

Dances of Nepal

A 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.

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Chairman

Nepal Music Centre Trust

Shrawan 30, 2071

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Translation

Mahesh Poudel

Tharu Folk Dance: Sakhya and Painya

Ashok Tharu

Many archaeologists are trying to find the origin and history of the Tharu community. If we go through the *Tharu Lok Shiva Purana*, *Tharu Loramayana*, *Tharu Lok Bhagwat Puran*, *Barkimar* etc, and try to find minutely in the library, the Tharu community can easily be identified.

Tharu folk literature arches out to many theories of origin like the Devine Theory, Theory of Special Creation, Big Bang Theory etc. In short, the Tharu folk literature indicates a time frame encompassing a period when the Tharus themselves wrote their cosmology, to the time when made the war of the Mahabharata was fought, and so on. In it we get an explanation of Paleozoic Era which is 575.8 million years old, up to Cenozoic Era which is 70 million years old, when human beings were still in the state of the primates. With the fall of the civilization and the birth of new civilization, this community marched ahead. This is indicated by some of the cultures, which can be taken as the remains of the ancient culture which is still in practice in the Tharu community. The Tharus, living in 23 districts of Nepal, had their cultural origin from Dang District and they have their distinct features. Sakhya and Painya are still in practice.

The Introduction of Sakhya and Painya

The word 'Sakhya' has originated from the word 'sakhi aa' form Braj language. It might be reminded that Krishna called his female friends 'sakhi' and Radha was his closest sakhi. Therefore, the Tharu folk Krishna calls the Tharu Lok Radha and her friends, "O Sakhis! Come in this precious occasion and dance and forget ourselves." In this way the same term 'sakhi aa' came to be 'Sakhya' later on, and took the form of folk dance.

Sakhya is one of the unique dances, which is danced during Dashain in two different ways. This dance boogied by women dancers with cymbals in hands in the tune to the madal elaborates the creation from beginning to the time of Krishna Kanhaiya in full circle. It is called Sakhya Dance. In the classical form, it can be said "Visham Lashya".

Another dance is Painya which means 'touch your feet'. The Tharu Radhas, the new dancers, are ready to dedicate themselves to Krishna and the dancers. The boys, who are regarded as Krishnas, are also ready to dedicate themselves to the Tharu girl dancers. Both sides are ready to sacrifice for one another. The dance is called Paiya.

In this way Sakhya dance is a dance of Tharu Krishnas and Tharu folk Radhas and on the another hand, Painya dance is a dance of both male and female dancers who forget themselves and fully enjoy in the tune of the madal and their dance steps. With the help of Sakhya and Painya, they want to unite and forget the world. This

dances are performed with the help of the tune of the madal and different gestures. According to Tharu dance experts, the madal used in the folk dances is played in 22 beats but unfortunately, there is lack of dancers who can play 22 beats and even there is the lack of the performer who could perform in the complete form. If we categorize as per the classical dances, Painya is also called “Bikat Lashya”.

Narrative of Sakhya and Painya

Sakhya is about the life of Krishna, the son of Bashudev and the grandson of Devmidh of Mathura of India. This is all about the narrative of Kanha, who came to Gokul from Mathura to be son of Nanda Baba and Yashoda due to the conceit of his maternal uncle Kansha, who wanted to be the king. It also shows how Krishna was fascinated at the various Gopinis (cow-hearing maidens) of Gokul especially with Radha, who later became his closest.

This Sakhya has been composed in own form by the Tharu community. Yashoda is presented as a simple housewife. She cleans every corner of the house, isolates rice from paddy chaff, prepares food and carries it for her husband to the forest, making it a nice dish including fish curry, lentils and other items.

The family life of Nandababa and Yashod runs smoothly. (Here Nandababa should be studied well.) Krishna (Kanha) becomes matured. He has a great attachment towards music; he also knows a lot about Saa Veda—the Veda dealing with music. His most favorite means of music is the flute. He is an expert of flute; he can play any tune very easily. The romantic ethos (*shringar rasa*) is the most favorite mood for him.

When Kanha plays the flute, not only the maidens get fascinated but even the animals and birds get enchanted. Same thing has been mentioned by Radha below:

Basiya ta sunana ho ho sasu sunati suhawan ri

Sakhi ra! Basiya bajuiya bhaiya koun roop ba

[How fascinating the tune of the flute is!

Tell friend, how about the person who played it?]

Radha is so much enchanted with the tune that she says what a melodious tune of the flute it is. If the tune is so melodious how can the person who played it be?

As the tune of the flute fascinates the Gopinis and they feel erotic towards Kanha and forget everything, the expression of the same state is Sakhya and Painya dance. The erotic tune of the flute not only fascinates Radha and the Gopinis but also the

whole Gokul people. They are very much eager to see the person who played such a tune. When they do not get any reason to go out, they go to see him with the purpose of milking cows. While milking the cows, Kanha hits them with a sod of soil.

Radha is not unknown about that act; she wants the intimacy of Kanha and pretends her milk pot to be quite heavy. Krishna comes to assist her but with a condition of sexual act.

The fascination of Radha and Gopinis is in extreme point towards Kanha. They are physically very beautiful; their complete make-up makes them look even more fascinating. Similarly their walk also is quite captivating. A song to this effect is presented below:

Asikai negaho ri skahiya bhau matakaiho ri

Sakhi ri! Mathakahi tikuli matkahi ri talak

Asikai negaho ri, sakhiya aankh jhimakaiho ri

Sakhi re! Aankh kahi kajala maraho ri talaka

Asikai negaho ri sakhiya chhati talakaiho ri

Sakhi ra! Chatikahi mala maraiho ri talaka

Asikai negaho ri sakhiya puththa mulakaiho ri

Sakhi ra! Puthak lahanga maraiho ri talaka

The romantic moment of Sakhya folk epic and Painya dance carries various contextual meanings. There is sufficiency of uniqueness. Life is like the waves of the sea, and it continuously goes on carrying various ups and down in the life.

Eventually, Kanha goes to Barka Fulwar for study. He gets his life completely changed. In this way the Tharu Kanha and Radhas enjoy the moments.

Read More.. (let them email us if interested to read more)

