



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Castes de musiciens au Népal by M. Gaborieau; M. Helffer; C. Jest; A. W. MacDonald;
Mireille Helffer; R. Mason

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ductory and closing solo harp segments are extraordinarily facile. Finally, Band 6 presents a chorus of pygmy females who use yodeling in producing the dense texture of their polyphonic song.

Other albums in the OCORA series have been more successful than this one, but it is, of course, authentic, and it does give us some further documentation of the African traditional music scene.

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Castes de musiciens au Népal. Recorded by M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, C. Jest and A. W. Macdonald. One 12" 33 1/3 rpm disc. 1969. Musée de l'Homme LD 20 (Editions du Département d'Ethnomusicologie). Descriptive notes in two parts: Fascicule 1 by Mireille Helffer (in French), 62 pp., musical transcriptions; Fascicule 2, translation by R. Mason (in English), 39 pp. 66 francs or \$12.00.

A generation ago Nepal was still one of the "forbidden" lands and information about its music, both written and recorded, has been relatively late to appear. At first single bands, with little documentation, were included on discs devoted to other regions; such were the items recorded by J. D. Robb (1955), Louis Sobel (1957) and Roger Morillère (?1958). The position was somewhat improved by the publication of two 7" discs of music from Nepal by Bernard Pignède (1958a; 1958b), but it is only within the last decade that 12" discs have begun to appear: those of Howard Kaufman (1962), Caspar Cronk (1964), Corneille Jest (1966) and François Jouffa (1970).

These discs are, however, not so representative as might at first seem. For much of their music did not originate in Nepal, but comes from the recently arrived Tibetan refugee communities, with some ritual fragments from the Tibetan Lamaist monasteries established on Nepalese soil (Kaufman's entire disc; Cronk, A.7-8; B.1-4; Jest, side A; Jouffa, B.11-12). The music of the three culture groups proper to Nepal has remained relatively little sampled. Yet each of these groups, Newar, Tibeto-Burman, and Nepalese, has a somewhat different music. Quantitatively, the best served of these cultures is that of the T-B. speaking tribes which form Nepal's largest ethnic element, and which include the *Botia* (Cronk 1964: A.2-3, 6, 11), Gurung (Pignède 1958a: A.3, B.1, 3; Pignède 1958b, complete; Jest 1966, B.9-10); Magar (Jest, 1966, B.5); Sherpa (Cronk 1964: A.9-10); Takali (Cronk 1964, A.4) and Tamang (Pignède 1958a: B.2; Jest 1966, B.3-4). The Newar people, also probably of Tibetan origin, were beginning to develop a relatively independent culture when they came under Gurka domination in the late 18th century; and the music of their descendants, who are still aware of themselves as an entity, is limited to four items in all (Pignède 1958a: A.2; Cronk 1964: B.11; Jest 1966: B.7-8). The Nepalese are served a little better. Though not ethnically Indian they speak a Sanskrit-derived language (Parbatian), follow the Hindu religion and have come strongly under Indian influence in their way of living (e.g., the persistent caste system) and in their arts. The fragments of their music recorded include various items whose origin is insufficiently specified, together with a few items attributed to three named castes: the

Chetri (Jest 1966: B.6), the Duiya (Jouffa: B.2), and the Gāine (Jest 1966: B.1-2. Cf. Pignède 1952b: A.1, 4; B.4).

Or such was the position until the appearance of the disc now under review, for this is devoted exclusively to the music of the Nepalese castes of musicians. The new disc, published by the Ethnomusicology Department of the Musée de l'Homme with the assistance of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, has been compiled from recordings made in Nepal at various times between 1961 and 1968 by four scholars: M. Gaborieau, Mireille Helffer, Corneille Jest and A. W. MacDonald. The documentation, edited by Mireille Helffer, takes the form of a book with two fasciculi. The first of these contains an introduction, a brief description of each caste, a commentary on each item recorded, the original texts, translations and musical transcriptions of four of the songs (A.3-5; B.1), a plate showing instruments and performances, a map and a bibliography. The second fasciculus, an English translation by R. Mason (revised by A. W. MacDonald) is rather shorter as it does not repeat the original Nepalese texts, musical transcriptions, map or photographic plate. The documentation is thus far fuller than we are normally allowed and provides a clear and informative account of some essential data.

The notes explain that whereas the Nepalese caste system was officially abolished in 1963, the system in effect continues with little change. The castes here represented are the *Damāi*, the *Huḍkiya* and the *Gāine*. Whereas some *Gāine* items have already appeared, the music of the others is new to recording. The items, which may be heard at length, are as follows:

- A.1. *Damāi*. Marriage music: 3 instrumental airs, played respectively in front of the bride's house; during procession to the groom's house; on arriving at the groom's house.
- A.2. *Huḍkiya*. Dance music: antiphonal singing (2 men) accompanied by 2 drums (*huḍkā*).
- A.3. *Gāine*. Lament: man's voice accompanied by *sāraṅgi*.
- A.4. *Gāine*. Election polling song: man's voice accompanied by *sāraṅgi*.
- A.5. *Gāine*. Soldier's song: man's voice accompanied by *sāraṅgi*.
- B.1. *Gāine*. Song about a legendary bird: man's voice accompanied by *sāraṅgi*.
- B.2. *Gāine*. Hymn to the goddess Sarasvati: man's voice accompanied by *sāraṅgi* and *arbajo*.

The *Damāi* are a caste of tailors and instrumentalists who come from south of the Himalayan border. Their ensembles are of some size, and include the following instruments, all of which are to be heard in band A.1 except the metal horns (*narsīnga*).

trumpets	: <i>karnāl</i> x 2
horns	: <i>narsīnga</i> x 2
shawms	: <i>sahanai</i> x 2
drums: large kettles	: <i>damāha</i> x 2 (pair)
small kettle	: <i>tyāmko</i>
two-skinned	: <i>ḍholak</i>
cymbals	: <i>jhyamta</i> x 2 (pair)

The *Huḍkiya* caste, who come from west of the River Karnali, are a sub-caste of the *Damāi*. They are chiefly instrumentalists who play in company with the *Damāi* at important marriages: otherwise their precise role is "not fully clear." The name of the caste is derived from that of the hourglass drum *huḍkā* in which they specialize professionally.

The *Gāine* come from the central zone. They are beggars and professional singers. Their repertoire is lyrical (*jhyāure*), narrative (*karkhā*, *sabai*) and religious (*stuti*, *māngal*). The instrument they normally use for preludes, interludes and accompaniment (drone and melodic doubling) is the *sārāngi*, whose morphology differs from that of the Indian instrument of the same name, and whose four strings consist traditionally of goat-gut, but are usually made of wire or nylon today. The final example (B.2) adds a 4-stringed lute called *arbajo*, which the *Gāine* claim as their original instrument, though it is now very rare. They include some good singers, and the voice on bands A.5 and B.1, that of Birkha Bahadur, has clear enunciation and is particularly attractive.

The notation provided with the documentation is stated to be more a listening guide than a faithful transcription. It is stylized and sometimes only approximate. It tells us far more about the structure than about the style, though even so it occasionally omits bare essentials. Thus the notation of B.4 would make the vocal ambitus an octave plus a minor sixth, whereas it is an octave plus a minor seventh.

This disc is to be welcomed as an important addition to the short list of Nepalese recordings available. It gives us a far better idea of the *Gāine* song repertoire and it adds some music of two castes hitherto unrepresented (the *Damāi* and the *Huḍkiya*). The sound is good and the documentation is unusually generous. It is to be hoped that the Musée de l'Homme may issue further discs of this quality on the Indian-dominated sphere of Nepalese music: perhaps by way of augmenting our picture of the *Damāi* and *Huḍkiya* castes or of adding that of other castes (e.g., *Bahun*, *Takuri*) not so far represented.

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1955 Music of the World's Peoples, V. FE.4508. New York: Folk-Ways Record and Service Corporation. D.3. Note by Henry Cowell.

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Südindische Tempelinstrumente. Recorded and with notes by Josef Kuckertz. One 12" 33 1/3 rpm disc. 1969. Klangdokumente zur Musikwissenschaft KM 0001. Descriptive notes (in German, with summary in English), 12 pp., musical transcriptions, photos. Available from: Staatliche Museen, Generalverwaltung, Arnimallee 23-27, Berlin 33, Germany. 6.- DM.

Hindu Temple ritual is not permitted to be witnessed by non-Hindus. In the relatively large discography of Indian music, temple music remains unrepresented. Very occasional fragments coming from more peripheral aspects of temple life have found their way onto recordings, but the conspicuous gap remains. The present disc, recorded in Madras, does nothing to alter this situation and tells us next to nothing about temple ritual music in any meaningful sense. This is not in its disfavour, for its stated aims are quite different. Its primary object is to present separately each of several instruments used in the temple, so that each may be clearly recognized in terms of its pitch, characteristic tone-quality and rhythmic patterns. Its secondary aim is to show how in small ensembles the constituent instruments relate to each other rhythmically, and this is further elucidated by means of ten short musical transcriptions. The descriptive notes identify the instruments and their players and are largely devoted to the morphology and playing techniques. The information on the place and manner of use was supplied by Dr. Damodaran of the Museum of Musical Instruments at Madras, and Josef Kuckertz has further consulted and cited leading writers on the instruments. The twenty-nine clear photographs show the instruments and, as far as possible, how they are held and played.

The aims are well realized. Although the recordings were made by the temple musicians in a private house—out of ritual context and in a foreign acoustic, that is—they may be reasonably considered "representative sound documentation." Technically excellent, the recordings enable the listener to distinguish clearly between several different varieties of a single species (e.g., 3 types of cymbals; 6 types of kettle-drums, and so on). The 37 bands, covering 29 different instruments, vary much in length, though only 11 bands exceed one minute in duration. With the possible exception of B.15, which lasts 14 seconds only, they all seem long enough to communicate the essentials. The disc contains the following instruments, which I have listed in the order of the Hornbostel-Sachs *Systematik*, and four of the bands (A5, 8, 12; B.1) add a voice or voices.