

MUSÉE DE L'HOMME

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**MUSICIAN CASTES
IN NEPAL**

record LD 20 (30/33)

Fascicule 2

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dirigées par Gilbert Rouget

Mireille Helffer

MUSICIAN CASTES IN NEPAL

Record LD.20 (30/33)

Fasc. I. Introduction et commentaires. Textes népali, traduction française et notations musicales de documents enregistrés au Népal par M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, C. Jest, A.W. Macdonald.

Fasc. II. Introduction and commentaries. Translation from the French of the Nepali texts, by R. Mason.

Fascicule II

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The Recherche Coopérative sur Programme (R.C.P.) n° 65,
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 Recherche Scientifique (C.N.R.S.), was founded in 1965
 for "Studies on the Nepalese region" by
 Professor Jacques Millot.
 It is headed by Corneille Jest.

The R.C.P. n° 178 is entitled
 "Research into ethnomusicology
 and studies in oral literature
 in the non-french world".
 It is headed by Gilbert Rouget.

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N.B. - {A1}, {A2}, ... refer to the sides and tracks on the record
 issued by the Department of Ethnomusicology, Musée de l'Homme :
 "Musician castes of Nepal", LD.20 (30/33).

For photographs, map, nepali texts and musical notations of {A3}, {A4},
 {A5} and {B1}, see Fasc. I.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently, very little was known about the music of Nepal. Its great variety -it differs according to ethnic or social groups- demands a systematic study which today is only in its initial stages. In this perspective, we felt it to be of interest to group together on a record a selection of material recorded between 1961 and 1968 by several field-workers of the R.C.P. N° 65 of the C.N.R.S. : Marc Gaborieau, Mireille Helffer, Corneille Jest, A.W. Macdonald. We have chosen as theme : "Musician Castes in Nepal".

Despite the official abolition of the caste system in 1963, Nepalese society remains strictly hierarchical. The distinction between the pure castes ("from whom one accepts water") and the impure castes (at the lowest level of which are situated the "untouchables") retains, in fact, all its importance. Professional musicians, whether they be instrumentalists like the *damāi*, or singers like the *gāine*, belong to the untouchables : according to the traditional hierarchy, only executioners (*poḍe*) and scavengers (*cyāme*) occupy an even lower position in the society. The *damāi* declare themselves superior to the *gāine* who, in turn, consider themselves to be better than the *bādi* (whose women dance in public).

Preliminary remarks concerning the establishment of the texts, the translation and the musical notation

Despite the aid of our Nepalese assistants, Messrs. Khem Bahadur Bista and Droṇa Prasad Rajauriya, and despite the care of Marc Gaborieau in his supervision of the texts, we realize that we have not been able to resolve all the problems raised by the establishment of the Nepalese texts and their translations : notably, we had to abandon attempts to give the text for the air sung by the *huḍkiya* (Side A, Band 2), finding it too marked with western Nepali archaisms ; in the "Hymn to Sarasvati" (Side B, Band 2), the diction of the singer was not sufficiently clear to permit an exact reconstruction of the text.

The language of most of the songs being Nepali as it is spoken in the villages around Kathmandu and Pokhara, we have adopted the system of transliteration recommended by Sir Ralph Turner in his : A comparative and etymological dictionary of the Nepali language.

To facilitate listening to these documents for those not familiar with the Nepali language, we have placed in normal print the vowels "a", "e" and "o" which were pronounced by the singers in order to conserve the rhythm of a line : these normally silent vowels may be found at the end as well as in the middle of a word. Thus, *gharmā* (in the house) could be written *gharamā*...

We should also mention that in Central Nepal (Side A, Band 5 and all of Side B), in order to avoid a hiatus between the final vowel of one word and the initial vowel of another, singers insert a softened "y" which we have not included in the Nepali texts.

Finally, a dislocation of words is often produced by singers adapting a text to the melody they have chosen ; we have separated by a hyphen those syllables which are arbitrarily cut off from the words to which they belong.

The proposed musical transcriptions do not pretend to do more than provide a melodic and rhythmic diagram of the songs in function of the texts which are their verbal support ; the notation should be considered more as a listening guide than as a faithful transcription.

N.B. Fascicule II has been revised by A.W. Macdonald.

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The *damāi*

The *damāi* (whose name is derived from *damāha* : kettledrum) are found throughout the section of Nepal situated to the south of the Himalayan barrier. Castes superior to them as well as many other ethnic groups -Chepang, Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Sherpa, Tamang, Thakali (to name only those for whom we have specific examples) and the Musulmans too- call upon their services for all solemn occasions and above all for marriage ceremonies.

In everyday life, the *damāi* are tailors. They form small instrumental groups whose composition can vary from one village to another, but which generally are composed of the following instruments : long metal trumpets -either straight (*karnāl*) or curved (*narsīṅga*)-, curved oboes (*sahanai*) whose wooden tube is pierced with seven holes and ends in a copper bell, large kettledrums (*damāha*) with a metal frame and played with a pair of drumsticks, a small kettledrum (*tyāmko*), a two-skinned drum (*dhōlak*), and finally, a pair of cymbals (*jhyāmṭā*).

MARRIAGE MUSIC

Side A, band 1

Recorded at Mirge, District of Dolakha, East No. 2, in October 1968.

The ensemble was composed here of nine instruments (*nau bājā*), which is considered the optimum number :

- 2 *karnāl*.
- 2 *sahanai* : one, called the *ragī sahanai*, the *sahanai* which plays the melody ; the other, called the *surai sahanai*, the *sahanai* which gives the note, i.e. the drone oboe.
- a pair of *damāha* kettle drums, one of which is considered as male (*bhāle*), the other as female (*pothī*).
- 1 *tyānko*, called the "guru" or the chief.
- 1 pair of *jhyāntā*.
- 1 *dhōlak* drum.

We might mention that the instruments in question were purchased by our colleague Pierre Valeix and that they are presently at the Musée de l'Homme (Paris).

- a. Air played in front of the house of the bride.
- b. Air played during the procession which accompanies the bride to the house of the groom.
- c. Air played upon arrival at the house of the groom.

The *huḍkiya*

Professional specialization, in the use of an hourglass drum, the *huḍkā*, has given birth to a subdivision inside the caste of the *damāi*, namely the *huḍkiya*.

As far as we are able to determine, the presence of the *huḍkiya* appears limited to the region located to the West of the river Karnali ; but numerous authors claim the existence of *huḍkiya* on the other side of the frontier, in Kumaon and in Garhwal.

These musicians have retained their old ceremonial costumes. They wear a long white skirt (*jāmā*) which they whirl when they dance. On their head they wear a turban (*pheta*) and they carry their drum suspended by a strap on the left shoulder. To this strap, they attach small bells. When they play, they slide the left hand under the tension cords to grasp the body of the drum, while striking the drum skin with the right.

The precise role of the *huḍkiya* is not fully clear. We only know for sure that, at important marriages, they march in front of the other *damāi*.

ALTERNATE SINGING ACCOMPANYING A DANCE

Side A, Band 2

Two male soloists and two *huḍkā* recorded in the village of Darna, District of Accham, in April 1968.

The *gāine*

These beggarmen singers live in small hamlets most often situated on the outskirts of the villages themselves. They can be found in groups scattered in the middle zone of Nepal, more exactly between Kathmandu to the East and the valley of Karnali to the West. This appears to correspond, by and large, to the region of the 24 Kingdoms in Nepali history.

In the present state of our knowledge consequent of field work, one may suppose that their number does not exceed 3.000 individuals. The *gāine* live on the results of their begging trips made after the corn or rice harvests, either in the villages of Nepal or in India, notably in the Ganges Valley and even in Assam.

The repertoire of the *gāine* is varied ; when they are young, they are more apt to sing lyrical songs called *jhyāure*, while the elders usually sing religious songs (*stuti* and *maṅgal*) or narrative songs of the *karkhā* or *sabai* variety.

The *gāine* accompany their songs with a four-stringed fiddle made of a single piece of wood and which is reserved for their use alone. This instrument is called a *sāraṅgi*, like the Indian fiddle which is of a very different morphology. The *sāraṅgi* of the *gāine* consists of a body, with a clearly defined waist ; the lower part of the body is covered with a goatskin. The neck is massive and the strings were traditionally made of goat gut. Today, however, they may be of metal (salvaged from electric wires) or nylon (from military parachutes). The tightness of the strings is controlled on the one hand by pegs attached to the top of the neck, and on the other, by a moveable bridge which rests on the skin of the body.

The *sāraṅgi* is tuned in the following manner :

- the two center strings are tuned to the same note, called *sur*, which acts as a drone (compare the *surai sahanai* of the *damāi*).
- the first string or *tikh* (literally "high") is tuned a fifth higher than *sur*.
- the fourth string or *ghor* is the low string tuned a fourth lower than *sur*.

The bow is formed by a short stick to which a lock of horsehair is attached. The musician holds his instrument vertically in front of him. When he plays seated cross-legged, he rests the tailpiece on his calf. The instrument's role is limited to executing short preludes or interludes, doubling the melody sung, or to providing a simple drone.

LAMENT OF THE *GĀINE*¹

Side A, band 3

Sung by Magar *gāine*, of Kirtipur (December 1961). Male voice and *sāraṅgi*.

This song in which is described the miserable condition of the *gāine* appears to be relatively old ; the singer dated it back to the period of Chandra Samser, Prime Minister from 1901 to 1929.

It is a strophic song with heteromorphic verses and chorus (which we have emphasized in the typographical disposition of our text).

The chorus is generally composed of :

10 syllables + *jarnela saheb* + 10 syllables.

In the verses, the number of syllables per verse is not fixed ; it does not appear possible to establish with any certainty a "model verse", although the episodic presence of rhymes and the general rhythm do allow

¹The Nepali text of this song and a résumé of its translation have been published by A.W. Macdonald in the *Essays offered to G.H. Luce*, pp. 188-189 (see bibliography) ; numerous playbacks of the recorded document have enabled us to correct certain details.

us to affirm that we are dealing with sung verses. This is perhaps a case of a folk adaptation of some as yet unidentified model from written poetry.

The musical notation which we propose is an attempt to sketch out the first verses and the chorus which follows it (see Fasc. I, p. ϕ). |13

{A3}1

- 1 Exempt me from transporting supplies¹, my General²,
exempt me from transporting supplies.
- 2 For a field, your Honor, there is not even a corner to plant red
peppers.
- 3 Understand me, I am of the *gāine* caste, which subsists by begging
throughout the country.
- 4 Exempt me from forced labour³, my General, exempt me from forced
labour.
- 5 Soldiers live in the palace, your Honor, soldiers live in the
palace.
- 6 Cobblers and tailors obtain their resources from their employer.
- 7 Goldsmiths work gold, blacksmiths work iron,
- 8 Only the *gāine* dies of gnawing out his heart, my General, only the
gāine dies of gnawing out his heart.
- 9 Exempt me from forced labour, my General, exempt me from forced
labour.
- 10 All day I travel about, your Honor,
- 11 My feet hurt, all I get for alms is fourteen grains.
- 12 If I go home, my old *gāineni*⁴ wife looks at me sideways.

- 13 From hunger, my legs are weak, my General, exempt me from transporting
supplies.
- 14 If I go home, my old *gāineni* wife looks at me sideways.

- 15 From hunger, my legs are weak, my General, exempt me from transporting
supplies.

¹*rasod/rasad* pronounced here *rasavad* means supplies ; we believe it refers here to the transport of supplies for the army.

²The English rank of "general" is rendered as "*jamaḷ*" in Nepali.

³We have translated *jhārā beṭhi* by forced labour ; in fact, two types of work are involved : *jhārā* being labor in the public interest (roads, bridges, etc.) and *beṭhi* being work for the head of the village. Theoretically, both forms of forced labour have been abolished.

On this subject, one can consult : Regmi (M.C.), *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal*, vol. III, Berkeley, 1965, pp. 53-54.

⁴*gāineni* is the feminine of *gāine*, it means simply : woman of the *gāine* caste.

{A3}2

- 16 Exempt me from transporting supplies, my General, exempt me from transporting supplies.
- 17 The *gāine* subsists by begging throughout the country.
- 18 In his home, the mice begin to cry.
- 19 The *gāine* subsists by begging throughout the country.
- 20 In the house, the mice cry.
- 21 Shall I go on forced labour or shall I continue to subsist in this manner ? My General, exempt me from transporting supplies.
- 22 Exempt me from transporting supplies, my General, exempt me from transporting supplies.

REGISTRATION IN THE VOTING LIST

Side A, Band 4

Sung by Magar *gāine*, of Kirtipur (December 1961). Male voice and *sāraṅgi*.

This is a song which was written on the occasion of the first elections which took place in Nepal in 1959.

The stanzas, formed of two lines of fourteen syllables, are lengthened by a literary extension :

prajātantra āūcha jarura.

The tune is formed of two phrases A and B, with B also acting as a melodic support of the literary chorus. (See the notation of the first verse and the chorus in Fasc. I. p. 15).

H 19

{A4}1

- 1 If your name isn't there, make your request within the time-limit,
Ladies and Gentlemen¹, democracy will surely come.
- 2 Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy will surely come.
- 3 Your own name, without delay, have it recorded².
- 4 Once you have voted, chase from your mind the doubts you've swept away,
democracy will surely come.
- 5 If your name isn't there, make your request within the time-limit,
Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy will surely come.
- 6 In the place where your names and *thar*³ have been written down
7 in that very place you will be permitted to choose a candidate,
democracy will surely come.
- 8 If your name isn't there, make your request within the time-limit,
Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy will surely come.
- 9 Whether you live in the hills, the plains or the jungle
10 Whether you live somewhere in the Himalaya, for all men,
democracy will surely come.
- 11 If your name isn't there, make your request within the time-limit,
Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy will surely come.
- 12 On form⁴ n°⁵ 22, write your own name
13 On form n° 2, fill in your name
14 On form n° 3, write in the margin,
democracy will surely come.
- 15 If your name isn't there, make your request within the time-limit,
Ladies and Gentlemen, democracy will surely come.

¹*hajur*(a) is a respectful form of address which we have translated by "ladies and gentlemen".

²Mistakenly pronounced *darja*.

³The *thar* is a subdivision of the caste ; it might be translated by "clan".

⁴*phāraṅga mā* for *pharammā*, *pharam* is the Nepali adaptation of the English word "form".

⁵*lambar*, Nepali pronunciation of the English "number".

SONG OF THE LAHURE¹

Side A, Band 5

Sung by Birkha Bahadur *gāine*, of Baṭulecaur (District of Kaski),
October 1966. Male voice and *sāraṅgi*.

The lament of a soldier about to die was composed by the *gāine* of
Baṭulecaur during the time of the military incidents between India and
China in 1963².

It is a song with regular strophic construction, verses and cho-
rus ; we should point out the special effect in the accompaniment obtained
by the musician's having attached small bells to the end of his bow, (for
the musical notation, see Fasc. I. p. 49). H 23

¹*Lahure*, pronounced here *lagure*, originally signified soldiers who had gone to enlist at Lahore (in the Punjab) ; presently, the term is applied to all soldiers, and by extension to men who have been abroad.

²We find a truncated version of this song in : Dharma Raj Thapa - *Hamro Lokgit* - Kathmandu, V.S. 2020, pp. 173-174.

{A5}1

- 1 Alas¹, do not cry rivers of tears, mother
do not cry rivers of tears, mother
- 2 if I survive, I'll have my picture taken and will send it to you.
- 3 What can one do, alas ! Unhappiness is written in one's fate.
- 4 Alas ! everyone else's son comes, everyone else's son goes off
again (repeat) ; ours does not come.
- 5 Ho ! Has our son fallen in battle ? (repeat)
or has he been unable to get leave ? (repeat)
- 6 in time with the play of the fingers on the harmonica² (repeat) ;
we run³ in step (repeat)
- 7 it is by King's order that a man doesn't get leave when he
asks for it (repeat).
- 8 After having split the earth, they remain in place, the sons
of the bamboo, the young sprouts⁴.
- 9 When the enemy's bullets hit his head ; he remembered his
parents (repeat).
- 10 Under bullets as thick as hail,
11 the *lahure* died in battle.
- 12 What can one do, alas ! Unhappiness is written in one's fate.
- 13 Alas ! By order of the Indian government⁵ (repeat) ; we had to
go to war⁶
- 14 Having abandoned our fathers and mothers, we had to go beyond
the seas.

¹We have translated indiscriminately by "alas !" the two expressions *he bari* and *barilai*. To avoid excessively burdening down the translation, we have omitted the particles *ni*, *po*, *ta* which intervene frequently.

²*Harpini bājā* appears to signify the harmonica played by soldiers.

³*res* seems to be the Nepali transcription of the English "race", from which we obtain *res phermu* or to run.

⁴The meaning of this line remains obscure. Does it suggest the stability of the bamboo as opposed to the young soldier whose life has been cut down ?

⁵During the military incidents of 1963, the Indian Army utilised large numbers of Nepalese soldiers.

⁶The English word "war" is used here. In Nepali *dhāva* (line 5) or *ran* (line 11) are the usual words for "war".

{A5}2

- 15 Don't cry, mother, on a letter's word
- 16 That I am dead, fallen beyond the seven seas¹ ;
if I should survive, I shall return home.
- 17 Taking a swipe at "Number 9"² ? the enemy aims for the head (repeat)
- 18 The great battle of two kings means death for the sons of the
people (repeat).
- 19 The lead of the bullets having cut short his life
20 the *lahure* is dead, fallen in battle.
- 21 What sort of *karma*³ has the *Bhābi*⁴ written on his forehead⁵ ! O Lord !
- 22 Alas ! My father will ask, "Where is my little brother ?" (repeat)
"He will come by and by" (repeat).
- 23 My mother will ask, "Where is my son ?" (repeat)
Tell her, "He has gone to war" (repeat)
- 24 My elder brother will ask, "Where is my younger brother ?" (repeat)
Tell him, "Your part of the inheritance⁶ will be larger".
- 25 My younger brother will ask, "Where is my elder brother ?" (repeat)
Tell him, "Send a letter". (repeat).
- 26 My little sister will ask, "Where is my elder brother ?" (repeat)
Tell her "The load of the *solī*⁷ has lessened (repeat).
- 27 My elder sister will ask, "Where is my little brother ?" (repeat)
Tell her, "Your family⁸ has grown smaller" (repeat).
- 28 The villagers will ask, "Where is the *lahure* ?" (repeat)
Tell them, "Forget him" (repeat).

¹The expression "beyond the seven seas" is a cliché in Nepali language. Instead of *sāt samundra*, the singer says here "*sasundra*".

²In the Indian and Nepalese army, a soldier is often known only by his serial number or even by the last digit of this number, this fact leads us to suggest that the hero in the song bore a number ending in a 9.

³The *karma* in Hindu thought represents destiny considered as the result of actions performed during preceding lives.

⁴*Bhābi* represents the god Brahma.

⁵*litāt/lalāt* literally means "forehead" but an extension of the meaning is "fate", since one's fate is said to be written on one's forehead.

⁶The term *amsai* signifies the share of inheritance. The disappearance of the younger brother increases the inheritance of the elder.

⁷The *solī* is a finely woven wicker-work basket in which, at the festival of Tihar, the sister who has left her family home carries delicacies to her elder brother.

⁸The term *māitī* is used to designate the family home of a young woman as opposed to the house of her husband

{A5}3

- 29 My dear wife will ask, "Where is my lord ?" (repeat)
Tell her, "Change your clothes" (repeat)
- 30 In the Baṭauli¹ bazar, no sealing wax for two cents.
31 Her lord is deceased ; she who lives on at home knows
nothing (repeat).
- 32 My son will ask, "Where is my father ?"
Tell him, "Stop wearing your hat²" (repeat).
- 33 My daughter will ask, "Where is my father ?"
Make her a gift of a golden bracelet³ (repeat).
- 34 What can one do, alas ! Unhappiness is written in one's fate.
35 What sort of *karma* then did the Bhabi write on his forehead !
Oh Lord !

¹Baṭauli or Butwal is an important bazar on the edge of the Terai. The meaning of this line is unclear : does it seek to compare the absurdity of the situation where the wife remains unaware of the death of her husband to that, unthinkable, where no sealing wax can be found at the Baṭauli bazar ?

²During the period of mourning, a son must shave his head and refrain from wearing the *topi*, the traditional male headdress.

³In order to obtain merits for the deceased, ceremonial gifts are traditionally given to the Brahmin, the son-in-law, and the daughter of the deceased.

THE *ḌĀPHE*¹ BIRD (fragment)

Side B, Band 1

Sung by Jhalak Man *gāine* of Baṭulecaur (District of Kaski),
October 1966.

The story of the bird from the Himalaya which goes to seek a wife in the Terai is one of the classics of the Nepali oral tradition². Although the plot of the story is nearly always the same, the versions known differ in their details. The present version is particularly well developed and illustrates the Nepali penchant for onomatopoeias and alliterations which render certain passages pure verbal games. The exclamation *abariha* which serves as an intonation for most of the verses is used only by the *gāine*.

The song is narrative and of an irregular strophic form ; the graphic disposition adopted attempts to take into account the distribution of the metrical cells within the chosen musical framework (See notation of the first verse, in Fasc. I. p. 127).

H 31

¹The *ḍāphe* bird is the "resplendent lophophore" of ornithologists ; for the layman, it resembles a pheasant.

²A version of the song was published by the Nepali poet and singer Dharma Rāj Thāpa, *Mero Nepāl bhramaṇa*. Kathmandu, V.S. 2016, pp. 175-178.

{B1}1

1 In a far-off corner of the Himalaya,
 2 In a far-off corner of the Himalaya, the mother of the *ḍāp̄he*
 was born
 3 aha ! she was born, Oh ! Bird !
 4 On a mountain of the Himalaya, after having broken branches of bamboo
 and shoots of *kharuḷ*¹
 5 she brings them
 6 (to the sound of) *karyāp-kirip*
 7 and *jharyāp-jhirip*, she broke them, Oh ! Bird !
 8 She alighted on a rock,
 little by little,
 9 (to the sound of) *bhuruṅ-bhuruṅ*²
 hastily she shaped it (her nest).
 10 The size just right,
 11 well squeezed down,
 12 and quite deep,
 13 turning and spinning, moving in every direction,
 14 flushed (in the face),
 15 she made a nest perfect in every way, Oh ! Bird !
 16 Isn't that so, Bird, oh my *ḍāp̄he*, she made her nest.

--:--:--:--:--

17 At the end of six months, a year,
 18 at the end of six months, a year, the mother of the *ḍāp̄he* declared :
 19 "I am going to have a child".
 20 After having said, "I am laying an egg",
 she rolls her eyes
 21 she puts her head on one side,
 22 she lets her feet go forward,

¹We do not know the meaning of *karul* .

²While *karyāp-kirip* and *jharyāp-jhirip* are onomatopoeias evoking the cracking of branches, *bhuruṅ-bhuruṅ* corresponds, according to the dictionary, to a whistling noise.

{B1}2

23 she supports herself on the threshold,
 24 she leans against the wall
 (of the nest)
 25 with great effort, she straightens up suddenly,
 26 she crouches,
 27 she gets on her knees,
 28 she grasps her waist,
 29 she shakes the small of her back and turns on her stomach,
 30 crying Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! My back hurts !
 31 My stomach hurts !
 32 My head hurts !
 33 She labors,
 34 She supports herself
 with her feet,
 35 bracing herself up against the wall,
 36 with great difficulty
 37 she walks one way
 and another
 38 she turns in a circle, she lays an egg, Oh ! Bird !
 39 Isn't that so, Bird, Oh my *ḍāp̄he*, she lays an egg.

--:--:--:--:--

40 *Abariha* ! At the end of six months, a year,
 41 at the end of six months, a year, the mother
 of the *ḍāp̄he* declared :
 42 "I am going to hatch a chicken"
 43 a cock who will be the leader
 44 of cocks, prepare him for me,
 45 serve me pieces of meat,
 46 massage me with hot oil¹

¹In Nepal, the heads of pregnant women are massaged with oil.

{B1}3

47 prepare me the *methi* and the *juvān*¹,
 48 prepare them and fry them, hey ! little father,
 49 This little mother,
 50 what torment she has caused her little father ! Oh ! Bird !
 51 Isn't that so, Bird, Oh my *ḍāp̄he*, what torment she has caused him !

--:--:--:--:--

52 *Abariha* ! One happy day the *ḍāp̄he-lagure*²,
 53 one happy day the *ḍāp̄he-lagure* came into the world
 54 aha ! he came into the world,
 Oh ! Bird !
 55 at the end of six days³, they held the ceremony of the sixth
 day for *ḍāp̄he-lagure*,
 56 at the end of nine days⁴, they gave a name to *ḍāp̄he-lagure*,
 57 after six months had passed, they gave *ḍāp̄he-lagure*
 his first solid food⁵.
 58 How charming he is !
 59 Elegant and smart !
 60 Graceful adolescent !
 61 Resplendent *ḍāp̄he* ! Graced with the charms of a male !
 62 Graced with the charms of a female ! Graced with the charms of a chicken⁶!
 63 *ḍāp̄he-lagure* is born... Oh !
 64 One happy day, look ! *ḍāp̄he-lagure* has become a young man !

--:--:--:--:--

¹*methi* and *juvān* are condiments used in preparing a soup offered to young mothers. *Methi* is the botanist's *fenugrec*.

²From this verse on, *ḍāp̄he* will receive the epithet *lagure*, no doubt to explain the bird's adventurous nature. For an explanation of *lagure*, see Side A, Band 5, note 1.

³Six days after the birth of a child, family and friends are invited to festivities.

⁴Nine days after birth, a ceremony is held at which a name is given to the new born child.

⁵*bhāt-khulai*, during this ceremony, which takes place towards the sixth month, the child is given his first solid food, in this case cooked rice (*bhāt*).

⁶The epithets which tend to describe the charms of the young *ḍāp̄he* have a greater value in their cumulative effect than in their precision. The meaning of *bhālekā baīsa*, *pothīkā baīsa* is uncertain.

{B1}4

65 *Abariha* ! This night in a dream,
 66 this night in a dream, the *ḍāp̄he* who was on the mountain-tops
 67 saw in his dream the *murali*¹ who
 was in the plains.
 68 aha ! He saw her in his dream !
 69 -"In a dream, this is the image I saw,
 70 I was laughing, I was talking,
 71 I was playing, I was teasing,
 72 I was on the knees of the *murali*."
 73 Getting up with a start, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* came to himself² : "Where is she ?"
 74 Isn't that so, Bird, Oh my *ḍāp̄he*, he came to himself Oh !

--:--:--:--:--

75 *Abariha* ! -"What one sees in a dream,
 76 How can that come to pass ? Oh my child, stay calm !
 calm !
 77 Aha ! stay calm ! Oh !
 78 Into a family
 79 which suits your wishes, my child, I shall certainly marry you"
 80 -"Don't cry out, don't cry out,
 81 Oh mother,
 82 a family
 83 which suits my wishes, I have myself seen it.
 84 The wife of your choosing,
 85 Oh mother,
 86 (she would be) like a new wall

87 battered by kicking.
 88 (she would be) as if scraped with a used ladle³,

¹We have not been able to identify the *murali* bird.

²It appears that *bimāna* is a lapsus for *bīpanā* : a state of wakefulness as opposed to *sapanā* : a state of sleep.

³When skin is scraped with a used ladle, a few hairs remain.

{B1}5

89 like a goat exhausted by diarrhoea,
 90 like a dead crow,
 91 like the deformed fruits¹ of the yam,
 92 with hair (sparse) like the filaments
 93 of yams and *bhyākur*²,
 94 like the stumps in a *khoriyā*³,
 95 like a pot for roasting corn, I'll not take her", he says,
 96 "a girl like that, I'll not take her, he says.

--:--:--:--:--

97 *Abariha* ! What I saw in a dream,
 98 what I saw in a dream,
 99 I'll describe it, Oh mother, listen well,
 100 aha ! listen well !
 101 In my dream, I had a vision,
 102 like the risen moon,
 103 like a bunch of bananas,
 104 like the trunk of a banana tree,
 105 like a ripe orange,
 106 like quarters of an orange,
 107 like slices of ginger,
 108 like a clove of garlic,
 109 like a trout in a torrent,
 110 like a *phageṭā* in a peaceful river,
 111 like a *gaḍe* in a spring,
 112 like *sahar*⁴ in the *Phevā tāl*⁵
 113 well rounded,

¹The *giṭhā* are the fruit of the yam and should be distinguished from the edible tuber.

²The *bhyākur* is an unidentified climbing plant. Its roots are edible.

³The *khoriyā* is a newly cleared field.

⁴*phageṭā*, *gaḍe* are unidentified fishes. The *sahar* is a large fish of the family of Cyprinidae which is found in Himalayan rivers (cf. Hobson-Johnson, ed. by W. Crooke, London, 1903, p. 538 to *mahseer*).

⁵The *Phevā tāl* is a large lake situated near Pokhara.

{B1}6

114 plump,
 115 having adjusted her *paṭukā*¹, a *chāp ṭikī*² on her forehead
 116 (her eyes) touched up with *gajal*³,
 117 (decked out) like a Magarni of the East,
 118 (sparkling) like the lights of Benares⁴,
 119 like a *pyāuli* flower,
 120 like a *makhamaḷī* flower,
 121 like a marigold,
 122 like the *gardaulī*⁵ flower,
 123 well rounded,
 124 plump,
 125 having adjusted her *paṭuka*, a *chāp ṭikī* on her forehead,
 126 (her eyes) touched with *gājāl*
 127 (decked out) like a Magarni of the East,
 128 like the lights of Benares,
 129 sparkling brightly,
 130 and glossy, the *ḍāphe* saw her, Oh bird !
 131 Isn't that so, Bird, Oh my *ḍāphe*, the *ḍāphe* saw her.

--:--:--:--:--

132 *Abariha* ! *Rāma* ! You went to the East, you went to the West,
 133 you went to the North, you went to the South,
 134 you summoned astrologers and Brahmans⁶ from the four directions,
 135 aha ! You summoned them !

¹*mail paṭṭa* is used here for *paṭukā* : the long belt which Nepali women wrap around their waist several times.

²*chāp* means mark ; the *ṭika/ṭiko* is a mark placed on the forehead. We presume that *chāp-ṭikī* is one of the colored pastilles with which Nepali women like to adorn their forehead.

³Black pigment used to line the eyes and which is believed to ward off the evil eye.

⁴*Kāsī* is the Nepali name for the town of Benares, where the English installed electricity long before it appeared in Nepal.

⁵We have not been able to identify the flowers *pyāuli*, *makhamaḷī*, and *gardaulī*.

⁶Brahmins are called upon to read the horoscope upon numerous occasions, particularly when an important decision must be made.

{B1}7

- 136 After having deposited on a plate
137 a ceremonial gift of a *māna*¹ of rice and two coins²,
(you said) "Fix me a day.
138 How unhappy I am ! There is no auspicious day for *ḍāp̄he* !"
139 - What does Monday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "The *murali* will meet someone".
140 - What does Tuesday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "For the *murali* there will be a
proposal in marriage."
141 - What does Wednesday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "He will make the *murali* lose
her senses."
142 - What does Thursday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "Go and rape the *murali*."
143 - What does Friday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "*Murali* will be numb and faded.
144 - What does Saturday say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ? "For *murali*, the influence of
the planets will be bad."
145 - Sunday,
146 what does it say, Oh *ḍāp̄he* ?
147 "*Murali*,
148 in long draughts,
149 the *phuru*³ of baked earth,
150 make her drink it in long draughts⁴.
151 By way of fields and cliffs,
152 along rivers,
153 (to the cries) *kul-kul*, *kyā-kyā*, and *kū-kū*⁵, with great wing beats,
come !" it says.
154 Among the seven constellations⁶ of the seven days, for *ḍāp̄he-lagure*,
it is Sunday which is favorable.

-:-:-:-:-

¹A measure equivalent to half a liter.

²*ṅā* and *suki* are small coins : one *suki* equals four *ṅā*, and one *ṅā* is the equivalent of 1/16 of a rupee.

³The *phuru*, according to the Nepali-Nepali dictionary of S'arma, is a wooden bowl used by the people of Tibet. (See Macdonald A.W. - Les Tamang vus par l'un d'eux, L'Homme, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1966), p. 56, note 1).

⁴The terms of a horoscope are rarely clear ; here the meaning is rendered even more obscure by the apparent attempt by the singer to make a sound correlation between the name of the day and what happens on that day : *saubār... sagelo, magalbār... māgula, budhabār... buddhi*, etc.

⁵*kul-kul*, *kyā-kyā*, and *kū-kū* are onomatopoeias reproducing the bird's cries.

⁶The *nakṣatra* are, in fact, sectors of the ecliptic zone determined by certain groups of stars. Indian astronomers have defined 28 of these sectors ; it seems, therefore, that the singer has confused the term *nakṣatra* with some other word intended to designate the planets which preside over the different days of the week.

{B1}8

- 155 *Abariḥa* ! Early Sunday morning,
156 towards four o'clock, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* carried out the ritual¹,
157 aha ! he carried out the ritual.
158 The pots and the jars, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* took them outside.

-:-:-:-:-

- 159 *Abariḥa* ! From the snow-capped peaks, the *ḍāp̄he* took flight,
to the sound of *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
160 and *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*², by way of fields,
161 along cliffs and rivers,
162 (to the cries of) *kul-kul* and *kyā-kyā*
163 and *kū-kū*,
164 having beaten his wings, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* swooped down on Mustang,
165 aha ! he swooped down on Mustang.
166 He presented his respects to the king of Mustang of the
village of Mustang.
167 From there,
168 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
169 and *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
170 by way of fields, along cliffs,
171 or along rivers, (to the cries of) *kul-kul*,
172 *kyā-kyā* and *kū-kū*,
173 having beaten his wings,
174 *ḍāp̄he-lagure*
175 alas ! swooped down on Muktinath.
176 Into the thousand fountains³
177 of Muktinath, he dove in splashing.

¹We have translated the expression *sāit garnu* by : carrying out the ritual preceding departure on a voyage ; it is for the ritual in question that the pots and jars must be taken outside.

²*ha-ra-ra-ra-ra* designates the noise made by the bird when it glides, while *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra* is the noise of the beating of its wings.

³Muktinath is generally spoken of as having 108 fountains ; a photograph of the site can be found in : Snellgrove, David. Himalayan Pilgrimage. Oxford : Bruno Cassirer, 1961, plate XL b, facing p. 225.

178 From there,
 179 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 180 and *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 181 by way of fields, along cliffs,
 182 or along rivers (to the cries of) *kul-kul*,
 183 *kyā-kyā* and *kū-kū*,
 184 having beaten his wings, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* swooped down on Dana.
 185 He presented his respects to the *subbā*¹ Danbhanse of the
 village of Dana.
 186 From there,
 187 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 188 and *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*, the *ḍāp̄he* took flight and swooped down
 on Baglung.
 189 To the Mother²
 190 *Baṇi rāmā*
 191 of the village of Bāglung, he paid his respects.
 192 He paid her his respects.
 193 He bought a buffalo.
 194 He bought a goat.
 195 He bought a gelded goat.
 196 He bought a cock.
 197 He bought a duck.
 198 He carried out the "sacrifice
 199 of the five victims"³.
 200 The heart's desires, Isvara Nārāyaṇ⁴ fulfilled them.
 201 The favor of a good harvest, long life, and
 sons, Nārāyaṇ granted them.

¹An official whose rank is superior to that of the village leader.

²Under the name of *Māi* (the Mother) different forms of the goddess Durga are worshipped. We have no special information concerning *Baṇi rāmā*

³The *pāca bali* or "sacrifice of five animal victims" generally includes a buffalo, a goat, a lamb, a cock, a duck.

⁴A name of the god *Viṣṇu*.

202 *Abariḥa*! From there, (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 203 and *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*, the *ḍāp̄he* took flight, alas!
 204 Aha! Rama! He swooped down on the fort of Kāskī
 205 Aha! He swooped down on the fort of Kāskī.
 206 To Ruma! *jhākri*¹
 207 of the fort of Kāskī,
 208 he paid his respects.
 209 He paid his respects to Kālikā² and *ḍāp̄he-lagure* swooped
 down on Pokhara.
 210-211 To the Vindhya³ of Pokhara,
 212 to Surya⁴ and (?)
 213 to Vāchi and Baliṣṭha⁵,
 214 to Bhimsen⁶ and to the Mother, to the Mother Sitalā⁷, he paid
 his respects.
 215 From top to bottom, *ḍāp̄he-lagure* went his way through the
 bazar.
 216 He paid his respects to the god Varaha⁸, famous ever since
 the Satyajug⁹.
 217 From there,
 218 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
 219 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*, *ḍāp̄he* took flight and went up to Nuvākot.

¹The *jhākri* is, according to A.W. Macdonald "a person who goes into a trance, at which time voices speak through the intermediary of his body, allowing him to diagnose illnesses and sometimes cure them, to give advice concerning the future, etc... He is thus at the same time a privileged intermediary between men and the spirits (who cure illnesses), between the past, present and the future, and between life and death..." (See Macdonald, A.W. - Notes préliminaires sur quelques *jhākri* du Muglan. *Journal Asiatique*, 1962, p. 106).

²*Kālikā* is one of the more frequent names given to the goddess Durga in Nepal. The temple located in the fort of Kaski is, in fact, consecrated to her.

³*Vindhya bāsīnī*, "she who lives in the mountains of Vindhya" is the name by which the goddess Durga is venerated in one of the most important temples of Pokhara.

⁴*Suryā* is the god of the sun.

⁵*Vāchi* and *Baliṣṭha* have not been identified; perhaps this is a case of poor pronunciation.

⁶*Bhimsen*, the deified hero of the Indian epic poem is the patron, we are told, of commerce.

⁷*Sitalā* is the goddess of smallpox.

⁸*Varāha* is an incarnation of the god *Viṣṇu* in the form of a wild boar. A temple consecrated to *Varāha* exists on the little island of lake Pheva tāl; an important pilgrimage fair is held on the shores of the lake a short time before the festival of *Dasai*.

⁹During the *Satyajug* or "age of truth", the first three transformations of the god *Viṣṇu* are supposed to take place, i.e. : fish, tortoise, and wild boar.

220 To the black Bhairav¹ of Nuvākoṭ, he paid his respects.
 221 From there
 222 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
 223 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 224 by way of fields, along cliffs,
 225 and along rivers, (to the cry of) *kul-kul*
 226 *kyā-kyā* and *kū-kū*, he beat his wings,
 227 *ḍāp̄he-lagure*, alas ! swooped down on Bhure².
 228 At the inn of the Thakalni³
 229 of the village of Bhure
 230 whom he had seduced, first making her laugh, then making her cry,
 231 *ḍāp̄he-lagure* took his fill of fish and spirits.
 232 From there,
 233 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
 234 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 235 by way of fields, along cliffs,
 236 and along rivers, (to the cry of) *kul-kul*,
 237 *kyā-kyā* and *kū-kū*,
 238 having beaten his wings,
 239 *ḍāp̄he-lagure*, alas ! Oh Ram ! went to Tansen.
 240 He paid his respects
 241 Alas ! to the Sitalpāṭi⁴ of Tansen.
 242 To the magistrates and to the judges,
 243 to the scribes and the clerks,
 244 to the accountants, the cashiers, the employees, the sentries,
 he paid his respects.
 245 From there,
 246 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
 247 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*, *ḍāp̄he* took flight and swooped down on Dobhan.

¹The god *Bhairava*, in the form of *Kal Bhairav* (black *Bhairava*) is particularly venerated in this region.

²This might be the village of Bhubre, which is half-way between Nuvākoṭ and Tansen.

³During the winter, Thakali women open temporary inns along the most frequently used roads and particularly along the entire itinerary of the *ḍāp̄he* bird.

⁴A *sital pāṭi* is a refuge for travellers ; that of Tansen is known for its large size.

248 The Thakalni
 249 of Dobhan,
 250 he seduced her, first making her laugh, then making her cry.
 251 From there,
 252 staring wide-eyed, he saw Nuvākoṭ¹.
 253 On a very straight tree
 254 of Nuvākoṭ,
 255 he promptly alighted.
 256 Alas !
 257 staring wide-eyed,
 258 at once, he saw Baṭauli².
 259 From there,
 260 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra*
 261 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*, the *ḍāp̄he* took flight and swooped down on
 Batauli.
 262 From top to bottom, he surveyed the bazar.
 263 In a stall of his choice, he promptly alighted.
 264 He straightway, alighted.
 265 He got on his knees,
 266 *sa-ra-ra-ra-ra* and *sa-ra-rā-ra-ra*, he had his money counted.
 267 Having put down 500 rupees at one go, he bought a *sāri* for
 the *murali*.
 268 Having put down 300 rupees
 269 at one go, he bought a blouse for the *murali*.
 270 Having put down 200 rupees at one go he bought a *paṭukī* for
 the *murali*.
 271 Having put down 100 rupees at one go, he bought a shawl for
 the *murali*.

¹The name Nuvākoṭ/Navākoṭ (whose etymology brings to mind the Chateauneuf, Neufchâtel, and Newcastle of the West) is found for several towns in Nepal ; the one in question here is located slightly to the north of Baṭauli.

²The bazar of Baṭauli/Butwal is an important market. It is thus quite normal that the *ḍāp̄he* should stop there to buy presents for the *murali*.

272 Having put down 500 rupees
 273 at one go,
 274 for the *murali*,
 275 *jeherī* and *paījarī*,
 276 *bichiyā* and *bājavantī*,
 277 *tārvanti*, *ghāgar*, *tīnmāne ghāgalo*¹, these are the jewels
 he bought.
 278 Having put down ten rupees
 279 at one go,
 280 for the *murali*,
 281 he bought red powder² and a comb,
 282 a coloured pastille, sequins, braids of thread³.
 283 In a small package,
 284 he held them tightly under his arm and *ḍāp̄he-lagure* set out
 down the road.
 285 -"Oh my sister water-carrier going to fetch water, I beg you,
 286 Oh my sister woodcutter going to fetch wood, I beg you,
 287 show me the road that leads to the country of the *murali*."
 288 -"Do not go East, do not go West, *ḍāp̄he-lagure*, fly straight
 South,
 289 at the foot of a *baniyā* tree⁴, the *murali* is waiting."
 290 Having heard
 291 these words,
 292 (to the sound of) *ha-ra-ra-ra-ra* and
 293 *bha-ra-ra-ra-ra*,
 294 *ḍāp̄he* took flight and landed straightway in the Kokili
 pasture of the *murali*.

¹These names of jewelry belong to the vocabulary of Terai. None of our Nepali informants was able to describe them.

²The *simrik* is a kind of red earth used by Nepalese women to mark in red the parting in their hair.

³Nepalese women attach braids of red or black thread called *dhago* to their hair.

⁴*Baniyā*, the *ficus indica* tree, named *bar* in Nepali.

295 -"Under the pretext of going to fetch wood,
 296 let the *murali* meet the *ḍāp̄he*.
 297 Under the pretext of going to fetch water, let the *murali*
 come to meet the *ḍāp̄he*." he says.
 298 After which,
 299 waiting for something to happen,
 300 as he had gotten no results,
 301 *ḍāp̄he-lagure* says,
 302 -"I will go myself". And he drew near.
 303 Into the courtyard of the *murali*,
 304 he went,
 305 he tapped with his cane,
 306 and made his footsteps ring out,
 307 he made *damakka-chamakka*, *damakka-chamakka* be heard.
 308 Having gone outside,
 309 the *murali* asked herself,
 310 -"What guest has come?" and she went outside.
 311 In a glance, she saw
 312 the *ḍāp̄he* bird.
 313 A vague smile crossed her face, not daring to show her
 pleasure, she went back inside.
 314 She spread out a fibre mat and a blanket,
 315 she brought a pipe-stem
 316-317 a pipe-bowl and tobacco and she filled the pipe¹.
 318 -"Without family ties²,
 319 this pipe and this tobacco, Oh *murali*, I will not accept
 them", he says.
 320 -"Between you and me, let us establish then a family tie,
 Oh *ḍāp̄he-lagure*".
 321 -"Listen closely,
 322 Oh *murali*,

¹The instrument in question is a hookah.

²This refers to a form of fictitious kinship which individuals may establish and which allows them to determine the kind of attitudes which they must adopt with each other.

323 you have asked me whether family ties exist between us,
 I shall explain to you.

324 Your father, I have called him "māmā"¹,
 325 your mother, I have called her "māiju"²,
 326 your father, I have called him "sasurā"³,
 327 the *murali*, Alas ! I shall call her "solti"⁴."
 328 -"These family ties which have been established, Oh *ḍāp̄he*,
 I shall make use of them."

329 Beyond the slope, on the side of the hill, I shall go
 and wash my clothes.

330 Do not worry, Oh *lagure-bhina*⁵, I shall be yours."

.....

After this exchange of vows, the *murali* and *ḍāp̄he* respectively praise the advantages of life in the Southern plains and in the Northern mountains. They then take the road for the Himalaya. But *ḍāp̄he* is unable to resist the sight of the ripening millet fields. He is trapped, killed and eaten by a villager, to the great despair of the powerless *murali*.

¹The vocabulary expressing family relations is very rich in Nepal. Its use here is not very coherent. *māmā* is the uncle on the mother's side ; for many ethnic groups in Nepal, marriage with the daughter of the maternal uncle is well considered.

²The *māiju* is the wife of the maternal uncle.

³*Sasurā* is the term used to indicate the father-in-law.

⁴*Solti* can indicate the brother or the sister of the brother's wife, but sometimes it is used for the husband of the sister. It is not clear what purpose this family relation serves here.

⁵A woman calls the husband of her elder sister *bhina*. In Nepalese society, this family connection permits a certain freedom in relationships.

HYMN TO SARASVATI

Side B, Band 2

Performed by Mijhar Durga *gāine* (Male voice and *sāraṅgi*) and by his son Jhalak Man (*arbajo*), both of Baṭulecaur, District of Kaski (December 1966).

Maṅgal are hymns of praise in honor of divinities ; this one is dedicated to Sarasvati, wife of the god Brahma, patroness of arts and letters. The *gāine* of Baṭulecaur play it at weddings and during the period of *Dasāi*¹, when they carry out a *puja* in honor of their musical instruments.

Exceptionally, a four string *arbajo* lute is coupled here with the usual *sāraṅgi* in support of the voice.

The *gāine* claim that they once played the *arbajo* and that they took up the *sāraṅgi* for reasons of convenience. Whether this be true or not, it is extremely rare to find an *arbajo* in working order. Their sound boxes, however, are preciously conserved for ritual purposes.

¹*Dasāi* is the important festival held in honor of the goddess Durga. It takes place during the light fortnight of the month of Asvin. On this occasion, arms, tools, and-in the case of musicians- musical instruments are honored.