sects and cults with beliefs, customs, rituals and rites peculiar to them. Songs are composed as incantations, hymns or musical composition depicting the principles of corresponding religious sect or cult. Another factor is the social organisation or social institution where the songs are sung in social ceremonies, festivals or religious functions. Some songs are associated with life activities which are sung in a group.

Folksongs are the products of the societies in every sphere of life activities. The folksongs are not only meant for the recreation or pleasure, but they also offer mental companionship to professional life of the people. This particular aspect of the folksongs should be borne in mind while collecting folksongs. If the evaluation of the folksongs is made independently of the relevant context of the life activities, the nature, spirit and soul of the songs will be lost.

The regional character prevails in the community in a locality though subtle changes may be observed in the features and manifestation of the culture patterns. A particular type of songs has emerged in a particular region. A particular type

of songs can be traced in a particular region. The currents and cross-currents of culture have been interrelated and interwoven in different regions of the country as a result of the blending of different ethnic groups and cross-cultures under the impact of various socio-historical forces, new culture-complex traditional patterns, new ritualistic behaviour, conventional customs

There are songs associated with various socio religious rituals and rites and ceremonies. The songs are mostly sung by the womenfolk. Most of these songs are about personal wants aspirations prayer for welfare of nearest and dearest ones happiness, peace, longevity of human life. These rituals and rites are observed in the home and members of the family take part in them.

There are a few social festivals, where persons of a village or villages or the community play their respective roles. The festivals are observed for days together, even for a month. Sometimes folksongs are composed on these occasions of socio-historical imports. Some conventional songs meant for these festivals are also sung.

The religious practices of the folk-people are found in various ritualistic patterns and religious rites. Besides the various religious festivals of the communities, the rites and rituals of the womenfolk demand considerable attention. The various rites and rituals revolve round the life-cycle of the persons in the family. These rites and rituals are performed at different stages of human life and on different occasions. Particularly in *vrata* rituals the womenfolk are more active. Though supernatural beliefs, superstitions and religious feelings lie in the background of *vrata* rituals, these are observed for the worldly aspirations and family welfare. There are songs relating to each *vrata* ritual and other rites and rituals performed round the life-cycle. These folksongs depict the nature of the *vrata* ritual and the 'mind' of the person.

In other ritualistic songs there are specific purpose and intention of the person observing them, such as, the songs sung for the invocation of rain associated with rites and rituals and songs for the fertility of barren women. The songs are closely associated with each ritual and the song of each category should be collected and preserved with the history of each ritual. Otherwise, the songs will lose their character and value. This will be like the plants uprooted from the soil, losing their life.

All the devotional songs are not religious folksongs and all the ritualistic folksongs are not also religious folksongs. The collector should be careful about this fact. All the functional folksongs may not be ritualistic. In a socio religious ceremony or festival, songs may be sung depicting socio-historical incidents. There are songs associated with different stages of life of the individual. The functional folksongs are sung on different occasions. Certain folksongs are sung for the welfare of the members of the family. Womenfolk take the lead in this respect. Occupational songs are associated with the working life. Different songs are sung about different occupations. Folksongs are also composed on socio historical

events natural calamity social injustice personal behaviour and other incidents Some songs are also composed on social and national integration

A broad division in two parts may be noticed in the folksongs songs sung by the male and songs sung by the female Occupational and recreational songs etc are usually sung by the male and ritualistic songs for family welfare marriage songs etc are sung by the female But this division is not a rigid one Again the folksongs may be divided in another way indoor songs and outdoor songs There are also '*chhadās* (nursery rhymes) recited by children and mothers Some folk songs are sung in groups particularly the ritualistic functional and occupational songs and some songs are sung by individuals particularly love songs and devotional songs The divisions mentioned here are not the categories of songs and folksongs should not be classified indiscriminately according to these categories The mentioned divisions are the different aspects of folksongs by which the folk songs may be studied The collector of folksongs must have an idea of the outline of various categories of folksongs which are often overlapping to be specific in his work and to understand the nature spirit and character of the folksongs and their interrelationship In this respect the collector should know the relevant socio religious background of the songs and the rituals rites beliefs superstitions functions ceremonies festivals life-cycle of people festival cycle in the calendar for right and proper identification of the folksongs

The factors in classifying the folksongs may differ according to the nature and spirit of the songs The factors may be regional ceremonial functional occupational ritualistic recreational community individual or something else but these factors should not be overlapped while collecting the songs One should not isolate a song from the root of its socio religious background but should identify it in association with its background and interrelationship Classification or categorization of folksongs is not separation from other classes or categories but it is the identification of folksong in the right context

According to form the folksongs may be divided into several categories The subject, topic content spirit may differ but the songs may be grouped under these categories

*Chhadās* are usually known as nursery rhymes but these are also recited in indoor games by children The form is distinct from other forms of folksongs Lyrical form is the form of most of the folksongs In the narrative songs there are narration of socio political events or religious legends These are usually recited *Bhromasi* can be treated as a form because it expresses the feelings and emotions of twelve months round the year The feelings during each month and season are expressed in this form of songs Ballad is a folksong that represents a story leading to a climax Different kinds of feelings are present in the ballads Incantations are recited in different rites and rituals and these are particularly used in folk medicine and curative methods The incantations may have meaning or may be collection of meaningless word usually believed to have a supernatural power

Folk dramas are short dramas having two or more characters depicting mythical legendary or epic tales. Sometimes social pictures and love affairs are the themes of folk dramas.

The structural forms of the folksongs do not affect the inner content of the nature of the songs. The songs are closely associated with and are an integral part of folk life—physical, social or metaphysical. The life-cycle of a human being from birth to death may be the order of categorization of the folksongs associated with them. The folksongs of the socio-religious ceremonies and festivals may be collected and arranged chronologically according to calendar year. Folksongs of a particular category prevailing in different regions may be arranged under that category. Whatever may be the order of collection and arrangement, it must be uniform, consistent, systematic and logical.

The collection of folksongs is a difficult job and so also is its classification under different categories, maintaining their nature and character. The songs are accepted as community product, therefore the songs are not individual units, an isolated product of the feeling/emotions of a particular person. The folksongs are closely associated with the community, and also with nature. Traits of folk beliefs, superstition, rituals, social condition and linguistic patterns are found in the folksongs. If these songs are treated as isolated products of individual persons, they will lose their character and spirit. The folksongs are associated closely with the life activities of the people and these should be preserved and studied with their social interpretation.

The songs are composed by the people of the soil, therefore regional usage of words are frequently found in the songs. It indicates the linguistic value of the songs. In collecting the folksongs the regional words should be kept in the original form. Words should not be distorted after a collector's own way if he is unable to understand the meaning of the words. The songs may be the source of materials of research in the fields of social science, anthropology and human relation. The usage of words, expression, idioms, social and ritualistic references depict the actual picture of the people. Therefore the collector should not change the words or expression in his own way for the sake of easy acceptance by the sophisticated society.

The songs are not the history of a country or the statement of evolution of social condition or religious ceremonies, but the songs preserve the tradition of the people of a region, the materials of history of social conditions and these are available in an indirect way. There might be fragments of historical materials, stray events of social condition because the expressions are oral and may be changed from time to time. In spite of these limitations, the folksongs are of immense value as the source materials if properly collected, efficiently preserved and edited with the socio-religious background.

The folksongs cannot be detached from the folk tune, melody and folk music. The folk tune, music and also mood of the folksingers are each an integral part of

the folksongs. A particular music is associated with a particular type of song. The wordings combined with the music characterise the nature of the song. Though the songs have their literary value, the real value of the folksongs is considered by their association with the music. The songs should not be collected as pieces of literature only and the collectors should not ignore the music. The folksongs should be collected with their notation of folk tune and music preferably by tape record. There are songs which are sung on a particular occasion in a particular season or on a particular day or in a particular ceremony. Those songs should be collected on the day of the occasion. Otherwise the songs may lack the spirit and may involve the risk of being collected in a distorted form. The wordings are the body and music is the soul of the folksongs.

The ritualistic songs should also be collected with the full history of the rituals, ceremonies, festivals and also with the detailed descriptions so that the background of the composition of the songs may be clear. Folksongs should not be collected indiscriminately. The collector should understand the literary value and the socio-historical value of the songs which is, sometimes, more important. The wordings and composition should not be distorted. While collecting the songs the collector should note the explanation and interpretation given by the singer. The collector should also note the personal identification such as name, address, age and other particulars of the persons from whom the songs are collected. He should mention the musical instruments used in different types of folksongs. If the songs are associated with dance, the photographs and details of folk dance should be collected.

A true folksinger may not be a good interpreter of the songs and their socio-religious background. The collector should be aware of this problem. He should collect the on the spot descriptions, methods of worship, description of ceremonies, festivals, rituals, religious and other rites, history of the worship of deities, position of the persons and castes performing the worship in the social hierarchy, socio-religious context of the songs and also the linguistic peculiarities. The collector should have arrangements to record the music of the folksongs while collecting them.

A collector should be well conversant with the anthropological, social and economic background of the locality, from where the folksongs are collected. His soundness of knowledge in this respect will lead to the accuracy of the facts he may be collecting. In our country there is not only a single culture, single group of people, single method of worship, single form of folksongs and single form of musical tune. One should be conversant with the interrelationship among the communities, methods of worship, performance of rites and rituals, tunes of folk music and also the culture-complex.

The danger of the researchers on the folksongs is the fake folksongs and pseudo folksongs. The alarming growth of this danger stands in the way of proper study of the folksongs in the right way. It is very difficult to understand which

songs are genuine and which are fake. In recent times, people, particularly sophisticated people are becoming interested in folksongs and these are getting popularity. There lies the danger of folksongs not being genuine. The genuine materials of folksongs are being transformed by sophisticated hands to make them more popular. Some songs are composed by sophisticated persons and are being known as folksongs. Sometimes the collectors use a free hand in the form and content of the folksongs, particularly in the usage of words. Sometimes the original form is changed to make it more dramatic and appealing particularly in case of folk dramas and folk ballads.

Alarming growth of these dangers confront the study of folksongs, because in recent times it is becoming a fashion to collect folksongs and publish them. The work is easy because the authorship is almost impersonal, usually the same man is responsible for the collection and editing of folksongs. If he is not serious and sincere in his work, the result becomes a kind of literary luxury, if not literary deceit. When the collector and the editor are different persons, the editor may lack the knowledge of origin and authenticity of the folksongs, or may be unaware of the socio-religious background of the songs. Both the collector and editor of the songs should be serious and sincere. The folksongs may be collected and studied on a particular aspect but the study should be comprehensive and not fragmentary. The collector and editor of folksongs should be conscious about this fact. Folksongs should be collected and edited in a systematic way and the attitude should be scientific. The songs and their relation with the socio-religious background should be studied in the right perspective.

In recent times folksongs are particularly studied for their literary merit. The folksongs may be rich in their literary value. But they are not only composed for the literary expression of the composers, they are also closely associated with the life-activities of the people and sung on various occasions. Therefore, the literary study of the folksongs is only an aspect of the study, but not the right placement and proper discovery of the contributions recorded in folksongs.

The literary study of the folksongs includes appreciation, interpretation and evaluation. The socio-historical study includes the critical study of the songs as the source materials of social and historical survey. The socio-religious study is to examine closely the religious rites and rituals of the communities, superimposition of thoughts, methods of worship of the folk deities, interrelationship of the religious ideas, magico-religious rites, religious beliefs and factors of social integration. Folksongs are the source materials of socio-cultural history, evidence of the changing social patterns and the register of the culture complex. If collected properly, folksongs offer the original materials of linguistic studies.

The immense value of folksongs as record of culture should be borne in mind while collecting the songs. The collector should have proper training and education in different methods of field study. He should have the proper angle of vision and scientific outlook in order to proceed in a systematic way. The collector's

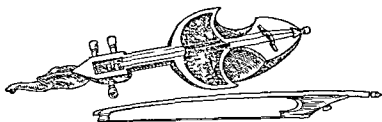
vision must be objective. Before collecting the folksongs the collector should study the socio religious history of the region. He should be well acquainted with the social condition, ethnic structure, socio religious ceremonies and festivals in a calendar year, occupation of the people, magico religious rituals, recreational life of the people and other aspects of life cycle of the community associated with the folksongs. He should have knowledge of the linguistic pattern of the region, should be conversant with the tune and notation of the music of the folksongs, should know the anthropological set up of the communities in the region and also the socio-cultural profile of the country. If the collector is not serious and sincere in these respects, the collected materials would not be able to yield the maximum value. Thus, the collector will be misled and others, who will depend on the collected materials, will be accordingly misguided. The collector should be conscious and careful about these facts.

If the collector is not fully aware of his problems, the materials collected by him would not be authentic records. While collecting the songs one may commit mistake for his unfamiliarity with the dialect and regional words. The wrong words might find place in his collection when listening to the songs. In rewriting the songs one may commit another series of mistakes. If the right person or the informant or true folksinger is not the source of collection, the materials available will not be genuine.

The editor presents a collection of folksongs to the readers. His is a more responsible job. He is to present the materials in the right context. The folksongs should be fully annotated in the book with word notes and a glossary is necessary. The variations of readings of the songs in different regions and a linguistic study should also have their proper place in the book. The information regarding the source of the materials, such as, names and addresses of the persons from whom the songs have been collected, their social status and profession, the geographical position of the regions from where the songs have been collected, the description of the ethnic groups among whom the songs are in vogue, the description of the societies and communities, where the songs are sung, the social history and the socio religious background of the societies and the regions, the religious ceremonies and rituals, the social festivals, magico-religious rites, the descriptions of the various occasions when the songs are sung, calendar of the chronological descriptions of the ceremonies, festivals, rites and rituals when the songs are sung, descriptions of the life activities when and where the songs are sung, description of musical instruments associated with the folksongs, the classification and categorization of the folksongs, whether ritualistic, metaphysical, occupational, functional, personal, recreational, religious, social, and also information regarding the tune, melody and musical composition of the folksongs are the essential parts of the editorial introduction. Full musical notations of all the categories of folksongs should be included in the book. The additional materials, if available, are also welcome in the book.



Emotional subjective appreciation defective compilation partial criticism, insufficient materials, fractional judgment wrong inference, hasty conclusion would impair the value of the collection. The editor should be careful, conscious and serious about his responsibility in editing the collection of folksongs. Haphazard collection and bad compilation of folksongs not only spoil the work but also spoil the field of other prospective workers. The wrong way of work misguides the prospective collectors and misleads the research workers. Therefore, all the aspects of the work of collection and editing of the folksongs should be carefully thought of, planned and reviewed at the beginning of the work and a detailed programme of procedure should be drawn up, keeping in mind all the problems relating to it.



**SĀRINDĀ** Three string high pitch instrument, with three notes, the centre-string providing the tonic, the two others the four notes above and below on the scale. Body from one piece wood, the hollowed out belly has lower part covered by skin, upper part uncovered. Bow from bamboo wood and horsehair. Once extensively used in East and North Bengal regions but gradually going out of use for reasons not yet fully known.

## A GLORIOUS HERITAGE

HEMANGO BISWAS

A purely academic and conservative approach to folksongs often overlooks and even ignores one of its most human aspects—the 'protest songs' which express in varied forms the struggle of our oppressed people through the ages against an unjust social order. These 'protest songs' can be classified into two categories—socio-economic and political—the former being against the feudal order with its caste system and economic exploitation, women's bondage and numerous other taboos, the latter being mainly products of our national movement and peasant rebellions against the British rule.

Our folksingers and researchers very often do not see the social content of the songs of the former category behind their religious and spiritual trappings and in assessing the songs of the latter category some of them appear to have developed an antipathy and even refuse to accept them as folksongs considering them as songs composed by 'politically motivated individuals' going off the timeworn track of tradition.

Without going into a theoretical controversy as to what a folksong is and what is not, I would straightaway quote only a few songs with their background to illustrate how hollow is the contention of these scholars.

In a broader sense a good number of our lovesongs—marriage songs or songs known as 'Baramashya', 'Birha' or Dehotaitva etc express in an indirect way a protest against the prevalent social system. In the pre-Brahminical order, the individual in the community life was not so trammelled by taboos—religious and social. The love-songs born out of the fertility cult were passionate, free and forthright—where nothing stood between the I and the You in their oral lyrics improvised on the spur of enthralled moments. The Hindu patriarchal system came to curb it. And love got generalised and symbolised in Radha and Krishna.

The village lovers always protested against any censor from above. As an Assamese *Bihu* song says—

God created the earth first  
And then created life  
If this God could fall in love  
Why should we not?

The heartless marriage system, the agonies of an unhappy marriage, the bondage of women, persecution by the mother-in-law or the husband—all these form the undertone of what is known as love songs.

In *Bhāttālī* which constitutes the main melodic pattern of East Bengal, very often the word 'nāior—going of the housewife from the father in law's house to her paternal home—strikes as a keynote of the whole gamut of emotion of our rural womanhood

Who are you, boatman  
Going down in a painted boat?  
Tell my beloved brother  
To take me home

In a *Bhawayā* song of North Bengal the girl in her loneliness in her husband's house pours out her heart to a bird

Oh 'kūrūa' bird on the Kadam tree  
Coming from my father's land  
Tell me about them

To our village girls the husband's house is a stranger's house. As an Assamese *Bihu* song has it

The birds brought up their offspring  
To beautify the branches of the tree  
O my mother brought me up with love  
Only to adorn a stranger's house

Tagore in one of his writings on folk literature quotes a verse

'It is dark and cloudy  
And it is raining heavily on the other bank,  
On this side of the bank  
The red chilly gleams  
My beloved brother, my heart aches'

and compares this verse for its intensity of feeling with Kalidas's *Meghadoot*

There are also direct references to the persecution by the husband or the mother in law, satirising the marriage system itself. Thus we find in a North Bengal *Chatka* song—

With what a great expectation  
I married  
For a full meal in a day  
But now I get not even a grain of rice,  
But thrashing every now and then

My back is bent from constant thrashing  
 The landlord's collector comes,  
 And jeeringly asks  
 How do you enjoy the blessings of marriage?

Even in the impersonal abstraction of love in the form of the Radhā and-Krishna story, behind a cover of religiosity one cannot fail to discover the protest against a society where free love is banned. Nanadi—the sister in law—and 'Shashuri—the mother in law—are the watchdogs on behalf of society. When 'Shyam or 'Krishna' starts playing on his flute on the riverside Radha the unhappy housewife starts weeping in silence and lest her tears should betray her she puts drenched firewood into the cooking oven to create a smokescreen. This theme is common in innumerable folksongs in our country.

In *Baramashu* songs prevalent in many parts of India the separation between husband and wife is dolefully related through the description of the twelve months. This separation is caused mainly by economic reasons. Struck by poverty the husband has to go out for his livelihood. The nature of the job sometimes keeps the husband and wife apart for a long time. This constitutes the common theme in the buffalo boy songs of North Bengal or the *Mahut* songs of Goalpara in Assam, both belonging to the same plaintive melodic pattern known as Bhawaiya.

So, my buffalo boy day and night  
 You move with the buffaloes,  
 And live with them in the Bathan\*  
 Keeping your young wife  
 Far away at home  
 The North is cloudy  
 The South is flooded  
 What kind of a rich man your boss is  
 Who does not grant you leave?

In the same way the *mahut* songs tell woeful tale of separation. For months the *mahut* has to live in the deep forest braving tigers and risking life while catching the wild elephants. Their love songs often speak of this separation.

There is no moon in the sky  
 How long would the stars glitter?  
 Of what use is the beauty of a woman  
 If the husband does not stay at home?

Some of our scholars often interpret the philosophy of the *Ba il* song as something obscure and esoteric, whose secrets can only be discovered by those who

belong to that cloistered sect of mystics. If that had been so, the *Bāul* songs would cease to be considered as folksongs. But the robust social content and appeal of the *Baul* philosophy as expressed in their songs is a direct challenge to the conventional religions that create divisions between man and man. For them man is above all religions. The philosophy of the *Bauls* is the philosophy of the outcast and the down-trodden. To them the temples and mosques are hindrances to the realisation of their *Moner Manush*, the Man within for whom they search. They have defied the orthodox preachers of the Hindu and the Muslim communities who uphold the feudal order.

He who knows the theory of Man  
Does not run after any other theology  
The earthen idols, the wooden icons  
Gods and goddesses & goblins—  
All these do not deter him  
Who knows the gem of a man

Thus sings Lalan Fakir, the great *Bāul* composer and teacher of the last century.

Lalan, as the story goes, was born into a Hindu family. While going on a pilgrimage, he was attacked with smallpox and abandoned by his companions. He was picked up by a Muslim weaver. The weaver's wife nursed him back to recovery. He lived on with them and was baptised into Islam. But after he was initiated into the *Baul* philosophy by his preceptor Sirajai, Lalan declared in his songs that he was neither a Muslim nor a Hindu but a Man.

Everybody asks me: What caste  
Do you belong to, Lalan?  
But Lalan replies  
I have not seen what caste looks like.

In another song he says

How will you go your way, mendicant?  
Men are divided into Hindus and Muslims.

He elaborates his philosophy in many other songs.

The real Mecca is the human body  
Why do you tire yourself out, running abroad?  
The human Mecca is the highest  
Embodiment of engineering skill.

Another wellknown *Bāul* of East Bengal, Madan Shek goes a step further and indignantly sings

Your path is blocked with  
 Temples and mosques,  
 When your call comes, my mentor,  
 I cannot move on—  
 The Gurus and Mursheds (*i e*, Hindu & Muslim preceptors)  
 Stand in my way  
 The 'Pūran', the 'Koran' and the counting of beads,  
 How tormenting are they  
 Madan wails in disgust

It is no wonder that these spiritual representatives of the oppressed people were once persecuted and looked down upon by the society high-ups

In a later period the *Bauls* got cloistered into a narrow sect and deviations came into their songs mainly harping on the weird esoteric methods of knowing the incomprehensible secrets of the human body and some even singing the utter futility of human life. But the basic philosophy of the *Bāuls*—its robust humanism—remains an ever lasting inspiration for us

The cleavage between the huts and the castles became sharper and sharper and our folk poets, ground down by a colonial economy, gave vent to the feelings of our toiling masses—often in a veiled figurative language—with a double meaning. An apparently innocent *Murshidi* song of Bengal says

My Mūrshid, my worries know no bounds  
 Some possess elephants and horses  
 But my possession is an one eyed sheep  
 The sheep doesn't know the East from the West

My Mūrshid, some live in palaces  
 But I have a broken hut,  
 The hut can somehow resist a gale,  
 But it can't withstand the storm

My Mūrshid, some people are well dressed  
 But I have a loin cloth,  
 Even if it covers a part of the body  
 It doesn't cover my shame

In another *Dehotattva* song of the mystic school we find

On others' land I have built my house,  
It does not belong to me  
The landlord I have never met  
Yet I pay my rent  
But don't get receipts from him

Though I paid my dues  
My land is auctioned off  
I don't meet my landlord  
To whom shall I complain?

The allegory is simple. It may be interpreted that the song is about the unknown supreme being but the entire impression is that of a poor peasant suffering under absentee landlordism.

In another song of the same school of mystic we find—

My Guru, I have none but you to complain to  
Born poor, I am a lifelong sufferer  
I have no lawyer to defend my case

My Guru, my paternal homestead is there  
But I am head and ears in debt  
I don't know how to pay off the Zaminder's rent,  
I am in constant worry,  
When the rent collector comes  
With the ejection notice in hand

The Rent collector may be interpreted by the mystics as the messenger of death and the ejection notice as death itself, but the truth remains that the allegory is taken from life itself, describing the conditions of our exploited peasantry under the Zemindary system. The protest of our peasantry against the injustice of landlordism is expressed directly or indirectly in our folksongs scattered all over India.

Now I come to the second category of protest songs that can be better termed as struggle songs—born out of the struggle against the British rule.

The first national uprising against the British colonial rule took place in 1857. The armed rebellion known as the Sepoy Mutiny lasted for more than two years. Though it was led by a few feudal lords, the soldiers, peasants and artisans constituted the main driving force of the rebellion. And it is quite natural that innumerable folksongs and folk verses were born in the blood of the martyrs. Luxmibai,

the queen of Jhānsī, a North Indian State, became the heroine of the rebellion. Herself on horseback she conducted the army against the British. Luxmībai became a legend with the people.

The Queen can make soldiers  
Out of earth and stone  
She can mould a wood  
Into a sword  
She has made every hillock  
A horse—on which  
She has chased upto Gwalior

A folk poet in his immortal ballad on the Rānī of Jhānsī describes the scorched-earth policy of the Rānī—

Fell the trees,  
The Queen of Jhānsī ordered,  
So that the Feringis  
Cannot hang our soldiers,  
So that the cowardly British  
May not shout,  
'Hang them on the tree'  
Fell the trees, so that  
They may not get any shade  
To rest in the hot sun

In only three months six thousand Indians were hanged—an edifying example of the civilizing mission of the British rulers. In the remote North Eastern province of Assam, Manirām Dewan, one of the founders of the Assam Tea Company and a versatile talent, was hanged in 1858 for his alleged complicity in the Sepoy Mutiny. He has been immortalised as the first Assamese rebel in a popular folkballad which is known to every Assamese today.

You smoked upon a gold hookah, O Manirām,  
You smoked upon a silver hookah,  
What treason did you commit to the Royalty  
That you got a rope round your neck!

Secretly did they arrest you, O Manirām,  
Secretly did they take you  
Holroyd Sahib on the Tokolai bank  
Had you secretly hanged



The agrarian policy of the British rulers that fleeced our peasantry and bled them white sparked off a chain of isolated peasant revolts all over India. The immense significance of these armed peasant uprisings have not been properly assessed or evaluated by the orthodox historians. Historians may mislead but our folk composers do not. Each rebellion has left behind a crop of folktales, verses, and songs—a great number of which have been lost as they were orally communicated and have not been recorded by the educated class.

The famous Santhal Revolt (1855-1856) was perhaps the most glorious of these revolts that shook the British Raj to its foundations. This rebellion may be treated as the precursor of the Great Sepoy Mutiny. Though the main location of this revolt was the Santhal Pargana of Bihar it spread to different parts of Bihar and West Bengal. More than 30 000 Santals under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanu with bows and arrows and other primitive weapons struck against the British forces and declared an independent Santhal Raj—

Sido why are you bathed in blood?  
 Kanu, why do you cry hul, hul?  
 For our people we have bathed in blood,  
 For the trader thieves  
 Have robbed us of our land

This was one of the rebellion songs that truly echoed the spirit of the time. W. G. Archer, the well known folklorist, collected and compiled the Santhal rebellion songs from the original Santhal language.

Closely following the Sepoy Mutiny, Bengal was shaken by a peasant uprising known as the Indigo Revolt (1859-60). Indigo was then one of the most profitable exports, indigo being used then as a dye for the flourishing British Textile Industry. The white indigo planters like the cotton planters of America used all kinds of coercive methods—wrongful confinement, physical torture, whipping etc. to force the peasants to cultivate indigo at the planters' terms. The womenfolk were not spared. The simmering discontent against the foreign exploiters flared up as one of the greatest peasant rebellions in our history. More than six million peasants were involved in the terrific sweep of this revolt. It gave rise to innumerable peasant heroes. The sweep of the revolt brought in its whirlpool the then English educated urban gentry. Even a section of the British Missionaries stood by the peasants' cause. Rev. James Long was at the head of them. Harish Chandra, editor of the 'Hindu Patriot' was persecuted for writing against the planters. The outstanding Bengali drama '*Nildarpan*' was written. The revolt brought in its trail a crop of folksongs of which the most famous was—

The Indigo monkey has brought ruin  
 To Golden Bengal—

Harish met with a premature death  
 And Long was put into jail  
 How shall the tenants live?

India's liberation movement has been marked by numerous peasant uprisings all over India, which as I mentioned above, threw up innumerable folksongs. In every part of India and in every language we may find such songs, though a great number of them have been lost.

Coming to our own times, in the first decade of this century, groups of urban middle class revolutionaries, discarding the path of prayer and petitioning, took up the cult of the Bomb against the British rulers. Khudirām Bose, a boy in his teens, was the first martyr who was hanged in the year 1905. He was immortalised in a Bengali folksong, composed by an unknown village bard—a song which is still most popular among us.

O mother, give me leave, let me go out  
 I'll put the knot around my neck with a smile  
 And the whole of India will look on  
 There were crowds at the High Court, mother, on Saturday after ten  
 The Judge tried me, mother, and ordered me to be hanged  
 Then let ten months and ten days pass,  
 I'll be born again, mother, in my aunt's house  
 If you don't recognise me, mother,  
 Look for the sign of the knot round my neck.

The national movement led by the Congress also has left its imprint on many of our folksongs. The hatred against the British rulers has also been expressed by those who came to work in British owned mines or plantations. The cultivation of tea is the most important amongst all the plantation industries of India. In 1835 the plantation of tea was started in Assam. The attitude of the Assamese population who were rooted in their extremely fertile soil was hostile to any work in these plantations which was worse than serfdom. The British planters engaged touts to recruit labour from outside. The backward poor landless tribals of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bengal became their victims. The touts drew a rosy picture of prosperity in the plantations to persuade the simple minded tribals to go to Assam. Once they came, after signing the agreement, they became virtual prisoners in the plantations. The working conditions in Assam's tea plantations infested with wild animals and diseases like malaria and kalazar was horrible and remind one of Negro sufferings in the cotton plantations in America. The coolies, as the laborers were called, were virtual slaves working under the whip of the 'Sardars' or the slave drivers. The white *sahibs* could kill with impunity. From the government reports we come to know that in 3 years from 1863 to 1866,

In another Punjabi folksong the village woman indignantly curses the train that carries away her beloved who is going to join the army

Oh you train  
 May your wheels break down  
 Or your sidings collapse  
 You are carrying away my youth

The Nepalese in North Bengal and Assam are known to be a martial race. Though separated from their original homeland Nepal in language and culture they have maintained their own distinctive identity. Many of them are the descendants of retired soldiers and it is no wonder that the war theme very often appears in their songs

Don't cry, my love  
 I am going to the German war  
 Don't cry—  
 If I survive I shall return  
 If not we shall meet in the other world

Gorakhpur in Northern India was the recruiting camp in the last world war, so a Nepali song says

The aeroplane zooms overhead  
 Moshodhai weeps in a corner of her house  
 You my love are in the Gorakhpur camp  
 Me sitting forlorn in Nepal

In the First World War the Bengal Regiment was posted in Basra in the Middle East. An East Bengal folksong in the Chittagong dialect says

Is the post office in Basra destroyed?  
 My husband went to war  
 I waited and waited  
 But there came no reply to my letter  
 The boy cries the mother cries  
 So cries the brother  
 Alas no news from Basra

Instances can be multiplied. But this article does not aim at an exhaustive treatment but at drawing the attention of our researchers to that aspect of our folksongs which is most inspiring but at the same time most neglected by them.

We have liting lullabys, enchanting folksongs, rhythmic worksongs, songs of joy and sorrow and of helplessness and philosophic resignation to fate but we are sometimes made to forget by our scholars that we have also inspiring songs of protest and struggles

The time has come to focus our attention on these Though some of these songs have been collected we do not know the tunes of most of them—this makes our task of popularising these songs all the more difficult But with the proper outlook and enthusiasm if our collectors turn their attention to this aspect of our folksongs, they, I am sure will be able to enrich our repertoire

Our masses are on the move and new songs are being born, revitalising the traditional tunes with new contents of life The people's composer shares the life of the people and gives expression to the emotion of the millions gripped by a new ideology of economic and political emancipation Our task is to collect, treasure and propagate these songs The study of folksongs is not archacology delving into a bygone past, it is an evergreen tree always shooting forth new leaves and buds

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALI, FARUQI, *Lok git*, 1959 (?) Urdu
- BARDHAN, MONI, *Bangalūr lōknritya o giti baichitra* (1st Vol), 1961, Bengali
- BARUA, HEM, *Li gāḍi ei git*, 1961, Assamese  
*Folk songs of India*, 1963, English
- BHATTACHARYA, ASHUTOSH, *Banglūr Lōk-sangit*, Part 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1962-66 Bengali  
*Bangiya lok sangit ratnakar*, Part 1, 2, 3, 1966-67, Bengali
- BHATTACHARYA, UPENDRANATHI, *Banglur Baul O Baulgān*, 1957 (?) Bengali
- BRHMA, MOHINIMOHAN (ed), *Folk-songs of Boḍas*, 1960, English
- CHAKRABARTI, SURENDRACHANDRA, (Comp) *Bangalur lōka-sangit* V. 1, 2, with musical notations, 1962, Bengali
- CHATURVEDI, PRITHVINATH, (ed), *Hamāre lōk git* (edited by Prithvināth Chaturvedi and Hirāśāi 'Vishārad' 3rd ed), 1957, Hindi
- CHATTOPADHYAY, PASHUPATI (ed), *Bāul Sangit*, 1964, Bengali
- DAS, KUNJABHARI, *Palligitu Sanchayana*, Orisā
- DIB, CHITTARANJAN, *Banglūr palligitu*, 1966, Bengali
- DUTT, G S, *Patua Sangit*, 1939, Bengali
- ELWIN, VERRIER, *Folk songs of Chhattisgarh*, 1946, English
- ELWIN, VERRIER & HIVALE, SHAMRO, *Folk songs of Marhal hills*, English
- GAGAI, LILA, (ed), *Bihugit āru banghosa*, 1961, Assamese
- GAGAI, LILAKANTA (ed), *Asamiyā lōk git*, 1957, Assamese
- GOSWAMI, PRAFULLADUTTA, *Bihu songs of Assam*, 1957, English
- GUPTA, HARAGOVIND, *Gāḍn Ke git*, 1963, Hindi
- HANJABAM GOURCHANDRA SHARMA, (Comp), *Mastel khullak ushal* (Folk songs of Manipur), Manipuri
- HASSAN HAFIZUR RAHMAN & ALAMGIR ZALIL, ed (E Pakistan), *Uttar Bonglūr Mevelit git*, 1962, Bengali
- JAIN, RAMA, (ed), *Parinaya gitikā* (ed by Rama Jain and Kunta Jain Includes musical notations), 1962, Hindi
- KALITA, PHANINDRANATH *Āstār nchukani*, 1960, Assamese
- LALAN SHAH 18TH CENTURY, *Lalan-gitika*, (ed by Motilal Das and Piyushkanti Mahapatra), 1958, Bengali
- MAHAPATRA, CHAKRADHAR (Comp 1907- ) *Utkala gaumall gita*, 1959, Orisā
- MAHAPATRA, CHAKRADHAR, *Orisā gramvagiti*, 1958, Orisā
- MAULAVI M MANSURUDDIN (ed), *Harāmanti* (Bengali Folk Songs), 1943, Bengali
- NEOG, DIBBESWAR, *Ākul Pathuk* (Collection of Bihu Songs, Comp 1922) *Ban Benu*, Bihu Songs, 1961, Assamese

- PANDEY, INDUPRAKASH (Comp and ed), *Avadhī lōk gīt dār prampara*, 1957 Hindi
- SARMA, NALIVILCHAN, *Lok gīthā parichaya*, 1959, Hindi
- SEN, DINESHCANDRA, *Eastern Bengal Ballads*, Vol I, Part I (or Mymensing Ballads) 1923 English  
 Vol II, Part I, 1926, English  
 Vol III, Part I, 1928, English  
 Vol IV, Part I, 1932, English
- Purva Banga Gītā*, Vol I, Part II (or Mymensing Gītā) 1952 Bengali  
 Vol II, Part II, 1926, Bengali  
 Vol III, Part II, 1930, Bengali  
 Vol IV, Part II, 1932, Bengali
- SEN GUPTA SANKAR, *Folklorists of Bengal* 1965, English  
*A survey of Folklore Study in Bengal*, 1967, English  
*A Bibliography of Indian Folklore and related subjects*, 1967, English
- SEN SASTRI KSHITIMOHAN, *Banglūr Bāul*, 1955 Bengali
- TAMULI, YOGESHCANDRA, *Asamiyā lōkagīti sangraha* (ed by Atulchandra Hajarika), Assamese
- TEJNARAYANLAL, *Maithilī lōk gītān ka adhyana*, Hindi
- VARMA, VRINDAVANLAL, *Bundelkhand ke lōk gīt*, 1957, Hindi
- VISHVANATHIPRASAD, (ed) *Māghī samskār-gīt*, 1962, Hindi
- ZBAYTEL, DUSAN, *Bengali Folk Ballads from Mymensingh*, 1963, English

*With best compliments of*

# GOODWILL MOTOR STORES

6 MANGOE LANE • CALCUTTA 1

Gram ROLLERBALL

Phone { 23 12  
23 73

*Specialists in Automobile & Industrial Bearings and Oil Seals*

**Laxmi dwells in**

**Trade & Commerce**



In ancient times maritime trade brought immense wealth to India

Today The Scindia Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. is carrying on this ancient trade and tradition. It serves the Indian overseas trade as well as the coastal trade with its cargo and passenger services.

SCINDIA SHIPS SERVE INDIA'S NEEDS



THE SCINDIA STEAM NAVIGATION CO. LTD. SCINDIA HOUSE, 81, AND STRAITS, BOMBAY 1

NO. A 7-3127

TT

*It's Quality that Counts . . .*

Papers and Boards of various types

*for*

**PACKING**

**WRAPPING**

**WRITING & PRINTING**

**And also**

High quality papers and boards to meet the special needs are manufactured under strict supervision of expert technicians adopting latest techniques and equipments

*At*

**Orient Paper Mills' Limited**

**BRAJRAJNAGAR ORISSA**

**AND**

**AMLAI M P**

*Manufacturers of*

**Writing & Printing Papers Packing & Wrapping Papers including  
Waterproof [Crepe and Polythene Coated Papers Poster Papers  
Duplex Triplex and Grey Boards**

**ORIENT'S PRODUCTS ARE SUPERIOR IN  
STRENGTH AND DEPENDABLE IN QUALITY**

---



*IF MUSIC BE... ..*

**PLAY ON!**

**INDIA FOILS LIMITED**

(Incorporated in Great Britain),

11 Sooterkin Street, Calcutta 13.

Phone : 23-9431

---

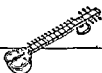
**INCABLE** 

THE INDIAN CABLE COMPANY LIMITED

*quality cablemakers—first and foremost*

*"I am quite  
'at home' with my  
bankers . . . . . it is  
their personalised  
service"*

says  
**RAVISHANKAR**



*Famous Sitar player Ravishankar  
has been greatly responsible for  
revealing the beaut es of Indian  
string instrument music to the  
western world*

Personalised service is one of the reasons why he has his SAVINGS ACCOUNT with American Express. At American Express you are equally important. Your banking requirements

are attended to promptly. Courteous and personalised service awaits you. You will find it a pleasure to bank with American Express.

**OPEN A  
SAVINGS ACCOUNT  
AT AMERICAN EXPRESS**

- No tokens speedy withdrawals
- 4% annual interest
- No bank charges
- Free issue of cheque books
- Internationally trained personnel

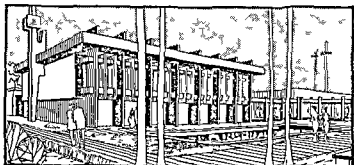
**AMERICAN EXPRESS**

**INTERNATIONAL BANKERS**

**AMERICAN EXPRESS CO INC.**  
364 Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Road Bombay  
21 Old Court House Street Calcutta  
Hamilton House Connaught Place  
New Delhi

AE/G/59

## Jamshedpur's new cultural centre



*An artist's impression of the Rabindra Bhavan. The cost of this beautiful modern building, the Steel City's tribute to the memory of the Poet, has been contributed by 11 districts and 111 locals.*

**THE TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY LIMITED**

*Our latest publication*

## Bharata's Natyasastra

*Edited by*

**Dr MANOMOHAN GHOSH**

*Vol. I* Sanskrit text (Chapters 1-xxvii) critically edited with introduction and detailed index (484 pages royal octavo), Price Rs 40 00

The same in English translation—second revised edition with elaborate introduction and index (636 pages royal octavo), Price Rs 60 00

**manisha**



**GRANTHALAYA**

**PRIVATE LIMITED**

4/3B BANKIM CHATTERJEE STREET  
CALCUTTA 12

## KEGS

*Electric Welded*

## DRUMS

*Electric Welded*

.

## CLOSE-TOP CANS

TIN PLATES OF\*

ALL TYPES

PLAIN & DECORATED

★

**ORIENTAL DISTRIBUTORS (India)**

3, KUNDU LANE, CALCUTTA-37

Grams : "SPRAYLIT"

*With Best Compliments of*

## HINDUSTAN SALES AGENCY

P 29 MISSION ROW EXTN  
CALCUTTA-13

*Specialists for •*

### AUTOMOBILE SPARE PARTS

PHONE 23-4910, 23 9447

---

## THE CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA LIMITED

*India's Largest Bank in the Private Sector*  
*Head office* Mahatma Gandhi Road,  
Bombay - 1

*Figures that tell—*

Authorised Capital	Rs 10,00 00,000/-
Paid up Capital	Rs 4,77,44 580/-
Reserve Fund & other reserves	Rs 7,15,09 047/-
Deposits as at 31 12 1966	Rs 3,59,87,65,315/-

Branches and Pay Offices in all important Commercial Centres  
of India.

*London Office* Orient House, 42/45, New Broad Street,  
London E C 2

*New York Agents* Morgan Guaranty Trust Co of New York,  
The Chase Manhattan Bank.

SIR HOMI MODY, K B E  
*Chairman*

V C PATEL  
*General Manager*

B C SARBADHIKARI  
*Chief Agent Calcutta*

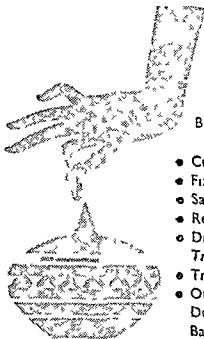
---

*Save  
with and  
deal through*

ASP/UCO 12/87



HEAD OFFICE CALCUTTA



**BUSINESS AND  
SERVICE**

- Current Accounts
- Fixed Deposits
- Savings Accounts
- Recurring Deposits
- Drafts and Telegraphic Transfers
- Traveller's Cheques
- Other types of Domestic and Foreign Banking Business

*With Best Compliments of*

## **Muttra Electric Supply Co. Ltd.**

*Registered Office*

POST BOX NO 6728 BARABAZAR

15, SHIB THAKUR LANE

PHONE . 33-1293--1295

---

*With Best Compliments of*

## **International Trading Company**

*IMPORTERS & EXPORTERS*

233, LOWER CIRCULAR ROAD

CALCUTTA-20

PHONE . 44-4890

---



### **From experience comes faith...**

**SQUIBB®**



*A century of experience builds faith*

Watch a young boy comparing and selecting books after books.

They look much alike to him now. When he is older through experience he will have judgment. He will know books he can live by. The rest can gather dust on the shelf.

Life is like that. Out of each new experience a man gathers wisdom. He learns to hold fast to things of proven worth.

By comparison man also learns the value of things unseen things in which he finally puts his faith.

**The priceless ingredient of every product is the honesty and integrity of its maker**

**SARABNA CHEMICALS** SA 04

Manufactured by  
SARABNA CHEMICALS, LTD., 17, MARKET STREET, CALCUTTA 1, INDIA

© Represents the Registered trademark of A. Squibb & Sons, Inc. of which Karamchand Prasad Prasad is one of the Licensed Users.



With Best Compliments of :

**LAKHMI GHEE**

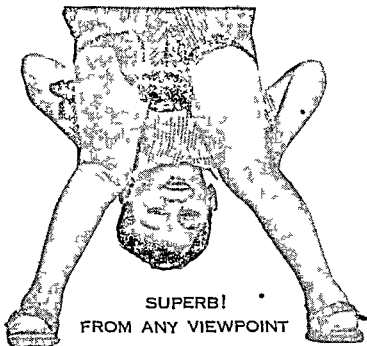
(AGMARKED)

**LAKHMIDAS PREMJI**

*The biggest Agmark Ghee Packers in India*

8 Bowbazar Street : Calcutta - 12

---



SUPERB!  
FROM ANY VIEWPOINT

Ambassador



*Mark II*

ALP 10/10/62



HINDUSTAN MOTORS LIMITED, CALCUTTA

Sales & Service Throughout The Country

*With Best Compliments of*

;

# LAKHMI GHEE

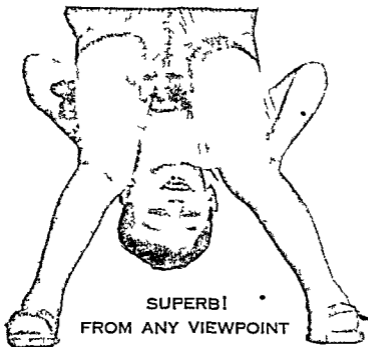
(AGMARKED)

**LAKHMIDAS PREMJI**

*The biggest Agmark Ghee Packers in India*

**8 Bowbazar Street    Calcutta - 12**

---



SUPERB!  
FROM ANY VIEWPOINT

---

Ambassador



*Mark II*

SPRINTAL 2



HINDUSTAN MOTORS LIMITED CALCUTTA

Sales & Service Throughout The Country

---

*With Compliments of*

**HANUMANPRASAD LAKSHMINARAYAN**  
**( Transport )**

207 MAHARSHI DEBENDRA ROAD  
CALCUTTA-7

**IN SERVICE OF THE NATION  
FOR DEFENCE & DEVELOPMENT**



Conserve resources. Travel only when you must. Save man hours by following simple hints



Detention hampers Defence efforts. Pull chain only when you must



Advance booking of tickets saves last minute worry



Minimum luggage means more accommodation.



A queue helps—whether in buying tickets or showing tickets at the gate



Keep Station premises clean. Nation's health is important.

In step with the accelerated pace of a marching nation.



# OUR TOP TEN CUSTOMERS

---

The U.K. Canada

The U.S.A.

W. Germany

**W. INDIES**

Belgium

Australia

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**FREETOWN**

HOLLAND & OTHERS

purchased footwear  
worth Rs.31 million  
in 1966

from *Bata* India

With Best Compliments of **Himangshu**

---

*See for yourselves  
whether the printers  
of this Anthology*

*SHANA PRESS PRIVATE LIMITED - CALCUTTA 12  
phone 34 3966  
have done a fine job of it  
or not*

---