

# FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE

A N A N T H O L O G Y

Vol. I



FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FOLK MUSIC AND FOLKLORE ANTHOLOGY

# FOLKMUSIC AND FOLKLORE AN ANTHOLOGY

VOL. I

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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.

For invaluable assistance in compilation of this Anthology we are greatly indebted to Santosh Bose, Department of Museology, the University of Calcutta.

We are also thankful to Kiranmoy Raha, Kshitis Roy, Arany Banerjee, Pratibha Agrawal, Dhiren Roy, Anil Roy, Santosh Mukherjee, Monoranjan Bose, Arun Roy, Soumya Chakravorty, Krishna Dutta, Madhuri Sinha, Kaloo Singh, Paritosh Dutta, Gita Sen, Guruprasad Chakravorty, Mrinal Barua, M. G. Purakayastha, S. C. Majumder, Samar Dasgupta, Anil Kanjilal, Prasun Majumder, Monoranjan Mazumder and Debdas Nath for their ardent and selfless co-operation.

The invaluable co-operation of the Asiatic Society; the National Library; the Visva-Bharati; the Cultural Research Institute, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, is gratefully acknowledged.

## 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 'ṭ' and 'ḍ', 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 Ṛ G G̣ M Ṃ P D Ḍ N Ṇ

'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 : Ṡ Ṛ Ḡ Ḥ Ḥ̣ etc.  
Lower Octave : Ṣ Ṛ̣ Ḡ̣ Ḥ̣ Ḥ̣̣ 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. 'Miḍh' or gliding notes are indicated by a slur on the top or bottom of the relative notes.

ṆṢ or ḠR etc.

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

\*P \*R etc.

VIII. Mātrās : 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 — |  
| Hā — — | ti (hi) — |

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## 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 RĀDH	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. Prafulladutta Goswami</i>	
FOLK MUSIC OF KHASI AND JAYANTIA HILLS	118
<i>Filkin Laloo</i>	
ON FOLKTALES, FOLKLORES AND MODERN AGE	127
<i>Dr. Heinz 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. Piyush K. Mahapatra</i>	
A GLORIOUS HERITAGE	165
<i>Hemango Biswas</i>	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	177

## 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 ceremonials. 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 *tē-mahalā*<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 *mahals* or sectors—the *andarmahal* (reserved for the women), the *bārmahal* (reserved for the men), and the *kāchhārimahal* (for the visitors).

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

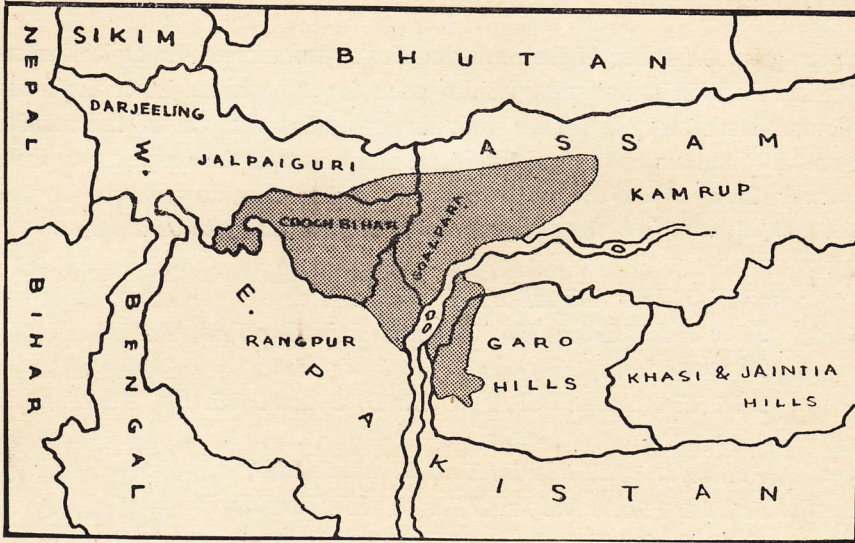
the other, and a copper pitcher on her head, she would go out walking through the forest towards the river, giving the food away to the birds and the beasts all along the way. When she reached the river bank, she sat down to brood ; tears ran down her cheeks and mingled with the river water.

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 *ghāt* 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 *jhāri* 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 Jayamālā 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. Jayamālā 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 Jayamālā 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's. The copper pitcher on her head became a sign on her forehead, and the gold *jhāri* 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 Goalpārā (Assam) begin at the foot of Bhutan. Like other regions of the Terāi, 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 *māhūts*) 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 Mōr Hāi Hastir Kanyā Re*  
*Khāniko Doyā Nāi Māhūtok Lāgiyā Re?*

1

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

The *māhūt*, the *phāndi* and their companions do not belong to any special community or caste. They come from the Boḍos, the Gāros, the Rāvās 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 Ki O, Mōr 'Dāntāl' Hatir Māhūt Re,  
Jedīn Māhūt Shikār Jāi, Nārīr Mon Mōr Jhuriā Roy Re.  
Ākāshetē Nāi Re Chandra Ki Korē Tōr Tārā,  
Jebā Nārīr Swami Nāi Re, O Tār Dinē Āndhihārā.*

*Pushkarnitē Nāi Re Pāni Noukā Kamnē Cholē,  
Je Nārīr Pūrush Nāi Re, O Tār Rupē Ki Kām Korē.  
O Ki O, O Mōr 'Makhnā' Hatir Māhūt Re—  
Jedīn Māhūt Ujān Jāi, Nārīr Mon Mōr Kandiyā Roy Re.*

2

2. What do you do, O my māhūt of the tusker ('dāntāl')?/ 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 Hatī Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl.*  
*Bhutan Mohalēr Hatī Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl.*  
*Kon Bā Phāndir Dhorā Re Bhāi Hāi Allā Rasūl.*  
 — — — *Phāndir 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 Bhutan 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).

*Hastikanyā, Hastikanya Bāmuner Nārī—*  
*Mathāi Niyā Tāmkalsi O Sokhi Hastē Sonār Jhāri.*  
*Sokhi O, O Mōr Hāi Hastīr Kanyā Re—*  
*Khāniko 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		<sup>P</sup> D	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	khi		Has	tē	So	nār		Jhā	ri	So	-khi	

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

Moderato  $\text{♩} = 104$ 

Hastikanyā, Hastikanyā,

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

Mā- thāiNiyā Tām-kala- si O So-khi

\*  
Hastē Sonār Jhā-riSokhi O, O Mōr HāiHastīr Kanyā Re

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

- Pāttirā Koriyā Kanyā Bādeyā Dilen Pāo,*
- Māthār Upor Kāl-Jiti O Sokhi Korē Pancha Rāo.* 5
- Bālutiltil Pankhi Kāndē Bālutē Poḍiyā,*
- Gouripuriyā mähūt Kāndē O Sokhi Ghar Bāḍi Chhāḍiya.* 6
- Āi Chhāḍilong Bhāi Chhāḍilong, Chhāḍilong Sonār Pūri,*
- Biāo Koriā Chhāḍiyā Āilong O Sokhi Alpo Boyaser Nāri.* 7

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

*'Ākāshetē Nāi Re Chondro Ki Korē Tōr Tārā,  
Jebā Nārīr Swami Nai Re Tār Dinē Āndhiharā.  
Pukhuritē Nāi Re Pāni Noukā Kamnē Cholē,  
Je Nārīr Pūrush Nāi Re Tār Rupē Ki Kām Korē.'*

But then he comes back to his own sphere of activity :

*Phānd Lādilong Phāḍā Lādilong Āro Lādilong Doḍi,  
Māhūt Phāndi Jukti Kori O Sokhi Choillong Shikār Bāḍi.  
Agāḍi Pichhāḍi Hastīr Phelāilong Bandhiyā,  
Ār Haridhvani Diyā Sokhi O, Sokhi Bosilām Bhiḍiyā.*

8

8. We took the lasso, we took the cords, we took our ropes along,  
We, the *māhūt* and the *phāndi* planned together before we set out for the  
hunting ground.

We bound the elephant all over,

And then with praise to Hari, O Sokhi, we sat on the back.

(An Indian girl would call her closest friend and companion her 'Sokhi').

## 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 :

*Āji Āulāilan Mōr Bandhā Moyāl Re—  
Hatīr Pitit Thakiyā Re Māhūt, Thōr Kolā Bhāngo,  
Nārīr Manēr Kathā Tomrā Kibā Jāno Re.  
Rastā Chhaḍo Rasta Chhaḍo Re Joler Kalas Kankhē,  
Nārīr Mon Bhangiyā Re Māhūt Chhaḍiyā Jāiben Mokē.*

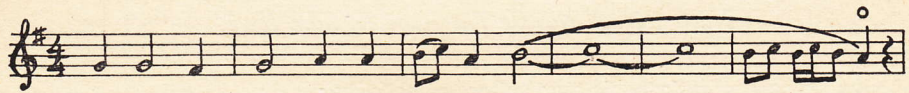
9

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

Hatīr Pitit,



Ha-tīr Pi - tit Thā-ki-yāReMā- hū- - - - - t



Hatī- r Mā- yā Jā- - - - no, Mā-hūt Re (hē)



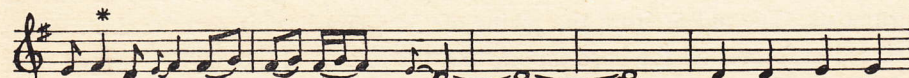
Hatī- r Māyā Jā- - - - no, (Ārē) Nā-rī-ro Mo- - -ne-



ro- - - Ko- -thā Tomrā Ki- bā Jā- -



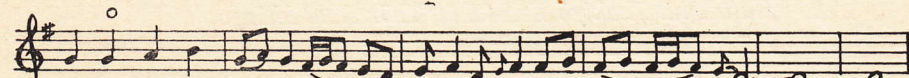
no- - - Re Ā- - ji Āu- - lā- - i- -lan Mō- - r



Bā- - - n-dhā Mo- - - - yāl Re. Ā- ji Āu-lāi



la- - n Mōr Bā- - -n-dhā Mo- - - -yāl Re, Ā- -ji



Ā-(hāu)lā-i- la- - -n Mōr Bā- - -n-dhā Mo- - - -yāl Re.

## ĀJI ĀULĀILAN

M	M	-M	G	M	M	P	P	DN	P	D	-	N	-	-	-		
Hā	-	ti	-	r	Pi	ti	t	Thā	ki	ya	Re	Mā	-	hū	-	-	-

— — — —	<u>DN</u> <u>DND</u> *P —	P DN PD M	P — <u>PN</u> <u>DN</u>
— — — —	— — t	Thō — -r Ko	la — Bhā —
P — — —	— — P D	<u>N</u> — — —	<u>DN</u> <u>DND</u> *P —
ngo — — —	— — Mā- hūt	Re — — —	— — (hō)
P <u>DN</u> PD M	P — PD PD	P — — —	— — P M
Thō — -r Ko	-La — Bhā —	— — — —	(Ā - r)
<u>PN</u> <u>N</u> — <u>N</u>	<u>DND</u> PM P <u>DN</u>	<u>DND</u> 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 — ki-	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
<u>RG</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>G</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>R</u> <sup>S</sup> <u>RG</u> GM	GM GMG <sup>RS</sup> S	S — — —	— — — —
Bā — -n- dhā	Mo — ya- l	Re — — —	— — — —
S S R R	G — GMG RS	<u>RG</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>G</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>R</u> <sup>S</sup> <u>RG</u> GM	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
<u>RG</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>G</u> <sup>2</sup> <u>R</u> <sup>S</sup> <u>RG</u> GM	GM GMG <sup>RS</sup> S	S — — —	— — — —
Ba — -n dhā	Mo — yā - l	Re — — —	— — — —

etc.

Āji Geilē Ki Āsiben Mōr Māhūt Bondhū Re,—  
 Hasti Norān Hasti Chorān 'Kekoā' Bāsher Tolē,  
 Ki Sāpē Dongshilek Māhūtok Koyā Jāo Bā Morē Re.  
 Rojāi Jhāre Gūninē Jhāre Dhekiār Āgāl Diyā,  
 Mūn Nārī Jhārim Māhūtok Kasher Āgāl Diyā Re.

10

Khāto Khuto Māhūt Re Tor Mukhē Chāp Dāḍi,  
 Satya Koriyā Kon Re Māhūt, Kon Bā Dashē Bāḍi.  
 Hasti Norai Hasti Chorai, Hastir Pāyē Bedi,  
 Satya Koriyā Koilam Kanya Gouripurē Bāḍi Re.

11

Hasti Norān Hasti Chorān Hastir Payē Bedi,  
 Satya Koriyā Kon Re Māhūt Ghorē Koyjan Nārī Re.

12

\* In the above staff notation mark 'O' above the note 'A' signifies cracked voice.

*Hastī Norai Hastī Chorai Hastīr Golāi Doḍi,  
Satya Koriyā Koilām 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 mähūt, 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 mähūt.
11. O my shortstatured mahut, with your thick beard,/ Will you tell me the  
truth, O mähūt, where do you have your home?/ (The *mähūt* 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 mähūt, 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 ♩ = 132

Āji Geilē,



## ĀJI GEILĒ KI ĀSIBEN

P	PD	DP	M	M	GM	GR	SR	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		PD To -	P lē,	—	—	
— —	— —	— —	P (Ki		P O	— —	N Re	DN —)	
PN Ki	N Sā -	DND pē	PM Dong-		M shi -	M lek	M Māhū -	GM tok	
RM Ko -	MR yā	R —	— —		RM —	M —	M Jāo	GR Bā	
RS Mō	— —	RG rē	RS —		N Re,	—	—	RG Āji	
SR Gei -	R lē	R Ki	GM Ā -		RG si -	GR be -	SR -n	GM Mōr	
RG <sup>2</sup> Mā -	G <sup>2</sup> R hūt	S Bon -	S dhu		S Re,	— —	— —	— —	

etc.

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

14

Unchā Kori Bandhen Chhapor Re—  
O Mūn Jol Bhorite Dekhim,  
Ki Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re.

15

Ūnchā Kori Bandhen Machā Re—  
O Mūn Āistē Jāitē Dekhim,  
Ki Māyā Nāilan Māhūt Re.

16

Doi Khoāilen, Dūdh Khoāilen Re—  
Māhūt Nā Khoāilen Mātā,  
Ebār Hāte Ṭṭiyā Gelo Re—  
Oi Ki Āsā Jaoār Ghātā.  
Ki Māyā Nāgāilan Māhūt Re.

17

*Nā Kanden Nā Kanden Kanya Hē—  
Nā Bhāngen Roser Gāla,  
Ebār Jodi Ghūriyā Āisong Hē—  
Kanya Sonāi Bandim Gāla,  
Ebār Jodi Ghūriyā Āisong Hē.*

18

14. On the banks of the Godadh<sup>1</sup>/ My mähūt grazes his elephants./ What a spell you have cast on me, O mähūt,/ 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 mähūt, 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 mähūt 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  $\text{♩} = 208$ Godhādh<sup>1</sup>orēr Pārē Pārē,

Godā-dhorē-r Pā-rē Pā-rē Re O Mōr Mautē Cho-rāi

Hā- - tī(hi) Ki Mā-ya Nā- - -gāilan Mähū-t Re O Tōr

Gā-lāi Rosēr Kā- -tī(hi) Ki Mā-ya Nā- gāilan Mähūt Re.

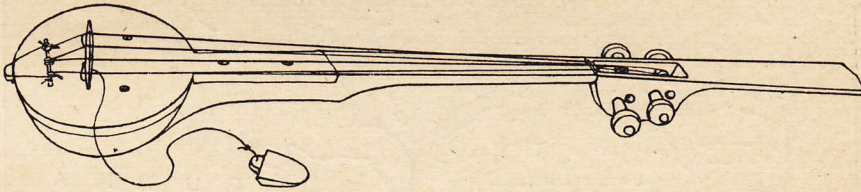
<sup>1</sup> The 'Gadādh<sup>1</sup>or' is the name of a river.

<sup>2</sup> The girl's last atanza has s 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 —	Ṣ —   Ṣ —	S' —   —	N —   D —
Go - dā —   —	dho - re - r   —	Pā - rē —   —	—   —	Pā rē —   —
P —   —	P —   P —	M —   —	P —   P —	N —   D —
Re —   —	O Mō - r   —	—   —	Mā - u - te   —	Cho rā - i   —
M —   —	G —   R —	—   —	R —   R —	G —   G —
Hā —   —	ti (hi) —   —	—   —	Ki Mā —   —	ya Nā —   —
R —   G —	G —   R —	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 —   R —
Ki Mā —   —	ya Nā —   —	—   —	gāi - la - n   —	Mā - hū - t   —
S —   —	—   —	—   —		etc.
Re —   —	—   —	—   —		

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 buffelo horn. Used to accompany *Bhāwaiyā* and *Chatkā* songs of North Bengal region.

## 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!  
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

it possible for city people to hear folk music as he had heard it out 'in the field.' He persuaded a young actor from the midwest, Burl Ives, that he should put on concerts of the songs that he had known as a boy on the farm. Lomax showed the southern singers Huddie Ledbetter ("Leadbelly"), Josh White, and Woody Guthrie, that there might be audiences in the New York City for their music. And he got me started.

I was simply one of the first of many college students who was bowled over by the strength, power, and honesty of American folk music, and set out determinedly to learn it by ear, to try to master it as one would a language: its subtleties, meanings and effects.

The efforts of Alan Lomax found one of the most conscious anti-fascists, and who were in favor of trade unions. Leadbelly used to sing for parties raising funds for Loyalist Spain. Woody and I used to go off on tours for the CIO labor unions. When some of us, after World War II, started a small magazine called People's Songs ("Songs of Labor and the American People") we just naturally assumed that we were fighting all the forces of power and respectability, and would be excluded from airwaves.

Little by little the picture changed. The invention in 1948 of the long-playing phonograph record made it possible for several small recording companies such as Folkways to issue hundreds of discs of authentic music recorded in the field. The invention of FM radio stations opened up the airwaves to the playing of such records. Little by little millions of Americans became aware that there was such a thing as 'folk music.' And in the 1960's a wave of popularity for songs accompanied by banjo or guitar swept American colleges and universities.

Why?

I am no authority, no folklorist. But I'll attempt an answer.

(1) In this highly mechanised nation could be found much evidence that the average citizen still wanted to do some things himself. This can be easily seen in many arts, crafts, sports and hobbies. Here was do-it-yourself music.

(2) A uprooted people, whose forefathers crossed oceans, prairies, and from city to city, was trying to re-establish roots. The older songs gave us a sense of our common past.

(3) The wide variety of music collected, and handed to us by the folklorists, included songs to suit almost every possible taste. The melodies, rhythms, instruments, stories and verse patterns had come from many places, principally Europe and West Africa, and had combined in many hybrid ways.

(4) Perhaps people found most of all appealing that this was a fluid, informal music. It implied that they were challenged to shape it further, to improvise on the melodies, rhythms, and words.

Let me discuss this last point more in detail. European classical music as it was usually taught in America, allowed little room for improvisation. The notes were there on the paper, and the student was told only to play them accurately

and 'with feeling.' This tradition of learning music carried over into schools, when children were told to learn a folk song exactly as it was written. But now people like me were travelling around the country obviously never singing a song twice the same.

It became obvious that there were many possible versions to play of the most popular songs.

And it was implied that new songs could be written which would carry the old traditions up-to-date. This leads me to the last chapter in my little report : the wave of songwriting in the United States today.

You see Leadbelly and Woody not only sang songs, but made up new ones as well. So when the trained folklorist tried to tell a young guiter picker that none of these new songs are "folk songs", he would face a series of questions such as this :

Is the old English ballad about the outlaw Robin Hood a folk song?

Yes.

Is the ballad of Jesse James, the 1870 train robber a folk song?

Yes.

Is Woody Guthrie's ballad of Pretty Boy Floyd, the 1935 bank robber.....?

Well, yes.

How about Bob Dylan's 1963 ballad of Hattie Carrol?

No. There I draw the line.

Why? Because Dylan came from Minnesota instead of Oklahoma?

The folklorist who based his criterion solely on age or anonymity, or rural, illiterate origins, was cornered. The young guiter picker didn't care, in any case.

At present the wave of songwriting includes an extraordinary range of music tastes, from art songs to rock and roll, from religious to anti-religious, from the political right to left. The radio stations tend to promote only the proper, non-controversial ones, but every so often a song with somewhat veiled meaning slips past them. A number of small "folk music" magazines circulating mainly in colleges print new songs regularly along with old ones. Some concentrate almost entirely on printing new songs on such subjects as the war in Vietnam, civil rights in Mississippi, and similar subjects. Among these circles, Bob Dylan's work is hotly debated. In 1962 and '63 he wrote a series of brilliant lyrical songs embracing a basically humanistic philosophy. In '65 turned his back on that approach, started working with a rock-and-roll group. His old fans were horrified ; his new ones delighted.

The average singer, amateur or professional, still works out some sort of balance between old and new songs, but new songs are heard in more abundance than ever before, whether they are good or bad. Some singers only sing their own songs. Many are of the "protest" type, but there are still a fair number of love songs, nonsense songs and children's songs.

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.