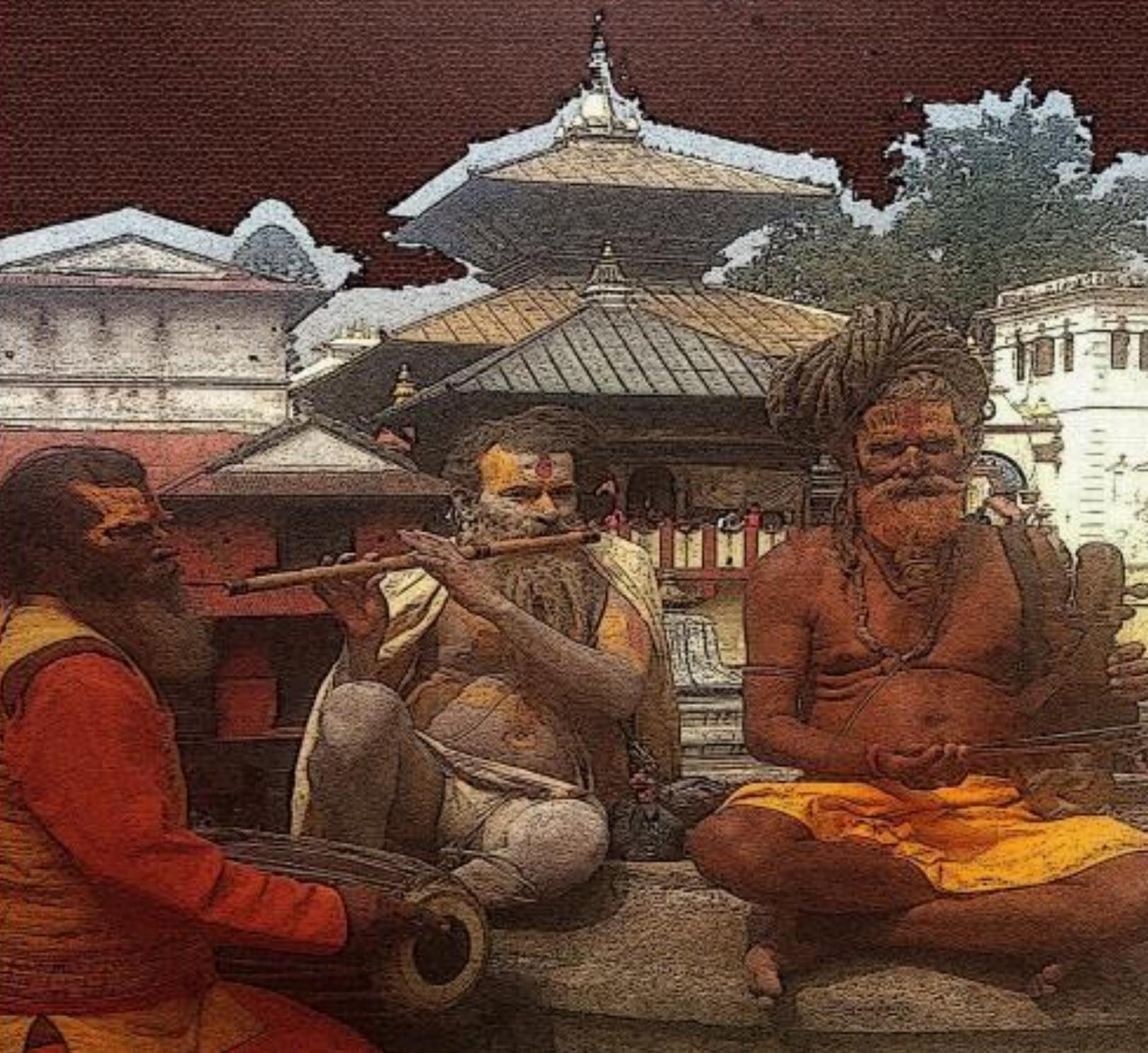


NEPALESE FOLK CULTURE

A compilation of research Journal



Nepalese Folk Culture Compilation of Research Journals

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Foreword

Nepal Music Centre (NMC) Trust was formally established five years back in the year 2009. Established with limited resources and with the initiation from people's level, this trust, in order to start a new initiative in the support of folk culture, aims to develop Nepali music enterprise, especially musical instruments, singing and dance.

NMC trust, with its own building at Pingalasthan, Battisputali, Kathmandu provides basic as well as advance music education and training to around 500 to 600 students from the age group of 6 to 50 years. It teaches students with the help of textbooks prescribed by the government of Nepal. As per the objectives mentioned above, the trust is running in its full-strength based on formal curriculum and standardized teaching methodology. In addition, this trust gives special preference to traditional Nepali folk music and classical music along with facility of modern/western musical education.

In this rapidly changing world, rigorous work can only bring a sense of authentic change in the field of music which requires practical planning, clear vision and imagination. In doing so, preservation of our musical heritage based on oral tradition along with its unique and original attributes is a must. Otherwise, our valuable musical cultural heritage may suffer from untimely extinction. Hence, it is important to publish journal papers on Nepali music even in English medium. Such research-oriented publications can help develop and introduce rich Nepali music to the international community.

Nepal Music Centre Trust is proud to share the fact that there is a regular publication of a research-based journal called LOK SANSKRITI. The Trust believes that this publication may become a meaningful contribution and thereby it would help preserve and disseminate valuable musical heritages of Nepal. In order to meet the demand of national as well as international music world, the Trust has published two useful journals written by experienced music practitioners, trainers, and researchers:

- a. Dances of Nepal
(A Compilation of Research Journal)
- b. The Nepalese Folk Culture
(A Compilation of Research Journal)

The publication of these journals is a matter of great pleasure for us. We would like to thank all the authors for their valuable contribution in the journals. Nepal Music Centre Trust congratulates authors for their success in producing insightful findings on the rich diversity of Nepali music enterprise. It is hoped that these research journals will become an important marker of the heart-beat of intangible culture of Nepal.

Satya Mohan Joshi

Chairman

Nepal Music Centre Trust

Shrawan 30, 2071

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Translation

Mahesh Poudel

The Holi Festival in Bhojpuri Community

—Bina Sinha

Our ancient sages have arranged for festivals in accordance with change in season in such a way that people can, even in the din of their busy task and struggle, can celebrate them with enthusiasm and joy. Happiness is the main essence of life. Festivals are observed in order to communicate this sense of happiness, besides the fulfillment of social, religious and spiritual needs of life. Festivals bring people together. Holi is one of such festivals. People share their joys and sorrows, forgetting all sorts of enmities and are inspired to co-operate one another, by songs like this:

Holi aayo re Kanhai, ranga chachalkiyo

Sunai deu ali bansuri

[It's Holi, Kanhai. See, color has spilled everywhere. Join us, play a melody on your flute]

Or,

Holiko dinma dil khuldachha

Rangasita rang milna jahchha

[The heart blooms out on the day of Holi. Color gets mixed with colors.]

When such songs, along with a play of color, start resounding in front yards of homes far and near, we can easily understand that the festival of Holi is round the air. In such tantalizing Falguni songs, we find a blend of the sweet taste of folk and rural life.

Among seasons, spring is considered the king. It is considered the initial manifestation of joy. It is accorded with the beauty of blooming buds. Sweet fragrance tickles everyone. It is the coming of the spring that heralds the onset of a fresh beauty in nature. When flowers start embellishing homes, yards, garden and the woods and the sweet fragrance is unleashed in the air, both body and mind is tickled, and the color of Holi spills everywhere. A poetic mind sings in the frenzy of happiness:

Pulakita palas bhayo, bahulayeko chha aamp

Kopilako othmathi basanti naam

Basudhako kaagaj liyera pushpapushpit

Mausamle patra lekheko chha, youbanko naam.

[Palash is frenzied; mad is the mango

Spring comes and settles, upon lips of the buds

Upon the paper of earth, with flowers all over

Time writes a letter, addressed to youthfulness.]

After a yearlong wait, the festival of color arrives. Everyone from husband to wife, from brothers to sisters-in-law, from sisters to brothers-in-law, from friends to their friends—all anxiously wait for the festival.

Holi is the biggest among festivals of the Tarai. It is celebrated with a great pomp, splendor and enthusiasm. If, at this time, a married girl is at her parents', her brothers and sisters reach out to her husband to play Holi.

Starting on Basanta Panchami day, the festival is celebrated until it is Falgun Poornima, the full moon day in the month of April, when the Holika Utsav is observed. As soon as the palas starts blooming, people start singing songs of Holi in the villages.

According to varied social, religious and ritualistic beliefs, this festival is explained in relation with many folk traditions and rituals. This is, in fact, a symbolic festival. It symbolizes the victory of faithlessness over faith, of truth over victory, theism over atheism, and trust upon mistrust. Legend has that Holika and Hiransyakashyapu, who represent falsity and evil have their ends, and Prahalad, representing truth and victory, has his victory. So, this festival is dedicated to the celebration of truth's victory over falsity. It is also taken as a metaphor of love, brotherhood, joy and enthusiasm.

On the day of Holika Dahan—the burning of Holika's edifice—all rubbish from homesteads is collected and piled at a place. In the evening, people gather and set the pile of fire, symbolizing the burning of Holika, the cruel sister of Prahlad.

After burning Holika down, people share joy with jokes and colors. On the day of Holi, people wake up early in the morning, the elders worship their deities, and offer vermilion and other offerings and flowers. Thereafter, the elderly members of the family put red powder upon the foreheads of other

members. Even the domesticated animals are offered this tika—the red powder—, and soon after, the play of Holi starts with colors of all sort—red, green, yellow, saffron and so on.

In villages, people use less color and more mud and smudge to play Holi. Both towns and villages are fully decorated in color. People bind in groups, and go from house to house to play Holi. The atmosphere resounds with songs of Holi. After playing with colors for half of the day, people return to their respective homes in the afternoon and take bath and clean themselves, and put on new dresses. Thereafter, they undertake feasting. Every home prepares a variety of sweets and eatables. Common dishes are malpuwa, pulao, vegetables of different varieties, curd, wada etc.

Holi is a group festival. So, everything performed on his day, is done in group. Even meals are taken in group. In the evening, people go to meet their friends with red powder and papaya in hand. People fall upon the feet of the elderly folks by smearing red powder on their feet. To friends and juniors, the powder is smeared upon the cheeks, and papaya pieces are fed.

To every guest coming on the Holi day, malpuwa is fed. Malpuwa is a bread of rice flour, baked in ghee or vegetable oil. On this day, friends go even to the homes of their enemies, and embrace one another, and the spell of enmity that lasted through the whole year, ends.

Holi is the biggest of the festivals celebrated in the Tarai, which is anxiously awaited for by the people. Those far from home wait for the festival to return to their families. They make all attempts to reach home when the festival comes, so that they can meet that near and dear ones. They save their money throughout the year for this festival, so that they can buy good clothes to wear and delicious food to eat and feed others.

Holi is a festival to dispel sorrow and usher joy. During the month of Falgun, when the festival is around in the air, people gather in groups of eight to ten, and go to every house, playing drums, cymbals, tabala and other instruments, and singing Holi songs. The celebration continues until late at night.

However, in the recent times, certain decadences have become apparent in the festival. Some people take the opportunity to take opium, hashish, and alcohol, and show a lot of hooliganism. So try to imitate obscenities from bad films, because of which, girls and women in the village find it quite difficult to go out of home. It therefore, is the need of our time to think how we all can contribute to keep the purity and greatness of this festival intact, as it is an integral part of our culture and tradition. The festival inspires people to cast off all evil thoughts and behaviors, and live a life of simplicity and purity. The festival inspire everyone to rinse all types of negativities, and to live a life of

harmony, happiness and joy, so that people, who are frustrated from life are rejuvenated and revitalized to start a joyful life again.

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