# MUSIC AND DANCES FROM CENTRAL NEPAL

## The Works of Subi Shah

VOLUME 1

EDITED BY ANNA MARIE STIRR, MASON BROWN, HIKMAT KHADKA, AND LOCHAN RIJAL



# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Contents | 7 |
| A Note on the Text | 9 |
| A Note on Audiovisual Recordings | 11 |
| Acknowledgments | 13 |
| 1. Translator’s Introduction to the Project: Subi Shah and his Worlds of Performanc. | 15 |
| 2. ‘A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music’ | 57 |
| 3. ‘Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances’ | 69 |
| 4. Mādal | 159 |
| 5. Introduction to Nepali Tunes | 315 |
| Bibliography | 421 |
| Glossary | 435 |
| List of Figures | 441 |
| List of Tables | 449 |
| List of Video Recordings | 451 |
| List of Audio Recordings | 467 |
| Index | 473 |

# MUSIC AND DANCES FROM CENTRAL NEPAL

# VOLUME I

# Music and Dances from Central Nepal

## The Works of Subi Shah

Volume I

*Edited by Anna Stirr, Mason Brown, Hikmat Khadka, and Lochan Rijal*

*with*
*Rajan Shrestha (Audio Production)*
*Dinesh Raj Upadhyaya (Video Production)*
*Rita Thapa Magar (Community Coordinator, Sankhu Sohraghar)*
*Ram Bahadur Sundas (Community Coordinator, Jyamrung)*
*Dhruva Shah (Community Coordinator, Jyamrung)*

*Sankha Devi Jyamrung Darbar Pañchai Bājā, Jyamrung*
*Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar*

*And the performers and villagers of Jyamrung and Sankhu Sohraghar*

OpenBook Publishers

https://www.openbookpublishers.com

© 2026 Anna Stirr, Mason Brown, Hikmat Khadka, and Lochan Rijal, acting as trustees for members of the Jyamrung and Sankhu Sohraghar communities.

This text is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC BY 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text and to make commercial use of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information: Anna Stirr, Mason Brown, Hikmat Khadka, and Lochan Rijal (eds), *Music and Dances from Central Nepal: The Works of Subi Shah.* Volume I. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2026, https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246

In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit, https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/0246#copyright

Further details about the Creative Commons license are available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of some of the images included in this publication differ from the above. This information is provided in the captions and in the list of illustrations. Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders, and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at https://archive.org/web.

Updated digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/0246#resources. The entire collection of recordings for both Volume I and Volume II is hosted at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa Scholarspace repository, and is accessible at https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112600 and https://www.youtube.com/@ghintangghintang

Information about any revised edition of this work will be provided at https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-941-5
ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80511-111-5
ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-051-1
ISBN Digital eBook (epub): 978-1-80064-174-7
Digital eBook (HTML): 978-1-80064-956-9
DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0246

Cover image: Dancers from the Jalkanya Yuva Club in Sankhu Sohraghar, Dhading, Nepal, performing Charitra dance (2023). Photo by Anna Marie Stirr, all rights reserved.
Cover design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

# Contents

A Note on the Text vii
A Note on Audiovisual Recordings ix
Acknowledgments xi

1. Translator's Introduction to the Project:
Subi Shah and his Worlds of Performance and Scholarship 1
2. 'A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music' 43
3. 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances' 55
4. *Mādal* 145
5. *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* 301

Bibliography 407
Glossary 421
List of Figures 427
List of Tables 435
List of Video Recordings 437
List of Audio Recordings 453
Indexes 459

# A Note on the Text

We use the Nepal Survey Department's system for Romanization of Devanagari script,[1] with one modification: we use ś for श instead of the system's prescribed sh.

We leave diacritics off proper names and words which are commonly used in English, like bazaar.

Nepali language terms are italicized the first time they appear in each chapter, then not italicized in the main text after that. Full song lyrics in Nepali remain italicized.

In song lyrics, we prioritize poetic meter in our transliterations and follow the poetic meter in choosing whether to include or omit the inherent /a/ sounds attached to Devanagari consonants.

Dates are given in C.E. (A.D.) with Vikram Sambat (v.s.) dates in footnotes when they occur in the text.

Footnotes in the translated texts are explanatory annotations added by the translators. They are not part of the original works.

1 This system can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab4e364e5274a1aa5933450/ROMANIZATION_OF_NEPALI.pdf

# A Note on Audiovisual Recordings

The audio and video recordings that accompany this book are accessible in two ways: online readers may click directly on the stable handle provided with each recording in the text and list of audiovisual recordings at the end of the book, while readers of the print edition can scan the accompanying QR codes with a phone or tablet to reach the same material. This dual mode of access is intended to ensure that the sonic and visual dimensions of the music and dances described here remain within reach regardless of how the reader encounters the text. The audiovisual material can be listened to or watched online as well as downloaded.

The majority of the recordings included here are used as examples in this book. In addition, we include the entirety of Subi Shah's album *Lok Bhākamā Ekal Prayās* (EMW 2005). The entire collection of recordings for both Volume I and Volume II is hosted at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa Scholarspace repository, and is accessible at https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112600

# Acknowledgments

Our team is grateful to and fondly remembers the late Surendra Bikram 'Subi' Shah for his myriad contributions to music and dance in Nepal, and for having the initial idea of preparing an English translation of his works. We thank the estate of Subi Shah for providing and licensing texts, photos, and audio recordings to include in this publication.

We are grateful to everyone who believed in this idea for the decades it has taken to bring it to fruition. Those who have encouraged the project from 2005 on include Mangal Maharjan of East Meets West Music Box (EMW), Bikas Karki of Kantipur Media, Rashil Palanchoke, Rubin Shrestha, Pavit Maharjan, and all members of Kutumba band, plus flutists Ram Kumar Singh and Aashis Pariyar. In the intervening years, those who helped prepare for translation included Chandra Kafle, then of Naya Patrika, who transcribed Shah's handwritten manuscripts; Maniraj Gurung, also then of Naya Patrika, who helped edit transcriptions and was always available for translation questions; Richard Widdess, of SOAS, who shared ideas about musical transcriptions and provided early comments on the draft translations; and Dharm Bhavuk of the University of Hawai'i Mānoa, who helped translate the more esoteric Hindu song texts. Alessandra Tosi of Open Book Publishers saw the potential in this manuscript, and has patiently shepherded the project along through the years.

In Jyamrung, we are especially grateful for the hospitality of the Shah and Sundas families, and of all the villagers who welcomed us. In Sankhu Sohraghar, we especially acknowledge Rita Thapa Magar's mother Til Kumari Magar, her brother Anand Thapa Magar, and husband Mohan Ballav Rana Magar, and all the villagers whose valuable contributions made it possible for us to film two

rounds of dances. We are deeply grateful to the performers who contributed their talents to the videos that illustrate the concepts in these volumes. As they are too numerous to name here, they are credited on the recordings and in the lists of media below.

This project would not have been possible without institutional support from multiple sources. We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities Scholarly Editions and Translations Grant that provided the bulk of our financial support. We also acknowledge the hardship faced by our project and many others when these grants were rescinded by the US Department of Government Efficiency in 2025. We thank Kathmandu University Department of Music for giving their faculty and graduate students leave to go to Dhading to film, and Lochan Rijal Productions for managing the project on the Nepal side. We are also grateful to Kutumba and Cowlee Studios for letting us use their studios and practice rooms free of charge. The University of Hawai'i Mānoa is hosting our collection of audiovisual materials in the library's ScholarSpace repository; here, we thank web developer Daniel Ishimitsu for his assistance.

The University of Hawai'i Mānoa College of Arts, Languages, and Letters (CALL) provided Anna Stirr with a Summer Fellowship in 2022, a Dean's Travel Award in 2025, and a Jumpstart Grant in 2026. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research Services awarded a Faculty Research Travel Grant in 2024, and the Department of Asian studies awarded a publication subvention in 2025. Membership at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, in Spring 2025, supported by the Elizabeth and J. Richardson Member Fund and the Fund for Historical Studies, gave Anna time to write the introductions to this volume and to each of Subi Shah's translated works.

Anna Stirr
Mason Brown
Hikmat Khadka
Lochan Rijal
Rajan Shrestha
Dinesh Raj Upadhyaya
Rita Thapa Magar
Ram Bahadur Sundas
Dhruva Shah

# 1. Translator's Introduction to the Project: Subi Shah and his Worlds of Performance and Scholarship

*Anna Stirr*

The Nepali performer and educator Surendra Bikram (Subi) Shah made it his life's work to develop, sustain, and promote Nepali folk genres of music, dance, and drama, intricately connected with local religious practice in the tradition known as pāṅgdure, in his home area of Nepal's central hills. Raised in this tradition, he became one of its leading exponents and innovators. Working outside of academia, he was relatively unhindered by the disciplinary strictures or colonial epistemologies that have shaped the study of performance across South Asia. He was simultaneously admired and criticized as a preservationist and as an innovator. In these two volumes we translate six of his works, plus his short autobiographical account: 'A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music;' 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances;' *Mādal*; *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* (Volume I); *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*; *Basic Theory of Folk Dance*; and *Soraṭī* (Volume II).

These volumes and accompanying audio and video recordings present Subi Shah's works in English translation, offering a comprehensive, regionally centered account of music and dance theory and practice from Nepal's central hills. Folk songs

©2026 Stirr, CC BY 4.0 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246.01

and the song dance, and instrumental genres performed in *pāṅgdure* (*mārunī*) dance troupes and the *pañchai* (*naumati*) *bājā*[1] instrumental ensembles feature prominently in these works. All together, they provide cultural and music- and dance-theoretical insights applicable far beyond this region.

Written primarily in the 1960s and 1970s and published in later decades, Shah's works blend elements of music theory, history, ethnography, memoir, nationalist polemic, and folkloric narrative. In this genre-bending complexity, they give us the fullest available picture of musical-religious life in this region in the recent past and present, and its connections to neighbors near and far. With detailed information about music and dance genres' social importance and their connections to numinous beings of the sacred landscape, his writings are the only scholarship on these genres that analyzes and provides concrete, interrelated, and in-depth examples of multiple aspects of performance.

Each of these volumes can stand alone, as Shah intended. Together, they make up one of the most comprehensive existing works of scholarship on any Nepali performance tradition. Shah describes his life and work as a performer briefly in 'A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music.' In 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances,' a chapter from the dance textbook *Nrityakalā*, he addresses melodies, rhythmic cycles (*tāl*), song structure, poetic meter, and dance in each of the primary genres of his focus: *khyālī*, *khyālī bhākā*, *jhyāure*, *jhyāure bhākā*, *charitra*, and *soraṭhī*, plus *chuḍkā*. *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* focuses on a theory of melody based on the flute (*bā̃surī* and *muralī*) and *sahanāī*, with examples of pañchai bājā rāgas, flute airs, and song tunes. *Mādal* focuses on the mādal drum and its genre-defining rhythmic cycles (*tāl*), especially as played with pāṅgdure dances. *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* addresses songs—their poetic meters and prosody, structure, and relationships to tāl and dance. *Basic Theory of Folk Dance* introduces Shah's own dance notation for the pāṅgdure dances, clearly articulating their relationships to song, melody, and tāl.

1 Pañchai bājā and naumati bājā are two terms for the same type of ensemble. We primarily use pañchai bājā throughout this text, simply for consistency.

*Soraṭī* contains the full oral text of the first part of the Soraṭhī dance-drama, along with discussion and analysis based on Shah's comparative studies.

Reading these works together presents significant insights into these varied genres, which can be applied beyond the regional focus of these works. *Mādal* and *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* together show that tāl and poetic meter are primary aspects in defining genres, with dance a close second. 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances' and *Basic Theory of Folk Dance* further demonstrate how tāl, poetic meter, expectations for narrative poetry, and dance together shape song structure and further define song and dance genres. As a beginner learning about Nepali music decades ago, *Mādal* showed me what must have been obvious to insiders to the music and dance traditions of central Nepal: the bols played on the mādal guide the dancers. And, the reason behind some folk songs repeating one phrase over and over was simple: this section of the song, with repeated lyrics and percussion changes, is when people dance. I had seen this in performance, but had not known it was such a central part of traditional performance expectations. From further reading of *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*, I learned about the associations of different poetic meters (*chhanda*) with different types of songs and dances. Shah's writings make such insights, basic to insiders, available to everyone else who would like to know more of this world of music and dance and make comparisons across regions and genres.

Shah's descriptions, musical transcriptions, and recordings, which we reproduce and include here, are grounded in experience of performance and everyday life in Jyamrung village in Dhading, plus other regional centers of Gorkha and Nuwakot, and his civilian and army life in the capital, Kathmandu. His writings provide an essential resource for scholars and performers, including information that has been published nowhere else. As major contributions to scholarship and these traditions' cultural sustainability,[2] Shah's works deserve greater attention. And, we

2 Mason, Michael Atwood, and Rory Turner, 'Cultural Sustainability: A Framework for Relationships, Understanding, and Action', *Journal of American Folklore*, 133.527 (2020), pp. 81–99.

hope that his meticulous attention to melody, rhythm, dance, and prosody, and how they all fit together, can serve as a model for future performance scholarship.

Our goals for this translation and audiovisual documentation project are to make Shah's works available and understandable to audiences from within and outside his tradition. A broader goal is to facilitate relationships among scholars and musicians interested in comparison, performance, and deeper understanding of music and dance genres across the Himalayan region and its diasporas. We see this as a step toward decolonizing music studies in that it centers the marginalized perspectives of vernacular traditions and their music and dance theories, arguing (in Shah's voice, in our own voices, and in the voices of the performers) for their equal status among traditions and theories currently seen as dominant. As we help bring these traditions and theories into a register of discourse from which they have been mostly excluded, we also aim to do the inverse: to create a portal for English speakers into the Nepali and other included languages and vice versa, for staff notation readers into the sargam notation and vice versa, and for those who know one version of a dance, a dance-drama, or a pañchai bājā rāga into more of its versions and possibilities, as expressed in central Dhading over the course of the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries.

If we are to discuss how this project contributes to decolonization in studies of music, dance, folklore, and performance, we must address its obvious limits regarding issues of caste, class, and gender: Subi Shah was a Thakuri Shah, born in a palace, a member of the erstwhile royal family, however distantly related to those who held state power. As many historians, anthropologists and political scientists have noted, the Shahs were responsible for much internal colonization of Nepal, from the expropriation of land to the suppression of varied languages and cultures. Subi Shah's voice is not the personal voice of someone marginalized in terms of class, caste, or gender. His views on the elites' denigration of folk traditions in Nepal during his lifetime, however, are quite valid, and he writes from within these traditions, aiming to raise them to equal status with those valued and promoted by the

colonizing policies of his own relatives. Still, his caste privilege shows through in his writing: while he commends the musicians of the Jyamrung pañchai bājā, whose caste has been considered Dalit, as experts in performance and music theoretical knowledge, he never overtly challenges caste itself. Subi Shah's unique position as a privileged individual deeply invested in folk performance traditions facilitated his ability to document and analyze them. Inarguably the work of a cultural insider in a multi-caste, multi-ethnic tradition, his writings still come from the position of a man from the palace.

We are grateful for the existence of these texts, while recognizing that had the same phenomena been documented by a Subi Damai, or a Subina Magar, they would provide us with different perspectives from voices that have yet to be widely heard. Our work brings in more voices, especially in the videos whose performances were organized by Ram Bahadur Sundas and Rita Thapa Magar, and feature the Damai, Magar, and Newar performers of their villages. Conversations and shared experiences with these performers significantly inform our translations. Looking ahead, we hope that our translations and recordings might inspire such scholarly and performed engagement from even more voices across social positions of caste, ethnicity, class, and gender, in the service of cultural sustainability of performance traditions. Understanding such sustainability as dynamic and changing, our introductions and annotations, along with our audio and video recordings, set Shah's writings and the songs, rhythms, tunes, and dances he analyzes within the dynamics of Nepal's history. In our introductions to each of Shah's works, we explore different facets of how Shah's home village of Jyamrung in the central hills interacts with the world beyond its horizons, taking in new forms and adapting them into local traditions, while also influencing how the same forms may manifest elsewhere.

This leads us to a disclaimer: we do not agree with all Shah's opinions, especially those about the undesirability of change. We are all practicing musicians in diverse global popular cultural forms who share a love for traditional music and dance, and also strongly believe in the power of creativity and innovation. We

therefore invite readers to examine how Shah's life and historical context may have shaped his views and preservationist polemics, along with how his efforts at preservation may contribute to the continued flourishing and variation of these cultural forms now and in the future.

## Subi Shah's Lifeworlds: Religion, Politics, and Performance

It helps to understand the world into which Subi Shah was born: that of the Thakuri Shah rulers of Jyamrung in the latter years of the Rana era. For his family and in his immediate surroundings, Hindu tantric Śakta ritual upheld the order of things, from the agricultural calendar to the Shah monarchy which retained religious authority and remained the seat of sovereignty even while the Ranas held temporal political power. The local goddess Sankha Devi of Jyamrung held the highest importance for the village, and across the river was a temple of the goddess Tripura Sundari, whose yearly festival known as Nwāgī Jātrā[3] brought devotees and revelers together from Jyamrung and other nearby villages in Dhading and Gorkha, and whose power was significant to the Shah monarchy. While this Hindu ritual environment characterized Shah's personal lifeworld, he resided in a broader multi-ethnic, multi-religious space, and so was in frequent contact with Hindu-Buddhist Newar religious observances and varied local shamanic beliefs and practices among the Magar and other ethnic groups living in these areas.[4] More tangentially, he also interacted

3 The term Nwāgī Jātrā is used for multiple festivals; the festival local to Salyankot and Salyantar on the Dhading-Gorkha border is the goddess Tripura Sundari's. Subi Shah wrote about and documented this festival with audio recordings; his articles are listed on his CV (see Volume II), but the tapes he lists have yet to be found.

4 For some understanding of local caste and ethnic demographics, we can refer to the 2021 Nepal Government census data on Nilkantha Municipality, the new administrative unit formed in 2014 that includes Jyamrung, Dhading Besi, and the surrounding area including Sankhu Sohraghar village where we filmed Pāṅgdure dances. While dubbed a municipality, apart from the district center of Dhading Besi the area remains rural. Nilkantha Municipality's caste/ethnic demographics are as follows: 17.6% Newar, 16.4% Hill Brahmin, 16.4%

with Buddhist and shamanic festivals and performances among Tamang and other groups. The boundaries between religious systems in practice were porous, and many observances were shared in various ways, even if simply sharing space. These all likely influenced his sense of how performance connected the social, natural, and spiritual domains.

In his lifetime, Shah saw the rise and fall of four political systems: the Rana oligarchy (1846–1950), the constitutional monarchy of the 1950s (1951–1959), the Panchayat absolute monarchy with its dictatorial one-party system (1960–1990), and the constitutional monarchy of the 1990s through the end of the Maoist People's War in 2006. He died two months before the democratic republic was established in 2008. With the political-economic changes he witnessed came major cultural changes. While Shah remained a supporter of the monarchy throughout his life, he seems to have been satisfied with constitutional monarchy as a system. But while he did not mourn the end of the Rana regime, it appears that his performing and musicological career was indelibly marked by nostalgia for the environment of his childhood and youth, when his family was at the center of both performance and patronage of the performing arts, guided by rituals connecting them with the sacred geography of their local and wider worlds.

What remains of Jyamrung Darbār is located on a fortified hill in the middle of Jyamrung village. The 'palace,' a two-story wooden structure,[5] was surrounded by a small fruit orchard and a garden.

---

Gurung, 12.0% Chhetri, 10.6% Magar, 7.7% Tamang, 6.5% Sarki, 4.1% Kami, 2.7% Damai/Dholi, 2.2% Kumal, 1.4% Thakuri, 0.5% Ghale, 0.5% Sanyasi/Dasnami, 0.3% Musalman, 0.2% Brahmu/Baramo, 0.2% Gharti/Bhujel, 0.1% Kalwar, 0.1% Rai, 0.1% Teli and 0.2% others. In Jyamrung, the population of Chhetris, Thakuris, and Damais is higher than the municipality's average, and the population of Gurungs is lower. Sankhu Sohraghar is predominantly Magar and Newar, with some Chhetris, one Brahmin family, and few if any families of other castes or ethnic groups.

5 The word Darbār as used in colloquial Nepali refers first to a palace, but it also connotes a gathering at a royal court—the term implies the physical structure as well as the assemblies of people held there. As Jyamrung was never a major seat of political power but rather a military outpost during the early Shah conquests and then mostly a waypoint between Gorkha and Nuwakot, a brick palace in the Newar Malla architectural style found in Gorkha and Nuwakot was not built there. But, such architectural expertise was applied

This palace was burnt down in 2003 during the People's War.[6] At a right angle to the palace were its stables and guesthouse. In the days of horseback travel, horses were stabled on the ground floor and guests were housed one floor up. This remaining structure also burnt down in 2025, the fire attributed to faulty electrical wiring. The courtyard that both the palace and stables faced held a hitching post and watering trough for horses, along with the sacred tulsi plant that adorns the yards of most Hindu families. Paved with large flagstones, this courtyard was where most of the music and dance performances hosted by the court took place. These included the pāṅgdure dances of which Subi Shah was to become an expert, along with daily performances of ceremonial music by the official ritual musicians as well as others in service at the palace. The Hindu ritual calendar, with its many pujās and festivals devoted to deities and seasonal events, provided opportunities for the palace to host performances of the varied types of songs, dances, and instrumental music associated with the changing seasons. They were the rulers and patrons; the music-loving Subi and his father Chandra Bikram Shah had only to invite performers to the court to learn about their music. This position provided Subi Shah the opportunity to become a performer, musicologist, and documentarian, and create the written and recorded works we have today.

The fort which became Jyamrung Darbār was initially established during King Nara Bhupal Shah's time, between 1703 and 1713 when the Shahs of Gorkha were earnestly pursuing their expansionist ambitions. Jyamrung lies halfway between Gorkha and Nuwakot, the object of their attempted conquest at the time; they would not capture it during Nara Bhupal Shah's lifetime. With their army they expelled the local residents and built a military

to the stables and guesthouse in some fashion over various periods, which can be seen in the pañchai bājā videos accompanying *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*.

6 This war was fought from 1996–2006 between Maoists and the state security forces. It ended in an agreement that brought the Maoists into democratic politics and established a Constituent Assembly to restructure the state. The first action of that Constituent Assembly in May 2008 was a vote that ended the monarchy and made Nepal a republic.

outpost on Jyamrung's hills. This hilltop fort once hosted barracks and arms, and was a staging area for the Gorkha kingdom's eastward conquests. It was also established as a town; today's community of Newar residents are descended from the Newar artisans invited to the area by the previous king, Ram Shah, to produce high quality goods with a focus on metalsmithing (hence the ethnonym Subi Shah sometimes uses for this group, Bãḍa, which in Nepali refers to the metal utensils they created). Royal residents brought other artisans with them, especially the Damai hereditary tailor and musician families whose performances provided the ritual soundscape for maintaining spiritual and temporal sovereignty, along with producing an auspicious environment for pujās and seasonal festivals.[7] The Newar families settled in what became the bazaar between the barracks and the palace, and the Damai families initially settled further east along the ridge, at the foot of the hill housing Sankha Devi's shrine. Their land remained palace land, and even today remains to be converted from *guthi* (land held by a government religious trust) to *raikār* (individual landholdings).[8] The population of Jyamrung over the last century has consisted of these initial groups plus Chhetri, Brahmin, Magar, and other households representing ethnic groups more populous in other areas of the district, including Gurung, Tamang, Bhujel, Kumal, Sarki, Kami, Ghale, and Muslim.

Once the kingdom of Gorkha was established in Jyamrung's immediate surroundings after King Prithvi Narayan Shah conquered Nuwakot in 1744, Jyamrung served as a halfway point on the horseback journey between the more important palaces

7 While the Damai have historically been considered Dalit, the Newar metalsmiths have not. Yet both groups had patronage relationships with the Shahs.

8 A 2015 report in the Dhading Post claims that *all* the land in Jyamrung was owned by the royal Vayu Guthi. According to the Sundas family, all the land they live on is still Shah guthi land. According to the Jyamrung Shahs, they own a great deal more land in Dhading, including some that was requisitioned by the state to build the Prithvi Highway tunnels; some family members expressed hope that they might use the compensation to rebuild the palace, but so far the family has not agreed on a plan for reconstruction. DhadingPost, 'Gorkhā Ra Dhadiṅgmā Ajhai Rājāko Nāmmā Jagga,' *Dhading Post*, 25 March 2015, https://dhadingpost.com/2015/03/25/2848/

in Gorkha and Nuwakot, and once the Shahs had conquered the Kathmandu Valley, it continued to be an important rest stop on officials' journeys between Gorkha, Nuwakot, and Kathmandu. Prithvi Narayan Shah's son Pratap Singh Shah lived in Jyamrung for a time, followed by Naru Shah, who held the title of Chautariya. It is from the line of Chautariya Naru Shah that Subi Shah is descended.[9] When Subi Shah was a child, and up until the Prithvi Highway connecting Kathmandu, Gorkha, and Pokhara was completed in 1974, this path was the main route between Gorkha, Nuwakot, and Kathmandu. Officials routinely passed through Jyamrung on horseback, the ordinary people on foot. One can imagine the atmosphere at Jyamrung Darbār throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as one of frequent political discussions and participation in festival revelry as visiting dignitaries and messengers passed through and participated in palace life.

At the Dasain festival, ritual offerings of *phulpātī* were traditionally carried on foot from Gorkha to Kathmandu along this route. These days, they are still brought from one Darbār to another, but by car along the highway. Nevertheless, the walking route remains significant in practices of official memory-making: currently, representatives of the Nepal Army trek from Gorkha to Kathmandu along this route once a year on Prithvi Jayanti, commemorating the 'unification of Nepal' under the Shahs of Gorkha. This atmosphere of travel and connection between royal

9 Chautariya was a high administrative post in the Shah government given to close cousins of the king. Chautariyas commanded troops and were appointed governors of provincial areas, in which their duties included tax collection, maintenance of law and order, and communication with the king. In the Rana era, provincial administrative duties were given to officials under the title of Bada Hakim, which was held by Subi Shah's father Chandra Bikram Shah; Chandra Bikram's older brother Yaksha Bikram held the title of Kaji (Minister) and his son Chuda Bikram held the title of Chautariya, by then a title of honor rather than one encompassing significant duties. The male line of Subi Shah's family, tracing back to King Prithvipati Shah of Gorkha (d. 1716) through his eighth son Shantarup, is as follows: Prithvipati Shah, Shantarup Ratan Shah, Naru Shah, Akbar Shah, Yasha Pratap Shah, Devi Pratap Shah, Chandra Bikram Shah, Surendra Bikram (Subi) Shah. See https://www.royalark.net/Nepal/nepal4.htm. Subi Shah married Swarna Kumari Shah and had one son, Dhruva Shah, and two daughters, Sachana Rana (neé Shah) and Ambika Rana (neé Shah).

seats was reflected in Subi Shah's early childhood, as he most of his early years in Nuwakot and then Gorkha Darbārs, following his father's postings as Bada Hakim or governor of the region. What he remembered most from those times were the ritual and festival performances.

By the time Subi Shah was born, the Rana hereditary prime ministers had ruled Nepal for eighty-three years with the Shah kings as figureheads. Shahs of his family's rank worked as regional administrators for the Ranas. During a Rana inspection tour or *dauḍāhā* which Shah's father hosted in Gorkha in 1937, Subi Shah first performed pāṅgdure dances. In his autobiography (Chapter 2, this volume) he details how this event shaped his life and career.[10] The large-scale pageantry of the Rana inspection tour involved performances by pāṅgdure groups local to Gorkha as well as the soldiers in the traveling retinue.

Such exchanges of pāṅgdure performance echo those that are said to have occurred among the courts and armies in the Bāisī and Chaubisī states in western Nepal from the fourteenth century on.[11] The association of pāṅgdure/mārunī dances with kingship dates back to the Bāisī-Chaubisī states of the medieval and early modern eras, with various kings credited with starting such traditions, and

10 A film depicting life in Gorkha from 1957, 'The Land of the Gurkhas,' filmed by a crew led by the Austrian ethnologist Christof von Fürer Haimendorf and narrated by Richard Attenborough, can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tRgbFUtw0A. While depicting Gorkha District twenty years after Subi Shah's childhood, the technological and architectural situation of life in the hills had changed little during this time. This film contains footage of ghā̃tu rather than Pāṅgdure dances, but the feasting and presence of deities in everyday life are similar to what occurs during Pāṅgdure performances. While the film begins with Gorkha, it continues following the Haimendorf expedition to Kathmandu and beyond to the eastern hills. The Haimendorf expedition would have taken the Jyamrung road to get from Gorkha to Kathmandu, but this three-day journey is not included in the film.

11 In the medieval era, the Yatse or Khas Malla kings are known for having encouraged and supported the performing arts, as did the Mallas of the Kathmandu Valley; the Sen kings who ruled over areas of the Tarai and central hills are also known for encouraging the ballads sung by traveling Gorakhpanthi yogis and their followers. These medieval kingdoms had influence on the cultural exchanges that shaped Nepali performance traditions as found today. Mahendra Budhathoki, 'Social Representations on Singaru Folk Songs in Nepal,' *Patan Pragya*, 11.2 (2022), pp. 82–92, https://doi.org/10.3126/pragya.v11i02.52043

their armies, including those of Prithvi Narayan Shah and of Magar kings who preceded him, credited with spreading them from place to place. Magars played a major role in the development of pāṅgdure dances and their diffusion throughout the Himalayan foothills; the word mārunī itself is a Magar word, and pāṅgdure dance songs in some places remember the fourteenth-century Magar king Balihang of Baldeng.[12] Armies remain spaces for cultural exchange and the continuity of pāṅgdure dances throughout centuries of political change. Performers whose pāṅgdure performances were documented by the anthropologist John Hitchcock described exchanges of Krishna Charitra songs among Magar and Gurung Gurkha soldiers serving in the British Indian Army in the First and Second World Wars,[13] and Shah's own army career demonstrates the importance of pāṅgdure performance in the Nepal Army in more recent times.

Given the rituals that surround pāṅgdure dance performance, it is possible that the songs, dances, and dance-dramas they performed could have been understood as part of rituals of propitiation and protection not just for the performers but for the whole kingdom. Links to ideas about the theatre state and performing power are also tempting, but as the anthropologist Gerard Toffin reminds us, we must remember that rulers were not simply putting on performances to dupe their subjects into accepting their power through pomp, but rather, these rituals exist in a cultural system to which the rulers themselves are also subject.[14] The medieval era was one of tantric sorcery as a popular political tool; the powers of the great yogis were revered and rulers sought out such adepts to increase their political power.[15] Pāṅgdure dances involve calling

12 Motilal Parajuli, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)* (Dikshant Pustak Bhandar, 2006), p. 43; Dharmaprasad Shris (Thapa), *Magarātī Saṁskṛiti*, 2nd edn (Magar Academic Group, 2014), p. 82.

13 John Hitchcock, *The Magars of Banyan Hill* (Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1966), p. 94.

14 Gérard Toffin, 'Royal Images and Ceremonies of Power in Nepal (17th–21st Centuries),' *Rivista Di Studia Sudasiatici*, 3 (2008), pp. 145–80.

15 Patton E. Burchett, *A Genealogy of Devotion: Bhakti, Tantra, Yoga, and Sufism in North India* (Columbia University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.7312/burc19032; Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton University Press, 1980); Jeffrey S. Lidke, *The Goddess within*

goddesses into the performers' presence and sometimes into their bodies: songs and drum sequences facilitate this and also 'bind' them together against enemies' sorcery. Thus, we can imagine a political-religious connection between pāṅgdure dances and kingship as the dancers both *perform* the ruler's power through their display of excellence in music and dance, and at least *protect*, and perhaps *produce*, such power through their invocation and manifestation of the goddess. Outside of such a royal or military setting, performance could be just as protective and empowering of a community with a different political structure.[16] The more horizontally structured communities of this region have maintained pāṅgdure dances through the centuries, regardless of political changes and as part of their own cherished heritage; arguably, we owe these genres' persistence to the efforts of these communities, like the mostly Magar and Newar village of Sankhu Sohraghar whose Jalkanya Yuva Club performed pāṅgdure dances for our video recordings, decades after the palace-supported dance troupe from Jyamrung had disbanded.

While Magar, Kumal, and other janajātī ethnic groups maintain strong pāṅgdure/mārunī performance traditions in many places around Nepal with or without links to medieval and early modern martial history, an association of pāṅgdure dances with kingship and military culture has also remained through the centuries. An echo of such relations remains in the practices of Magar performers

*and Beyond the Three Cities* (D. K. Printworld Pvt. Ltd., 2017).

16 The dialectical tension between hierarchical and non-hierarchical sociopolitical structures, and their connections to religion or at least enchanted conceptions of the world, is an ongoing theme of the historical interaction between Hindu and tribal communities in the western and central hills of Nepal in which Pāṅgdure dances developed, and of the broader world to which they were connected in the medieval and early modern periods. As Marie Lecomte-Tilouine writes, 'Nowhere more than in the hills of central Nepal has the Hindu caste organization come in close contact with the tribal world. It is believed that Hindu kingdoms were established there only in the fifteenth century because of the alliances that Hindu rulers contracted with the local population, especially tribal chiefs…Magars…form the Nepalese janajati group which in the past had developed the closest relationship with Hinduism, Hindu kingship and caste organization, and which countered it most radically recently [in the Maoist revolution].' See Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, *Hindu Kingship, Ethnic Revival, and Maoist Rebellion in Nepal* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 4.

in Palpa: Keshar Jung Baral Magar notes that Palpali Magars begin performing soraṭhī at *kālarāt*, the ninth night of Dasaĩ, spending the night dancing in their local *koṭ* or fort or at the house of their headman or *mukhiyā* (*mijhār*).[17] There are many historical forts in Palpa (as well as elsewhere in Nepal); we can imagine the armies of prior centuries occupying them and performing for the sovereign of their kingdom on such festival days, and this practice being carried on through the years. The yearly performance of pāṅgdure dances during Indrajatra in front of Hanuman Dhoka Palace in Kathmandu was also such a display; it ended with the demise of Rana rule. We have not found a clear reason for this practice ending at this time, besides the idea that perhaps it had become too closely associated with the Rana regime. It was Shah power, rather than Rana power, that was closely linked to tantric ritual; perhaps the persistence at Jyamrung Darbār of a strong pāṅgdure performance tradition through much of the twentieth century could be a vestige of the customs of earlier small states and their armies during the medieval and early modern eras, in a palace where the century of Rana dominance minimally affected ritual life. Or perhaps Subi Shah's father Chandra Bikram Shah simply liked music.

Subi Shah was thus born into a richly supported system of cultural performance, bound up with the ritual calendar, the monarchy, and the rhythms of representing one's region for Rana rulers. He left his childhood world behind in 1945, moving to Kathmandu and learning more about music from classical teachers and other performers. After the Rana regime fell in 1951, the new government opened the national radio station, Radio Nepal. Shah began performing for the radio, reading his own poems and stories and playing instruments on the Student Program, then on the Army Program once he joined the army in 1955. As he was a member of the King's Guard, his army life involved

17 Keshar Jung Baral Magar, *Pālpā, Tanahũ, Ra Syāṅgjākā Magarharuko Sanskṛti [The Culture of the Magars of Palpa, Tanahun, and Syangja]* (Asthami Books, 2012), pp. 87, 93. The footnote on p. 93 says, 'In the Magar language the word mijhār means "*jeṭhobāṭho*" or "senior and clever" but in the Gurung area of Grandi the chief or *mukhiyā* is called *mijhār*.'

regular drills and training, acting as part of a royal protection detail, and fulfilling ceremonial roles. The year after he joined was the year King Mahendra was crowned; films of this event show the King's Guard in their ceremonial glory, standing at attention and marching in the coronation parade that involved forty-three elephants, multiple foreign dignitaries, horses, buggies, pañchai bājās, brass bands, bagpipes, and a level of pomp and circumstance not seen since–not even at the coronation of King Birendra in 1975, by which time Shah had been appointed personal ADC to the Queen Mother, and undoubtedly took a more prominent role in the ceremony. His military career culminated in his appointment as King Birendra's personal ADC in 1983, a post he held until he retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1991, the beginning of the new democratic era. His posts left him ample time to pursue his vocation as performer and musicologist; apart from a list of his ranks and roles, the army section of his CV primarily lists his musical accomplishments. Unofficially, he was one of the army's main folk music and dance performers and teachers, and he trained many of the various battalions in pāṅgdure performance.[18] He also credits the army with providing opportunities for him to learn about music and dances of other areas of Nepal.

## Preserving and Developing Nepali Music

Beginning in 1966, Subi Shah turned in earnest to documenting, analyzing, performing, and teaching about the performance traditions of his region. As he puts it:

> In the course of my life as my knowledge about folk music grew, the desire to write articles and books began to grow when I returned to Jyamrung Darbār from Kathmandu in 1966. Before that, I had danced and watched others dance only for entertainment. When these traditions began to be misused in the name of folk song, then I wanted to find out the concrete rules of folk music and promote

18 The Nepal Army has its own official marching band, pañchai bājā, and bagpipe units; in addition to these, performance of music and dances from around Nepal has traditionally been an unofficial yet significant part of army life, which continues to this day.

> them as well. Even by 1966, distorted forms of folk songs and folk dances had already been promoted in Kathmandu. Because of this, I had a very unpleasant feeling in my heart, and because I had some knowledge of classical music, as soon as I got home I decided to collect folk songs myself.[19]

Shah's displeasure with seeing his traditions misrepresented grew into a strong preservationist stance. This fueled his desire to collect and document the performance traditions in and around Jyamrung. His documentation efforts began in earnest with a fellowship he received from the Royal Nepal Academy in 1966 to document the soraṭhī dance-drama. He traveled to villages near Jyamrung and invited various gurus to his home, and from one, who he respectfully calls Buwajyu, wrote down a full version of the oral text of the *Soraṭhī* story's first part. He also collected many fragments demonstrating similarities and differences in soraṭhī around Dhading, Gorkha, and nearby areas, and noted the songs being broadcast as soraṭhī (some incorrectly referred to as such) on Radio Nepal. His report was submitted to the Academy and manuscript submitted to Sajha Prakashan, but it was never published; we include its English translation in Volume II as *Soraṭī*.

Throughout his writings, Shah expresses concerns that folk songs, instruments, and dances are being lost and misunderstood. He laments what he sees as an excessive preference for foreign music and dances over local forms, excoriates the musicians and musicologists of the capital for improperly promoting rural performance forms, and calls on everyone to turn their attention seriously to preservation. His insistence on doing things the 'correct' way—the way he learned to do them in Jyamrung—was too much for his own son Dhruva Shah, who chose sports rather than music for his career. But Subi Shah was also an innovator who drew on pañchai bājā norms to describe and assert the importance of a local music theory of melody; developed mādal drum sequences and choreography to transition between tāls and dances; and created his own forms of music and dance notation. His tāl combinations joining soraṭhī and charitra tāls to transition

19 'A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music' (Chapter 2, this volume).

between dances have been criticized by other soraṭhī gurus like Govinda Gurung, who prefer that the two genres be kept separate.[20]

## Nationalism, Modernism, and Classicization

Besides nostalgia for the lifeworld of his childhood and youth, preoccupations with nation-building, modernization, and development, international discourses warning about the dangers of 'cultural grey-out,' and the Kathmandu elite's habits of valuing the foreign over the local, all shaped Shah's concerns with preservation and ideas about appropriate innovations.

While nationalism, modernization, and development were prominent in Nepali state rhetoric of the 1960s when Shah began his documentation, there were also older musical modernist concerns at play. Shah was influenced by the nation-building efforts of an earlier generation of Indian musicologists, especially Vishnu Bhatkhande and Vishnu Paluskar. In dialogue with Western ideas of the classical and aiming to clearly articulate Indian genres' artistic commensurability with Western classical arts, their idea of musical modernization included a standardization of music notation and teaching methods such that 'classical' music could become more easily accessible to the masses, thus facilitating a musically-based sense of national unity.[21] It also involved writing modern-day treatises of music theory, partly in service of such standardization. The music educational aspects of their modernizing ideas were widely adopted, and Bhatkhande's version of *sargam* notation had already become ubiquitous in South Asia by the time Subi Shah began to learn harmonium in Kathmandu in 1938.[22] While much of the politics of these early-twentieth-century modernization

20 Personal communication, Govinda Gurung, June 2005.

21 Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195166101.001.0001

22 Shah's sargam contains characteristics derived from both the Bhatkhande and Paluskar versions, as do other books containing musical notation in sargam such as Nararaj Dhakal, *Saṅgīt-Suras*, 2nd edn (Taleju Prakashan, 2016). Namely, they may use both the dash and the *S* character to indicate an elongated note or syllable.

efforts in India may have escaped the professional concert music world in Nepal,[23] modernist concepts of standardization were in wide circulation by the 1960s and proved attractive to Subi Shah. Toward this end he posited a 'Nepali notation' for music, with a nine-line, eight-space staff; created his own dance notation to demonstrate how pāṅgdure dances should be done; and argued for the standardization of genre names. However, his notations were not adopted—he himself returned to sargam in the very book in which he introduced 'Nepali notation'—and though others called for a similar standardization of genre names, this never came to pass; there were far too many variations.[24] Where Shah appears to have succeeded regarding standardization in music education and the music industry is in convincing people to call genres by their existing names instead of giving them new ones (as he had observed people doing when bringing rural genres to be performed in urban areas or broadcast on the radio). Some of his definitions of genre terms and musical terminology have been adopted in textbooks, and these have helped produce a shared set of terms for discussing music even when a multiplicity of other terms is also in use.[25]

23 Sociopolitical consequences of the standardizing, modernizing wave, and also of colonial policies, included the marginalization of women, lower class and caste, and Muslim performers. Bakhle's book, though excellent in many respects, has since been criticized for perhaps placing too much of the blame for Muslim musicians' disenfranchisement on Bhatkhande and Paluskar as individuals. Some others who have examined this twentieth-century 'modernization through classicization' movement in music and dance include, but are not limited to: Rumya S. Putcha, 'Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance,' *Dance Research Journal*, 45.3 (2013), pp. 91–110, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767713000260; Katherine Butler Schofield, *Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009047685; Lakshmi Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (Duke University Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822388050.

24 For example, the folklorist Kali Bhakta Pant calls for standardization in the name of national unity, following the political emphasis on national homogenization that characterized Panchayat-era policies. Kali Bhakta Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)* (Self, 1972).

25 For example, see the many references to Shah's works in Shobha Tiwari, *Loksaṅgītarpaṇa (The Treasure of Folk Music)* (Sajha Prakashan, 2003).

In his writings, Shah often rails against the adoption of foreign music and dances, worrying that rock and roll, disco, the twist and the cha-cha, and Indian film music and dances, are about to replace Nepali music and dance. The dances he fears give us a clue about what did happen in the ensuing decades—passing Western dance crazes passed in Nepal too—but it is instructive to look at the elite's long obsession with things foreign. On this topic, anthropologist Mark Liechty notes that for those who want to remain in control, 'foreignness is dangerous: its power must be carefully managed, its circulation controlled,' and that, for these reasons, the Ranas adopted a policy of 'selective exclusion' during their reign, carefully choosing what the Nepali populace would be exposed to in their official efforts to exclude outsiders from the kingdom and to 'hold back time,' including holding off dangerous ideas like democracy. But foreignness, as understood and deployed in Nepal, also enhances and conveys status. Nepali elites even in the medieval Malla era demonstrated their knowledge of the foreign to enhance their reputations, and Ranas from the nineteenth century onwards claimed the privilege of consuming foreign goods for themselves, often quite ostentatiously.[26] Just as earlier elites had used foreign fashions to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, mid-twentieth century Kathmandu elites adopted foreign music and dance as status symbols. Sharad Chandra Shah, head of the National Sports Council in the 1980s, recalled the Western ballroom dancing craze that swept palace associates in the 1960s and 70s.[27] It could be argued that King Mahendra's import of musical artists from Darjeeling to staff the state musical institutions was another example of ruling elites valuing the distant over the local.[28]

26 Mark Liechty, 'Selective Exclusion: Foreigners, Foreignness, and Foreign Goods in Modern Nepali History,' *SINHAS*, 2.1 (1997), pp. 5–68.

27 Interview with Sharad Chandra Shah, 6 April 2007.

28 See Peter J. Karthak, *Nepali Musicmakers: Between the Dales of Darjeeling and the Vales of Kathmandu* (Himal Books, 2018), pp. 65–70. Amber Gurung was certainly considered a Nepali composer, at least by Karthak who is also from Darjeeling, and at least by the present day. But as Karthak demonstrates, he was treated poorly by his counterparts in Kathmandu, who sabotaged performances of his compositions and kept his employment precarious. Subi Shah didn't see these *ādhunik* artists as an inappropriate type of foreign, Nepali-speaking as they were; rather, he understood them as part of an

A Nepali proverb sums it up: *najik ko deutā helā*, the nearby god is belittled. This is what Subi Shah is warning against. From his viewpoint, if we continue to believe that foreignness brings high status, and what we have is of no account, the traditions we have will disappear. It is likely that Shah had also heard of Alan Lomax's warnings about cultural grey-out.[29] Shah's worries about foreign genres' potential dominance in Nepal parallel Lomax's concerns, and his writings can be seen in a similar vein, as an 'appeal for cultural equity.'

Like Lomax, Shah calls us to recognize the expressive value of all cultural systems. But he had some different ideas about how to recognize the expressive value of his specific cultural system. Shah saw his 'nearby god' as belittled and wanted to raise its status. To do this he turned to regional discourses of classicization that combined Western and South Asian perspectives.[30] The 'classical' in European discourse and for English speakers connoted something old and prestigious, associated with high social status. In translation into the many Sanskrit-derived languages including Hindi and Nepali, 'classical' was glossed as *śāstriya*, which generally refers to things written about in authoritative, systematic treatises, *śāstra*s.

---

entirely different genre of Nepali song. But he did argue that things seen as predominantly Indian, like Kathak and Manipuri dance, should not be allowed to replace local dance forms.

29 Alan Lomax, 'An Appeal for Cultural Equity | Association for Cultural Equity,' *World of Music*, XIV.2 (1972), https://www.culturalequity.org/alan-lomax/appeal

30 Matthew Harp Allen, 'Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the Dialogue between "Classical" and "Non-Classical" in the Music of India,' *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 30 (1998), pp. 22–52; Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*; Anurima Banerji, 'The Laws of Movement: The Natyashastra as Archive for Indian Classical Dance,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 31.1–2 (2021), pp. 132–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801.2021.1878507; Pallabi Chakravorty, 'Hegemony, Dance and Nation: The Construction of the Classical Dance in India,' *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 21.2 (1998), pp. 107–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/00856409808723345; David Dennen, 'The Third Stream: Oḍiśī Music, Regional Nationalism, and the Concept of "Classical,"' *Asian Music*, 41.2 (2010), pp. 149–79, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.0.0063; Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*; Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern*; Claus Peter Zoller, 'On the Relationships between Folk and Classical Traditions in South Asia,' *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 20–21 (2001), pp. 77–105.

Following Shah's logic, if 'classical' is śāstriya, and śāstriya is that which is described in authoritative treatises, then to establish something as classical in the sense of prestigious, one must write a treatise about it. That was what Bhatkhande had done for music in India in the early twentieth century, and Subi Shah set out to do the same for pāṅgdure dance, folk song, and folk music in Nepal.

Shah makes at least two arguments for classicization, which do not fully align with each other. One is that Nepali music should be 'made classical' while retaining its Nepaliness. The other is that the soraṭhī dance-drama is a classical art form due to its integrated use of all the performing arts as prescribed in the *Naṭyaśāstra*. Shah's goal of raising prestige guides both these arguments. But he does not argue that all genres should integrate all the performing arts to become classical. It appears that he is working with two definitions of the classical here; one, 'prestigious and worthy of state support and promotion,' and two, 'based on and following the parameters set forth in the śāstras,' particularly the Nātyaśāstra with its emphasis on *sangīt* as integration of music, lyrics, dance, and drama. Yet he still contrasts Nepali genres with Indian classical genres, sometimes referring to these Indian classical genres simply as śāstriya in contrast with the 'folk' genres on which he focuses: he is not immune from using dominant modes of categorization. In sum, what Shah desires is for the genres he loves to be considered prestigious, respected, and supported so that they can be sustained as the world changes. From a nationalist point of view, he wants them to be considered both Nepali and 'classical,' a status that he saw might provide some level of cultural equity. He knows that this sort of 'classicization' is a choice motivated by cultural politics. In one of his most insightful comments, he notes that 'Until a few years ago there was no custom of referring to our songs and dances with the categorical terms of "folk song" and "folk dance." Each song and dance had its own name.' Here he acknowledges that 'folk' and 'classical' are constructed categories, made when they became relevant to a new set of social relations.

## Folklore and Music Studies in Nepal

Shah's thoughts about category construction, nationalism, 'folk,' and 'classical' can also be situated in the context of Nepal's academic discipline of folklore. This discipline emerged in Nepal in the mid-twentieth century as a 'collecting' discipline with a focus on categorization and analysis. The emphasis on collection and categorization was influenced by colonial collectors and their methods, but folklore in Nepal was also inspired by nationalist and regionalist movements in South Asia, including those of '*bhāṣā* literatures' arguing for their abilities to stand on their own against the binaries of Great and Little Traditions, *desi* and *marga*, or the 'classical' and cosmopolitan languages of Sanskrit (and Persian) versus everything else.[31] For Nepali speakers in Nepal and India, asserting the importance of their language and its cultural forms was central to a developing ethno-national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The focus here was on Nepali language as a unifier for disparate, multilingual ethnic and caste identities, rather than on music or other aspects of

31 Nepali literary movements toward establishing a pan-Nepali national identity have been studied by Rhoderick Chalmers, '"We Nepalis": Language, Literature and the Formation of a Nepali Public Sphere in India, 1914–1940' (unpublished PhD Thesis, SOAS, 2003), https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00034025; Michael Hutt, *Nepali: A National Language and Its Literature* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988); Pratyoush Onta, 'Creating a Brave Nepali Nation in British India: The Rhetoric of Jati Improvement, the Rediscovery of Bhanubhakta, and the Writing of Bir History,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 1 (1996), pp. 37–76; Pratyoush Onta, 'Activities in a Fossil State: Balkrishna Sama and the Improvisation of Nepali Identity,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 2 (1997), pp. 69–102; Pratyoush Onta, 'The Career of Bhanubhakta as a History of Nepali National Culture, 1940-1999,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 4 (1999), pp. 65–136. Works that critically address the divide between 'classical' languages and everything else, from multiple perspectives, include Sheldon Ivan Pollock, *A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics*, Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought (Columbia university press, 2016); *A Cultural Poetics of Bhasha Literatures in Theory and Practice*, ed. by E. V. Ramakrishnan (Orient Blackswan, 2024); Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (Praeger, 1972). In India, the discursive use of 'classical languages' has come to be similar to 'classical music' and classical dance,' with a certifying body, the Sahitya Akademi (similar to the Sangeet Natak Akademi), that has developed criteria for these languages to be considered classical and certified eleven languages as of 2024.

performance. As folklore scholarship expanded to address more linguistic communities, the focus on language remained. The main circulating term for folklore in Nepali was and remains *lok sāhitya* or folk literature; another popular Nepali term, *lok wāṅmaya*, has the same literary connotation. Existing prestige attached to writing in Nepal may also have influenced the ongoing emphasis on literature within this field; nevertheless, an attempt to change the term to *lokvārtā*, loosely translatable as folk oral tradition, has had limited success.

Along these literary lines, strong narrative elements are apparent in the ritual performances of various traditions such as those of Gurung,[32] Tamang,[33] Magar,[34] Kami,[35] and Kirat castes and ethnic groups, to name a few. In the laudable efforts to preserve these oral texts in written form, there seems to have been a trend to favor the narratives over the other elements present. The anthropologist Martin Gaenszle observes 'an apparent tendency to unlink the narrative from the performative aspects' in intra-community efforts to preserve Kirat *mundum* ritual performance traditions, which we also observe in scholarship on everyday performance traditions as well.[36] Theses on popular folk and *ādhunik* song genres from *lok dohorī* to progressive song transcribe lyrics and analyze the themes within them;[37] along with these worthwhile endeavors, we also see a need to return scholarly attention to performances in their entirety, as parts of their social worlds. The following section

32 Kishor Gurung, 'Ghantu: A Narrative Ritual Music Tradition as Observed by the Gurungs of Nepal' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1992); Stan Royal Mumford, *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

33 Santbir Lama, *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim* (Sushila Nepal, 2013).

34 Anne de Sales, *Je suis né de vos jeux de tambours. La religion chamanique des Magar du Nord* (Societé d'ethnologie, 2000).

35 Gregory Maskarinec, *The Rulings of the Night: Ethnography of Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Gregory Maskarinec, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts I*, Harvard Oriental Series (Harvard University Press, 1999); Gregory Maskarinec, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts II: Texts of the Bhuji Valley*, Harvard Oriental Series (Harvard University Press, 2009).

36 Martin Gaenszle, *Ancestral Voices: Oral Ritual Texts and their Social Contexts among the Mewahang Rai* (LIT Verlag, 2002).

37 Shiva Poudel, *Dohorī Gīt* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Tribhuvan University, 2002).

details how Nepal's folklore scholarship developed its literary emphasis on narrative, along with some exceptions and Shah's evolving place among them.

Commercial publications from Banaras of *laharī*, *sawāi*, bhajans, and religious literature in folk song meters, and audio recordings of Nepali folk songs from studios in Calcutta and DehraDun emerged before the academic enterprise of documenting folklore took hold among the Nepali-speakers of Nepal and northern India.[38] Interest in folklore among the elites was growing, perhaps spurred by the Banaras publications and attention to local performance traditions outside of the Rana palaces; Devkota's *Muna Madan*, a retelling of a Newar folk ballad in Nepali in *jhyāure* poetic meter, is an example of such attention.[39] Perhaps the first work of scholarly folklore was Adhikari's 1939 publication of folktales.[40] Then, Satya Mohan Joshi began collecting folk songs around Pokhara in 1946. The work credited with founding the discipline of folklore in Nepal was his *Hāmro Lok Saṁskṛiti*, published in 1956 on the basis of articles he had written on folk songs in the magazine *Sharada*; the book won Nepal's highest literary prize, the Madan Puraskar.[41] Joshi went on to establish cultural institutions including the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar or National Dance Center,[42] to write many more books on various topics including two more Madan Puraskar winners, *Nepālī Rāṣṭriya Mudrā* (1957) and the History volume of the *Karṇālī Lok*

38 Rhoderick Chalmers, 'Pandits and Pulp Fiction: Popular Publishing and the Birth of Print Capitalism in Banaras,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 7 (2002), pp. 35–97; Rhoderick Chalmers, 'When Folk Culture Met Print Culture: Some Thoughts On The Commercialisation, Transformation and Propagation of Traditional Genres in Nepali,' *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 31 (2004), pp. 243–56; Prakash Sayami, *Nepālī Saṅgītko Ek Śatak (A Century of Nepali Music)* (Bhavak Abhiyan Nepal, 2009).

39 The meter in question is what Shah calls *pākhe chhanda* or field meter, and what is best known as *asāre jhyāure*. Laxmi Prasad Devkota, *Munā Madan* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1936); Anna Stirr, 'Sounding and Writing a Nepali Public Sphere: The Music and Language of Jhyaure,' *Asian Music*, 46.1 (2015), pp. 3–38, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.2015.0008.

40 Bodh Bikram Adhikari, *Nepalī Dantya Kathā* (Nepali Bhasha Prakashini Samiti, 1939).

41 Satya Mohan Joshi, *Hāmro Lok Saṁskṛiti* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1957).

42 The official Nepali name of this institution is Saṁskṛtik Saṁsthan, and its official English name is 'Cultural Corporation.' We will use this name on occasion, but it is best known as the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar.

*Saṁskṛiti* series (1971).

Once Subi Shah moved to Kathmandu, he was no doubt inspired by Joshi's trajectory, beginning to publish his articles in *Sharada* and other magazines as well. As the folklorist Chuda Mani Bandhu puts it, the new democratic regime of the 1950s emphasized the expressions of the people and thus promoted folk culture, often in the written works and performances of singer and song collectors Dharmaraj Thapa and Kumar Basnet, and song collector Laxman Lohani.[43] Although democracy and open expression ended in 1960 and the Panchayat absolute monarchy lasted until 1990, scholars and performers were still able to persuade the state of folklore's significance to the Panchayat state's values of national identity and unity. Thus, the universities and Department of Culture began to support its teaching and research, beginning with Tulasi Diwasa's courses at Padma Kanya Campus in 1966 and extending to the curricula and research programs of Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines throughout Tribhuvan University's nationwide campuses. The Royal Nepal Academy also began to host seminars and provide research grants. Other scholars inspired by the growing attention to folklore wrote and published in various magazines, and Kali Bhakta Pant self-published his book on folk song and culture, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās*, in 1972.[44]

What counted as folklore was considered broadly, as the whole *Karṇālī Lok Saṁskṛiti* project demonstrated—this multi-author, five-volume work included *History*, *Geography*, *Folklife*, *Language*, and *Literature, Music, and the Arts*.[45] But, such interdisciplinary

43 Cuda Mani Bandhu, 'Folklore Studies in Nepal: A Historical Survey,' *Nepali Folklore and Folklife: A Biannual Newsletter of the Nepal Folklore Society*, 2.3 (2006), pp. 4–8; Laxman Lohani, *Rodhighar* (Self, 1958); Dharmaraj Thapa, *Gandakīko Suselī* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1973); Dharmaraj Thapa and Hansapure Subedi, *Nepālī Loksāhityako Vivechanā (Analysis of Nepali Folklore)* (Pathyakram Bikās Kendra, Tribhuvan University, 1985). These are generally the performers and collectors who did not overtly oppose the Panchayat regime. This list omits performers like Gokul Joshi and Kevalpure Kisan, whose anti-establishment folk performance was not published or recognized by the state for decades. Gokul Joshi was a performing and traveling partner of Dharmaraj Thapa's in the 1950s, but they parted ways over class and ideological differences.

44 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History).*

45 Pradip Rimal, *Nepālī Lok Samskṛiti: Sāhitya, Saṅgīt, Kalā* (Royal Nepal

studies did not become the norm. Even as more researchers take on folklore topics, folklore research in Nepal has continually emphasized the collection of oral literature such as folktales and proverbs, and songs have primarily been treated as oral literature. The term *lok sāhitya* has had two lasting effects—to continue a separation between literature and folk literature in which folk literature and folklore remain the lesser-valued, marked terms; and, among those who study Nepali folk songs, to emphasize lyrics as the units of analysis.[46]

This is not to say that sonic aspects of lyrics, the types of music and dances associated with the songs, and their situation within social relations have been completely ignored; Kalibhakta Pant addresses the development of the Nepali language in the early modern period along with poetic meter and prosody (on which Devi Nepal's later work on meter, *Chhanda Parāg*, is also highly instructive),[47] and Krishnaprasad Parajuli does the same for the mid-twentieth century,[48] while Thapa and Subedi devote some time to discussing music and dance.[49] The same goes for many later works, such as Motilal Parajuli and Jivendra Dev Giri's folklore textbook, and Din Bahadur Thapa's study of *jhyāmre* songs in Baglung.[50] Yet their examples are all of song lyrics, and while they

Academy, 1971).

46 Writing in 2007, Tulasi Diwas and Chura Mani Bandhu make a distinction between oral literature and performing arts, but this is also driven by the categories UNESCO supplied for discussing types of intangible heritage. The distinction they make in this document—that 'performance theorists' following Bauman's *Verbal Art as Performance* view everything as performance, but separating oral literature and performing arts is apparently more suitable for Nepal (p. 8), is not necessarily one they would strongly defend. Tulsi Diwas, Cuda Mani Bandhu, and Bhim Nepal, *The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal: Future Directions*, Unesco Kathmandu Series of Monographs and Working Papers (UNESCO, 2007); Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art As Performance* (Newbury House, 1977).

47 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)*; Devi Nepal, *Chanda Parāg* (Bhundipuran Prakashan, 2006).

48 Krishnaprasad Parajuli, *Nepālī Lokgītko Ālok (Light on Nepali Folk Music)* (Veena Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

49 Thapa and Subedi, *Nepali Loksahityako Vivechana (Analysis of Nepali Folklore)*, pp. 56–76.

50 Motilal Parajuli and Jivendra Dev Giri, *Nepali Lok Sahityako Ruprekha* (Sajha Prakashan, 2011); Dinbahadur Thapa, D*haulagirīkā Lokgītko Pahichān: Jhyāmregīt* (Dia Prakashan, 2010).

state the importance of dance, instruments, melody, and rhythm in song, it is not part of their analysis.

Another group of scholars have paid closer attention to music and dance in folk performance traditions, including Subi Shah and Ram Sharan Darnal (1940–2017), who is often referred to as Nepal's first ethnomusicologist, and who was Shah's close friend and neighbor in Kathmandu. In Darnal's eleven books and many articles, he studied music, dance, drama, and songs, with an additional focus on musical instruments and the social aspects of music performance.[51] Rather than *lok sāhitya* or *lok wāṅmaya*, he uses the term *bāginā*, which encompasses song, instruments and instrumental music, and dance. This perspective aligns with Shah's, although Shah does not use the same term in his writings. Music textbooks of the 1990s and later include notated songs exemplifying various genres, including examples of tāl and references to but not descriptions of dance, often citing Shah.[52] Further studies of folk performance with a musical bent often include some musical transcriptions, mostly focused on song melodies,[53] and recent studies have begun to give more attention to describing percussion and other instrumental music, dance, and the social aspects of performance from various angles.[54]

51 Ram Sharan Darnal, *Nepalī Bājā* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2005); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Saṅgīt Saurabh* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2002); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Saṅgīt Parikramā* (Sajha Prakashan, 1981); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Nepalī Saṅgīt Sādhak* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1981); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Vishwa Vikhyat Saṅgītkār* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1984); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Saṅgītko Vistrit Avalokan* (Pilgrims Book House, 1984); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Nepalī Saṅgīt-Sanskṛiti* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1988); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Nepalī Bāginā Ra Kalā* (Bhrikuti Academic Publications, 2003); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Gāyan Śailī* (Sajha Prakashan, 2004); Ram Sharan Darnal, *Kāṭhmaṇḍu Upatyakā Ka Prachīn Samasāmayik Gītharu* (Nepal Music Center, 2010).

52 Chinnaiah Jangam, 'Politics of Identity and the Project of Writing History in Postcolonial India: A Dalit Critique,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50.40 (2015), pp. 63–70; Subba Parshuram Bhakta Mathema, *Saṅgīt Praveshikā*, 5th edn (Sajha Prakashan, 2009); Tiwari, *Loksangitarpana (The Treasure of Folk Music)*.

53 Govinda Acharya, *Lokgītko Biśleṣaṇ* (Pairavi Prakashan, 2005).

54 Govinda Acharya and Durga Rayamajhi, *Magar Jātiko Lokgīt tathā Loksaṅgīt* (Nepal Music Center, 2017); Aaita Khajum, *Chyabrungko Nalibeli* (Vishwa Yakthung Mundhum Samaj, 2014); Pratibhā Pun, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī* (Lālbahadur Pun, 2018).

These Nepali-language studies remain mostly works of classification and textual analysis, whether the text is song lyrics or music as presented in sargam notation. And, they are primarily works of song collection and documentation rather than ethnographic storytelling. Ethnographic works have so far been more the purview of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists trained outside Nepal; most of these works, including my own, have focused more on the sociocultural meanings of performance than on the operative theories of music, poetics, and dance in a given area.[55] Some significant ethnographic studies also take on the task of documenting the music theory and history of a group or genre.[56] Yet doing all this within one study inevitably leads to the sacrifice of some depth in any one topic, in the service of breadth; more studies are inevitably needed to present a full picture of any group's musical life.

Scholars of the current generation have been lucky to be able to rely on the works of those who came before us in understanding music theory, theories of poetic meter and prosody, general ideas about genre development and boundaries, plus the multiple and overlapping social worlds of Nepali folk genres, their performance and circulation in various media. Subi Shah's works have been invaluable in this regard, enabling my own ethnographic scholarship on song. The more works on performance genres of Nepal that are produced and made widely available, the more possibilities emerge for different types of studies to address their different facets in depth.

55 Kathryn S. March, *'If Each Comes Halfway': Meeting Tamang Women in Nepal* (Cornell University Press, 2002), https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501728457; Pirkko Moisala, *Cultural Cognition in Music: Continuity and Change in the Gurung Music Culture of Nepal*, Suomen Etnomusikologinen Seura (Gummerus, 1991), IV; Anna Stirr, *Singing Across Divides: Music and Intimate Politics in Nepal* (Oxford University Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190631970.001.0001

56 Lochan Rijal, 'The Transmission of Music in Nepal–Gandharva Tradition' (Kathmandu University, 2014); Carol Tingey, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Panchai Bājā* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1990); Gert-Matthias Wegner, *Drumming in Bhaktapur* (Heidelberg University Press, 2023), I; Richard Widdess, *Dapha: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City. Music, Performance, and Meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal*, SOAS Musicology Series (Ashgate, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315258515

## Subi Shah after Army Retirement: Further Documentation and Publishing

The Subi Shah I met in 2000 was a spry septuagenarian, employed as a dance teacher at the prestigious Galaxy School and teaching private music lessons in the back room of Mangal Maharjan's music shop in Thamel. He rode his bicycle between the school, the shop, and his home in Kaldhara each day, and enjoyed chatting with Mangal, visiting musicians, students, and tourists over cups of tea. The neighborhood we knew as the 2000s tourist area and center for music shops and live band performance, Thamel, had been a sleepy little town surrounded by fields when Shah moved into the Kaldhara house. His son, Dhruva Shah, grew up playing and hunting birds in the surrounding forests. Now an urban center catering to tourism and youth culture while remaining a functioning Newar neighborhood, Thamel and the adjacent Kaldhara then were already a gathering place for musicians and music-lovers. Ram Sharan Darnal lived just down the street from Shah; according to their sons, their musical friendship was legendary.

Living in this environment of cosmopolitan musical interactions in the last few decades of his life, Shah was preparing his legacy as a scholar of music and dance by attempting to get his unpublished writings published and make his documentary recordings widely available. Having developed a reputation as a leading authority on mādal playing and pāṅgdure dances, Shah published many articles in newspapers and magazines, but was still trying to get his books published and make his recordings available to the public. His much-read and assigned article 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dance' came out in the dance textbook *Nrityakalā* in 1981, and is still used today. *Mādal* came out in 1983. In 1992, Shah brought a troupe of pāṅgdure dancers from the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar to Jyamrung and filmed their dances in the palace courtyard with a Nepal Television crew. In 1998, he recorded the Jyamrung pañchai bājā performing the rāgs for each quarter of the day and night, plus a few more rāgas and tunes, and gave those along with tapes of his own flute performance and other musical recordings to

Radio Nepal and Music Nepal for safekeeping and presumably for eventual broadcast. He recorded the unmetered flute tunes (airs) for *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* on his own tape recorder, and also taped a series of song tunes played on the flute. He collaborated with prominent singers to record a song album in the 1990s (later re-released by UNESCO-ICHCAP with Korean collaboration), and a charitra dance music video in the 2000s. And, he created a demo tape of instrumental recordings of folk songs using two tape recorders in turn to make a multitrack recording at home.

It was this demo tape that led to our collaboration. When I interviewed Shah in 2005 along with the musicians Rashil Palanchoke and Rubin Shrestha, Shah played these recordings for us and expressed his frustration with how long the publication process was taking, and his inability to get anyone to help him produce the recordings to his liking. We decided to lightly edit the audio of his demo tape and release it as was; this became *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās*, released in a limited CD run from Mangal Maharjan's company East Meets West Music Box (EMW). I translated the liner notes in collaboration with Subi Shah and the poet Manjul Nepal.

The existence of the *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās* CD helped Shah persuade Music Nepal to re-record some of the tunes, and the following year they released a similar album, *Subi Shahko Ekal Prayāsa*, re-recording just eight of the twenty-three tracks from the demo tape. The book *Nepalī Lokgītko Jhalak* (*Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*) was published in 2007, but its accompanying tapes of musical examples were not released, although they remain archived at Music Nepal.[57] *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* has not yet been published in Nepali, and its associated cassette tapes of flute airs and song tunes have not been found.

In fact, many of the recordings that Subi Shah left in care of archives, as listed on his CV, now cannot be found. Radio Nepal insists that all their archival recordings were given to Music Nepal. When asked about Shah's collection among these archival recordings,

57 These recorded musical examples held at Music Nepal also do not exactly match the examples in the text of *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*; more study will be needed to find the names of the recorded tunes.

Music Nepal found a fraction of what was on Shah's list. They also found only a fraction of what Shah says that he gave directly to Music Nepal. The 1992 VHS video recordings of pāṅgdure dances may well be in the archive of Nepal Television, but our attempts to find them there have proved fruitless. Nepal Television's archives are offsite, so if the tapes are indeed there, they would likely have survived the fires of 2025's political uprising. Perhaps others will rediscover these recordings in the future and make them easily available to the public. For now, we have attempted to fill the gaps in illustrative audiovisual examples for Subi Shah's written and notated works as best we can.

## Our Methods and Limits

This project in its entirety encompasses annotated translations of Shah's works, historically and ethnographically informed introductions to each volume, translations of Shah's musical transcriptions into transcriptions that encompass both staff notation and sargam notation, and audio and video recordings illustrating as many of Shah's notated examples as has been feasible to produce.

Our work in all these categories has been significantly informed and enhanced by our visits to Jyamrung and Sohraghar villages in Dhading. We framed this work as translation, annotation, and audiovisual documentation rather than ethnography, as none of us would have been able to stay in the village for a sufficient amount of time to complete a restudy of Shah's musical documentation or a sufficiently ethnographic portrayal of musical life in Jyamrung today. Also, the Jyamrung pāṅgdure dance troupe was no longer active, and as Shah was looking for old songs in the first place, many of the songs he collected were no longer commonly sung by the time he published their transcriptions. Visiting Jyamrung helped us understand what had been there during Shah's day and what it was like now, but we did this knowing we would not find the same musical world Shah experienced. Our visits to Jyamrung between 2022 and 2025 took place at appropriate times for filming seasonal and festival performances, as well as during summer

and winter breaks; different groups of team members visited at different times depending on who was available, and our stays lasted between two and ten days. There, we filmed performances of rāgas, instrumental tunes, mādal tāls, and folk songs as remembered by some of the elderly musicians, as well as the ritual songs for the festival of Dasain.

For filming pāṅgdure dances as performed today, we turned to the dancers in the nearby village Sankhu Sohraghar, still within the same administrative unit of Nilkantha Rural Municipality but on the other side of the district center town of Dhading Besi. While one of our team members, Sohraghar native Rita Thapa Magar, spent a great deal of time in Sohraghar coordinating performances, our full team's work there, too, was limited to shorter visits. Recording performances was the obvious objective of these visits; in addition, being present in village life, visiting temples and notable sites nearby, planting rice seedlings together, sharing drinks and meals, and having informal conversations with musicians and other villagers was also essential to our developing knowledge of and relationship with these people and places central to understanding Subi Shah's works of documentation and analysis.

## Our Approach to Translation

There are two types of text translated here: Shah's prose, and song lyrics. We render Shah's conversational prose in similarly simple English, mostly following a communicative rather than semantic translation paradigm,[58] adjusting on a case-by-case basis informed by the cultural and historical factors relevant to each instance of translation.[59] For song lyrics, as we provide transliterated Nepali originals in the text, our approach leans toward the communicative rather than the semantic as well.

With this choice we are aligning ourselves with a literary movement for 'simple language' prominent in Nepal since the

58 Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

59 Despoina Panou, 'Equivalence in Translation Theories: A Critical Evaluation,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3.1 (2013), pp. 1–6, https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.1.1-6

1970s, when poets and academics protested a trend of increasingly obscure modernist and surrealist experimentalism by turning to folk poetry and song as models for poetry and prose writing.[60] Shah followed such models out of habit rather than literary conviction, and his prose is simple yet full of local vernacular phrases; such phrases are a major part of the song lyrics as well.

As we envision this project as a decolonizing project dedicated to helping maintain cultural sustainability, the scholar of South Asian literature S. Shankar's perspective on translation and the idea of the vernacular is useful here. Acknowledging postcolonial perspectives that have deemed translation to be 'epistemic violence,' Shankar believes these to have served an important rhetorical purpose in calling attention to multiple epistemes. Yet he does not advocate giving up on translation.[61] He writes: 'Vernacular perspectives, to become available in contexts other than those to which they are native, must be translated. At the same time, the vernacular is that which resists translation.'[62] Shankar understands 'vernacular' as a term that registers power in 'a particular kind of hierarchy, in which it identifies the dominated element in relation to opposing elements commonly manifested as the transnational, the national, the universal, the classical, and so on.'[63] The vernacular cries out for translation but resists it; it cannot be understood beyond local limits without translation, but it cannot be fully translated. We believe that what cannot be fully translated can be approached from multiple languages and modes of expression, including music and dance notations, video, and audio recording. We expect that many readers of our translations will be multilingual speakers

60 Hutt, *Nepali: A National Language and Its Literature*; Manjul Nepal, *Samjhanākā Pailāharu: Gītī Yātra Samsmāran* (Ananda, 1988).

61 Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?,' in *Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, ed. by Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak (Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 208–311; Rolando Vázqez, 'Translation as Erasure: Thoughts on Modernity's Epistemic Violence,' *Historical Sociology*, 24.1 (2011), pp. 27–44, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6443.2011.01387.x

62 S. Shankar, *Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation, and the Vernacular* (University of California Press, 2012), p. 138, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520952348

63 Shankar, *Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation, and the Vernacular*, p. 148.

of English, Nepali, and other languages. Our translation of the vernacular, with its multimodal accompaniments, is thus meant to expand the platform for the study of these traditions in our multilingual, multimodal world.

We hope that readers will be able to glean aspects of rhythm, prosody, and rhyme in the lyrics from the Romanized Nepali text, along with the audio and video recordings; our English glosses aim to convey the lyrics' lexical meanings. Lyrics often contain multiple, ambiguous meanings, and we hope that the Nepali text will help readers get a sense of their scope.

## Our Approach to Musical Notation

Subi Shah included over a hundred notated examples of songs, instrumental airs, examples of drum patterns, and pāṅgdure dance choreography. These are basic guidelines for performance rather than representations of a composer's intent. They are prescriptive rather than descriptive, but what they prescribe also involves a great deal of melodic and rhythmic improvisational leeway. The audio recordings featuring Subi Shah himself playing the song tunes on flute, and some short excerpts featuring Subi Shah playing mādal and singing, give us an opportunity to hear the difference between what he notated and what he played.

Shah primarily used the sargam notation that has become standard in South Asia over the last century, and developed his own dance notation that fit well into a sargam notation paradigm. While musical notation has not been central to practices of musical transmission in Nepal, three notation systems have become widely used in Nepal over the past century. The most widely used system is sargam notation. It is taught in basic school music classes and at music institutes which teach the basics of Hindustani classical music theory and emphasize how to perform Nepali ādhunik and folk music, and is passed on to others outside of these institutional systems by those who know it.

Music educational institutions in Nepal also use cipher notation and staff notation. Cipher notation is popular among musicians teaching Tibetan and Himalayan musics. Staff notation has been

circulating in Nepal for over a century, but its popularity is less widespread. These days, some music schools and primary school music classes teach it as part of basic keyboard instruction, and some Christian organizations have begun teaching basic staff notation in hymn-singing workshops.[64]

In higher education, the performance-focused music departments at Tribhuvan University and its affiliates emphasize sargam. The Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory and the ethnomusicology-focused Kathmandu University Department of Music also teach staff notation beyond the basics. They also teach sargam and cipher notation, plus chords, guitar tablature, the time unit box system (TUBS), and others. In fact, TUBS notation was our first choice for transcribing Shah's sargam into a system that foregrounded more rhythmic information, and we do use it for illustrating mādal bols. This system is somewhat intuitive for those familiar with sargam notation due to both systems' table-like form. But after experimenting with it, we decided in favor of combining two systems that are more widely taught: sargam and staff notation.[65]

We chose to combine these two notation systems as we wanted

64 In this way, Nepali Christian music has developed differently than that of Northeastern India and Goa, where centuries of church exposure to Western music, especially tonal harmonies and orchestration, has influenced popular music. In Nepal, Christians are a smaller minority than in these areas of India, and hymns have circulated orally or in books of written lyrics, which singers set to their preferred Nepali folk melodies. The introduction of church-influenced tonal harmonies on Nepali popular music can be traced in part to the Darjeeling artists invited to Nepal by King Mahendra in the 1960s. See Gregory Booth, *Behind the Curtain: Making Music in Mumbai's Film Studios* (Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195327632.001.0001; *More than Bollywood: Studies in Indian Popular Music*, ed. by Gregory Booth and Bradley Shope (Oxford University Press, 2013); *In Tune With Darjeeling*, dir. by Tsering Choeden and Yubakar Raj Rajkarnikar (Kathmandu, 2006); Karthak, *Nepali Musicmakers: Between the Dales of Darjeeling and the Vales of Kathmandu*.

65 Other practical considerations factored into our choice not to use TUBS as our main notation system. Space on the page was the main one: as more characters are needed when writing mādal bols in Roman script than in Devanagari, aligning bols with lyrics and melody while maintaining a musically intelligible layout became difficult. TUBS often uses non-letter symbols for different drum strokes, but we did not think that inventing new symbols for mādal bols would facilitate our goal of broader access.

to make Shah's notated examples more widely accessible to people within and outside of the sargam-dominant sphere. The solution we settled upon involves staff notation transcriptions with sargam notation aligned with the staff notation in the lyric lines. And, in five instances, it also includes Shah's dance notation. Sargam for songs is included underneath the lyrics, and mādal bols are included underneath a single-line percussion staff that uses the upper note for the mādal's small head and the lower note for the mādal's large head. Resonant drum strokes are represented by regular note heads and stopped drum strokes are represented by note heads in the shape of x's. The combination of upper and lower notes allows us to represent the strokes for both drumheads as played simultaneously. This builds on the staff notation system for mādal developed by Maharjan and Moore.[66] When dance notation is included, the two lines of dance notation are placed underneath the mādal bols. Our transcriptions change one thing from Subi Shah's notation: we place the vocal melody in the top staff, and the percussion in the bottom staff, instead of the other way around. We hope that the visual representations of sounds in staff notation and sargam together will reinforce each other and help make the intended meaning clearer, while also facilitating readers' broader knowledge of both systems.

Shah does not often notate details of song structure, except in the songs notated in *Basic Theory of Folk Dance* (in Volume II) which are meant to exemplify full dances in each of the primary pāṅgdure genres, and to an extent in the songs in *Mādal*. Many of the songs Shah notates include only lyrics plus notation for the melodies of the sections of the song called *charan* (verse, *antarā*; the part of the song whose lyrics generally continue to change) and *ṭukkā* (chorus, *sthāyi*, Hindi *mukhrā*; the part of the song whose lyrics generally remain the same over multiple repetitions).[67] One is expected to

66 Sanuraja Maharjan and Robert Moore, *Madal: Learn the Most Popular Drum of Nepal* (Kumari Printing, 2010).

67 These definitions of terms for parts of a song's structure mostly hold throughout the folk music of the central hills. But there is a significant exception for *ṭukkā*. The term *ṭukkā* is also used to refer to the changing verses that are often improvised in the jhyāure bhākā and khyālī bhākā dohorī songs that make up the majority of Nepali popular folk song today. These songs' longer

know what to do with them. Thankfully, this is relatively easy once one knows the rules of song structure in each genre, and their interrelation with the mādal and the dances, which Shah explains in multiple places. Notated examples of mādal bols show how these bols are played, and notation that includes both melody and mādal bols shows how the mādal can be played with a song. In *Basic Theory of Folk Dance*, the notated examples for each genre include Subi Shah's original dance notation symbols, representing the choreography for the mārunī dancers, along with the song and mādal bols. A key to the dance notation symbols is included in the text that precedes the notated songs and dances.

Prose descriptions and written notation give us part of the sense of how these songs, dances, and instrumental tunes should be performed. Subi Shah always meant to augment his books with audio and video recordings. With these translations, we include as many as we could of the recordings Shah made, along with ones we have made ourselves. Recordings serve two purposes: those that follow the notation exactly give an idea of the sounds this notation is meant to represent, thus helping listeners learn the notation. Those recordings that do not follow the notation exactly provide more ideas of how the melodies and rhythms can be varied, as is expected in Nepali folk performance. The relationship between the notated examples and the recordings can help readers and listeners begin to understand the unspoken expectations around melodic and rhythmic variations, informed by everything else Shah has to say about song structure, tāl, melody, and dance and their interrelations.

---

choruses are referred to as *ṭhego* (refrain). This is perhaps because ṭukkā are characterized by their clear, traditional, well-established poetic meters, which provide an important resource for improvising lyrics; such improvisation is called 'making ṭukkās' as Shah notes in *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*. And, as Shah also notes, the refrains of these songs are neither improvised nor based on poetic meters and fully depend on their melodies. This exception does not apply to all jhyāure bhākā and khyālī bhākā folk songs; these forms are quite flexible and afford many different combinations of ṭukkā, charan, ṭhego, rahanī, and different poetic meters. And, we must remember that there are significant variations in terminology from place to place throughout Nepal, and that they have also evolved and changed over the years.

## Video Recordings

As mentioned in the Note at the beginning of this volume, video and audio recordings are presented in two ways: as stable URLs for online readers, and as QR codes for readers of the print edition. The audiovisual material can be viewed and listened to online as well as downloaded.

Video examples that accompany music and dance notation include pāṅgdure dances with their related songs and mādal tāls, filmed in Sankhu Sohraghar, and pañchai bājā rāgas and tunes plus other dances outside the pāṅgdure tradition, filmed in Jyamrung. We also have some video clips of elders playing mādal and sahanāī, and singing snippets of some of the folk songs Shah documents in *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*, filmed in both Jyamrung and Sohraghar. Commercial audio recordings and music videos also exist, including one music video of a charitra song directed and choreographed by Subi Shah, in which Shah himself stands in the guru's place (*Naramāilo*, sung by Narayan Rayamajhi); we cite this video and other relevant commercial recordings in the appropriate places throughout the text.

Subi Shah's 1992 videotapes of pāṅgdure dances, filmed in Jyamrung with dancers from the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar and a Nepal Television film crew, have yet to be found. In seeking out somewhere to film similar pāṅgdure dances, Rita Thapa Magar recommended the active troupe in Sankhu Sohraghar. Sankhu Sohraghar lies in the same rural municipality as Jyamrung, on the southeastern side of the hills that ring Dhading Besi while Jyamrung lies to the northeast. There are direct connections; Rita's mother Til Kumari Magar lived in Jyamrung for much of her youth. The performers of Sohraghar were easily able to put together most of the dances. For soraṭhī, the Sohraghar performers gamely adjusted some of their choreography to help exemplify what Shah wanted to demonstrate. They did so with help from guru Pitambar Sundas, a multifaceted Jyamrung performer who played in the pañchai bājā, sang folk songs, and danced with Subi Shah. Nevertheless, each of our filmed performances of pāṅgdure dances differs in some way from what Subi Shah described and notated. He would not

have been surprised, as he routinely notes that different garrā or troupes do things differently. The Sohraghar troupe did not perform jhyāure or chuḍkā, so our videos of these dances, from Jyamrung and Kathmandu, show them being performed in non-pāṅgdure styles.

Putting on these performances that require large ensembles takes a great deal of work before and after the main event. Dhruva Shah and Ram Bahadur Sundas in Jyamrung, and Rita Thapa Magar in Sohraghar, did the bulk of the organizing work over the weeks and months preceding other team members' visits to record performances. As song texts and dance styles needed to be agreed upon, and rehearsals needed to take place among performers, their families also organized other villagers to make everything happen. This included the logistics of feeding everyone: collecting sāl leaves from the forest and weaving them into plates, then working together to provide snacks and meals for the performers at rehearsals, the film crew in the days surrounding the event, and nearly the whole village on the day of the event. This logistical work, much of it accomplished by the village women, also included making sure all visitors had appropriate lodgings. And, it included making sure everyone was compensated fairly in ways that fit smoothly into village traditions, a challenge that these team members were skillfully able to meet.

## Audio Recordings

Subi Shah recorded more audio than video. We found some of the audio recordings he made himself, as well as studio recordings of songs he collected, sung by other singers. And, we recorded some studio audio ourselves.

### Subi Shah's Audio Recordings

Subi Shah released two albums of song tunes that he played on the murali flute, with other instrumental accompaniment including the mādal: *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās* (EMW 2005), which began as his demo tape recorded at home on two tape recorders, and *Subi*

*Shahko Ekal Prayāsa* (Music Nepal 2007), recorded at Music Nepal. He made a home recording of another set of song tunes on flute, which he submitted to Music Nepal to keep in their archive; these have been digitized, though the tracks are not in their original order, and remain held at Music Nepal. He also recorded the unmetered tunes or flute airs from *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, on a tape that cannot currently be found.

Among recordings Shah made of others is a set of pañchai bājā rāgs and tunes, played by the Jyamrung pañchai bājā of the 1990s—Ram Bahadur Sundas's grandfather and his contemporaries—and recorded on his cassette recorder in 1998. These audio recordings are archived at Music Nepal. Our video recordings show today's Jyamrung pañchai bājā group playing the same rāgs.

In the 1990s, songs Shah collected began to be recorded by others in Kathmandu studios. Later, in the 2010s, a UNESCO-ICHCAP project based in Seoul, South Korea released several recordings of these collected songs in their series Precious Drops from the Fountain of Nepali Folk Music. These recordings were originally produced by Bishnu Paudel, and Ram Prasad Kandel of the Nepal Folk Instrument Museum assisted in their transfer to the UNESCO project. We cite these recordings whenever these songs appear in Shah's texts.

What happened to the remaining recordings Shah deposited with trusted state and private organizations for safekeeping remains a mystery. Perhaps Radio Nepal, Nepal Television, and Music Nepal will locate them in the coming years and take steps to share them with the world, as Shah intended.

## Our Team's Audio Recordings

We are excited to have some audio recordings of Subi Shah himself. We were lucky enough to have saved and been able to extract the audio from a minidisc recording of an interview with Subi Shah in 2005, which I conducted with Rashil Palanchoke and Rubin Shrestha of the band Kutumba. In this interview, Shah performed songs from *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* and played part of the

tape of flute airs intended to accompany *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*. Although the flute airs are incomplete and hampered by the substandard audio quality of a minidisc recording of a cassette tape being played aloud, this is the only recording that includes Subi Shah's own singing, mādal playing, and distinctive style of playing unmetered airs on the *murali* flute. Most of his audio recordings are instrumentals, so it is especially fortunate to have a recording of him singing and explaining songs.

We have also made audio recordings of the song examples in *Mādal*, with our team members and friends performing.

## Subi Shah's Dedication, and More Thoughts on Translation

As we move on to Shah's texts, instead of summary thoughts to this introductory chapter, I offer a poem Shah wrote and included as a Dedication in *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* (Volume II). This translation went through more iterations than most others, as the lines kept finding their way into iambic pentameter, and I thought I would try one translation into verse. The process of verse translation reminds us that poetic meters are linguistic registers, with sociolinguistic associations. Choosing a meter in the target language requires us to consider its associations for speakers of that language. Iambic pentameter in contemporary English often operates as a 'high' register, signifying relatively formal language as in Shakespeare's sonnets or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But it still remains accessible: it is easy to 'fit' English phrases into this meter, and imperfect adherence to metrical rules is common. The Nepali meter Subi Shah uses is the ever-malleable *sawāi*, one that crosses the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' registers, allowing for literary and ordinary language alongside imperfect adherence to metrical rules. It is easy to fit Nepali phrases into this meter, too. If we think of the English meter as operating solely as a signifier of high register, we have a mismatch in tone. The potential for such mismatch is one reason we eschewed verse translations for lyrics. But iambic pentameter does not always signify high-falutin' talk. Shakespeare's plays were popular culture in their day, and the rock

band Coldplay's song 'Yellow' offers an example of iambic pentameter in more recent popular culture. With that in mind, perhaps iambic pentameter is more like sawāi than it initially seems. Although their metrical associations are not exactly the same, these English and Nepali versions of Subi Shah's poem are neither high nor low, but track back and forth between the two poles. Meanings are multiple within each version; between the two, meanings overlap but are not identical. Subi Shah's lofty thoughts about art flowing from the gods into the world and being rendered in varied forms, connect across registers and make room for more possibilities, in more directions, through yet another transformation. As we strive to find our ways into new understandings of music, language, and movement, across languages and lifeworlds, shedding the assumptions that reify such categories of high and low, and through joy, curiosity, and wonder rendering them into other forms, this little exercise in form begins to illuminate our task.

*Śailendrako hṛidybāṭa bagera paile*
*Vyaptai bhayo sakal mānavbhitra jaile*
*Saṅlo kalā jagatamā taba sirjanā bho*
*Saṅgīt nāma tyasko naulopanā ho.*
*Tyai śuddha bhāv manle paharāharumā*
*Khojera arpaṇ garẽ namunā arumā*
*Saundarya phūlsari bhai jagamā khilos*
*Āśā ma garchhu sabko dilmā milos.*

That which first flowed from Śailendra's heart[68]
Pervaded then through all of humankind
When lucid art was brought into the world
The name they gave this fresh new thing was music.[69]
My heart sought such pure feeling in the hills
And offered it rendered in other forms.
May its beauty blossom worldwide like a flower
And, I hope, find favor in all hearts.
(Subi Shah, Jagar, Jyamrung, Byarthok, 14 May 1970)

68 Śailendra, a Sanskrit conjunction of Śaila and Indra, means 'Lord of the Mountains' and is used to refer to Shiva.

69 *Saṅgīt*, translated here as music, is better understood to encompass music, dance, and drama as integrated arts.

# 2. ‘A Short Account of my Life in Folk Music’

*Subi Shah*

## My Introductory Speech about Folk Song

I would like to inform my readers that I am not an educated writer, nor a trained artist. However, as a pāṅgdure dance guru I have knowledge of the rules of folk music, and with this topic as the focus I present my short biography to readers; my biography is as follows.



Fig. 2.1 Uday Bikram Shah, Jyamrung Darbār in the 2000s. © Uday Bikram Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.

©2026 Stirr, Brown, Khadka and Rijal, CC BY 4.0 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246.02

I was born in Jyamrung Darbār in Jagar Jyamrung Byarthok village, West No. 1 Dhading District, on the day of *Swasthānī Pūrṇimā* on February 23, 1929. Because my father Chandra Bikram Shah was the Head Officer (*Baḍā Hākim*)[1] of West No. 1 Nuwakot District, I also had the opportunity to spend time living there during my childhood. Of the remarkable things that I saw during my stay in Nuwakot, I remember only a few. Among them are when the earthquake of 1934[2] brought down the tower of the Seven-Story Palace;[3] Bhairavī's Sindure Jātrā;[4] and Nuwakot's Lākhe Jātrā,[5] etc. Apart from these, I passed my four years in Nuwakot without being aware of much.

After living in Nuwakot for four years, in 1936[6] my father was transferred to Gorkha, so I got to go to Gorkha with him. After moving to Gorkha I finally began to learn to read and write, and my entire education ended up being limited to that which I received in the *paṭhśālā* of Gorkha's Tallo Darbār neighborhood.[7] At that time, one only had to be able to read and write Nepali well, and to do arithmetic well, to be considered educated. Even so, while living in Gorkha I had the opportunity to read English fastbooks[8] and *Laghu Siddhānta Kaumudi* in Sanskrit.[9] Along with this, there was also an arrangement in which the books *Buddhichānak 8*,[10] *Rāmayaṇa*, and

1 *Baḍā Hākim* was the Rana era title of the head officer of a district.
2 January 15, 1934; Magh 2, 1990 v.s.
3 This palace is also known as Nuwakot Darbār. Its seven stories were damaged again in the 2015 earthquake, and it has since been rebuilt.
4 Also known as Bhairavi Varsha Bandhan, this *jātrā* or procession is one of Nuwakot's major festivals, with a procession that links the Bhairavi Devi temple in Bidur Municipality of Nuwakot near Nuwakot Darbār, with the Jalpadevi temple in Devighat.
5 This *jātrā* features the masked dance of the *lākhe*, a fierce protector deity associated with Newar culture and performed wherever there are Newar communities, including in Jyamrung. *Lākhe* dances are performed in the Newar (Nepal Sambat) month of Gunla which corresponds with August/September. See our video of *lākhe* dance in Jyamrung.
6 1993 v.s.
7 A *paṭhsālā* is a traditional institution of learning in South Asia. Its most traditional meaning refers to a gathering of high-caste boys learning Sanskrit texts taught by a Hindu pandit, and this is the type of institution Shah attended. Tallo Darbār means 'lower palace,' and it is a name for the main Gorkha Darbār plus the neighborhood at the foot of the hill on which it is located.
8 These are books meant to teach English quickly, as the name implies.
9 This is a work of Sanskrit grammar.
10 *Buddhichānak* is a Nepali language version of the *Chanakya Niti* attributed

*Mahābhārata* were taught at home in the morning and evening. In this way, as I reached the age of ten while still living in Gorkha, my days passed in equal amounts of studying and playing.

It was during my four years in Gorkha that I suddenly got involved in folk music. First of all, in 1937 when the then Colonel Toran Shamsher J.B.R.[11] was doing his inspection tour of the district,[12] I had to dance. At that time, everyone who came on inspection tours of the district had to be given a grand welcome, and a dance was also organized especially for the festivities. First, there was a rehearsed dance prepared by the civil servants along with the theater group of Pokharithok Bazaar. Second, the soldiers of the militia stationed in Gorkha had prepared a pāṅgdure dance sponsored by the Baḍā Hākim, and the third was a dance by the *Āṭhpahariyā*[13] contingent that had come along with the entourage, and these made up the program. In this way, the dances by the three different groups proceeded on the night that the tour group arrived. First was the Pokharithok theater group's dance, along with the welcome song. Their dancing looked very good as they had specially trained for it. Next was the Āṭhpahariyā contingent's dance, and while they were dancing, Jhilke Tamang, the constable of Darkha village in Dhading District, danced especially energetically and was the highlight of the

to the sage Chanakya of the 4th century BCE. Rajiv Lochan Joshi (1848–1929) published a version in 1893. Book 8 of this version is still being printed by publishing houses in Varanasi.

11 J.B.R. stands for Jung Bahadur Rana, part of the title assumed by members of this family of hereditary prime ministers. It refers specifically to the first Rana prime minister, whose name was Jung Bahadur Rana.

12 The word Shah uses is *dauḍāhā*, an inspection tour that was part of the Rana administrative system from 1846-1950. By 1900, the position of dauḍāhā leader was usually taken by someone from the Shamsher Rana branch of the Rana family, as noted by Daniel W. Edwards, 'The Daudaha (Inspection Tour) System Under the Ranas,' *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 3. Addendum (1976), pp. 7–34. Toran Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana was born in 1904. After the Rana regime was deposed, in 1951, he was named the Chief of Police, a position which he held for only three days. He remained in the Royal Nepal Army, rose to the rank of General, and was appointed Commander in Chief from 1956–1960.

13 *Āṭhpahariyā* in the context of Nepal's military history refers to the team that was responsible for presenting *salāmī* (salute) during the Quarter Guard (Guard of Honor) ceremony. The term āṭhpahariyā is derived from *āṭh prahar* signifying the division of the day into eight sections or prahars. The team is so named because the team members were on duty for the entire duration of eight prahars. This is an archaic term, no longer in use.

Āṭhpahariyā contingent's dance. Now it was the turn of the Baḍā Hākim's contingent; this dance was sponsored by the Baḍā Hākim and the dance training was also held in the house where we were living. The dancers were the main *pursuṅge* and four *subedār*s,[14] and the *mārunī* dancers were myself and a *sipāhī*.[15] The first dance we danced was *jhyāure*, and this was declared to be very agile. While we were dancing, none of the three types of dances was inferior or superior to any other. Since the bazaar group's dance was a rehearsed dance, it was natural that they and the theater group would automatically withdraw after a few dances.[16] Now, the tour contingent and the Baḍā Hākim's contingent began taking turns dancing as if to compare dances. It was clear that both these groups were trying to defeat each other as best they could, through the manipulation of the song and the rhythm of the dance. But because our troupe had pursuṅge, mārunī, mādale, and singers, our dance became more and more brilliant. Because we were presenting soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, and jhyāure one after the other. In poor Jhilke Dai's group, there was only one pursuṅge and one mārunī, and there were fewer instrumentalists and singers, so their dance gradually began to diminish. In the end, a subedar began to dance like a duck while singing a *ṭhāḍo bhākā* song himself. This song and dance defeated Jhilke Dai and he began to shrink back. After a while, Jhilke Dai had to withdraw abashedly into the tent. The head of the tour called for Jhilke Dai many times, but he didn't have the courage to come out of the tent. In the end, the Baḍā Hākim's contingent won the bet, and thus ended the night's festivities. This was my first time dancing, and after that I went on dancing and singing whenever I could.

In this way, after I had gotten a special taste of dancing and singing, I had the opportunity to come to Kathmandu from Gorkha in 1938.[17] As the festivals of Gaijatra and Indrajatra were

14 *Subedār* is the military rank of Warrant Officer First Class, a junior noncommissioned officer. It is implied here that the *subedār* dancers were the *mādale*.

15 *Sipahī* is the military rank of Private.

16 The implication here is that they had choreographed and rehearsed that one dance but did not have the same inexhaustible well of folk forms on which to improvise as did the other groups.

17 1995 v.s.

going on at that time, I got to see many different kinds of dances and got to see pāṅgdure dances performed by the 24 Platoons at Hanuman Dhoka. I clearly saw that among the pāṅgdure dances danced according to our village customs, soraṭhī and charitra were receiving special attention. Apart from this, I saw rehearsed dances and various types of dramas, and returned to Gorkha with much more knowledge of dance. After I got back to Gorkha, our group performed many kinds of dramas, and had others perform dramas as well. Even before 1939 I had already become very interested in dancing. At that time, as I had already learned to play the flute according to folk rules, I also accompanied dances by playing folk song tunes and instrumental tunes.

In 1939, we had to return to Jyamrung from Gorkha, and after coming home we had more opportunities to gain knowledge of folk music. According to tradition, we are the patrons[18] of the song and dance troupe of our village, so I had no difficulty dancing and singing together with the troupe. We are not only the patrons, but all of us brothers and our father himself would customarily participate in the dances. My father used to play the harmonium and sing himself, and took great pleasure in playing for the old dances. This is how I also came to play the harmonium to some extent. And, as my youngest older brother lived in Kathmandu and could sing some *rāg*s and *rāginī*s and play the harmonium, in his company I also learned to play the harmonium according to the common rules of *sargam* notation. After getting a taste of dancing and singing in this way, I came to realize that when we get together in our troupes and talk about dance with the elderly gurus in the villages, the dances that we dance in the troupes are referred to as pāṅgdure dance, bharat dance, or mārunī dance, and the dances that are not danced in a ritually-bound troupe but rather only for ordinary question-answer songs or just for entertainment, these are referred to as 'straight-up' or 'plain' (*ṭhāḍo*) dance. On this basis, I have shown in various articles that the dances included in pāṅgdure dance all have their own particular and separate names, among which soraṭhī, charitra,

18 The word he uses here, *saṁrakṣak*, could also be translated as 'guardians.' Indeed, this is how Shah understood his role in the troupe.

khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā are the main ones.

After going home, from 1939 to 1945 I continued dancing in pāṅgdure dances, starting out as a mārunī. After that, I danced as a pursuṅge and mādale in the dances for the festivals at Salyan Phet,[19] and in 1945 I came to Kathmandu and since then have returned to the hills only once in a while. In this way, when I went to the hills, I always used to try to go in the middle of a festival. As I continued to be involved in singing and dancing, after Radio Nepal was established in 1951, I had the opportunity to play tunes on the flute, play leaves,[20] sing songs, tell stories and recite poems on Radio Nepal's Student Program from 1952–1955. And, after 1957, I had many opportunities to perform stories and sung stories, play song tunes on the sitar and tunes on the flute, and play the mādal with its various *tāl*s and *bol*s, on the Army Program on Radio Nepal. The program directors at that time were Shyamdas Vaishnav and Rashmi Rana.

The main thing is that on the 11th of April in 1955,[21] I became a Clerk Sergeant in the Royal Army. After I joined up and got this post, participating in the morning and evening dances and the yearly festival programs provided a good opportunity for the exchange of songs and dances from the villages of different districts, which led to a deep study of the folk songs and dances of different places. Also, in 1956, during the auspicious coronation of His Majesty King Mahendra,[22] when seventy-five folk dances from all over the Kingdom of Nepal were performed as tattoos in the stadium,[23] I had the opportunity to perform in the dances from every sector of the Royal Army as per

19 Also known as Salyan Phedi, this village lies in the river valley below Jyamrung. The festivals celebrated here include Tripurasundari Nwagi Jatra, which Shah mentions having recorded on audiotape, but the tapes have yet to be found.

20 Folded leaves are often used as instruments in Nepal's hills, inserted into the mouth similarly to the reed of a reed instrument. Players change pitch by changing the airflow.

21 29th of Chaitra in 2011 v.s.

22 The coronation of King Mahendra was filmed in Cinerama by a US documentary crew, as part of the film *Search for Paradise* (1957). Along with footage of life in Nepal in 1956 including a group of porters carrying a car up into the Kathmandu Valley, the film shows the type of ceremonial army life that Subi Shah likely participated in as part of the King's Guard. The Nepal part of the film can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gQSuGZaMBg

23 The stadium in Kathmandu was built in 1956 and was brand new at this time. We have not found film or photographs of these dances.

the program, and I also had the opportunity to perform in the dances that were selected for performance in Phora Darbār Prabha Cinema Hall.[24] As the royal tours gave me the opportunity to see the folk dances of different districts, I was able to see what the folk dances of the east and west were like. I also had the opportunity to publish various poems and articles related to folk music through Radio Nepal and various newspapers and magazines. By 1969, many of my poems were published in *Ramjham*, *Mādhurī*, *Sipāhī*, *Madhuparka*, etc., and articles on folk music in *Saṁskṛiti*, *Prajñā*, *Saṅgīt Saritā*, *Gorkhāpatra*, etc., which readers must already know.



Fig. 2.2 Subi Shah after retirement from the army at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY.

24 Prabha Cinema Hall was on the property of Phora Darbār, 'Fountain Palace,' built in 1895 by Bir Shamsher and located across from Narayanhiti Palace in central Kathmandu. The palace, including the cinema hall, was demolished in 1966 after being sold to the US Embassy, which turned the property into a fortified country club for Americans.

In the course of my life as my knowledge about folk music grew, the desire to write articles and books began to grow when I returned to Jyamrung Darbār from Kathmandu in 1966. Before that, I had danced and watched others dance only for entertainment. When these traditions began to be misused in the name of folk song, then I wanted to find out the concrete rules of folk music and promote them as well. Even by 1966, distorted forms of folk songs and folk dances had already been promoted in Kathmandu. Because of this, I had a very unpleasant feeling in my heart, and because I had some knowledge of classical music, as soon as I got home I decided to collect folk songs myself. Using the notes of the flute and harmonium, I have notated the songs that I myself knew from experience, along with those of the elderly gurus of various places who I invited to my home to sing in order to collect their songs. I also collected the historical background of soraṭhī. Likewise, as I had already collected the styles of mādal playing and the styles of dancing as done in the villages from Buwajyu,[25] on Wednesday, November 23, 1966, he also gave a detailed account of what soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, and jhyāure are and how they are danced. As he also narrated the entirety of the historical events of soraṭhī, I gained a great deal of knowledge about pāṅgdure dance.



Fig. 2.3 Subi Shah, his turntable and his records in his room in Kathmandu, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY.

25 In the text *Soraṭī*, included in Volume II, Subi Shah details how he met the guru he respectfully calls Buwajyu. This man's name is given as Padam but his surname is not given.

On this basis, I have succeeded in publishing many articles and books. Some of these writings are still to be published in various newspapers and magazines. Similarly, I trained the artists of the Nepal Academy and the Cultural Corporation[26] in these dances and they are still being performed from time to time. Likewise, in 1977 when a seminar was held by the Nepal Academy, I presented a paper on pāṅgdure dance. The papers from that time have been published as a book by the Nepal Academy. Similarly, in 1983, a book called *Mādal* was published by Sajha Prakashan.[27] In addition to various articles published in newspapers and magazines, a book called *Bālan Gātha* was published on August 20, 1988.[28] After this, I had the opportunity to present a paper titled 'Suitability and Relevance of Nepali Folk Instruments in the Context of Current Nepali Music' on March 3, 1991, and that paper has also been published in a book by the Nepal Academy.[29]




Fig. 2.4 Subi Shah greeting a crowd at the Rastriya Sabha Griha, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY.

26 This institution is officially known as Sāṁskṛitik Saṁsthān in Nepali and in English as the Cultural Corporation; it is better known as the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar (National Dance Center).

27 Shah writes 2034 v.s. [1977/78]; this is a typo. The first edition of *Mādal* was published in 1983. He may have submitted it for publication in the earlier year.

28 Subi Shah, *Bālan Gāthako Jhalak* [*Glimpses of Balan Ballads*] (Self, 1988). Two copies are available in libraries: one at the Nepal Academy, and one at the Music Museum of Nepal.

29 Subi Shah, 'Nepālko Vartamān Saṅgītko Sandarbhamā Nepālī Lok Vādyaharūko Upayuktatā Tathā Prāsaṅgikatā', in *Nepālī Lok Vādya Saṅgīt Saṅgoṣṭhī* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1991), pp. 9–21.

As my articles have been published, they have been promoted by the newspapers and magazines *Ramjham*, *Gorkhāpatra*, *Hāmro Saṁskṛiti*, *Prajñā*, *Bāginā*, *Saṅgīt Saritā*, *Mādhurya*, *Madhuparka*, *Sargam*, *Nepālī Lokbājā*, etc., along with Radio Nepal. Even so, the artists who have made use of my writings about folk music must be few, because if they had considered my articles there would not be corrupt songs promoted in the name of folk music today. The songs that are being promoted as folk songs on the radio, Nepal TV, and by various organizations today—do the artists in the villages really sing Nepali folk songs that way? Or should village folk songs and commercial folk songs be considered as two different forms? Today's demand is that intellectuals should be able to tell these apart.

In fact, those songs to which no one holds exclusive rights should be called folk songs. People of all castes and ethnicities should be able to sing them in all forms. Also, a song's type should be determined by its popular branch and should closely adhere to the rules of folk tunes. The original roots of a folk song's story and melody cannot be found. The song suddenly spreads throughout the Kingdom, then fades away. If anyone had written down the lyrics and melodies of folk songs, there are so many that they would probably not even fit in a big grain storage basket.[30] These folk songs that were once widespread are now diminishing. In fact, the main reason for the disappearance of our famous songs and dances, especially soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, jhyāure, bālan, and bhajan, is our greedy eyes and wandering hearts and minds. Because we all like only Hindi songs, pop songs, Western music, and dances like disco and urban dances. Only if you can sing, play, and dance in these ways are you considered an artist, and where is the place for our folk songs? Today, at pujās, weddings, coming-of-age ceremonies, picnics, wherever you go, the places are filled with the sounds *kyãkyã* and *kũkũ*, *ḍhyāṅgḍhyāṅg*, and *ḍhuṅgḍhuṅg*. Nobody even wants to hear the names of pañchai bājā, mādal, and *damphu*. Because of this mistake, today so many folk songs are

30 A *bhakārī* is the largest-sized basket for storing grain; it can be about as tall as an average person.

being thrown in the trash, while the village folk dances are being scrapped. Now, if we do not collect and publish the *loklaharī*,[31] folk music, and folk songs that our ancestors saved, our descendants will curse us as the destroyers of folk music.

Subi Shah
West 1 No. Dhading District, Jagar Jamrung, Byarthok
Presently Kathmandu District, Kaldhara, 15/322
2006



Fig. 2.5 Subi Shah, genealogy of folk songs popular in the central part of the Gandaki area. Transcription © Anna Stirr. CC BY. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/63236997

31 *Loklaharī* are unaccompanied folk songs including chants like the *khãdo* sung at weddings; Subi Shah puts them in a separate category from folk songs that have instrumental accompaniment. See *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* in Volume II for more on these categories.

# 3. ‘Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances’

## Translator’s Introduction: Pāṅgdure Dances and their History in Nepal and Jyamrung

*Anna Stirr*

This work introduces the genres that are performed by *pāṅgdure* dance troupes in central Nepal, using nomenclature from Subi Shah’s own experience in Jyamrung village of Dhading District. These genres include *khyālī*, *charitra*, *soraṭhī*, *jhyāure*, and *chuḍkā*; Shah focuses on their dance aspects while also emphasizing song structure and rhythmic cycle (*tāl*) as defining aspects of each genre. This experience-based overview of pāṅgdure dances and their musical forms is a chapter Subi Shah wrote for the textbook *Nṛityakalā* or *The Art of Dance*. The book is co-written with other dance experts, each writing chapters on their areas of expertise, and first published by the state publication house Sajha Prakashan in 1981.[1]

1 Mrigendra Singh Pradhan’s chapter in *Nrityakalā* introduces classical dances and dance theory of the subcontinent. Shah’s chapter describes some of the folk dances of Nepal; Saptamuni Vajracharya includes a chapter on Buddhist Charya dance; and Beti Vajracharya’s brief final chapter returns to Sanskrit-based dance theory and a brief account of other dances of the world.

©2026 Stirr (introduction);
Stirr, Brown, Khadka and Rijal (translation), CC BY 4.0 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246.03

Shah's chapter in *Nṛityakalā* gives an overview of pāṅgdure dances as one of Nepal's widely-known sets of folk dance forms, alongside chapters on the dances recognized as classical in India, the Buddhist devotional *chārya* dance as practiced among Newar Buddhists, and brief references to dance forms from elsewhere in the world. This is one of Shah's enduring goals: to present the local, Jyamrung village versions of dances, music, songs, and dramatic forms he knows and loves as worthy of promotion on the world stage, on equal terms to the forms recognized as classical or of major ritual importance. We also like how this chapter briefly introduces most of the topics that Shah addresses in greater detail in his other works on pāṅgdure dances. For an introduction to pāṅgdure dances, the tāls that define their various genres, the poetic meters that merge with tāls to outline song structure, and the cultural associations of each of these performance forms, it makes sense to begin with this chapter and then turn to the others for more detail and depth.

In this translator's introduction to Shah's overview chapter, we begin to explore the origins of pāṅgdure dances and their counterparts, both mythological and what little has been established through historical research on written documents. Here we also address two questions that arise about pāṅgdure dances in general, and those Shah documented in particular. First: Why has pāṅgdure traditionally been an all-male genre, and what is the history of men dressing as women to perform the mārunī role? Second: What is the history of pāṅgdure in Jyamrung, and why have the pāṅgdure troupes of Jyamrung and its surroundings in central Dhading declined since the mid-twentieth century? In exploring the answers to these questions, we provide background to the tradition as a whole, and to the cultural, political, and economic changes that sparked Subi Shah's efforts at documentation and promotion.

## Pāṅgdure, Mārunī, and Siṅgāru Dances: Their Development in Medieval Nepal

Pāṅgdure, mārunī, and siṅgāru are regional names that refer to similar types of dance troupes which perform similar dances. As

Subi Shah notes, the custom of male dancers dressing as women for the mārunī role is one of the major identifying aspects they all have in common. While pāṅgdure and mārunī are often said to be exactly the same, by Shah and others, siṅgāru of the mid-western hills is sometimes treated separately because siṅgāru songs are considered a genre in and of themselves. There are other regional names as well: purkhyāulī nāch ('ancestral dance') and nachari are two among them, from Parbat and Baglung districts in Nepal. In some places nachari refers to all pāṅgdure dances; other places, it appears to refer only to charitra. For simplicity's sake, we will refer to these dances all primarily as pāṅgdure, using Shah's terminology.

Oral tradition dates the origins of pāṅgdure dances back to sometime between the twelfth and the fourteenth century, in the small principalities of the central-western hills. At this time in the surrounding areas, the Delhi Sultanate held power in the plains, and bands of disaffected Rajputs were migrating into Nepal; this immigration increased, we hear, after the siege of Chitoragarh in 1303, and thus began the establishment of Hindu royalty in the hills.[2] The Khas Malla or Yatse kingdom ruled from Sinja in what is now Nepal's far-western hills, and the Mallas ruled in Kathmandu.[3] The Yatse kingdom collapsed in the thirteenth century, leading to the formation of confederations known as the 'Bāise and Chaubise Rājya' or 'Twenty-Two and Twenty-Four Kingdoms.' In fact, the number of kingdoms among these also varied, as they conquered each other or split due to internal strife. The rulers of these kingdoms were often Magar, as was the majority of their population, and they referred to this area as Magarat. Beginning in the early fourteenth century and increasingly in later years, immigrant Rajputs looking to regain some of their lost authority began to set themselves up as rulers. Beginning in 1743, one of

2 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)*.

3 Dilli Raman Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, 3 vols (Rupa Publications, 1965), II. Malla is a title literally meaning 'wrestler' in Sanskrit; it is meant to connote someone of great strength. The Khas Mallas originated from Yatse in Ngari in Tibet and later took on the title of Malla, while the Kathmandu Mallas originated in Mithila and were not related to the Khas Mallas.

these kingdoms, Gorkha, would come to conquer all the others and much more territory, establishing the Gorkhali empire that later became today's Nepal. It was in these central-western hill kingdoms that the pāṅgdure traditions developed.

According to Parajuli, the word mārunī comes from the Magar language.[4] Thus, it makes sense to look for the general dance form's history in the historical area of Magarāt, generally thought of as extending west from the Budhi Gandaki river in the central hills.[5] Subi Shah believes that these dance forms originated in the area around the Budhi Gandaki, while others point to further western hill origins. While some of the stories that appear in their songs have origins in the plains, and various song styles have influences from different local and immigrant groups, the style of dancing with pursuṅge, mādale, and mārunī, accompanied by a group of singers and instrumentalists, is acknowledged to be an innovation of these central-western hills, which spread eastward with general migration patterns and with the movements of armies from the central-western hills, especially during the era of Prithvi Narayan Shah.

One story passed down orally in the southwestern hill area of what is now Gulmi and Palpa tells us that the army of King Balihang Rana Magar developed this dance style to entertain their king while he was ill. This story provides background for the tradition of performing pāṅgdure dances for a patron, royal or otherwise, and for the tradition of performing pāṅgdure dances in a military context, both practices which remained the norm through the end of the Rana period. The Magar king Balihang[6] is said to have founded the kingdom of Baldeng centered around Baldeng Gadhi (Baldeng Fort) likely in the late fourteenth century C.E. (1448 v.s. or 1391

4 Parajuli, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)*, p. 37.

5 Jyamrung and Sohraghar are slightly east of the Budhi Gandaki and there are plenty of Magars living there, especially in the Magar-speaking village of Sohraghar; the distinction regarding what fell within Magarat and what did not is more about which kings ruled these areas than whether or not Magars lived there, and Dhading had Tamang and Ghale rulers before the Shah expansions during Ram Shah's reign in Gorkha in the 1600s.

6 Hang means 'king' in Kirat languages, so from the perspective of those languages, Balihang means King Bali. Magar is not a Kirat language, but the meaning may nevertheless have been known at the time.

C.E.).[7] Baldeng reached from what is now Pokhara to Gorakhpur in its heyday, and when it fell around 1700 to the combined forces of Palpa, Khanchi, and Gulmi (neighboring principalities of Barha Magarat), its hill territories went to Palpa, the Tarai to Khanchi, and Baldeng Gadhi itself to Gulmi; they were then redistributed to Palpa and Gulmi.[8] The ruins of the fort remain today, in the rural municipality of Baldengadhi, Palpa. In some histories, Balihang is credited with initiating Tihar celebrations: as the story goes, his time of death had come, but his subjects did not wish his benevolent rule to end. So, they fooled the god of death by lighting many lamps at once, such that the night turned into day, and the opportunity to take King Balihang's life passed. The stories of legendary kings named Bali or Balihang get conflated in practice, but this medieval King Balihang was clearly a different person than the King Bali of already-existing stories from pre-Vedic times.

There are still more stories; we shall keep the discussion of Tihar aside, but King Balihang was likely not the only king calling for performances similar to pāṅgdure in the fourteenth century. Oral tradition and some written documentation from the Khas homelands in mid-Western Nepal presents another origin for Siṅgāru songs and dances. On this subject, folklore researcher Mahendra Kumar Budhathoki writes,

> On the bases of historical documents of Khasan (the mainland of Khas people in Mid-Western part of Nepal, a province Sinja-empire), a king named Siṅgāru ruled over Salyan in the late fourteenth century (B.S.) of the Vikram era and commenced a song with dance, and people entitled this song under the name of the King Siṅgāru. Therefore, Siṅgāru folk song is considered to be originated in Salyan (Lamichhane, Lokabarta, 2074, p.73). Siṅgāru song is also known as Bangari song, and Bangar is the name of a village located in Salyan; it shows that Siṅgāru song originated in Salyan.[9]

7 Nar Bahadur 'Naru' Thapa, *Kirāt Magar Itihās* (Nirantar Prakashan, 2010). Nepal's National Museum states that he ruled in the twelfth century but does not provide a source (https://nationalmuseum.gov.np/archives/120).

8 Bernardo Michael, 'The Tarai: A Part of Moghlan or Gorkha? Perspectives from the Time of the Anglo-Gorkha War (1814-1816),' *Himalaya*, 29.1 and 2 (2010), pp. 7–17.

9 Mahendra Budhathoki, 'Social Representations on Singaru Folk Songs in Nepal', *Patan Pragya*, 11.2 (2022), p. 82, https://doi.org/10.3126/pragya.

Experience shows us that such etymological claims do not conclusively demonstrate origins, though they do give us an idea of how genres may have circulated. It is also likely that the various genres performed as part of mārunī, siṅgāru, and pāṅgdure were incorporated into the tradition at different times during this era. Parajuli writes that mārunī dance is the 'mother dance' of which 'mārunī sorathī,' 'mārunī charitra' with its two branches focusing on Ram and Krishna, and 'mārunī khyālī' are parts.[10] In other words, the way of dancing came first, and these song genres and stories were incorporated into it later. Subi Shah suggests below that khyālī is the most ancient of these song forms. We can perhaps imagine that these initial pāṅgdure dancers were performing something like the 'historical khyālī' songs Shah writes about, at the time the millet ripened and could be harvested, and winter days were close on the horizon. Work on Siṅgāru songs supports this: while the charitra and soraṭhī dances may be performed by siṅgāru groups, many other local song genres known specifically as siṅgāru songs are favored.[11] And, the performances they gave may have been developing and innovating rapidly with the influx of new material coming from newcomers to the territory.

The latter years of the Yatse (Khas Malla) kingdom and the subsequent era of small principalities also saw increasing in-migration of Rajputs, who, though few in number, were evidently 'of a temperament that quickly gained them the ascendancy in the hill states where they settled.'[12] As Hindu kingship developed in Nepal's central hills,[13] along with it came what has been called a cultural Sanskritization, but which can also be seen as an era of innovative and hybrid cultural forms.[14] Some cultural forms

v11i02.52043; M. Lamichhane, *Lok Varta Kehi Pakshaharu* (Brother's Books, 2017), p. 73. Also see M. Lamichhane, *Lok Sahitya Samajik Pratibimba* (Oxford International Publications, 2072), p. 112.The fourteenth century of the Bikram (Vikram) era (v.s.) is 1243–1342 CE.

10 Parajuli, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)*, p. 7.

11 Acharya and Rayamajhi, *Magar Jātiko Lokgīt tathā Loksaṅgīt.*

12 Ludwig F. Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha: A Study in the Unification of Nepal 1768–1816* (Manjusri, 1973), p. 45.

13 Lecomte-Tilouine, *Hindu Kingship, Ethnic Revival, and Maoist Rebellion in Nepal*, p. 133.

14 The development of these forms, of course, was still shot through with power

popular in the plains may have traveled along with these new rulers and their entourages, and, the routes by which they came may have already been conduits for the circulation of popular stories, songs, music, dances, and dramas. Folklorist Kalibhakta Pant focuses on west-to-east migration, and believes that jhyāure-style and other songs, with poetic meters 'of 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19 syllables (*mātra*)', were introduced into the central-western hills at the time by immigrants from Gadhwal and Kumaon who came fleeing Muslim rule, and that these new song forms were readily adopted by the people there, and assisted in forming a sense of supralocal unity.[15] It is likely that many complex poetic meters already existed in these regions, and this era of increasing intercultural interaction brought about new variations. A language that became the Nepali language, containing elements of that spoken in the Yatse seat of Sinja plus elements of languages from the south, like Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Gujarati, and Hindi, and elements of the languages that were already in use in the hills, like Magar, Gurung, Kumal, and others, was one result of this cultural mixture; it was in this language that new song genres developed.

An increasing mixture of lowland Hindu and local hill religious practices (which at this time could already be seen to incorporate Hindu, Vajrayana Buddhist, and shamanic practices)[16] was another result of these changes. We see this in Magar adaptations of Bhume pujā,[17] and in terms of pāṅgdure dances, we see it in the inclusion

dynamics; Lecomte-Tilouine's work addresses some of them, but much of this history has yet to be studied in depth.

15 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)*, p. 61. Pant discusses this in terms of national unification, seeing such unification as a desired goal: 'Without this cultural gift of the jhyāure-style songs, melodies, and sounds to the men and women of the song and dance-loving Gurung, Sherpa, Kirat, and other ethnic groups, who had only been singing and dancing to poetic meters like "Selo, Bhoṭeselo, Tamangselo" before the arrival of the Paudyals, it cannot be said whether the gift of a common language alone would have sufficed to unite them to take up arms under the banner of Gorkha' (p. 61). We can surmise that there were many more song types existing at the time than Parajuli assumes, but the situation today does show that the jhyāure-style songs certainly became popular.

16 Rishikesh Shah, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal,' *Kailash*, 16.1 and 2 (1990), pp. 71–115.

17 Lecomte-Tilouine, *Hindu Kingship, Ethnic Revival, and Maoist Rebellion in Nepal*.

of the stories of Ram and Krishna into pāṅgdure performance as charitra dances. The famous Bihari version of Ramleela, based on the Ramcharitmanas, is said to have begun in the sixteenth century; the pāṅgdure performances of Ramayana stories contain none of this Ramleela's dramatic elements, and are instead stories set to song and dance without acting, so they may well have developed in earlier centuries. Additionally, it makes sense that dances highlighting Ram and Krishna may have developed in the fourteenth century as Vaishnava *bhakti* expression was becoming increasingly popular in the northern plains and nearby hills.[18]

We now know that the soraṭhī/soraṭī[19] story likely originated in the Bhojpuri-speaking plains of what is now Uttar Pradesh;[20] this area includes the city of Gorakhpur on the banks of the Rapti river, which for a time marked the southern limits of the Baldeng Gadhi kingdom. The dates proposed for the spread of the soraṭhī dance-drama in Nepal also give us an idea about the time when mārunī, siṅgāru, and pāṅgdure dances and their primary genres were becoming more widely established and adopting more stories into their performance repertoires. Because characters in the second part of the soraṭhī story (which does not appear in Shah's version included in Volume II) include Prince Brijabhar and his father King Todar Mal[21] who is a member of Akbar's court (1556–1605), historian

18 Burchett, *A Genealogy of Devotion*.

19 A note on the spelling: Parajuli explains that the story is written in a poetic meter called soraṭhī chhanda, and asserts that this is not in doubt; for this reason he uses the spelling Soraṭhī. In some of his works, Shah, on the basis that Soraṭī is the sixteenth (Sorha-woti) queen, chooses the spelling Soraṭī. We discuss the etymology later; throughout this volume, we use *Soraṭī* to refer to Shah's transcription of the text of the story (in Volume II). Otherwise, we use soraṭhī, the more common and familiar spelling, and the one used by Sajha Prakashan in Shah's published works.

20 Parajuli, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)*, p. 45. Parajuli describes how this story has remained in this area as a gāthā (epic) tale (now performed as Nautanki sung drama), spread to Bengal also as a gāthā, and become a literary story or kathā in Gujarat (p. 45). The several versions of the story Parajuli analyzes exist among many more versions found in Nepal and in these other regions, but it is in Nepal and among the Nepali speaking populations of the eastern hills of India and southern plains of Bhutan that Soraṭī is performed as a dance-drama.

21 Among his many achievements, Todar Mal is known for having issued a decree sometime between 1582 and 1584, making Persian the official language of

Motilal Parajuli asserts that the story in its Bhojpuri version must have been written after that, likely at the end of the sixteenth century C.E.[22] Another character in this second part of the story is the yogi Gorakhnath, who is estimated to have lived in the twelfth century C.E. So, even if the characters from Akbar's court are later additions, the Soraṭhī-Brijhabar story that Parajuli documents is likely to be no older than Gorakhnath.[23] Shah's focus is on the first part of the story, whose characters do not appear in other records, so this part is harder to situate historically; it could be older than the second part.

Again, we make no claims regarding a single origin for pāṅgdure dances. The role types, choreography, songs, stories, musical instruments, and associated social and ritual traditions have developed over the years as the performance form spread and took root in communities throughout the hills of what is now Nepal, northeastern India, and Bhutan. Each region, each village, each troupe, has its own unique and valuable elements.

## Mārunī/Pāṅgdure/Siṅgāru as an All-Male Genre: Female Impersonation, Costumes, and Gender

The term pāṅgdure comes from the agricultural calendar—dances to be danced when the *pāṅgdur* variety of millet is ripe—but the other names by which these dances are known, mārunī and siṅgāru, come from the tradition of men dressing as women to perform the mārunī role. As male mārunī dancers are known as men dressed

the Mughal courts Najaf Haider, 'Language, Caste and the Secretarial Class in Mughal India,' in *The Evolution of a Nation Pre-Colonial to Post-Colonial: Essays in Memory of R.S. Sharma*, ed. by D. N. Jha (Manohar, 2014), pp. 249–62.

22 Parajuli, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)*, pp. 11, 45. Parajuli writes 'the Vikram sixteenth century,' but he gives inaccurate dates for Akbar's reign, which has been established as 1556–1605 C.E; his estimate that Soraṭī must have been composed at the end of the sixteenth century v.s., fifty-seven years ahead of the Western calendar, can thus be adjusted to refer to the end of the sixteenth century C.E.

23 There is a very ancient King Jayasingh recorded in Nepal, said to be the second king of the Mahispal dynasty whose dates are lost to time but which long preceded the time of the Buddha. If this Jayasingh is the king meant to be Queen Soraṭhī's father, this first half of the story could be very old indeed. But the Mahispal King Jayasingh's prehistoric time period does not fit with the sixteenth-century C.E. Brijhabar part of the story.

as women, this type of mārunī performance can be referred to as female impersonation, following Kamath and Lothspeich's definition of 'impersonation' as 'the temporary assumption of an identity or guise in social and aesthetic performance that is perceived as not one's own.'[24] These days, many women also perform as mārunī. But the tradition of male mārunī is said to be older, and troupes like the one in Sohraghar are proud of maintaining their tradition of male mārunī dancers. This tradition is said to have begun when women performing in public was frowned upon. While it is certainly true that women's public performances have been disparaged in South Asia, there is more to the history of female impersonation in performance, which may involve aspects of religious devotion, entertainment, and eroticism.

First, in what ways were women discouraged from performing in public, and how might this have affected pāṅgdure dances? Unlike in the history of Japanese Kabuki, we have no records of events that led women to be barred from pāṅgdure performance.[25] Neither did the British suppress women's performance in Nepal as they did in India in the nineteenth century. Rather, it is more likely that pāṅgdure and similar dance traditions developed as all-male genres. There are many longstanding South Asian traditions in which women do perform—professional court performers have included both men and women, and various participatory folk genres including both women and men are found across the Himalayan region. At the same time, in the plains region of what is now Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, including the Bhojpuri-speaking regions around Gorakhpur where the soraṭhī story developed, there are more restrictive versions of purdah that strongly discourage women's public performances, and caste and

24 *Mimetic Desires: Impersonation and Guising Across South Asia*, ed. by Harshita Mruthini Kamath and Pamela Lothspeich (University of Hawaii Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824894108

25 Women were officially banned from performing Kabuki in 1629 on the pretext that their sensuality on and offstage caused social disorder, but also because of powerful men's rivalries over the favors of kabuki actresses. Mette Laderrière, 'The Early Years of Female Impersonation in Kabuki,' *Maske Und Kothurn*, 35.2–3 (1989), pp. 31–38, 10.7767/muk.1989.35.23.31; Yoko Takakuwa, 'Masquerading Womanliness: The Onnagata's Theatrical Performance of Femininity in Kabuki,' *Women: A Cultural Review*, published online 1 September 1994, world, 10.1080/09574049408578194.

class have influenced which women become public performers despite the regional disparagement of this role.[26] Nevertheless, even in these more restrictive regions, women have performed at home and in areas outside their home compounds all along.[27]

Oral tradition tells us that in Nepal's small hill principalities, it was kings who began the tradition of pāṅgdure/mārunī/siṅgāru performance, relying on their male soldiers as performers. So, the dances must have been performed in the all-male context of army life, and spread and circulated as these armies moved eastward. Legend has it that these Magar armies reached all the way to the Tista river in the east, and in subsequent centuries, Prithvi Narayan Shah's armies certainly contributed to the spread of central-western hills cultural forms, and the integration of cultural elements from the places they passed through.[28] This army context may have influenced pāṅgdure's evolution as an all-male genre involving female impersonation.

The medieval milieu in which pāṅgdure dances emerged also saw the development of multiple 'religious transvestisms' in various traditions, from the Vaishnava practice of cross-dressing as *sakhī* or 'friends of Radha' to embody a feminine relationship toward the divine, to the tantra-informed practices and theologies of Bauls and Fakirs who aimed to transcend cultural and biological constraints of gender-sex systems. These still remain in multiple forms to this day despite colonial, orthodox, and reformist disparagement in both Hinduism and Islam over the intervening centuries.[29] While we can only speculate about this, the mixture of Vaishnava and tantric Buddhist traditions plus 'religious transvestism' in the Sahajiya

26 Prem Chowdhry, *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples: Gender, Caste, and Patriarchy in Northern India* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Regula Qureshi, 'Female Agency and Patrilineal Constraints,' in *The Courtesan's Arts in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Bonnie Gordon and Martha Feldman (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 312–331, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195170283.003.0019

27 Kathryn Hansen, *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India* (Manohar, 1992); Gloria Raheja and Ann Gold, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (University of California Press, 1994), https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520914216

28 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History).*

29 Carola Erika Lorea, 'Pregnant Males, Barren Mothers, and Religious Transvestism: Transcending Gender in the Songs and Practices of "Heterodox" Bengali Lineages,' *Asian Ethnology*, 77.1/2 (2018), pp. 169–214.

traditions of the northern plains is quite similar to the religious mixture of Vaishnava traditions, tantric Śakta and Buddhist traditions, and shamanic traditions, which continued in Nepal even after the rise of orthodox Vaishnavism in India.[30] Pāṅgdure dances involve female impersonation and embodying the goddess Saraswati through possession, both of which are viewed positively by the societies in which they are performed. This suggests that there may be a religious aspect to the inclusion of mārunī in pāṅgdure dances, even though their role is not a specifically devotional one.

Beyond the overtly religious, there are many genres that involve female impersonation throughout South Asia. Some of these, like Kuchipudi in southeastern India, involve elaborate training to embody femininity, and enjoy high social status.[31] Others, like the various genres often referred to as *lauṇḍā nāch* in the North Indian plains and the western hill regions, are associated with rural life and lower social status, are performed at weddings and other festivals, and also involve a concerted effort to perform femininity by the male performers who wear women's dress. Lauṇḍā nāch may also involve homoerotic joking and jokes about cross-dressing, drawing attention to the idea that there is a disjuncture between the gendered body of the performer and the gender being performed, and emphasizing its connections to sexuality. Performers of lauṇḍā nāch may or may not see this performance as an expression of their preferred gender, and are often in heterosexual marriages, whatever the full extent of their sexuality may be.[32] Wedding entertainment performances, called *lagan*, are sometimes also referred to as lauṇḍā nāch,[33] but more often involve people who identify themselves as third gender, hijra, or koti,

30 Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II; Shah, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal.'

31 Harshita Mruthini Kamath, *Impersonations: The Artifice of Brahmin Masculinity in South Indian Dance* (University of California Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.72; Rumya Putcha, *The Dancer's Voice: Performance and Womanhood in Transnational India* (Duke University Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478023760

32 Anna Morcom, *Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance: Cultures of Exclusion* (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199343539.001.0001

33 Aniruddha Dutta, 'The Freedom to Dance: Performance and Impersonation in Lagan,' in *Mimetic Desires: Impersonation and Guising Across South Asia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2022), pp. 127–47, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824894108-009

and whose performance is thus more congruent with their everyday gender expression than it is an instance of female impersonation. This can of course be the case for mārunī; transfeminine performers have certainly expressed how they felt at home in their gender while dressed to dance as a mārunī.[34] Yet tradition requires all dancers in a pāṅgdure troupe to begin with mārunī roles before progressing to other roles, so as everyone must dance as mārunī, not all who do so will identify as transfeminine. Further, while mārunīs' costumes and makeup are feminine, the femininity of their movements while dancing is not often emphasized in rehearsals. This is more a matter of individual dancers' choice; across Nepal and its diasporas, we have seen plenty of pāṅgdure performances where the only thing that seemed feminine about the mārunī dancers was their jewelry and shawls, and still others where the mārunī dancers delighted in moving in a flowing, feminine style (what classical dance scholarship would term *lasya*).

The name for these dances that seems most closely related to the custom of female impersonation is siṅgāru, used in Nepal's mid and far western regions, especially those that correspond with the Magar territorial division of Athara Magarat. As mentioned above, one idea about the source of the name siṅgāru is that it came from the name of the king who began the tradition. In this telling, the king is of Khas ethnicity. The folklorist Bamkumari Budha Magar provides an etymology for siṅgāru based in the Magar language. Quoting her, musicologists Acharya and Rayamajhi write,

> Because Siṁgāru is a dance of the Magar society in Aṭhara Magarāt, it is necessary to look for the origins of its name in the Magar language. In Pang and Kham Magar, "Sya" means "my," "nga" means "dancing," and "rya" means "person," so "syangarya" would mean "my dancing person" (Bamkumari Budha Magar). With "*siṅāru*" coming from "syangarya" and in the context of today's "siṁgāru," it also appears that the term "siṁgāru" may have originated from *sṛngār*, with a /u/ added.[35]

34 Namrata Sharma, 'Ensuring Rights Of Gender Minorities,' *The Rising Nepal* (Kathmandu), 20 December 2023, https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/36480

35 D.C. 2065, 32, cited in Govinda Acharya and Durga Rayamajhi, *Magar Jātiko Lokgīt tathā Loksaṅgīt* (Nepal Music Center, 2017), p. 119. Siṁgāru सिंगारु is another spelling of siṅgāru सिङ्गारु.

Sṛngār is a Sanskrit word that appears in many related languages, and MacDonnell's Sanskrit dictionary gives its multiple meanings as follows: 'शृङ्गार sriṅg-âra a. handsome, fine (rare); fine garments, finery (also of the ornamental trappings of an elephant); sexual love; erotic sentiment in a poem.'[36] The last meaning, erotic sentiment in a poem, refers to sṛngār rasa, which is also commonly applied to sound and movement in music and dance; love songs are said to express sṛngār rasa. The related Nepali verb, *siṅārnu*/*siṅgārnu*, means 'to adorn, bedeck, or decorate,'[37] and can refer to adorning anything. So, we see a cross-linguistic association between the name siṅgāru and dancing, adornment and finery, and love and eroticism. In Nepali slang, the term siṅgāru can also refer to transwomen or male cross-dressers outside of the dance context; the Ekta Comprehensive Nepali-English Dictionary defines it as 'childless or barren woman; hermaphrodite; eunuch.'[38] This usage of the term may have come after, rather than preceded, the practice of men dressing as women for siṅgāru dances, and acknowledges the connection of female impersonation in performance with the performance of gender in everyday life. The term mārunī also carries this connotation to an extent, as seen in the 2019 film *Mārunī*, about a trans woman.[39] But, as it lacks siṅgāru's etymological connection with transfemininity, the term mārunī remains more strongly associated with female impersonation in the dance role and less with transfeminine identities or cross-dressing as an erotic practice.[40]

Since the mid-twentieth century, it has become much more common for women to dance as mārunī. This coincides with movements for cultural preservation and gender equality, and a decline in stigma associated with women's public, presentational performance. Some of the simpler pāṅgdure/mārunī dances are taught in Kathmandu

36 Arthur Macdonnell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary with Transliteration, Accentuation, and Etymological Analysis Throughout* (Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 319, https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/macdonell/

37 Ralph Lilley Turner, *A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language* (K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1931), p. 605m https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/turner/

38 www.wisdomlib.org, 'Singaaru, Singaru: 1 Definition,' 13 July 2024, https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/singaaru

39 *Mārunī*, dir. by Punam Gautam (Kathmandu, 2019).

40 That is not to say that such a connotation is absent, but that it is less strong, especially since many women dance mārunī these days.

Valley primary schools to all students regardless of gender. In the structure of learning in the pāṅgdure troupes of Dhading, mārunī is the simplest and thus the first role that everyone who joins a troupe must learn. Then, as they progress, they may perform as mādale or pursuṅge. While women play mādal in other contexts, we have yet to see women dancing in pāṅgdure dances as mādale or pursuṅge. So, troupes have a vested interest in continuing to teach young men and boys to dance as mārunī, so that they will be able to progress to the other roles. Nevertheless, the growing number of performances and music videos featuring male or female mārunī dancers make it clear that the mārunī role is now open to both men and women.

## Pāṅgdure Dances in Jyamrung Village

Subi Shah learned to perform pāṅgdure dances and their instrumental accompaniments from the troupe led by his father while in Gorkha, and then as part of the larger troupe based in their home village of Jyamrung in Dhading District. This Jyamrung troupe included many members of multiple castes and ethnic groups, including the Thakuri Shahs at the palace, Newar performers from the nearby bazaar, Damai performers who played the pañchai bājā instruments along with dancing and playing mādal in pāṅgdure dances, and others. Although Shah says that he left Jyamrung and mostly stayed in Kathmandu after he joined the army in 1955, he also returned to Jyamrung at festival time to participate in pāṅgdure dances, and sometimes invited the Jyamrung pāṅgdure troupe to Kathmandu to perform at the homes of dignitaries. Pitambar Sundas, who is the same age as Subi Shah's son Dhruva (in his seventies in 2025) and who danced with Subi Shah, remembers a trip to Kathmandu to perform sometime in the 1970s:

> After we performed at the National Dance Center, we visited government ministers' homes. And we would play deusī, and dance soraṭhī. And when we danced soraṭhī, he would dance the mārunī part too. He danced all the parts. It was so much fun![41]

41 Interview, 25 June, 2023. He may be combining two trips in his memory because he remembers performing at Phora Darbār and the Rastriya Nachghar; Phora Darbār was demolished in 1966 and the Rastriya Nachghar was established in 1972.

By the end of the 1980s, it seems that fewer people were dancing pāṅgdure dances in Jyamrung. The sponsorship situation was not what it had been when the Jyamrung palace was in its heyday. Subi Shah's father Chandra Bikram Shah had long since passed away, and his nephews and sons had either joined the army or become diplomats, so they were no longer living in Jyamrung. No one else in the village had taken up the responsibility of sponsoring dances to the extent that they had in Chandra Bikram Shah's lifetime, so there were fewer dance events than there had been before. Subi Shah's choice to bring a troupe from the National Dance Center in Kathmandu to film the dances at Jyamrung Darbār in 1992 suggests that he did not feel he could rely on Jyamrung's dancers to perform to his satisfaction. This could possibly be because he no longer lived there and was training the dancers at the National Dance Center rather than those in his home village, and thus wanted to film the dancers he had been training. But, it appears that a decline in palace patronage in Jyamrung led to a decline in pāṅgdure performance there.

The 1990s and 2000s saw further decline in pāṅgdure performances in Jyamrung. Men now in their forties and fifties attributed this to these decades' increase in out-migration for foreign employment. Many of them had learned to dance pāṅgdure during their childhoods, most of them having some experience dancing as mārunī. During their late teens, when they might otherwise have been dancing pāṅgdure dances, they had gone abroad for work. When they returned, the People's War (1996–2006), fought mainly in rural areas, had disrupted the conditions for performance; many of these men chose to go abroad again or move to urban areas rather than stay in the uncertainty of rural Nepal. In 2003, Maoist-affiliated villagers burned down Jyamrung Darbār in their fight against the socioeconomic inequalities perpetuated by the monarchy and aristocracy. While no one was hurt, a great deal of artifacts and foodstuffs burned along with the palace, leaving only the stables partly standing. Subi Shah's and his son Dhruva's generations had already moved away, returning only occasionally. Those Shahs who stayed on looked after the palace ruins and themselves, living similar lives to the other villagers. Without the

palace as a key sponsor and focal point of ritual activities, pāṅgdure dances and many other cultural activities associated with palace life did not revive in Jyamrung after the end of the war in 2006.[42]

During the years of our fieldwork, 2022–2025, no one was dancing pāṅgdure dances in Jyamrung. Several men told our team that they remembered how to do it, but there were not enough people to put together a troupe without holding extensive rehearsals, and no one had taken charge of such a task. Beyond the Jyamrung Shahs and the palace, there are families from Jyamrung who have become quite well off and could sponsor pāṅgdure performances, but they have also moved away. Many houses in Jyamrung lie empty most of the year, families returning only to plant and maintain their rice fields in the monsoon season if they have enough members to do the work. But, Kathmandu and Dhading are relatively close, and we may see more back and forth travel and new cultural configurations as the highway is widened and repaired, making such travel easier.

## Pāṅgdure Dances in Sohraghar Village

Village social structure also makes a difference in the sustainability of performance traditions. The situation is different in some of the villages near Jyamrung that never relied on a large landowning family for patronage of performance events. These villages are inhabited primarily by members of the Magar and Gurung janajātī ethnic groups, among others including Newars and Parbatiya Brahmins, Chhetris, and artisan castes; their village socioeconomic structures differ from that of Jyamrung as they do not have large landowners to whom other villagers may be bound in patron-client relationships. Magar and Gurung ethnic groups, along with many other janajātī ethnic groups, often use patronage of the arts and religious rituals to bring blessings on their families

42 Jyamrung Darbār was listed as private property and not nationalized after the war like other royal property was when the new government was formed in 2008. The family retains large landholdings in and around Jyamrung and in other parts of Dhading. In our conversations with them, we learned that the palace and its outbuildings had not been rebuilt because of disagreements within the family about how to do so, not because of lack of funds.

and to increase their individual and family prestige.[43] A person who has earned a large sum of money through work in the city or abroad, for example, might give back to the village by hosting a performance and feast, with the accompanying puja. This more horizontal model of performance patronage has persisted in these villages despite the disruptions of out-migration and the People's War, and people have continued to dance and learn pāṅgdure dances to a greater degree than in Jyamrung, where the palace patronage structure's decline left a vacuum that no one so far has stepped up to fill. That said, we should not underestimate the impact of out-migration on villages like Sohraghar; the youth who would otherwise be learning music and dancing as part of village life are mostly away in urban areas for school and work. Those who really wish to dance have to return to the village specifically for their training and performances. This is possible because of Dhading's closeness to Kathmandu, but it still takes greater interest and commitment than learning while living in one's own home.

Sankhu Sohraghar village lies on the opposite side of Dhading Bazaar from Jyamrung, about a day's walk or a few hours' drive away. Those who live there often refer to it simply as Sohraghar, which means 'sixteen houses,' although there are many more than sixteen houses in the village. Sohraghar is primarily inhabited by Magars and Newars. There, they refer to pāṅgdure dances as a whole as soraṭhī, acknowledging that there is also a specific *Soraṭhī* story, song, and dance.

Sohraghar is home to the popular folk singer Rita Thapa Magar, current President of the Nepal Folk and Duet Song Academy.[44] As part of our team, Rita arranged for her community to perform their pāṅgdure dances for us to film as part of this project, her mother

43 Kishor Gurung, 'Ghantu: A Narrative Ritual Music Tradition as Observed by the Gurungs of Nepal,' (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Hawaii Manoa, 1992); Pirkko Moisala, 'Gurung Music and Culture,' *Kailash*, 15 (1989), pp. 207–22; Moisala, *Cultural Cognition in Music: Continuity and Change in the Gurung Music Culture of Nepal*, iv; Sherry Ortner, *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 1989), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691218076; Hitchcock, *The Magars of Banyan Hill*, p. 92.

44 *Lok tathā Dohorī Pratisthān Nepāl*, referred to in many of my other works on dohori simply as 'the Pratisthan.'

Til Kumari Magar, Sorhaghar's oldest village elder, serving as host for the rehearsals and dances. Sohraghar pāṅgdure dancers had previously performed in music videos for Rita,[45] which used studio audio, but our project differed in that we wanted to document their own instrumental and vocal performances as they danced.

Despite the Sohraghar troupe's familiarity with having their pāṅgdure performances filmed, getting everyone ready for filming live involved some persuasion. There had previously been multiple troupes, and the current singing guru came from one in the upper village, while the mādal guru was from the lower village. These neighborhoods differed in ethnic group and dominant political party affiliation, with the latter apparently more of a dividing factor than the former. With many gestures of respect and gifts of their favorite beverages, Rita was able to convince the two gurus to cooperate with each other. The resulting month of preparation helped bridge some of the divisions that had resulted from recent local elections. Then, looking at the old books of lyrics kept by singing guru Purna Bahadur Shrestha, they chose the songs they would perform, and invited the interested new mārunī dancers back from Kathmandu to learn their parts. Officially, they performed as the Jalkanya Devi Youth Club, a club registered by Rita's brother Anand Thapa Magar and headquartered in the shop he kept along the main village road. They rehearsed in December 2022–January 2023, and we filmed our first round of dances in January 2023.

This first round of filming was notable for being a true community event. It officially began with the Saraswati pujā described in the introduction to *Mādal* and documented on video. But it had truly begun during the preceding month as rehearsals took place several times a week at Til Kumari's house, and the preceding week as a group of Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club women who were interested in being part of the event but not performing gathered leaves in the forest to make plates and bowls. The day before the performance was to take place, a pujā to Jalkanya Devi was conducted. This was necessary, we were told, to begin any kind

45 *Jhumarī*, dir. by Shankar BC, performed by Rita Thapa Magar and Mohan Ballav Rana (Kathmandu, 2020).

of ritual event—she was the most powerful goddess of the area and must be propitiated first. Following the tradition that families involved with a pāṅgdure performance contribute something to the larger party that takes place along with it,[46] other villagers donated various foodstuffs from grains to vegetables to meat and alcohol for the post-performance feast that would take place at Til Kumari's home. Women then made hundreds of *sel roṭī* and enough potato *achār* and distilled millet alcohol (*raksī*) to go around. Those who wanted to perform joined the group of singers at the field below the village, many of them dressed in their best Magar finery. The dancers then performed excellent renditions of charitra, and a khyālī genre performed in Sohraghar but not in Jyamrung, known as Jhumarī. After we were done filming, the group of women who had cooked and prepared leaf plates gathered at the community center beside the field where filming had taken place and served sel roṭī, achār, raksī, and sweet milk tea to performers and guests alike. Many performers and audience members then sat down in the grass around the community center and began to sing dohorī. The performers later gathered at Rita's family's house for a feast, including more sel roṭī, potato achār, and raksī, plus a *jhol tarkārī* or savory meat stew made from the chicken that had been sacrificed earlier, accompanied by fresh local mustard greens and steamed white rice. Woven straw mats (*gundrī*) were spread on the porch and on the flagstones of the yard, and after eating, everyone sat down for more singing and dancing, this time informal and non-choreographed. The mādal was passed around, and enthusiastic singers began dohorī songs. The raksī flowed long into the night and the dohorī and free-form dancing continued, as even non-dohorī-singing members of our team became emboldened enough to attempt a couplet or two. After we left, the villagers would complete a closing pujā to Jalkanya Devi once again.

During this first round of filming, we found that although the Sohraghar troupe referred to all their performances as soraṭhī, the dances and songs for the *Soraṭhī* story itself were not among their strongest repertoire. So, we arranged for Pitambar Sundas from

46 Hitchcock, *The Magars of Banyan Hill*, pp. 92–93.

Jyamrung to come down to Sohraghar especially to film soraṭhī during the next pāṅgdure dancing season in December 2023. This was once again arranged as a pāṅgdure performance sponsored by Til Kumari Magar, but was a smaller affair than the previous season's. Pitambar Sundas came to Sohraghar along with his grandson Ram Bahadur Sundas, and taught the Sohraghar dancers to perform soraṭhī in the Jyamrung style. In doing so they also remembered much of their own local choreography for this dance, and had discussions about the differences between them. They understood that we aimed to film an example of the dance as Subi Shah described it, and made some concessions to the Jyamrung style. Mainly, this involved having the mārunī weave around the pursuṅge and spin after crouching down at the front of the dance space, instead of the Sorhaghar style in which the pursuṅge weaves around the mārunī and spins. They were extremely gracious to accept the interventions of yet another guru, and produced an excellent performance of the soraṭhī dance.

None of the Sohraghar performances we filmed are exact replicas of the dances as Subi Shah describes them in this chapter and in *Basic Theory of Folk Dance*. The melodies and mādal tāls are the most similar, but the choreography differs. As Shah writes, this is to be expected, as each troupe has its own choreography. Nevertheless, there are some significant similarities between Shah's written and notated examples and the Sohraghar performances, which give us an idea of pāṅgdure dance choreography in central Dhading. These can be seen in comparing the videos with Shah's descriptions of the dances below, and his longer discussions and notated examples, including dance notation, in *Basic Theory of Folk Dance* (included in Volume II).

## Jhyaure, Khyālī, and Chuḍkā

Few pāṅgdure troupes today perform jhyāure, khyālī, and chuḍkā dances using pāṅgdure-specific dance styles. Most people can dance to jhyāure and khyālī tāls using simple moves learned from childhood onwards, and the more complex group choreography of chuḍkā is widely learned as well, but these dances are not

necessarily considered to be special parts of the pāṅgdure repertoire. Pāṅgdure choreography for jhyāure and chuḍkā songs is choreography of a specific type, which is not currently practiced in Jyamrung or Sohraghar. The jhyāure dance video included in the jhyāure section of this chapter shows Jyamrung villagers dancing 'ordinary' jhyāure to the tunes played by the Jyamrung pañchai bājā, at the celebration of Maghe Sakranti in January 2023.

We do not have video recordings of pāṅgdure dances to jhyāure and chuḍkā songs. But, we do have some for khyālī. Instead of the historical khyālī that Shah says was waning even in the 1960s, we have an example of a khyālī song in the genre called jhumarī. To be technically precise, jhumarī is a genre in its own right, but it can still be considered a version of khyālī, as its song structure parallels those songs Shah refers to as khyālī songs rather than khyālī bhākā.

Chuḍkā, a dance which uses the khaĩjaḍī frame drum rather than the mādal as its main percussion instrument, may be considered khyālī bhākā in Shah's terms because of its four-beat tāl and song structure that differs from khyālī songs. Beyond this, chuḍkā is also a more complex group dance that has long been more popular outside of pāṅgdure troupes than within them. It is widely performed throughout the central and western hills, by male and female dancers, and in the hills near Dhading in Gorkha and Tanahun, it is performed in the summer rather than in the winter when pāṅgdure dances are in season. In the Gurung, Magar, Dura and other ethnic communities that perform ghãṭu on the April/May full moon,[47] chuḍkā is often danced at the following full moon when the post-ghãṭu feast (*ghãṭu khoi*) is held. Multiple groups come together and dance chuḍkā at once, as in the video included in this chapter; it is difficult to get a recording of one single chuḍkā group except in a presentational cultural performance setting, or in rehearsal. Of all the choreographed folk dances Shah describes, chuḍkā remains the most widely performed today.

In the text that follows, we learn about pāṅgdure dance troupes

47 Celebrated in various communities as Chandi Purnima, Buddha Jayanti, Ubhauli Parva, Gorakhnath Jayanti, and Chandeshwori Jatra. The most relevant celebrations for this area of Dhading are Chandi Purnima and Buddha Jayanti.

and how tāl, lyrics, poetic meter, song structure, and dance relate to each other in each of these genres. This chapter sets us up to understand the rest of Shah's works translated in these volumes, through this introductory tour through many of the basics that are addressed in greater depth in other works.

# 'Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances'

*Subi Shah*

As society developed and spread throughout the Himalayas,[48] it is apparent that various forms of dance have arisen, all with their own colors and characteristics. Today, some have been classified as classical and some as folk. Among these dances, khyālī and jhyāure have already spread throughout the kingdom of Nepal. Soraṭhī and charitra have become well established in the central region. These folk dances are known in rural areas as pāṅgdure. Before 2007 v.s. (1950), it was only the army platoons that danced these dances in Kathmandu. In fact, there was a custom of dancing these dances on Indrajatra in front of Hanuman Dhoka and other palaces.[49] It is also because of their connection to the army that these dances have spread to cover Nepal from east to west.

Until a few years ago there was no custom of referring to our

48 The phrase Shah uses is *uttarakhaṇḍ tapobhūmī*, a phrase whose many connotations cannot sufficiently be rendered into English. Uttarakhaṇḍ refers to northern areas, and tapobhūmī is a place of ascetic spiritual practice. Among the connotations of this phrase is the idea that the Himalayas are the home of the gods, especially Shiva as the wandering, meditating ascetic. Although Shah means an area broader than just the snowy mountains of the Himalayas, we translate this phrase as 'Himalayas' because of the similar connotations of remoteness and connection to mythology that the name calls forth for both South Asians and people from elsewhere.

49 Indrajātrā (or Yenyā in the Nepal Bhasa of the Newar ethnic group) is the biggest Hindu religious festival in Kathmandu, celebrated over a week in September. Like other religious festivals of the capital city, it has historically contained important ritual aspects supporting monarchical rule. Hence, troupes would perform in front of the palaces, both as offerings to the king and displays of the monarchy's power to the masses. For more information about Indrajātrā and the monarchy, see for example Gérard Toffin, "The Indrajātrā of Kathmandu as Royal Festival" (*Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 1992, 19 (1), pp. 73–92).

songs and dances with the categorical terms of 'folk song' and 'folk dance.' Each song and dance had its own name. If dancers wore mārunī dress,[50] whatever they danced was referred to as mārunī. Actually, the dance had two names, pāṅgdure and mārunī. Soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā were included within this category of dances. Soraṭhī was considered the most important among them, and the songs from charitra that fit into the Soraṭhī story were combined and sung within soraṭhī performances.[51] Khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā dances were included as comic relief. In the Soraṭhī epic, there are various themes of pathos (*karuṇā*).[52] Because the story can be long and boring, khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā are used to liven up the performance. Besides Soraṭhī, other stories such as the Rāmāyana and Krishna Charitra can be used as a basis for charitra songs. Khyālī songs can be used in the same way. Jhyāure, though, is used for comedy.

The name 'pāṅgdure dance' is used for dances that are performed with the mādal and follow particular rules. The first thing done before performing this dance is *sakhī lagāune*. This involves worshiping the three hundred and thirty million gods. It is also referred to as *garryāune,* 'binding the troupe together.' No dances are performed during garryāune; only the mādal is played and the sākhī lagāune song is sung. The goal of this is to make sure no one will be able to overpower the dancers through magical incantations. After the process of garryāune begins, those who become possessed by Saraswati come into the midst of the dancers, and once the rhythmic cycle or tāl called *ṭhakan hānne* has begun

50 Mārunī dress is a specific style of women's dress worn for these dances; see Shah's descriptions of dress below. Traditionally, this style of dress is worn by male dancers dancing the mārunī role. In recent decades, it has become much more common for female dancers to dance the mārunī role as well.

51 This is an innovation from Shah's region that Shah himself contributed a great deal to establishing. In other regions, dancers object to the mixing of Charitra and Soraṭhī. In *Mādal*, as well as below in the discussion of Charitra mādal patterns or bols, Shah describes his innovations in the rhythmic and melodic patterns he and his troupe used to shift between Charitra and Soraṭhī.

52 Here Shah is referring to *rasa* theory, which outlines conventional emotions and themes for performers to portray and evoke in their audiences. The best-known Sanskrit treatise on rasa theory is the *Natyaśastra*, attributed to the sage Bharatamuni, and first compiled between 200 B.C.E and 200 C.E.

these individuals begin to shake. The mādales return them to their normal state through their skill in ṭhakan hānne. Not all mādales can do this. The dance begins after the ṭhakan has been performed. Most often, pāṅgdure dances start with an invocation to Saraswati, and the song is often in charitra tāl.



Video 3.1 Saraswati Pujā, Mādal Tāls and Garra Bẫdhne Song for the Ceremony Preceding Pangdure Dances, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112724. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 17:42 minutes. These songs and mādal tāls are discussed in detail in *Mādal*.

The actions and expressions (*abhinaya*) in our folk dances do not match the songs exactly. Most of the time, the themes (*bhāv*) expressed in the song are based on the story, but the feelings and hand positions (*mudrā*) of the dance have no such basis. Most of the time, in dances performed in a garrā, the feelings and hand positions of the dance come from the tāl, and the same ones are used with many songs. Thus the songs tell different stories but the dancers always adopt the same role types: *pursuṅge* (male role), *mārunī* (female role), and *mādale* (mādal-playing dancer). In fact, it is the *mādal bol*s that guide the dancers to dance in particular ways. Until a cadential or 'rolling' pattern[53] is played, dancers may not switch from one type of movement to another. In the song as well, singers must repeat a particular line until they receive a signal from the mādal. Only in soraṭhī do the song, dance, and mādal move along and end together. This is why soraṭhī should be classified as a classical dance.

53 'Rolling pattern' is one English translation used in the Kathmandu valley for 'tal kāṭne,' literally 'cutting the tāl' and 'tāl phirāune,' literally 'bringing the tāl around,' used by mādal players to describe rhythmic patterns that signal a musical transition or a cadence.

In Nepali tradition, no religious rules can be found that limit the timing for performance and closing of a pāṅgdure dance. Including various calendrical festivals attached to particular places and religious observances, the custom of singing and dancing at any particular time is found everywhere. Yet pāṅgdure dance is especially important in the month of *Kārtik* (October–November). Usually, the troupes spend time perfecting their dances beginning in the month of Bhadau (August-September). Young boys are taught to dance the mārunī part, to sing the songs, and to play the mādal in previous months when they have free time, and they continually work on getting their dances ready. Our pāṅgdure dances survive today based on this oral tradition (*guru paramparā*). But today, in developed areas, pāṅgdure dances are being lost. Some years ago, worship ceremonies (*pujā*), fasts, all-night possession ceremonies (*jāgrām*),[54] feasts, wedding festivities, and other celebrations rang with the sound of the mādal, but that sound is now changing into rock-and-roll, twist, chachacha, etc. If society continues to immerse itself in foreign dances, what will folk dance be in the future? The situation is such that everyone should be thinking about this.

Pāṅgdure (mārunī) dance includes soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā. A large garrā or troupe of dancers includes one pursuṅge (male role) dancer, two or four mārunī (female role) dancers, and four or six mādale (mādal player) dancers, who all dance together. It is referred to as mārunī dance because young boys are dressed as women and dancing the female role, called mārunī. In fact, there is no difference between the names mārunī and pāṅgdure dance. This is the main dance performed with the mādal throughout the kingdom of Nepal. The main reasons that it has spread from the central region include its performance in army platoons; Nepali people's custom of migrating; coming together at various festivals; and the fact that all castes and ethnic groups have adopted the mādal. It is believed that its origin lies in the central region.

54 A *jāgrām* ceremony is an all-night musical event honoring a deity. These events remain especially popular in far-western Nepal, Kumaon, and Garhwal.



Fig. 3.1 Some members of the Sankhu Sohraghar *garrā*: Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar (mārunī), Rita Thapa Magar (singer), Umesh Magar (mārunī), Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar (pursuṅge), Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale), Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale). © Anna Stirr. 10 December 2023. CC BY.

An introduction to the main dancers and their dress is as follows:

- A group of people who take part in dance, directed by one guru, is called a garrā (troupe). A garrā may contain any number of people and carries great importance.
- A senior person who has experience of every aspect of dance is called a guru. Sometimes the pursuṅge dancer is also the guru of the dance. Most of the time the guru lineage extends through an ancestral line.
- In pāṅgdure dance there are two or four mārunī dancers. Pāṅgdure dance cannot take place without mārunī dancers. The boys who dance the mārunī role are selected from the good young dancers. They wear skirts, blouses, wrapped belts, and other elements of women’s dress. Because of this custom of dancers wearing mārunī dress, pāṅgdure dance is also called mārunī dance.

- The lead male role dancer, pursuṅge, has major importance in this dance. In some troupes it is the guru who dances this part. The role of this part is to lead the mārunī and mādale and make sure they dance correctly. The pursuṅge's dress is a long white skirted coat (*jāmā*) with a border or a *dhotī kachāḍ*,[55] a white turban, and a waistcoat.
- Those who can dance the correct steps, play the mādal, and change the mādal bols at the correct time in the song according to the direction of the pursuṅge are called mādale. They wear kachāḍ, waistcoats, and turbans.

The roles mentioned above are the main dancers in pāṅgdure dance. In addition, there are *lawarpāṅge* (comic role),[56] *mujure* (cymbal player), and *kartāle* (clapper player). Some individuals have the jobs of singing and protecting the troupe. There is no rule limiting the number of people in a pāṅgdure dance troupe; the more people there are, the better it is.

In the kingdom of Nepal, pāṅgdure dance is held in the highest regard among dances from the central region. The songs sung along with these dances include stories and comic songs. One troupe can bring its audience's hearts to a state of bliss by dancing soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā. As pāṅgdure dance can continually provide the kinds of songs audiences desire to hear and dances they desire to see, performers of this dance are invited to perform at various festivals.

## Khyālī Dance

In Nepali tradition, khyālī dance is very famous among the dances included in pāṅgdure dance. Every caste and ethnic group has adopted this dance in one way or another. Yet, as there are no written histories or genealogies that mention the origins of khyālī folk music,

55 A *dhoti* is a length of cloth wrapped around the waist that usually reaches to the ankles. A *kachāḍ* is a shorter length of cloth wrapped around the waist, that can be mid-thigh to mid-calf length. A *jāmā* is a long, skirted coat adapted from Mughal styles of dress; while originally male dress, there have long been masculine and feminine styles of *jāmā.* The style referred to here is the masculine style.

56 Also known as *dhātu waray*, or 'liar.'

it can only be a folk creation. Khyālī has developed and been passed down from teacher to student through the Nepali oral tradition.

Khyālī is divided into three branches: historic khyālī, khyālī, and khyālī bhākā. Among these, the third branch is found throughout the kingdom of Nepal. Khyālī bhākā itself is a major source for new songs and musical creations. Both women and men can participate in it, and it has been adopted as widely as jhyāure.

The first two branches of khyālī are common in the central region. Here, all castes and ethnicities have adopted khyālī equally. Because all pāṅgdure dance troupes equally dance khyālī, it is hard to say whether khyālī was developed by a particular caste or ethnic group, but the speech melody in these songs[57] suggest that they may have originated with the Kumal or Magar ethnic groups. But, because Gurung, Tamang, Sarki, Kami, and other ethnic groups all say that they are part of their long-standing traditions, this assumption may not be true either.

As khyālī folk music is divided into three branches, the songs are also in various poetic meters. Khyālī songs in local ethnic forms have spread all over the kingdom of Nepal. In the historic branch of khyālī, Puranic stories and the Soraṭhī story are the main themes. These songs are only sung by the guru in a pāṅgdure troupe. Here are some examples of historic khyālī:

*Jamunāko tir yahã̃ niramohī āī*
*Sārī kwai harī lāgyo.*
*Pāpī kṛiṣṇa sārī deu*
*Saramale marnu bhayo.*

To the banks of the Jamuna, the heartless one came
And stole my sari away.
Wicked Krishna, give me my sari
I am dying of shame.

57 Subi Shah here uses the neologism *bhangīt*, a combination of the word *bhannu*, 'to say' and the words *sangīt*, 'music,' or *gīt*, 'song.' While I originally took this word to be a typo meant to read *sangīt*, its recurrence throughout Shah's works, plus discussion with his editor at Sajha Prakashan, assured me that he did intend to write *bhangīt*, meaning 'speech melody:' the pitch and rhythm of the language in the songs. Speech melody is more specific than accent (*lawaj*), as accent can refer to more aspects of how the language sounds, beyond pitch and rhythm.

--
*Chham chham bālikā kahã gayo*
*Ãganī śunya bhayo.*
*Bālikā mero*
*Kaunale harī lagyo.*

The lively baby girl, where did she go?
The yard is empty.
My baby girl
Who stole her away?
--
*Rāmle bajā ho ki śyāmle bajāko*
*Ādhi rātmā nidarī jagāī.*
*Mohanī ras muralī*
*Gokulmā kasle bajāī.*

Was it Ram playing or was it Shyam playing
At midnight, waking me from sleep.
The enchanting sound of the flute
Played by someone in Gokul.[58]
--
*Chaudha barisa banibāsa kelle po pāryo*
*Rāma sītā lakṣhumanalāī.*
*Kekaīko khelamā*
*Bharatle pāyo rajāī.*

What caused Ram, Sita, and Lakshman
to go into the forest for fourteen years?
Because of Kaikeyi's game-playing
Bharat became king.
--
*Deśai bhari jyotiṣīko mana lobhāī*
*Kānai phukī hāta liũlā.*
*Dinai herī basa rānī ho*
*Sātai mula pārī diũlā.*

58 Gokul is the place where Krishna spent his childhood.

Manipulating the country's astrologers through their greed,
We'll take control by conniving.
Just wait, watching the days, O Queens
We'll ensure her stars show seven ill omens.[59]

Looking at these historic khyālī songs we do not find any rule-bound poetic meter, but the songs' two parts, charan and ṭukkā, are clearly visible. The first two lines may be described as having up to sixteen or twelve syllables, and the ṭukkā in the second two lines has two groups of eight syllables. But this does not make up any fixed, rule-bound meter, and thus the custom of fitting words to the melody is widely used. The songs sung in the second branch of khyālī appear similar in this regard, but their themes are different. Unlike historic khyālī they are songs of teasing and flirtation. The reason for separating them into two categories is the use of these particular khyālī songs in comic interludes during soraṭhī and charitra dance performance. Examples of khyālī songs are as follows.

*Ĩṭako gāro jhiṅgaṭī chhāno*
*Śattīsāl kāṭhakī jhyāl.*
*Pātalī nānī*
*Kalilaimā bhayo jammājāl.*

A wall of bricks and a roof of tiles
Windows of rosewood.
Slender girl
Married in your tender youth.

*Kholā khālī jāũlā māchhā mārī āũlā*
*Māchhiyā misām simīmā.*
*Runu jhunu kelāī garchau nānī*
*Najara bhulyo timīmā.*

We'll go to the river and come back with some fish
We'll mix the fish with bush beans.
For what do you cry so much, girl?
My gaze is lost in you.

59 See the section on soraṭhī for discussion of this specific form of astrological inauspiciousness, *sāt mula* or 'seven ill omens,' in the Soraṭhī story. This is a khyālī song that refers to the Soraṭhī story.



Video 3.2 Khyālī – 'Kholā Pāri Jaũlā/We'll Go To The River,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112807. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:01 minutes.

*Titarīko māsu karuwāko tel*
*Jati bhuṭyo uti chāmaro.*
*Pātālī nānīlāī*
*Jati heryo uti rāmaro.*

Partridge meat, a pitcherful of oil
The more you fry it, the chewier it gets.
The more you look at this slender girl
The more beautiful she gets.

*Aĩseluko jhāṅmuni kati chiso pānī*
*Chiso pānī saṅgai piũlā.*
*Baĩsālu nānīko*
*Jovan kāhã̃ jānā diũlā.*

Below a stand of raspberries, what cool water!
We'll drink the cold water together
Youthful girl,
As if I'll ever let your youthfulness go!

*Alachhilāī balachhī ta nāmardalāī dwālī*
*Marīdako pākhurīmā jāl.*
*Ghumṭo kholī hã̃sī deuna kānchhī*
*Chhakkai pārī yo pañcha khāl.*

A hook for the lazy and a trap for the unmasculine
A net in the arms of a real man.
Lift up your veil and smile, little one
Dazzling everyone around.

These two kinds of khyālī song are not in any rule-bound poetic meter, rather, they are composed according to the rhythm of the words. Their main characteristic is that once the charan is sung the ṭukkā is repeated over and over again throughout the dance. Also,

the way of dancing to these two kinds of khyālī is the same. If other songs besides these in khyālī tāl, or ethnic songs that can be sung in khyālī tāl, are performed in pāṅgdure dances, these are referred to as khyālī bhākā songs. There is no rule-bound way of dancing to these songs. Either mārunī or pursuṅge can dance to them. Also, women dance to them in rodīghar, rateulī, and at festivals. In khyālī bhākā, songs with fixed meters, songs with free meters, and songs with lyrics written according to the existing tune's melody and rhythm can all be found. This is one of the sources for Nepali folk songs' continuity, and as times change they are also changing into jhyāure bhākā. As any individual song can be sung in both khyālī and jhyāure tāl, one must think carefully in categorizing this kind of song. In khyālī bhākā songs, one ṭukkā has many charans. In these charans, pākhe poetic meter[60] and jaṅgalī poetic meter are used, and sometimes a *thego* is also added:

*Uṭha lai lai basa lai lai,*
*Kati mīṭho nidarī lāgyo hajurlāī.*

Get up, *lai lai*, stay there, *lai lai,*
What sweet sleep you have had.

Audio 3.1 Uṭha lai lai basa lai lai, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112788. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:06 minutes.

Video 3.3 'Utha lai lai,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112805 Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:39 minutes.

60 This and the next term for poetic meters are discussed at length in *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*. Although both can be used for the bhattyāune or storytelling part of the song (the charan), what Shah calls pākhe poetic meter is more often referred to today as bhattyāune pāra or storytelling style, and also as sawāi poetic meter; and, what Shah calls jaṅgalī poetic meter is more often called asāre jhyāure meter today.

*Sundarījī tapāĩle garda,*
*Manko dhoko manaimā rahyo.*

Beautiful one, because of you,
My heart's wish remained in my heart.



Audio 3.2 'Sundarījī tapāĩle garda,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112802. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:19 minutes.

*Marsyāṅdīko gairī kheta ghumāī ghumāī kulo,*
*Gorī jhyālaimā.*
*Bharam pāthī jokhum tulo kasko māyā ṭhūlo,*
*Gorī jhyālaimā.*

By the Marsyangdi River, canals surround the rice paddy,
Fair girl at the window.
Let's fill a measure and weigh it on the scale: whose love is greater?
Fair girl at the window.

*Jhamkaulī nānī jhamkaulī,*
*Baṭaulīko phariyā gamkaulī.*

You'll sparkle, girl, you'll sparkle,
Splendid in the sari from Butwal.



Audio 3.3 *Jhamkaulī nānī*, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112786. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:04 minutes.

*Baĩsālu nānī laha laha timro jovan,*
*Yasai kahã̃ jānā diũlā.*

Youthful girl, *laha laha*, your youthful energy,
Can't just be allowed to go to waste.



Audio 3.4 *Baīsālu nānī,* https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112790. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:44 minutes.

*Jānai lāgyo jānai lāgyo kaṭhai,*
*Dui dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo.*
*Tinai ra sahar tyai nepālaimā,*
*Aglo chha dharara dharara māīlī.*
*Kānchhīko darśan pāũchhu ki bhanī,*
*Āīrāko harara harara māīlī.*

It's almost gone, it's almost gone, poor thing,
This two days' fleeting youth is almost gone.
Three cities in this Nepal,[61]
The Dharahara Tower is tall, Maili.
The thought that I might be able to see Kanchhi,
Keeps returning to my heart, Maili.



Audio 3.5 *Jānai lāgyo*, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112796. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:16 minutes.

*Himai ra chulī tyai pallā paṭṭi, bhoṭ māthi paryo chīn,*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhau ki sunaiko.*
*Māyāko khojī garera hĩḍdā bitīgo barṣa din,*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhau ki sunaiko.*

61 Here 'Nepal' refers to the old name of the Kathmandu Valley, with its three cities of Patan, Bhadgaon, and Kathmandu.

On the other side of snowy mountain peaks, up from Tibet
is China,
Will you wear a hanging nose ornament of gold?
A year has gone by, going in search of love,
Will you wear a hanging nose ornament of gold?



Audio 3.6 Track 6: Jhamke Bulākī. https://open.spotify.com/track/2jd1SVCowOnmqVABhqCTLA. Subi Shah, all instruments. Kathmandu, Music Nepal, 2007. © Music Nepal. All Rights Reserved. Duration: 5:38 minutes.

These various khyālī bhākā songs have been popular since about 1950. Songs like this can still be heard from the mouths of elderly people. The radio has helped immensely in their circulation. To sing folk music one must also know how to play folk instruments. Only then can one dance folk dances correctly. This also helps in giving folk dances their correct names.

The khyālī tāl played on the mādal is of four or eight beats. It takes many different forms according to different ethnic instruments. In pāṅgdure dance, because the mādal is the main instrument, dances are classified by the tāl played on the mādal, and thus many different dances are called khyālī. This is the way khyālī tāl is played on the mādal:

## Khyālī Tāl

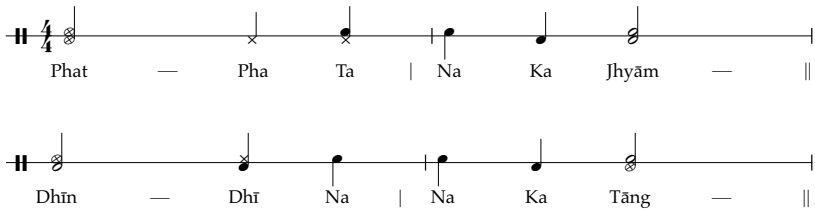
Bols: Sixteen, eight, and four beats
Tāl: Four beats



Video 3.4 Mādal Demonstration for 'Pāṅgdure:' Khyālī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112703. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:50 minutes.

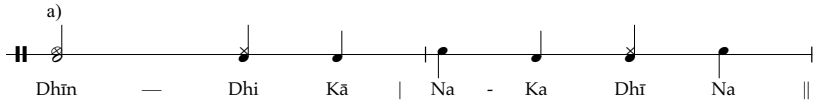
# Khyālī Tāl

1) 16-beat *bol* for starting *khyālī*

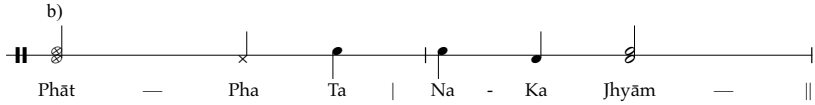



2) Ordinary 8-beat *bols* for playing after the dance has started

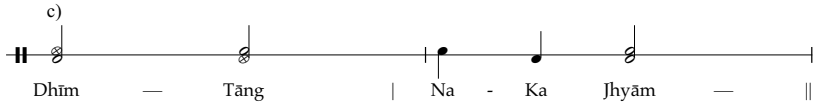
a)



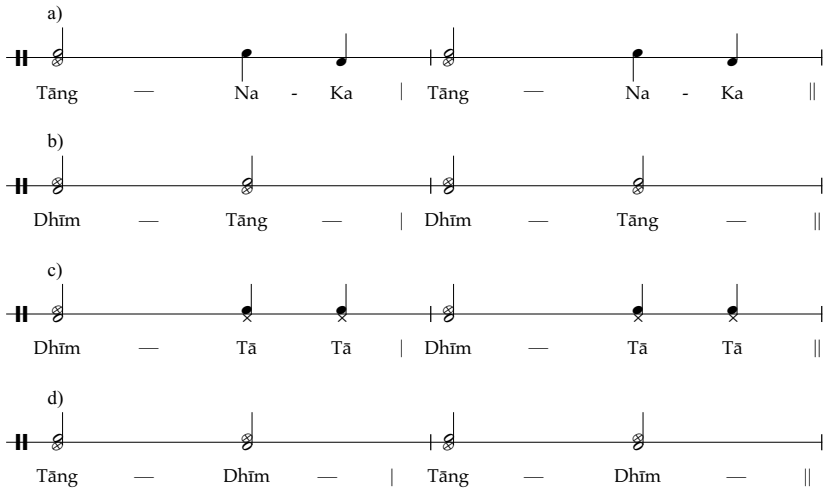

b)




c)



3) 4-beat bols for ordinary playing after the dance has started




4) 44-beat bol for establishing and ending the tāl, and playing with the *rahanī*

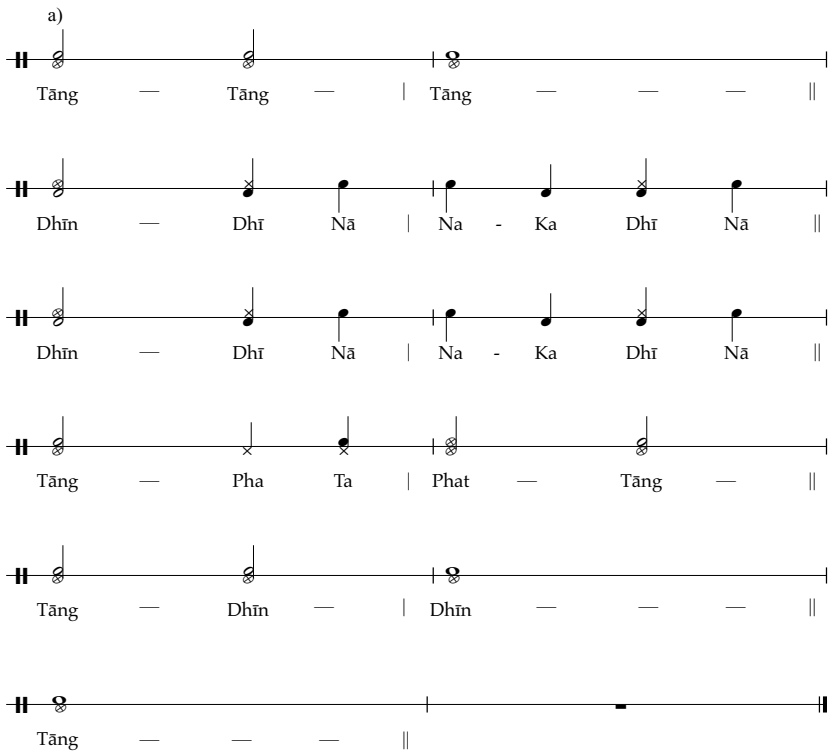



Fig. 3.2 Subi Shah, Mādal bols for khyālī tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

These various khyālī tāl bols are played according to the steps of khyālī dance. In khyālī dance, the mādal players must play the cadential patterns exactly in time. Those who dance and those who play must know the traditional styles of interaction very well. In relating the song to the mādal, the last line of the song is the most important, and it is after the last line of the song that the rolling pattern[62] is played on the mādal. After this signal bol is played the dancers begin their steps.

When performing khyālī dance in a pāṅgdure dance group, the mādale start with the sixteen-beat bol for starting khyālī tāl, and the guru starts to sing the charan from the correct place. In this part of the song the pursuṅge and mārunī stand in one place and perform gestures only. After all pieces of the charan have been sung, while the ṭukkā is being repeated over and over, the mādale play the forty-four-beat bol for establishing the tāl. In this tāl, the pursuṅge, mārunī, and mādale remain in their places, and following the mādal bols, they all make two turns to the right, followed by two turns to the left, and end by energetically jumping and crouching down. The mādale play one of the four-beat bols. In this bol, pursuṅge, mārunī, and mādale all stand up at the same time, move to one side, and return to their former places. They then turn around all together and move to the other side, return to their former places, and all move forward together. Having arrived at the right spot they turn one or two times to the right and to the left, then move backward to their former places. Now the pursuṅge demonstrates his expertise in various different dance steps, asking for the appropriate tāl. Then the mādale move forward playing the tāl-establishing bol, and everyone moves forward together according to the bol, then turning and turning they move backward and crouch down. Then the mādale play the first of the eight-beat ordinary bols. From this place, gesturing to one line of the song, everyone slowly stands up and with very slow steps returns to their former places. Now, the mādale play the third of the eight-beat ordinary bols, and everyone energetically speeds up their steps, turns around quickly, moves to one side, makes

62 'Rolling pattern' and 'cadential pattern' can both refer to the terms tāl phirāune and tāl kātne, but neither term has a direct equivalent. Both terms in Nepali refer to cadences, and both can refer to internal cadences, but only tāl kātne can refer to final cadences.

one full spin, returns to their former places, and moving straight forward right away, slowly moves backward according to the song. At the right point in the song the mādale play the forty-four-beat tāl-establishing bol. Here, after everyone has spun around, the pursuṅge and mādale energetically jump up and down exclaiming 'syābās!' and the mārunī put their hands on their heads and sit down, or bow and do Namaste. This is the way khyālī is danced in pāṅgdure dance; every song is danced to in the same way.

Khyālī bhākā songs are danced to in various ways, including different ethnic and regional styles. As there are no strict rules in khyālī bhākā women and men take equal part according to the type of celebration at which the dance is being performed. Khyālī dance is greatly appreciated among Nepali folk dances. This is one branch that produces new songs, and the main branch of khyālī is considered to be historic khyālī. The other branches are created with it as a basis. The chart below shows the genealogy of khyālī songs.

In this chart, the genealogy of khyālī is classified according to mādal tāl. If the mādal is to be played in folk music, the songs are measured by the tāl that it will be playing. In this way the above songs are classified as branches of khyālī. Looking at them this way, many folk songs may be specific to ethnic groups, but they may be played in khyālī tāl and included in pāṅgdure dance. As such songs can be played on the mādal in khyālī tāl they are customarily known as khyālī bhākā songs.

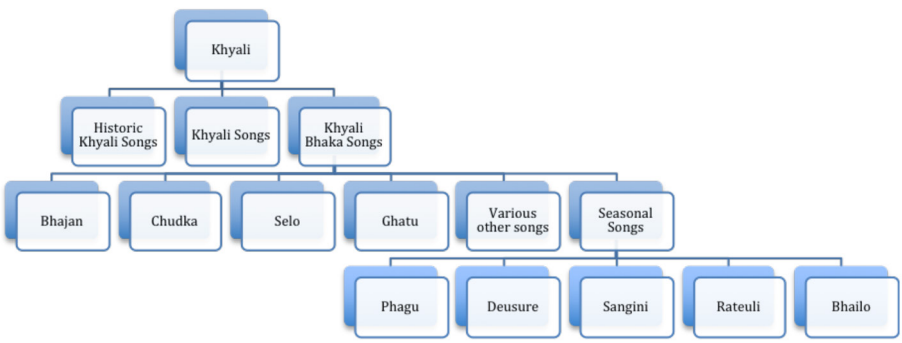



Fig. 3.3 Subi Shah, genealogy of khyālī songs. Transcription © Anna Stirr. CC BY.



Video 3.5 Jhumari (Khyālī) Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112727. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:26 minutes. On the basis of song structure, Jhumari fits into Subi Shah's category of khyālī songs.

## Charitra Dance

Charitra is considered one of the main parts of pāṅgdure dance, as danced in the central part of the kingdom of Nepal. While charitra dance is danced, songs telling stories from the Puranas are sung. Soraṭhī gurus will also sing the story of Soraṭhī in this very tāl. In some other areas, there is also a custom of singing other folk songs in charitra tāl. On this basis, it can be said that charitra dance is found throughout the kingdom of Nepal, but the exact (*ṭhos*) charitra dance is found in the central region. All pāṅgdure troupes dance charitra, and as they do so, they intersperse khyālī, jhyāure, and chuḍkā. On the subject of dress and caste/ethnicity, any and all castes/ethnicities may dance pāṅgdure dance. Charitra songs, in particular, have only one refrain (ṭukkā) and verse (charan) each. In the dance, the custom is to repeat the couplet over and over. Many different mādal bols are played again and again. The main characteristic of this is that when the verse is sung, the mādale, pursuṅge, and mārunī dancers must all remain crouched down. For this reason, the verse is also known as the 'sitting song' (*baiṭhanko gīt*).

An exact poetic meter cannot actually be seen in charitra songs, but their ṭukkā and charan take different forms. In this way, the ṭukkā is made up of two lines, and the words are added according to the melody. Likewise, the charan is also made up of two lines. Both lines can be seen to be meaningful, with the words added to fit the music. Different kinds of melodies are found in charitra songs. Because of this, their poetic meters appear to be created

apart from any metrical rules. But no matter what melody the song is in, the dance and style of playing mādal will be the same in any troupe. According to the traditions of pāṅgdure dance, the rituals of binding the troupe together (*garrā bā̃dhne*), putting out the lights to end the performance (*battī selāune*), and bestowing blessings (*āśik dine*), and other fixed, rule-bound ritual actions are performed on the basis of this charitra tāl. Thus, charitra is understood to be a primary branch of pāṅgdure dance. Some examples of charitra songs are as follows:

1) *Tamra rakṣa gare saramāswatī,*
   *Hamra khelchhaũ rāmako nām.*
   *Phula pātī hātai liī,*
   *Saraswaīi māī lāī.*

   Please protect us, Mother Saraswati,
   We repeat Ram's name.
   Taking flowers and leaves in our hands,
   For Mother Saraswati.

Video 3.6 Charitra Introduction and 'Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112810. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:46 minutes.

Audio 3.7 Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112793. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:10 minutes.

2) *Maranu bhayo bālai maranu bhayo,*
   *Pānīko piyāsle maranu bhayo.*
   *Galai sukyo sāsai rukyo,*
   *Tirakhaile bālai maranu bhayo.*

I'm dying, child, I'm dying,
I'm dying of thirst.
My throat is dry and my breath has stopped,
I'm dying, child, of thirst.



Video 3.7 Charitra: 'Maranu Bhayo/I'm Dying,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112811. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:44 minutes.

3) *Ho dūdhaiko bālikālāī,*
*Jamunāmā bagāuna deū.*
*Sātai mula parigayo,*
*Deśai bhari ulkā bhayo.*

Oh, this nursing child,
Let the Jamuna carry her away.
Born with seven ill omens,
Stars fall throughout the land



Video 3.8 Charitra – 'Dudhaiko Bālikā/Nursing Child,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112812. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:24 minutes.

4) *Hãsī lāko more piratī*
*Roī chhuṭyo māyā*
*Mukhai chhopī ghumṭo najhāra,*
*Ãkhai bhari ãsu napāra.*

We were smiling when we fell in love,
And crying when it was over.
Don't drop your veil to cover your face,
Don't fill your eyes with tears.

5) *Phūlai ṭipī chadhāū, kṛiṣṇajyūko pāumā,*
*Phūla ṭipī chadhāū.*
*Jamunāko wāri pāri,*
*Kadamai phulyo bana bhari.*

Pick flowers and offer them at Lord Krishna's feet,
Pick flowers and offer them.
On both sides of the Jamuna,
Kadam[63] trees bloom all through the forest.

6) *Kekaīko khelale ramajilāī banabāsa,*
*Bharatlāī milyo rajāi.*
*Ayodhyā puri śunya bhayo,*
*Daśarathjyūle maranu paryo.*

Kaikeyi's games led Lord Ram to live in the forest,
Bharat became king.
Ayodhya was completely empty,
Dasrath had to die.

7) *Hātai ṭhekiyā kāhā̃ jānchhau golenī,*
*Dahiyāko lamyo jagāta.*
*Basa basa gopī jamāta,*
*Kṛiṣṇajyūko pāu samāta.*

Where are you going with a yogurt jar in your hands,
round girl?
The lover of yogurt has been awake for a long time.
Stay, stay, all milkmaids together
Touch Lord Krishna's feet.

Looking at the above charitra songs, it appears that they have some basis in poetic meters, but as the poetic meters of these songs are not all based on the same rules, some have fewer and some have more syllables. Thus, there is no doubt that charitra songs are based on the music rather than on the number of syllables in a line. The tempos of these songs often vary, but the style of playing

63 Kadam is the name used for two trees, *Nauclea cadamba* and *Anthocephalus cadamba*.

mādal and the style of dancing are the same in all the songs. Also, there are *sakhī lagāune* songs, songs sung as the lamps burn down (*battī selāuna jā̃dā*), songs sung while giving blessings *(āśik)*, and some other folk songs sung in charitra tāl as well, in which specified mādal bols are played, and the style of dancing differs; these songs are known not as charitra but rather by various names according to their topics. Some examples of this type of song are as follows:

1) Song for Binding the Garrā
*Mādale ho sakhe, tero maya sama rasa--*
*Nirai mala ho sakhe mādale ho.*
*Pūravaiko deva devī sevai hamāro…*

Oh, mādal playing friends, may your love remain--
Oh, mādal playing friends, may you be pure.
Gods and goddesses of the east, we serve you…[64]

Audio 3.8 Garrā Bā̃dhne Gīt/Song for Binding the Troupe: Sevai Hāmaro, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112723. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:15 minutes.

2) Song Sung as the Lamps Burn Down (*battī selāuna jā̃dā*)
*a) Āūmā āū didī ra bainī,*
*Jamunāmā nwāuna jāū̃.*

Come, come, sisters,
Let's go bathe in the Jamuna.

*b) Ho bāra varisako somabāre aũnsī*
*Jamunāmā nwāuna jāū̃*

64 The published text says sabai hāmaro, or 'all belong to us,' but when compared to this song as printed in Shah's other texts, and as sung in Sohraghar and various other places around Nepal, the phrase should indeed be sevai hāmaro, or 'we serve you.' Also, regarding the statement above, this song does not involve any dance in Jyamrung or Sohraghar.

Oh, on this once-in-twelve-years Monday new moon,
Let's go bathe in the Jamuna.

*c) Āū āū gopenī saṅgai jānchhu ma pani,*
*Jamunāmā nwāunalāī.*

Come, come, milkmaids, I'll come along too,
To bathe in the Jamuna.

3) Song For Coming Back from Bathing
*Śirmā lāuni bindulī*[65] *tirthaimā chhoḍiyo,*
*Rũdai rũdai kaise ghar jāũ.*
*Ho, more sākhīyā rũdai rũdai kaise ghar jāũ.*

The sindoor I wear on my head was left on the bank of the holy river,
Weeping and weeping, how can I go home?
Oh, my friends, weeping and weeping, how can I go home?

4) Blessing Song (*āśik dine gīt*)
*Suvarnaiko gharamā sunai buṭṭe jhyālamā,*
*Jhilimilī bhai rahos.*

In a golden house, in its gold-embellished windows,
May all keep shining brightly.

5) Song of Farewell
*Saramāswatī māīlāī phūla pāti chaḍhāī,*
*Hãsī hãsī aba ghara jāũ.*
*Ho more sākhīyā hãsī hãsī ghara jāũ.*

Offering flowers and leaves to Mother Saraswati,
Let's go home, laughing and laughing.
Oh, my friends, let's go home, laughing and laughing.

In addition to the above songs, which are sung according to specific rules, there are also folk songs sung in charitra tāl. Only a few of them have exact names and they are limited to a few new melodies. At present, there is no custom of defining songs as 'charitra bhākā' or 'soraṭhī bhākā' [as there is in the case of songs based on khyālī

65 Another name for sindoor, the vermilion powder that married Hindu women wear in the part of their hair.

and jhyāure]; songs are named according to the mādal tāl in which they are played. For this reason, if a song is sung in charitra tāl it should be called charitra bhākā, and if a song is sung in soraṭhī tāl it should be called soraṭhī bhākā. Only then will our folk rules be followed. Thus, some examples of charitra bhākā songs sung in charitra tāl are as follows.

## Songs Sung in Charitra Tāl

1) *Ākāsaibhari naulākhe tārā ek tārā jūnsita,*
*Din bitāidiyau bemānī timle rāt kāṭaũ kunsita.*

Nine hundred thousand stars in the sky, one star next to the moon,
You took up my whole day, dishonest one, with whom will I spend the night?

2) *Tāmāko ghailo nauraṅge dãphe pittālko ghapanī,*
*Sadhaĩmā dekhchhu nauraṅge dãphe pyārīko sapanī.*

A copper pitcher, nine-colored pheasant, a brass lid,
I always see my love, nine-colored pheasant, in my dreams.

3) *Rām sāĩlā bāṭaimuni bāṭaimāthi jhapke titepātī,*
*Rām sāĩlā dekhe mayā jhalko lāgne nadekhkai jātī.*

Ram Saila, below the road and above the road, bowing wormwood stalks,
Ram Saila, if I see my love, I can't stop thinking of her, it's better if I don't see her.[66]

4) *Asāre māsko dabdabe hilo chhunalāī ghin lāgyo,*
*Pātālī jyānlāī phariyā kindā chha bīsa rin lāgyo.*

The wet, sticky mud in the month of Asar[67] is disgusting to touch,
Buying a sari for the slender one, I took on a loan of six times twenty.

66 This song is notated in *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* (Chapter 5).
67 Asar or Asadh, June–July, is the month of rice planting at the onset of the monsoon. Asāre songs are songs for this time of rice planting.



Video 3.9 Asāre Songs, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112840. Pitambar Sundas and Lal Bahadur Pariyar, singers. Jyamrung. 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:26 minutes. This song is the second one Pitambar Sundas sings in this video, filmed in the Shah family teashop in Jyamrung.

The above charitra bhākā songs can be found throughout the kingdom. The custom of singing and dancing to songs like these remains common today. Actually, just knowing how to sing songs is not enough. It is also necessary to have knowledge of which instruments are played and which tāl is appropriate for any particular song. Only then can the correct name of any song or dance be determined. Among tāls played on the mādal, charitra tāl is divided into six beats, and it has various types of bols. In true charitra tāl, the various bols appear to be of six and twelve beats long. Other songs are sung playing only one of these bols; these songs are provided above, but they are not called charitra bhākā songs, rather, they are called seasonal songs, or given names according to the locales in which they are sung. For example, a song that contains the lyrics '*Asāre māsko dabdabe hilo…*' would be called *Asāre gīt*, and the song 'Ram Saila' is known as an eastern song (*purviyā gīt*). In this way, songs sung in charitra tāl are known by various names, but they are not called charitra bhākā. Anyway, charitra tāl can be seen to have been used in various Nepali folk songs traditionally through the ages. These are the mādal bols played in charitra tāl:

## Charitra Tāl, Six Beats

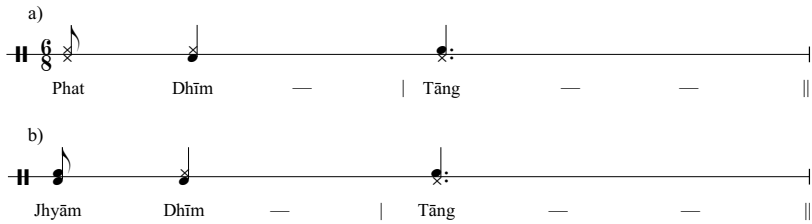
Bols: Six and twelve beats
Tāl: Six beats



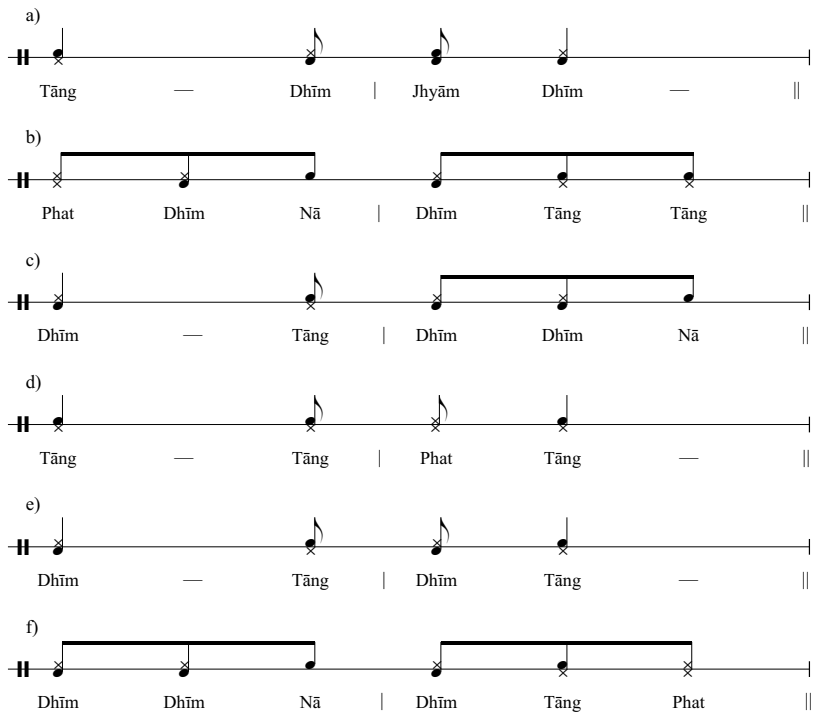
Video 3.10 Mādal Demonstration for 'Pāṅgdure:' Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112704. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:07 minutes.

# Charitra Tāl

6-Beat Bols to Begin the Tāl
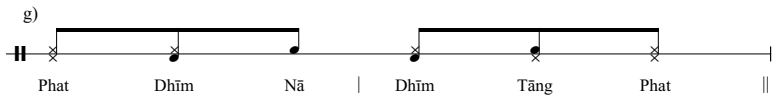



6-Beat Bol Played During Songs
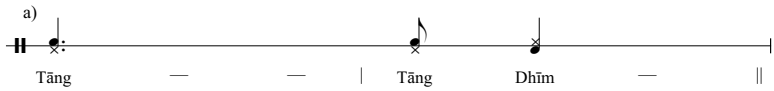


2

g)




12-Beat Bol Played During Songs

a)







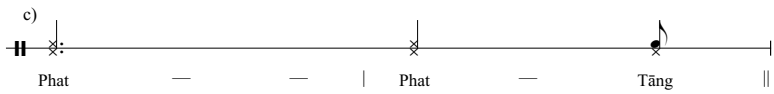
b)







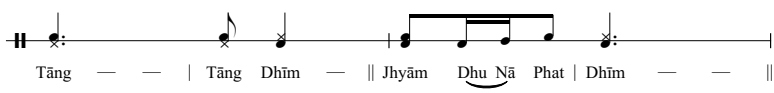
c)

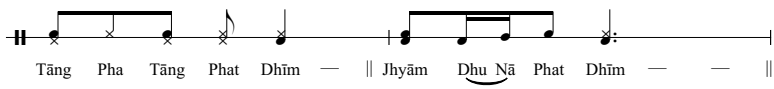






36-beat beginning *bol* for after dancers crouch down



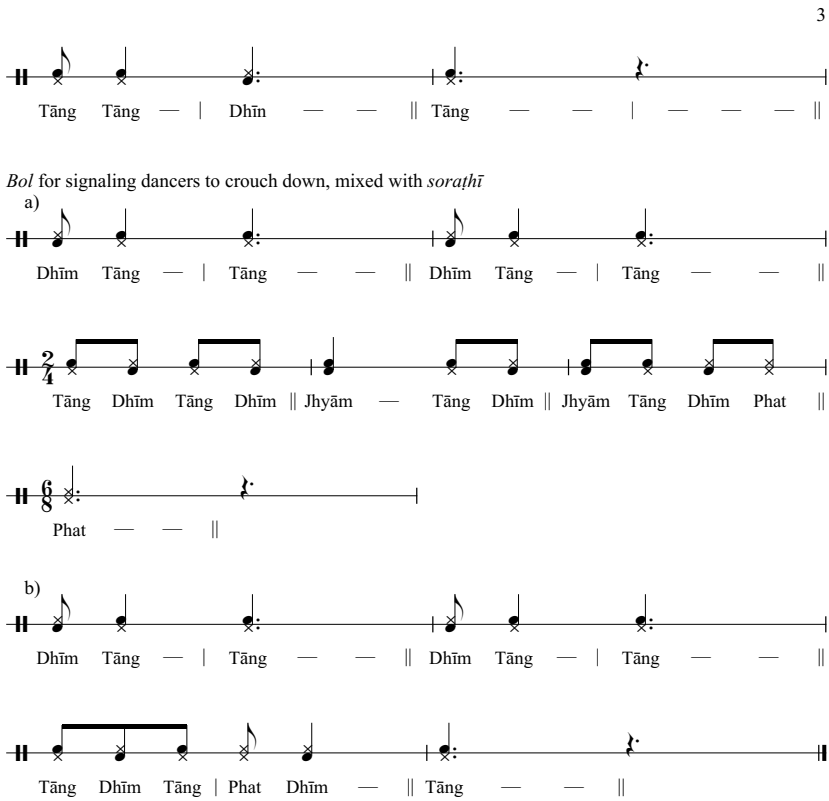



Fig. 3.4 Subi Shah, Mādal Bols for Charitra Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

When charitra dance is being danced, six or seven of the above bols will be played, with a baiṭhān bol in the middle to signal dancers to crouch down; this way of dancing is found in pāṅgdure troupes to this day. Along with this, in other songs, one bol may be chosen from the above bols and played throughout the song.

Mādal bols are of primary importance in charitra dance. After many different bols are played during the ṭukkā song, each with a different style of dancing, the baiṭhān bol is played and dancers crouch down. While the dancers are crouched down, the charan song is sung. Then the bol is played to signal the dancers to stand up, and dance to the same ṭukkā song again. Finally, the dance

is brought to an end with a bol mixed with soraṭhī lāmī tāl. In villages, many different castes and ethnicities have adopted this charitra dance, and there is no rule limiting it to one particular caste or ethnicity. The main thing is that this dance has clearly been passed along through traditional gurus. Dance steps are slow or fast according to the mādal bols, and jumping, crouching down, and spinning steps are also included. Today, this style of dancing charitra is found only in the remote corners of the central region.

In charitra dance, the first thing that happens is that mādale dancers dance to various mādal bols only. When the mādale dancers have taken their places, only then does the pursuṅge bow to the mādal with his hands, and coming from one side to the other, take his place. Then the mārunī bow to the mādal and take their places. When the mārunī have taken their places, the guru begins to sing. The mārunī and pursuṅge come forward and gesture along with the song, moving backward again when the song has finished. At this time, the mādale bring the tāl around. After this, all including the mādale come forward, turn all the way around and go back where they came from, and after arriving there, without stopping, the entire troupe moves some steps to the right, turns all the way around, moves some steps to the left, turns all the way around, and from the right goes along the side, stepping according to the mādal bol until they all return to their original places. After this they turn once to the right, and once to the left, then go along the side to the left until they return to their original places, after which they all move forward, and then slowly, slowly, move backward until they return to their original places. Now the pursuṅge takes the mārunī dancers to different places with all kinds of different gestures, signaling that the tāl should be brought around by bringing the mārunī dancers forward and having them crouch down, going back to get the mādale dancers and bringing them forward to crouch down among the mārunī dancers; then the tāl is brought around. During this, everyone jumps energetically four or five times, after which they continue again as above, according to the mādal bols. When three or four tāls have been played, then the baiṭhān bol is played for the dancers to crouch down. Now, the beginning bol is

played on the mādal and the guru starts to sing the charan song. Right when the charan begins, the pursuṅge stands up and comes forward, and circles around while gesturing along with the song. At the end of the song, he returns to his place and crouches down. Then the mādale dancers play the cadential bol. Then the mādale dancers, mārunī dancers, and pursuṅge stand up together and crouch down after spinning around fully to the right and to the left. The mādale dancers play the beginning bol again and the same charan is repeated. Then, the mārunī dancers come forward and gesture while spinning around, and at the end of the charan they return to their places and crouch down. Then the mādale dancers play the cadential bol, along with which everyone spins and crouches back down like before. Again, the mādale dancers play the beginning bol. Now, for the dance after the baiṭhan [when all crouch down], the same ṭukkā song begins, and at its end the mādale dancers bring the tāl around again. All stand up and spin around then continue dancing like before. The ṭukkā gīt may be repeated four or five times, and at its end, the ending bol consisting of charitra tāl mixed with soraṭhī is played, and all mārunīs go to the center of the troupe and crouch down while the mādales stay in place and the mādal starts to play the beginning of the next dance. In this charitra dance there are no rules about how many times a particular mādal bol can be played; the only thing that is always followed is the custom of having the dancers crouch down in the middle part. Because the charan is sung while the dancers are crouched down, in some places, after the charan is sung, five or six mādal bols will be played in succession along with repetitions of the ṭukkā, after which the dance is brought to a close.

This is how the dance is danced in pāṅgdure dance, and its songs are sung on the basis of the Puranas. Other separate charitra bhākā songs use one of the many charitra mādal bols each, and some are danced to while some are not. Because it contains many of the rules followed in our pāṅgdure dance tradition, this charitra dance is considered very important. And, there is no troupe that does not perform charitra dance. This is found in villages to this day.



Video 3.11 Charitra Dance 1, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112725. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 12:00 minutes.



Video 3.12 Charitra Dance 2, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112726. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 12:54 minutes.

## Soraṭhī Dance

Among the dances included in pāṅgdure dance, soraṭhī is extremely famous. Before 1950, army platoons danced this dance at the festival of Indrajatra at Hanuman Dhoka. In villages as well, troupes that danced Soraṭhī were highly respected. The origins of this dance, including where it came from and which caste or ethnic group started it, remain in the dark at this time. It is true that this is seen as a historical dance, but there is no evidence regarding in which century King Jayasingh lived. In any case, soraṭhī dance has clearly been passed down through the guru tradition since ancient times. As people of all castes and ethnic groups say that this dance has been passed down from their ancestors, no evidence for its caste or ethnic origin can be found.

Today, everyone knows soraṭhī dance, but the number of people who can correctly sing the songs, play the mādal, and dance the

dance steps is decreasing day by day. Because the way of singing, mādal bols, and dance steps are interrelated in this dance, it is difficult to dance. Also, because the entire song is about the life of King Jayasingh, there is a growing lack of gurus who can sing the entire song. In order to dance soraṭhī, it is necessary to have deep knowledge of theory:

1. How to sing soraṭhī songs
2. How to play both soraṭhī lāmī tāl and chhoṭī tāl
3. How to dance according to both tāls.

## Branches of Soraṭhī Songs

The theme of soraṭhī songs is based on the life of King Jayasingh. Without knowing the historical description of King Jayasingh, these songs cannot be sung. Knowledge of the different branches of songs is also necessary. Their meters are not fixed by any rules, but the branches of songs are fixed. The same song must be possible to sing in both lāmī tāl and chhoṭī tāl and the lines are seven to ten or twelve syllables long. One ṭukkā gīt is sung with many charans or verses. The most important thing is to be able to sing in a way that shows glimpses of the progression of his life, and making many or few songs depends on the guru's ability. It is said that this song can be sung for seven days and seven nights. But it can also be finished in one night or four to five hours. Accordingly, here is a short summary of King Jayasingh's life.

King Jayasingh was over forty and had no children. In hopes of a child, he had already married fourteen queens. Even so, he had no children, and out of frustration, he announced his intention to leave his authority to his minister Sujan. Seeing the king thus frustrated, the minister tried everything to advise him, and finally suggested that he marry again. The king got ready to marry again in hopes of having a child. According to Minister Sujan's advice, King Jayasingh was lawfully married to the daughter of King Vaidanga, who became Queen Hemaiti. King Jayasingh was very happy to have Queen Hemaiti. Seeing the queen's good qualities, the king began to believe that this time he would definitely be able

to see the face of his own child. He spent his days with his youngest queen.

Seeing the king forgetting everything else in the company of his youngest queen, the other queens began to shake with jealousy. Slowly, slowly, the fourteen queens together made a plan to banish Queen Hemaiti. Co-wife relations got more strained day by day, and Queen Hemaiti expressed her desire to take a break and go on a trip to visit pilgrimage sites with the king. In accordance with the queen's wishes, the king and queen went on a pilgrimage together for some days. After they had been visiting the pilgrimage sites in various countries for five months, when they returned to the palace Queen Hemaiti was pregnant. The king and all the inhabitants of the country were happy with the queen's pregnancy, but the relations between co-wives and the atmosphere in the women's quarters became more and more strained.

The fourteen queens began to discuss what to do now. They came to the decision that they would get an astrologer under their control and have him say that when the baby was born it would be born under seven ill omens (*sāt mula*), and have both Queen Hemaiti and the baby banished. They welcomed the royal astrologer with wealth and property, and bound him by a promise to declare the baby inauspicious, and the fourteen queens were satisfied. The days went by, the months went by, and Queen Hemaiti's pregnancy progressed normally, and she entered into the tenth month. In the palace, the midwives and the astrologer were ready and waiting. Slowly, slowly, the day everyone was waiting for arrived, and a baby girl was delivered from Queen Hemaiti's womb. At that moment, the astrologer looked at the birth chart and declared, 'This is the inauspicious mark of seven ill omens; you must place her in a golden cradle and let the Ganga carry her away.' At the happy time of the baby's birth, the sad news that the baby girl had to be carried away by the Ganga caused a deep wound in the hearts of the king and his people. Remembering that no one could contest the decree of the gods, the king ordered Minister Sujan to place the baby girl in a golden cradle and float her away in the Ganga.

Making a golden box according to the king's order, he put the baby girl in it along with the umbilical cord and placenta, and floated it away in the river. This sad event caused an even deeper wound in the hearts of the king, queen, and the people of the country. Upon hearing her lamentations, no one could comfort Queen Hemaiti. The king himself became as if insane. The daily life of the palace was one of lament, but who can understand the decree of the gods! There in the river, the golden box got caught in the net belonging to Kumale and Mallare, and was pulled to the riverbank. On dividing up the catch, the baby girl was in Kumale's share, and he brought her home and named her Sunrupa, and she grew day by day. Time passed quickly. Slowly, slowly, as she played, she reached sixteen years of age. Just as a flower that falls becomes part of the earth, with the passage of time the king and queen forgot about the baby girl. The event of the baby girl that was floated away on the river sixteen years ago had been erased from the country's memory.

One day the king was out hunting and got thirsty; his band of hunters, in search of water, came to Kumale's house. They looked with wonder on Kumale's daughter who gave them water, and returned. When they got back to the king's side, they described Kumale's daughter. Upon hearing of this young woman with the thirty-two excellent qualities, a new feeling arose in the king, and he took his minister with him to go see Kumale's daughter for himself. Sunrupa had already ascertained that this would happen. So she painted her face with soot, wore rags, and disguised herself as a beggar. The king arrived at Kumale's house with the excuse of needing water, splashed water on her face, and upon seeing Sunrupa's beauty, he was immediately struck with love for her. Upon returning to the palace, he was wounded by love. At the king's sudden sickness, Queen Hemaiti was in a panic. No one and no medicine could cure the king, and the queen asked Minister Sujan the cause of the king's illness.

Upon hearing all that had happened from the minister, Queen Hemaiti called Kumale to the palace and asked for Sunrupa's hand in marriage on behalf of the king, and ordered the minister

to get everything ready for the wedding. So, Sunrupa and Jayasingh were about to get married. When Jayasingh was about to put sindoor on her forehead, Sunrupa took hold of his hand and said 'No daughter wears sindoor from her father's hand. I, a daughter, won't wear it either,' and while the king was startled at this, Sunrupa said, 'I am the daughter who was floated away in the river sixteen years ago because of the inauspiciousness in my birth chart.' Saying this, she provided all kinds of proof, but the king was still not satisfied and demanded a test. When everything was proved through the test and he believed that she was his daughter, he proclaimed her name to be Suvarnarekhā in front of all gathered there for the wedding procession, happily married her to his nephew at that same marriage altar, and they all lived happily ever after.

Most of the dance gurus assert that the nephew of Jayasingh is his minister Sujan. When singing, instead of calling him a minister, they call him nephew. They also sing that in the end, he gives her the name of Soraṭhī. They also sing that the nephew, having lost his kingdom, wins it back after gaining help from his maternal relatives (i.e. King Jayasingh and Queen Hemaiti). Soraṭhī is still said to have sixteen parts. These are some songs from Soraṭhī:



Audio 3.9 Soraṭhī-Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl Songs, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112722. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:38 minutes.[68]

68 There is an earlier studio recording of one complete set of songs in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl, as collected by Subi Shah. The melody and song structure in performance is the same as that for the songs here; the lyrics are different. See Anjana Gurung, Shiva Paudel, and Kanhaiya Singh, with Subi Shah, *Soraṭhi*, with Subi Shah, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music, UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터 (1994), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub3.php, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExYpfgibpgc

## Song in Lāmī Tāl

*Manai bhayo virakta.*
*Kaise rāja chalāũ.*
*Tinai kāl bitisakyo,*
*Godai āja khālī bhayo. Kaise rāja chalāũ.*
*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ,*
*Chaudhai rāni khāli bhayo. Kaise rāja chalāũ.*

My heart is desolate
How will I rule the kingdom?
Three stages of life have already passed
Today, my lap is empty. How will I rule the kingdom?
Not one, not two
All fourteen queens are barren. How will I rule the kingdom?

## Song in Chhoṭī Tāl

*Manai bujhāī basideū.*
*Punasako jāla kāṭī,*
*Kasle bāhira lānchha ra.*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai,*
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*

Console yourself.
Can anyone cut the net woven by past lives,
And throw it out?
Don't sob and cry, King,
Console yourself.

*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ ,*
*Baru herana jāũlā.*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai,*
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*

Not one, not two,
We'll go and search for a bride.
Don't sob and cry, King,
Console yourself.

*Chārai kāla bhaesamma,*
*Godai hunechha bharilo.*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai,*
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*

By the fourth stage of life,
Your lap will be full.
Don't sob and cry, King,
Console yourself.

## Song in Lāmī Tāl

*Manai kholī bola sujana,*
*Baru khojī lyāeu kauna.*
*Puravai deśa gamana,*
*Kaun kaun lyāyau lahana. Baru khojī lyāeu kauna.*
*Dakṣiṇai deśa gamana*
*Kaun kaun lyāyau lahana. Baru khojī lyāeu kauna.*

Speak open heartedly, Sujan
Who did you bring back as a bride?
You traveled to the eastern country,
Who did you bring back? Who did you bring back as a bride?
You traveled to the southern country,
Who did you bring back? Who did you bring back as a bride?

## Song in Chhoṭī Tāl

*Bhalai samāchār li āẽ.*
*Puranī jūna jaiso,*
*Hemaitī bālaiko muhāra.*
*Bālikaijyuko rupaimā herī,*
*Bhalai samāchār li āẽ.*

I come bringing good news.
Like the full moon,
The face of young Hemaiti.
Looking at the young Queen's beauty,
I come bringing good news.

*Parevāko ãkhī jaiso,*
*Hemaitī bālaiko najara.*
*Bālikaijyuko rupaimā herī,*
*Bhalai samāchār li āẽ.*

Like the eyes of a turtle-dove,[69]
The face of the young Hemaiti.
Looking at the young Queen's beauty,
I come bringing good news.

## Song in Lāmī Tāl

*Ghumī ghumī sarovara,*
*Kinārai heraũ phulbārī.*
*Purvai deśako nilpokharī,*
*Ḍuṅgai salalala bicha pārī. Kinārai heraũ phulbārī.*

Around and around the lake,
Let us look at the flower gardens on the banks.
Blue Pond of the eastern country,
Gliding in a boat, out into the middle. Let us look at the flower gardens on the banks.

*Dakṣhiṇai deśako kamal pokharī,*
*Ḍuṅgai salalala bicha pārī. Kinārai heraũ phulbārī.*

Lotus Pond of the southern country,
Gliding in a boat, out into the middle. Let us look at the flower gardens on the banks.

*Paśchimai deśako lāla pokharī*
*Ḍuṅgai salalala bicha pārī. Kinārai heraũ phulbārī.*

Red Pond of the western country,
Gliding in a boat, out into the middle. Let us look at the flower gardens on the banks.

69 *Parevā* is literally 'pigeon,' but 'turtle-dove' better expresses the intended meaning of complimenting her beauty.

*Uttarai deśako dudha pokharī,*
*Ḍuṅgai salalala bicha pārī. Kināraī heraũ phulbārī.*

Milk Pond of the northern country,
Gliding in a boat, out into the middle. Let us look at the flower gardens on the banks.

## Song in Chhoṭī Tāl

*Manai merī santoṣa.*
*Sayapatrī phūla ṭipī,*
*Leū o more rājaijyū.*
*Rājai ra jyule dieko phūla,*
*Manai merī santoṣa.*

My heart is content.
Pick a marigold flower,
And take it, O my King.
With the flower my King has given me,
My heart is content.

## Song in Lāmī Tāl

*Sãchchai bāta bhanideū,*
*Rājai dina nadukhāū.*
*Manai timro hãsidie,*
*Dilai merī ujyālo. Rājai dina nadukhāū.*
*Manai icchā khola rājai,*
*Parai samjhī nahera. Rājai dina nadukhāū.*

Tell me truly,
King, don't spend your days in sorrow.
If your heart laughs,
My heart will be bright. King, don't spend your days in sorrow.
Open up your heart's desire, King,
Don't look at me like I'm a stranger. King, don't spend your days in sorrow.

## Song in Chhoṭī Tāl

*Manai bhaigayo dubidhā.*
*Rānījyūko khānībāṭa,*
*Dilai bhaena santoṣa.*
*Na marī jānu na bẽchī basnu,*
*Manai bhaigayo dubidhā.*

My heart is in a dilemma.
With the Queen's abundance,
My heart is not satisfied.
I can neither die nor live,
My heart is in a dilemma.

*Kumālekai bālikāle,*
*Dilai chũḍī liera.*
*Na marī jānu na bẽchī basnu,*
*Manai bhaigayo dubidhā.*

Since Kumale's daughter,
Has stolen my heart.
I can neither die nor live,
My heart is in a dilemma.

The songs above are small pieces taken from the middle of the Soraṭhī dance-drama songs. While singing these songs, some gurus sing the same song in both lāmī tāl and chhoṭī tāl. These songs follow the story, lengthening it one after the other. Thus, it is said that soraṭhī can be danced for seven days and seven nights.

## Tāls in Soraṭhī

Soraṭhī is the premier among Nepal's famous folk tāls. These soraṭhī tāls are played only on the mādal. The shortage of mādalists who can play these tāls is the reason that not all troupes perform soraṭhī. One of the characteristics of soraṭhī is that the dance is complete only when two different types of tāls are played. The first tāl is called lāmī tāl, and the second is called chhoṭī tāl.

Because Soraṭhī's songs, bols, and dance steps are interrelated, it is exceedingly difficult to play the mādal for it. Along with this, it is even more difficult to find a mādale who can play the mādal correctly, because one must play the mādal while dancing and still make sure the mādal bols are played in the right place. These are the tāls played on the mādal in soraṭhī.

## Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl

Video 3.13 Mādal Demonstration for 'Pāṅgdure:' Soraṭhī Tāls, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112705. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:09 minutes.

Soraṭhī lāmī tāl has a bol of fourteen beats divided into two groups of seven. Its smaller divisions are groups of three and four, and the bol that gives the tāl is played differently. Its form is as follows:

## Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl

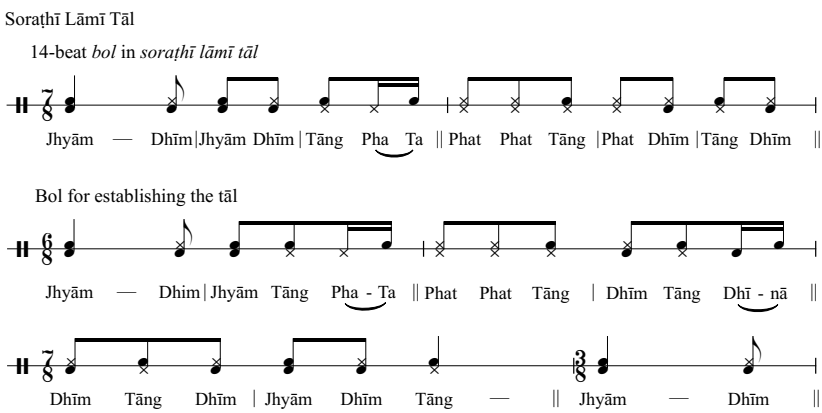



Fig. 3.5 Subi Shah. Mādal Bols for Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl

Chhoṭī tāl has eight beats, and is made of two groups of four and four beats. Even though chhoṭī tāl is similar to khyālī, its bols are not played in khyālī. They are each played with their own characteristics. This is the form of chhoṭī tāl:

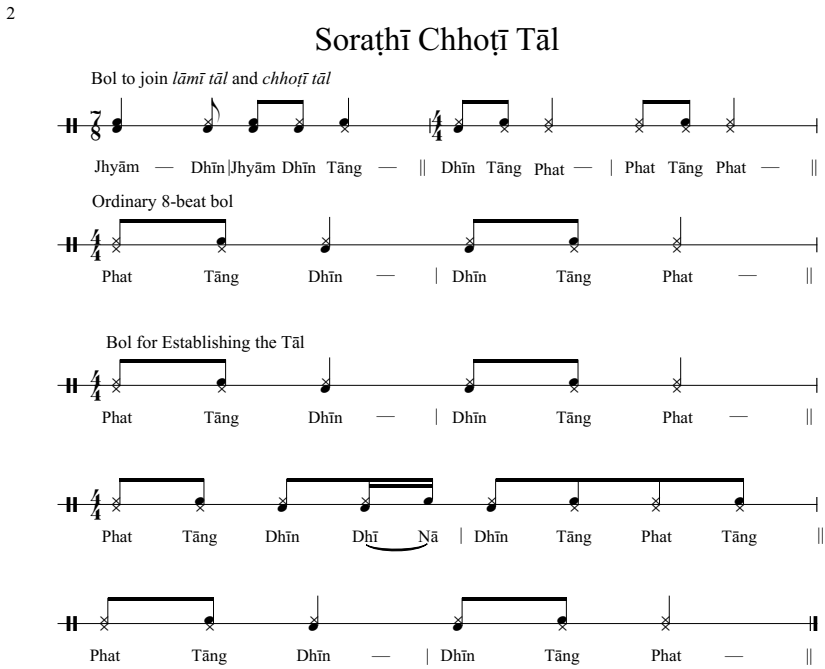



Fig. 3.6 Subi Shah. Mādal Bols for Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

As soon as a song in lāmī tāl is finished, a song in chhoṭī tāl will start right away, and when a chhoṭī tāl song is finished, the tāl is again brought to lāmī tāl, and one dance is complete. Sorathi's very significance is in the skillful alternation between the dances in both tāls. But with only one part of the dance finished, soraṭhī is not considered complete.

## Parts of Soraṭhī Dance

One soraṭhī dance is finished when two different parts have been danced. In this dance, the mādale dancers of the troupe stand in front in one line. Until the mārunī and pursuṅge's dance starts, they stay in the middle of the troupe. The way of dancing is given below.

## Dance in Lāmī Tāl

First, the mādale dancers begin playing lāmī tāl and dancing along the side of the dance space until they get to their places, at which point the mārunī and pursuṅge dancers come out from one side and bow to the mādals with one hand, while crossing to the other side and making a full circle until they stand in front of the mādale dancers in a line, and sway back and forth to the mādal tāl until the song starts. When the song starts at the correct place in the mādal tāl, the mārunī and pursuṅge come straight forward and gesture along with the song as they have learned. When the song's first ṭukkā has been repeated once, everyone moves backwards to their own places, and when the he-ho vocalization that introduces the song's second ṭukkā starts, everyone including the mādale comes forward and crouches down in time with the mādal. When the second ṭukkā is repeated, the mādale dancers play the bol that gives the tāl, and everyone together makes one full turn to the right and one full turn to the left, at the end yelling 'syābās!', and the mārunī dancers place their hands on their heads and crouch down. The pursuṅge and mādale dancers jump energetically. Now, the first ṭukkā of the song begins again and the mādale and pursuṅge dancers move backwards. At the same time, the mārunī come slightly backwards, weaving diagonally around each other, and meet with the pursuṅge and all move forwards together. When one repetition of this song is finished, everyone moves backwards to their own places. Now, the charan starts and the mārunī and pursuṅge dancers come forward in one line, turn around, and move backwards. At this point, only the alāp[70] of the song has been

70 *Alāp* refers to the unmetered beginning part of the song, which is initially sung on the syllable /a/.

sung. When the lyrics begin, the mārunī dancers on the right go to the right side and those on the left go to the left, and all weave around each other towards the front going along the sides and meeting in the middle. During this step, the pursuṅge follow the mārunī on one side, and when they weave around each other in the middle, they move back with the mārunī dancers from the middle, all together, and when they have gone all the way back they come all the way forward together again. With this, the first line of the charan is repeated and when it is finished, all move backwards. When these steps are going on, the mādale dancers come forward two by two and split off to the right and left, circling back to their places. Now the second line of the charan begins, along with which the mārunī and pursuṅge dancers come straight forward and gesture along with the song as they have learned. At the end of this line they move backward, come forward again along with the mādale dancers, and all make one full turn going back and coming forward again together. At this time, the second line of the ṭukkā gīt begins again, and all the dancers do their steps once more as described above. Once the tāl has been given and all the dance of the first ṭukkā gīt is finished, the next charan will start. When each charan has been fully danced according to the above description, the cadential bols are played for moving into chhoṭī tāl.

## Dance in Chhoṭī Tāl

As soon as the tāl is changed from lāmī tāl to chhoṭī tāl, the mārunī and pursuṅge along with mādale dancers sway right and left together to the beat of the mādal until the song lyrics start. There is no rule that states how many times this must repeat—the signal to change steps is when the guru begins the song. When the song begins, the mārunī and pursuṅge move forward, gesturing as they have learned. When the song is done repeating, all move backward to their places. Now the verse starts. During this song the mārunī and pursuṅge come forward, turn around and go back, and then those on the left go left, those on the right go right, and they circle around the sides and come back to the front and skip once. Moving a little bit backwards, they turn around and come forward, and

gesture as they have learned to the second line of the verse, at the end of which they move backwards and return to their places. At this time the mādale dancers, too, going their own way, circle around, come forward, and return to their places. Now, the song repeats, and everyone does the same actions, at the end of which everyone is at the back. When the third line of the song begins, all including the mādale dancers come forward, turn around, and go back, then come all the way forward again. At this time, the third verse finishes and the fourth verse begins, and the mādale dancers begin to give the tāl at the correct place in the song. When giving the tāl, all including the mādale dancers turn around throughout the tāl, and the mārunī dancers place their hands on their heads and crouch down, while the pursuṅge and mādale dancers jump energetically. When all this is over, on the word 'syābās!' chhoṭī tāl begins again, and they weave around each other while moving backwards, then come back forwards. When the first ṭukkā is finishing, they all go backwards, and return to their places. Now, the song's second verse starts, and they dance according to it. At the end of the song, when the tāl is being changed again into lāmī tāl, the mārunī and pursuṅge go to the back of the troupe. In this way, Soraṭhī dance is complete, and the style described above can often be seen in many troupes.



Video 3.14 Soraṭhī Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112728. Pitambar Sundas, dance guru. Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar, pursuṅge. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar and Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādale. Ram Bahadur Sundas, jhyālī. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 10 December 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:06 minutes.

## Jhyāure Dance

Jhyāure dance seems to have been created around the time that human society was established in the Himalayas. This is because all Nepalis have adopted jhyāure dance in one way or another. There is

no rule that prevents men and women from dancing together. While minding small children, working in the forests cutting fodder and firewood, working in the fields, wherever you go, jhyāure dance steps have been adopted. In Nepali tradition jhyāure is a dance that can be danced at any time, and this dance is also included in pāṅgdure dance. Jhyāure enlivens and brings together wedding celebrations, pujās, festivals, processions, rodīghars, and other celebrations. This jhyāure dance has also taken on various forms through adoption by different ethnic groups and through changes over time. There are also various forms of jhyāure songs. The songs sung in jhyāure dance are of two types, one called jhyāure song and another called jhyāure bhākā song. The dance performed when the mādal is played in jhyāure tāl is also called jhyāure dance. For this reason, it is important to understand poetic meter and tāl.

The rules of folk poetic meters place great importance on the identities of different places, and on end-rhymes. In these meters, the number of syllables is less important than the sound of speech melody, so the final /a/'s are not omitted from words. Similarly, the rules of long and short vowels are not followed. The poetic meters used in true jhyāure dance are as follows.

## Jhyāure Meter

Jhyāure meter is arranged in groups of four, five, four, six syllables. When divided into two parts the divisions contain 9 and 10 syllables respectively. Some songs also contain groups of four, six, four, six syllables. The rule in some folk music that half of the couplet should contain a phrase meaningless to the song's narrative while the other half should carry meaning does not apply in jhyāure. For example:

> *Dhanna jovan dhāneko maile, rojī keṭā pāũlā ki bhanera.*
> With great difficulty, I'm saving my youth, so I might get the boy I choose.

> *Alkāṭāra siũdiko bāra, māitī ghara nabasne ko chha ra.*
> A cactus fence in Alkatar, who does not stay in their natal home?

*Phūlko thuṅgā kyā mīṭho bāsanā, dantabirī kholerai hãsana*
Bouquet of flowers, what a sweet fragrance, smile and show all your teeth.

*Gairābārī ṭãkī ra koirālo, samjhyo mayā ãnsuko wairālo.*
In the field down in the hollow, tãkī and koirālo[71] flowers grow, remembering love, a flood of tears.

## Hillside Meter (Pākhe Chhanda)[72]

Hillside meter is used in the work of telling stories, and some jhyāure bhākā songs are based on this meter. The count of syllables in this meter is groups of four, four, two, two. In these couplets, the first line contains a phrase meaningless to the song's narrative, while the second line carries meaning. In this meter as well, speech melody is given priority.

*Himaichulī pallo paṭṭi surke gayo pairo,*
*Sāinu paryo jeṭhī sāsu mayā basyo gairo.*

On the other side of the Himalayan peaks, there is a long and narrow landslide
By relation she's my wife's older sister, but I've fallen deeply in love

*Pokharāko bajāraimā lāhā chha ki chhaina?*
*Piratīle neṭo kāṭyo thāhā chha ki chhaina?*

Is there sealing-wax to be found in Pokhara bazaar or not?
Do you know that my love has gone far away or not?

*Sālghārīmā sālko pāta belghārīmā bela,*
*Hāmīlāī ãkhā lāe jānuparlā jela.*

71 Both flowers are the flowers of trees in the Bauhinia family. *Tãkī* is *Bauhinia malabarica*, and *koirālo* is *Bauhinia variegata*. These edible pink and white flowers bloom profusely in the summer, and are made into a variety of dishes including a delicious fresh *achaar*.

72 Known elsewhere, and predominantly, as *sawāi* meter. Also known as *bhaṭṭyāune* or *batāune* meter. As pākhe ('of the hillsides') is an offensive slang term for a rural person, we often use the English translation here while keeping to the Nepali terminology in other references to specific meters.

Sāl[73] leaves in the the sāl grove; in the bel[74] grove, bel,
If you set your sights on us, you might end up in jail.

## Jungle Meter (Jaṅgalī Chhanda)[75]

In this jungle meter, storytelling (*bhaṭyāune*) songs, *terso bhākā*, *asāre bhākā*, *jhyāure bhākā* and, with the addition of some syllables, *ghãse* songs can be sung. In this meter, too, speech melody is given priority. In this meter, syllables are grouped as five, five, three, three, and, in even smaller groups, as three, two, three, two, three, three. The first line contains a meaningless statement while the second line contains meaning. Poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota wrote *Muna Madan*[76] in this meter, which is also referred to simply as *jhyāure* meter. But this is not jhyāure meter; this can be included among jhyāure bhākā. This meter is called 'jungle song' or 'storytelling seed' (*bhaṭyāune geḍā*). This is the basis on which the meter is called jungle meter.

*Himai ra chulī, tyo pallopaṭṭi, bāgh māryo ḍhuṅgāle,*
*Purānū māyā bheṭ bhayo āja bãcheko hunāle.*

On the other side of the mountain peaks, a tiger was killed by a rock,
My former love, we met today, because we have survived.

*Siru ra pāte khukurī mero hātkāṭe bijāune,*
*Pātalīsaṅga hãskhela gardā koi chhan ki risāune?*

My long and slender khukurī[77] can cut and pierce one's hand,
If I flirt with this slim girl, is there anyone who might get angry?

73 *Sāl* trees are *Shorea robusta*, known for their tall, straight trunks.
74 Bel trees, *Aegle marmelos*, bear the juicy fruit sometimes known as wood apple.
75 Predominantly known as *asāre jhyāure* meter. Note that both *pākhe chhanda/sawāi* and *jaṅgalī chhanda/asāre jhyāure* can be used as, and referred to as, the *bhatyāune geḍā* used in the *charan* or verse of a song.
76 Devkota, *Muna Madan*.
77 A *khukurī* is a curved knife used both as a utility knife and as a weapon, found especially in Nepal's Himalayan foothills.

*Sānūmā sānū kusume rumāl dhobīle nachhune,*
*Ukālī bāṭo ma kati dhāũ bheṭ kaile nahune.*

Smaller than small, silk handkerchief, that the washerman won't touch,
How long can I keep coming up this steep road, never to meet you?



Video 3.15 Jhyāure, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112815. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:24 minutes. Subi Shah describes jhyāure meter and song structure.[78]

## Ṭhāḍo Bhākā Meter

Ṭhāḍo bhākā meter, in some places, is comprised of jungle meter and ghãsī meter with some words repeated or some syllables added. When this meter is created from jungle meter the syllables are divided this way: four, four, six, six; and when it is created from ghãsī meter the syllables are divided into groups of four, four, six, and seven. But the rules of folk meters allow there to be a few more or a few less. Deu Bahadur Dura is one famous person among those who sing and dance to ṭhāḍo bhākā. Many ṭhāḍo bhākā songs attributed to him are still sung today.[79]

*Ḍamphu mā re bajdā bajyo himī ḍimī gardai mādalu jhyāntunā,*
*Chelī mā re beṭī sabai bheṭa bhāko ṭhaũmā durustai Nautunā.*

78 This 1994 recording is a studio version of the song Subi Shah discusses here. Anjana Gurung, Kanhaiya Singh, and Dipak Raman, *Hasi Deu Boli Deu Rasaile*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music (UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터, 2018), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub3.php <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=891i2zM0skk

79 For more on Deu Bahadur Dura, see Yambahadur Dura and Binod Neupane, 'Thado Bhaka: A Source of Social Intercourse,' *Marsyangdi Journal*, 3.1 (n.d.), pp. 51–57; Yambahadur Dura, *Deubahādur Durā: Ṭhāḍo Bhākākā Loknāyak [Deubahadur Dura: Folk Performer of Thado Bhaka Songs]* (Self, 2022).

When the ḍamphu[80] is played, it resounds playing himi dimi, the mādal resounds jhyāntunā,
When all the kinswomen gather in one place, it feels just like Nautuna.[81]

*Adhi kholā bhaṅgālīmā māchhā mārnu bhurā duwālī pharkāī,*
*Deu bādur durā dājyu karapuṭar jharyo bokephūla[82] larkāī.*

At the fork of the Adhi river, fish for minnows by diverting the stream,
Brother Deu Bahadur Dura descended to Karaputar, with highland flowers swinging.

*Guḍu mā re guḍu guḍu champaikalī hukkā jhirai hāli kholana,*
*Satya mā re satya, satya māyā bhae mero hẽsī hẽsī bolana.*

The champaikalī hookah makes a gurgling sound, stir it with a pointed stick,
If you truly, truly love me, talk with a smile.

*Pāni paryo gāũ gharmā kuiro tala jharyo himālai ḍhākera,*
*Maryo bhanchan deu bādur hātko sānu rumāl chhātimā rākhera.*

It rained in the village, the fog descended and covered the mountains,
They say Deu Bahadur died with a small handkerchief in his hand, placing it on his chest.

*Dhurī māthi lāgnelāgne tyasai dhwāso bhwāso majherīmā lāgne leu,*
*Katābāṭa āyau kānchhī katā jāna lāgyau pachheurīko lagyo chheu.*

80 A large frame drum.
81 Nautuna (Nautanwa) is a bazaar town in India near the Nepali border with a Gurkha recruitment center for the Indian Army (and formerly the British Indian Army), so the lyric suggests that the place where all the kinswomen gather is vibrant like a busy bazaar town full of soldiers.
82 Most likely colloquial for *bukiphul*, highland flower.

Soot covers the roof-tree, and green algae covers the
ground where the rain falls from the eaves,
Where have you come from, kanchhi, where are you
going, the border of your shawl is blowing away.

The jhyāure dance songs in the above fixed poetic meters are still sung in villages today. Any other songs that lack fixed poetic meters but are played in jhyāure tāl are called jhyāure bhākā, and the line of these songs stretches from one side of Nepal all over the kingdom. In these songs, these very ṭukkās are also sung. It is impossible to count how many Nepali jhyāure bhākā songs there are. These songs change every year. Here are some examples of jhyāure bhākā songs:

*Jindagī oilāyo bijulā din kāṭaũ kasarī?*
Life is fading, Bijula, how will we spend our days?



Audio 3.10 *Jindagī oilāyo*, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112787. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:35 minutes.

*Pānī salala jovan bhaijāne belaimā sāīlī relaimā.*
Flowing like water, salala, in the prime of my youth, Saili,
away on the rails.

*Charī bharara charī bharara laijāũlā kānchīlāi relmā sarara.*
As a bird flies bharara, as a bird flies bharara, I'll take you
away, Kanchhi, on the train, sarara.



Video 3.16 Jhyāure Bhākā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112816. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Subi Shah explains jhyāure bhākā song structure using this song as an example. Duration: 1:36 minutes.

*Nautunāko bajāra lāure āe kaiyaũ hajāra.*
In Nautuna Bazaar, Gurkha soldiers have arrived by the thousands.

*Bāsai basera yo piratī nalāī ta jānna gharaimā.*
Taking shelter, I won't go home until you agree to love me.

*Bhancha re mālurai sānumāyā lām ki nalām.*
They say, mālurai, should we have a little love, or not?

The above songs in various meters come from the mouths of our prominent singers. The meters of these songs are rarely the same. For this reason, these songs once sung are slowly lost. In this way, everyone is beginning to forget the jhyāure and jhyāure bhākā songs which have spread throughout the kingdom. Another thing, it is also important to know how to sing a jhyāure song with a thego. Songs in jhyāure meter to which a thego is added become jhyāure bhākā songs. But a thego can be added to a song in any fixed meter. If a song has a thego added the tune is called by the name of the thego. Among these songs, '*relīmai*,' '*barīlai*,' '*lailai*,' '*rīmai*,' '*naina resam*,' and others are popular.[83] Some examples of songs with thegos added are as follows:

*Pānī paryo relīmai gairīmā tāl paryo, māyā baḍhyo relīmai māitīlāī gāl paryo.*
It rained, *relimai*, the hollow became a lake, love grew, *relimai*, and my kin got scolded.

*Hāta kāṭyo barai pālise churāle, māyā phāṭyo barai gāũgharko kurāle .*

83 *Ṭhego*s can be vocables or words with lexical meanings, but their lexical meanings are rarely meant to be interpreted within the song. *Barai* (friend) and *hajur* (sir) can be interpreted as addressees when used as ṭhegos. *Lailai* and *barilai* are vocables; *lailai* has no genre associations, but *barilai*, or the two used together (*lai bari lai*, etc.) is strongly associated with women's songs for the festival of *Haritalika Teej*. *Relimai* is usually understood simply as vocables, though it could be understood as meaning 'on the train.' *Rimai* and *naina resam* were particularly popular among Gurungs in this area of Dhading and Gorkha in the 1960s and 70s; *rimai* means 'girl' in Tamu Ke (the Gurung language), so like *barai* and *hajur* can be understood as addressing a listener. *Naina resam* would literally mean 'eyes of silk' and this *ṭhego* has come to refer to its own song genre, popular in this area in the 1960s and 70s.

A hand was cut, *barai*, with a polished bangle, love was
torn apart, *barai*, by the gossip in the village.

To understand folk music well it is not enough to only sing songs. It is also important to understand tāls. In every tāl, ethnic instruments are played in their own ways. As jhyāure as described in this article is included in pāṅgdure dance, information about playing the mādal in jhyāure is presented here. Although it is not really necessary to keep writing about the mādal, now mādals are in Chhetrapati in central Kathmandu, but mādal tāls are stuck in the corners of hill villages, and thus I will write something about jhyāure rules and forms. Folk dances must be danced differently to different mādal bols. It can be said that these different styles represent the ancient or classical aspects of Nepali folk dance. The parts of our folk dances include crouching down, weaving diagonally around one another (*chhirkane khānu*), jumping up, spinning, and other steps, each of which are performed at the signal of a particular mādal bol. Thus, it is not necessary to keep harping on how important it is to know these bols.[84] The jhyāure tāl that is practiced in our villages is divided into groups of three, and here are some examples of this tāl.

## Jhyāure Tāl

Bol: Six and twelve beats
Tāl: three beats
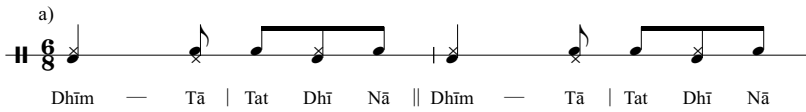


Video 3.17 Mādal Demonstration for 'Pāṅgdure:' Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112706. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:14 minutes.

84 It is certainly important to know the bols, and also to know that the same bol often has multiple names. Those who have read Subi Shah's list of bols in *Mādal* will notice that the below bol ghum is not on his list. Ghum here is the same as dhum on Shah's list. Shah's names for bols differ from those now most commonly used in Kathmandu; while we will not list all the differences here, we will note that the initial consonants dh and gh are often interchanged, so that dhin and ghin refer to the same bol; dhum and ghum refer to the same bol, etc.

# Jhyāure Tāl

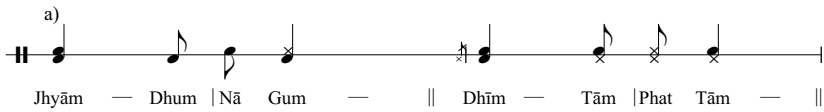
Ordinary 6-beat bol

a)

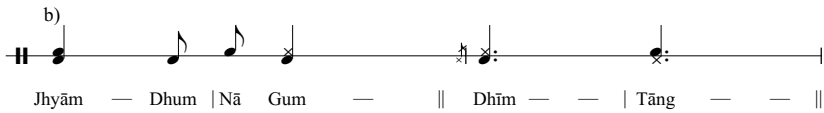



12-beat bol for the beginning of a dance

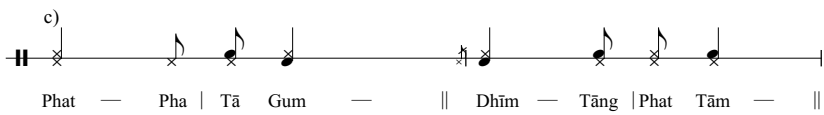
a)



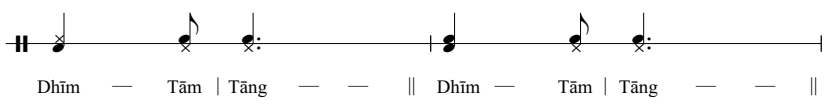

b)




c)




6-beat bol to signal dancers to crouch down



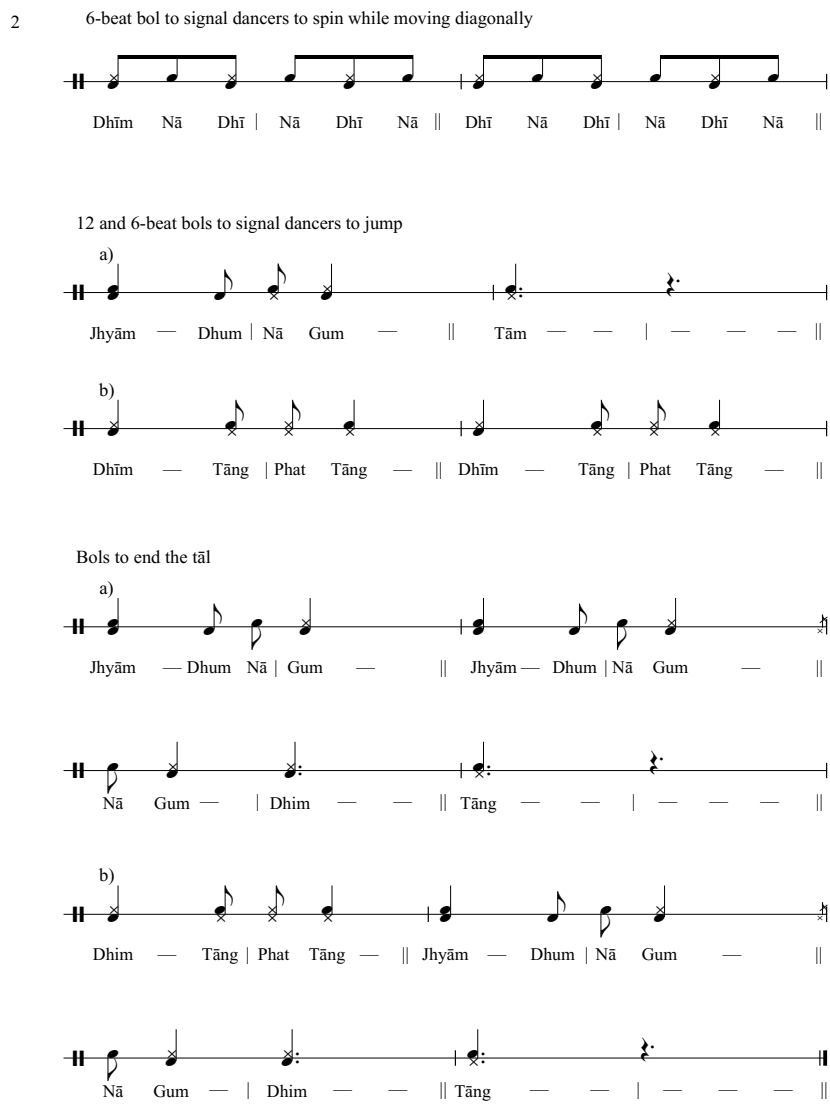



Fig. 3.7 Subi Shah, Mādal Bols for Jhyāure Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The above bols are put together into longer pieces, to which jhyāure dance is danced. In fact, those who can dance well according to the signals of bols become famous. The mādale's special ability is in playing these bols.

When jhyāure is danced as part of pāṅgdure dance, first, a storytelling (bhaṭyāune) verse of a song is sung. Only after this does the ṭukkā verse of the song begin, at the end of which the mādal plays a cue bol, and then the entire troupe begins to repeat this verse.[85] The mādale and the dancers start at the same time. The signal bol to start the dance is played on the mādal, and the pursuṅge and mārunī together move to the left, crouch down stepping on each other's feet and placing their right hands on their heads at the same time, then together quickly stand up, move to the right, and repeat the same move. After energetically standing up, they move to the right along the sides of the dance space and return to their former positions. At this time, the mādale signal the end of the song with the ending bol. They energetically move to the left in a circle, and once they return to their former places they move forward together and gesture to the song. When the final phrase of the song is reached, the mādale play the bol that signals the dancers to crouch down. Here the dancers move backward while spinning and once they reach the center they stop and crouch down, and gesture to the song. Now the bol signaling them to block each other while dancing begins, and the pursuṅge energetically rise and circle around the mārunī as if to block their way. On the final phrase of the song the bol signaling dancers to jump is played, and the pursuṅge jump energetically placing their hands on their heads. On the final verse, when all dancers have stood up, they spin around in one place, and when the mādale play cadential figures and speak the sound '*chaṭ*' on the final beat, the dancers put their hands on their heads and crouch down or do Namaste. This is how a full jhyāure dance is performed in pāṅgdure dance. But this is not the only jhyāure

85 Shah simply writes *gīt* (song) here, following common practice of referring to a verse (as in one single couplet, tercet, or quatrain) as a song in itself. He does not use the words *charan* or *antarā*, which I usually translate as 'verse.' Rather, he is differentiating between parts of the performed jhyāure song that are sung in different poetic meters, and that can be separated from each other and used in different songs. For example, the same bhaṭyāune song could be combined with a different ṭukkā song in a different poetic or musical meter, and vice versa.

dance; there is also a custom of the pursuṅge performing solo, and in *rodīghar*,[86] *rateuli*,[87] and other similar contexts women also perform jhyāure dance. Likewise, there is also a fixed form of jhyāure dance associated with ṭhaḍo bhākā. And, jhyāure dance is also danced to the pañchai bājā, and from evening until morning young men and women dance jhyāure in their own style for entertainment. This is not all; there are also regionally specific and ethnically specific forms.



Video 3.18 Jhyāure Dance at Jyamrung's Māghe Sakranti Melā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112731. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 15 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:34 minutes. This is 'ordinary' or non-paṅgdure jhyāure dancing, performed by villagers attending the fair on the holiday of Maghe Sakranti, the first day of the month of Magh (January-February)

86 *Rodīghar* (also spelled rodhīghar following Nepali rather than Gurung language) is a traditional Gurung social institution in which young men and women gather at night in what anthropologists have referred to cross-culturally as a 'youth dormitory:' a house where youth of the same age spend the night. *Rodī* has traditionally been a place to do handwork like weaving, plan the next day's labor exchange, and sing, dance, and flirt. As modes of production in Gurung village life have changed, the singing, dancing, and flirting aspects of rodīghar have remained. See Ellen Andors, 'The Rodi: Female Associations Among the Gurungs of Nepal' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1976); Alan Macfarlane, *Resources and Population: A Study of the Gurungs of Nepal*, 2nd edn (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2003); Devendra Neupane, 'Mother's Groups among the Gurung of Bhujung Village of Lamjung District' (Tribhuvan University, Patan Multiple Campus, 2011); Bernard Pignede, *The Gurungs*, trans. by Alan Macfarlane (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1966).

87 *Rateuli*, associated with Hindu weddings, is a party held by the women of the groom's family while the men have gone to fetch a new bride. Rateuli songs and dancing can often be bawdy and raucous.

## Chuḍkā Dance

In Nepal, chuḍkā dance originated with Chhetris and Bahuns. Over time, this dance has been adopted by other castes and ethnic groups. Immediately upon hearing the word chuḍkā, one’s thoughts turn to bhajans,[88] and the main instrument associated with this dance is the khaĩjaḍī. But if the youth of West Number 3[89] are dancing chuḍkā with question-answer songs, the herders in the high pastures can also be found making a path between their hearts through the same chuḍkā songs. Many of our pāṅgdure gurus have been found to include chuḍkā in their khyālī bhākā songs for their dances.

In this way chuḍkā songs have taken various forms throughout the central region of the kingdom of Nepal, throughout which they are still surviving. Looking at these various forms it is difficult to say how many branches there are, and in many places the name has even been changed. In fact, the most well-known forms of chuḍkā in the central region are as follows:

### Lok-Laharī Chuḍkā

Herders in the high pastures sing *lok-laharī chuḍkā* to express what is in their hearts. These songs are not danced to, and themes include love and longing, the Ramayana, Krishna Charitra , and other storytelling songs. The poetic meter is not fixed, rather, the words are made to fit the melody. Because the songs are not danced to and no instrumental accompaniment is used, these songs are called lok-laharī chuḍkā.

88 Most likely this is true if one comes from a Chhetri or Bahun background, or is involved in bhajan performance groups. Other ethnic groups may think of kaudā chuḍkā first; this is the type of chuḍkā represented in the dance video for this section.

89 ‘West No. 3’ refers to the region of Nepal that was designated West No. 3 from 1951–1956. This area encompassed the northwestern area of central Nepal, with Pokhara as its headquarters. This system of administrative units was replaced with the Kshetra system from 1956–1973, the Anchal (Zone) system from 1973–2015, and the system of provinces in 2015.

Here are some examples:

*Gokulmā kṛiṣṇale dāĩ hālī khele.*
*Kadamko gāchhilāī miyo banāe,*
*Bhirkaule ra kã̃s kuś parāl tulāe.*
*Soramā saya gopenīlāi goru banāe,*
*Gopenīko chulṭhoko māl dāmlo tulāe.*

In Gokul, Krishna played a game of threshing.
Using a kadam tree trunk as the central threshing pole,
Using bhirkaule,[90] kã̃s,[91] and kuś[92] grasses to make straw.
Making oxen out of sixteen hundred milkmaids,
Using their plaited hair as tethering cords.

*Vindrā banmā kṛiṣṇale muralī bajāe.*
*Soramā saya gopenīko nindrā byũjhāe,*
*Gopenīko manbhitra khalbal tulāe.*
*Ḍhokāmā kholī gopīharu sabai jammā bhae,*
*Gopīharu sabai milī dauḍī dauḍī āe.*

In Vrindavan, Krishna played the flute.
Waking up sixteen hundred milkmaids from their sleep,
The hearts of the milkmaids began to flutter.
Opening the door, all the milkmaids gathered,
Together, all the milkmaids came running.

*Samjhanā rahyo kaṭhaibarī māitī gharaiko.*
*Āmaile chhāḍin babaile chhāḍe hṛidaya ḍagāī,*
*Dājyuko mana bhāujyule chhekin tagāro lagāī.*
*Bhāiko mana buhārīko māyā jāla banī,*
*Samjhã̃dā pani samjhanna didī bhanna pani.*

Poignant memories of my natal home remain.
Mother left me, Father left me, hardening their hearts,
Older Sister-in-law blocked Older Brother's heart, locking it down.

90 A species of millet, commonly known as Job's tears millet, *Coix lacrima-jobi*.
91 A species of grass that grows by small rivers, *Saccharum spontaneum*.
92 A particular kind of grass, *Poa cynosuroides*, used in religious ceremonies.

Younger Sister-in-law caught Younger Brother's heart in a net of love,
Even if they remember me, they don't remember to call me Sister.

## Bhajan Chuḍkā

These are not bhajans themselves, but rather these chuḍkā songs are sung in between bhajans for comic relief, and the dance to these songs is also in bhajan style. The main instrument is the khaĩjaḍī, and the khaĩjaḍī players themselves also dance. In *bhajan chuḍkā* the songs that are sung do not have fixed meters, rather, short phrases are put together following the melody, and the themes of the songs are varied. Here are some examples of bhajan chuḍkā:

*Kahã̃ jānchhau golenī,*
*Dahī ta lāna dinnau.*
*Jalai jamunāko pāri,*
*Dahī ta lāna dinnau.*
*Kahã̃ jānchhau golenī,*
*Dahī ta lāna dinnau.*

Where are you going, round one,
Won't you let me take some yogurt?
Across the waters of the Jamuna
Won't you let me take some yogurt?
Where are you going, round one,
Won't you let me take some yogurt?

--

*Jamunāko tīramā,*
*Luchhā chũḍī paryo.*
*Dahīko ṭheki tānātān,*
*Luchhā chũḍī paryo.*
*Jamunāko tīramā,*
*Luchhā chũḍī paryo.*

On the banks of the Jamuna,
A struggle occurred.
Fighting over the yogurt jar,
A struggle occurred.
On the banks of the Jamuna,
A struggle occurred.

--

*Bhijyo māyā jāl,*
*Bāluwāko pānī jhaĩ.*
*Samjhanā bijhyo ãkhīmā,*
*Sapanī banera,*
*Bāluwāko pānī jhaĩ.*
*Bhijyo māya jāl,*
*Bāluwāko pānī jhaĩ.*

The net of love is drenched,
Like sand with water.
Memories pierce eyes,
Becoming dreams,
Like sand with water.
The net of love is drenched,
Like sand with water.

## Chuḍkā

The main region where this chuḍkā dance is performed is West Number 3.[93] Boys and girls sing its songs in question-answer form, teasing and poking sarcastic fun at each other. These songs do not have a fixed meter but rather follow the melody. Both boys and girls dance in chuḍkā songs, and either the khaĩjaḍī or the mādal is customarily played. As all castes and ethnic groups of the central region have adopted this dance, they use whichever instrument is customary. Throughout the central region the custom of calling

93 For a local recording of 'West No. 3' chuḍkā from Dhading, see गोर्खाली ठिठीहरुको बबाल चुड्का *Gorkhali Thithiharuko Babal chuḍkā* from Nirvana Television (2019): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swUrSgda3Nc

this kind of chuḍkā song or dance "Number 3 Chuḍkā" still exists. Some examples of chuḍkā are as follows:

*Sālghārī majurlāī,*
*Sun kāṭī gajurlāī,*
*Salām mero hajurlāī.*

Peacock in the sal grove,
Gold cut for a finial,
Salute to you, my honored one![94]

*Timī kã̄ko kã̄ko,*
*Mayā bhandai āirāko,*
*Chineko na jāneko.*

You're from where again,
Coming here talking of love,
Without even being introduced?

*Māthi devī thāna,*
*Sahara paryo mai jāna,*
*Āko timlāī laijāna.*

The goddess's shrine is up above,
I have to go to the city,
I've come to take you with me.

*Hāmlāī lāne bhae,*
*Sun chã̄dīmā dubāe,*
*Pharka ã̄ṭa nabhae.*

If you want to take me,
Cover me with gold and silver,
Turn back if you don't have the courage.

--

94 This song can be found here. Anjana Gurung, Kanhaiya Singh, and Dipak Raman, *Salaam Mero Hajurlai*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music, UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터 (UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터, 1999), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub9.php, https://tinyurl.com/5cp9kh8n

*Rāto cholo sārī,*
*Jhamke raichha bulākhī,*
*Ekchhin basna holā ki.*
*Ḍhalkīmā jāne sānnānī bolāũdā ni nabolne.*

Red blouse and sari,
A dangling nose ring,
Will you stay a while?
Little girl, running away, not answering when called.

*Chautārīko chheu,*
*Jātra mātrai ke lāunu,*
*Ekchin basna ke āunu,*
*Bolāi rāko dāi timle holā katti kāmale.*

Beside the resting place,[95]
Let's not make a scene,
Why should I come just to sit awhile?
Older brother calling me, what purpose might you have?

*Māyālāī chinera,*
*Bolāirāko āera,*
*Ṭhyammai manle khāera.*
*Ḍhalkīmā jāne sānnānī bolāũda ni nabolne.*

Recognizing you, my love,
I've come, calling you,
As my heart is totally lost to you,
Little girl, running away, not answering when called.

## Pāṅgdure Chuḍkā

The custom of pāṅgdure dance troupes making all kinds of chuḍkā songs into khyālī bhākā dances is found all over the central region. These are danced according to pāṅgdure dance rules while the mādal plays khyālī tāl. Some call this kind of dance chuḍkā dance, while others call it khyālī bhākā dance, and for this reason chuḍkā

95 A *chautāra* or *chautārī* is a platform for sitting on, built of earth, stones, plaster or brick, and usually constructed under a tree or at cross-roads.

dance is considered a branch of pāṅgdure dance.

In addition to the above branches, chuḍkā can be found to have taken many different local and ethnic forms. In some parts of West Number 4,[96] *roilā* songs can be seen that are similar to these chuḍkā tunes and songs.[97] Likewise, across the Kali Gandaki, the same songs are sung and danced to though they are customarily called bhajans.[98] The further west you go, the more you will find the custom of singing songs in melodies with chuḍkā rhythms. Dance styles and names vary according to region and ethnic group.

It is customary to dance chuḍkā to the accompaniment of the khaĩjaḍī in some places and to the mādal in khyālī tāl in other places. Whatever instrument is used, the tāl consists of four beats. If the khaĩjaḍī is played, this tāl is called chuḍkā tāl, and if singing and dancing is done with the mādal, the tāl is called khyālī. Without knowing how to play the khaĩjaḍī, the exact form of chuḍkā dance cannot be known. For this reason, the instrument and knowledge of its tāl are necessary. Chuḍkā tāl as played on the khaĩjaḍī is as follows:



Video 3.19 Khaĩjaḍī Demonstration for 'Pāṅgdure:' Chuḍkā Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112707. Ganesh Gurung, khaijaḍī. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:22 minutes.

96 West Number 4 was an administrative region from 1951–1956, headquartered in Putalikhet, Syangja district.

97 For a commercial music video example of a roilā chuḍkā (also known as *khelī chuḍkā*) song with dancers doing chuḍkā steps, see दुर्गा हौ कि भवानी *Durga Hau ki Bhavani* by Sirish Devkota and Komal Oli (2021): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De2aFzHdT94. The musicologist Kusumakar Neupane has long protested the use of roilā for this style of song. He is correct in that it makes no etymological sense, as roilā, coming from *runu* (to weep) would suggest a sad song although the songs and dances are quite upbeat and usually have happy lyrics, while its other name, khelī, comes from *khel*, to play. Neupane blames the music industry since the 1990s for this, but Shah's use of roilā in this 1981 publication suggests that people had been referring to this type of song as roilā already for some time. This could still be one of those genres to which Shah alludes, whose names got 'mixed up' with the advent of the recording industry.

98 For a commercial music video example of *bhajan chuḍkā* with some footage of dancers doing chuḍkā steps, see के खान्छेउ कमाला *Ke Khanchheu Kamala* by Prajapati Parajuli and Devi Gharti (2014): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k6xjvunR7Q

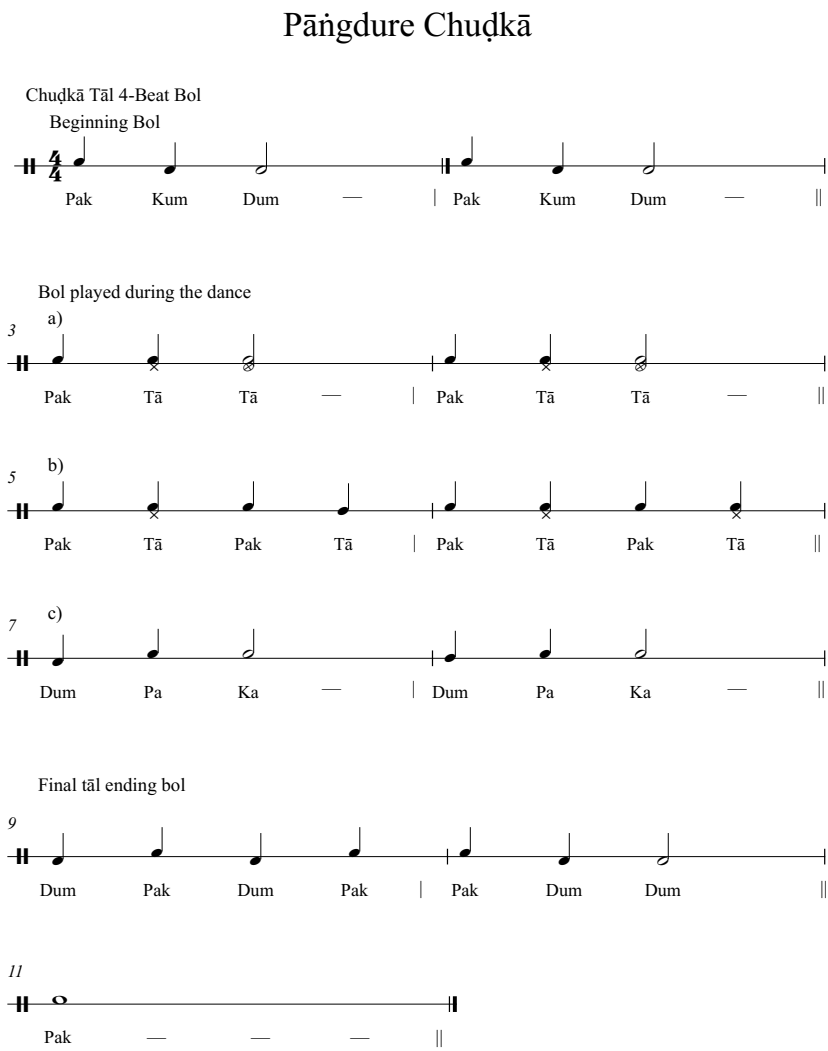



Fig. 3.8 Subi Shah, Khaijaḍī Bols for Chuḍkā. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Chuḍkā dance is danced to the above bols played according to the rules of chuḍkā. In this dance, after the beginning bol is played on the khaĩjaḍī, the song begins from the correct place. From the last word of the ṭukkā gīt, the khaĩjaḍī plays a cadential bol, and both boys and girls, staying in their places, make two turns to the right, then two turns to the left, through the duration of the ṭukkā gīt. On

the last word of the song, a cadential bol is played, and both boys and girls crouch down. Right after this the khaĩjaḍī returns to the previous tāl and the dancers go along the side in a line, turning and going the other way at the last word of the ṭukkā gīt. After they have gone around twice, the cadential bol is played and they turn and crouch down back in their places. Now, gesturing along with the song, they slowly rise and turn in their places, and on the last word of the ṭukkā gīt, yelling 'syābās!' they put their hands on their heads and bow down. In this way, beginning another verse, they start the dance over.

Because this dance is so popular in the region of West Number 3, it is referred to as 'Number 3 Chuḍkā.' In some places, the girls sing while the boys dance, and then the boys sing while the girls dance. There is also a custom of performing this dance in mārunī dress. With variations according to place and ethnic group, chuḍkā dance is still popular in the central region.

Likewise, according to bhajan rules, bhajan chuḍkā is danced for comic relief. The dancers are the bhajan singers themselves. In the same way, pursuṅge, mārunī, and mādale together dance chuḍkā in khyālī tāl in pāṅgdure dance.

In fact, chuḍkā dance, meaning Number 3 Chuḍkā,[99] has flourished, and this dance is danced at festivals, rodighar,[100] pujās, places where swings have been set up,[101] and other such festive places, and the best dancers are invited from far and wide. Among Nepali folk dances, chuḍkā dance is not only popular, but also held to be quite famous.

99 This style of *chuḍkā* is known as *kauḍā chuḍkā* in some places of the former West Number 3 and its environs, for example, in the Gurung and Magar villages of southern Gorkha, Tanahun, and Kaski.

100 For a good commercial music video example of West No. 3 chuḍkā,/kauḍa chuḍkā in the Gurung social institution of rodhi ghar, see रोधीघर *Rodhighar* by Pavitra Gurung and Ganesh Gurung (2023): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A7qne935PQ. This video includes only female dancers, and as it is in a rodhi ghar setting, the dance is not performed by a Pāṅgdure troupe.

101 During the Dasaĩ festival, it is customary throughout the hills to erect swings for the celebration. There are two types: *rote ping* which is similar to a ferris wheel, and *linge ping* which is made from four bamboo poles connected at the top, with a swing of jute rope hanging from them.



Video 3.20 Kauḍā chuḍkā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112730. Tamu Kalākār Sangh. Kathmandu, 8 June 2024. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 18:41 minutes. Performed by members of the Tamu Kalākār Sangh (Gurung Artists' Association) at the Ghā̃tu Khoi (feast held one month after the ghā̃tu performances on Chandi Purnima/Buddha Purnima) sponsored by Bandipur Tamu Samaj and Tamu Samaj Tanahun. Many groups perform at once at such feasts, and the playing, singing, and dancing are all participatory. This is not a pāṅgdure dance group, but the performance is illustrative of kauḍā chuḍkā/'Number 3 Chuḍkā.'

# 4. *Mādal*

## Translator's Introduction

*Anna Stirr*

*Mādal* is Subi Shah's most successful book, having remained in print and been published in several editions since the early 1980s. The book focuses on the mādal drum as used in the pāṅgdure dance tradition of Jyamrung in Dhading. And, it links mādal playing to dance and the world beyond the human, underlining the instrument's social-religious significance in the context of pāṅgdure dances. Beyond the book's regional specificity, it is significant as a source of information on the mādal's legendary past, its construction, and how to play a variety of *tāl*s and the rhythmic patterns used within them. Tāl refers to rhythmic cycles of set numbers of beats (*mātra*) with characteristic patterns of drum strokes, referred to by syllables (*bol*). The term bol can refer to a single drum syllable, or a group of them. Introducing the tāls used in the pāṅgdure dances of Jyamrung and beyond, plus their characteristic patterns of bols, Subi Shah's *Mādal* is the closest thing to a mādal method book that has existed until the 2010s, when various mādal teachers began publishing written and notated works featuring their own regional styles and posting mādal lesson videos online.

©2026 Stirr (introduction);
Stirr, Brown, Khadka and Rijal (translation), CC BY 4.0 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246.04

## The Mādal in Nepali Music

The mādal is probably Nepal's best-known percussion instrument. Used throughout the hills by multiple castes and ethnic groups, it is constantly being adapted into new genres at the same time as its characteristic sounds, tāls, and rhythmic phrases within those tāls are held up as icons of Nepali identity. Its use in the ensembles at the national radio, Radio Nepal, from the 1950s onwards have helped further establish it as a national symbol. As the ethnomusicologist Noe Dinnerstein notes, the mādal has also come to signify part of a 'pan-Himalayan' hill-region musical style even in places like Ladakh in India that do not include the mādal among their own traditional instruments.[1] Shah's book is the first that has focused specifically on the mādal; since then, others have come out with a focus on other regional styles of mādal playing. Kathmandu mādal player Sanuraja Maharjan published a mādal method book along with American music educator Robert Moore, using staff notation and focusing on playing styles common within the Kathmandu Valley.[2] Kharka Bahadur Budha Magar, originally from Salyan in the mid-western hills and employed for many years as the mādal teacher at the Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar, is working on a book of mādal tāls focusing on his regional style.

Other works on Nepali instruments provide short descriptions of the mādal, giving various etymologically and organologically based speculations on its origins. Ram Sharan Darnal cites a Sanskrit *sloka* which mentions the 'mardal' and speculates that this term evolved into 'mādal.'[3] Ram Prasad Kandel includes the mādal and other similar instruments in his book *Nepali Lokbājā*, noting the differences in mādal construction in various parts of the country, and the similar instruments known by different

1 Noe Dinnerstein, 'Ladakhi Lu: Songs, Cultural Representation and Hybridity in Ladakh,' *Himalaya*, 32.1 and 2 (2013), pp. 73–84.
2 Sanuraja Maharjan and Moore, Robert, *Madal: Learn the Most Popular Drum of Nepal* (Kumari Printing, 2010).
3 Darnal, *Nepali Bājā*, p. 144.

names and used in various ethnic groups' musical traditions.[4] Unlike Darnal, Kandel asserts that the mādal has its origin among the Magar ethnic group, but he does not cite a source.[5] A likely source is the Newar term for the mādal, *magakhĩ*, which implies that it is a *khĩ*-like instrument played by Magars; this is also the basis for Sanuraja Maharjan's similar claim. But, this remains a speculation; all it really implies is that the mādal may have come into the Kathmandu Valley along with Magar mādalists. Shah, on the other hand, asserts on the first page of *Mādal* that the mādal developed from the *mṛidaṅgam*, surmising that through the ages people began to play it worn around their waists, and it slowly evolved into its current form.

Scholarship on Nepali instruments also categorizes mādals into various types. Darnal, as well as Jangam and Rawal mention that 'eastern mādals' are larger,[6] and Parajuli also mentions larger 'eastern mādals,' smaller 'western mādals,' and 'soraṭhī mādals' as big as the 'eastern mādals' but worn around the waist.[7] In our experience there are very large mādals used in the western hills as well; the comparatively smaller mādals are more characteristic of the central-western hills, including Dhading and the Kathmandu Valley. Others refer to the larger mādal used in pāṅgdure dances as 'guru mādal.' Shah does not differentiate between soraṭhī mādals or guru mādals and other mādals; a mādal used for pāṅgdure dances must simply be on the large side. Although Shah's focus is on the mādal as used in pāṅgdure dances, mādals are widely used in many different genres as well, and each may have a preference for the size of the instrument. Finally, there are other barrel drums used in Nepal that are similar to the mādal but have different names.

4 Ramprasad Kandel, *Nepalī Lokbājā: Folk Musical Instruments of Nepal* (Nepal Lokbājā Sangrahalaya, 2004), pp. 81, 157, 165.
5 Kandel, *Nepalī Lokbājā: Folk Musical Instruments of Nepal*, p. 165.
6 Darnal, *Nepali Bājā*, p. 144; Deepak Jangam and Beni Rawal, *Saṅgīt Surabhi* (Bhrikuti Pustak Tathat Masaland Bhandar, 2003), p. 200.
7 Parajuli, *Nepali Lokgitko Aalok (Light on Nepali Folk Music)*, p. 576.



Fig. 4.1 Mādals as used in pāṅgdure dances, held by mādale dancers in Sankhu Sorhaghar, Dhading. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale), Sarki Thapa Magar (mādale), Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar (mārunī), Umesh Magar (mārunī), Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar (pursuṅge). © Anna Stirr. 7 January 2023. CC BY.

The way the mādal is played, and its sounds used in composition, has also evolved. As Darnal, Maharjan, and Shah all note, there is a twentieth-century innovation of playing a set of differently-pitched mādals standing on end as a 'mādal tarāṅg,' reminiscent of a *jaltarāṅg*[8] and of the Burmese *patt waing*.[9] While Darnal and Maharjan approve of this, Shah expresses his disfavor for the mādal tarāṅg because he believes that one should first learn traditional ways of playing the mādal before moving on to such innovations. And, as becomes clear in this book, Shah was worried that a great deal of traditional mādal knowledge was slipping away due to both lack of attention from learners and lack of support from potential patrons. In any case, the mādal tarāṅg and other configurations of multiple mādals, along with mādal sound patches in digital audio

8 The jaltarāṅg is a South Asian instrument made up of small porcelain bowls filled with different amounts of water to make different pitches when played by striking their edges with a bamboo stick.

9 The patt waing is an instrument made up of twenty-one drums similar to the mādal, tuned to different pitches with tuning paste in the centers of their animal-skin drum heads, and arranged in a semicircle, hanging in a wooden frame. The player sits in the middle of the semicircular frame and uses their hands to strike the drums.

arranging software, have become part of the Nepali and Indian music scenes, adding more rhythmic possibilities to innovative music in and beyond the genres Shah documented.

There are many other works that address rhythm in Nepali music, but most of them are focused on Hindustani classical music, its theories, and its terminology rather than on the various other musical styles found throughout Nepal.[10] Yet attention to other genres is also growing. Gert Wegner has published on various Newar drumming traditions,[11] and more recently, the performers of multiple Nepali musical traditions have begun to publish about percussion in these traditions. Pradeep Bomjan has recently published a book on tāl in Nepal,[12] and Pratik Khadgi's *Nāya:khĩ Bājã Sa:chĩ* gives a short introduction to this particular Newar percussion tradition in Nepali and English, with Newari terminology and notation of several important pieces included.[13] Aaita Khajum's *Chyābruṅgko Nālībelī*, which focuses on the Kiranti traditional drum *chyābruṅg* and its relation to songs and dances similarly to Shah's *Mādal* and other works on pāṅgdure dances, complete with notation and drawings of how to dance with the chyābruṅg.[14] Other works focused on dance briefly list mādal bols associated with particular songs and steps, but few of these works address rhythm on the mādal in any great depth.[15]

One of the main issues that Shah takes with music scholarship in Nepal is that scholars were often using the terminology of Hindustani classical music to describe aspects of Nepali folk music.[16] Shah makes

10 Jangam and Rawal, *Sangeet Surabhi*, pp. 75–77; Dhakal, *Saṅgīt-Suras*; Mathema, *Saṅgīt Praveshikā*; Sriram Acharya, *Saṅgītāmrit: Prathamāhuti*, 2nd edn (Sangitamrit Samiti, 1999). Jangam and Rawal's book includes folk songs with sargam notation, but does not include their rhythmic aspects as played on percussion instruments.

11 Wegner, *Drumming in Bhaktapur*, i.

12 Pradeep Bomjan, *Nepālī Prachalit Maulik Tālko Prayog Ra Mānak Nirmān* (Nepal Academy of Music and Drama, 2024).

13 Pratik Khadgi, *Nāy:Khĩ Bājã Sa:Chĩ* (Nepal Khadgi Samaj, 2024).

14 Khajum, *Chyabrungko Nalibeli*.

15 Pun, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī*.

16 See, for example, Acharya and Rayamajhi, *Magar Jātiko Lokgīt tathā Loksaṅgīt*, pp. 200–01. In another context, Shalini Ayyagari asserts that such use of Hindustani classical terminology is common when describing the music of the Manganiyar, who also use a local Sindhi system of terminology and conceptualization of modes that is different from the Hindustani raga system. Shalini Ayyagari, 'Spaces Betwixt and Between: Musical Borderlands

two arguments about this, which sometimes conflict with each other. On the one hand, he believes it is important for the tāls, poetic meters, and song genres found in Nepal to be 'called by their own names' rather than by the names of similar (but not identical) phenomena within Hindustani classical music. On the other hand, he would like for these Nepali names to be standardized. So, while he observes that tāls have regionally specific names and that these usually differ from those of Hindustani classical music even when the tāls may sound similar, he would like for there to be a Nepali national standard for naming these tāls (and poetic meters, and song genres, etc.).

Creating a Nepali national standard for folk music genres and their terminology according to Subi Shah's proposed idea would be a great challenge, because it would require that the customs of Jyamrung be applied to the entirety of Nepal. As we have seen in our own fieldwork, there are differences in musical style, and differences in naming, even from village to village within an hour's travel from Jyamrung. Additionally, things have changed over time; for example, while Shah refers to the small and large sides of the mādal as 'male' and 'female' respectively, this terminology is no longer popular today. In the years since *Mādal* was first published, the custom of referring to folk tāls by the names of classical tāls can still be found. But, at the same time, scholarship on regional genres has complicated the picture, using various names for the genres themselves and their bols, tāls, and poetic meters, thereby demonstrating that a wide variety of names remains in use for similar performance genres throughout Nepal.[17] It is wonderful that scholarly works on Nepal's myriad folk genres are increasing. But so far, these scholarly works still rarely provide a detailed musical description of their tāls and patterns of bols that could be used for comparison across regions.

We do not believe that the terminology used in Jyamrung should be standardized for all of Nepal. In fact, we wonder if Shah even believed this by the end of his career, as his interactions with more and more musicians from various parts of Nepal must have confirmed

and the Manganiyar Musicians of Rajasthan,' *Asian Music*, 43.1 (2012), pp. 3–33, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.2012.0005

17 Pun, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī*; Thapa, *Dhaulagirīkā Lokgītko Pahichān: Jhyāmregīt*.

the country's extensive musical diversity and concomitant diversity of terminology. Nevertheless, we view Shah's detailed descriptions of Jyamrung traditions as an important resource, and believe that similar detailed descriptions of tāls and their rhythmic patterns as used in similar genres, in different places, would provide further resources for cross-regional comparison.

## Mādal Bols: The Drum Syllables

Shah begins with mādal bols. While he uses 'bol' to refer both to drum syllables and to patterns of such syllables within a tāl, he first specifically addresses the vocables used to represent different sounds played on the mādal. Refuting arguments that the mādal has no real bols of its own, he cites various songs in which mādal bols are part of the lyrics. He then provides an extensive list of bols using the names he knew best: those from the Jyamrung area. While the primary bols are similar to those used by mādalists elsewhere, some of Shah's bols are more regionally specific. For example, while the main bols Shah uses for resonant sounds from the mādal's small head (*tām* or *tāṅg*) are common elsewhere as well, he uses *dhīm*, *dhīn,* or *dhī* for the resonant sound from the large head, while *ghīn* is just as common for this bol in other places. And, Shah's bol for the resonant sound of both heads being played together is *jhyām*, while in Kathmandu this bol is usually called *dāṅg*. Raju Maharjan explains some of these different bols in more detail in his video introducing Shah's bols (see Video 4.1 below).

For lists of bols used elsewhere in Nepal, Maharjan and Moore's book gives us a simplified set of bols from the Kathmandu valley, which have become somewhat standardized in the recording industry;[18] Jangam and Rawal list different bol styles attributed to various places;[19] and Pun lists bols used in the dances similar to pāṅgdure known as 'ancestral folk dance' (*purkhyaulī loknāch*) in Myagdi and Parbat.[20]

18 Maharjan and Moore, Robert, *Madal: Learn the Most Popular Drum of Nepal.*
19 Jangam and Rawal, *Sangeet Surabhi*, p. 200.
20 Pun, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī*, p. 69.

## Mādal Bols: The Patterns of Syllables

Shah also provides many example patterns of drum syllables or bols to play in each tāl. Before doing so, he provides examples of how to count in each tāl. These 'ways of counting' give us several types of information. First, they show how the tāl is subdivided: jhyāure tāl consists of six beats divided into two groups of three. Second, they show how these groups can be further subdivided, emphasizing beats one and four, or beats one, three, four, and five. These strong beats can also show when the dancers step according to various bols. Thus, when dancers become familiar with a particular bol, they will know the beats on which they are supposed to step.

Some of these example bols are intended as directions for dancers in pāṅgdure dances, beyond the steps to be done on specific beats of the tāl. For example, bols three through six in Shah's list of bols for jhyāure tāl contain specific references to what they are supposed to signal dancers to do, such as signaling the dancers to crouch down. Bols one and two are 'ordinary' bols that do not signal a specific dance step, and the bols in group seven are cadential bols, or bols that end a musical phrase. The relation of bols to dance steps clearly shows that there is a close relationship between the mādal bols and the dance.

In our experience, dancers certainly do change steps following changes in the mādal bols. But, the relationship between these specific bols and these particular dance steps is not universal, and is in many ways specific to Subi Shah's own troupe. As this troupe is no longer performing, it is hard to determine exactly how these bols were put to use in their choreography. Looking at the charitra dances performed by the Sohraghar troupe (see the videos for charitra dance below), and another, '*Naramāilo*,' filmed as a music video with Subi Shah as the guru, can give us an idea of how bols and steps relate to each other at different times and places.[21]

Consider the beginning bol of charitra tāl:

Phat Dhīn – | Tāng – – | |

21 *Naramailo*, prod. by Subi Shah, dir. by Narayan Rayamajhi (2006), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zT_YRFxpU0k

The song included in *Mādal*, 'Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati' (*Tamu Rakṣhā Gare Saramāswātī*), starts with this bol, as do the charitra recordings from Sohraghar and the charitra song recorded by Subi Shah. In 'Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati,' which is not a dancing song, Shah notates a different set of mādal bols with each repetition of the lyrics. In the videos of dances, the bols change with the two different types of verses, *ṭukkā* and *charan*. The beginning bol above is played during the ṭukkā, and another bol accompanies the charan. Shah writes about the relation of bols to dances in greater detail in *Basic Theory of Folk Dance*.

## Mādal Tāls

*Mādal* includes sections on the common tāls jhyāure, khyālī, charitra , soraṭhī, and the ritual tāls, *garrā bā̃dhne tāl* and *ṭhakan hānne tāl* (see below). While Shah's focus is on how these are played for pāṅgdure dances, he also makes it clear that these tāls are used in many other performance genres. He provides sets of bols for each tāl, describing what they signal to the dancers, and includes one song for each tāl to demonstrate how the different bols are put together to play along with a song. These examples are templates that give an idea of how, in each genre, beginning bols, bols played throughout a verse, cadential bols to end a section and go on to the next one (*tāl phirāune*) and final cadential bols (*tāl kāṭne*), for example, can be put together to accompany a song. These examples are meant to be learned as exercises, then built upon in performance of other songs or tunes, rather than as scores to be followed exactly.

## Recorded Examples of Tāls, Bols, and Songs to Accompany *Mādal*

*Mādal* includes many examples of rhythmic patterns that can be played in the tāls he describes. These are patterns from the area around Jyamrung, but they do not represent the full extent of the patterns that exist in this area. Innovation and improvisation are part and parcel of the performance tradition. While these notated patterns and songs are templates to be used in various ways,

following the notated material exactly is pedagogically useful as a step toward understanding how to play mādal along with a song. With Shah's pedagogical aims in mind, we have recorded 'exact' performances of his notated examples so that readers can hear what the notation represents. The mādalists playing these examples are Kamal Oli of Dang in Mid-western Nepal, and Raju Maharjan of Chobhar in the Kathmandu Valley. They are experienced performers who can read musical notation, but they are not originally from Dhading. Thus, their renditions may not carry the local flavor of Dhading mādal playing. Nevertheless, they provide sonic and visual examples of how to play the bols as Shah notated them, which can serve as a starting point for learning mādal and then adapting to the particulars of a local style.

We have also recorded additional video examples of mādal bols that exemplify these tāls, as played in Shah's village and the nearby village of Sohraghar where pāṅgdure dances are still performed regularly. These additional examples are played by Pitambar Sundas of Jyamrung, who danced with Subi Shah in the Jyamrung pāṅgdure troupe and is also part of the Jyamrung pañchai *bājā* ensemble; and Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru of Sohraghar. While these may be different from the bols that Shah notated, they also provide some of the feel for how mādal is played in central Dhading.

Our team has also recorded the songs notated in *Mādal* as audio recordings (on these, Raju Maharjan plays mādal). These songs give listeners an idea of how and where to play cadences, also known as rolling patterns, within the song (tāl pharkāune or phirāune), how to use some of the bols given for each tāl, and how to end the song. The final cadential bols (tāl kāṭne) at the end of each song are those used specifically in pāṅgdure dances, demonstrating that drumming for these dances remained Shah's main concern. These audio recordings follow Shah's examples in the book exactly as notated, and are thus missing parts that might be expected: the singers' verses in jhyāure, for example, are not included. This is because the mādal is not played during the verses, and Shah's concern was with demonstrating how to play the mādal along with the songs.

The songs notated in *Mādal* in garrā bā̃dhne and soraṭhī tāls are

also included in the live video recordings from Sohraghar, with the lyrics as sung in this village, and the bols and song structure that the Sohraghar dancers chose, rather than those Shah documented from Jyamrung. These help give a sense of the options available in performance, as well as a sense of the variation that exists from village to village. As the garrā bā̃dhne song is central to the ritual that precedes pāṅgdure dances, the video of this song also documents much of the ritual as it was performed, including Saraswati pujā and the ṭhakan hānne tāl played as performers whom Saraswati has possessed are released from her possession.

## The Mādal and Goddess Possession in the Context of Pāṅgdure Dances

In addition to rhythmic patterns and mādal playing in general, *Mādal* highlights another arena for potential cross-regional comparison: that of the rituals that bookend pāṅgdure dances, and the mādal's role in possession, and release from possession, by the goddess Saraswati. In discussing the mādal's role in the rituals associated with performing these dances, Subi Shah includes information on goddess possession as a matter of fact, writing for an insider audience who already knows what might be expected. Here we discuss these rituals in greater detail, to provide background for newcomers to this tradition and its multiple variants, and because of the importance given to the mādal in calling and releasing the goddess: there are many other elements of Saraswati pujā, but according to Subi Shah and the contemporary performers in Sohraghar, the mādal's role is key.

The general religious context for most pāṅgdure dance performance in the Himalayan foothills includes Hinduism, animism or shamanism, and Buddhism, which in practice are not mutually exclusive but rather integrated in local worldviews.[22]

22 Sondra L. Hausner and David N. Gellner, 'Category and Practice as Two Aspects of Religion: The Case of Nepalis in Britain,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 80.4 (2012), pp. 971–97, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfs083; David Holmberg, 'Transcendence, Power and Regeneration in Tamang Shamanic Practice,' *Critique of Anthropology*, 26.1 (2006), pp. 87–101, https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X06061485

While Christianity and Islam are certainly present, their traditions have not been integrated into pāṅgdure dance performance. The religious traditions that have influenced pāṅgdure dances have a similar sonic theology—a similar way of seeing sound as sacred. In Hinduism in general, sound is a creative force, including speech, natural sound, and drum sounds,[23] and in the tantric traditions that have strongly shaped the practice of Hinduism, Buddhism, and shamanism in Nepal, mantras are the sonic technology that enable their users to act on the spiritual and material world around them.[24] Sounds made by musical instruments can also act as mantras in the appropriate ritual contexts.[25] Drums are important in the religious practices of the indigenous ethnic groups of the Himalayan foothills, regardless of their interactions with Hinduism and Buddhism; drum sounds call deities, who may make their presence known by temporarily possessing the bodies of those present.[26] The prevailing religious context of pāṅgdure dances is a tantric Śakta orientation toward goddesses,[27] with Śiva invoked as the lord of

23 Guy L. Beck, *Sonic Theology: Hinduism and Sacred Sound* (University of South Carolina Press, 1993), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2z5510b

24 Andrew Alter, 'The Significance of Tantric Sects for Drum Practice in the Central Himalayas,' *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 41 (2009), pp. 187–98, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0740155800004197; Maskarinec, *The Rulings of the Night: Ethnography of Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts*; Maskarinec, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts I*; Maskarinec, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts II: Texts of the Bhuji Valley*; Robert Yelle, *Explaining Mantras: Ritual, Rhetoric, and the Dream of a Natural Language in Hindu Tantra* (Routledge, 2003), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203483381

25 Paul D. Greene, 'Sounding the Body in Buddhist Nepal: Neku Horns, Himalayan Shamanism, and the Transmigration of the Disembodied Spirit,' *The World of Music*, 44.2 (2002), pp. 93–114.

26 Sales, *Je suis né de vos jeux de tambours. La religion chamanique des Magar du Nord*; Philippe Sagant, 'The Drums of Nyishang (Nepal),' trans. by Matthew Cunningham, *Ateliers d'anthropologie. Revue Éditée Par Le Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative*, 49 (January 2021), 49, https://doi.org/10.4000/ateliers.14217

27 The nearby temple of goddess Tripurasundari in Salyankot is an important tantric site that, in the ancient tradition of spiritual power being used to help gain and retain temporal power, was instrumental in the eighteenth century rise of the Shahs to power over the other Himalayan kingdoms and the establishment of the Gorkhali kingdom which would become known as Nepal. For more on the history of tantric traditions being used to shore up political power, a set of traditions which survive in Nepal to this day although modified in their political relevance since the 2008 dissolution of the

the dance and the originator of drums. Indeed, Subi Shah begins *Mādal* with a reference to Śiva and his hourglass *ḍamaru* drum, and the rituals preceding pāṅgdure dances invoke Saraswati.

While spirit possession of various types occurs across the Himalayan region and in neighboring locales,[28] the type of possession that occurs during pāṅgdure dances and similar dances like *ghãṭu* is only of the specific type described here.[29] While we

monarchy, see Burchett, *A Genealogy of Devotion*. For more on Tripurasundari in Kathmandu and Dhading, and Śakta tantra in Nepal, see Lidke, The Goddess within and Beyond the Three Cities. Focused as they are on medieval/early modern India in Burchett's case and the Brahminical interpretations of Śakta tantra that have underlain the religious justification for Shah rule, these texts do not address the Buddhist and shamanic angles informing local beliefs and embodied practices, but nevertheless they are there in Nepal today. Also, Subi Shah states in his CV (see Volume II) that he made audio recordings of music performed at Tripurasundari's festival, Nwagi Jatra, in Salyantar, below Jyamrung, and deposited them into the archives of Radio Nepal. As of 2025, these recordings have yet to be found. They may comprise part of the archive that was given by Radio Nepal to Music Nepal. Participants' recent videos of Tripurasundari's Nwagi Jatra in Salyantar can be found on YouTube.

28 A recent edited volume containing anthropological work on different types of possession in the Himalayas is Marie Lecomte-Tilouine and Anne de Sales, *Encounters with the Invisible: Revisiting Spirit Possession in the Himalayas* (Taylor & Francis, 2024), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003490920-1. Possession has been a perennial topic in Himalayan studies with a broad set of referents including multiple religious and epistemological perspectives; it has been studied from a medical and psychological lens, as in William T. Fisher, 'Retold Tales: Towards an Understanding of Spirit Possession in Central Nepal,' *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, 9.2 (1989), pp. 5–16; Ram P. Sapkota and others, 'A Village Possessed by "Witches": A Mixed-Methods Case–Control Study of Possession and Common Mental Disorders in Rural Nepal,' *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, 38.4 (2014), pp. 642–68, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-014-9393-8. It has also been studied from a political lens, as in David N. Gellner, 'Priests, Healers, Mediums and Witches: The Context of Possession in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal,' *Man*, 29.1 (1994), pp. 27–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/2803509; Nancy E. Levine, 'Spirit Possession and Ethnic Politics in Nepal's Northwest,' *Himalaya*, 9.1 (1989), pp. 11–20. Oracular possession is also an important topic.

29 Rather than being performed by all castes and ethnic groups like pāṅgdure dances, *ghãtu* is more specifically associated with Gurung, Magar, and Dura cultures. For an in-depth musicological study of ghãtu, see Kishor Gurung, 'Ghantu: A Narrative Ritual Music Tradition as Observed by the Gurungs of Nepal' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1992). Pirkko Moisala discusses ghãtu in an article on the heritagization of Tamu (Gurung) music; Pirkko Moisala, 'Heritagization of Tamu Music—from Lived Culture to Heritage to Be Safe-Guarded,' *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 15.4 (2019), pp. 321–29, https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180119890135. There are multiple documentary films on ghãtu as well, including *Sati*

continue to use the somewhat inadequate English word 'possession' to describe it, some more insight into the Nepali terminology can help us better understand the phenomenon. Subi Shah and the Sohraghar performers refer to it in Nepali as *Saraswati chaḍhne*, a specific reference to Saraswati in the broader term *deutā chaḍhne.* The verb *chaḍhnu* means, in various contexts, 'to climb,' or 'to ride;' the sense of this term, then, is that the deity is using the human body as a vehicle to make her presence visible, 'climbing onto' a body and 'riding' it as a human might do with a horse or a car. In the context of pāṅgdure dances, Saraswati may possess anyone regardless of their gender, caste, ethnic, or class status, although those who have been possessed before have a greater chance of experiencing possession again. In our experience with possession by Saraswati in the context of pāṅgdure dances in Sohraghar, it is seen as a sign of a pure heart, not as an affliction or punishment as in some other types of possession. A similar type of possession may occur in *lok bhajan* gatherings, with a larger variety of deities involved. In the case of possession in the context of pāṅgdure dances in Dhading, the possessing deity is nearly always the goddess Saraswati.

Pāṅgdure dances, by all the various names that they are known, are preceded by rituals that sacralize the space and time for dancing, along with the performers. These rituals differ from place to place, but appear to have strong similarities. As we witnessed in Sohraghar during the performances we were recording, the rituals began with a sacrifice of a chicken to the goddess Jalkanya Devi on the day before the performances would occur. In the previous days, the villagers had collected the necessary foodstuffs to make a feast for performers and guests, and the leaves to weave plates and bowls for serving food and offering pujā. Then, on the morning of the day of performances, the pujā items were gathered to

*Ghātu*, dir. by Pritam Gurung (Kathmandu, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Grf3L1zgI6g. Subi Shah did not write about ghãtu because it was not included in his troupe's Pāṅgdure dances, and because the possession involved in ghãtu was so much more long-lasting and more potentially dangerous to participants, that he did not wish to involve himself with spiritual matters about which he knew little.

worship Saraswati. The daughter-in-law of the house holding the performances roasted nine types of grains and beans in a dry pot over a fire. Others prepared sel roṭi and achār to feed performers and audience members, and still others gathered flowers, uncooked rice, vermilion powder, yogurt, coconuts, incense, a picture of Saraswati, a copper vase, a copper oil lamp, and a mat to lay them out on. Vermilion, yogurt, and uncooked rice were mixed together to make *tīkā*. Once the mat was laid out, the items were arranged upon it with the picture of Saraswati in the center and a mādal on either side, topped with the small cymbals (*jhyāmṭā*). In front of them were the coconuts, flowers arranged in the copper vase, and the other items in leaf bowls made the previous day. Saraswati was garlanded with a marigold and bougainvillea garland, and the oil lamps and incense were lit. The pursuṅge dancer and mādal guru Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar performed the first pujā. Then, all those who had not yet eaten that day were invited to perform their own pujā, and one by one these members of the troupe offered tīkā, flowers, prayers and incense to Saraswati and the instruments.

Having given these offerings to Saraswati and the instruments, the performers then 'bound' the performing troupe together with the blessings of the deities, against any evil spirits and incantations that might otherwise disrupt the performance. Keshar Jung Baral Magar explains that this 'binding' means that the troupe members and the deities are bound together in a promise.[30] This is done through a song with mādal accompaniment, followed by a tāl known as *ṭhakan* or *ṭhokan*, that both calls Saraswati to show her presence by possessing someone present, and subsequently releases this person from possession. In Palpa, Tanahun, and Syangja, this ritual is known as *devī bā̃dhne* (binding the goddess) or *bandhan line* (making a promise); in Jyamrung, Shah refers to it as *garrā bā̃dhne* (binding the troupe) while in Sohraghar, it is called *barnāune*; writing about this song as sung in Myagdi and Parbat, Pratibha Pun defines barnāune as 'to do pujā or to worship.'[31]

The lyrics that Subi Shah includes for this song are:

30 Baral Magar, *Pālpā, Tanahũ, Ra Syāṅgjākā Magarharuko Sanskṛti [The Culture of the Magars of Palpa, Tanahun, and Syangja]*, p. 96.

31 Pun, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī*, p. 55.

*Mādale ho sakhe, mādale ho sakhe.*
*Terī mayā sama rasa nirai mala ho sakhe,*
*Mādale ho.*
*Saraswaīi māī sevai hamāro.*
*Saraswatī māī sevai hamāro sakhe*
*Mādale ho.*
*Mādale ho sakhe, mādale ho sakhe.*
*Terī mayā sama rasa nirai mala ho sakhe,*
*Mādale ho.*

Oh, mādal playing friends, oh, mādal playing friends!
May your love remain pure, oh, friends,
Oh, mādal players!
We perform service to Mother Saraswati.
We perform service to Mother Saraswati, oh, friends.
Oh, mādal players!
Oh, mādal playing friends, oh, mādal playing friends!
May your love remain pure, oh, friends,
Oh, mādal players!

In Sorhaghar, the lyrics are similar, as are the melody and tāl (see the video for garrā bā̃dhne/barnāune, the song to bind the troupe together). While mutually intelligible with Nepali, these are not Nepali lyrics. According to the Sohraghar performers, the language these lyrics are in is Kumal. Their songbooks contain songs in Kumal and Magar languages along with Nepali, and they say that the Kumal residents of nearby villages also used to have a strong Pangdure performance culture, which has currently declined in this area.[32]

32 Ram Prasad Kandel of the Nepal Music Museum sponsored video recordings of a Kumal (perhaps both Kumal and Majhi) garrā's pāṅgdure performances in 1993. The liner notes for this performance inform us that 'Pangdure Naach is danced in the Chitwan district of Nepal by the Kumal community in October. Pangdure is an alternative name for the Maruni dance, in which the dancers sing the glories and legends of Lord Krishna and Goddess Saraswoti. The performer of this dance is a man dressed as a woman, who becomes possessed by the goddess. There are special rituals before, during, and after the dance, which are accompanied by maadal. The area must be made safe and protected from evil spirits before the dance begins. Although there are some traditional sequences to the dance, there is also a lot of improvisation. The dancer visits each house in the village and gives a blessing.' Ramprasad

The lyrics as sung by the Sohraghar troupe make it clear that Shah's example is a template for a longer song that acknowledges many more deities; in Sohraghar, the song must always begin by addressing the goddess Jalkanya Devi,[33] and in addition to the deities' names, their locations are also mentioned.[34] Further west in Palpa, Syangja, and Tanahun districts, there are different lyrics which specifically mention binding deities and performers together in a promise.[35] In Gulmi, as recently recorded in a music video by Prasad Khaptari Magar, the song is similar in lyrics, melody, and tāl to those of Sohraghar and Jyamrung, with the lyrics about binding the troupe together also included, as in the Palpali tradition.[36] A version of the song from Baglung, recorded as a music video by Man Salami Magar, is also similar in lyrics, melody, and tāl; it begins by invoking Saraswati, and like the Sohraghar version, it references deities and their locations around Nepal.[37] In the Jyamrung and Sohraghar versions of this song, the troupe members remain seated for the performance; in the music video versions from further west, some troupe members are standing, and some are dancing. However, the dancing part may have been added for visual interest in the music video. Subi Shah states that in Jyamrung, no dancing

---

Kandel, *Pangdure Naach*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music, 2 vols (Kathmandu, 2017), I, Music Museum of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub9.php. Many other more recent recordings of Kumal groups dancing pāṅgdure can be found online.

33 Jalkanya Devi is the primary goddess associated with the local stream. In Sohraghar, she is said to be so powerful that temples for her cannot be built. Her *thān* or places of worship are found near water in various places in Dhading and Gorkha. The belief that she should not have temples built for her appears to be regional; there is a Jalkanya Devi temple in Gorkha and another one near Dharan in eastern Nepal.

34 In the Sohraghar and Jyamrung examples, the language used in this song includes some Bhojpuri words and inflections, with *sākhe* instead of *sāthī* for 'friend,' and *hamāro* instead of *hāmro* for 'we/our.' This mixture of Nepali and Bhojpuri, along with some Magar and Hindi words, is characteristic of the dance-drama songs in Pāṅgdure dances like Charitra and Soraṭhī.

35 Baral Magar, *Pālpā, Tanahũ, Ra Syāṅgjākā Magarharuko Sanskṛti [The Culture of the Magars of Palpa, Tanahun, and Syangja]*, pp. 96–97.

36 *Sewai Hamaro*, dir. by Prasad Khaptari Magar (Kathmandu, 2023), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY7cqvCCcG4&list=RDFY7cqvCCcG4&start_radio=1

37 *Saraswoti Bandana*, dir. by Man Salami Magar, performed by Junu Shris and Tara Budhathoki, Nachari 2 (Kathmandu, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0BVhXpIkRc&list=RDL0BVhXpIkRc&start_radio=1

occurs while this song is being sung, as the purpose of the song is to protect the troupe before they begin to dance.

Troupe members embody the blessings this binding promise brings, and sometimes embody the goddess herself, through participating in song and drum sequences that can lead to possession by Saraswati, and eventually through consuming the blessed ritual offerings, prasad. The possession they experience is benign, though it does involve an element of risk. Specifically, while this troupe-binding song is being sung, the goddess may possess some of the troupe members or audience members. When this happens, the possessed individuals will shake and tremble, and in most cases, they will also lose consciousness of what is happening around them. Saraswati is then persuaded to leave their bodies with multiple repetitions of the ṭhakan, which Subi Shah refers to as ṭhakan hānne tāl, played by one or more mādals, sometimes with small cymbals accompanying. The process for doing this as a mādal player is described in Shah's section on ṭhakan hānne tāl. Invoking Saraswati, enabling troupe members' possession, then releasing them from possession requires considerable skill in drumming, and is fraught with risk of potential illness to the possessed individuals if release is not skillfully accomplished.[38] Thus, Shah stresses the need for mādal players to be proficient in playing this tāl.

During our pāṅgdure dance recordings in Sankhu Sorhaghar, Dhading, this chance of illness to the possessed caused a moment of tension: while the ṭhakan was being played, the lead mādalist Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar's mādal strap broke, leading to a break in the tāl. Everyone present worried whether the possessed performer, Anand Thapa Magar, would be safely released from possession. After the tāl started up again and was repeated the requisite number of times, Anand's shaking diminished and he regained awareness. After this, the pujā was completed and everyone could relax. Then the dances began.

Subi Shah's primary context for mādal playing was this pāṅgdure milieu, where the presence of the goddess, the pujā before the dancing season begins and again at the onset of a dance

38 Shris (Thapa), *Magarātī Saṁskṛiti*, p. 82.

performance to honor the deities and protect the dancers, and finally at the end of the season to close it out, were essential to the mādalist's relationship with performance and the social and spiritual worlds. The ways of mādal playing described in this book are both central to pāṅgdure dance performances and applicable in other contexts and genres, from the jhyāure bhākā and khyālī bhākā songs that are the mainstay of the lok dohori industry, to the many versions of these dances performed at many a party in rural and urban areas of central-western Nepal, to adaptations of these tāls in other musical genres from pop to ādhunik and light classical (otherwise known as *sugam sangīt*). Through the information presented in Subi Shah's *Mādal* and the audio and video recordings that augment this text, one can begin to understand the mādal's importance in Nepali music and dance, the importance of tāl in defining song genre, and the building blocks of mādal playing in the genres associated with pāṅgdure dances, within and beyond the context of the dance performances themselves.

## *Mādal*
### *Subi Shah*

---

Folk music and folk instruments have flowed through the joy and sorrow and happiness and grief of the general public, and they are an inseparable part of people's lives. Such folk culture associated with folklife is considered to be the nation's own treasure. It is essential to preserve it. It is equally important to research it and present it to the public.

The mādal is a well-known instrument associated with the primitive history of Nepali music. It has become the most prominent identification of our cultural folklife. But it is possible that not everyone is aware of its accurate history and use. We hope that this book *Mādal* will be helpful for those who wish to learn more about the mādal.

Subi Shah, who is interested in folk culture that is associated with folklife such as folk music and folk instruments, is an expert

in this field. He has profound knowledge of the performing arts. Therefore, it can be hoped that his research in this field will be beneficial and contribute to identifying the pure form of folk music and folk instruments.

This book on mādal, an instrument that has already become a national instrument, is not only useful for students but it will also earn respect from mādal players. We would like to thank the author for the opportunity to publish it.

Sajha Prakashan
Baisakh 2039 [April/May 1982]

## Preface

In the ancient stories of the Puranas, Lord Shiva realized that percussion instruments were missing from the music to which he danced. Thus he created the ḍamaru,[39] and since then, the Puranas tell us, many different kinds of percussion instruments have continued to be created.

It is extremely difficult to count how many percussion instruments have been created, and how many have already been lost, from the time of the beginning of creation until the present day; in fact, it cannot even be estimated how many such percussion instruments will be created in the future. If we look around the world at percussion instruments today, we find that in addition to those made according to ancient rules, some stringed instruments are now also included among percussion instruments. The main purpose of all these instruments is to set the tunes of songs in time, to bring forth music in its full form. On this basis percussion instruments have become famous throughout the world.

Important among percussion instruments since ancient times are those instruments made of animal skins stretched on frames. Today, innumerable such instruments can be found, created and developed according to various peoples' styles and ideas about the ease of playing. Among the percussion instruments covered with

39 The *ḍamaru* is an hourglass-shaped drum traditionally associated with Lord Shiva.

stretched skins, there are equal numbers of those to which the paste of metal filings called *kharī* is applied, and those to which it is not. Popular among those with kharī include the *mṛidaṅga, pakhabāj*, mādal, tablā, *dāpā khĩ, kochā khĩ*, and many others. Popular among those without kharī include the *ḍholak, ḍholakī, damāhā, bhusyāhā, ḍamphu, khaĩjaḍī, ḍhol, tamara, tyāmko, huḍkā,* and others.[40]

Among these different kinds of instruments, some are known as folk and some as classical instruments, some are played by all castes and ethnic groups, and some are played by one group alone. Some are limited to their local areas. In truth, the instrument most widely embraced in the Kingdom of Nepal is the mādal. It is true that different ethnic groups call the mādal by different names, and differences are also found in its construction. Some people make mādals by stretching skins over appropriately sized pieces of hollow bamboo; others have even made mādal bodies out of the bases of cacti. In fact, however the mādals are made, playing mādals has become a Nepali tradition. In some places, mādal is known as *māṅgdalu* in the local language; in others *magakhĩ*, and in others *mādalu* can also be heard. In this way, the name and form of the mādal vary according to customs, language, ethnic group, and place; even so, the main form and style of making mādals remains similar from place to place. Thus, the mādal has been successful at making itself known at the national level. Though the mādal has proven its popularity in the Kingdom of Nepal, no one has yet been able to produce a book on its theory and playing styles. For this reason, drawing on my own experience and the styles of village mādal players as much as possible, I have endeavored to write this small book of knowledge, entitled *Mādal*.

## Origins and Development of the Mādal

According to the stories of the Puranas, we can assume that the mādal originated in Vedic times. When Lord Shiva became aware that music was incomplete without a percussion instrument, he

40 More about these drums can be found in Darnal, *Nepali Bājā*, and Kandel, *Nepali Lokbājā*.

created the ḍamaru. After that, many types of instruments were continually created for music, according to the *Dharmaśāstra*. As this went on, the mṛidaṅgam and the pakhawāj became popular in the *Dev Yug* (Age of the Gods). In this age, people also danced and sang wearing such instruments on their bodies; Lord Shiva himself danced wearing a mṛidaṅgam, as we find in the stories of the Puranas. Through the changing ages the custom of wearing the mṛidaṅgam and other instruments to play them continued, and took new forms as humans learned new skills; the form of the mṛidaṅgam that evolved in Nepal is popularly known today as the mādal. It is also true that the mādal is Nepalis' best-loved instrument, and, from the Mechi in the east to the Mahakali in the west, there is no village where the mādal is not played. Thus, there are no obstacles to calling the mādal our national instrument. But books on the playing styles and theory of mādal bols cannot be found anywhere. Because of this, the tāls and bols of the mādal are being lost. As many mādalists as there are in cultural centers, they play only according to the tablā tradition, and it is clear that our ancient mādal tāls are being forgotten.

Because of the modernization of the twentieth century, these days even mādal players are already being lost. It has already become nearly impossible to find a mādalist who can properly play the groups of bols that bind the troupe together (garrā bā̃dhne), play the mantra-like groups of bols that bring trancing dancers back to consciousness (ṭhakan), or play soraṭhī, charitra, khyālī, jhyāure and other tāls. If we cannot even find mādalists who can play the mādal, how can our folk music be preserved? Today, this problem exists even in hill villages. Thus, drawing on what I know and on what is well-known everywhere, I have included mādal bols and their names and their playing styles, along with theoretical guidelines. I hope that this will benefit all music lovers as well as mādal players.

However the mādal was created in ancient times, after it became part of Nepali folklife it was made by hollowing out logs with a chisel, so wood with a soft core was used, such as *siũḍī*,[41] *chuwā*,[42]

41 *Euphorbia royaleana*, or Sullu Spurge, a cactus-like plant whose branches can be hollowed out to make a mādal.

42 *Plumeria rubra*, a flowering tropical tree.

*chhatiun*[43] and others, including hollow bamboo. Later, as people of the Chunara caste began to make things out of wood, the custom of Chunaras making mādal bodies began.[44] Today, Chunaras make mādal bodies, and people of the Sarki, Kulu, and Badi castes add the kharī paste. With the body made in one place and the kharī added in another, mādals make their way to Nepalis of all castes.

Before 1950,[45] kharī was added to mādals in various parts of the Kingdom of Nepal. Most of the time, Kulus and Badis from the Madhes and Kathmandu would travel around, staying in various places and adding kharī to mādals.[46] Also, Sarkis in various places covered mādals with skins and added kharī to them.[47] These days, with public transportation and economic advances, Chunaras bring the bodies to Kathmandu after carving them, and the work of adding kharī is most often done right in Kathmandu.[48] The work

43 *Alstonia scholaris,* or Blackboard Tree, an evergreen tropical tree. Also known as *chhativan*.

44 The Chunara caste is a caste primarily found in the Tarai area, which has historically been considered Dalit.

45 Shah writes 2007 v.s., the Nepali lunar year which goes from mid-April 1950–1951.

46 The Kulu and Badi castes have historically been considered Dalit. The Kulu caste's traditional occupation has been drum making, while the Badi caste's traditional occupation has been traveling music and dance performance, and making pipes and chillums. Because Badi women's performance for patrons was also tied to their sexual exploitation, the historical occupation of the Badi caste has also been listed as prostitution. More accurate is to view Badi women and men as hereditary professional performers who often became attached to patrons; the female performers as courtesans, with sex work involved at times and not always by choice; the upper-caste male view of Dalit and indigenous women's sexual availability is well documented. With the breakdown of the socioeconomic system that supported traveling teams of female performers and the husband-wife duos often seen among the Badi, sex work has indeed become part of many Badi women's livelihoods today.

47 The Sarki caste has been considered Dalit, with the traditional occupation of leather tanning. The skins required to make drums have historically been obtained from Sarki tanners. Thus, it makes sense that Sarkis would also take up the work of adding kharī to mādals.

48 The situation has changed slightly since the time of writing and will likely continue to do so. These days, in 2025, mādal bodies are also carved right in Kathmandu, and not only by Chunaras. They are also carved in other places as well. People of different caste and ethnic backgrounds are also involved in mādal making. In the 2000s and early 2010s, many of the Kathmandu valley's mādals came from a business run by Ramji Kulu and his family from Mahadev Besi in Dhading; by 2012 competitors had set up shop in Kathmandu, and after the 2015 earthquake, this Kulu family returned to Mahadev Besi, continuing to

of adding kharī to mādals is carried out only in a few villages now if there are Sarkis or local Badis and Kulus living there. Today, most of the time, ready-to-play mādals come from Kathmandu and are distributed throughout the kingdom. Not only throughout Nepal; the mādal has reached all parts of the world. Until a few years ago, mādals were exported along with other Nepali goods, but these days foreign tourists have taken mādals back to their own countries. The mādal has spread around the world, but for lack of a worthy book on the mādal, I have endeavored to write this book on some of its techniques, based on my own experience. All music lovers will derive some benefit from this.

## Mādal Construction

However mādal bodies were made in ancient times, today they are made by hollowing out soft, light wood such as *chativan*,[49] *śirīṣ*,[50] *ṭūnī*,[51] *chãp*,[52] *kalikāṭh*,[53] *kadam*,[54] *khirrā*,[55] and *chuwā*.[56] In addition, some people make do with hollowed-out bamboo or the bases of cacti. Mādals are made in lengths from 1 *bittā* to 1 *hāt* and 6 *āṅgulā* long.[57] They can even be longer than this. Small mādals are usually made to be children's toys. The width of a mādal is made in

make and sell mādals from there. These mādals are distributed up and down the highway route; for villages like Jyamrung further up in the hills of Dhading, most of their mādals are made in and distributed from Dhading bazaar. The process of mādal production and distribution is no longer limited to occupational castes, but many members of these occupational castes remain involved.

49 *Alstonia scholaris,* or Blackboard Tree, an evergreen tropical tree.

50 *Albizia.*

51 *Toona ciliata*, a type of mahogany also referred to as Mountain Cedar or Red Cedar, though now considered part of a separate family than cedar trees.

52 *Michelia champaca*.

53 *Myrsine semiserrata,* also known in Nepal as Kurauta.

54 *Neolamarckia cadamba,* an evergreen tropical tree known in English as burflower-tree, laran, and Leichardt Pine.

55 *Sapium insigne,* an evergreen tropical tree.

56 *Plumeria rubra*, a flowering tropical tree.

57 1 bitta is 0.25 yards, while 1 hāt is 0.5 yards. 1 bitta is made up of 18 angula so 1 hāt, 6 angula would be about 0.58 yards. Measurements are based on the conversion table found at https://www.nepalhelp.dk/filer/Projecthelp/conversion.pdf. Hāt and angula as terms of measurement derive from the words for 'hand' (hāt) and 'finger' (auṃlā).

proportion with its length, and at the widest part can be as wide as 3 *kuret*.[58] The main thing is that the width must be proportional to the length. The widest part is not exactly in the middle, and from this widest part both sides slant inwards. The shorter side is slightly larger, and the longer side is carved slightly smaller. The large head is called the 'female' and the small head is called the 'male.'[59] The slanted part on the male side is slightly longer. Looking at the entire mādal, those made by drilling only look smooth, while those carved by Chunaras have designs carved into the body. Among all the kinds of wood used to make mādals, according to folk tradition, chativan is said to be the best, but if a chativan body is carved too thin, it is likely to collapse.

As previously stated, Sarkis, Kulus, and Badis do the work of stretching skins on mādals. On the male side, the *maidān* or 'ground' skin should be that of a goat or domestic mountain goat (*chyāṅgrā*). On the female side, the skin of a goat, chyāṅgrā, sheep, or cow (if thin) can also be used. When the maidān is ready it is covered by another skin, known as the mathurā, with a small hole in the middle, and tightened with string, although Kulus and Badis may use nails to fasten it on. The mādal heads fastened with nails tend to break easily. To be careful, it is better to bind the mathurā with string after fastening it on top of the maidān. The mathurā can be bound only after it is fastened on. Mathurās are bound in different ways. The quality of the binding is used in determining the mādal's price. After the mathurā is added to both sides, strings are added and tightened, and then, slowly, the mathurā skin is cut from the hole in the center to expose the maidān. When the ground skin is ready, kharī can be applied. Before kharī is applied, the maidān must be scraped clean.

58 The distance between the tip of the thumb to the tip of the pointer finger when both are stretched out, as in the photo in Lok Bahadur Karki, 'Basic Mathematical Concepts Practiced by the Danuwar Community' (unpublished M.Ed., Tribhuvan University, 2017), p. 41, https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14540/1502

59 These days, rather than referring to the *mādal*'s different heads as 'male' and 'female,' the dominant terminology is 'small' for what Shah refers to as male, and 'large' for what Shah refers to as female. The terminology of male and female sides of a double-headed drum is still used in central Nepal when referring to the different sides of the *dhyāngro*, a double-headed frame drum with a handle that is used by ritual specialists. Not all dhyāngros have two drum heads.

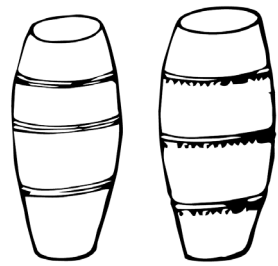


Fig. 4.2 Subi Shah, drawing of mādal bodies. Left: made by drilling; right: made by carving. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

In making the kharī for the mādal, cooked *ãgā*[60] rice is ground and mixed with the dust of burnt straw. Those whose work is adding kharī keep the proportions of this mixture a secret. When the kharī paste is ready, the place for kharī on the maidān on each side of the mādal is measured, and the paste is thinned out and applied. The circle of kharī on the male side is small, while the circle on the female side is large. There does not appear to be a theoretical basis for the procedure of adding kharī. The quality of work increases with workers' experience, as does the pace; especially the work of adding kharī to many mādals at a time becomes quicker: in the time it once took to add kharī to one mādal, a worker will be able to add it to five or six. Actually, when a layer of kharī is added to a mādal, it must be dried in the sun and then smoothed by rubbing a pestle hard across it, then scraped with a knife before applying another layer. In this way, workers add kharī to each side of the mādal, listening to the character of its sound, and at the very last, they sprinkle the dust of fired ceramics on the male side, let it dry, and smooth it, and the work of adding kharī is done. When the kharī is dry, it must be well smoothed, breaking off any fine grains. Then the sound of the mādal becomes sweeter. This is the

60 This variety of rice has grains that are black on the outside.

way that Sarkis used to add kharī in villages. Later, since Kulus and Badis learned to add kharī well, many Sarkis have abandoned this occupation.

## Covering the Mādal

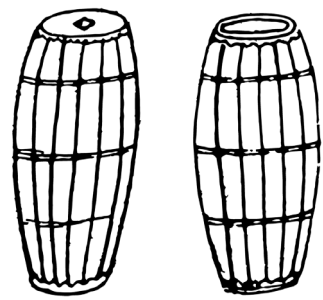


Fig. 4.3 Subi Shah, drawing of mādals being covered with skins. Left: Before removing the middle of the *mathurā*; right: after removing the middle of the *mathurā*. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. CC BY.

If too much rice is used in making the kharī paste, it will be coarse-grained and the mādal will not sound that good. If there is too much dust of burnt straw, the kharī will fall off easily. Thus, it is necessary to make kharī paste with scientific attention to its formula. If kharī falls off, it can be added again, but if the maidān of the mādal breaks, it must be completely replaced. If for some reason the maidān of a newly covered mādal breaks right away, it may be necessary to remove the maidān and mathurā from both sides of the mādal and throw it away, before taking the mādal to be covered again. Otherwise, Kulus may replace only the broken maidān and add kharī, and return the mādal with its old mathurā. Such a mādal will easily become loose. No matter how much it is tightened, it will not stay in tune. In the end, the mathurā will pull away from the body of the mādal. For this reason it is better to tear off everything including the mathurā before taking the mādal to be fixed by the Kulu.

## Mādals with Kharī Added



Fig. 4.4 Subi Shah, drawing of mādals with kharī paste added. Left: male side (small side); right: female side (large side). Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

These days, people have started adding kharī to the inside of ground skins as well. The problem with this is that one cannot tell if the inside kharī has fallen off, and the pieces that fall off inside the mādal make an unmusical flat sound. It is also more difficult to change the kharī. And, especially, it makes no difference to the sound. Also, if kharī falls off the female side of the mādal, flour or rice paste works as a substitute until it dries. When it is fully dry, the mādal will not sound right. This substitution is merely a quick fix limited to a few days' use.

## Names of the Different Parts of the Mādal

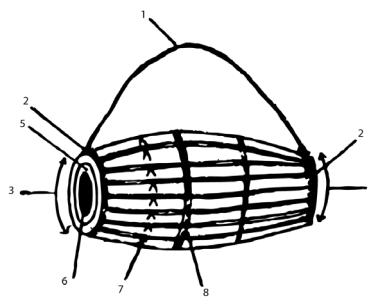



Fig. 4.5 Subi Shah, names of the different parts of the Mādal. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

1. is known as *juinu*, *ujhiṇḍo*, *khakān*, and other names as well
2. is known as mathurā, biḍā, or tanā ko ghar
3. is known as female or *maidā*
4. is known as male or *kharī*
5. is known as *maidān*, 'ground' (on both sides)
6. is known as *kharī* (on both sides)
7. is called *tanā* or *tān* (taut string)
8. is called *bich bhāg* (middle part), but it is actually not in the middle; rather it is in between the two slanted parts.

A hollowed-out wooden body made with the parts named above is a mādal. Since ancient times the mādal has developed different names according to different ethnic groups' languages, and the customs of different places; the parts called 'male' and 'female' are known by other names as well. Though there are other names, it is clear that these parts are known by these names as the names suit them for various reasons. The reasons for calling them 'male' and 'female' or other names, according to Nepali tradition, are as follows:

1. According to the laws of nature, males are quicker and taller; accordingly, the quick and long part of the mādal is called 'male;' just as:
    a. Among birds like the duck, chicken, pheasant, *ḍãphe* pheasant,[61] and dove, the males are quick and flashy, and the female birds are plain and short, this has also had an effect on the mādal.
    b. Among trees, the male *tindu*,[62] *kāphal*,[63] mango, and others that do not bear fruit are tall and thin, while those that bear fruit are ugly with thick foliage; one can also see the influence of this on the mādal.
    c. Males are also said to have strident and strong voices, while females' voices are thought to be soft and low. Thus it is clear that the male and female

61 The *ḍãphe*, also known as Himalayan monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*), is the national bird of Nepal.
62 Ebony, *Diospyros embryopteris.*
63 Himalayan mulberry, *myrica esculenta.*

sides of the mādal have also been named for the character of their sounds.

2. The significance of calling the female side the maidā or 'flour' side is that instead of kharī, flour paste or cooked rice paste can also be used on that side; thus it is called the 'flour' side.
3. The significance of calling the male side the kharī is that it cannot be without kharī; thus it is called the kharī side.

The mādal is made by the processes described above. Mādals are made in the same way today, but the mādal bodies are becoming thinner. It seems that in every music school these days, a custom of playing very small mādals has developed. Importantly, it is not good to perform pāṅgdure dances with small mādals. Most of the time, these dances are in a slow tempo, and the sound of a small mādal cannot carry the rhythm of the song, which will thus increase in tempo as it is played. Also, while singing and dancing in an open place, the sound of a small mādal is not enough. These are the reasons why mādals in the past were made very large. A large mādal is absolutely necessary for pāṅgdure dances.

## Mādal Bols

In Nepal, from ancient times to the present, one can see that the mādal has been learned and taught from one player to another through oral tradition and demonstration. For this reason, the vocables spoken to indicate different strokes on the mādal, or bols, have not been standardized, but we can see that certain syllables have been used as mādal bols through their use in parts of folk songs. But, a written form or a way of teaching orally through bols has not been adopted. These days, with the tablā[64] method well-known, some have begun to teach the mādal orally with the bols of the tablā or of the khĩ.[65] In fact, this embracing of others' methods

64 The *tabalā or tablā* is a set of two drums played together, one smaller and one larger. It is an essential instrument in much of the music of the northern subcontinent.

65 The *khĩ* is another kind of barrel drum important in the Newar cultures of the Kathmandu Valley.

demonstrates their own shortcomings. If our own kind of method and bols exist, why should we apply the methods and bols of other instruments to the theory of the mādal? If we investigate, we can find mādal bols expressed in many songs:

> *(1) Ḍamphumāre bajyo bajyo tyai ta dimī dimī,*
> *Mādalu jhyã̄ dhunā.*
> When struck, the ḍamphu plays dimi dimi,
> and the mādal plays jhyã̄ dhunā.
>
> *2) Dhīn tāṅg dhīn tāṅg mādaluko kati mīṭho bolī.*
> Dhīn tāṅg dhīn tāṅg, what sweet speech the mādal makes.
>
> *3) Dhīn dhīnā mādal kã̄ bajyo kosī kinarmā.*
> Dhīn dhīnā, the mādal plays—where? On the riverbank.
>
> *4) Bajyo mādal dhīn tāṅg tāṅg dhīn dhīnā,*
> *Jaya hos sarkārko din-dina.*
> The mādal plays dhīn tāṅg tāṅg dhīn dhīnā,
> Hail to our sovereign every day.
>
> *5) Dhīnādhī nādhīnā dhīn tāng tāṅg tālīle,*
> *Dil mero uḍāyo jālīle.*
> With the beat of dhīnādhī nādhīnā dhīn tāṅg tāṅg,
> That trickster made my heart fly away.

Many songs can be heard sung in this way; if we pay attention to these things, it is not difficult to determine mādal bols and devise a system for playing them. When our own words are already in use to express mādal bols, why should we run after other systems? This is something that all music lovers should think about.

Because mādal bols and tabalā bols sound similar, and hand movements are almost the same, these days it looks like many mādal players are running after the tabalā. But when we think deeply about it, mādal tāls do not match with the characteristics of the tabalā. Nor can the mādal's importance be demonstrated through tabalā bols. In fact, the popular mādal tāls are considered to be jhyāure, khyālī, charitra and soraṭhī. Along with these, garrā bã̄dhne and ṭhakan hānne tāls are separate. These two tāls are not used in other folk songs. Mainly, the four tāls listed above are our

folk tāls. Based on these tāls, seasonal tāls have developed on other ethnic instruments; in fact, it can be seen that these tāls have been created by taking bols from other existing tāls and making new tāls with separate names. Because the bols in the four tāls above are different in each tāl in different places in the dances, each tāl will have many different groups of bols. In fact, according to the system of mādal playing, and after looking at the bols used as words in folk songs, the bols used for the sounds made by the male head, female head, and both heads together are as follows:

| **Male**[66] | **Female** | **Both Heads Together** |
|---|---|---|
| Tām[67] | Dhīm | Jhyām |
| Tā | Dhīn | Thām |
| Ta | Dhī | Phat |
| Trītā | Dhum | Naka |
| Tat | Gum | Taka |
| A | Pha | Dhīnā |
| Nā | Ka | Phata |

Table 4.1 Mādal bols according to drum head.

These are the ordinary mādal bols, but mādal players can make up others according to necessity. Actually, as the mādal and the tablā are the descendants of the mṛidaṅgam and pakhawāj of earlier eras, it makes sense that their bols are similar. But as folk arts go, the tāls cannot be similar. If any tabalā bols are played on the mādal, they must suit the mādal tāl and be named accordingly.

Many styles of playing percussion instruments vary according to ethnic customs and means of instrument construction, and their sounds also vary. These various sounds are assigned different bols according to custom. Thus, the bol of one kind of instrument cannot be transferred to another in such a way as to demonstrate that instrument's particular characteristics. As so many of our Nepali folk musics have not been able to take classical forms, they have been unable to develop fixed systems to this day. For these

66 Note that 'male' refers to the small drumhead and 'female' to the large drumhead.

67 Tām is often written as Tang.

reasons there is no fixed system of mādal bols even though the mādal has reached places all over the world. Actually, taking into account the mādal's creation and the forms and categories within the musical field, the mādal can be seen to deserve a place among classical instruments. We have only to take these hidden strains and write them down in systematic notation for the mādal to take its place in classical music.

## Rules of Mādal Playing

When beginning to play the mādal, use your dominant hand. For instance, some are right-handed and some are left-handed; all tablā and mādal players know this. There is no rule that says the male head of the mādal must be played with either hand. Nevertheless, it is better to play the male head with the right hand, but the effects of nature do not allow this for everyone. If a left-handed person is determined to learn to play the male head with the right hand, they will certainly be able to become proficient. Now, another thing: the care of the mādal. When playing the mādal it is extremely necessary to take proper care of it. Thus, if you play the mādal following the rules listed here, it will not only remain in good condition, but you will quickly be able to demonstrate success.

1. You must decide which hand you will use to play the male head of the mādal, and hang it (from the waist if standing, around the knees if seated) or otherwise place it above the ground to play it. If the mādal is played resting on the ground, the pressure will dampen its sound. This is why it should be played without resting it on the ground.
2. When playing the mādal it should be held lengthwise. The mādal's importance is best demonstrated when it is used for what it was designed for. It should not be used placing

it standing on end, as a jaltaraṅg[68] or ḍamphu,[69] etc. If a mādal must be played standing on end, that same mādal should not be played in the lengthwise, hanging manner.[70]

3. The mādal should not be played while the kharī tuning paste is wet or damp; at this time the kharī will stick to the player's hands or flake off of the mādal.
4. When playing the mādal, you should not strike the kharī with the palm of your hand, because the ground skin may break, or the kharī may flake off.
5. The fingers on the hand playing the mādal's female head should be kept joined together, with the fingertips extended halfway into the circle of the kharī.
6. When playing the male head, the fingertips of the forefinger and middle finger should extend into the center of the kharī; it is also good if they are helped by the ring finger.
7. You should not play with curved fingers or press into the kharī, because the ground skin will break.
8. You should strike the mathurā with the base of the fingers; the energy of the stroke will carry the fingertips to the kharī and produce the bol.
9. To stop the sound, you should lightly touch the kharī with fingers joined together.
10. When tuning the mādal or tightening its strings, it should be placed standing on end, and struck lightly on the

68 A jaltaraṅg is a percussion instrument constructed of bowls containing different amounts of water adjusted to make the desired pitches, then struck with a small wooden stick to play melodies. Some mādalists place many mādals tuned to different pitches in a semicircle, standing on end, to play them in a similar way.

69 A ḍamphu is a large frame drum. Playing a mādal like a ḍamphu would mean holding it under one arm and playing one head of it with the opposite hand, using strokes commonly used on the ḍamphu. This is sometimes done when no ḍamphu is immediately available, but the player wants to imitate its sound and style.

70 If a mādal is played standing on end for a long while, it will be difficult to tune when playing it lengthwise.

mathurā with a pestle or a wooden or metal hammer. It is useless to tune the mādal without tightening both sides first, because if one side goes up in pitch, the other will fall in pitch. If you are tuning the mādal yourself, you should do it from the male head. But it is better to get a mādal maker to do it for you.[71]

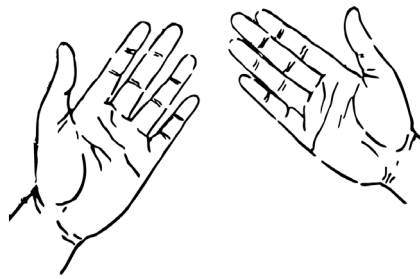


Fig. 4.6 Subi Shah, picture of hand position for playing the small head left-handed: left hand fingers open. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

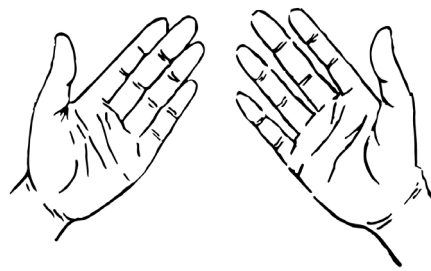


Fig. 4.7 Subi Shah, picture of hand position for playing the small head right-handed: right hand fingers open. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

71 Shah refers to people of the Kulu and Badi castes here, but the profession of mādal making is no longer necessarily bound by caste.

If you play the mādal by paying attention to the above rules, you will quickly be able to demonstrate success while also taking care of the mādal. The important thing you must remember is how to take care of the mādal. If you don't know how to lay the mādal down properly, you will face the hassle of the kharī flaking off and the ground skin breaking. If the mādal is not straight when you hang it up, the higher side will go up in pitch and the lower side will fall. Not only that, the mādal body might also bend and break. Therefore, it is extremely important to pay attention to taking care of the mādal.

## Producing the Mādal Bols

Because Nepali folklore is oral tradition passed from one person to another, it has no written system. As all its aspects have traditionally been learned according to individual desires, the tendency has been to learn through one's own concentration or by getting help from others, and no classical systems developed. Even to this day no comprehensive system of folk music has been able to develop. In this same way no reliable system of mādal playing has developed from village rules. Thus, this book attempts to record the way the mādal is played in Nepali folk music. It is true that many people's writings about the mādal have already been published, but even so, none specify hard and fast rules. The rules and bols in this book are primarily based on those found in folk songs and dances. The styles of playing favored by contemporary mādal players are also found here. The ways of producing bols on the mādal depend on the principles listed below:



Video 4.1 Introduction to Mādal Bols, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112708. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 6:22 minutes.

1. **Jhyām**: This bol is produced by striking the mādal on both sides in the manner specified in Number 8 (in the previous list).

2. **Thām**: This bol is produced by playing jhyām as described, then quickly stopping the sound on the female side while letting the sound from the male side continue.
3. **Dhīm, Dhīn, Dhī**: These bols are produced by stopping the sound on the male side and striking the female side. A long duration of sound is known as Dhīm, slightly faster as Dhīn, and even faster as Dhī.
4. **Tām, Tā, Ta**:[72] These bols are produced by stopping the sound on the female side and striking the male side. If the female side is not fully stopped, the sound is ruined. These bols are also named according to their durations.
5. **Phat**: This is the sound made when both sides of the mādal are struck as to stop the sound simultaneously.
6. **Pha**: This bol is produced by striking only the female side in such a way as to stop the sound. This bol should not be played in a way that produces a ringing sound.
7. **Dhum, Dhu**: This bol is produced by striking the female side only, without stopping the male side. This bol, dhum, is used in fast tempos; in even faster tempos it becomes dhu.
8. **Tat, A**: This is the sound produced by striking the kharī of the male side quickly with the fingers joined together. In some groups of bols it is referred to as tat, and in some groups of bols as a, depending on necessity.
9. **Gum**: This is the sound made by striking the male and female sides simultaneously to produce a sound from only the female side, then quickly stopping that sound.
10. **Nā**: This is the name for the bol used when playing only the male side and moving on quickly to another sound.

72 There is another bol that should be in this list and is included often in the rest of this text: the bol Tāng, spelled just like Tā but with a nasalization or the letter ṅ at the end (तां). This is the most common spelling of the bol played in this way outside of Shah's works, and this spelling is also found in Shah's other works. From here on, we transliterate ताम् as Tām and तां as Tāng.

11. **Dhīnā**: This bol is produced by playing first the female head and then the male head equally fast, letting the sound ring out.
12. **Phata**: This bol is produced by playing first the female head, without letting the sound ring out, and then the male head, letting the sound ring out. The main thing is to have continuity between the sounds.
13. **Naka, Taka**: This bol is produced by playing the male head, then the female head, quickly in succession without letting the sound ring out for long. This bol is often used in fast tāls.
14. **Trītā**: Two strikes of the fingers[73] quickly one after the other on the male head, letting the sound ring out on the second hit.
15. **Ka**: This is the sound produced when only the female head is allowed to ring out while quickly moving to another bol. This bol is used in fast tāls.

These ways of producing mādal bols are very useful for beginning mādal students. From their combinations, you will be able to produce the forms and outlines of various folk tāls. For this reason, you should practice these bols very well. In practice, you should say the bols out loud while playing them correctly on the mādal. Some bols are given here for practice, based on different forms and pieces from different tāls. When practicing, you should say the mādal bols out loud while playing them and counting according to the tāl. If you practice this way, you will later be able to become a qualified mādalist who can sing songs while playing the mādal.
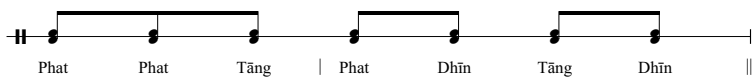


Video 4.2 Mādal Practice, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112709. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.

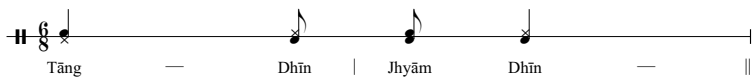
73 Usually, the middle finger quickly followed by the pointer finger.

2
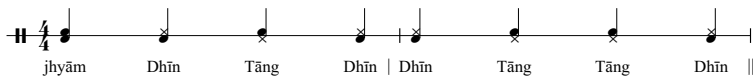
Exercise 9: Phat + Phat + Tāng + Phat + Dhīn + Tāng + Dhīn




Exercise 10: Tāng + Dhīn + Jhyām + Dhīn




Exercise 11: Jhyām + Dhīn + Tāng + Dhīn + Dhīn + Tāng + Tāng + Dhīn
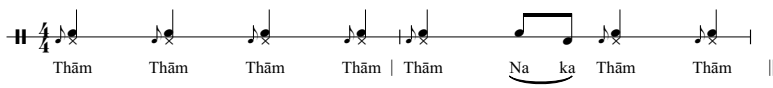



Exercise 12: Dhīn + Tāng + Dhīn + Tāng




Exercise 13: Tāng + Tāng + Phat + Tāng + Jhyām + Jhyām




Exercise 14: Thām + Thām +Thām + Thām + Thām + Naka + Thām + Thām




Exercise 15: Phat + Tām + Dhīn + Dhīn + Tām + Phat



## Exercises 1-15

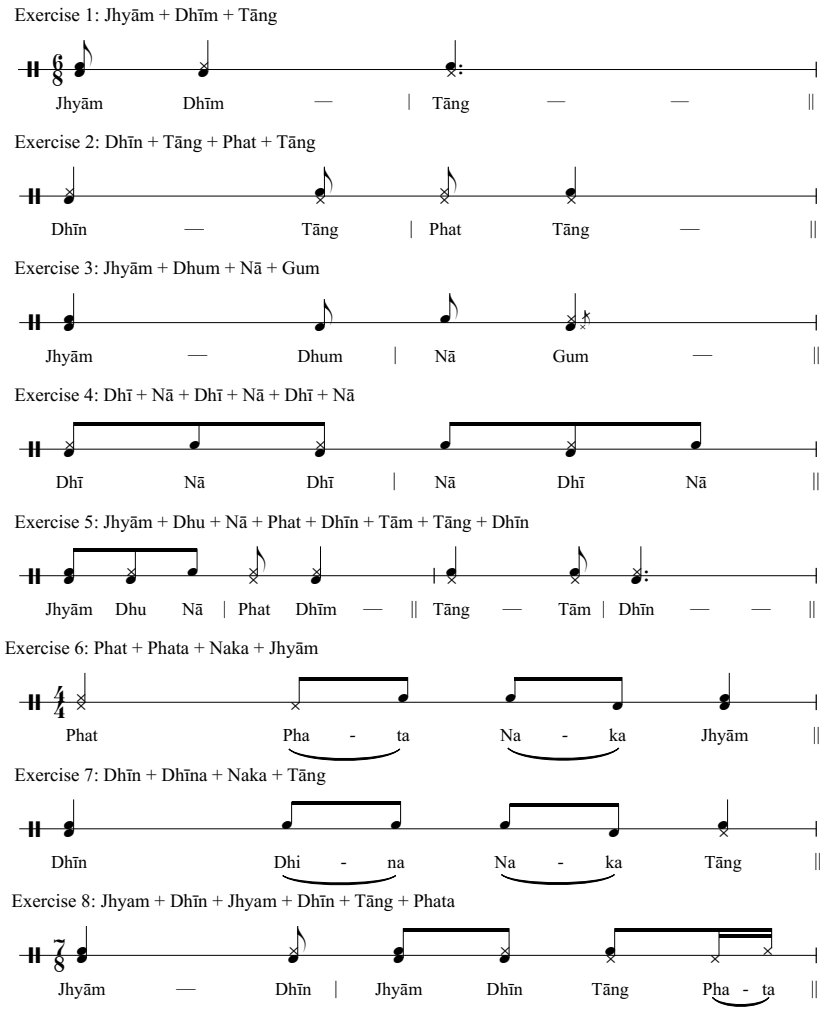



Fig. 4.8 Subi Shah, Mādal Exercises 1–15. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

You should spend equal time on each of the above bol exercises. It is good to start out unmetered, concentrating on producing each bol correctly and perfecting clean hand technique. After you can

produce each bol clearly, then you should practice counting in a meter. Later, these bols will take the form of tāls. Whatever way you seek to know about folk music, it's not enough just to know things yourself. Remembering this, we should develop the ability to teach others. So in order to become a teacher of folk music, it is necessary to know dance, song, and instrumental music, all three. To know these three things, your hands, voice, and feet must all move together from the time you begin your practice.

## Introduction to Tāl

A tāl is a set of certain rhythms bound within a particular unit of time, that carries the rhythmic beat of the music ahead. The ways of carrying a rhythm forward are many, and tāls are named according to their groups of rhythms and the beats they follow: (1 2 3), (1 2 3 4), (1 2 3 | 1 2 3 4), etc. No way of introducing tāls in Nepali folk music has been standardized, but we can see clearly that since ancient times, customs used when singing any song, playing any instrument, or dancing any dance, such as clapping hands, playing cymbals or mujurā bells, saying '*chaṭ, chaṭ*' or '*syābās, syābās*' introduce the tāl. If we pay close attention to these things we can clearly find when hands are clapped in which songs and the number of beats they denote. But in villages, people do not think of songs in terms of how many beats there are, and clapping is limited to clapping, and playing cymbals or mujurā bells is limited to playing. In truth, there is not much knowledge of how many beats are in a tāl. These days, after reading tablā books, some people have begun to talk of tāls in terms of the number of beats. Even so, only literate mādalists can make sense of these things.

Actually, in our folk music, rhythm is divided in three ways: slow, medium, and fast. Many various customs of songs and dances rely on these three divisions of tempo. According to the rules of folk music, the folk song or folk dance gets its name

from the tāl that the main instrument plays. Thus, without any knowledge of tāl we cannot find out the name of any song or dance. Many songs are known by different names when all that is varied among them is the tāl. Thus, it is clear that when the instrument's tāl is changed the name of the same song or dance also changes.

These days many articles and even books have come out about our folk songs and folk instruments, but these writings do not always agree with village customs, because the names of the main tāls used on the mādal and in the pañchai bājā[74] are not included. It was in fact on the mādal and Pañchai Bājā that the tāls of our folk music were created in ancient times. These two sets of tāls sound alike and their names are also similar. Among these there are four tāls played on the mādal, but most of the time these days artists relate the mādal to the tablā and are seen to be playing tabla tāls on the mādal. Whether in joining the tablā and the mādal our folk songs' importance remains or not is a question folk music lovers should seriously think about. The names of the four tāls played on the mādal are as follows:

1. Jhyāure tāl
2. Khyālī tāl
3. Charitra tāl
4. Soraṭhī tāl

In addition to these four tāls, according to the rules of the dances, there are garrā bã̃dhne tāl and ṭhakan hānne tāl, which are separate. There is no custom of singing other folk songs in these two tāls. Garrā bã̃dhne songs are sung in garrā bã̃dhne tāl, and when people are possessed by Saraswati, they are released

74 The *Pañcai Bājā* or *Naumati Bājā* is an ensemble consisting of various percussion and wind instruments, played for religious and political ritual purposes. See *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* (Chapter 5) for a discussion of the *rāga*s played by the *Pañcai Bājā* of Jyamrung, Dhading, as collected by Subi Shah. For more on the traditions of the *Pañcai Bājā* see Carol Tingey, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Pañcai Bājā* (1990).

through ṭhakan hānne tāl.

Even in the main important music centers today there are mādal players who pay no attention to the above topics and play mādal according to the rules of the tabalā. And this is not all—they are not far behind in using the mādal in place of the ḍamphu and khaĩjaḍī.[75] We should all think about how far we should take this trend of leaving the rules of the mādal behind. According to the rules of folk music, there are many kinds of bol groups or pieces within a tāl, from which it can be clearly seen that there are a total of six different tāl groups of different types. I give you here the ways of counting these tāls, the bol groups, and the names of the tāls, as they have been practiced in the villages according to the rules of folk music since ancient times; from this you will know the real thing.

## Jhyāure Tāl

It is not that Nepalis do not immediately understand what is meant by jhyāure, but merely that without knowledge of its techniques they have not followed its folk rules. In fact, jhyāure is the tāl used in jhāyure songs and jhyāure bhākā songs, and this same jhyāure is also played on other classes of instruments. Jhyāure tāl is divided into groups of three and three beats. Within this division, a clap or a cymbal or other instrument is played on beats one and one. According to our folk rules there are no empty beats in our tāls; clapping or cymbal playing goes on continuously. Cadential patterns[76] are played beginning on the final bol of a song verse. Also, jhyāure tāl can be counted in six as 1 2 3 | 4 5 6, or in two as 1 | 2 || 1 | 2 || This style comes

75 The *khaĩjaḍi* is a small frame drum, used in playing *bhajan*s and *chuḍka*.

76 Words we translate as 'cadential patterns' include: *tāl dine,* 'giving the *tāl,*' *tāl rākhne* or 'establishing/ending the *tāl,*' *tāl phirāune* or 'bringing the *tāl* around,' *tāl pharkaune* or 'returning the *tāl* [to its beginning],' and *tāl kaṭne* or 'cutting the *tāl*'). It remains true that they begin on the final bol of a song verse (charan or tukka).

from the style of exercising in army platoons. It is known as '*ek-ek aḍān*' or 'one-one time.'[77] The ways of counting jhyāure tāl are as follows:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | X | | | | X | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 1 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 2) | X | | | | X | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |

Table 4.2 Dance Steps and Counting for Jhyāure Tāl. (These step patterns apply to all bol patterns below.)

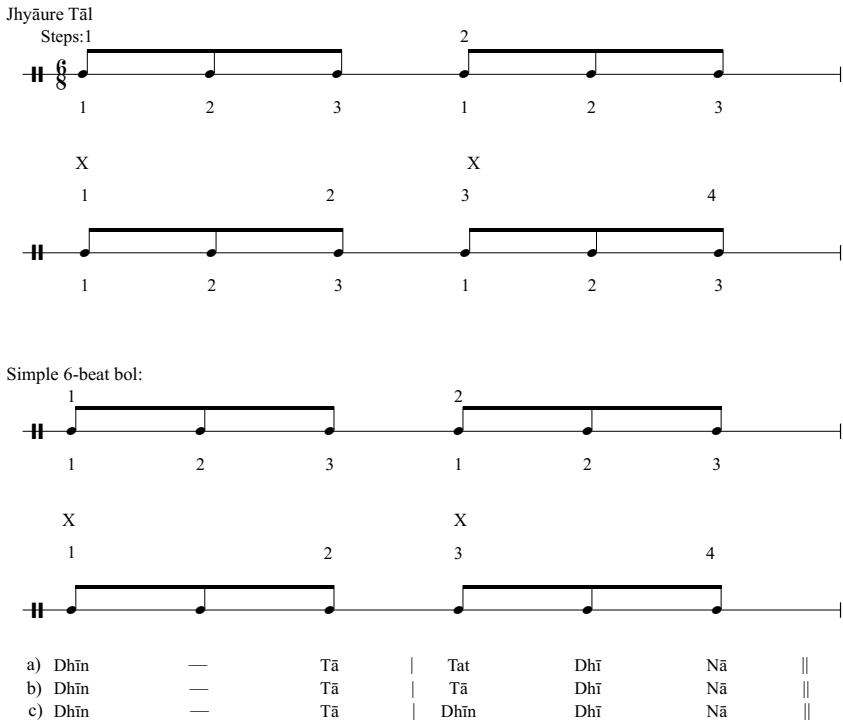
The above way of counting was not previously used in villages. It spread from district to district through soldiers' exercises and is found everywhere today.

The various mādal bols used in jhyāure tāl at different points in the corresponding dance are given below. I have also given an outline of the style of playing along with a song and dance, from which readers can gain practical and factual knowledge about jhyāure tāl.
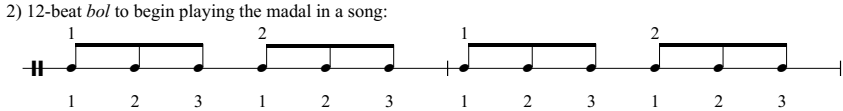
Video 4.3 Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112710. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.

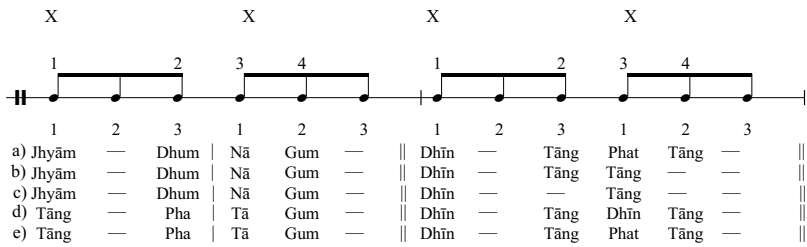
77 Literally, 'measures of one.'

# Jhyāure Tāl

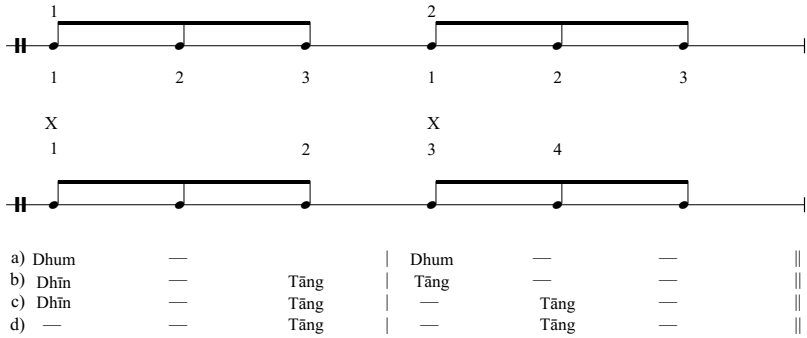



2) 12-beat *bol* to begin playing the madal in a song:

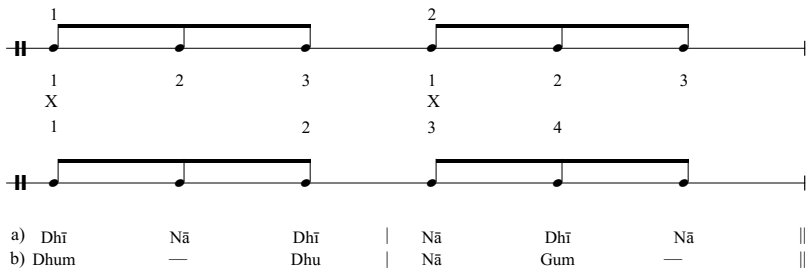




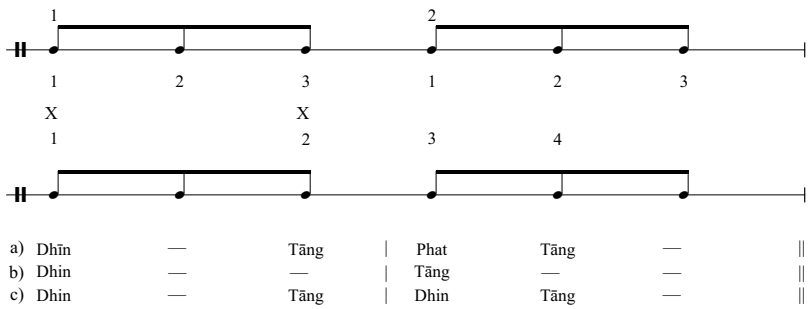

3) 3 and 6-beat *bol* for signaling dancers to crouch down in place and do hand gestures




4) 6-beat *chhekaro khāne bol* for after dancers have crouched down




5) 6-beat *bol* to signal to dancers to crouch down



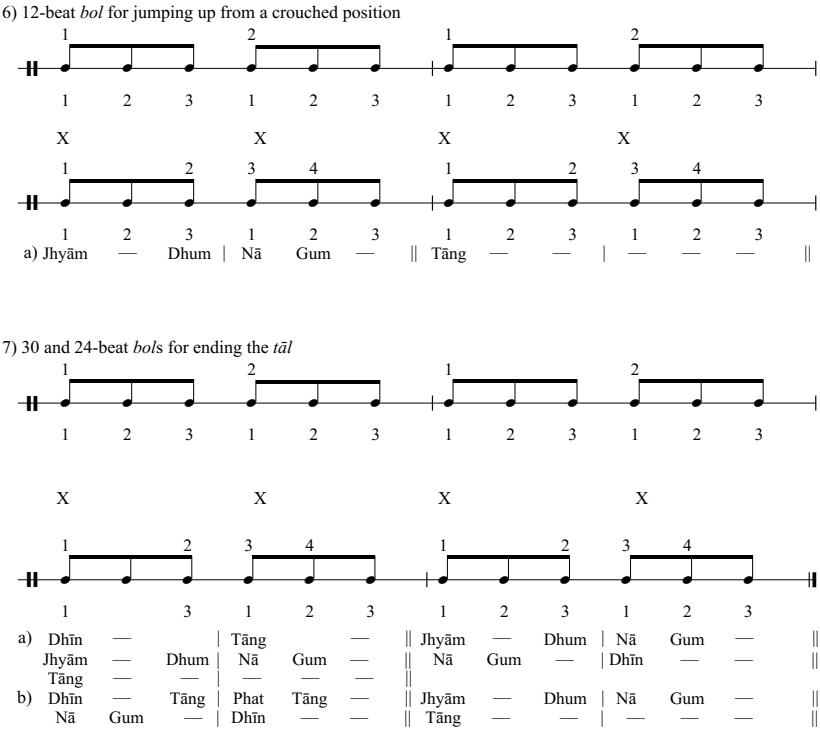



Fig. 4.9 Subi Shah, Mādal bols used in jhyāure tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Note 1: When initially establishing the *tāl*, 30-30 beats or 24-24 beats are used for both types of bol.

Note 2: The dance steps for the second kind of counting, 1 - 2 | 3 4 - | |, involve stepping right and left on each marked beat.

The above bols in the jhyāure tāl group are played as necessary with various kinds of jhyāure dance. There are no rules that say you have to play these exact bols in folk dance. Actually, the mādal bols follow the actions of the dancers.

Here is an example of the above mādal bols used in a way that corresponds with pāṅgdure dance, with the notation of a song to be sung while playing the mādal.



Audio 4.1 Sali Bhina Jau, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112791. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:55 minutes. Note that this recording includes the melodies of the *ṭukkā* (refrains) (see 0:00–0:47) as well as the melodies for the *charan* (verses) (0:48–1:06) played on flute with madal and other percussion accompaniment.

Boy: *Sālībhinā jāũ saṅgaisaṅgai sisāghāṭa tarera lāhura.*
Let's go, sister-in-law and brother-in-law[78] together, crossing Sisaghat to Lahore.[79]

Girl: *Jānnã bhinā nalāū na kara timībinā didīko ko chha ra?*
I won't go, brother-in-law, don't pressure me, who will older sister have without you?

Boy: *Ṭũḍikhelko dubo khāne rāto surke ghoḍī,*
*Sabko ãkhā chhaldai jāũ man mileko joḍī.*
A red horse with a white spot on its nose eats grass on the parade ground,

78 This song draws on customs related to polygyny: a man's *sālī* is his wife's younger sister; his younger sister-in-law. A woman's older sister's husband is her *bhena* or *bhina*. This is traditionally a joking relationship, with the understanding that a man may marry his wife's younger sister as a second wife. The saying *sālī ādhā gharwāli* (a wife's younger sister is half a wife) represents the attitude related to this custom. Among groups that practice matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, the term *sālī* also refers to a man's female matrilateral and thus marriageable cross-cousin.

79 Lahore was the center for British Gurkha recruitment where Nepalis used to go to enlist in the Gurkha regiments before Indian and Pakistani Independence in 1947. Gurkha soldiers became known as *Lāhure*, (pronounced *lāure*, and literally meaning 'one who has gone to Lahore'); the term remains to this day. To be a *lāhure*, one does not actually have to go to Lahore; it is a figure of speech. This term has gained a number of connotations beyond its original meaning of someone who worked in the British Gurkha regiments. These connotations now include 'migrant worker' or 'person in foreign employment' in general, along with 'someone who roams around, not staying at home.'

Let us go but avoid being seen, we, the couple whose hearts are one.

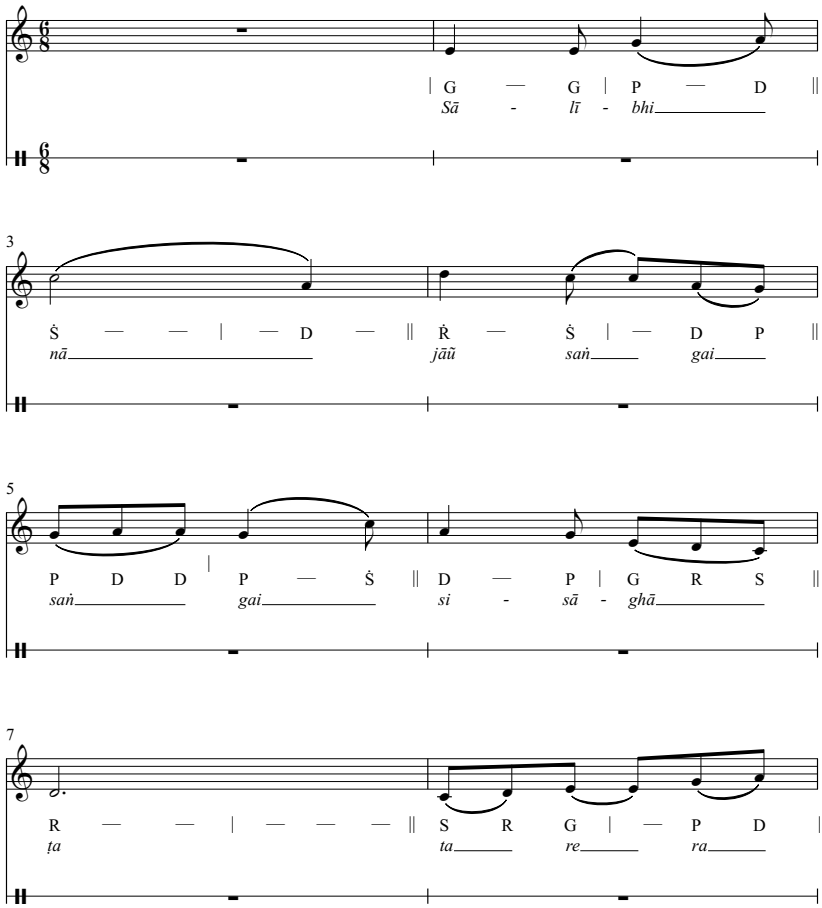
Girl: *Lekhai barsyo andhādhundhā bāḍhī āyo kholā,*
*Didīmāthi sautā jāne kasko mana holā.*
It rained heavily on the ridge; without warning the river rose in flood,
Who would want to be the co-wife of their own sister?

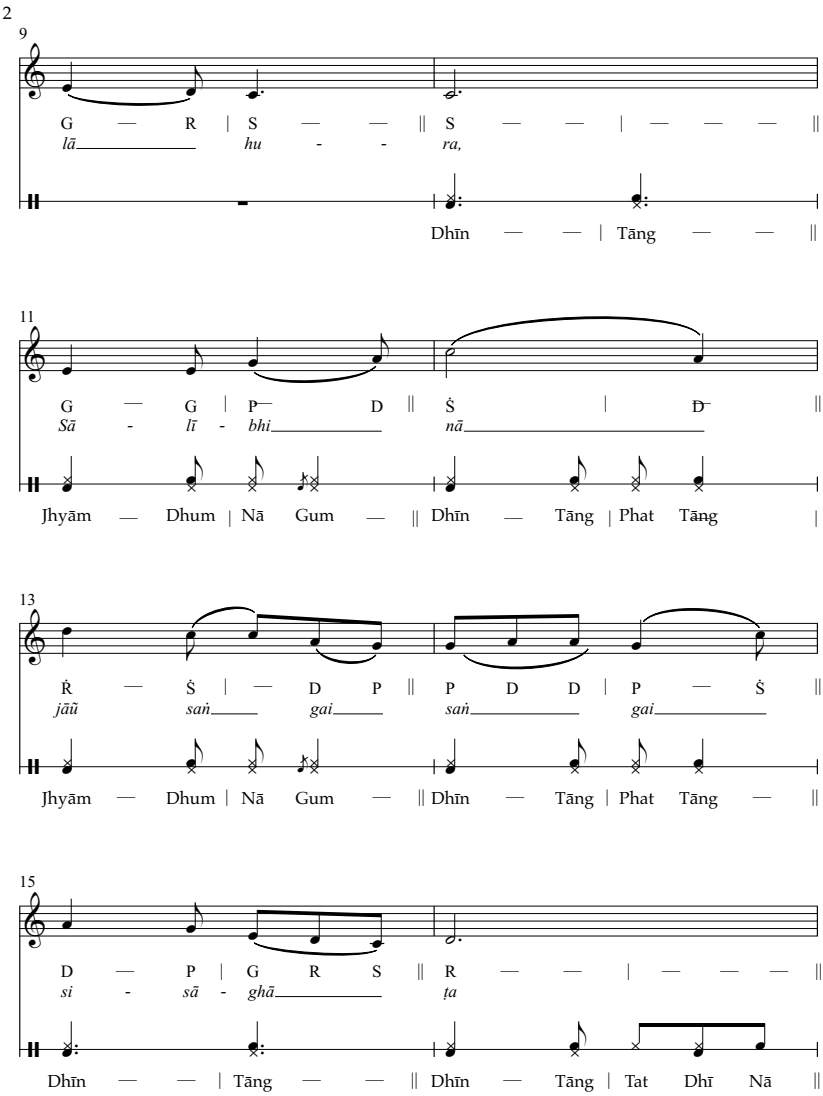
Boy: *Tala paryo jitpur phedī māthi pãchamāne,*
*Timrī didī pahāḍgharmā hāmī lāhur jāne.*
Down that way is Jitpur Phedi, up there Panchmane,
Your sister will stay in the hills, while we go abroad.

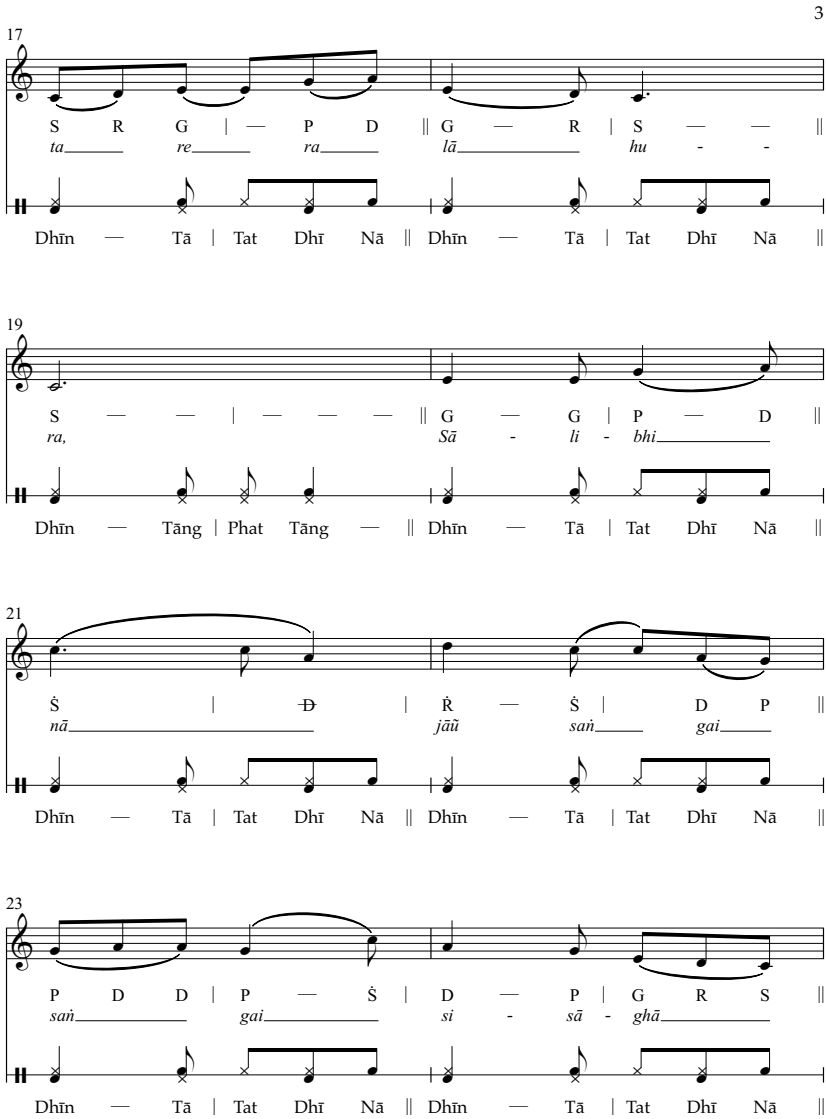
Girl: *Ḍuṅgai bagyo salalala mājhī lāgyo tānna,*
*Didīlāī nai laijāū bhinā sālī pakkai jānna.*
The boat was carried away, *salalala,* the fisherman's pulling it back,
Take my sister, brother-in-law, your sister-in-law really won't go.

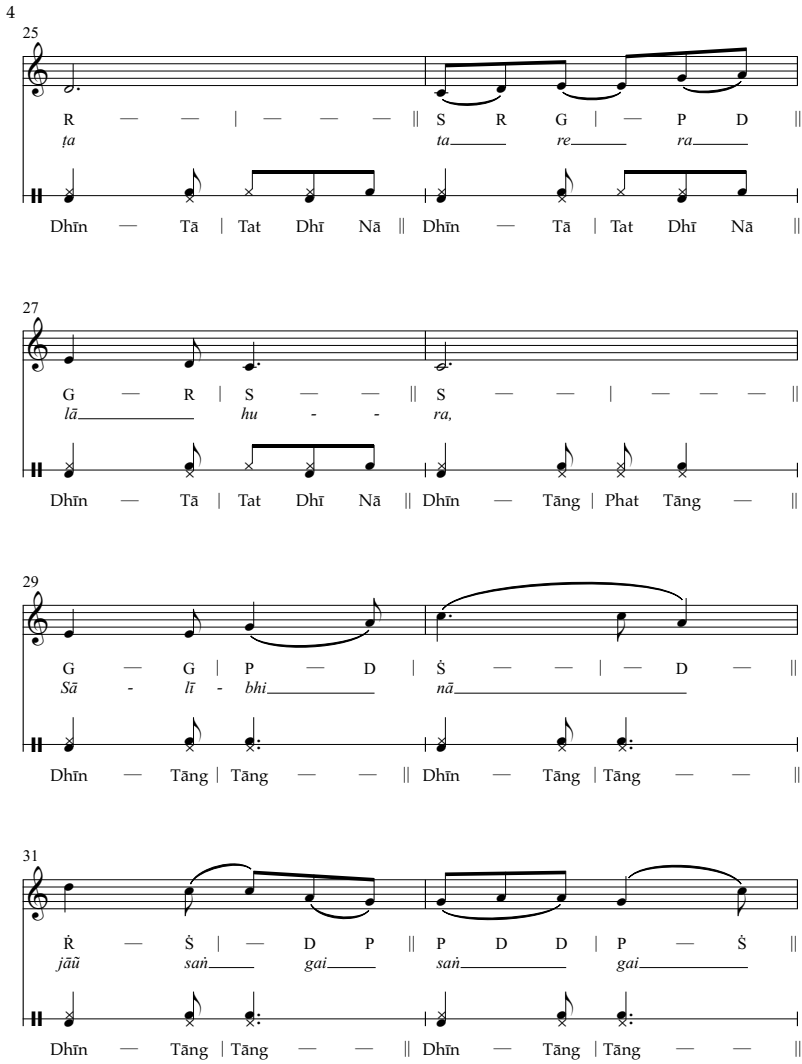
Audio 4.2 Sālībhina Jāũ, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112719. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:12 minutes. This recording reproduces the below notation. The vocal part includes only repetitions of the men's refrain (*ṭukkā*), as the focus here is on how to play the mādal bols with the song. The women's refrain would be sung to the same melody as the men's. The *bhaṭṭyāune geḍa* rhyming couplets or verses (*charan*) are not traditionally accompanied by the mādal, and presumably because this section is focused on mādal playing, Shah does not notate these melodies here.

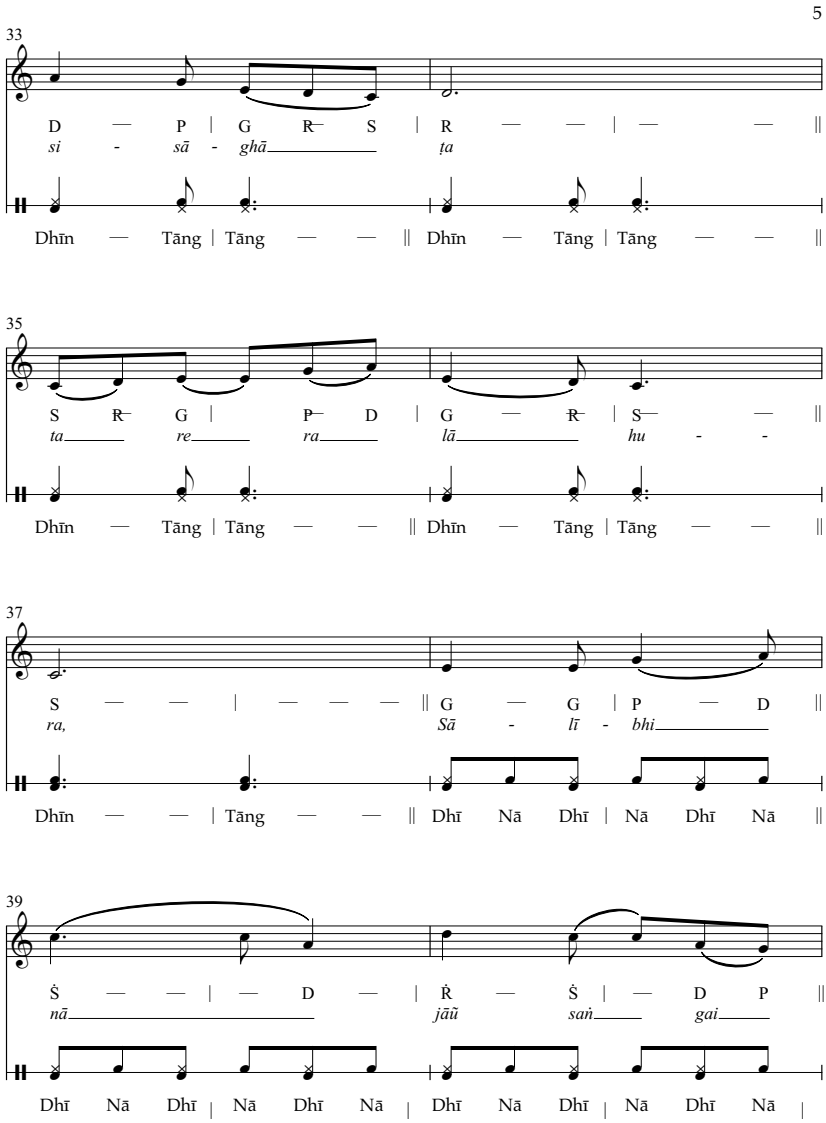
# Jhyāure song

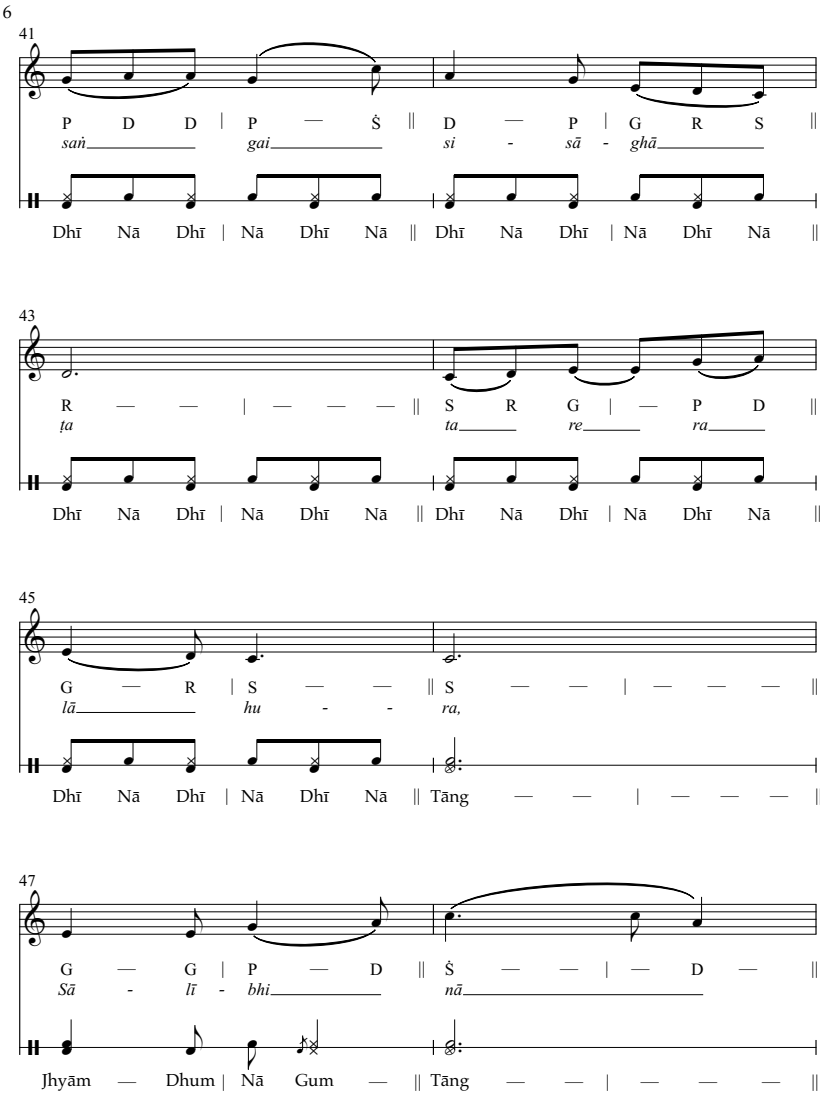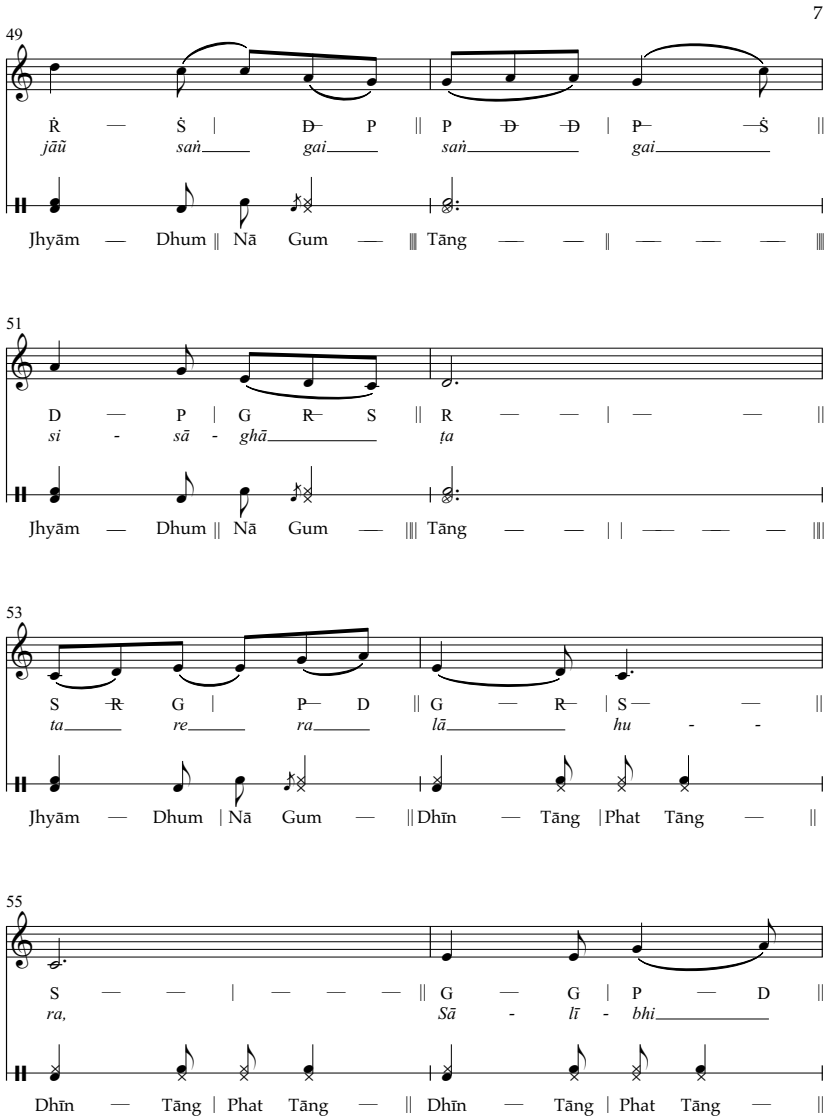



2
9
G — R | S — — || S — — | — — — ||
lā hu - - ra,
Dhīn — — | Tāng — — ||
11
G — G | P — D || Ṡ | Ḍ ||
Sā - lī - bhi nā
Jhyām — Dhum | Nā Gum — || Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng |
13
Ṙ — Ṡ | — D P || P D D | P — Ṡ ||
jāũ saṅ gai saṅ gai
Jhyām — Dhum | Nā Gum — || Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ||
15
D — P | G R S || R — — | — — — ||
si - sā - ghā ṭa
Dhīn — — | Tāng — — || Dhīn — Tāng | Tat Dhī Nā ||

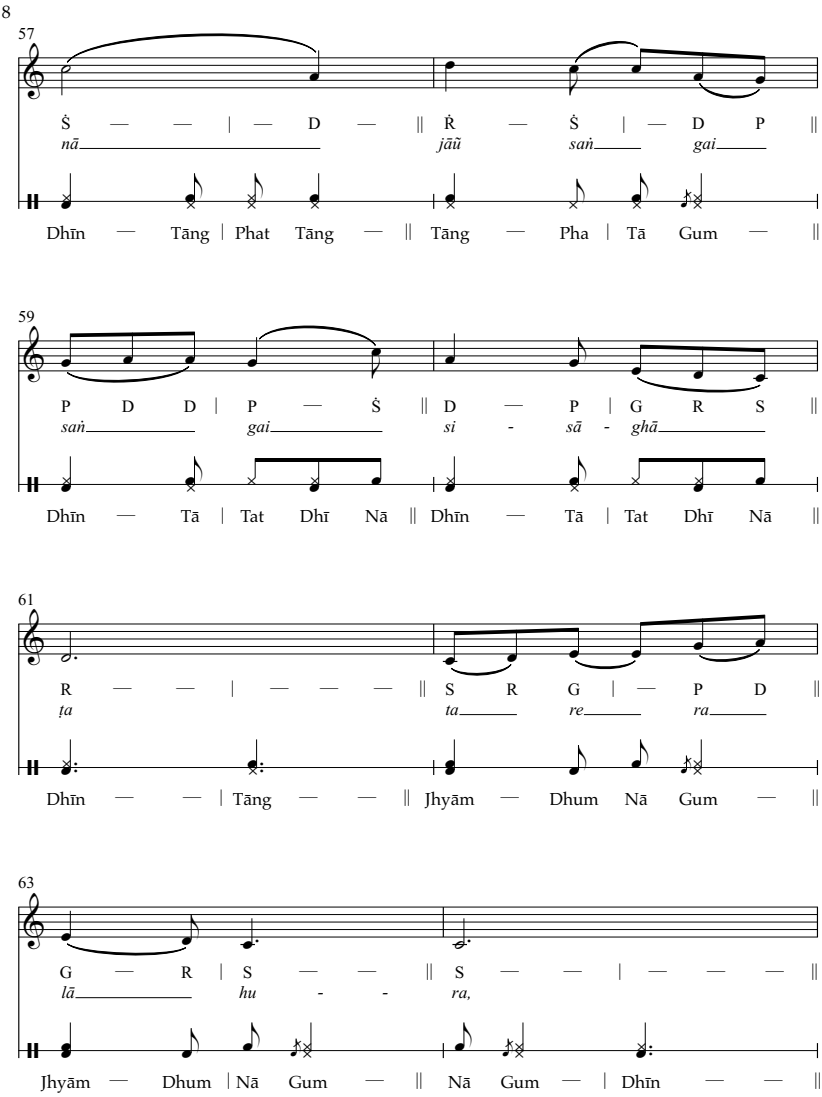

3
17
S R G | — P D || G — R | S — — ||
ta re ra lā hu - -
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ||
19
S — — | — — — || G — G | P — D ||
ra, Sā - li - bhi
Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ||
21
Ṡ | Ḍ | Ṙ — Ṡ | D P ||
nā jāũ saṅ gai
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ||
23
P D D | P — Ṡ | D — P | G R S ||
saṅ gai si - sā - ghā
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ||


4
25
R — — | — — — ‖ S R G | — P D ‖
ṭa ta re ra
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ‖
27
G — R | S — — ‖ S — — | — — — ‖
lā hu - - ra,
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖
29
G — G | P — D | Ṡ — — | — D — ‖
Sā - lī - bhi nā
Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖ Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖
31
Ṙ — Ṡ | — D P ‖ P D D | P — Ṡ ‖
jāū saṅ gai saṅ gai
Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖ Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖


5
33
D — P | G Ṛ S | Ṛ — — | — — ‖
si - sā - ghā ṭa
Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖ Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖
35
S Ṛ G | P D | G — Ṛ | S — — ‖
ta re ra lā hu - -
Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖ Dhīn — Tāng | Tāng — — ‖
37
S — — | — — — ‖ G — G | P — D ‖
ra, Sā - lī - bhi
Dhīn — — | Tāng — — ‖ Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā ‖
39
Ṡ — — | — D — | Ṙ — Ṡ | — D P ‖
nā jāũ saṅ gai
Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā | Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā |


6
41
P D D | P — Ṡ || D — P | G R S ||
saṅ gai si - sā - ghā
Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā || Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā ||
43
R — — | — — — || S R G | — P D ||
ṭa ta re ra
Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā || Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā ||
45
G — R | S — — || S — — | — — — ||
lā hu - - ra,
Dhī Nā Dhī | Nā Dhī Nā || Tāng — — | — — — ||
47
G — G | P — D || Ṡ — — | — D — ||
Sā - lī - bhi nā
Jhyām — Dhum | Nā Gum — || Tāng — — | — — — ||


7
49
Ṙ — Ṡ | Ḍ P || P Ḍ Ḍ | P — Ṡ ||
jāũ saṅ gai saṅ gai
Jhyām — Dhum || Nā Gum — ||| Tāng — — || — — — |||
51
D — P | G R S || R — — | — — ||
si - sā - ghā ṭa
Jhyām — Dhum || Nā Gum — ||| Tāng — — | | — — — |||
53
S R G | P D || G — R | S — — ||
ta re ra lā hu - -
Jhyām — Dhum | Nā Gum — || Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ||
55
S — — | — — — || G — G | P — D ||
ra, Sā - lī - bhi
Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ||


8
57
Ṡ — — | — D — ‖ Ṙ — Ṡ | — D P ‖
nā jāũ saṅ gai
Dhīn — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Tāng — Pha | Tā Gum — ‖
59
P D D | P — Ṡ ‖ D — P | G R S ‖
saṅ gai si - sā - ghā
Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn — Tā | Tat Dhī Nā ‖
61
R — — | — — — ‖ S R G | — P D ‖
ṭa ta re ra
Dhīn — — | Tāng — — ‖ Jhyām — Dhum Nā Gum — ‖
63
G — R | S — — ‖ S — — | — — — ‖
lā hu - - ra,
Jhyām — Dhum | Nā Gum — ‖ Nā Gum — | Dhīn — — ‖

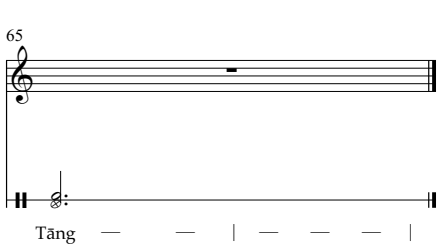



Fig. 4.10 Traditional Song in Jhyāure Tāl: Sālībhina Jāũ/Sister-In-Law, Brother-In-Law, Let's Go. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The above example song is an outline of how the mādal leads using jhyāure in mārunī dance. In this way, paying attention to the beginning and end of the song, there are many other ways of singing and dancing with the mādal. The main bols are chosen and placed. Lengthening and shortening the jhyāure dance is in the hands of the mādal players and the dancers together. According to the rules of Nepali folk dance, this jhyāure dance is a fast dance. So the songs sung and played on the mādal are fast as well. The main subject that you must take care to understand in folk dance is the relation of steps to tāl; it is essential to pay attention to this. The method of counting in jhyāure tāl with attention to the dance steps is presented here. Readers should keep this in mind while also continuing to pronounce the bols as you play them. This will help you learn to become a good mādalist who can sing and play at the same time.

If you practice the above rules of jhyāure tāl, its various groups of bols, and the notated song well, you will be able to play mādal without stopping in any jhyāure song. You will also be able to play for any dance, as long as you know the styles of folk dances. With this knowledge you will be able to understand the dancers' intent and play the mādal without stopping. The rules given above outline ways of playing in jhyāure tāl with different dance steps. You should practice these groups of bols until you know them well, and then practice even more. Now we will study the second branch of folk tāl, khyālī tāl.

## Supplementary Videos for Jhyāure Tāl



Video 4.4 Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112735. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:08 minutes.



Video 4.5 Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112748. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:00 minutes.

# Khyālī Tāl

The custom of playing in khyālī tāl exists all over the Kingdom of Nepal. It is only due to its being an oral folk dance tradition that it has not got the recognition it deserves. Khyālī tāl is used for khyālī songs and khyālī bhākā songs. Ethnic songs and seasonal songs are also sung in this tāl. In addition, khyālī tāl is also played on other ethnic instruments. Even if the ethnic and seasonal songs are known by many other names according to the ideology of folk music, there are many songs in which the tempo and counting mark their tāl as khyālī. For example, selo, chuṭkā, bhajan, saṅginī, roilā, phāgu, and many other genres can be played in khyālī tāl. But the tāls of these songs can also take other ethnically-specific forms, which are associated with the ethnic instruments on which they are played. For this reason it is necessary to know the khyālī tāl that is specific to the mādal. Without good knowledge of any tāl it is impossible to fully understand folk song and folk dance.

According to folk rules, khyālī is a medium-tempo tāl. Cymbals and handclaps played according to each different song are not too slow and not too fast, and the dance steps follow the mādal beats with one step to a beat. It is true that any tāl can be danced and

sung to at a fast or slow tempo, but this is not the village custom. It is the tempo of the song and the tāl that characterize the dance. If a jhyāure song is extended and made into khyālī, the resulting song will seem very fast. When dancing in such fast khyālī tāl, khyālī bhākā songs rather than khyālī songs are sung. The style of dancing is also different. If we look at the ordinary rules, there are two groups of four and four beats in khyālī tāl and the claps or cymbals are played on the first beat of each four. The way of counting while singing and playing in khyālī tāl is as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | | | | | | \| | 2 | | | | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | \| | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | | 8 | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | \| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | X | | | | \| | X | | | | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.3 Dance Steps and Counting in Khyālī Tāl.

These ways of counting have only recently come into use. Actually, this is the way of counting brought back by returned pensioned soldiers. Otherwise, there was no custom of learning to sing and dance through counting. In khyālī tāl, no measure is left 'empty;'[80] the handclaps or cymbals are played continuously on the first beat of each group of four.[81] Even though khyālī tāl looks like it has eight beats in total, the custom has also arisen of counting it in sixteen beats, with the dance steps also counted accordingly, as written above in the third example. But in this method of counting

80 An 'empty' measure is a measure in which handclaps or cymbals are not played; while 'empty' measures are a significant aspect of the theory of classical tāls, they do not appear in the folk tāls of Pāṅgdure dances as practiced by Subi Shah and his compatriots in the area in and around Dhading.

81 In the original printed copy, the pattern of handclaps for the classical Hindustani tāl called tīntāl (with one 'empty' measure beginning with beat nine of sixteen) is written underneath the diagram of how to count khyālī tāl. Since this paragraph makes it clear that in khyālī tāl no measure is left empty (khāli), unlike in tīntāl, for consistency we have included a handclap/cymbal mark (X) here rather than the empty (O) in the published Nepali language version of *Mādal*.

khyālī the handclaps and cymbals are not played very fast, and are only played on the first of each group of four. Now, the bols used at various places in khyālī dance are given below, from which you can gain knowledge of how khyālī tāl is played on the mādal.

Video 4.6 Mādal Bols used in Khyāli Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112711. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:28 minutes.

## Khyālī Tāl

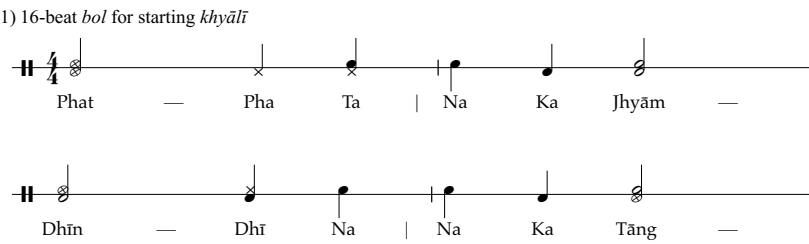



Fig. 4.11 Subi Shah, sixteen-beat bol for beginning khyālī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.4 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl.[82]

82 In the published Nepali language version of *Mādal* there is an alignment mistake in this table; we have corrected it here.

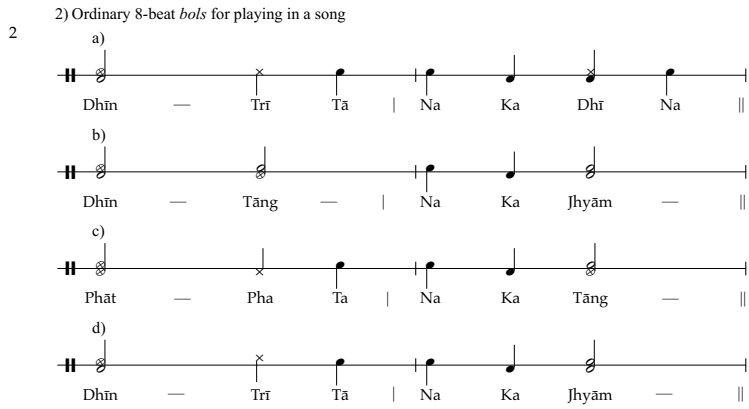



Fig. 4.12 Subi Shah, ordinary eight-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.5 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl.

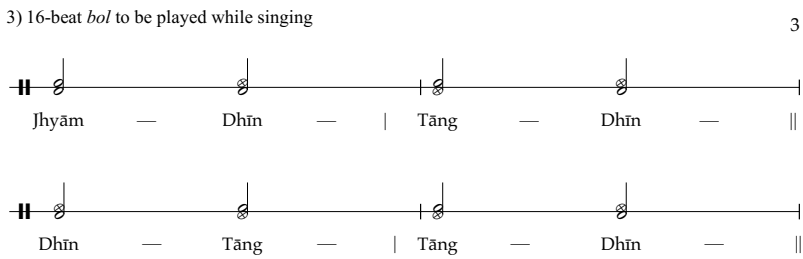



Fig. 4.13 Subi Shah, sixteen-beat bol for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.6 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl.

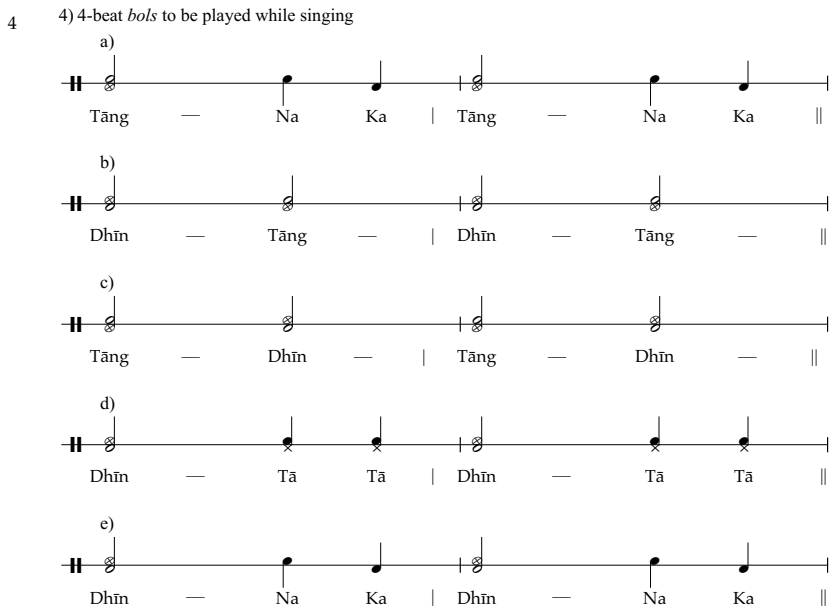



Fig. 4.14 Subi Shah, four-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.7 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl.

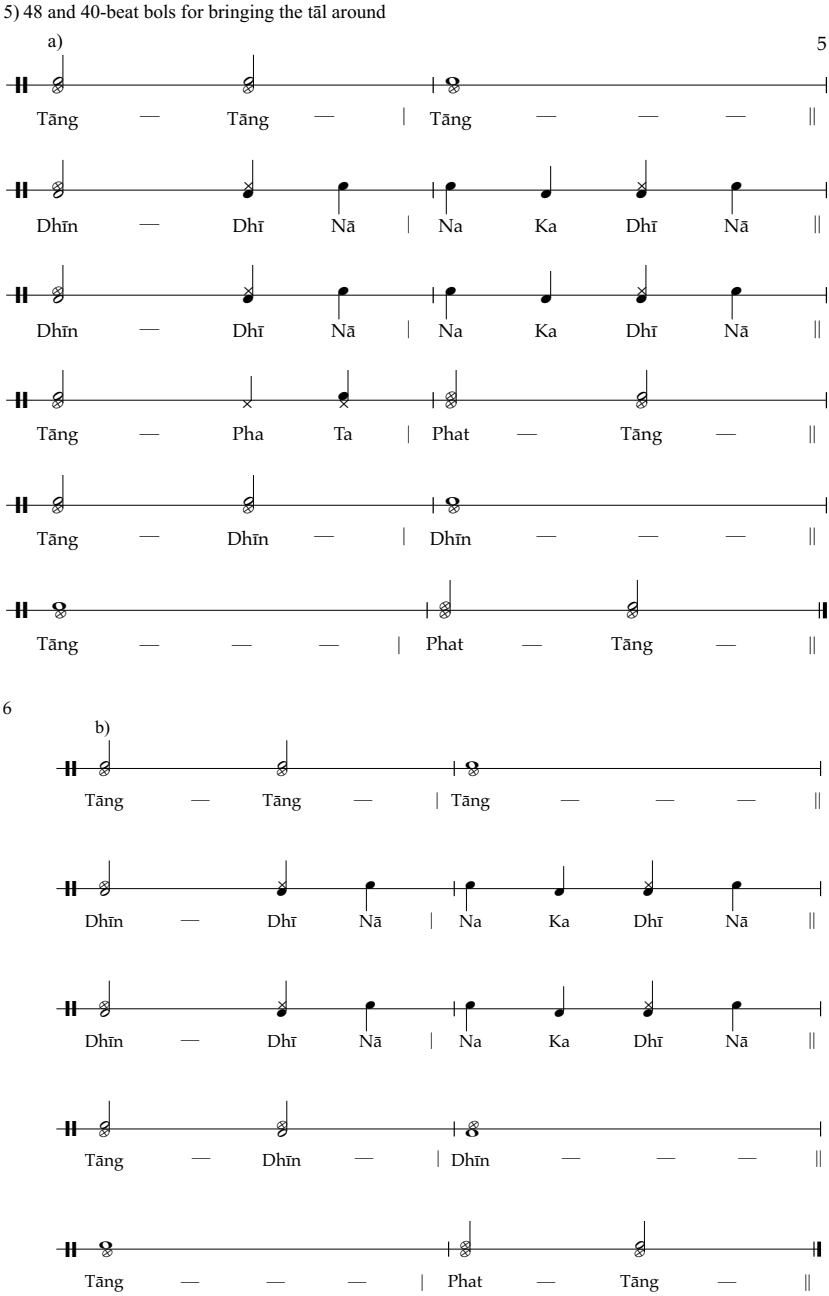
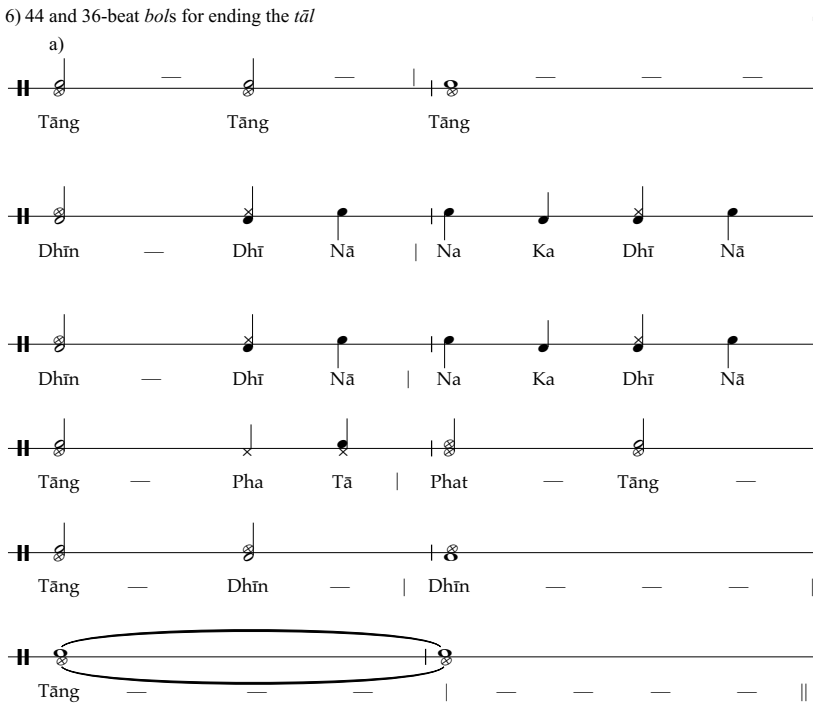



Fig. 4.15 Subi Shah, forty-eight and forty-beat bols for bringing the tāl around. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.8 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl.



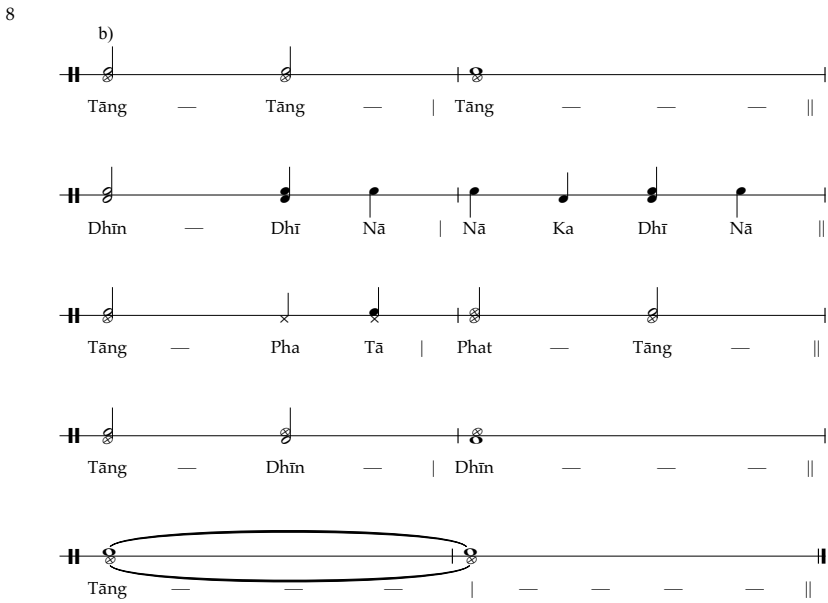



Fig. 4.16 Subi Shah, forty-four and thirty-six-beat bols for ending or establishing the tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

These above groups of bols are used in different styles of dances in separate places according to the song and dance. Actually, the way of starting the mādal in khyālī dance and khyālī bhākā dance is different. In khyālī dance the mādal starts playing at the beginning, and in khyālī bhākā, once the song is sung, the mādal starts from a rolling pattern. Here is an example of a song and mādal bols for mārunī dance:

*Nadīwāri nadīpāri kusumako ghārī,*
*Kusumai chuṭī chuṭī raṅga banāī*
*Pũḍo sarī basa nānī ho,*[83]
*Sārīko raṅga lukāī.*

83 Jangam and Rawal, *Sangeet Surabhi*, p. 161, have '*phula sari basa rānī ho*,' 'keep sitting like a flower, queen,' which also makes sense, especially in the Kathmandu Valley where the expression *ũḍo/pũḍo* for *wara/para* or over here/over there is not well known. (The change from 'girl' to 'queen' occurs with a one-letter substitution of r for n). They cite Subi Shah as the song's

Beds of flowers on both sides of the river,
Crushing those very flowers, making colors
Move over a little, girl,
Hiding the colors of your sari.



Video 4.7 Khyālī – 'Nadi Wari Nadi Pari/Beds of Flowers,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112808. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:01 minutes.



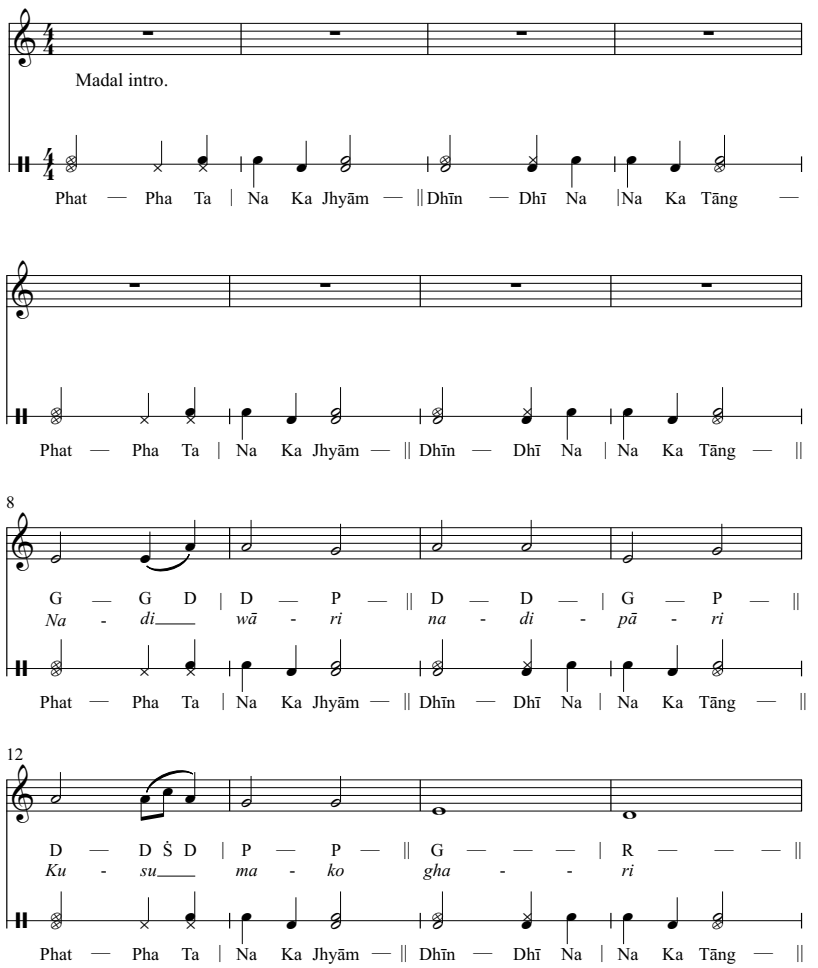
Audio 4.3 Khyāli-Nadī Wāri Nadī Pāri/Beds of Flowers, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112720. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:44 minutes.
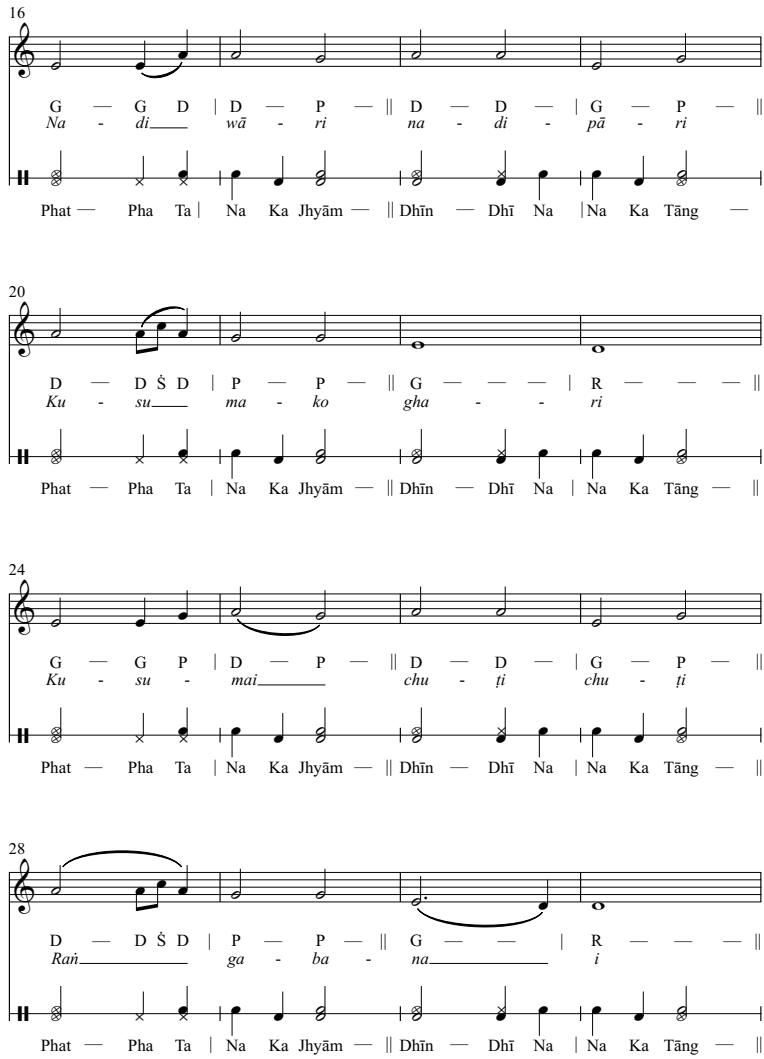
---

collector, and include more lyrics (some of which Shah includes in *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*, though not necessarily as part of the same song). The first verse of this version especially seems to have been edited to fit with a Kathmandu Valley idea of how the song should go in standard Nepali, but this grammatical adjustment removes the near rhyme between banāī and lukāī.
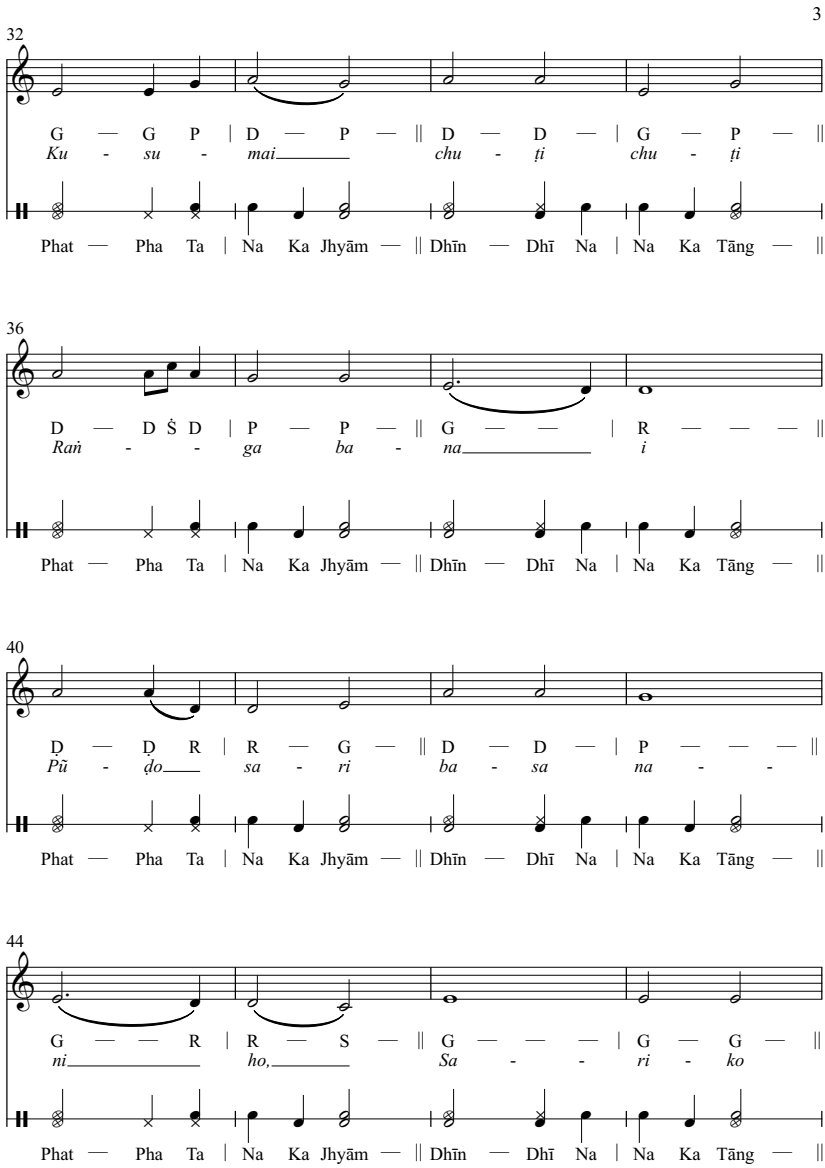
*Nadiwāri nadipāri kusumako ghārī*
*Kusumalāī chuṭi chuṭi raṅga banāũ*
*Phula sarī basa rānī ho*
*Sārīko raṅga lukāī.*
*Jamunāko tirmā niramohī āī*
*Sārī kina harī lagyo*
*Pāpī kṛśna sārī deuna*
*Saramale marnu bhayo.*
*Rāmle vajāyoki śyāmle vajāyo*
*Ādhirātmā nidarī jagāī*
*Mohanī rasa muralī*
*Gokūlamā kṛśna vajāī.*
*Caudha varis banivāsa kehale pāryo*
*Rāma sītā lakśumanalāī*
*Kaikaīko khelamā*
*Bharatale pāyo rajāī.*

# Song and mādal bols for Khyālī dance
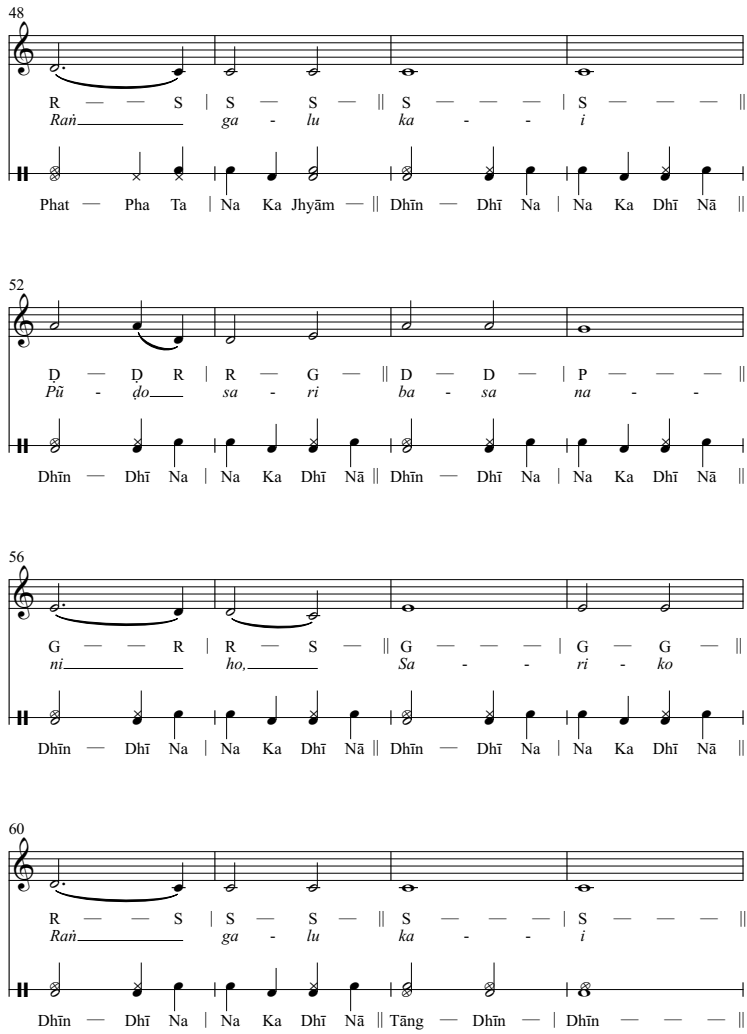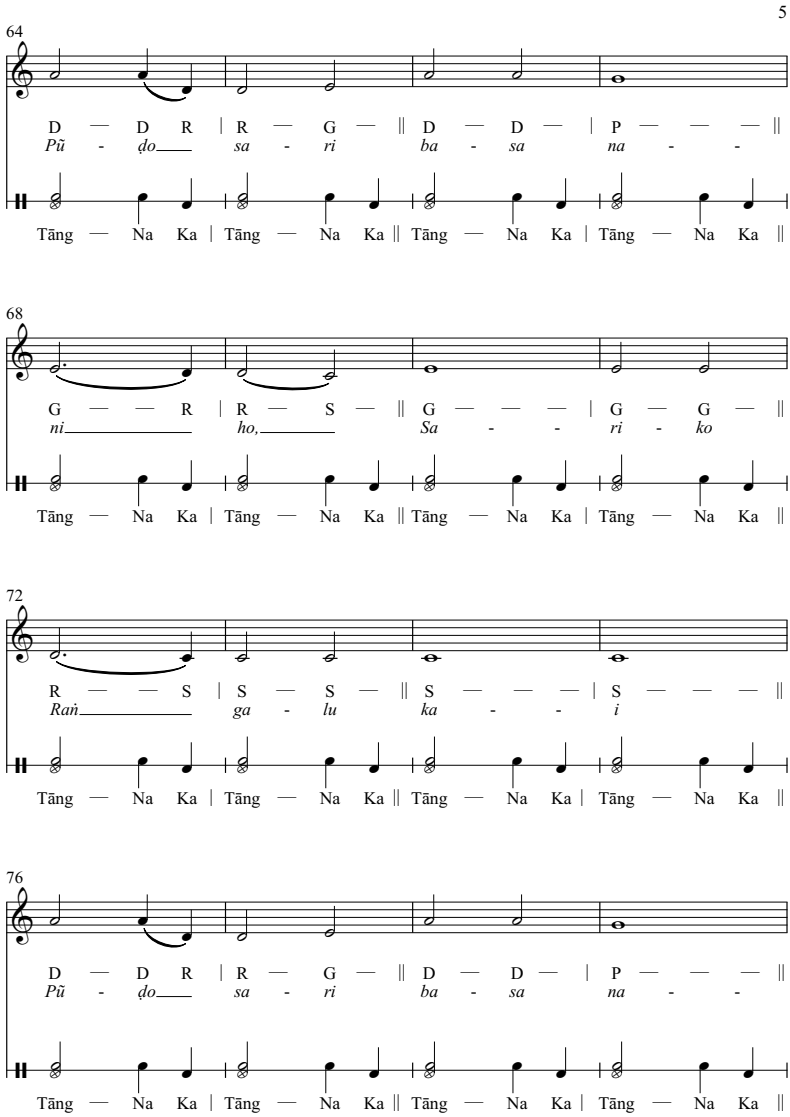


2


16
G — G D | D — P — || D — D — | G — P — ||
Na - di wā - ri na - di - pā - ri
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
20
D — D Ṡ D | P — P — || G — — — | R — — — ||
Ku - su ma - ko gha - - ri
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
24
G — G P | D — P — || D — D — | G — P — ||
Ku - su - mai chu - ṭi chu - ṭi
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
28
D — D Ṡ D | P — P — || G — — | R — — — ||
Raṅ ga - ba - na i
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
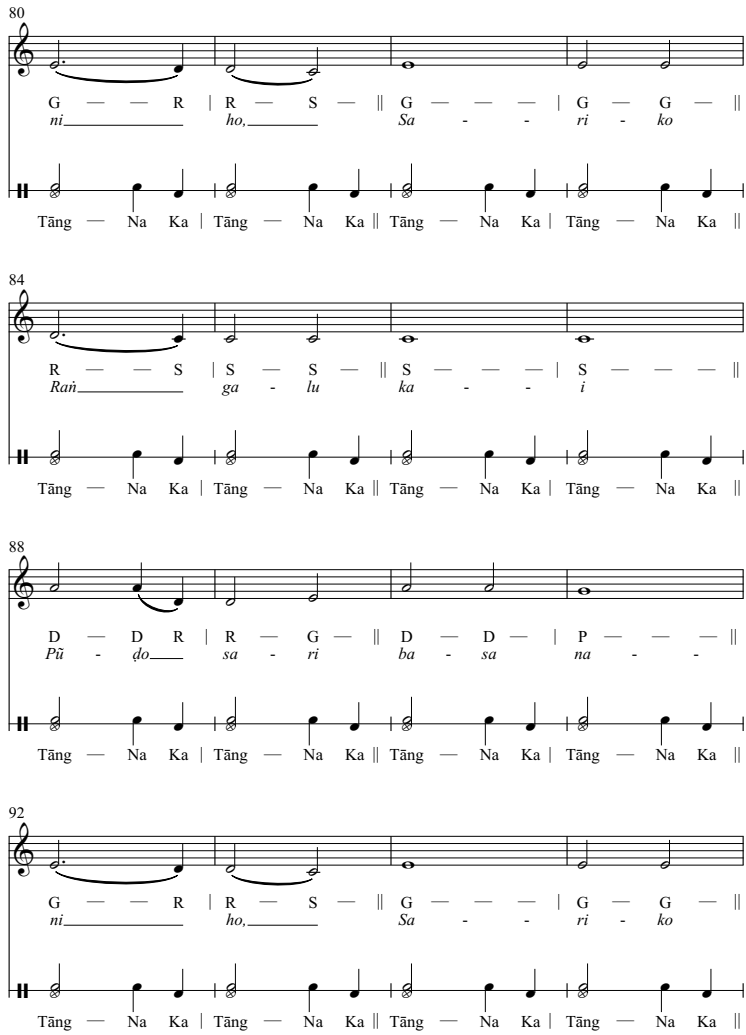

3
32
G — G P | D — P — || D — D — | G — P —
Ku - su - mai chu - ṭi chu - ṭi
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
36
D — D Ṡ D | P — P — || G — — | R — — — ||
Raṅ - - ga ba - na i
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
40
Ḍ — Ḍ R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pũ - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
44
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Tāng — ||
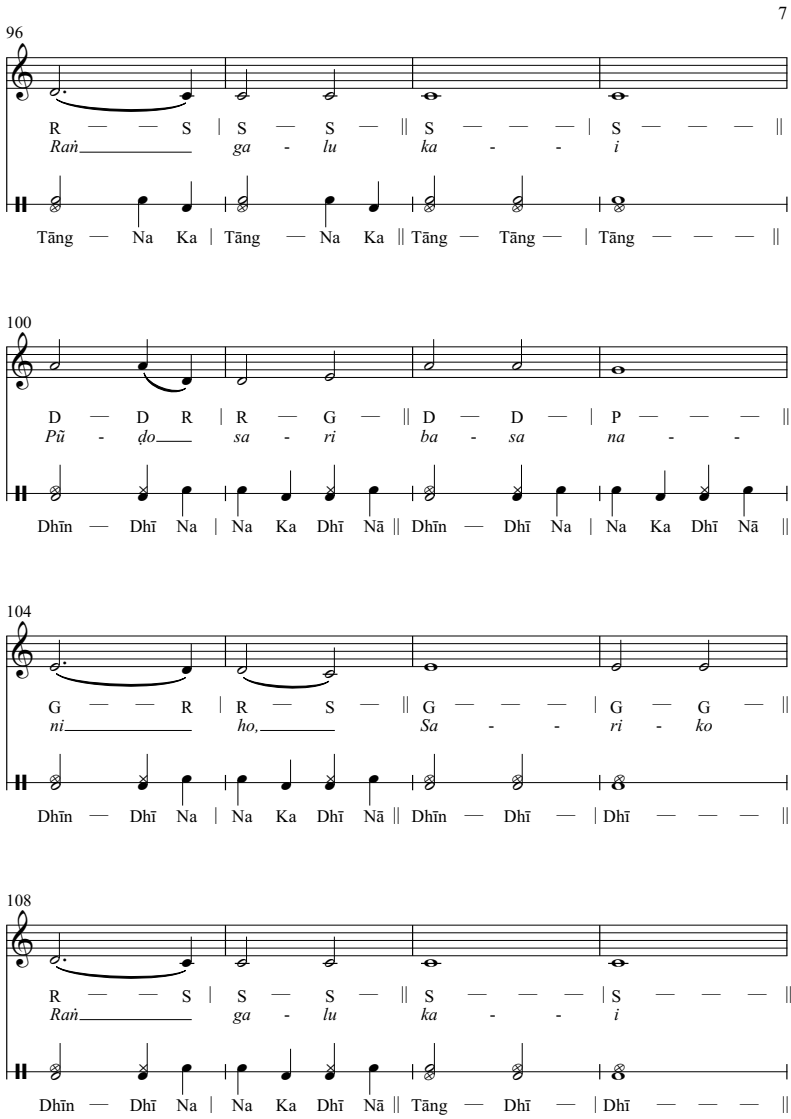
4


48
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Phat — Pha Ta | Na Ka Jhyām — || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
52
Ḍ — Ḍ R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
56
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
60
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Tāng — Dhīn — | Dhīn — — — ||
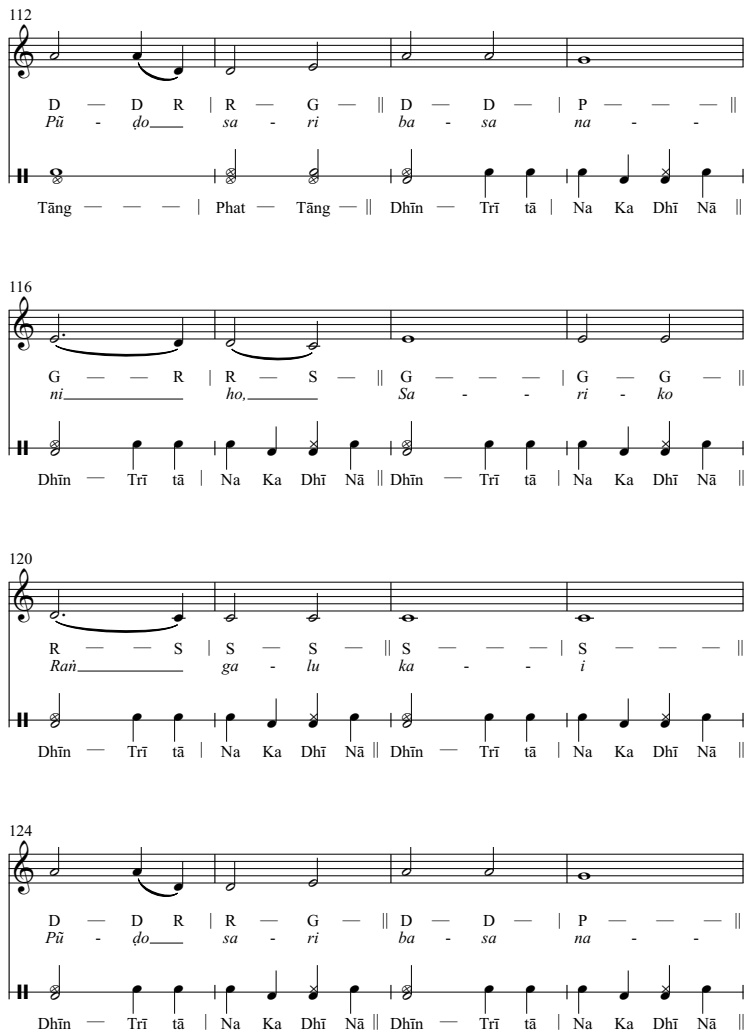

5
64
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pũ - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
68
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
72
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
76
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pũ - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
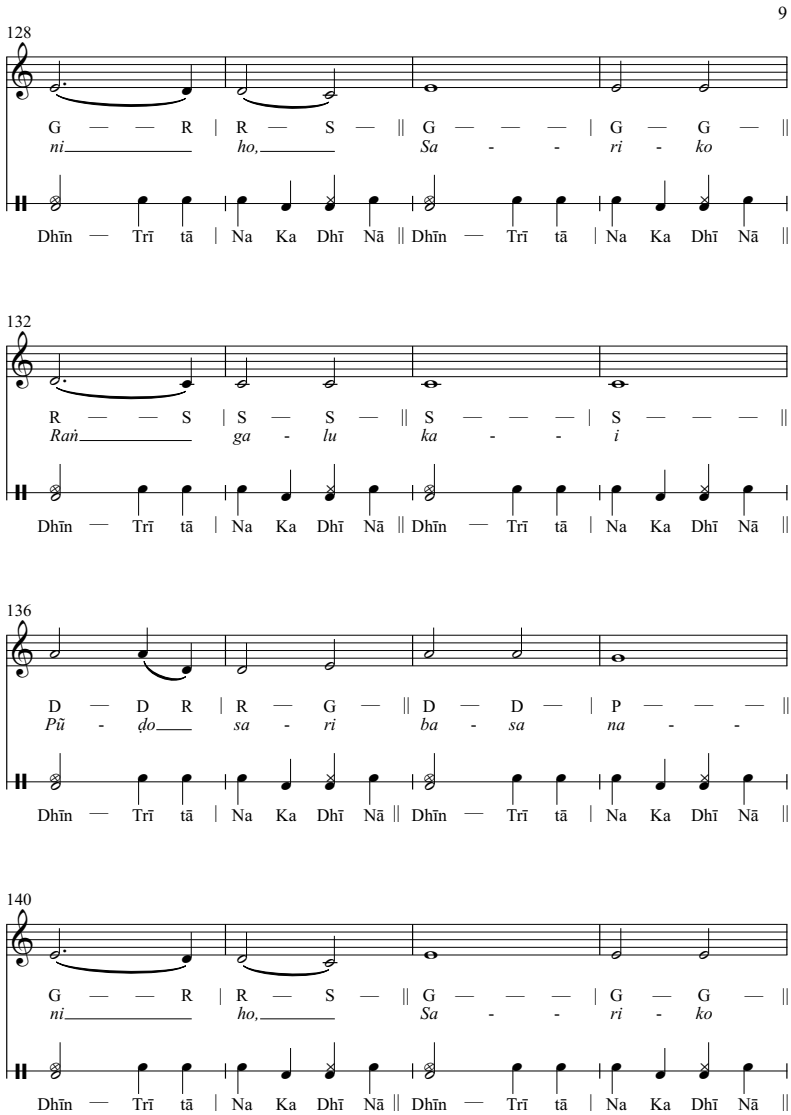
6


80
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
84
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
88
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
92
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka || Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ||
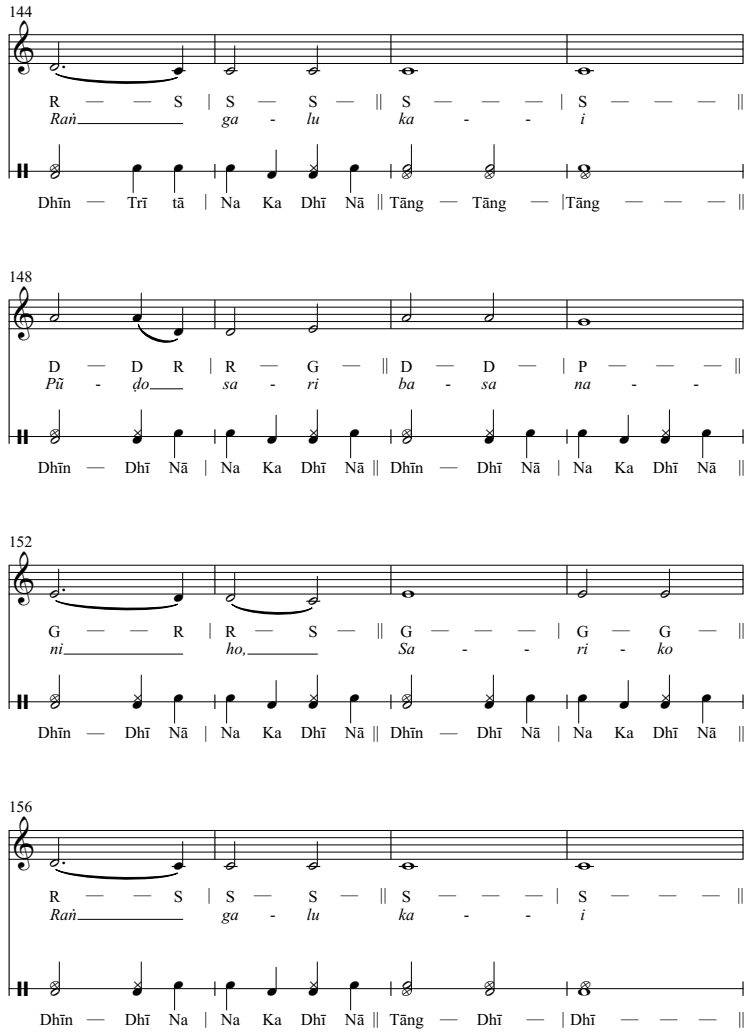

7
96
R — — S | S — S — ‖ S — — — | S — — — ‖
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Tāng — Na Ka | Tāng — Na Ka ‖ Tāng — Tāng — | Tāng — — — ‖
100
D — D R | R — G — ‖ D — D — | P — — — ‖
Pū - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ‖
104
G — — R | R — S — ‖ G — — — | G — G — ‖
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn — Dhī — | Dhī — — — ‖
108
R — — S | S — S — ‖ S — — — | S — — — ‖
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā ‖ Tāng — Dhī — | Dhī — — — ‖

8


112
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo___ sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Tāng — — — | Phat — Tāng — || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
116
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni_____ ho,_____ Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
120
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ_____ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
124
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo___ sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||


9
128
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
132
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
136
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
140
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||

10


144
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Trī tā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Tāng — Tāng — | Tāng — — — ||
148
D — D R | R — G — || D — D — | P — — — ||
Pū - ḍo sa - ri ba - sa na - -
Dhīn — Dhī Nā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Dhī Nā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
152
G — — R | R — S — || G — — — | G — G — ||
ni ho, Sa - - ri - ko
Dhīn — Dhī Nā | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Dhīn — Dhī Nā | Na Ka Dhī Nā ||
156
R — — S | S — S — || S — — — | S — — — ||
Raṅ ga - lu ka - - i
Dhīn — Dhī Na | Na Ka Dhī Nā || Tāng — Dhī — | Dhī — — — ||

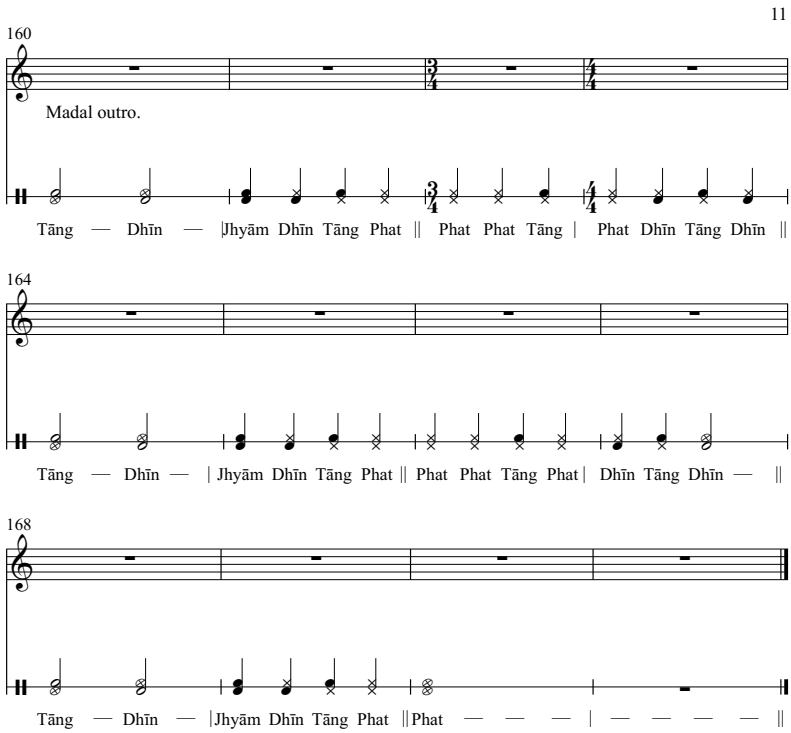



Fig. 4.17 Traditional. Song in Khyālī Tāl: Nadī Wari Nadī Pari/Beds of Flowers. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

This song, with its mādal bols and sargam notation, is an example of a song associated with mārunī dance. In this way, khyālī bhākā dance uses the same bols put together differently according to the dance. If you practice the above groups of bols and the model song well, you will easily be able to play mādal for any khyālī or khyālī bhākā song and dance.

When increasing the tempo in khyālī tāl, first the cadential pattern should be played, and then the tempo of the dance should increase with the next bol. Thus, the mādalist is responsible for whether the dance will be long or short. There is no law that says you must play exactly these bols. Only the beginning bol, the rolling pattern in the middle, and the ending bol are absolutely necessary. Apart from this, there is no hard and fast rule for the bols in the main part of the song and dance. If you are dancing in pāṅgdure dances, you can add lāmī tāl from soraṭhī at the end after the ending bol, as given in the above example.



Video 4.8 Jhumari (Khyāli) Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112727. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:26 minutes.

## Supplemental Videos of Khyālī Tāl



Video 4.9 Jhumari Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112734. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal, Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:15 minutes.



Video 4.10 Khyāli Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112749. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:52 minutes.

## Charitra Tāl

Charitra tāl is famous among the mādal tāls as it is the tāl used for singing the historical Puranic charitra stories.[84] Thus not every mādalist knows the right way to play this tāl; it is only those who perform in the troupes for mārunī dances who do it well. Charitra tāl has six beats and there are bols of three to twelve beats. Sixteen or seventeen types of bols can be found in charitra tāl but not all bols are used for dancing. In the middle of the dance after crouching down, only six types of bols are danced to. Also, different bols are associated with different troupes. This six-beat charitra tāl is played

84 These are the stories of the lives of Ram and Krishna.

slowly, and soldiers' exercises also adopt a slow speed. Thus the tempo in charitra tāl is expected to be slow. Of course the tāl can be played faster, but the dance steps will not work with the bols and the song at such a speed; also, there is no custom of dancing charitra fast. There are various dance steps in charitra tāl, and they correspond with different ways of counting the beats, as the tempo of counting steps according to bols changes with the different ways of counting four beats within six.[85] Here are the different ways of counting:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| 2) | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| 3) | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| 4) | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.9 Dance steps and counting for charitra tāl.

Dance steps vary according to the mādal bols counted in these various ways, and charitra tāl has no empty beats so cymbals and handclaps continue on the first beat of each group of three. Even though the handclaps are continuous, the tempo is slow. Some other songs such as seasonal songs and auspicious songs use some charitra bols though they are known by different names, among

85 This appears to mean that (as illustrated in Table 4.9), steps are not evenly spaced among the six beats, and dancers must take quicker steps when the steps are to be taken on beats that are closer together; steps taken on beats one and two will be quicker than steps taken on beats one and four, etc.

which the most famous include *bhailo*, *asāre*, *ghãṭu*, and others. Folk songs and Nepali songs have been sung with this tāl as a basis since ancient times. Likewise, charitra tāl has come to be used in today's modern songs, but it is not customarily called charitra tāl when used in these songs. The bols of charitra tāl have been popularized by other genres, but they have not become well known in relation to charitra song itself. From this we should think about how we as artists have fallen behind even in our own folk music. It is clear that all institutions and music lovers should pay close attention to this. Without basic knowledge of the tāl one cannot even know the name of a folk song. For this reason, various mādal bols in charitra tāl are given here for all artists and musicians to memorize and practice.

Video 4.11 Mādal bols used in Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112712. Raju Maharjan and Kamal Oli, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 7:35 minutes.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.10 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl.

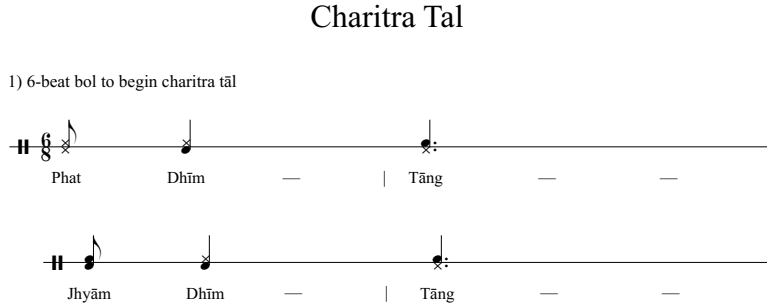



Fig. 4.18 Subi Shah, six-beat bol to start charitra tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.11 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl.

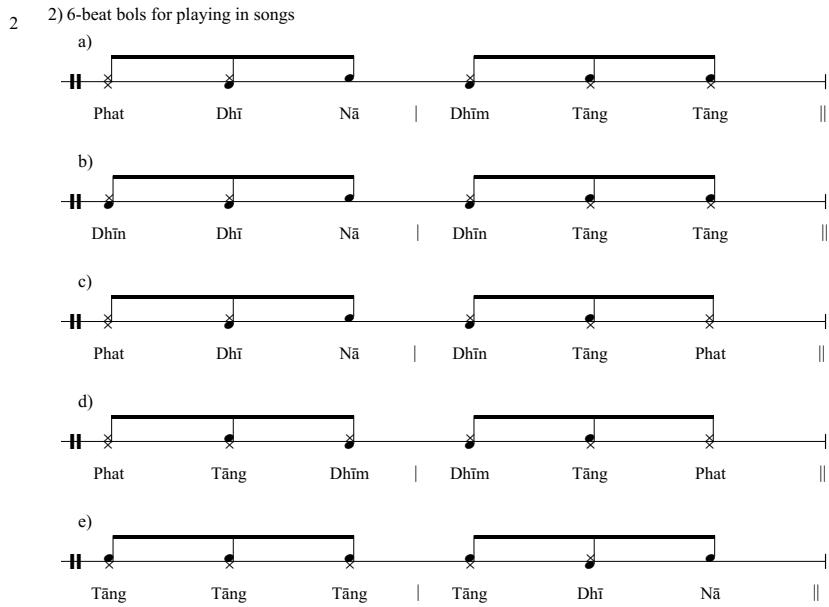



Fig. 4.19 Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The following six-beat bols for playing in songs have the same dance step choices as above.

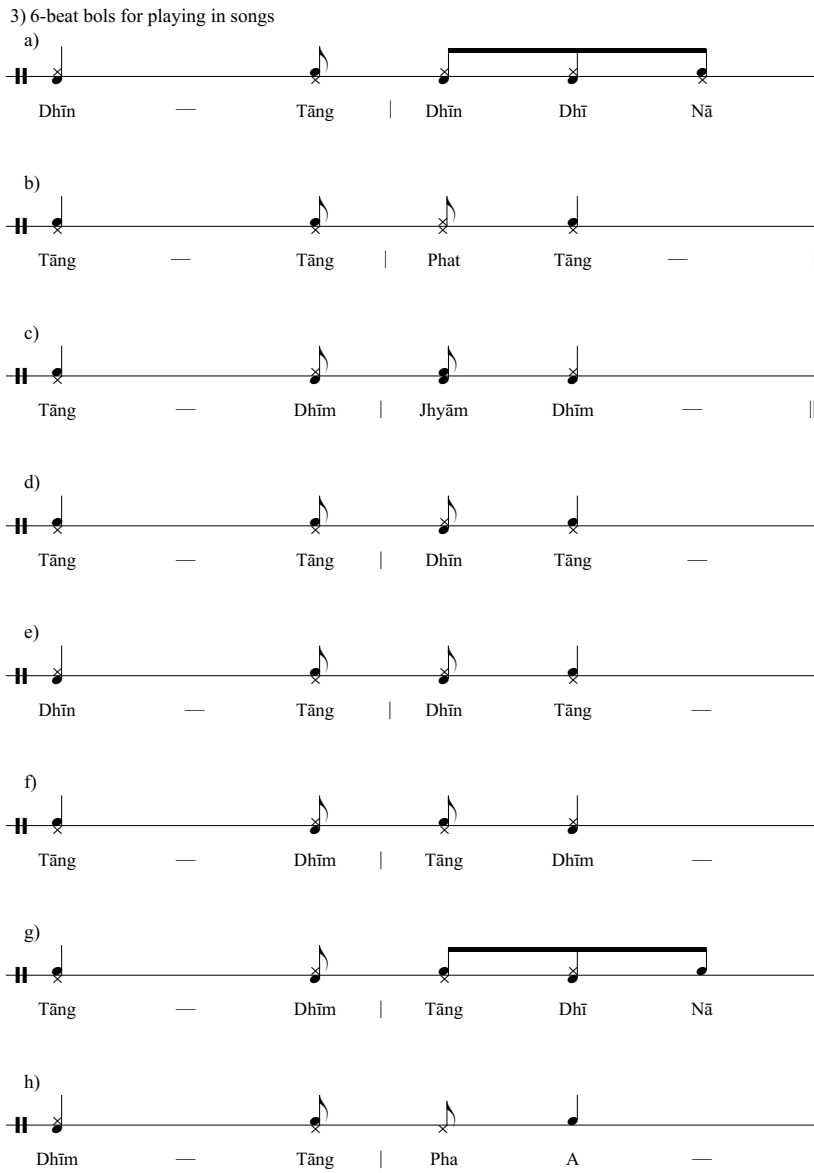



Fig. 4.20 Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 2 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 2 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |

Table 4.12 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl.

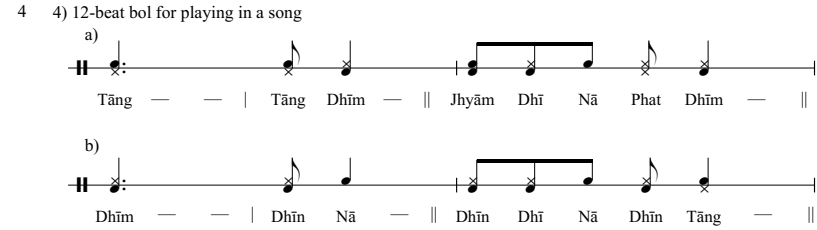



Fig. 4.21 Subi Shah, twelve-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 2 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 2 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |

Table 4.13 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl.

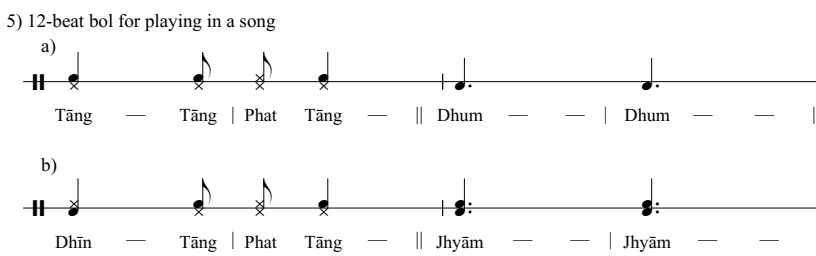



Fig. 4.22 Subi Shah, twelve-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | | | | \| | 2 | | | | | | \|\| | |
| Count | 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | \| | 4 | | | 5 | | | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | | | \| | X | | | | | | \|\| | |
| Steps | 1 | | | 2 | | | \| | 1 | | | 2 | | | \|\| | |
| Count | 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | \| | 4 | | | 5 | | | 6 | \|\| |

Table 4.14 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl.

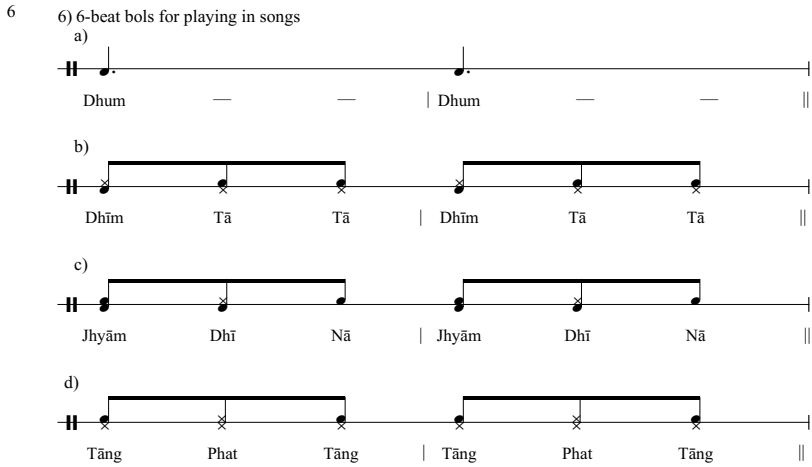



Fig. 4.23 Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

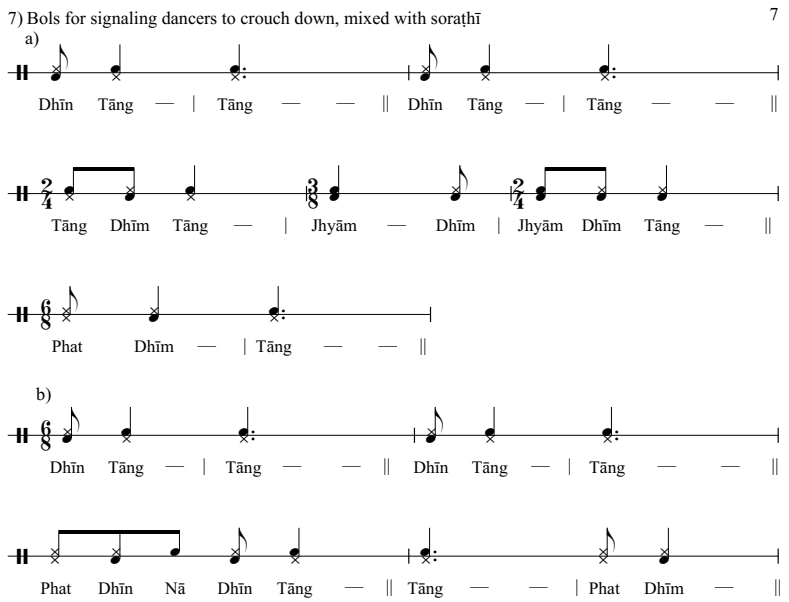



Fig. 4.24 Subi Shah, Bols signaling dancers to crouch down, mixed with soraṭhī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Note 1: In number 7 (a) and (b), after one bol is played and the dancers crouch down, the beginning bol should be played and the charan refrain sung. When the refrain is repeated and the beginning bol ends, along with the shouts of ‘syābās’ the dancers crouch down again. This sequence is repeated twice, and the ṭukkā git (couplets) begin after this.

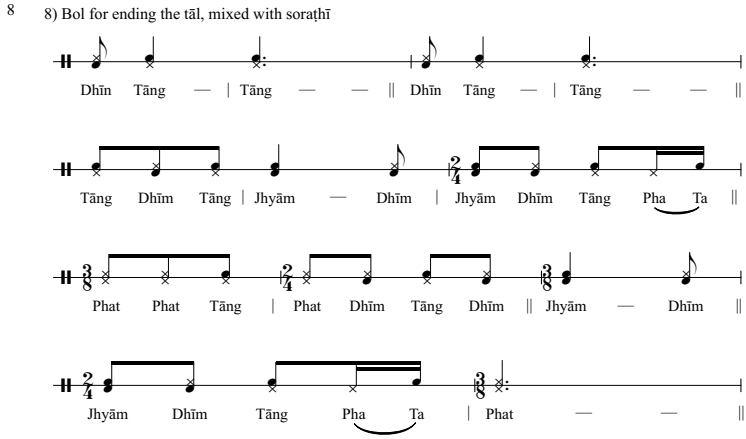



Fig. 4.25 Subi Shah, Bol to end the tāl, mixed with soraṭhī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Note 2: The ending bol in number 8 ends the charitra dance, after which the dancers go behind the troupe or behind a curtain.

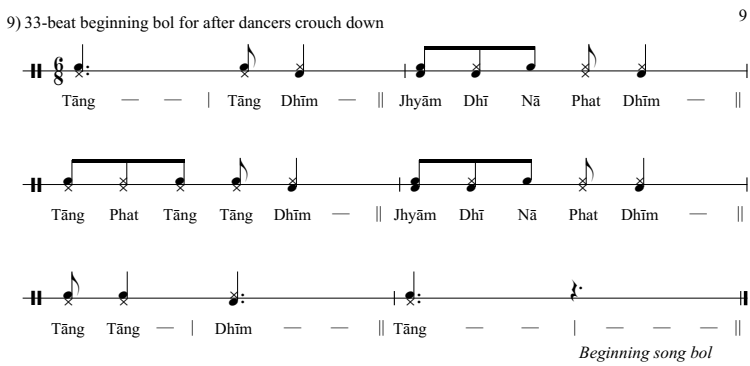



Fig. 4.26 Subi Shah, Bol for establishing the tāl after the dancers crouch down. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The various bols of charitra tāl are written above, in accordance with folk rules. After perfecting each bol you should be able to play them one after the other, as this is how five or six bols are put together in sequence along with song and dance. In the charitra dance, after the very beginning bol is played the mādalists start to dance, and when the mādalists come back to their own place, and the dancers playing the male part (pursuṅge) take their places in front of the mādalists, the dancers playing the female part (mārunī) enter and bow to the mādal. When all are ready to dance, the song is begun. Because the song begins in the last measure of the tāl, the part after the dancers

crouch down is empty when written in notation. All music lovers will obtain the facts of this tāl through the model song given below, which shines with the genuine aspects passed down through folk rules.



Video 4.12 Charitra Introduction and 'Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112810. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:46 minutes.



Audio 4.4 Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati/Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112793. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prāyas.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:10 minutes.



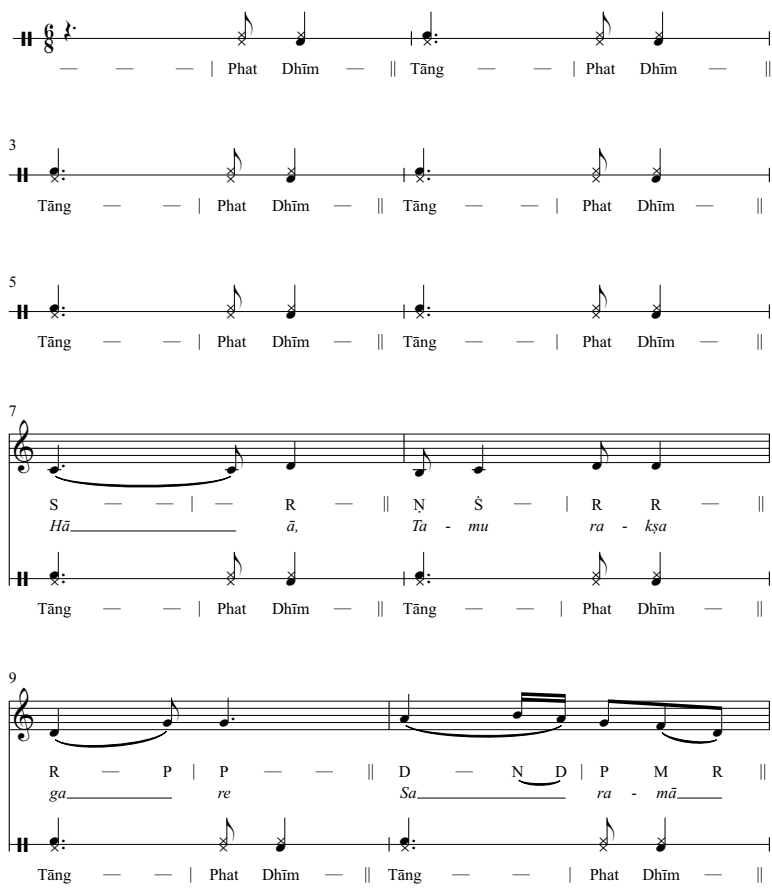
Audio 4.5 Charitra-Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati/Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112721. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:35 minutes.

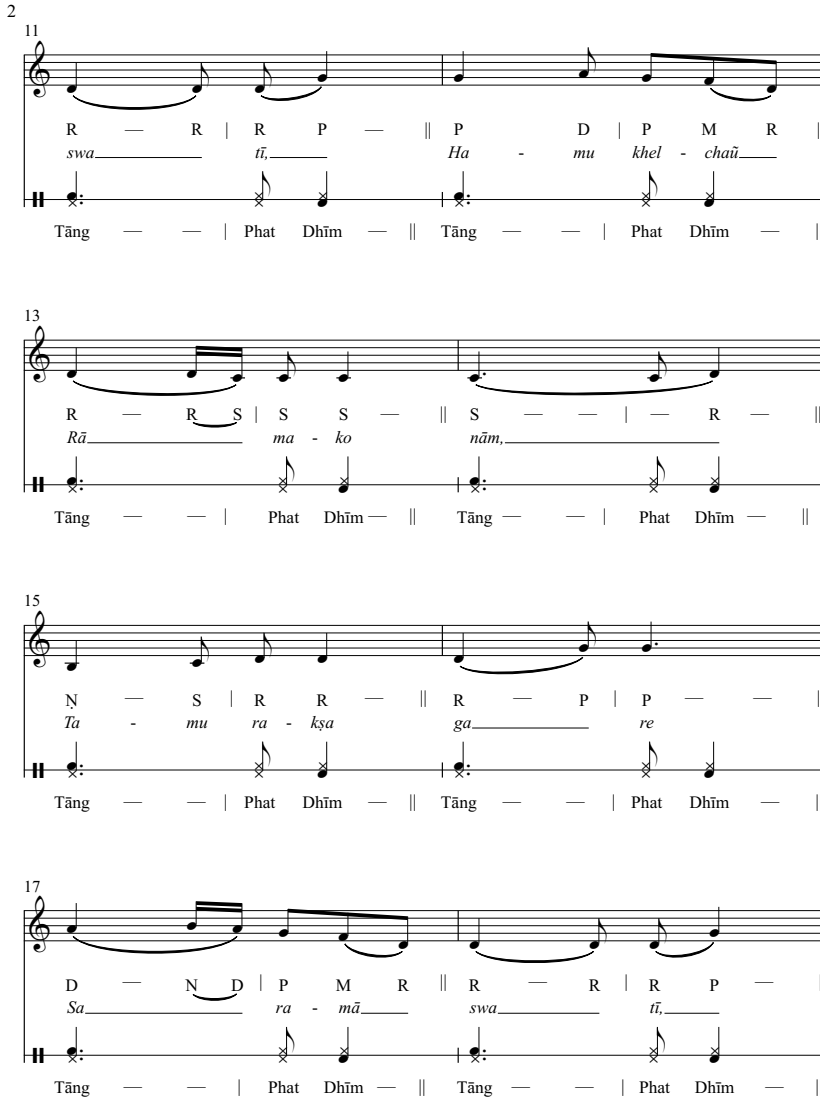
*Tamu rakṣa gare saramāswatī,*
*Hamu khelchaũ rāmako nām*
*Phūla pātī hātai līī,*
*Saraswaīi māī lāī.*
*Tamu rakṣa gare saramāswatī,*
*Hamu khelchaũ rāmako nām.*

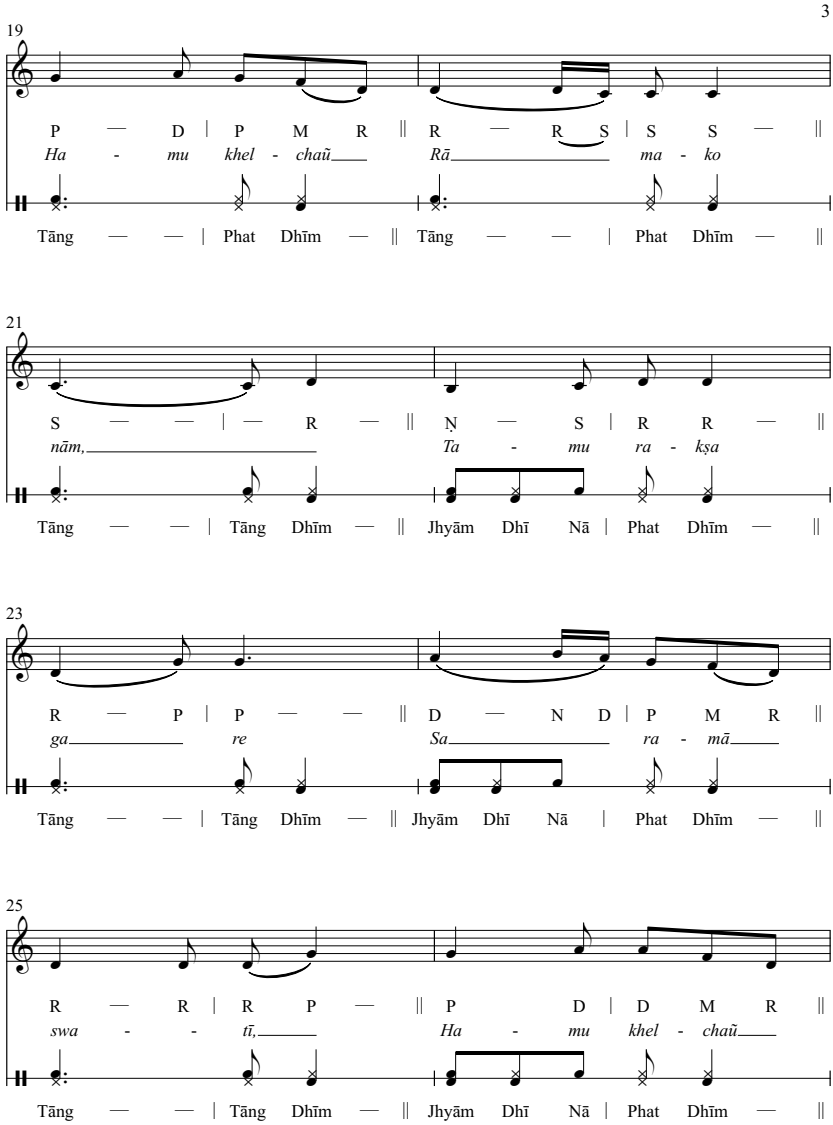
Please protect us, Mother Saraswati,
We repeat Ram's name.
With flowers in our hands,
For Mother Saraswati.
Please protect us, Mother Saraswati,
We repeat Ram's name.

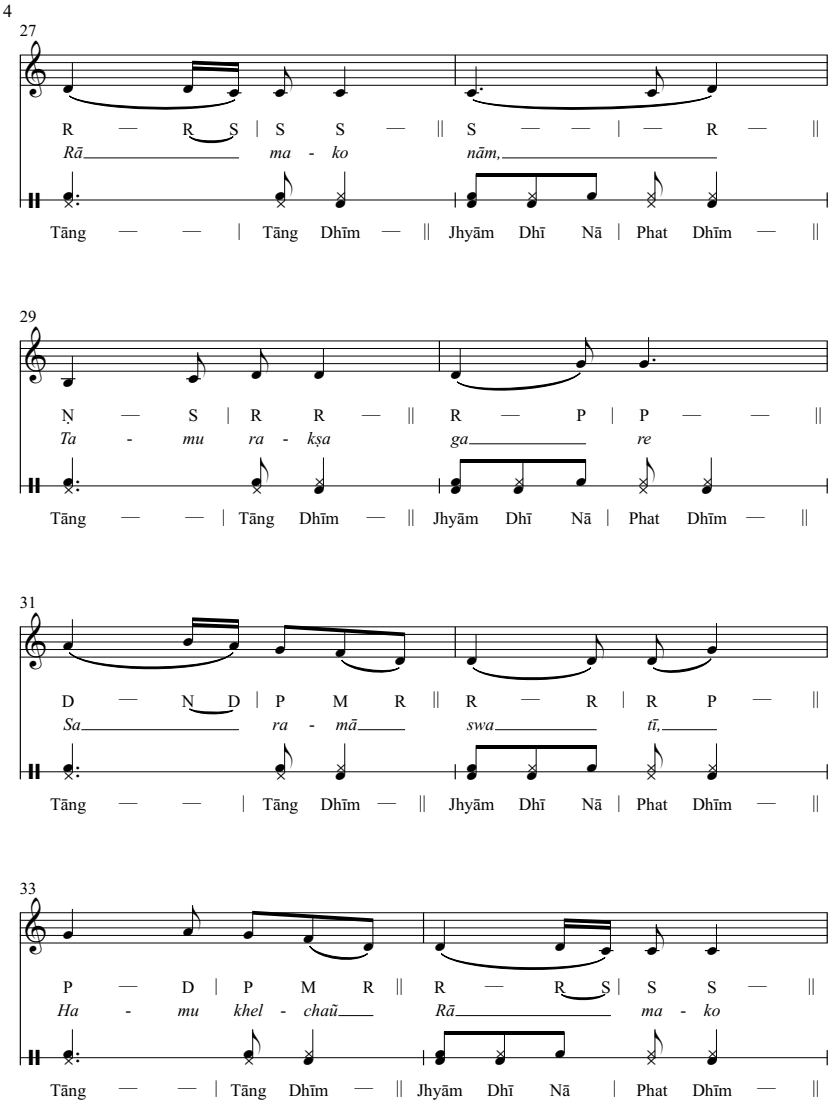
# Song in Charitra Tāl: Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati

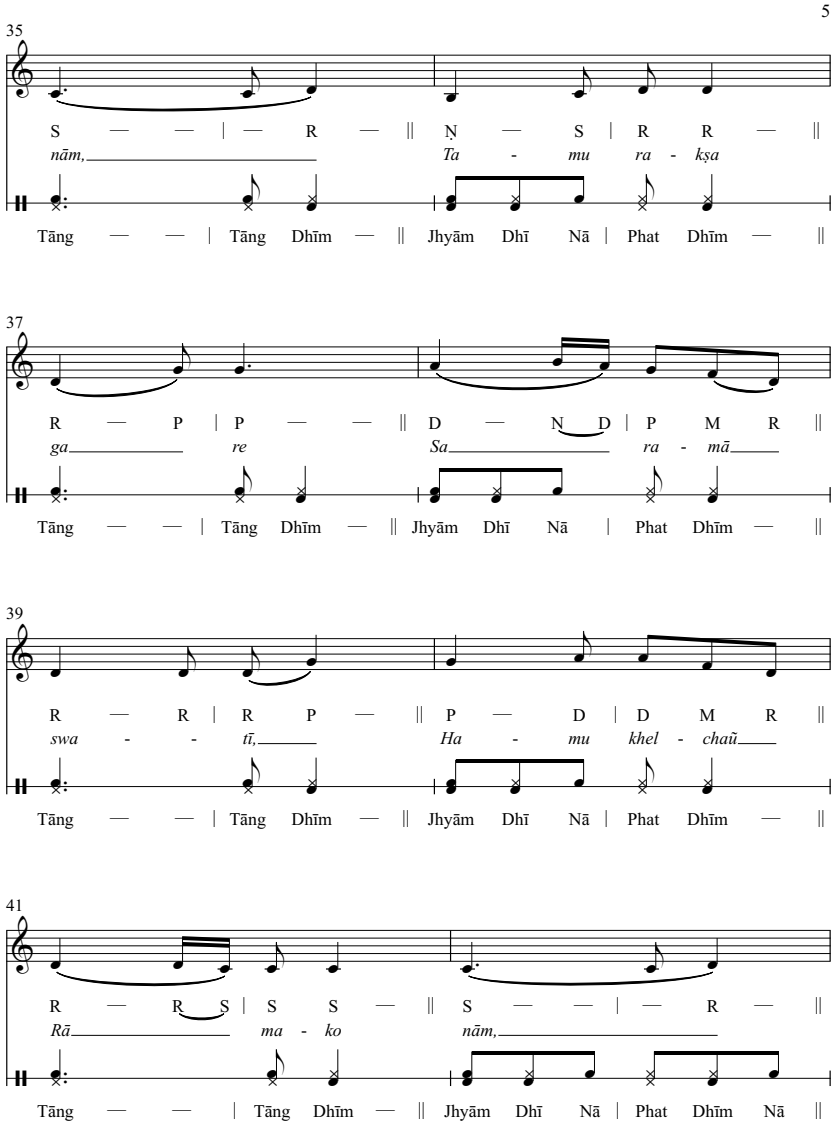
## Please Protect Us Mother Saraswatī: Song and Bols for Charitra

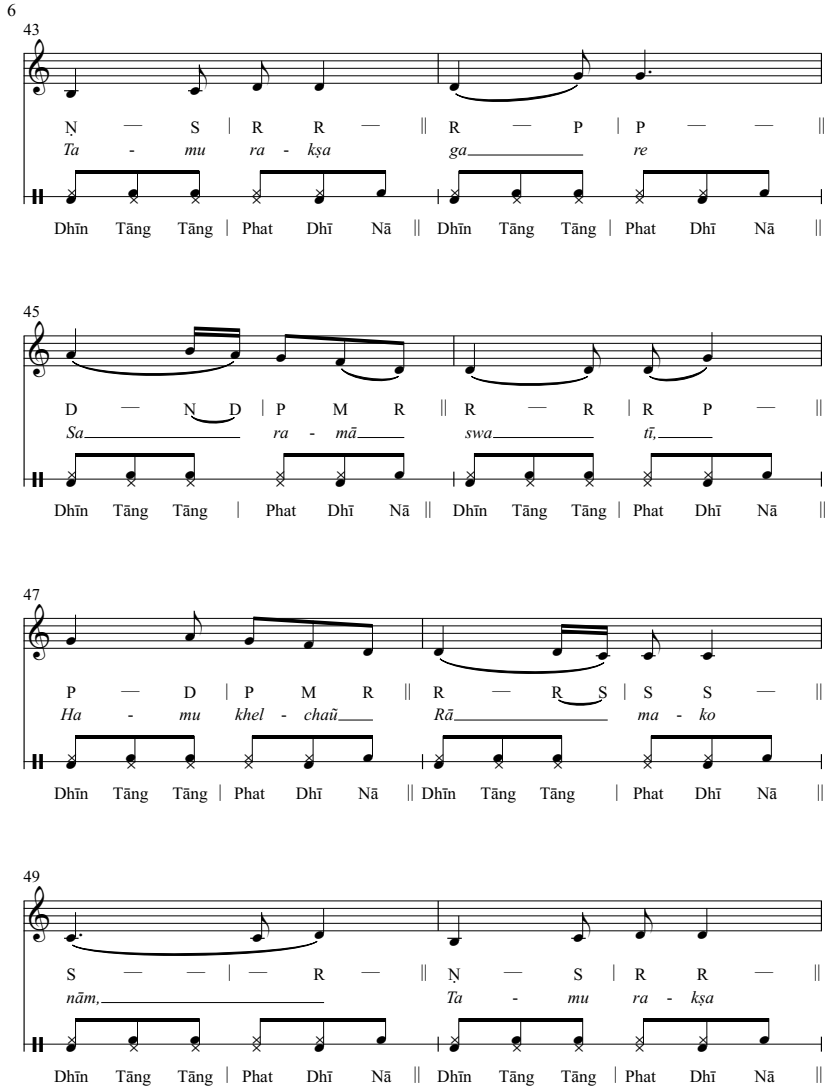


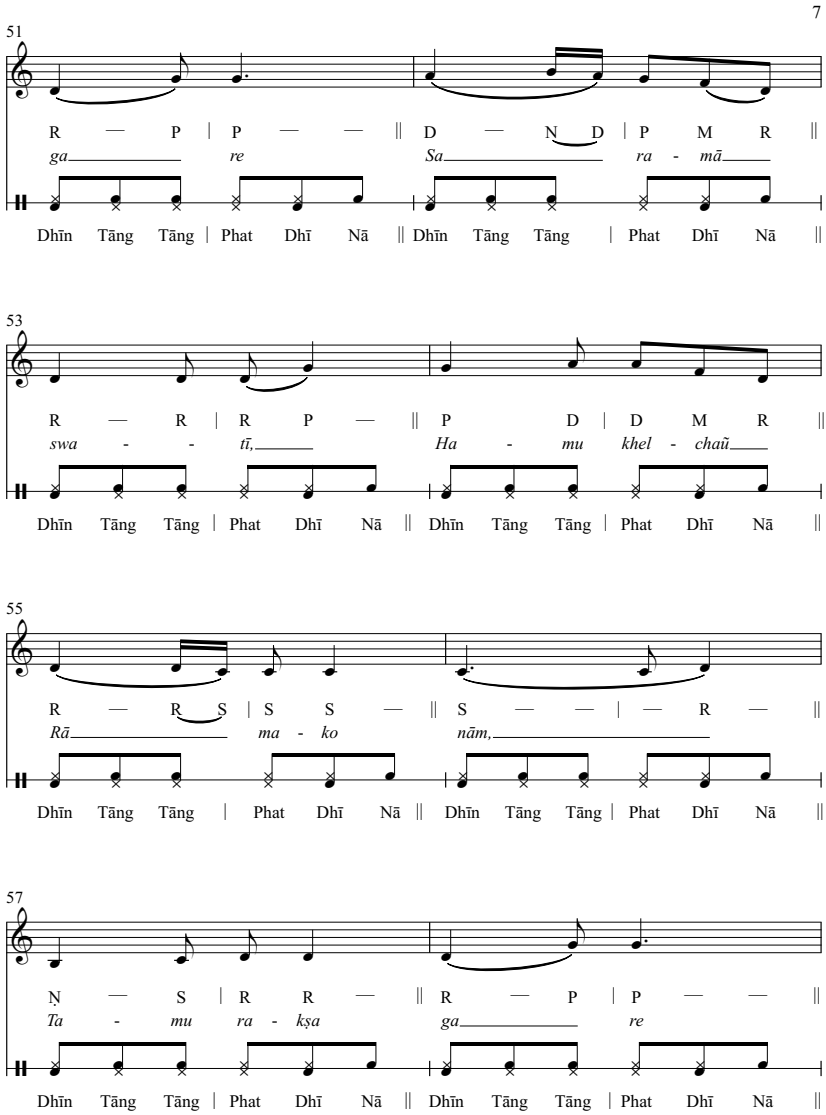

2
11
R — R | R P — || P D | P M R ||
swa tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — ||
13
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — ||
15
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — ||
17
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — ||
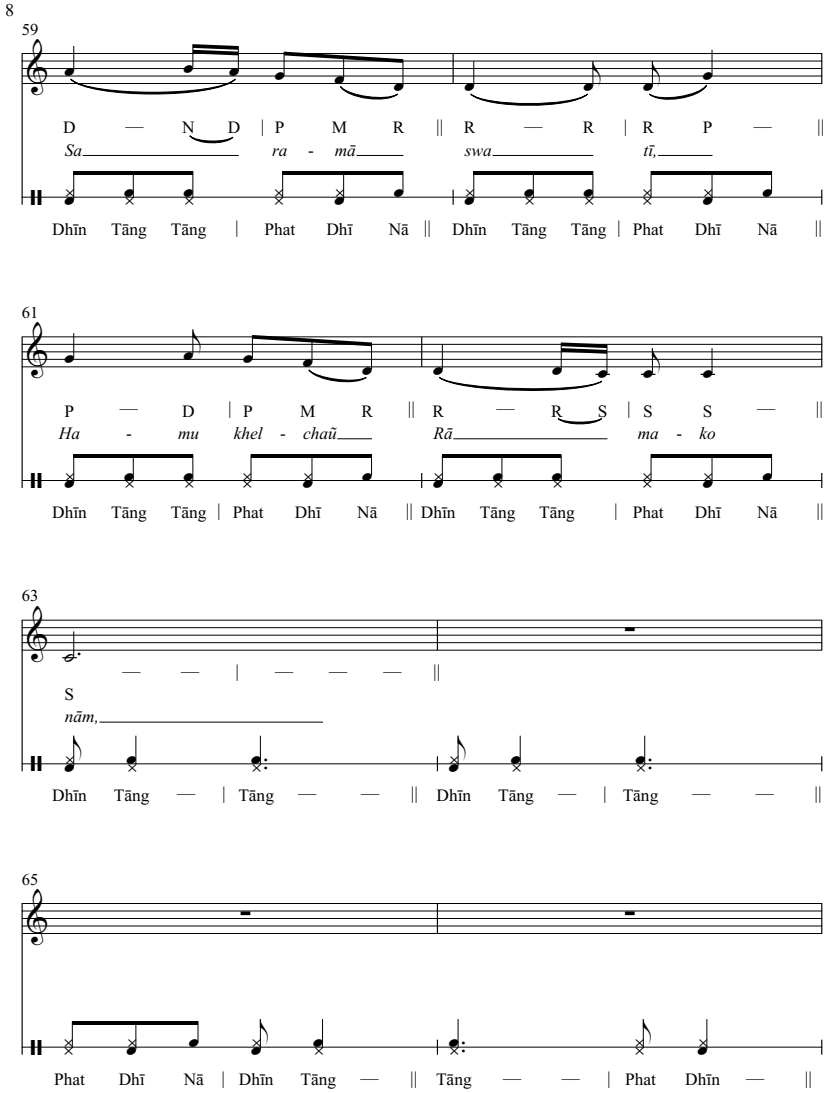

3
19
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — ||
21
S — — | — R — || Ṇ — S | R R — ||
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
23
R — P | P — — || D — N D | P M R ||
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
25
R — R | R P — || P D | D M R ||
swa - - tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||

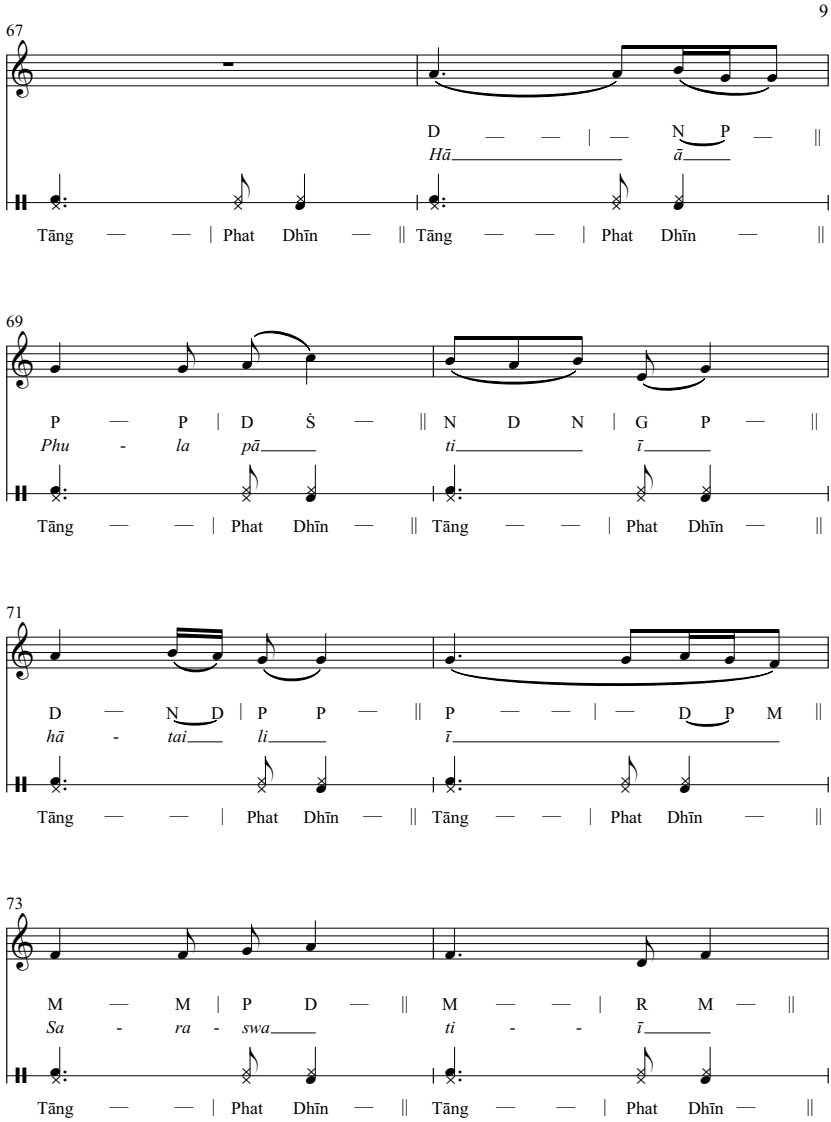

4
27
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
29
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
31
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
33
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||

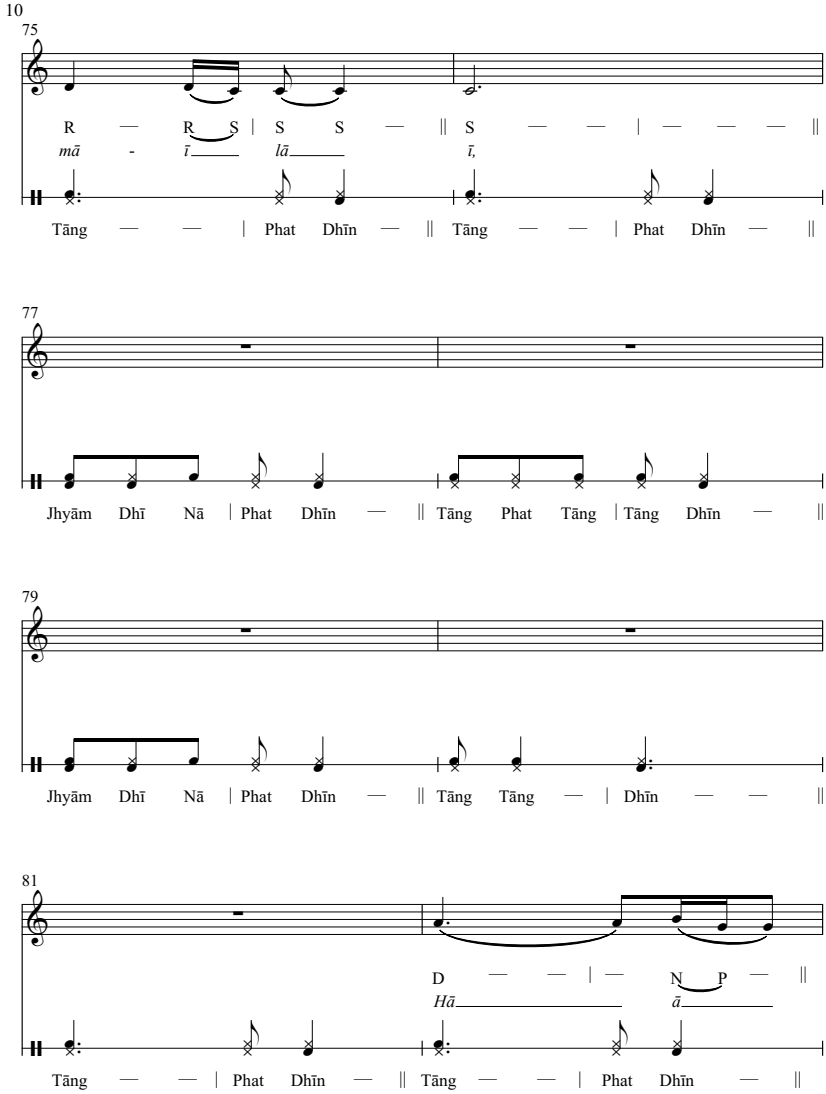

5
35
S — — | — R — || Ṇ — S | R R — ||
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
37
R — P | P — — || D — N D | P M R ||
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
39
R — R | R P — || P — D | D M R ||
swa - - tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm — ||
41
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — — | Tāng Dhīm — || Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīm Nā ||
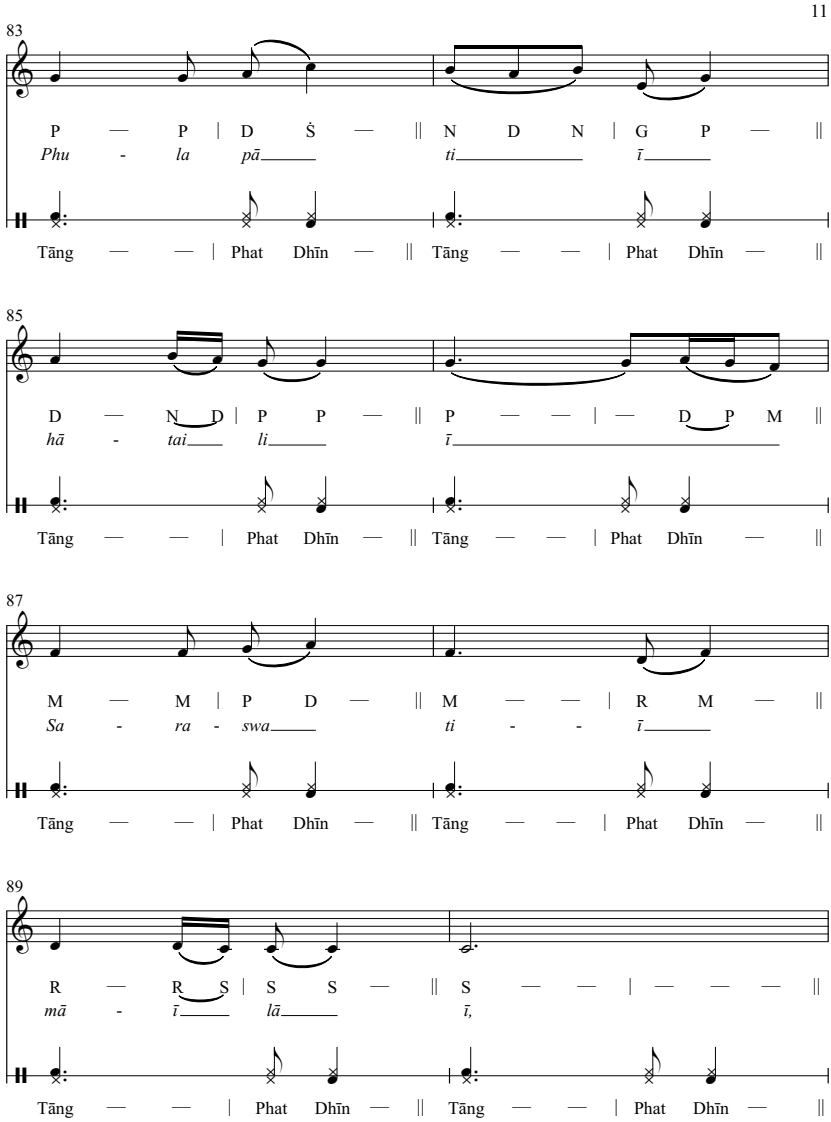

6
43
Ṇ — S | R R — ‖ R — P | P — — ‖
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
45
D — N D | P M R ‖ R — R | R P — ‖
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
47
P — D | P M R ‖ R — R S | S S — ‖
Ha - mu khel - chaiũ Rā ma - ko
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
49
S — — | — R — ‖ Ṇ — S | R R — ‖
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
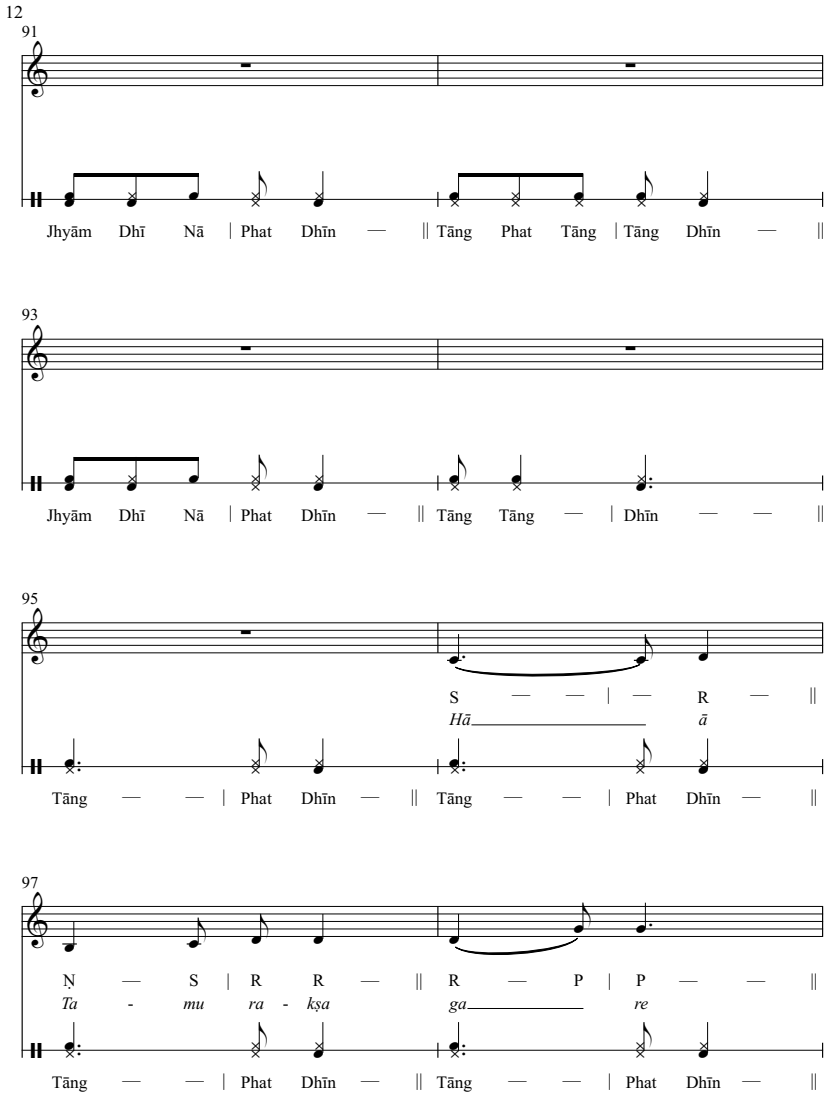

7
51
R — P | P — — ‖ D — N D | P M R ‖
ga re Sa ra - mā
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
53
R — R | R P — ‖ P D | D M R ‖
swa - - tī, Ha - mu khel - chaŭ
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
55
R — R S | S S — ‖ S — — | — R — ‖
Rā ma - ko nām,
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖
57
Ṇ — S | R R — ‖ R — P | P — — ‖
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖ Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ‖

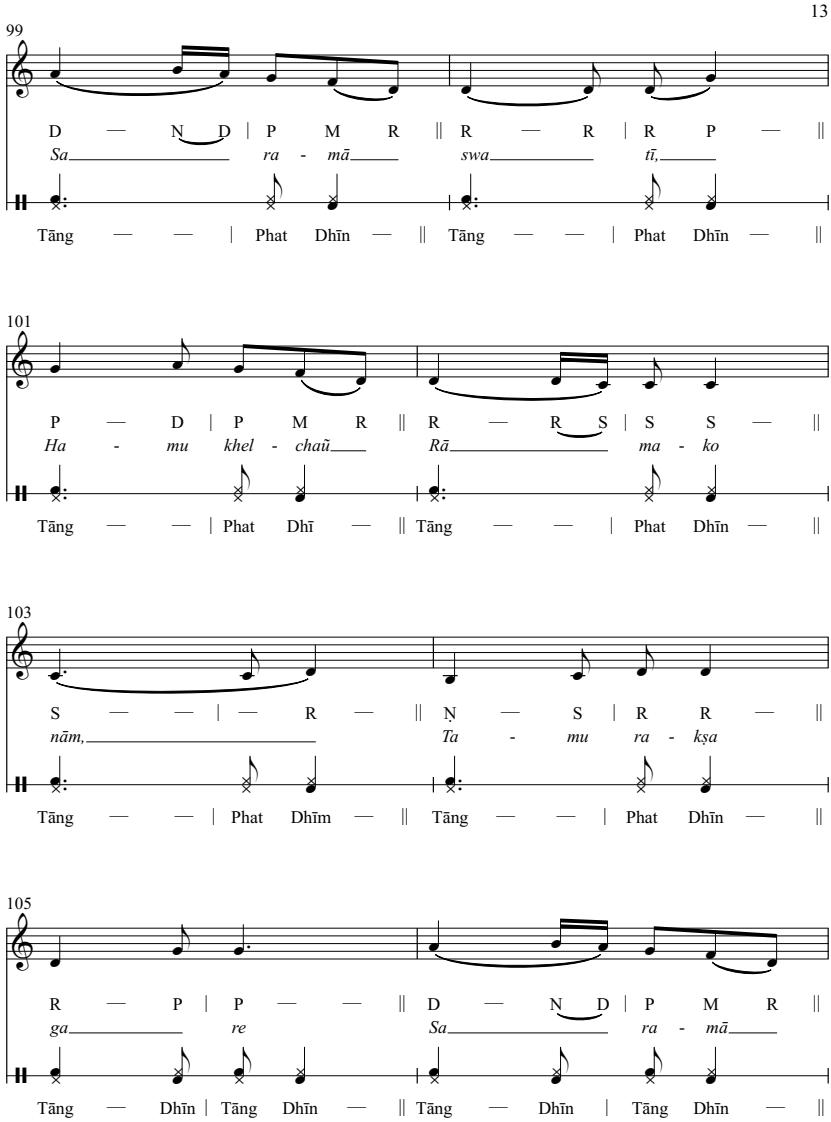

8
59
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā || Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ||
61
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā || Dhīn Tāng Tāng | Phat Dhī Nā ||
63
— — | — — — ||
S
nām,
Dhīn Tāng — | Tāng — — || Dhīn Tāng — | Tāng — — ||
65
Phat Dhī Nā | Dhīn Tāng — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
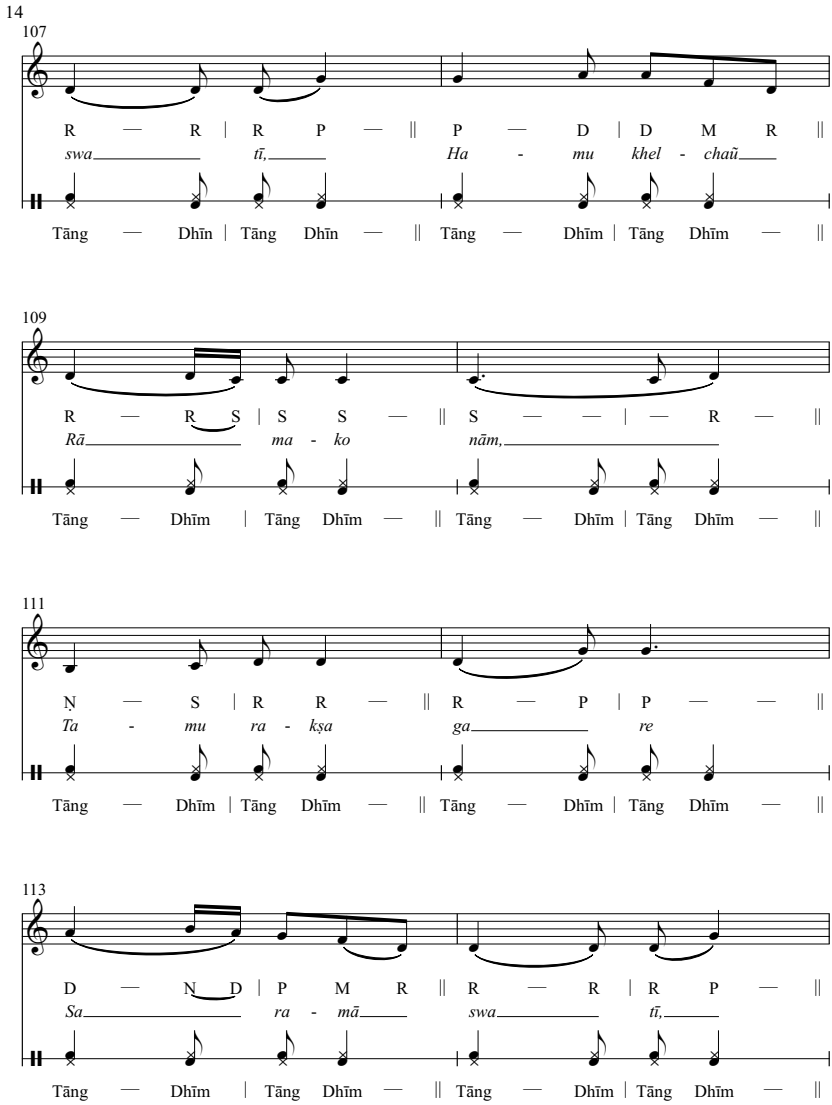

9
67
D — — | — N P —
Hā — — ā —
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — | Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn —
69
P — P | D Ṡ — | N D N | G P —
Phu - la pā — ti — ī —
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — | Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn —
71
D — N D | P P — | P — — | — D P M
hā - tai — li — ī —
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — | Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn —
73
M — M | P D — | M — — | R M —
Sa - ra - swa — ti - - ī —
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — | Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn —

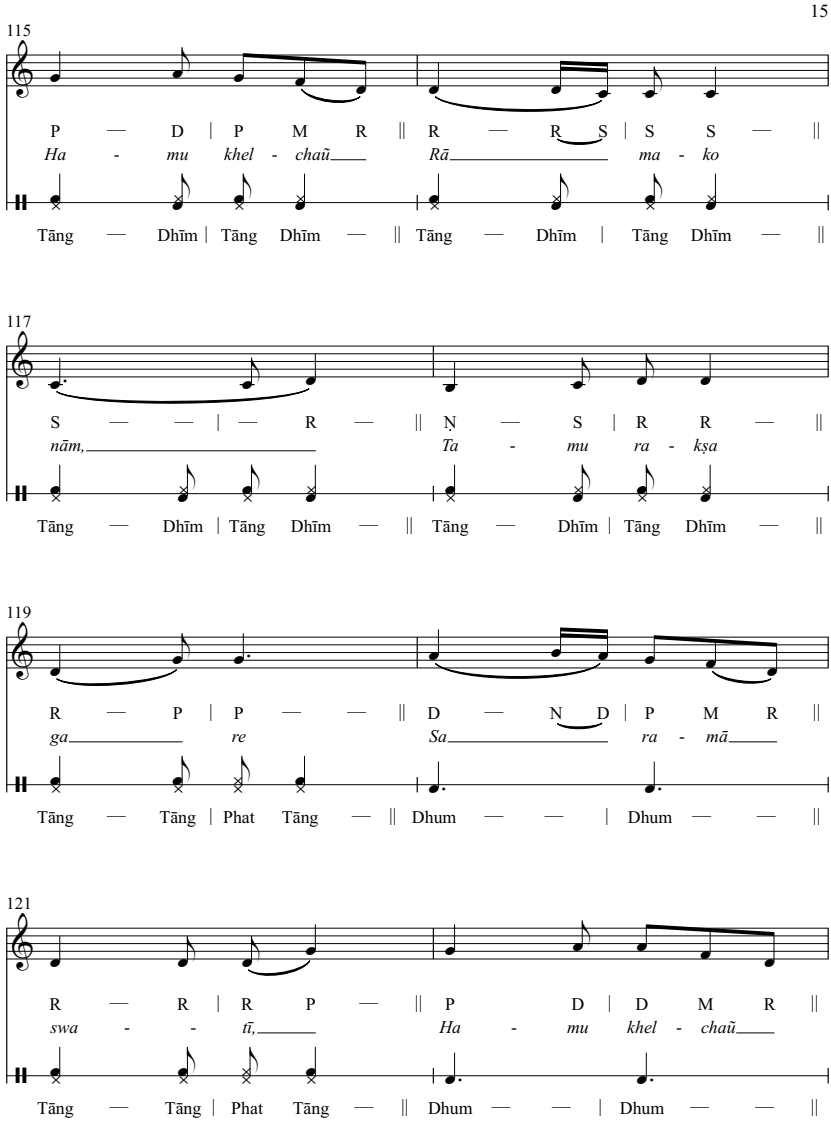

10
75
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — — — ||
mā - ī lā ī,
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
77
Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng Phat Tāng | Tāng Dhīn — ||
79
Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng Tāng — | Dhīn — — ||
81
D — — | — N P — ||
Hā ā
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
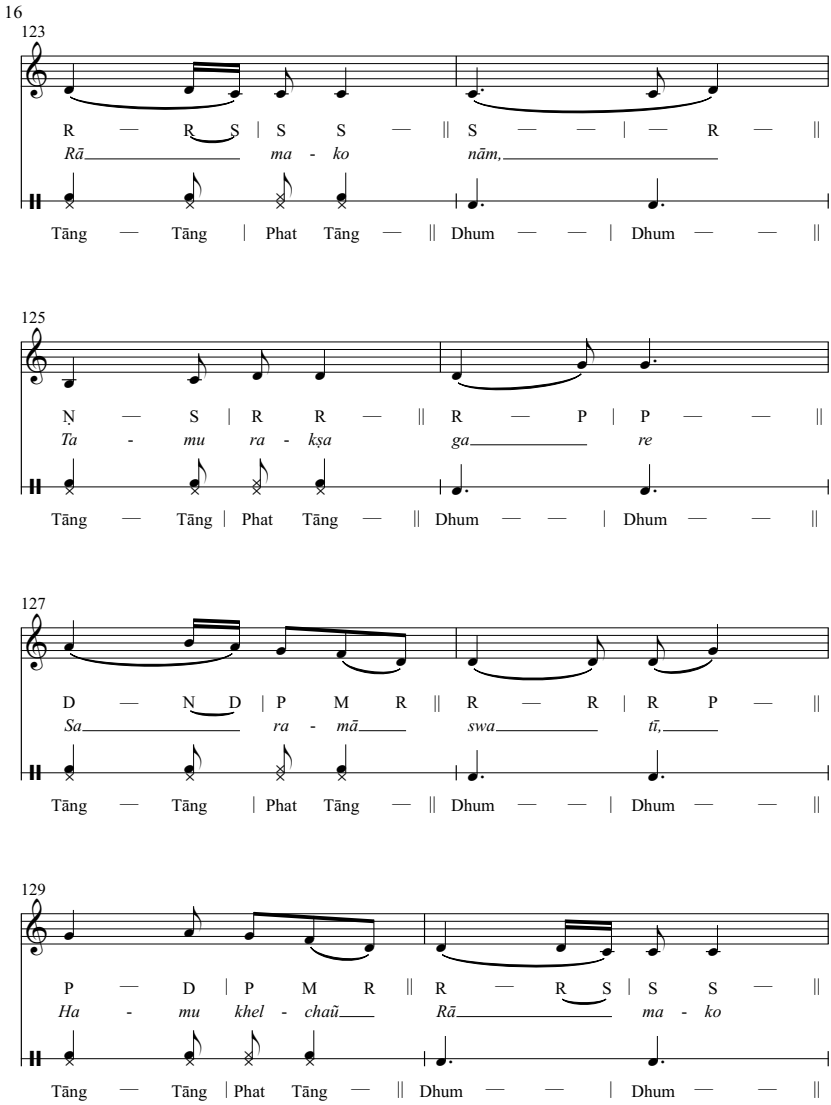

11
83
P — P | D Ṡ — || N D N | G P — ||
Phu - la pā ti ī
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
85
D — N D | P P — || P — — | — D P M ||
hā - tai li ī
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
87
M — M | P D — || M — — | R M — ||
Sa - ra - swa ti - - ī
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
89
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — — — ||
mā - ī lā ī,
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
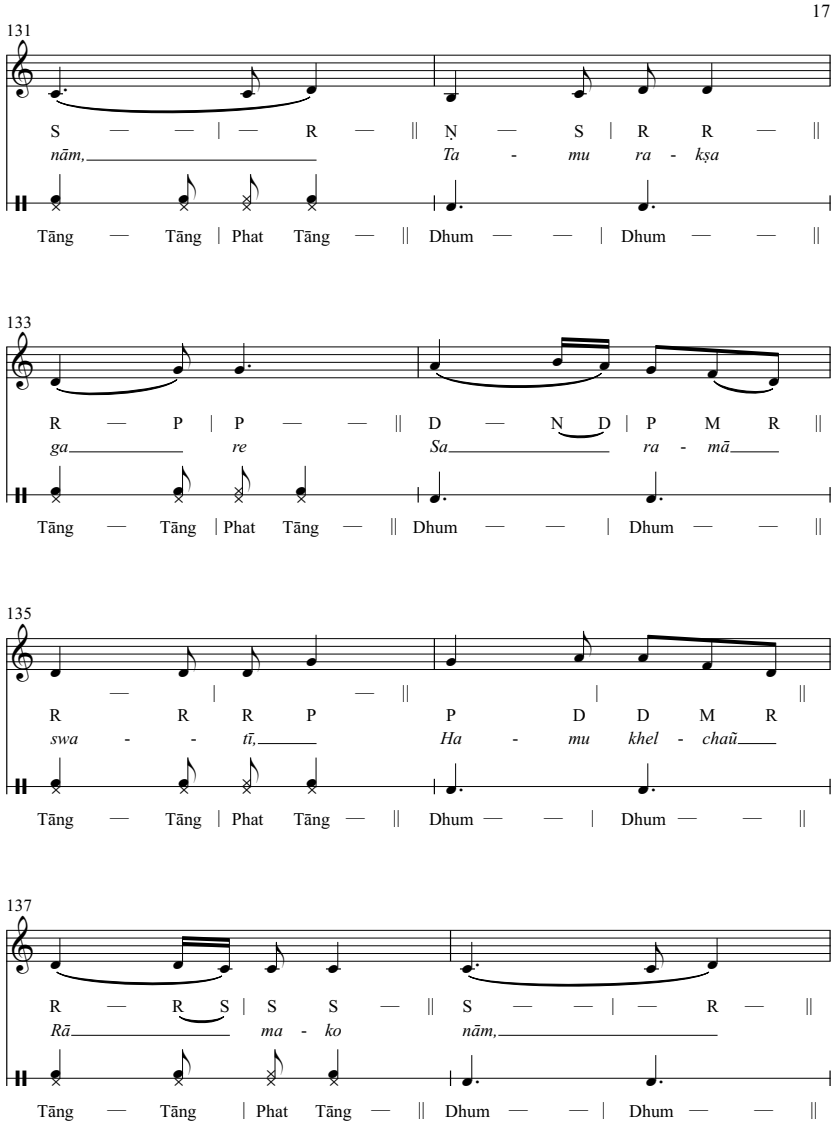

12
91
Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng Phat Tāng | Tāng Dhīn — ||
93
Jhyām Dhī Nā | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng Tāng — | Dhīn — — ||
95
S — — | — R — ||
Hā ā
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
97
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
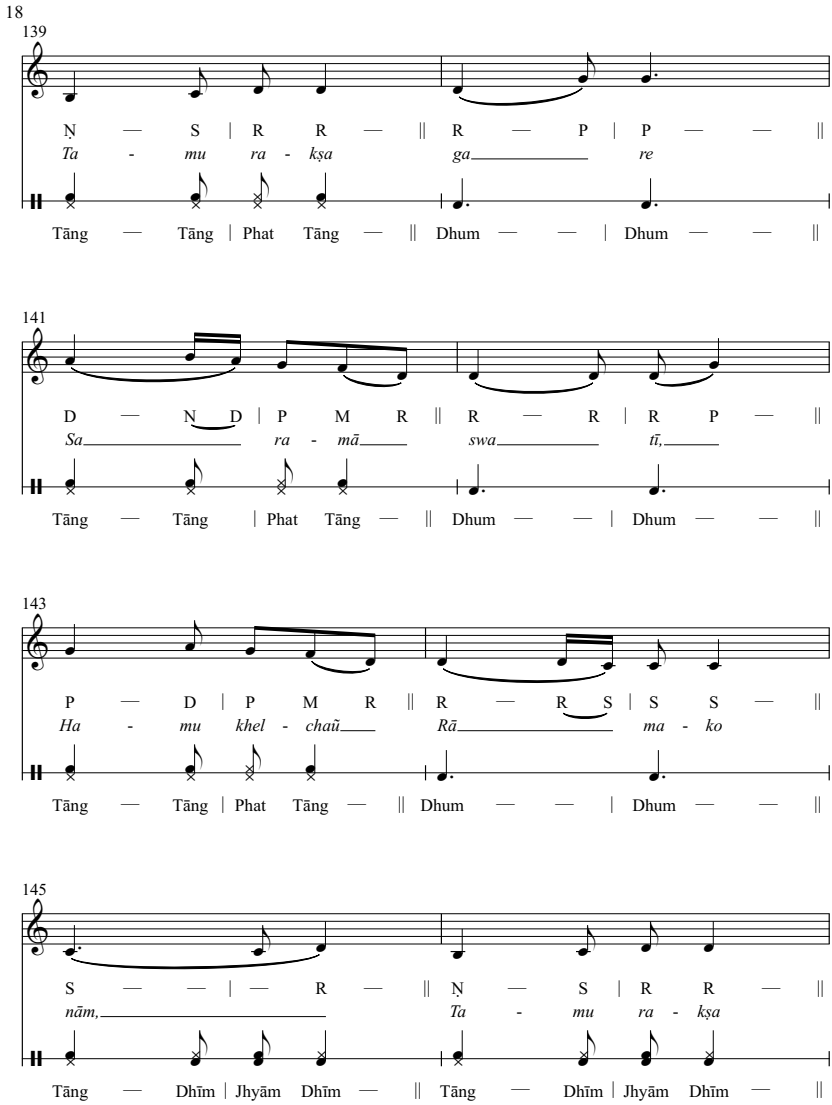

13
99
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
101
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — — | Phat Dhī — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
103
S — — | — R — || Ṇ — S | R R — ||
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — — | Phat Dhīm — || Tāng — — | Phat Dhīn — ||
105
R — P | P — — || D — N D | P M R ||
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — Dhīn | Tāng Dhīn — || Tāng — Dhīn | Tāng Dhīn — ||
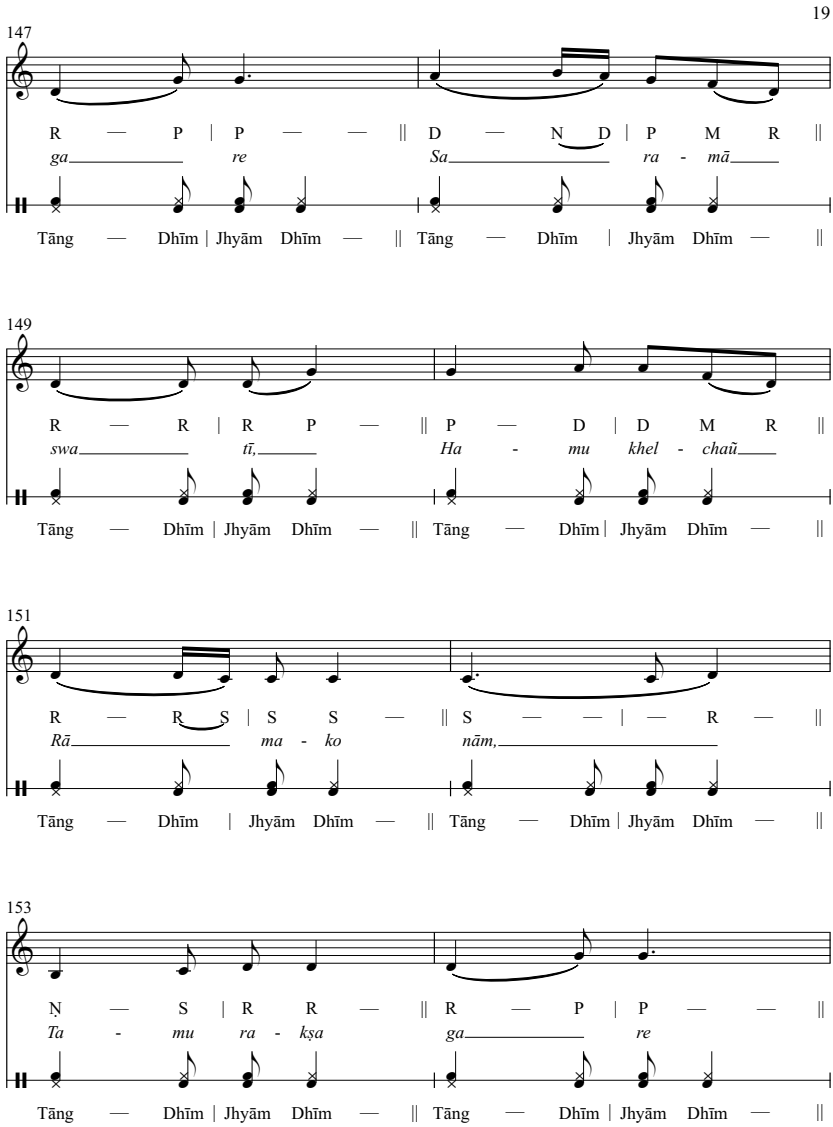

14
107
R — R | R P — || P — D | D M R ||
swa tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — Dhīn | Tāng Dhīn — || Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ||
109
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ||
111
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ||
113
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ||
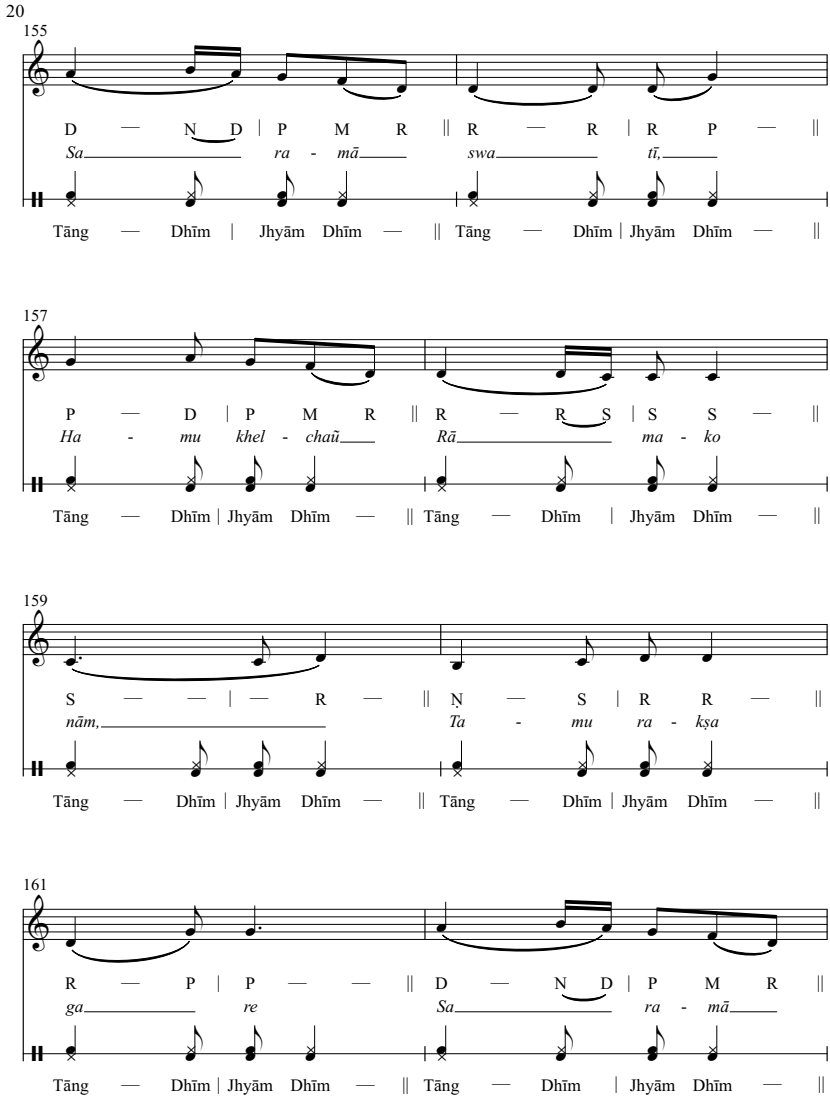

15
115
P — D | P M R ‖ R — R S | S S — ‖
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ‖
117
S — — | — R — ‖ Ṇ — S | R R — ‖
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm — ‖
119
R — P | P — — ‖ D — N D | P M R ‖
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖
121
R — R | R P — ‖ P D | D M R ‖
swa - - tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖

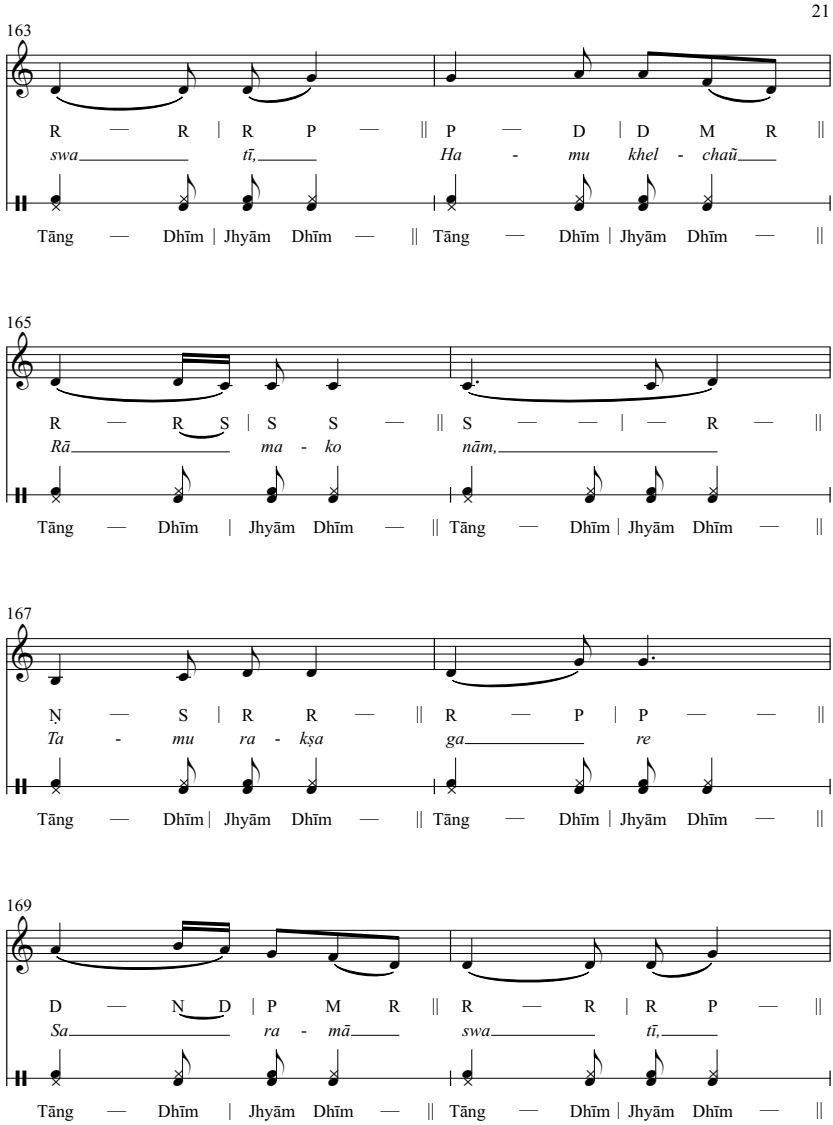

16
123
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
125
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
127
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
129
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||

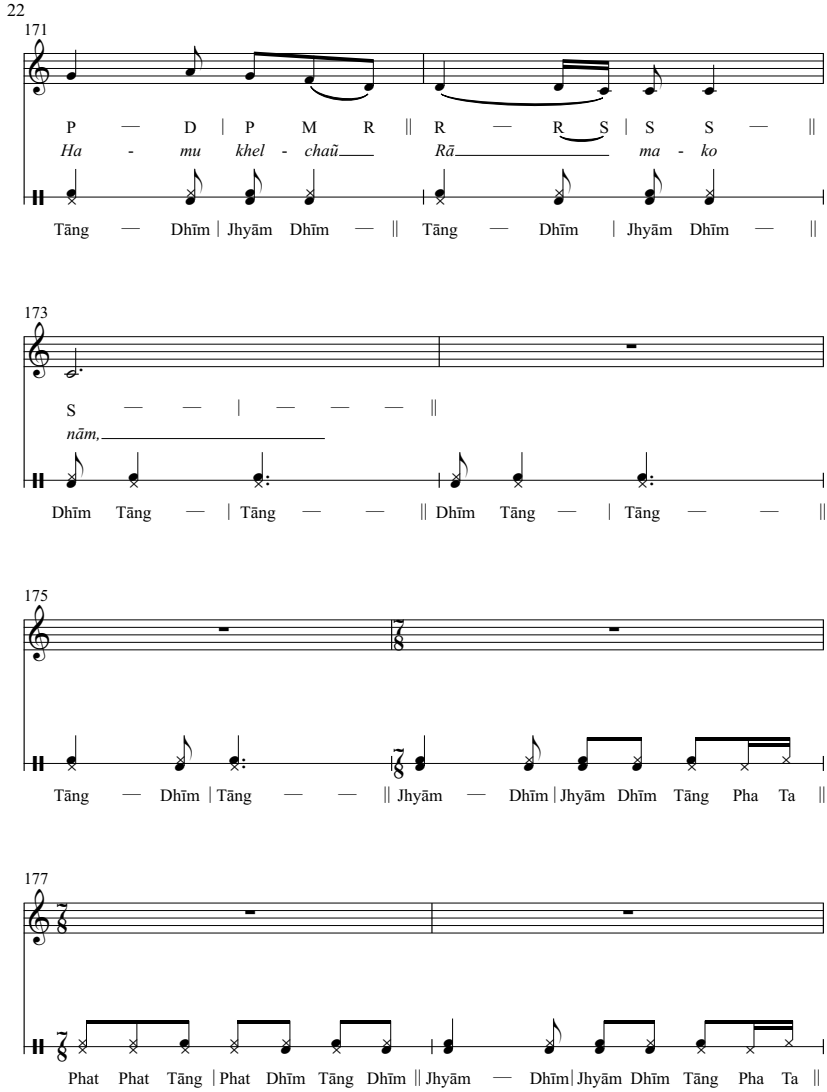

17
131
S — — | — R — ‖ Ṇ — S | R R — ‖
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖
133
R — P | P — — ‖ D — N D | P M R ‖
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖
135
— | — ‖ | ‖
R R R P P D D M R
swa - - tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖
137
R — R S | S S — ‖ S — — | — R — ‖
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — ‖ Dhum — — | Dhum — — ‖


18
139
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
141
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
143
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — Tāng | Phat Tāng — || Dhum — — | Dhum — — ||
145
S — — | — R — || Ṇ — S | R R — ||
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||


19
147
R — P | P — — ‖ D — N D | P M R ‖
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖
149
R — R | R P — ‖ P — D | D M R ‖
swa tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖
151
R — R S | S S — ‖ S — — | — R — ‖
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖
153
Ṇ — S | R R — ‖ R — P | P — — ‖
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖ Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ‖


20
155
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
157
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
159
S — — | — R — || Ṇ — S | R R — ||
nām, Ta - mu ra - kṣa
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
161
R — P | P — — || D — N D | P M R ||
ga re Sa ra - mā
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||


21
163
R — R | R P — || P — D | D M R ||
swa tī, Ha - mu khel - chaũ
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
165
R — R S | S S — || S — — | — R — ||
Rā ma - ko nām,
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
167
Ṇ — S | R R — || R — P | P — — ||
Ta - mu ra - kṣa ga re
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
169
D — N D | P M R || R — R | R P — ||
Sa ra - mā swa tī,
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||


22
171
P — D | P M R || R — R S | S S — ||
Ha - mu khel - chaũ Rā ma - ko
Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — || Tāng — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm — ||
173
S — — | — — — ||
nām,
Dhīm Tāng — | Tāng — — || Dhīm Tāng — | Tāng — — ||
175
Tāng — Dhīm | Tāng — — || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm Tāng Pha Ta ||
177
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm Tāng Pha Ta ||

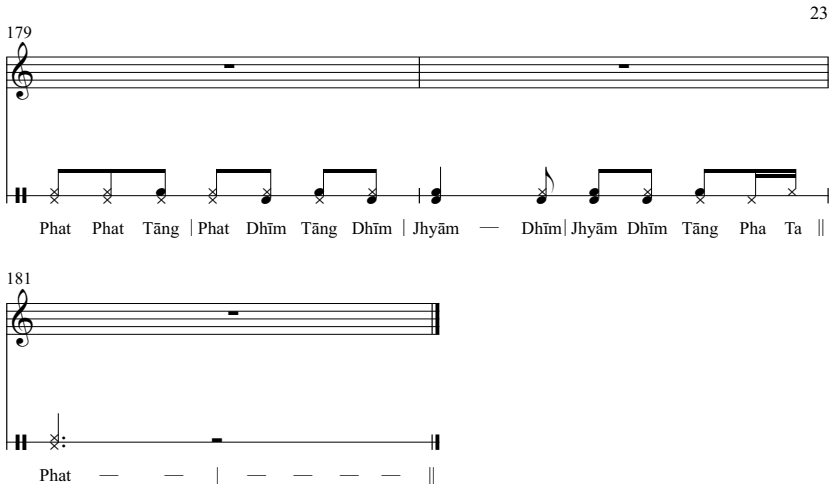



Fig. 4.27 Traditional. Song in Charitra Tāl: Tamu rakṣa gare saramāswatī/ Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

When dancing according to the above example of charitra song, it is customary to use a rolling pattern to bring the tāl around and repeat the song many times. Also, more or fewer types of bols can be used, compared to the number used in this example. In charitra dance the dancers must crouch down in the middle, and in signaling this dance step with the mādal, the custom of mixing charitra tāl with soraṭhī is found in many places. The custom of crouching down on the ending bol is also found in some places. When playing for charitra dance, if another dance is to come directly after, one can continue playing the mādal after the ending bol as necessary. If the dance is to be stopped after mixing in the soraṭhī bols, the 'phat' written above is where the dance stops. The ways of continuing on from the ending bol of charitra tāl into other tāls are as follows; you must practice these very well.

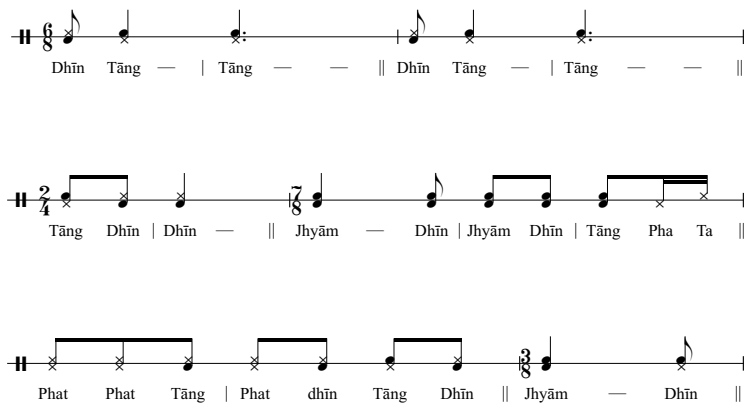
Video 4.13 Taking Charitra Tāl Into Soraṭhī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112713. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:05 minutes.

Video 4.14 Taking Charitra Tāl Into Khyālī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112714. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:55 minutes.

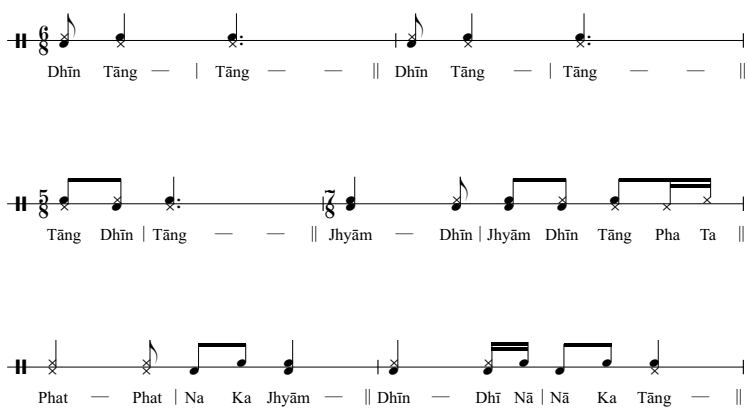
Video 4.15 Taking Charitra Tāl Back Into Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112715. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:56 minutes.

## Taking Charitra Tāl Into Other Tāls

1) From *charitra* into *soraṭhī tāl*




2) From *charitra* into *khyālī tāl*



2

3) From *charitra* back into *charitra tāl*

a)

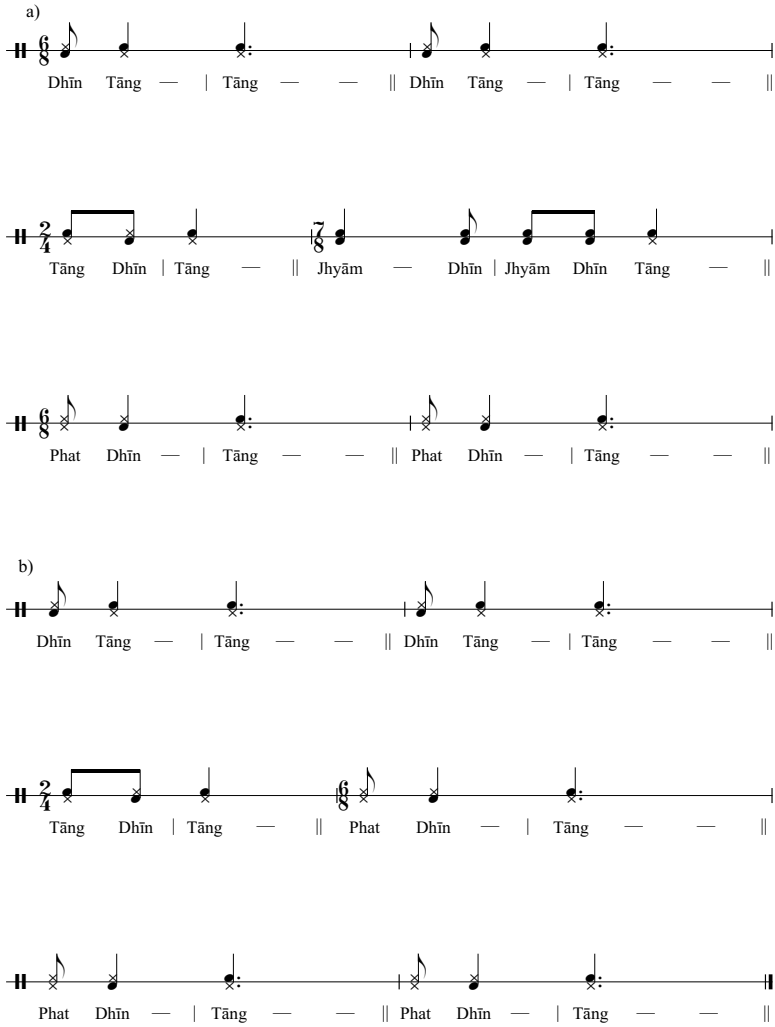



Fig. 4.28 Subi Shah, taking charitra tāl into other tāls. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

It is very good to know the ways of taking charitra tāl into other tāls. If you do not know how to do this, the dance will not necessarily stop, because some troupes stop the dance and then begin another tāl, but expert mādalists know how to join tāls together without

stopping. According to folk rules, the mādal only stops when transitioning from jhyāure to khyālī bhākā. The main reason for this is that the mādal only starts after the song has been sung. Thus, it is crucial to know these rules.

In fact, dances and songs in the above charitra tāl are not popular today. The main reason for their not becoming popular is the shortage of mādalists. There seem to be no mādalists in any organization who can play the mādal according to village rules. To tell the truth, people become artists at the radio and in various organizations today even if they only know the ordinary bols of jhyāure and khyālī. Thus, dances like soraṭhī, charitra, and khyālī have not become popular. It is with the aim of addressing this weakness that this book has been written, with the wish that mādalists will play the mādal correctly according to our folk rules.



Video 4.16 Charitra Dance 2, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112726. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 12:54 minutes.

## Supplementary Video for Charitra Tal



Video 4.17 Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112733. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:34 minutes.

# Soraṭhī Tāl

Soraṭhī tāl is famous among the folk tāls in the central part of the Kingdom of Nepal. It is the tāl for the story of King Jayasingh and Queen Hemaiti, told in song and dance. As it takes a lot of hard work to play on the mādal, most mādal artists do not know it. Thus the soraṭhī dance is not found everywhere. Even though there are not very many bols in soraṭhī tāl, it is difficult to play well. Actually, two tāls are mixed in soraṭhī tāl. These two tāls include the first, starting tāl, otherwise known as lāmī tāl, and the second, returning tāl, otherwise known as chhoṭī tāl.[86] Some also call this second one *chaltī tāl*. Dance steps and formation are completely different in these two types of tāl.

Lāmī tāl is slow, and cymbals and handclaps are played in a pattern of seven beats. This tāl is counted in the following manner:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| | X | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |
| 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | 3 | | \|\| | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | 3 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| | O | | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| |
| 3) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | \| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \|\| | 1 | | 2 | \| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | \|\| | 8 | 9 | 10 | \| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| | O | | | \| | X | | X | | |

Table 4.15 Dance steps and counting for Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl.

86 Referring to the second tāl as the 'returning tāl' demonstrates that these tals are indeed considered as rhythmic cycles. Here the return is to the first tāl, lāmī tāl, and the beginning of another full iteration of a Soraṭhī dance and its songs in both tāls.

## Soraṭhī Tāl

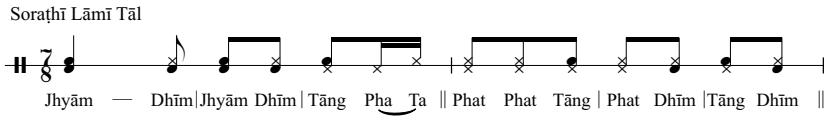



Fig. 4.29 Subi Shah, Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Because the cymbals and handclaps are not divided into equal numbers of beats, the way of counting soraṭhī lāmī tāl is somewhat different. The first measure has three beats, and the second and third each have two beats. Cymbals and handclaps play on the first beat of each group. Mādal bols in lāmī tāl are made in fourteen beats. The eighth beat is empty, as shown above. Although it is true that in folk rules, no beats are left empty, when looking at the form of this bol it seems like the eighth beat could be left empty, so this form is also shown.

Soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl contains two groups of four and four beats, with four and eight-beat bols, which is the same as khyālī tāl, but khyālī tāl bols are not customarily used in this tāl. There is still a custom of using bols specifically made for soraṭhī. These are counted in this way:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| | | | | | | |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| | | | | | | |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| | | | | | | |
| 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| | 3 | | | | \| | 4 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | O | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.16 Dance steps and counting for Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl.




Fig. 4.30 Subi Shah, Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Actually, soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl is thought of as having a fast tempo, and its tempo is similar to khyālī, though its bols do not match those of khyālī. Likewise, to this day no custom exists of singing any songs besides soraṭhī songs in these tāls.

These days, it is fair to say that the artists who sing and play soraṭhī have already been lost. Thus the reason for soraṭhī being lost is that '*būḍho bhayo sab raṅg gayo ãgan bhayo pardeś*'—'in old age, all colors fade and one's yard is a foreign land'—old artists now cannot leave their beds, and it is more profitable for young artists to learn foreign dances than to learn the broken remnants of soraṭhī, so who will bring back soraṭhī performance? Another thing is that young mādalists have an appetite for modern mādal styles in modern songs, so old tāls from dances like soraṭhī and pāṅgdure dance are being lost. In order to bring back the ancient soraṭhī I have given here the style of playing and counting based on my own experience and village customs. Here are examples of bols in both lāmī tāl and chhoṭī tāl, from which readers can get full knowledge of both.

Video 4.18 Mādal Bols used in Soraṭhī Tāls, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112716. Kamal Oli and Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:47 minutes.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | 3 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | \| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | \|\| |

Table 4.17 Dance steps and counting for the below bols in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl.

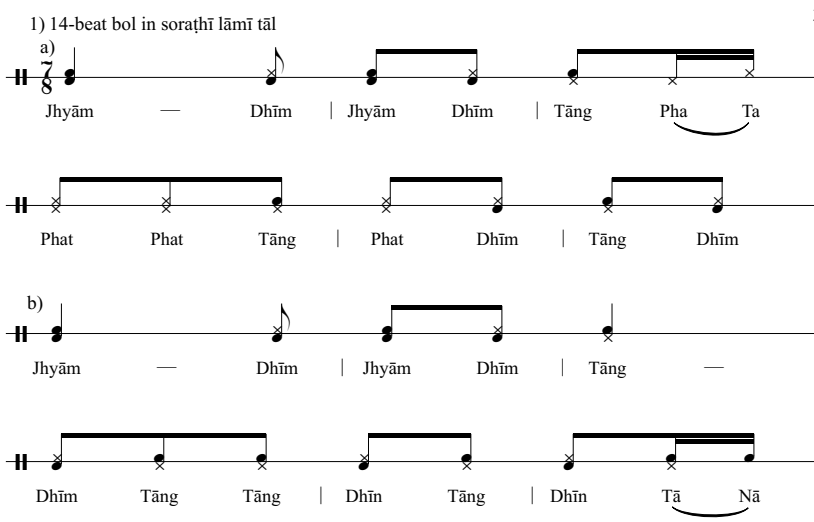



Fig. 4.31 Subi Shah, fourteen-beat bol in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

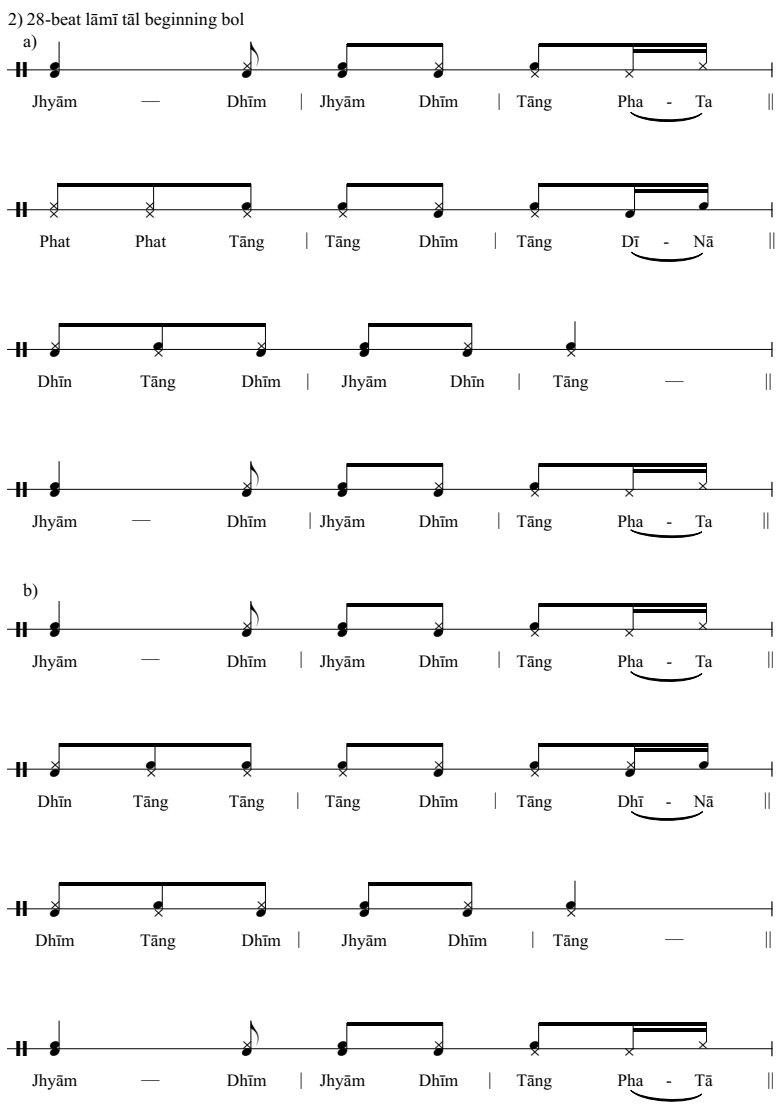



Fig. 4.32 Subi Shah, twenty-four-beat beginning bols in Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

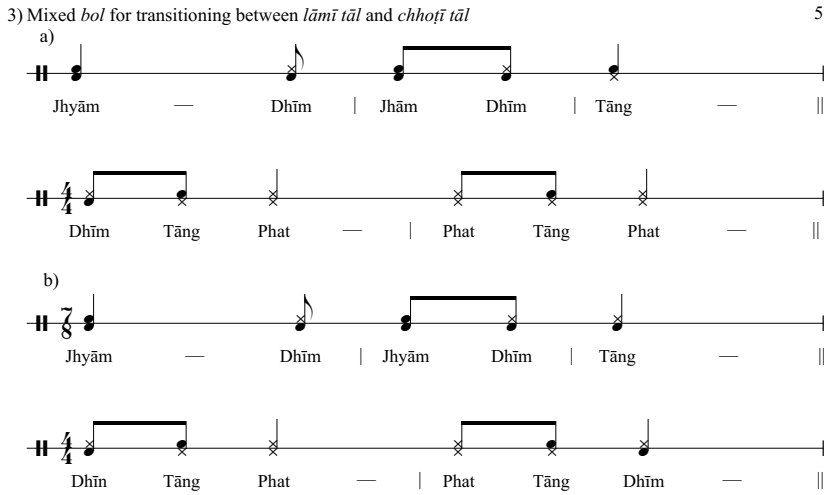



Fig. 4.33 Subi Shah, mixed bol for transitioning between Lāmī Tāl and Chhoṭī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |
| 2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | | 4 | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.18 Dance Steps and Counting for one and four-beat ordinary chhoṭī tāl bols.

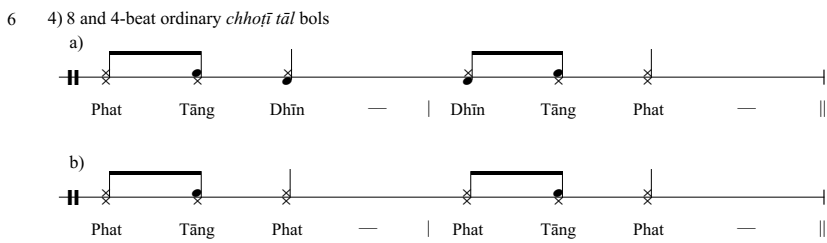



Fig. 4.34 Subi Shah, eight and four-beat ordinary chhoṭī tāl bols. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |
| 2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |

Table 4.19 Dance Steps and Counting for twenty-four-beat chhoṭī tāl beginning bols.

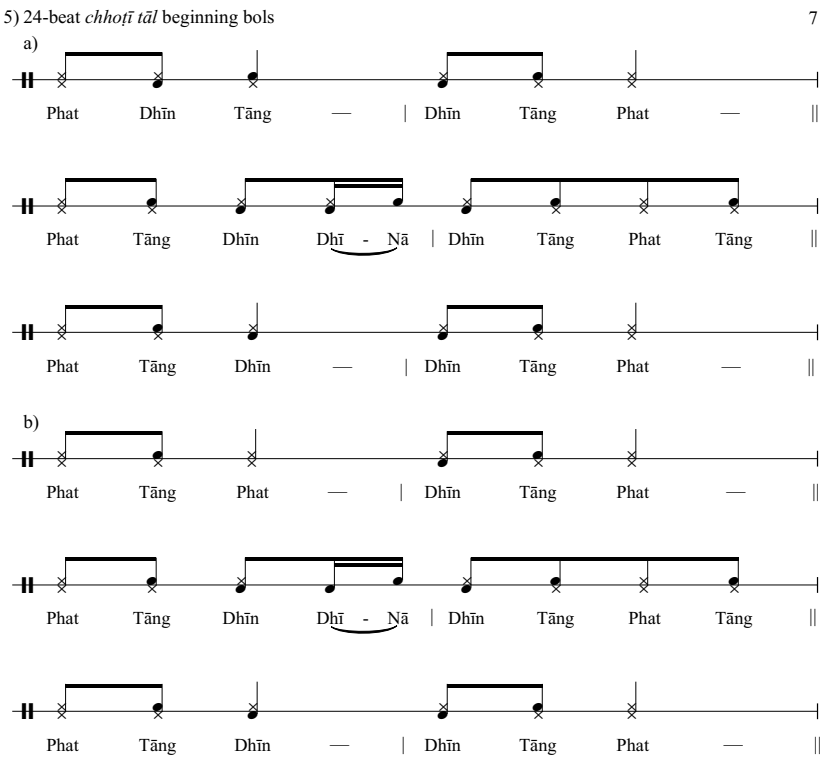



Fig. 4.35 Subi Shah, twenty-four-beat chhoṭī tāl beginning bols. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

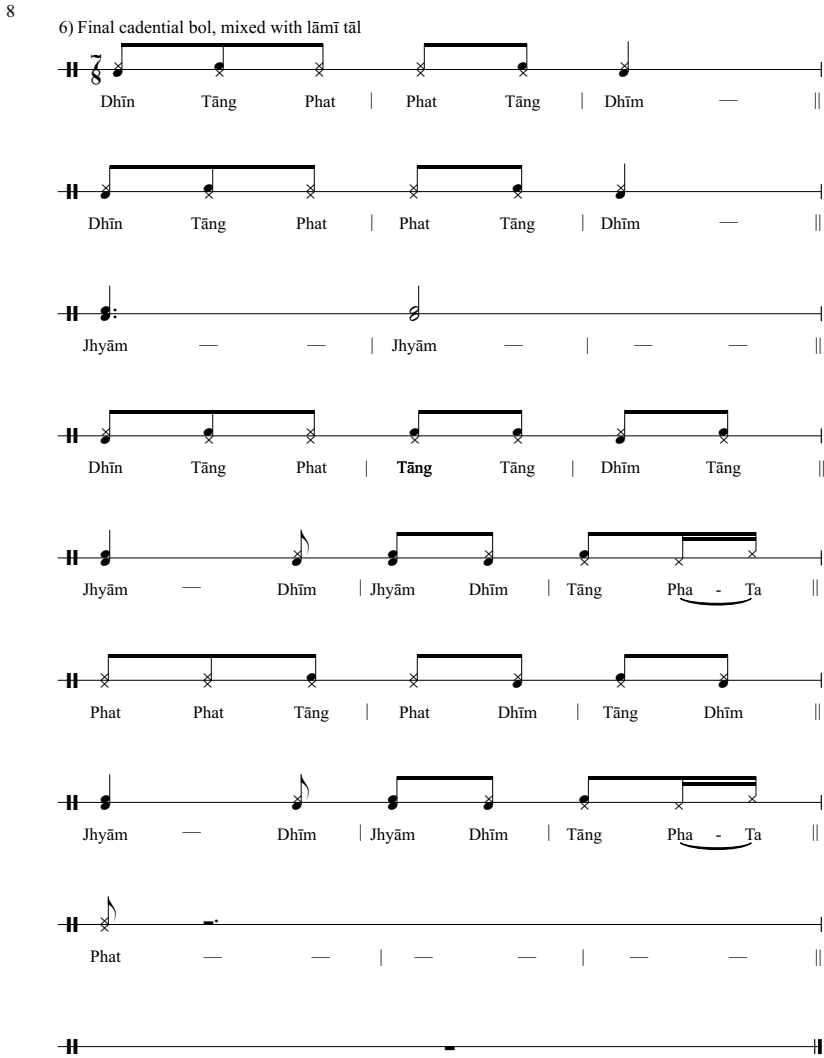



Fig. 4.36 Subi Shah, final cadential bol, mixed with Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The above bols in lāmī tāl and chhoṭī tāl are used in various places in the soraṭhī dance of the central Nepali villages. Soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl is also counted in sixteen beats, as in the third style given above. In this bol the song customarily starts from either one or five. If it starts from one, the song's melody must be stopped in the middle

or else it does not fall in the correct place. Thus the mādalist must be extremely attentive to whether or not the bols fit with the song, and only then can you master the tāl. With attention to these things, readers can learn how bols fit with a song through the following example. In the villages with elderly song, dance, and mādal gurus, the custom of singing songs and playing the mādal in the style in which this example song is written can still be found.

**Lāmī tāl Song**

*Manai bhayo virakta. Kaise rāja chalāũ?*
*Tīnai kāl bitisakyo. Godai āja khālī bhayo.*
*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ. Chaudhai rānī khālī bhayo.*

My heart is desolate. How can I rule the kingdom?
Three stages of life have already passed. Today, my lap is empty.
Not one, not two. All fourteen queens are barren.
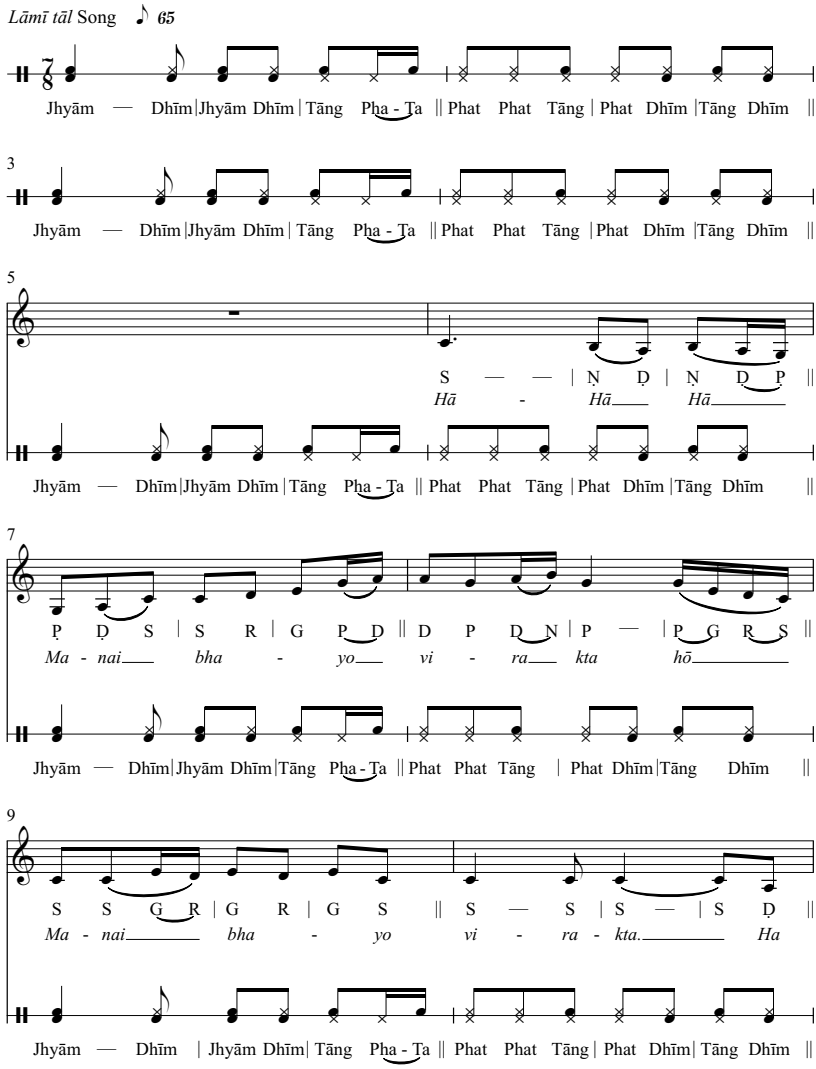
**Chhoṭī tāl Song**
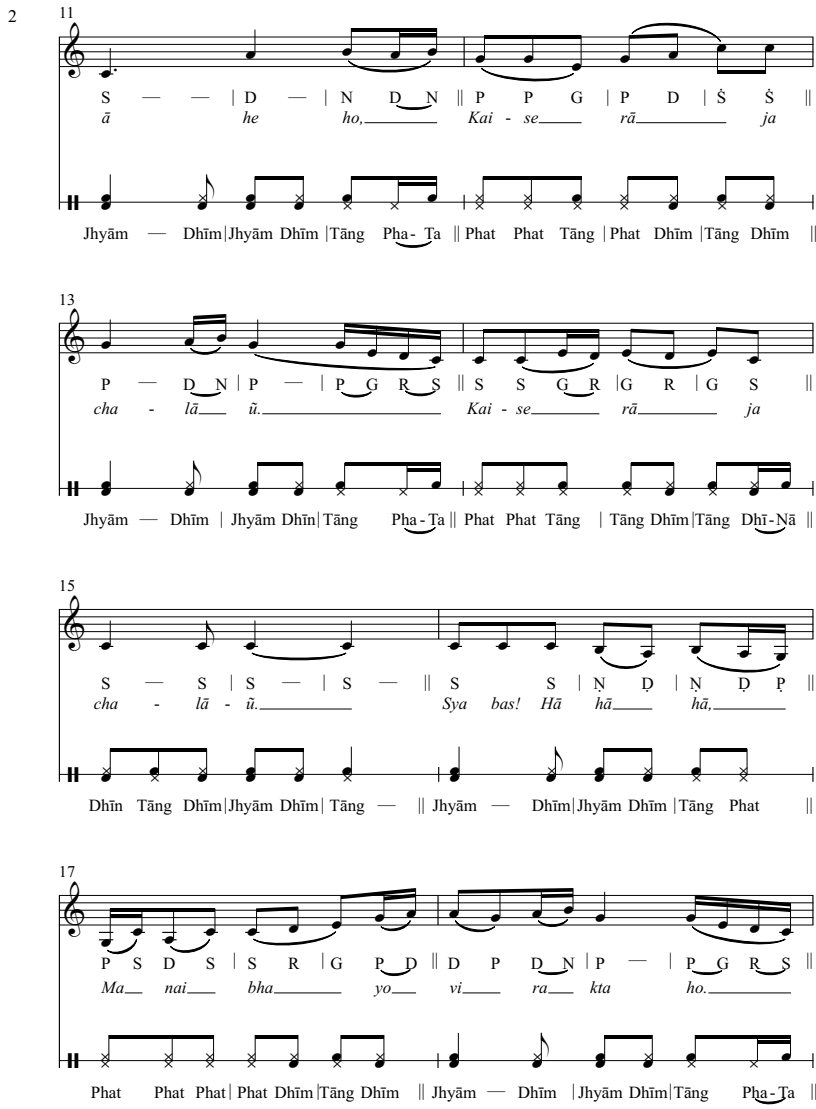
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*
*Punasako jāla kāṭī, kasle bāhira lānchha ra?*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai, manai bujhāī basideū.*
*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ, baru herana jāũlā,*
*Dhurumā dhurū naroū rājai, manai bujhāī basideū.*
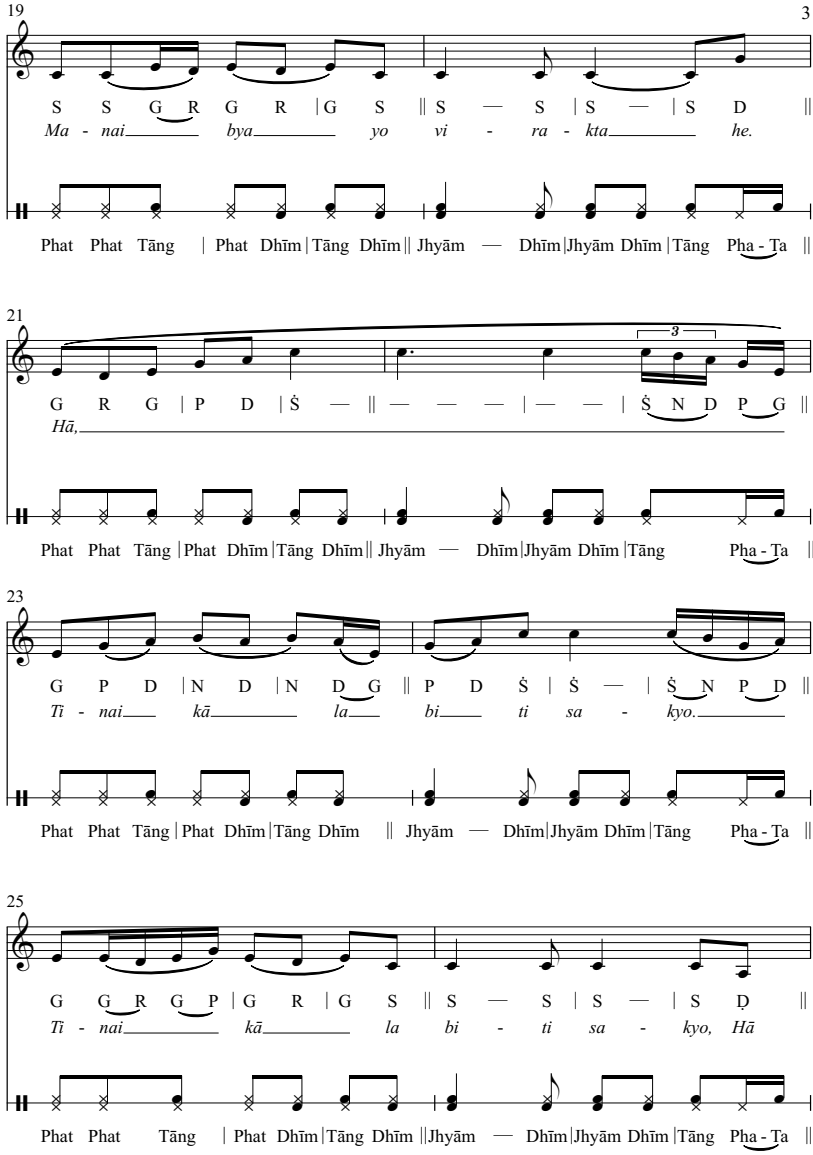
Console yourself.
Can anyone cut the net woven by past lives and throw it out?
Don't sob and cry, King, console yourself.
Not one, not two, we'll go and search for a bride,
Don't sob and cry, King, console yourself.
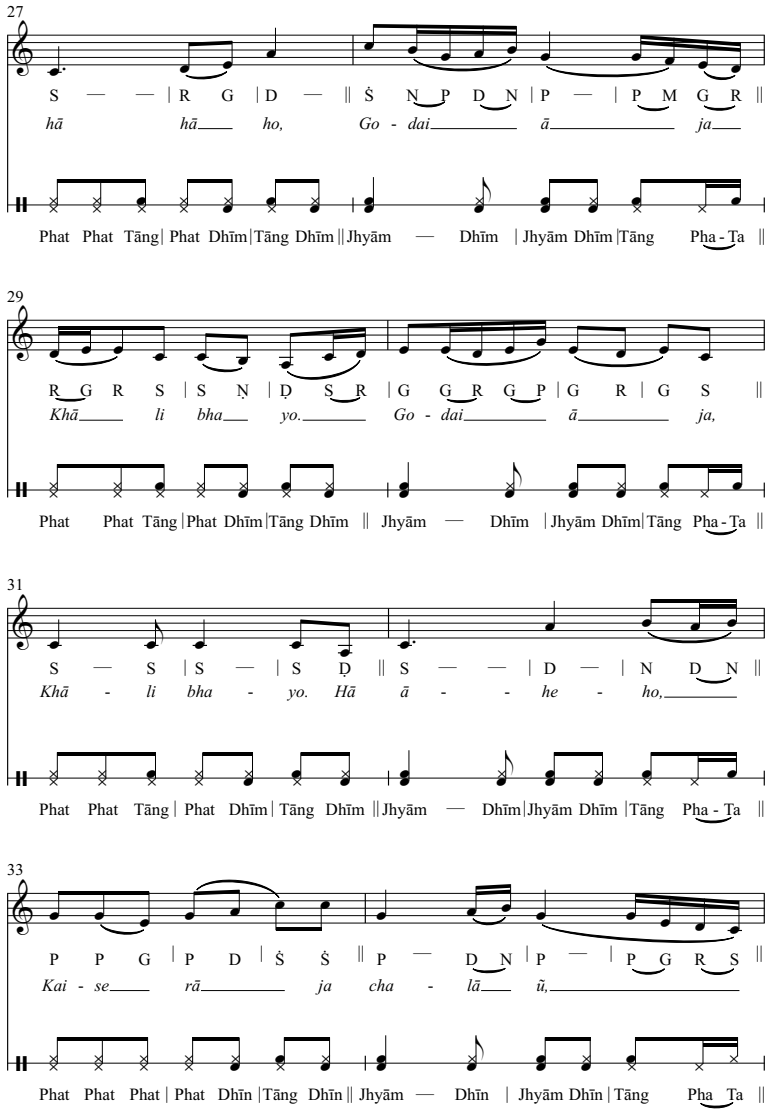
Audio 4.6 Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl Songs, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112722. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:38 minutes. This recording follows the lyrics above and the notated example below.

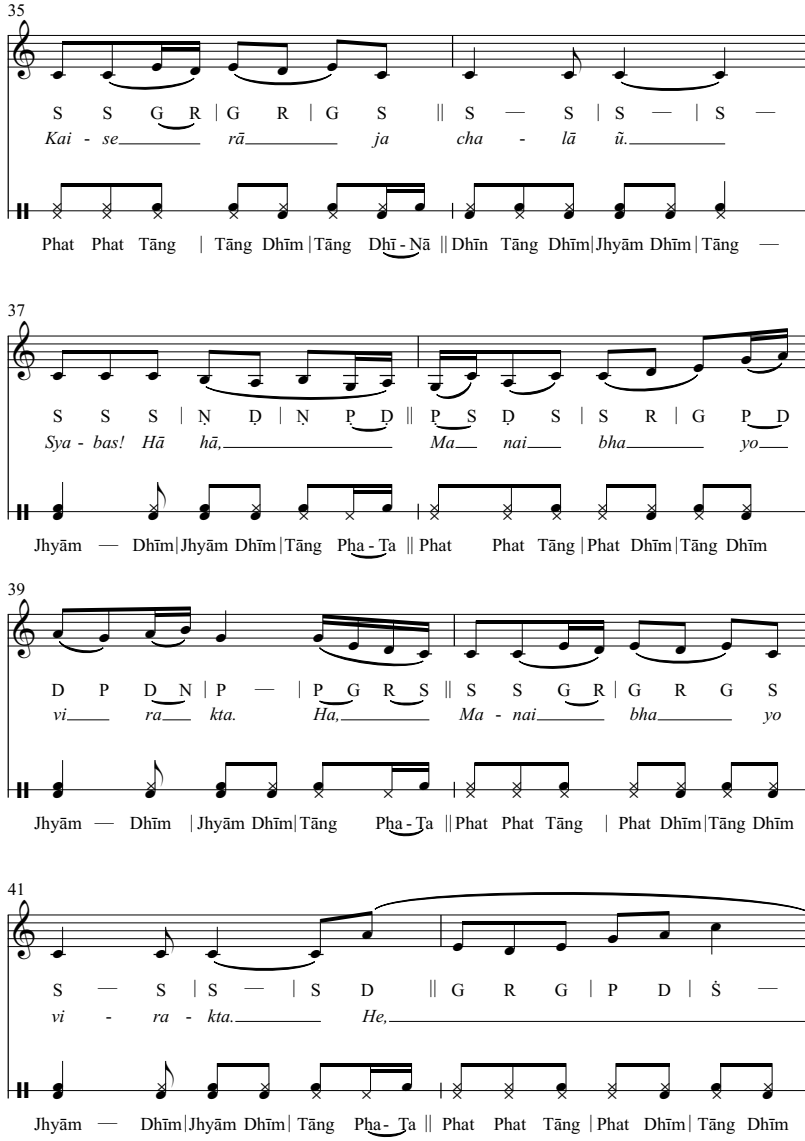
# Soraṭhī Lāmī tāl / Chhoṭī tāl Song
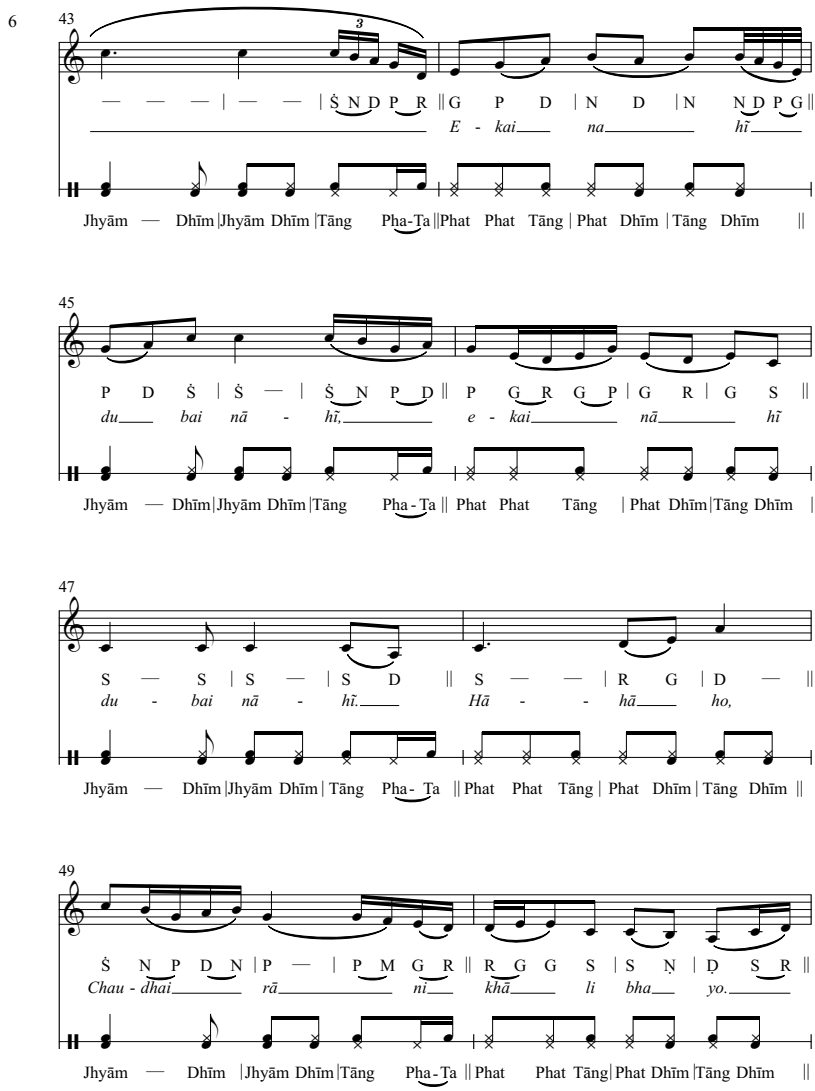


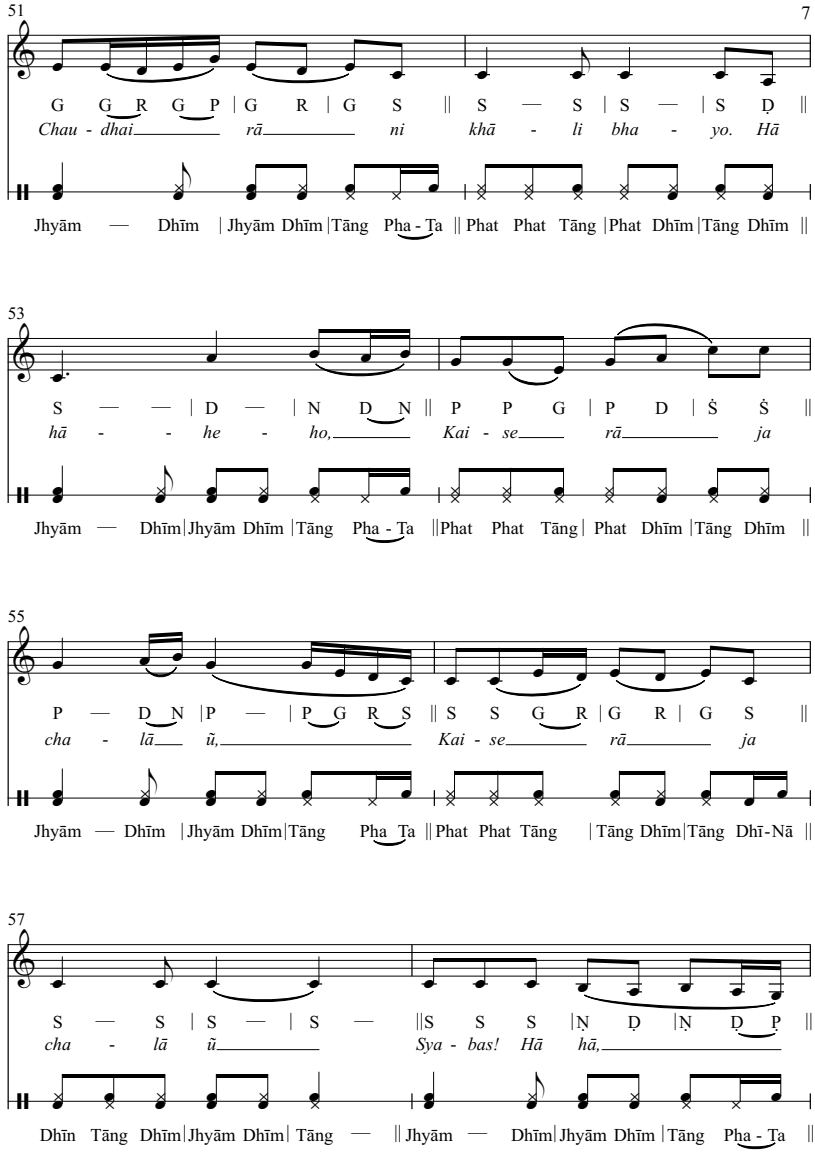

2
11
S — — | D — | N D N || P P G | P D | Ṡ Ṡ ||
ā he ho, Kai - se rā ja
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||
13
P — D N | P — | P G R S || S S G R | G R | G S ||
cha - lā ũ. Kai - se rā ja
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīn | Tāng Pha - Ṭa || Phat Phat Tāng | Tāng Dhīm | Tāng Dhī - Ṇā ||
15
S — S | S — | S — || S S | Ṇ Ḍ | Ṇ Ḍ Ṛ ||
cha - lā - ũ. Sya bas! Hā hā hā,
Dhīn Tāng Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng — || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Phat ||
17
P S D S | S R | G P D || D P D N | P — | P G R S ||
Ma nai bha yo vi ra kta ho.
Phat Phat Phat | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||
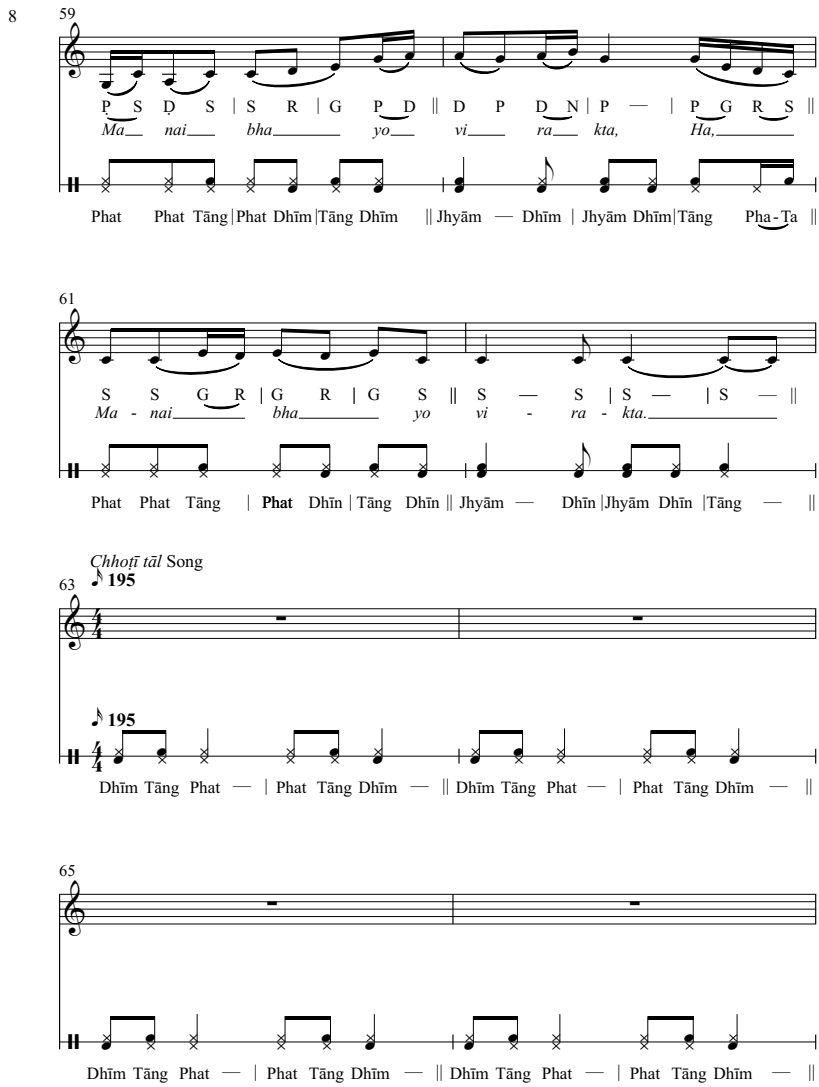

19
3
S S G R G R | G S || S — S | S — | S D ||
Ma - nai bya yo vi - ra - kta he.
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||
21
3
G R G | P D | Ṡ — || — — — | — — | Ṡ N D P G ||
Hā,
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||
23
G P D | N D | N D G || P D Ṡ | Ṡ — | Ṡ N P D ||
Ti - nai kā la bi ti sa - kyo.
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||
25
G G R G P | G R | G S || S — S | S — | S Ḍ ||
Ti - nai kā la bi - ti sa - kyo, Hā
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||
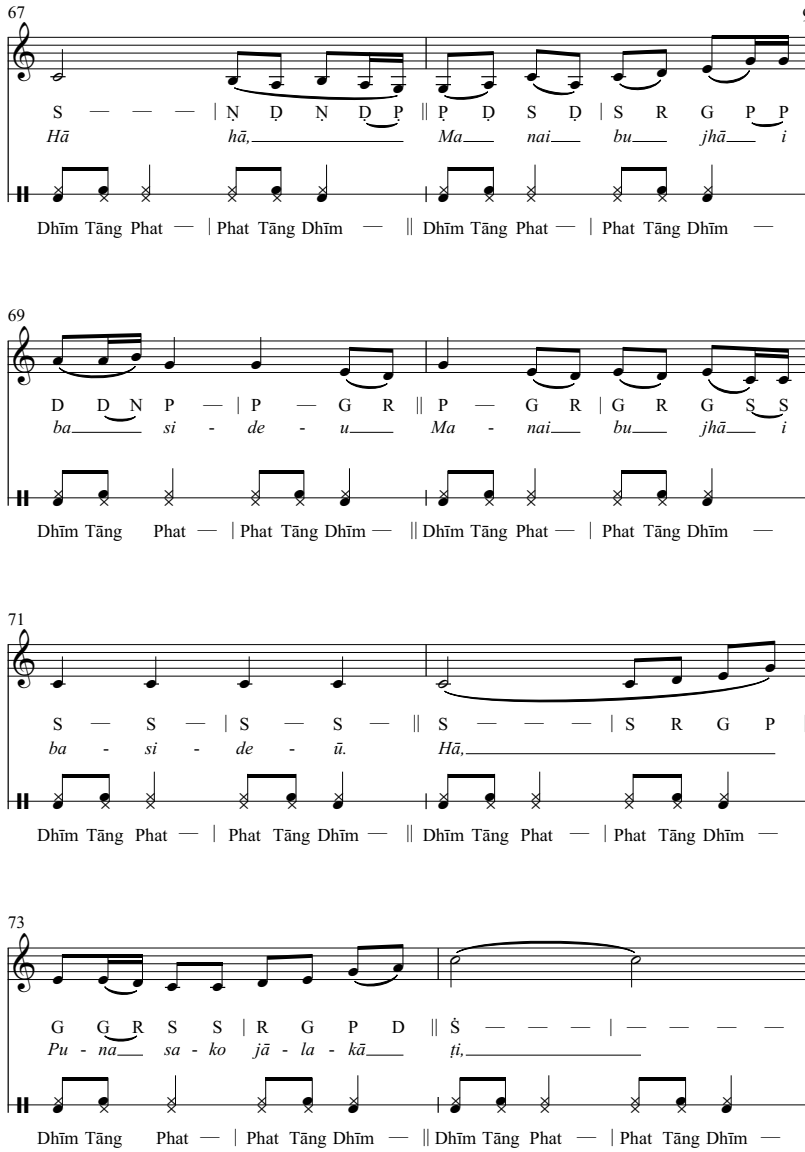

4
27
S — — | R G | D — ‖ Ṡ N P D N | P — | P M G R ‖
hā hā ho, Go - dai ā ja
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖ Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ‖
29
R G R S | S Ṇ | Ḍ S R | G G R G P | G R | G S ‖
Khā li bha yo. Go - dai ā ja,
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖ Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ‖
31
S — S | S — | S Ḍ ‖ S — — | D — | N D N ‖
Khā - li bha - yo. Hā ā - - he - ho,
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖ Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ‖
33
P P G | P D | Ṡ Ṡ ‖ P — D N | P — | P G R S ‖
Kai - se rā ja cha - lā ũ,
Phat Phat Phat | Phat Dhīn | Tāng Dhīn ‖ Jhyām — Dhīn | Jhyām Dhīn | Tāng Pha Ṭa ‖
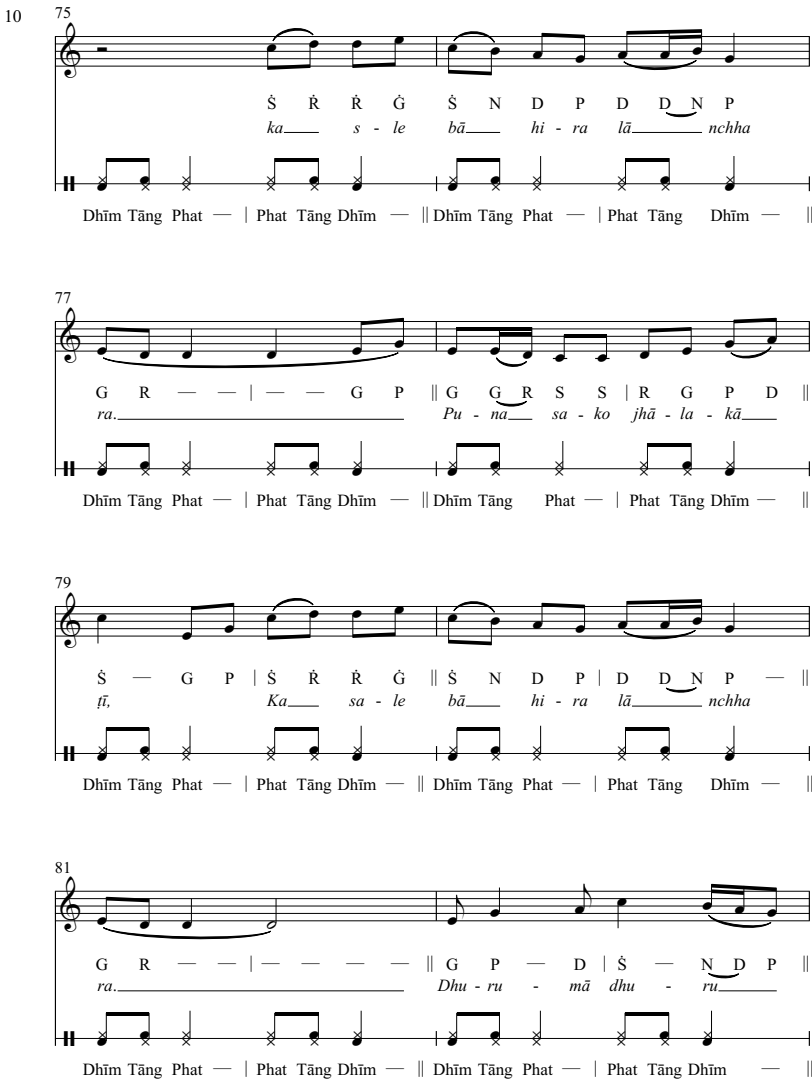

35
5
S S G R | G R | G S || S — S | S — | S —
Kai - se rā ja cha - lā ũ.
Phat Phat Tāng | Tāng Dhīm | Tāng Dhī - Nā || Dhīn Tāng Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng — ||
37
S S S | Ṇ Ḍ | Ṇ P D || P S Ḍ S | S R | G P D ||
Sya - bas! Hā hā, Ma nai bha yo
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ta || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||
39
D P D N | P — | P G R S || S S G R | G R G S ||
vi ra kta. Ha, Ma - nai bha yo
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ta || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||
41
S — S | S — | S D || G R G | P D Ṡ — ||
vi - ra - kta. He,
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ta || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||

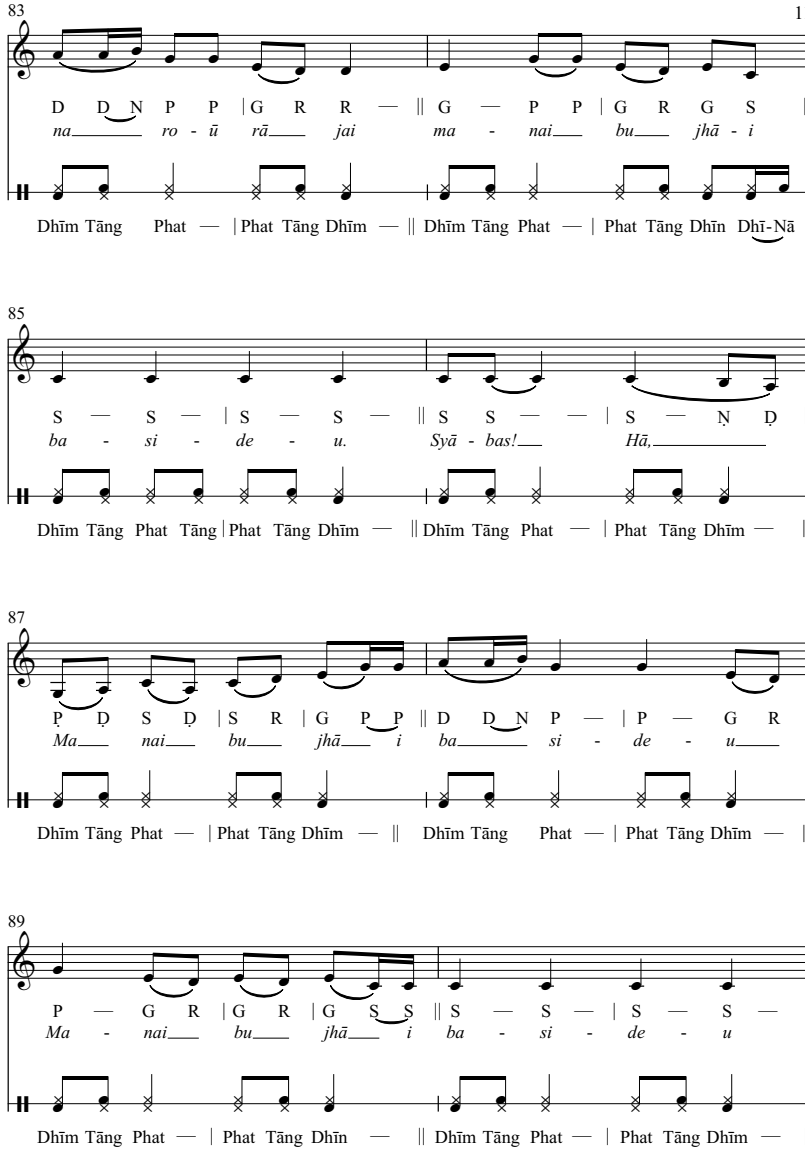

6
43
3
— — — | — — | Ṡ N D P R ‖ G P D | N D | N N D P G ‖
E - kai na hĩ
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha-Ṭa ‖ Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖
45
P D Ṡ | Ṡ — | Ṡ N P D ‖ P G R G P | G R | G S ‖
du bai nā - hĩ, e - kai nā hĩ
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha-Ṭa ‖ Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖
47
S — S | S — | S D ‖ S — — | R G | D — ‖
du - bai nā - hĩ. Hā - - hā ho,
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha-Ṭa ‖ Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖
49
Ṡ N P D N | P — | P M G R ‖ R G G S | S Ṇ | Ḍ S R ‖
Chau - dhai rā ni khā li bha yo.
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha-Ṭa ‖ Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖

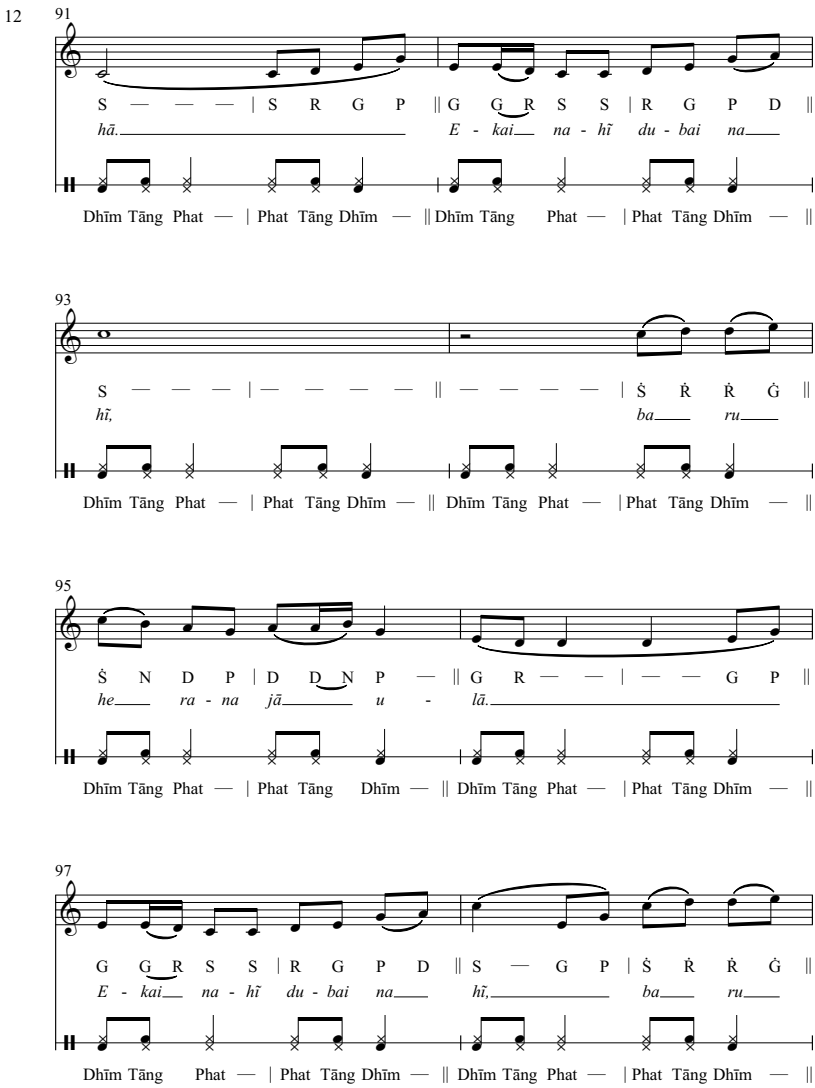

51
7
G G R G P | G R | G S || S — S | S — | S Ḍ ||
Chau - dhai rā ni khā - li bha - yo. Hā
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||
53
S — — | D — | N D N || P P G | P D | Ṡ Ṡ ||
hā - - he - ho, Kai - se rā ja
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa || Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ||
55
P — D N | P — | P G R S || S S G R | G R | G S ||
cha - lā ũ, Kai - se rā ja
Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha Ṭa || Phat Phat Tāng | Tāng Dhīm | Tāng Dhī-Nā ||
57
S — S | S — | S — || S S S | Ṇ Ḍ | Ṇ Ḍ P ||
cha - lā ũ Sya - bas! Hā hā,
Dhīn Tāng Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng — || Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha - Ṭa ||


8
59
P S Ḍ S | S R | G P D ‖ D P D N | P — | P G R S ‖
Ma nai bha yo vi ra kta, Ha,
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīm | Tāng Dhīm ‖ Jhyām — Dhīm | Jhyām Dhīm | Tāng Pha-Ṭa ‖
61
S S G R | G R | G S ‖ S — S | S — | S — ‖
Ma - nai bha yo vi - ra - kta.
Phat Phat Tāng | Phat Dhīn | Tāng Dhīn ‖ Jhyām — Dhīn | Jhyām Dhīn | Tāng — ‖
Chhoṭī tāl Song
63
♪ 195
♪ 195
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ‖ Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ‖
65
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ‖ Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ‖


67
9
S — — — | Ṇ Ḍ Ṇ Ḍ Ṗ || Ṗ Ḍ S Ḍ | S R G P P ||
Hā hā, Ma nai bu jhā i
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
69
D D N P — | P — G R || P — G R | G R G S S ||
ba si - de - u Ma - nai bu jhā i
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
71
S — S — | S — S — || S — — — | S R G P ||
ba - si - de - ū. Hā,
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
73
G G R S S | R G P D || Ṡ — — — | — — — — ||
Pu - na sa - ko jā - la - kā ṭi,
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||


10
75
Ṡ Ṙ Ṙ Ġ Ṡ N D P D D N P
ka s - le bā hi - ra lā nchha
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm —
77
G R — — | — — G P || G G R S S | R G P D ||
ra. Pu - na sa - ko jhā - la - kā
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm —
79
Ṡ — G P | Ṡ Ṙ Ṙ Ġ || Ṡ N D P | D D N P — ||
ṭī, Ka sa - le bā hi - ra lā nchha
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm —
81
G R — — | — — — — || G P — D | Ṡ — N D P ||
ra. Dhu - ru - mā dhu - ru
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm —


83
11
D D N P P | G R R — || G — P P | G R G S ||
na ro - ū rā jai ma - nai bu jhā - i
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīn Dhī-Nā ||
85
S — S — | S — S — || S S — — | S — Ṇ Ḍ ||
ba - si - de - u. Syā - bas! Hā,
Dhīm Tāng Phat Tāng | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
87
Ṇ Ḍ S Ḍ | S R | G P P || D D N P — | P — G R ||
Ma nai bu jhā i ba si - de - u
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
89
P — G R | G R | G S S || S — S — | S — S — ||
Ma - nai bu jhā i ba - si - de - u
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīn — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||


12
91
S — — — | S R G P || G G R S S | R G P D ||
hā. E - kai na - hĩ du - bai na
Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — || Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — ||
93
S — — — | — — — — || — — — — | Ṡ Ṙ Ṙ Ġ ||
hĩ, ba ru
Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — || Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — ||
95
Ṡ N D P | D D N P — || G R — — | — — G P ||
he ra - na jā u - lā.
Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — || Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — ||
97
G G R S S | R G P D || S — G P | Ṡ Ṙ Ṙ Ġ ||
E - kai na - hĩ du - bai na hĩ, ba ru
Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — || Dhĩm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhĩm — ||

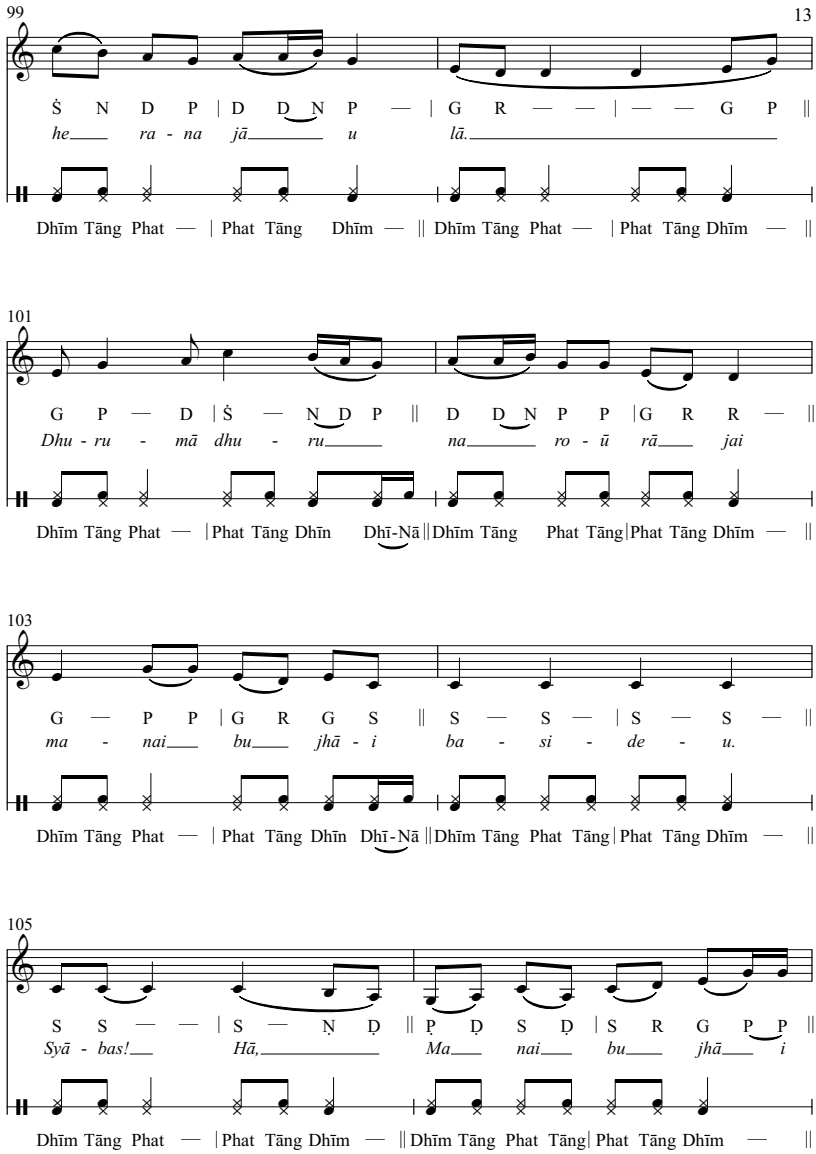

99
13
Ṡ N D P | D D N P — | G R — — | — — G P ||
he ra - na jā u lā.
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
101
G P — D | Ṡ — N D P || D D N P P | G R R — ||
Dhu - ru - mā dhu - ru na ro - ū rā jai
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīn Dhī-Nā || Dhīm Tāng Phat Tāng | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
103
G — P P | G R G S || S — S — | S — S — ||
ma - nai bu jhā - i ba - si - de - u.
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīn Dhī-Nā || Dhīm Tāng Phat Tāng | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
105
S S — — | S — Ṇ Ḍ || Ṛ Ḍ S Ḍ | S R G P P ||
Syā - bas! Hā, Ma nai bu jhā i
Dhīm Tāng Phat — | Phat Tāng Dhīm — || Dhīm Tāng Phat Tāng | Phat Tāng Dhīm — ||
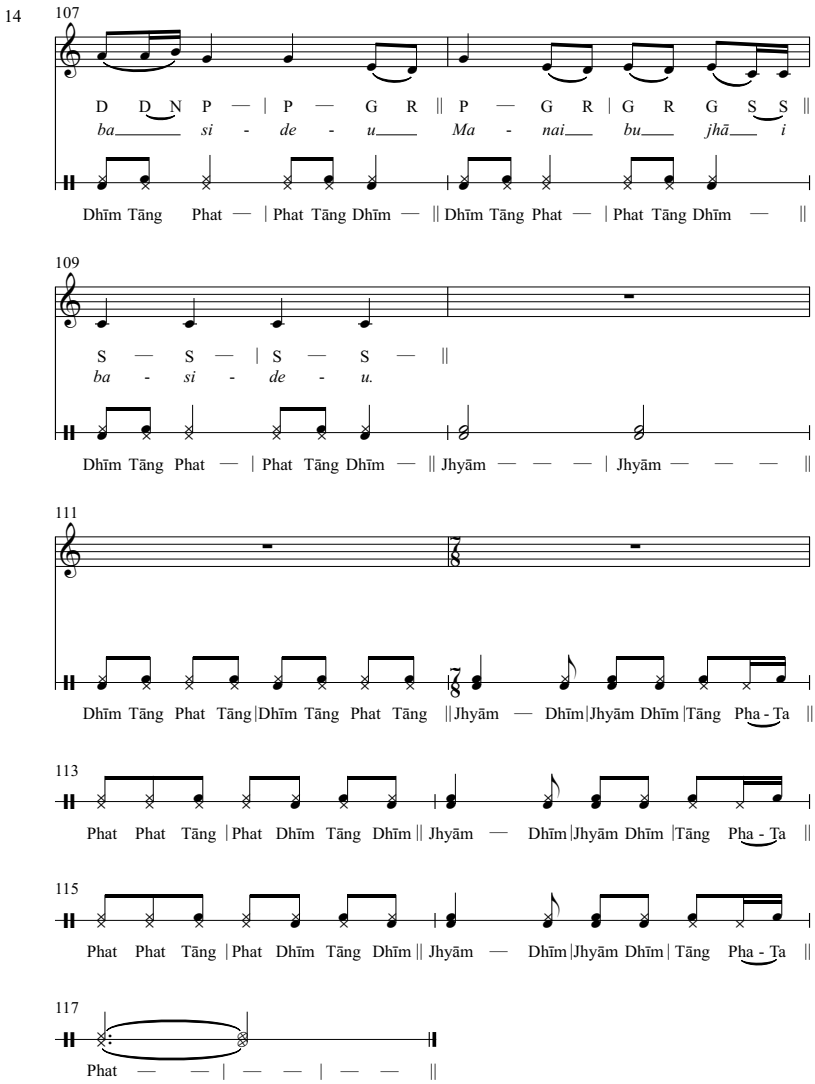



Fig. 4.37 Traditional. Song in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl and Chhoṭī Tāl. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The custom of dancing soraṭhī with mādal bols and songs as in the above example is still found in villages and in army platoons today. According to folk rules, soraṭhī songs are in a meter with

very few syllables, so singers sing alāp in these meters.[87] The main thing is knowing when to sing alāp and when to pronounce the words of the song in soraṭhī lāmī tāl; it is important to know this well. According to the song's rhythm the words of the song can be insufficient, so it is necessary to fill it out with alāp. Likewise in chhoṭī tāl it is important to obey many rules of the song. If dancers, singers, and instrumentalists get out of sync, there is no obvious place to restart the tāl and the dance falls apart. Mainly, in soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl each line of a song has a fixed melody and rhythm, and if a dancer or mādalist falls behind or rushes ahead the song will stop. One must play in time. The rhythm cannot be made shorter or longer. Because of these things, not anyone can dance or play for soraṭhī dance. Another thing, if the dancers get lost in between refrains, singers must also know how many beats or how many measures to wait before resuming the song. Only then will the final ending bol fall in the right place. In fact, these points make it clear that soraṭhī dance has been taking on a classical form through its evolution since ancient times, and this soraṭhī dance is an important one among those included in pāṅgdure dances.



Video 4.19 Sorathi Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112728. Pitambar Sundas, dance guru. Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar, pursuṅge. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar and Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādale. Ram Bahadur Sundas, jhyālī. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 10 December 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:06 minutes.

87 With the term *alāp* Shah is referring here to singing on vocables. In *Soraṭhī*, *Māruni*, *Pāṅgdure* and other such slow dance songs, the vocable is usually simply /ā/ or /hā/.

## Supplementary Videos for Sorathi Tāls



Video 4.20 Soraṭhī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112732. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:02 minutes.



Video 4.21 Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112750. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:19 minutes.



Video 4.22 Soraṭhī Chhotī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112751. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:27 minutes.



Video 4.23 Soraṭhī Tāl Rākhne Bol, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112752. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:22 minutes.

## Garrā Bãdhne Tāl

In our village customs, the way of starting and ending a mārunī dance is extremely important. When the dance is begun, singers pray to all the gods that no one in the garrā or troupe experience suffering. This practice of praying is known as garrā bãdhne (binding the troupe together), or *sakhī lagāune* (sanctifying or, literally, friendship-forming),[88] and the tāl played during these

88 Sakhī is most used in Nepali as a term for a female friend; this term can be

prayers is known as garrā bā̃dhne tāl or sakhī lagāune tāl. While these bols are taken from charitra tāl, they are not played in charitra tāl but only in sakhī lagāune tāl. The custom of sanctifying the performance space is found wherever pāṅgdure dances are danced, but the individual songs used can differ from place to place. In this book, mādal bols are given according to the customs of Katunje, Madhuban, Bhorle, Jyamrung, Salyan, and other villages in West Number 1.[89] Importantly, there is a belief that if pāṅgdure dance is danced without binding the troupe, another troupe may cast spells to make the dancers sick, and it is also said that the local gods of the area, including Sime Bhume,[90] may make the dancers sick. Thus, dancers refuse to dance when the troupe has not been bound. Troupe-binding songs bring Saraswati[91] into the performers' presence. There is a separate tāl for calling and releasing Saraswati, which is called ṭhakan hānne. After the ṭhakan and sakhī lagāune song is finished, a garrā bā̃dhne song is sung. This is in a six-beat tāl, with a cadential pattern in the middle. There are no other bols besides these two. This tāl is counted as follows:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steps | 1 | | | \| | 2 | | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | | \| | 3 | 4 | | \|\| |
| Count | 1 | 2 | 3 | \| | 4 | 5 | 6 | \|\| |
| Claps | X | | | \| | X | | | \|\| |

Table 4.20 Dance Steps and Counting for Garrā Bā̃dhne Tāl.

understood as a reference to binding the performers in friendship, as the lyric 'mādale ho sakhe' is sung. There are other religious connotations to the term: in Vaishnava bhakti practices, the sakhīs are the friends of Radha.

89 All of these villages are near each other in Dhading District.

90 Sime Bhume is a goddess of the soil. More specifically, Bhume is the name for the soil deity that is used in many places in the northern subcontinent, and Sime Bhume could be translated as 'the deity of humid and dry earth.' Bhume or Sime Bhume mediates between the tamed world of agriculture and village life, and the wild world of the forest. For more on Bhume see Gisele Krauskopff, 'Nepalese Chiefs and Gods,' *Diogenes*, 44.174 (1996), pp. 3–26, https://doi.org/10.1177/039219219604417402 and Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, 'The Cult of the Earth Goddess among the Magar of Nepal,' *Diogenes*, 44.174 (1996), pp. 27–44, https://doi.org/10.1177/039219219604417403

91 Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of wisdom and music.

This garrā bā̃dhne tāl is taken from one bol of charitra tāl. According to the rules of folk music, one cannot become a real mādalist without knowing garrā bā̃dhne tāl. Thus it is necessary to know this tāl. The bols in garrā bā̃dhne tāl are of the following types, which have been passed along among village mādalists.

Video 4.24 Madal bols used in garrā bā̃dhne tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112717. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:11 minutes.

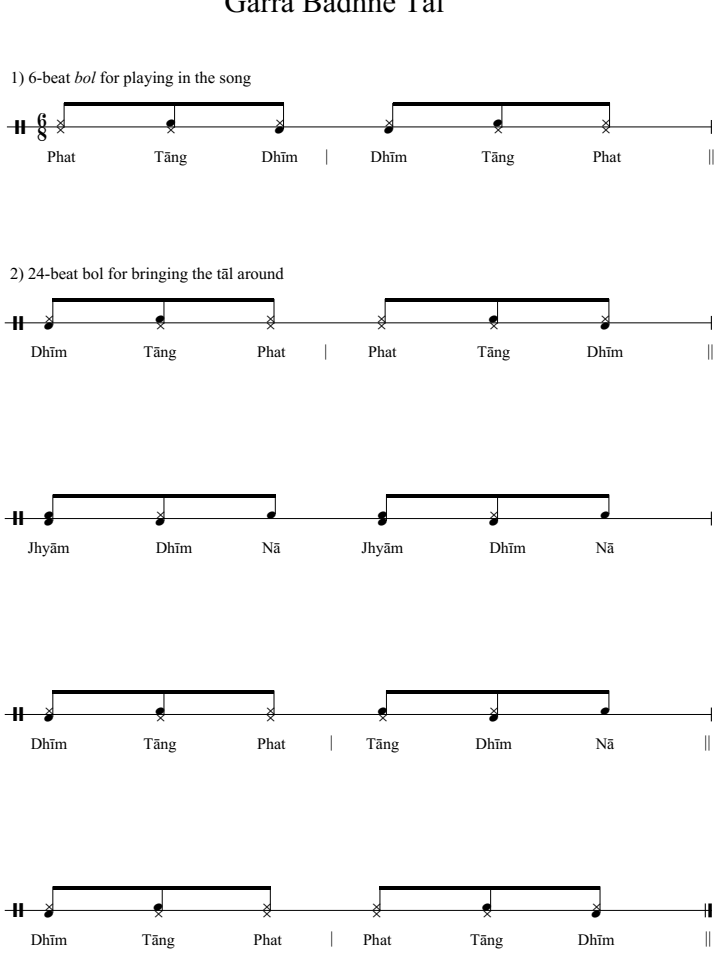



Fig. 4.38 Subi Shah, bols in Garrā Bā̃dhne Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

These two kinds of bols bind the troupe for the dance. All dancers must be present in order to bind the troupe. Troupe-binding dances are still danced according to ancient rules in the villages, but these days this custom seems to be declining in developed areas, because young artists do not bind the troupe in this way. They just worship Saraswati and Natyeshwor[92] in order to be successful at their work. Anyway, it is still clear that deities must be called into the dancers' presence in some way, and if we are to bring our dances openly to festivals according to our folk rules, it is better to dance having bound the troupe together. The way of playing the mādal with a song in garrā bā̃dhne tāl is like this:

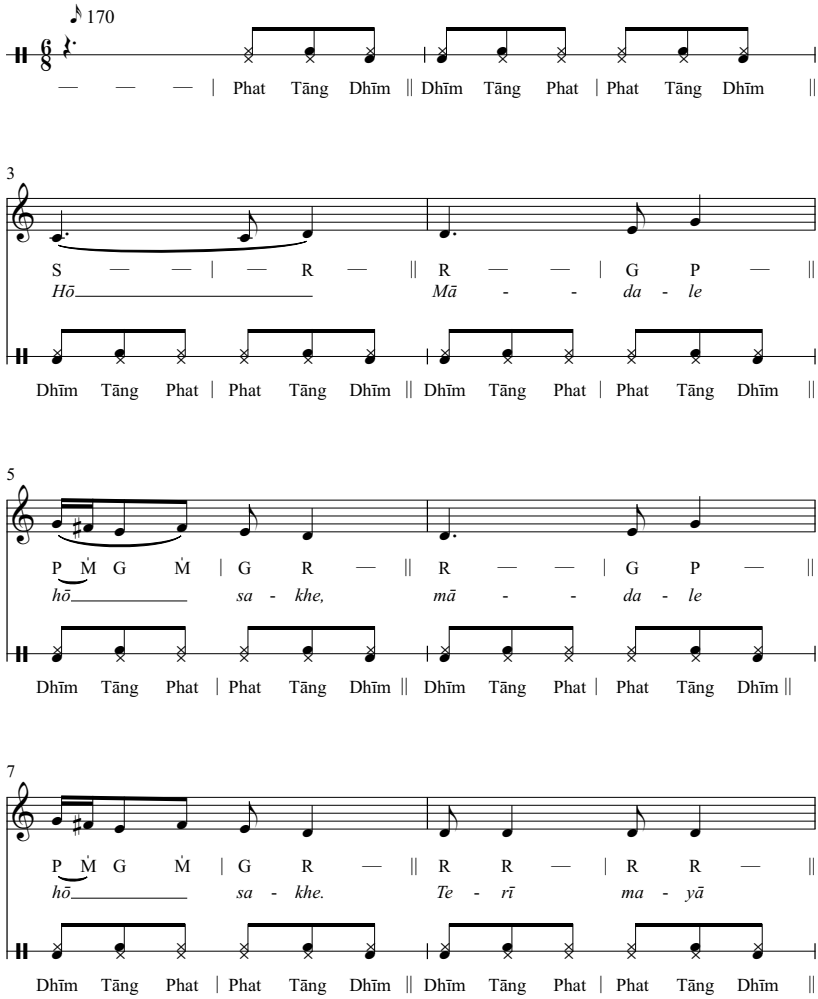
*Mādale ho sakhe, mādale ho sakhe,*
*Terī mayā sama rasa nirai mala ho sakhe,*
*Mādale ho.*
*Saraswaīi māī sevai hamāro.*
*Saraswatī māī sevai hamāro sakhe.*
*Mādale ho.*
*Mādale ho sakhe, mādale ho sakhe.*
*Terī mayā sama rasa nirai mala ho sakhe,*
*Mādale ho.*

Oh, mādal playing friends, oh, mādal playing friends,
May your love remain pure, oh, friends,
Oh, mādal players.
We perform service to Mother Saraswati.
We perform service to Mother Saraswati, friends,
Oh, mādal players.
Oh, mādal playing friends, oh, mādal playing friends,
May your love remain pure, oh, friends,
Oh, mādal players.
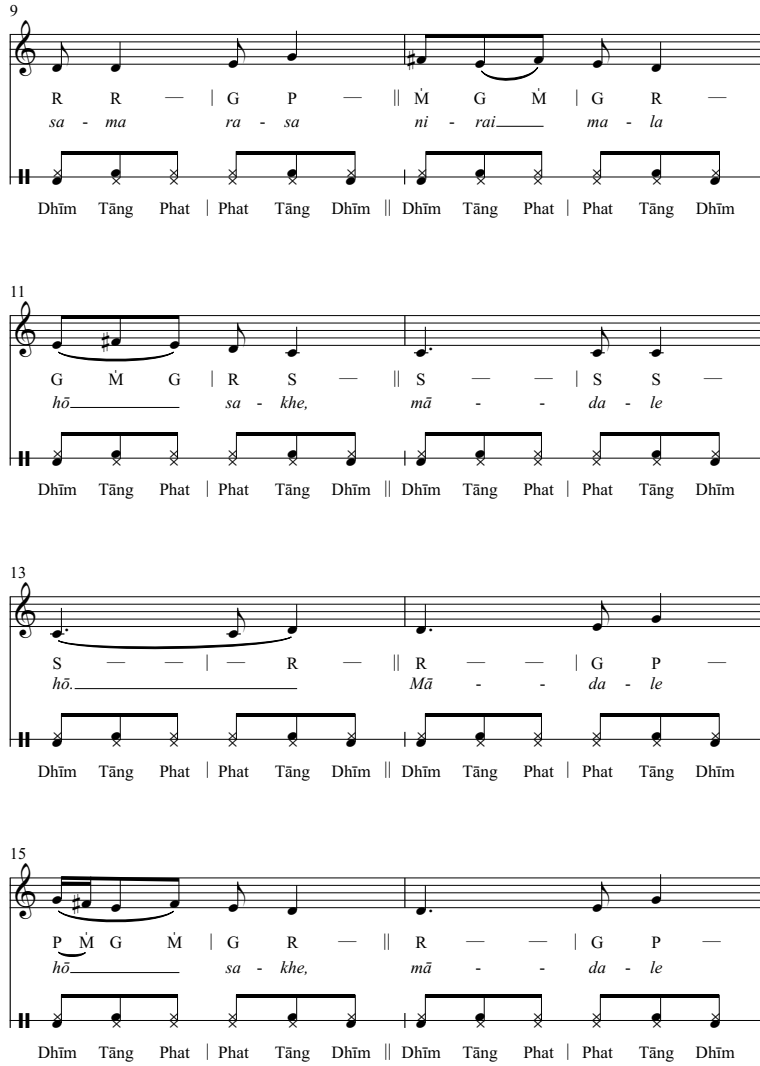
Audio 4.7 Garrā Bā̃dhne Gīt/Song for Binding the Troupe, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112723. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, Production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:15 minutes.

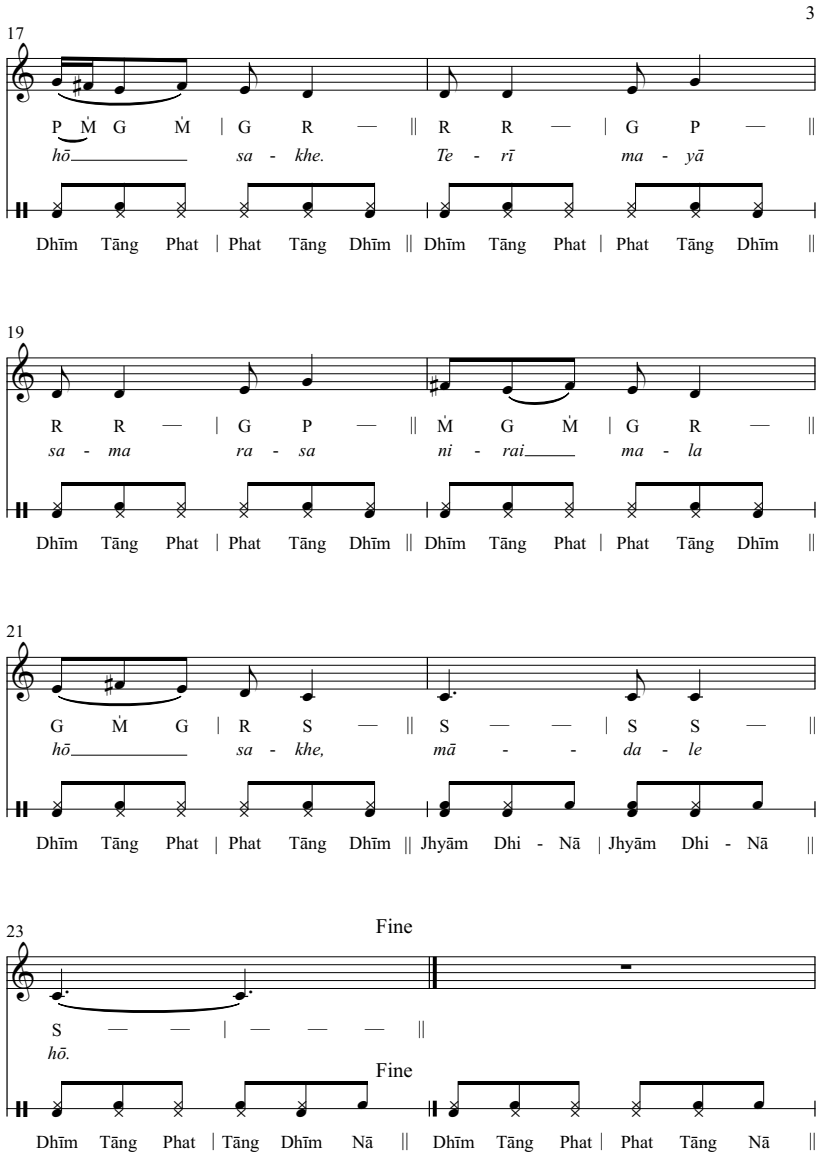
92 Natyeshwor is Shiva in his form as Lord of the Dance.

# Garrā Bãdhne Song: Mādale Ho Sakhe

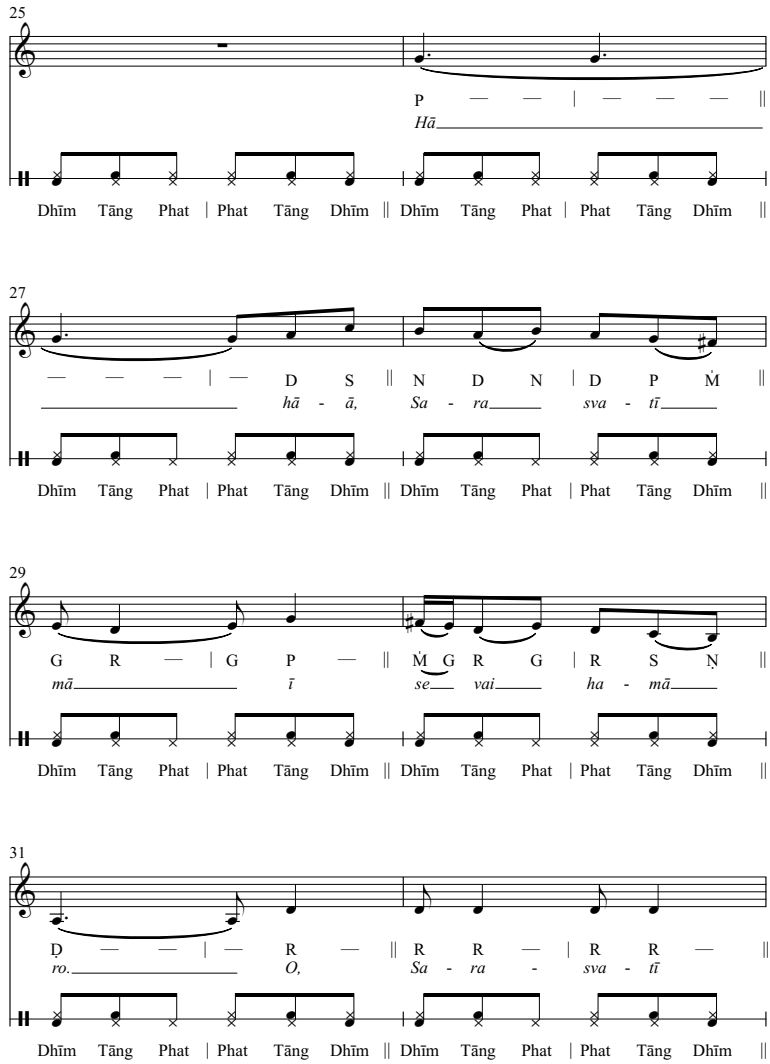


2


9
R R — | G P — || Ṁ G Ṁ | G R — ||
sa - ma ra - sa ni - rai ma - la
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
11
G Ṁ G | R S — || S — — | S S — ||
hō sa - khe, mā - - da - le
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
13
S — — | — R — || R — — | G P — ||
hō. Mā - - da - le
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
15
P Ṁ G Ṁ | G R — || R — — | G P — ||
hō sa - khe, mā - - da - le
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||


3
17
P Ṁ G Ṁ | G R — || R R — | G P — ||
hō sa - khe. Te - rī ma - yā
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
19
R R — | G P — || Ṁ G Ṁ | G R — ||
sa - ma ra - sa ni - rai ma - la
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
21
G Ṁ G | R S — || S — — | S S — ||
hō sa - khe, mā - - da - le
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Jhyām Dhi - Nā | Jhyām Dhi - Nā ||
23
Fine
S — — | — — — ||
hō.
Fine
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Tāng Dhīm Nā || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Nā ||

4


25
P — — | — — — ||
Hā
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
27
— — — | — D S || N D N | D P Ṁ ||
hā - ā, Sa - ra sva - tī
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
29
G R — | G P — || Ṁ G R G | R S Ṇ ||
mā ī se vai ha - mā
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||
31
Ḍ — — | — R — || R R — | R R — ||
ro. O, Sa - ra - sva - tī
Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm || Dhīm Tāng Phat | Phat Tāng Dhīm ||

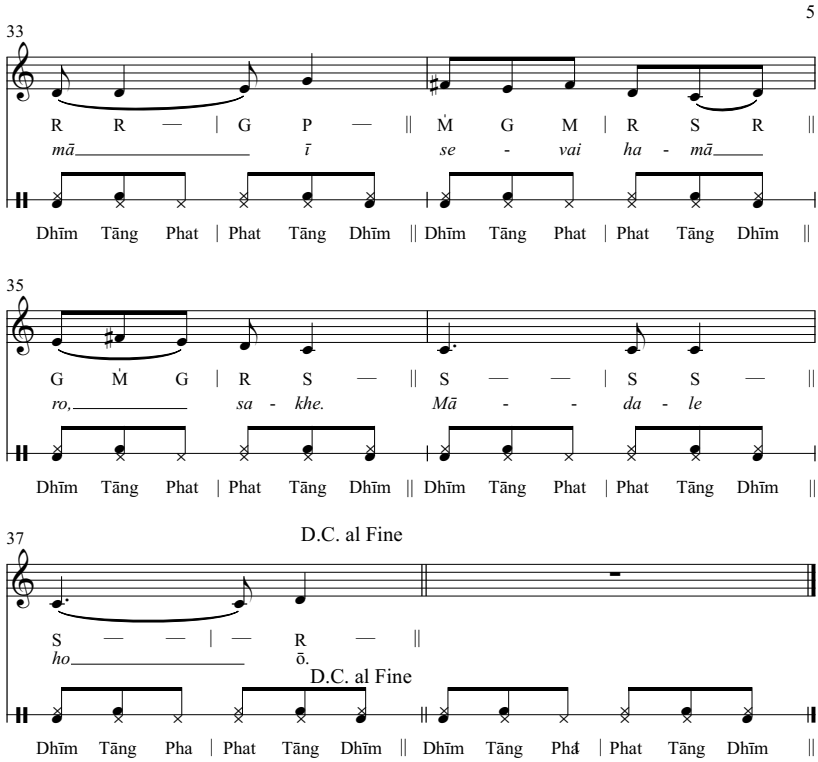



Fig. 4.39 Traditional. Garrā Bãdhne Gīt/Song for Binding the Troupe. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Following the above example and calling on the gods and goddesses you know in this method of binding the troupe, the ṭhakan hānne tāls are played. Usually when this troupe-binding song is played, people who become possessed by Saraswati gather at that place. Saraswati comes upon some people immediately when the mādal is played. Thus, if Saraswati does not leave the possessed people through the ṭhakan at this time, she will only leave at the end of the troupe-binding song when the ṭhakan is played again. Thus, it is extremely necessary to know the style of garrā bãdhne in order to be a mādalist.

## Supplementary Video for Garrā Bā̃dhne Tāl



Video 4.25 Garrā Bā̃dhne/Barnāune Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112736. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:21 minutes.

## Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl

According to ancient customs, the mādalist who can play ṭhakan hānne tāls is very important among mādalists who participate in pāṅgdure dances. Sometimes a mādalist will even be called to play ṭhakan in a troupe that is not his own. This ṭhakan hānne tāl cannot be played in all types of songs. Merely the sound of this tāl can make people shake.[93] The pāṅgdure dance troupe respects this tāl as a mantra, and it is only used in the troupe-binding dances.

This ṭhakan hānne tāl has groups of four beats that can be extended into a sixteen-beat tāl. Each group of bols is repeated four times and an ending bol group is played; this is a full ṭhakan hānne tāl. The number of times this tāl must be played is determined by those who are possessed by Saraswati. Because some people will require three tāls, some six, some even up to eleven. This work of playing the ṭhakan is very difficult because those who have been possessed by Saraswati and assembled in the troupe must each be approached individually, and only when a person possessed by Saraswati catches the mādal tāl[94] does the tāl count start for them. When playing the ṭhakan the mādal may also start trembling, and it becomes difficult to play the bols correctly and in the correct timing, which makes the tāl even longer.

The way of counting this ṭhakan hānne tāl and the way of ending the tāl are fixed. Likewise it can be understood according to the

93 Shaking is the indication that a person has been possessed by a deity; in this case, by Saraswati.

94 One would 'catch' the tāl by beginning to move in time with it.

way of playing the small cymbals (*mujurā*) etc. Mainly, mujurā are played on each bol, delineating groups of four beats.

While playing mādal, if you count in the above fashion you will get the hang of playing and you will not make mistakes when playing the ṭhakan. It is usually played very fast.



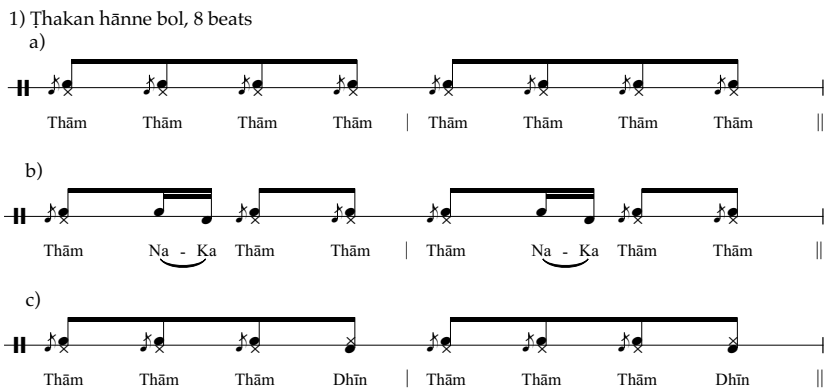
Video 4.26 Mādal Bols used in Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112718. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:00 minutes.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | \| | 2 | | | | \|\| | 3 | | | | \| | 4 | | | | \|\| |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| | X | | | | \| | X | | | | \|\| |
| 1 | | 2 | | \| | 3 | | 4 | | \|\| | 5 | | 6 | | \| | 7 | | 8 | | \|\| |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | \| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | \|\| |
| X | | X | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| | X | | X | | \| | X | | X | | \|\| |

Table 4.21 Ways of Counting ṭhakan hānne tāl.

1. Ṭhakan hānne bols, eight beats
2. Ending bols mixed with khyālī

## Ṭhakan hānne bols



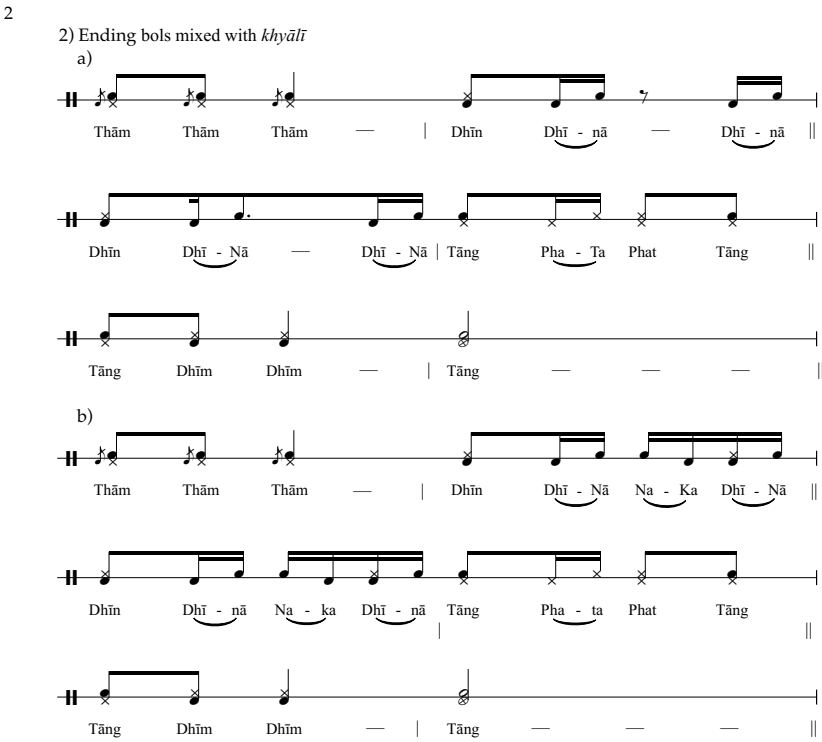



Fig. 4.40 Subi Shah, Ṭhakan hānne bols Types 1 and 2. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The above examples of ṭhakan hānne bols are used according to specific rules. In one bol there are eight beats. After repeating this bol four times and finishing one part, playing all four types of bols, the ending bol is played. Then one instance of the tāl is finished. In this way, one may have to play ṭhakan hānne up until three, seven, or even eleven repetitions of the tāl. Thus, there should be many mādalists in one troupe who know how to play ṭhakan hānne. Here is one example of a ṭhakan hānne tāl, which must be repeated the necessary number of times in a careful and precise manner. The bols must be fast but also very clear in order to be successful.

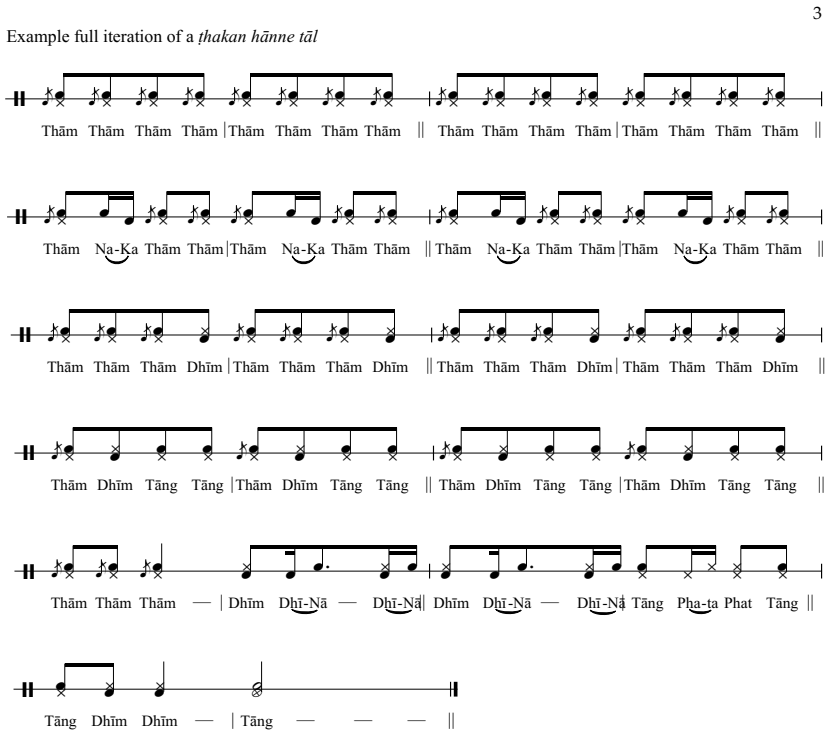



Fig. 4.41 Subi Shah, full iteration of Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

Video 4.27 Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112729. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. 2023. Sankhu Sohraghar. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:39 minutes.

The above ṭhakan hānne bols can be found in ṭhakan in many places, and in some places the above bols in examples (a) and (b) are used according to these rules to end the tāl. There is no law that says these exact bols must be used. But, whatever bols are used, they must be clear and precise. The final bol must be exact. Importantly, there must be trust in the mādalist who is playing the ṭhakan, and the mādalist must be confident in their ability to end the tāl in the right place and release the possessed from Saraswati.

When putting on a dance performance, the ṭhakan must be played after binding the troupe. If the ṭhakan is not played then there will be obstacles and difficulties while the dance is going on. Those who are possessed by Saraswati will come shaking into the middle of the dance and get in the way, and it will be difficult to release them. Sometimes it can even become necessary to bind the troupe all over again. Thus, right after binding the troupe, it is best to play the ṭhakan right away. These customs are still in practice in the western part of central Nepal.



Video 4.28 Saraswati Pujā, Mādal Tāls and Garrā Bā̃dhne Song for the Ceremony Preceding Pangdure Dances, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112724. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 17:42 minutes. This video shows the main part of the puja to Saraswati, the ṭhakan followed by the garrā bā̃dhne song, and the repetition of the ṭhakan which releases the possessed performer(s) from possession by Saraswati, followed by the culmination of the pujā as blessed pieces of coconut are handed out to all present.

## The Present Reality

Because no theory of mādal playing has been written to date, we have been in a situation of having to believe whatever anyone writes, as we do not know how the mādal was created and the root source cannot be found: we have neither a history of the mādal, nor can we find a history of who first made the mādal. Still, Chunaras and similar castes[95] make the mādal body, and Kulus, Badis, and Sarkis cover it with skin.[96] Likewise, the custom of playing the mādal exists

95 Chunara is a caste whose traditional occupation is carpentry. Similar castes would be other carpenters.

96 These are all castes that have a history of working with leather, although they have other traditional occupations as well.

in all parts of the Kingdom of Nepal, and all castes play it equally. Truly, the mādal has become the common instrument of all Nepalis.

From a scientific perspective, it appears that the mādal was developed from the mṛidaṅgam and pakhawāj. Because both of these instruments also have a wooden body, two sides covered with skins to which kharī is applied, and the ways of tightening the strings and making the mathurā are similar; only the size is different. If we look at the difference between today's mādals and the mādals of twenty years ago, we can all estimate how much change has taken place in the mādal from ancient times. Anyway, it is clear that the mādal is an instrument made by Nepal's indigenous nationalities[97] with the inspiration of the form and sound of the mṛidaṅgam and pakhawāj, because the custom of dancing with the mādal hanging around the waist and the custom of calling such a dancer a mādale are not found anywhere else but Nepal. This is why the mādal is thought of as Nepal's ancient instrument.

Today, our ancient instrument the mādal is not only found in Nepal but has spread throughout the world. So is it only the mādal, or is it not also its playing style and its Nepali tāls that have spread throughout the world? If it is good to promote the mādal on its own terms, then how significant will it be if it is presented in other countries as a toy, or as a jaltarang or other instrument? It is essential to think about this. Today's young artists and some organizations have developed strange ways of playing the mādal. Some are playing mādals like tablās, and some are trying to play them like jaltarang. Likewise, we also find the mādal being played as a replacement for the bongos, ḍamphu, khaĩjaḍī, and other instruments. It is worth thinking about whether using the mādal as another instrument or playing the bols of another instrument on the mādal are good things to do or not. Using the mādal along with other instruments in arrangements of modern songs is a different matter, but when the mādal is the primary instrument, playing the bols of other instruments on the mādal is disrespectful of the mādal as well as one of the main ways in which our other percussion instruments will be lost.

97 Shah's word is *adivāsiharu*.

It is true that the male and female heads of the mādal with their different sounds appear suitable for using in different ways in combination with other percussion and melody instruments, and the mādal has indeed come to be used in this way today. Mainly, the male head is used when playing mādals in the form of jaltarang, and it is alright to develop the sound of the mādal in this way, but it is not good to use the mādal as a makeshift instrument to represent another instrument. Rather, other new instruments can be created based on the mādal. For example, the *dhirja* instrument has been created from the mādal's female head, and similarly, a group of mādals standing on end with their male heads upwards, known as a 'mādal tarang,' or another form of a jaltarang. Creating new instruments in this way is a separate matter, but standing the mādal on end and hitting it, *ṭyāṅṭyāṅ, ṭuṅṭuṅ*, becomes counter to the theory of the mādal itself. All music lovers must be aware of these things, and preserve our own traditional instruments.

Thus, we should promote the ways of learning the mādal such as those contained in the various parts of this book, with special attention to the rules regarding counting mādal tāls, relating them to dance steps, and knowing the bols for specific tāls, in order to be able to play along while singing various songs. Along with this, it is essential that the mādal be included in the regular curriculum and mādal playing be developed as a habit. If the various theoretical aspects and rules written in this book are insufficient, those with knowledge about music should work together to bring more knowledge about the mādal to light, preparing an additional book, and if possible bringing mādal bols into a classical form, writing down the bol groups involved in the song genre selo, and thus continuing to promote folk tāls and providing knowledge of folk tāls to all music lovers.

Keeping these various reasons in mind, the mādal and our ancient bols and tāls will reach the whole world as an integral part of folk dance; otherwise, the mādal will be known by its name only. Because the mādal is finding a place in Indian film music today. Likewise it is also finding a place in Western music, but the bols and tāls heard there are transformed. In our Nepali music, Western instruments like guitar and banjo are beginning to swallow the

mādal like a python swallows its prey. Even if we think we hear mādal bols, it has become difficult to determine if they are coming from a jaltarang or a tablā. If we leave things as they are, in a few years the method of mādal playing could become foreign, and we might have to go to a foreign country to play our own instrument. Just as we now have to go abroad to get music degrees in order to sing folk songs,[98] we also have to dance our folk dances on the basis of foreign theories. We cannot say that we will not soon have to obtain foreign theoretical credentials in order to play the mādal.

To tell the truth, looking at the performance and promotion of today's folk songs, modern songs, or any other kind of Nepali music, Western and Indian musical styles can be seen to have taken their places within the styles of dance, ways of singing, bols of percussion instruments, and even the tāls themselves. Actually, though song styles and ways of joining them with rhythms and tāls are being kept within their own boundaries, presenting their own essence, many of today's songs are presented in a foreign style. The main reason for this is that many of our young artists use percussion instruments like guitar, bongos, snare drum, and others, and even if they use our ancient instruments, the custom has arisen of playing bols according to new, transformed tāls. Thus, what we must focus on is which instruments are our ancient instruments, which bols belong to them, and we must strive to sing songs and perform folk dances keeping these and other things in mind. Only then will Nepali music continue to exist.

How many of our traditional percussion instruments have never even had the opportunity to be presented on stage or enter the radio studios? Perhaps these instruments have stopped showing up in their own villages, religious places, and main roads, and have already been forced to take shelter in attics and dark corners. If we forget our own instruments and take up foreign instruments

98 In the early 1970s when Shah was writing this, Nepal did not offer music degrees or diplomas. To obtain higher education credentials in music, one had to go to India. Still today, the accreditation for classical music and dance in Nepali universities and music schools comes from Prayag Sangeet Samhiti in Allahabad, India. Nepal's Lalit Kala Campus began offering an Intermediate in Arts (I.A.) in Music in the 1980s.

like this, how will Nepali music have the opportunity to rise and progress? Today, all Nepalis must ask themselves whether their traditional folk music is progressing in the right form or not, because degenerate forms of song and dance have been adopted in so many developed places today, including playing band bājā during lākhe[99] dance, accompanying deusire[100] with the guitar, using effects of the snare drum in selo[101] dance, the use of bongos, tango,[102] guitar, snare drum, and more in jhyāure and khyālī dances, and many other new customs that can be observed. Getting rid of these degenerate customs and bringing our own traditional instruments into the primary position should be everyone's concern.

If we only say that the mādal is ours, yet ignore its rules and continue according to current styles of performance and promotion, the ancient tāls, bols, and all the abilities related to mādal playing will disappear, and only the name of the mādal will remain. For this reason, along with promoting the mādal as the mādal, it has become the main duty of all Nepalis to preserve our folk percussion instruments. For the sake of protecting our folk music, the primary concern must be given to folk percussion instruments. We cannot save our folk music by giving it musical names that do not refer to its tāls. Among the percussion instruments, the mādal is the main one embraced by all Nepalis, and thus, with the hope and request that all may gain and pass on knowledge about the mādal, presented here from my own experience and the playing customs of village mādalists, I bring this book on mādal knowledge to an end.

99 Lākhe dance is performed by the Newar community on *Gāi Jātrā* and other ritual occasions. A band bājā is a brass band that is used in the same contexts that call for a pañchai bājā; as this is a newer practice that has been around for less than 200 years, there are many traditionalists who call for a return to using pañchai bājā in these contexts. Jyamrung has a thriving pañchai bājā and does not use band bājā; the latter is more popular in the Kathmandu valley.

100 A ritual song sung during the holiday of Tihar/Deepawali.

101 A genre of song and dance performed by the Tamang community.

102 Subi Shah writes 'byāṅgo, ṭyāṅgo,' which could simply be a nonspecific reference to foreign sounds. But, it is also true that people were using bongos on recordings, and that there was a craze for Western ballroom dancing among Kathmandu's elite in the 1970s (see Anna Stirr's interview with the 1980s Sports Council chairman and initiator of national folk dance and lok dohorī competitions Sharad Chandra Shah, April 6, 2007), so it is quite possible that the growing popularity of tango at the time could have been a concern of Shah's.

# 5. *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*

## Translator's Introduction

*Anna Stirr*

In *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Subi Shah introduces two innovations: first, he tries his hand at creating his own musical notation, and second, he explains a theory of melodic construction based on the flute (*bā̃surī* and *muralī*) and *sahanāī*, articulated on the basis of the system used by *pañchai (naumati) bājā* ensembles and thus centering the knowledge of Dalit musical experts. Along with this, he lists many of the *rāg*s played by the Jyamrung pañchai bājā along with their temporal associations, and includes notated examples of songs in each of the modes or tunings that he describes in his theory of melody. As the instrument-based theory of melody Shah introduces comes from the sahanāī players' traditions, it makes sense for him to begin with the pañchai bājā rāgs. The songs are notated with their lyrics, but Shah's focus here is on melody. The recordings he produced to exemplify some of these song melodies all feature the melodies played on the flute, without any vocals.

This is one of Shah's unpublished manuscripts, and it is undated. It appears to be midway through revisions, but as far as we know it was not submitted to a publishing house. A broadcast of the same title is listed in his CV (see Volume II) under the heading of things broadcast on the Radio Nepal program *Hāmro Samskṛiti* ('Our

©2026 Stirr (introduction);
Stirr, Brown, Khadka and Rijal (translation), CC BY 4.0 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246.05

Culture').[1] The pañchai bājā rāgs listed under the same heading were probably recorded on cassette in Jyamrung in the 1990s, given to Radio Nepal around the same time, and ended up at Music Nepal after Radio Nepal turned over much of its archive to Music Nepal in the mid-2000s. A few pages of the manuscript's prose text is computer typed and printed, including the diagrams of flutes and keyboards which we have copied exactly, and corrections can be seen on these pages in Shah's handwriting. Much of the prose text and all the musical notation remains handwritten, also in Shah's handwriting. As Shah expressed in conversation with us in 2005, he was working on preparing this for publication around the same time as *Nepālī Lokgītko Jhalak* (*Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*), which was published in 2006. Like *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*, it is also likely that *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* was initially written much earlier. The inclusion of 'Hey Brave One' (*He Bir*) a song by King Mahendra, suggests that this manuscript may have been written during his reign, between 1960 and 1972. The audiotape of his own flute playing that Subi Shah played during our 2005 interview refers to Dhading as being in 'West Number 1,' a name used in a prior system of administrative divisions that ended in 1972. The inclusion of notation for soraṭhī songs may help us narrow the time of writing further; as Shah completed his study of the Soraṭhī dance-drama around 1969, this manuscript was likely first written between 1970 and 1972.

*Introduction to Nepali Tunes* makes the following nationalist argument. First, Nepal has its own musical systems that are different from the classical music standardized in the northern Indian systems of music education based on Bhatkhande's ideas. Second, these Nepali systems should be acknowledged, promoted, and institutionalized into an education system that will ensure their development and survival. We can understand these nationalist assertions in the argument's historical context of both a general mid-twentieth-century climate of anticolonial nationalism, and the influence of the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century

1 If a recording of this broadcast exists, it may contain more examples of the unmetered tunes Shah notates here.

movement toward documenting and standardizing music as it was being practiced in the courts, and creating a new system of school music education. In India, the latter movement joined with nationalist sentiments as a way of democratizing the art form so that it could better serve as a unifying element for the nation. The idea of a national school music curriculum that elevates aspects of the nation's music to the level of 'classical' appeals to Shah. In this book, he explains music theories that differentiate musics of Nepal from the classical music of the northern subcontinent (I use this term with precision, as Shah does not consider Hindustani rāga music to be Indian alone; rather, he thinks this type of music is being considered 'classical' in Nepal partly due to the classicizing processes that took place in the first part of the twentieth century in India). And, he calls for these Nepali musical forms' incorporation into a national level music curriculum toward the establishment of a 'Nepali classical music.' Importantly, the word for 'classical' here is *śāstrīya*, which implies a basis in authoritative written texts.

## Notation, Nationalism, and the Classical

The early twentieth century in South Asia was a time of growing nationalism and movement toward musical standardization and democratization, a process which also led to the promotion of many music and dance genres as 'classical' or śāstrīya. This sense of the 'classical' emerged in the colonial encounter and combined the English term's connotation of court performance, artistic prestige, and cultural pride, with the Sanskrit term's sense of authoritative grounding in written theoretical texts.[2] Nationalists in India tied classical status, especially for dance, with demonstrated connections to the ancient treatise, the *Nāṭyaśastra*.[3] Reference to other musical treatises, such as the *Saṅgītaratnākara*

2 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*; Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*; Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern.*

3 Banerji, 'The Laws of Movement: The Natyashastra as Archive for Indian Classical Dance.'

of Sarangadeva, also helped establish the classical status of various musical traditions.[4] These texts had always held authority in South Asia, but during the colonial encounter, the European orientalists sought them out as older and therefore more authentically Indian than anything produced in Persian under Mughal rule. This led to a modern association of Sanskrit treatises with Hindu authenticity and imaginations of an illustrious Hindu past.

With these fantasies of a glorious past as a moral counterweight to colonial disregard for the cultures of the subcontinent, nationalists in India proclaimed the longstanding prestige of their artistic traditions, their links to past glory demonstrated by their grounding in these treatises. This prestige established, democratizing musical nationalists began with renewed enthusiasm to write music theoretical works or treatises of their own, linking classicization with standardization and national identity.[5] Subi Shah's work, especially *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, also fits in this vein, as a response to this impulse several decades after its initial expression in the connected worlds of the princely courts, peripatetic musicians, and nationalist musicologists who aimed to codify, standardize, classicize, and re-establish the prestige of their musical traditions.

While nationalist ideals and sentiments were growing against the British in India, rulers of sovereign and princely states like Nepal's Maharaja Bir Shamsher and the Maharaja of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwar, were also working to sustain court musical traditions among their modernizing efforts. Associating modernization with standardization and order, such rulers attempted to regulate musicians' dress and behavior; they also held conferences of musicians to promote the performance and study of music and exchange of information. As Barbara Ramusack asserts, 'it is

4 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*.

5 Allen, 'Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the Dialogue between "Classical" and "Non-Classical" in the Music of India'; Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*; Regula Qureshi, '"Muslim Devotional": Popular Religious Music and Muslim Identity under British, Indian and Pakistani Hegemony,' *Asian Music*, 24 (1992), pp. 111–21, https://doi.org/10.2307/834453

clear that the princes were key figures during the transition of patronage from the personal, intimate world of the royal court to the bureaucratic, populist organizations of post-colonial India such as All India Radio and the Sangeet Akademi.'[6] Comparatively little is known about Maharaja Bir Shamsher's 1900 music conference in the village of Bagadi, Nepal.[7] The 1916 conference held by the Maharaja of Baroda, which Bhatkhande helped organize and which is now known as the first All India Music Conference, is famous for its inclusion of musicians from varied musical traditions. Along with the court musicians from northern India and Nepal, British band masters and musicians were also in attendance.[8]

Vishnu Bhatkhande said at this conference:

> I cannot but hope that in a few years time, there will be an easy system of instruction of our music which will lend itself to mass education. Then will the ambition of India be fulfilled for the Indians will have music in their curricula of the universities, music instruction will be common and universal. And if it please Providence to so dispense that there is a fusion between the two systems of the North and South, then there will be a National Music for the whole country and last of our ambitions will be reached, for the great nation will sing one song.[9]

By the 1920s, the efforts of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar had led to the establishment of music schools with these aims as their intent; a similar process was happening in

6 Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 157, https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521267274

7 A 2017 blog post containing several photos from the collection of Purushottam Shumsher, a descendant of Bir Shumsher, provides a summary of what occurred at the conference and lists the names of attendees; reading this post in conjunction with Dhrubesh Chandra Regmi's account suggests that Purushottam Shamsher himself is the source for the list of names. 'Bagaḍīko Jalsa (The Gathering at Bagadi),' *History of Nepal*, 19 June 2017, https://modernnepalhistory.blogspot.com/2017/06/gathering-at-bagadi.html; Dhrubesh Chandra Regmi, *Music, Myth, and Melody: A Brief History of Nepali Music* (Bookhill, 2023). In an appendix, Regmi provides the text of a letter from an eyewitness to the Bagadi conference (Annex III).

8 *Report of the First All-India Music Conference Held in Baroda, March 20th to 25th, 1916* (First All-India Music Conference, 1917), p. 37.

9 Sobhana Nayar, *Bhatkhande's Contribution to Music: A Historical Perspective* (Popular Prakashan, 1989).

southern India as well.[10] As Janaki Bakhle writes, 'Largely because of their efforts, there is a vast network of small training schools that allows for the dissemination of a base-level knowledge about music within the middle class, which helps to keep music "traditional" and national.'[11] In developing such an 'easy system of instruction' they paid close attention to musical notation, developing two similar systems. While the Bhatkhande system was more widely adopted by the middle of the twentieth century, the Paluskar system still circulates; sometimes aspects of the two may be combined in individuals' idiosyncratic uses of sargam notation. Shah himself combines aspects of the two at times.

By the 1960s when Shah was writing his works on the music and dance of Jyamrung and surrounding areas, Nepal was engaged in a homogenizing project of nation-building that echoed Bhatkhande's wish for the Indian nation to sing one song. Nepal's Panchayat government, established by King Mahendra in 1960, had walked back the democratic reforms of the 1950s and instituted a dictatorial absolute monarchy and a nation-building program based on the pillars of one language (Nepali), one style of dress, and one (Hindu) religion equaling one nation (*ek bhāsā, ek bhes, ek dharma, ek deś*). It is unclear what Subi Shah thought of the Panchayat system; his inclusion of King Mahendra's composition *He Bir* in this volume suggests support for the king, but such artistic genuflection has a long history and may more reliably indicate appreciation for royal patronage, whatever the artist's feelings about the broader political system. Subi Shah, himself a royal relative and officer in the Royal Nepal Army, appears to have been close to the palace throughout his life. But, comments throughout his writings show that he was unsatisfied with the government's patronage of the arts.

Musically, Nepal's Panchayat state promoted music in the Nepali language over the nation's plethora of linguistic and musical diversity. State arts bodies focused on lok gīt or folk song, patriotic songs, and ādhunik gīt or modern song, which across South Asia

10 Lakshmi Subramanian, 'Court to Academy: Karnatik Music,' *India International Centre Quarterly*, 33.2 (2006), pp. 125–38.

11 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*, p. 3.

today is often referred to as *sugam saṅgīt*. These genres were performed and recorded at the national radio, Radio Nepal, with the accompaniment of similar ensembles that included mādal, ḍholak, sometimes tablā, harmonium, cymbals of varying sizes, and bā̃surī or sāraṅgī. These 'nationalized' performances were used to promote the homogeneous idea of the nation that was the state's ideal from 1960–1990; internally, this was the Nepali state's attempt at musical nation-building.[12]

Shah wished that the government would promote more types of music; that efforts would be made to 'call genres by their correct names' and standardize musical terminology; and that more Nepal-based music and dance would be promoted at the national level, instead of the foreign sounds and movements that appeared to be trending in the 1960s. Such comments are found throughout his writings. In *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Shah advances his own system of musical notation. His rationale for this is that 'various countries use notation methods according to their own theories;' Nepal also has (at least one) local musical theory that differs from Western and Indian classical ones as described below; and therefore, just as the Western world has the five-line staff notation, and India has its sargam system developed from the efforts of Bhatkhande and Paluskar, Nepal also needs its own notation system.

Shah first introduces a separate set of letters to represent note names, which have no connection to note names in either Vedic-based or Persian-based music theory, nor do they follow the progression of the alphabet as in the Western system; he does not provide a rationale for this. Perhaps he is simply trying to differentiate the 'Nepali' from the 'Indian' (specifically, the Bhatkhande notation system) or perhaps he is referencing something as yet unknown. But, he introduces them on page fourteen of his manuscript and abandons them after page fifteen; after listing the relevant modes in his novel note spellings, these note names do not form part of his musical notation.

Shah then introduces a nine-line staff on which only the spaces

12 Shah too recorded at Radio Nepal, singing songs, reciting poems, and playing the flute on the Student Program and Army Program. See his CV at the end of Volume II for more information.

are used to represent pitches. The pitches they represent are indicated by a marking above the staff that tells the reader the tuning or mode, which is based on the number of holes covered to play the tonic note on the flute or sahanāī (discussed below). A discrete pitch on the staff is represented by the syllable 'lā' in the Devanagari script. Rhythmic divisions are indicated similarly to Bhatkhande's sargam notation - two notes played within one beat (*mātra*) are indicated with an upward curve below the two 'lā' syllables. Lyrics are written below the staff. Shah does not notate rhythmic accompaniment to the melodies he gives in his 'Nepali notation,' so we can only guess that he might have put the drum syllables (*bol*s) above or below the staff as well.

Although Shah introduces this new notation here, he does not use it in every example. While he lists the rāgs played by the pañchai bājā ensemble, he does not attempt to notate their complex melodies. For each mode, he gives an example of one unmetered tune and a few metered song tunes. He notates the unmetered tunes in sargam only. He notates each song tune in this volume in 'Nepali notation' and also in sargam. When discussing the notes produced in each different mode, he uses what he earlier calls 'Vedic' terminology, referring to the notes as Sa, Re, Ga, and their full forms of Shadja, Rishav, Gandhar etc. In none of his other works does he use his 'Nepali notation.'

It seems that Subi Shah introduced a new form of notation only to apparently abandon it in the same manuscript. Looking at the manuscript suggests several reasons why this might have been the case. In the handwritten musical examples, it is clear that 'Nepali notation' takes up a great deal more space on the page than does sargam. Where sargam notation compactly conveys an entire song's melody on less than a page, the same song in 'Nepali notation' takes several pages. Perhaps this is one reason why Shah decided not to pursue the development of this notation. Another reason might be that by the 1960s, the popularity of sargam in Nepal, along with the common co-presence of staff notation and cipher notation, made it unlikely that people would adopt another notation system simply for reasons of national pride. As Shah's main goal was to preserve the genres of his home region, he may also have realized

that learning an entirely new notation system might have been a barrier to widespread recognition of the music and dance forms, and their terminologies, that he wished to promote.

While Shah's use of the term śāstrīya or classical varies a bit throughout his writings, there are two performance forms that he consistently asserts should be considered in classical terms. These are the Soraṭhī dance-drama and the instrumental music of the pañchai or naumatī bājā. Soraṭhī is discussed in *Soraṭī*, as well as in *Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dance*, *Dances of Central Nepal*, and *Mādal*. The pañchai bājā's role in Jyamrung ritual life is discussed more fully in the Introduction to Volume I, and in relevant parts of *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* in Volume II. Here we briefly discuss the Jyamrung pañchai bājā's musical contributions to the theories Shah is setting forth in *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*.

## The Pañchai (Naumatī) Bājā in Jyamrung



Fig. 5.1 Anna Stirr, Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā performing at Jyamrung Darbār. © Anna Stirr. 29 June 2022. CC BY.

The pañchai or naumatī bājā in Jyamrung is an ensemble of several instruments that includes the sahanāī as a main melody instrument, the *narsiṅgh* horns that play horn calls, and several percussion instruments: the *tyāmko*, *damāhā*, *ḍholakhī*, and *jhyālī*. While there is usually only one tyāmko, one ḍholakhī, and one jhyālī player, there are two players each of sahanāī, damāhā, and narsiṅgh. Shah refers to this ensemble using the terms naumatī bājā, pañchai bājā, and pañchai bājā; all refer to the same ensemble. While the words naumatī and pañchai/pañche appear to refer to the numbers of instruments, nine or five respectively, scholarship tells us that this is not exactly the case; the word naumatī comes from the Arabic-origin *naubat*, a troupe of musicians associated with royalty and sovereignty, through Persian or Ottoman Turkish around the time of the Delhi Sultanate.[13] As these ensembles were adopted by courts in South Asia they gained association with things these courts valued, including the prior associations of court musical ensembles with Hindu ideas of auspiciousness. Thus, 'pañchai' is thought to refer to the five elements, perhaps in a nod to the ensemble's auspiciousness. The instruments included in the ensemble and the number of each may be modified according to the availability of players and the need for particular sounds. For example, during our recordings, this ensemble chose to use two damāhā and no tyāmko during their performance of *Asāre Rāg*, explaining that this would make the tāl sound cleaner in the setting of the rice fields.

In Nepal, these ensembles are traditionally played by members of the Damai caste, which is considered Dalit.[14] The music that they

13 Raja Iskandar Bin Raja Halid, 'The Nobat: From Muslim Antiquity to Malay Modernity,' in *Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia, Volume One* (Brill, 2023), pp. 139–60, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004686533_008; Tingey, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Panchai Bājā*.

14 Dalit is a word adopted to refer to the group identity of varied groups of people who the caste hierarchy had ranked as untouchable. Dalit means 'oppressed.' As with any such identity term, it is controversial, with some people rejecting it as derogatory. In hill Nepal, it is the preferred umbrella term used by many members of this large and diverse group of people. Untouchability and caste discrimination are officially outlawed but remain a significant aspect of social life that ultimately affects everyone negatively. Attending to the value of the musical knowledge that these Dalit musicians have nurtured and

play is considered auspicious and essential for various rituals, but Hindu caste hierarchy has considered the players themselves ritually impure and of low social status. Intersections of caste and class hierarchies have left these musicians and their families with fewer material resources and less access to opportunities than members of other castes. Legal and economic changes over the last half century have moved slowly toward mitigating some of the injustices associated with caste, but discriminatory attitudes and practices remain. Subi Shah, although he did not challenge the pañchai bājā's ritual roles or connections with the palace, treated the performers as expert musicians and respected their knowledge greatly. It is this knowledge, of which the Dalit performers have long been custodians, on which Shah bases his discussions of the local theories of melody in this book.

Originally associated with the palace, performing duties for the rulers including helping fulfill their religious obligations to the local deities through musical offerings, and still under the Jyamrung Shah family's patronage today, the pañchai bājā's local role is to provide ritual music for the village. They have repertoire for many different ritual occasions as well as for the subdivisions of the day and night as described in this volume. Members of the ensemble also play sahanāī and *nagarā* in the temple of the goddess Sankha Devi each morning. Beyond these ritual obligations, they are often contracted to perform at auspicious occasions like weddings, in and around the Jyamrung area but also as far away as Kathmandu and Hetauda. This ensemble is notable for their skill and is in high demand. The descendants of Amrit Bahadur Sundas, the excellent sahanāī player whose knowledge of rāgs Subi Shah recorded in this book, have homes in Jyamrung and apartments in Kathmandu, from which they organize their fellow performers in multiple groups to meet demand for their ensemble around central Nepal. Ram Bahadur Sundas, grandson of Amrit Bahadur Pariyar and leader of Jyamrung's pañchai bājā today, coordinated musical arrangements in Jyamrung for our team.

---

safeguarded is a step toward more equitable social relations, and we hope this step will lead to other equity-minded action.

In *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Subi Shah lists the different rāgs and their associated tāls associated with different times of the day and night. These rāgs are played on the sahanāī, with one player holding a drone pitch on the tonic note (*sor*) and the other playing the melody, while the other instruments play in the tāl specified for each rāg. These rāgs have more of a fixed form than those played in *khyāl* and *dhrupad*, but they still have room for interpretation by the sahanāī players. Each rāg associated with a specific time of day has its own particular tāl or tāls, followed finally by a faster part in a four-beat tāl, known as '*khyālī pharkāune*.' While pañchai bājā ensembles play all kinds of popular tunes in addition to the ritual repertoire, it is considered inappropriate to mix these tunes with rāgs.

From the custom of playing two sahanāīs together, establishing the tonic pitch with a drone, Shah begins to explain the theory of melody and modes based on the holes of the sahanāī:

> This rule of playing the tonic leads to seven note groups, and in this way, whichever hole is closed to play the tonic establishes the name of the tuning. For example: close 6 holes for 6-hole tuning, close 5 holes for 5-hole tuning, close 4 holes for 4-hole tuning, etc., and the tunings are named like this.

Shah uses the word *chāl* for the note groups produced by using each hole in turn as tonic, and the word *dhun* for the tunes that can be produced from each note group. We translate chāl as 'mode' and dhun in this sense as 'tuning,' although dhun more generally means 'tune.' Thus, Shah is talking about tunes that are *in* tunings which in turn are *based on* modes. These modes are understood with reference to the sahanāī in the music theory of the pañchai bājā; taking this theory to be more broadly applicable to understanding how melodies are formed not only in these rāgs but also in the songs of this area, Shah uses the rest of this volume to demonstrate the different modes along with unmetered and metered tunes that can be played within them. A flute player himself, he provides a detailed explanation of how these modes are based on the sahanāī or flute.

For the rest of this introduction, we examine this theory in greater detail. Our approach is based in an established phenomenological

approach to ethnomusicology that focuses on embodied theory,[15] and the time-honored practice in ethnomusicology of drawing on embodied interaction with a musical instrument to gain understanding of elements of a musical tradition.[16]

## A Theory of Melody Based on the Flute and Sahanāī

### The Instruments

Subi Shah writes, 'according to ancient customs, Nepali tunes can be categorized on the basis of how they are played on the sahanāī (double reed shawm), bā̃surī (transverse flute), and muralī (vertical flute).' Among his many musical skills that included mādal playing and dancing, as a flutist Subi Shah mostly played the muralī, though he could also play the bā̃surī.

In researching to write *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Subi Shah spent a great deal of time with the sahanāī players of his hometown of Jyamrung in Dhading. The sahanāī is a double-reed instrument that takes a different embouchure technique to play than the bā̃surī or muralī. As Subi Shah himself did not

15 Harris Berger, 'Phenomenological Approaches in the History of Ethnomusicology,' in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.013.30; Harris Berger, 'Phenomenology and Phenomenological Ethnomusicology,' in *Theory for Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Harris Berger and Ruth Stone (Routledge, 2019), pp. 204–18, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315408583-9; Steven Feld, 'Communication, Music and Speech About Music,' in *Music Grooves*, ed. by Charles and Steven Feld Keil (University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 77–95; Matt Rahaim, *Musicking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani Music* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012); Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Timothy Rice, 'Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology,' in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195109108.003.0006

16 Berger, 'Phenomenology and Phenomenological Ethnomusicology'; Paul F. Berliner, *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (University of Chicago Press, 1978); Mantle Hood, 'The Challenge of Bi-Musicality,' *Ethnomusicology*, 4 (1960), pp. 55–59; Renato Moreira Varoni de Castro, 'Performance and Autoethnography in Historical Ethnomusicology: Differentiating the Viola and the Violão,' *Per Musi*, 34 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1590/permusi20163402

play sahanāī and was not trained in the repertoire of the naumatī bājā, he credits Amrit Bahadur Sundas,[17] the leader of Jyamrung's pañchai bājā in the 1970s–1990s, with helping him understand Nepali tunes from the sahanāī player's perspective. Because the body of the sahanāī is constructed similarly to the bā̃surī and muralī, the way the notes are produced through fingerings is the same in this part of Nepal, except that the sahanāī may have one more fingering hole. So, the perspective and knowledge that Subi Shah learned from Amrit Bahadur Sundas is applicable to bā̃surī and muralī as well as sahanāī. Working with the descendants of Amrit Bahadur Sundas, including Ram Bahadur Sundas and others, we are representing knowledge of Jyamrung instrumental music from the same lineage here.

## The Theory

Sahanāī, bā̃surī, and muralī players in Jyamrung and in other rural areas of central Nepal refer to tunes according to the number of holes covered on the instrument to produce the main note of the musical scale or mode. In *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Subi Shah takes this one step further theoretically, and focuses on the pitch sets this system produces. He writes:

> When playing the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, using the modes (chāl) of rāgs and rāginīs, care must be taken to play the notes that are part of the rāg. When playing with attention to the notes in this way, the name of the tuning (dhun) is associated with the hole from which the note is played, and that name becomes the *ṭhāṭ*, the mode or tuning (dhun). For example: six-hole tuning, five-hole tuning, four-hole tuning, etc. The basis for many tunes is formed and maintained according to these names.

This perspective categorizes tunes according to note groups. Subi Shah uses the word *ṭhāṭ*, following the usage established by Indian musicologist Vishnu Bhatkhande. The word ṭhāṭ also has

17 Subi Shah refers to Amrit Bahadur with the surname Pariyar, while Amrit Bahadur's descendants use the surname Sundas. We use Sundas, following the descendants' lead, while clarifying that Amrit Bahadur Pariyar is indeed the same person as Amrit Bahadur Sundas.

a history of referring to instruments and embodied postures: it is used to refer to the arrangement of frets on a sitar, and different arrangements of frets produce different note groups. Thāṭ also refers to the starting posture in Kathak dance. So, this word implies a material configuration of instrument or body that applies certain parameters in sound or movement.

To clarify that the groups of notes Subi Shah is referring to are different from Bhatkhande's ten ṭhāṭs of Hindustani music theory, we translate Shah's use of ṭhāṭ as 'note group.' Note group or ṭhāṭ refers to a set of pitches that can be used to make a tune; while pitches outside of this set are excluded, not all the pitches within the set need be included in a tune for the tune to be categorized within the note group. Note groups in this system are made from the sets of notes obtained from starting at each one of the holes in the body of these wind instruments. When this group is conceptualized as having a specific order, it becomes a mode rather than just a set of pitches. The bottom hole covered becomes the beginning note of the mode, known as the tonic in Western music theory and as sor among pañchai/naumatī bājā ensembles in Nepal.[18] As the naumatī bājā evolved from the Arabic-origin naubat, it is tempting to relate this theory to the influence of maqam. But, the music theory of the naumatī bājā shows no emphasis on tetrachords, which are central to maqam theory.

As Shah writes, the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī can all be used as the base instrument for a theory of tunes and the note groups on which they are based. The sahanāī as made in Jyamrung has seven holes used for fingerings (it actually has eight holes, but seven are used to play and the bottom one is used to make sure the instrument is tuned to the correct pitch). The bā̃surī and muralī as made in Jyamrung usually have six holes used for fingerings, and if a seventh one is made to create the correct pitch, it is usually on the underside of the instrument rather than in a place that can be covered by the fingers when playing. Unlike on some similar wind instruments like the recorder or the ney, there is not a thumb hole on the underside of the instrument. The system of building

18 Tingey, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Panchai Bājā.*

note groups on the basis of the number of holes covered on these instruments is focused on a six-hole instrument; in this model, an instrument with a seventh hole simply has another note that is playable below the lowest tonic note described in the rules here (six-hole tuning).



Fig. 5.2 Subi Shah playing the bā̃surī. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY. Other instruments pictured include harmonium, mādal, and sitar.

Shah uses diagrams of flutes to show how this system works. For example, below is the diagram for five-hole tuning. The box represents the instrument's body, Ø represents a closed hole, and O represents an open hole. The holes are numbered one to six, and the corresponding notes of the mode are indicated on the right in sargam notation. Hole number one can produce three pitches, played closed, half-open, and fully open. In the system Shah describes here, other holes are not played half-open. Hole number seven is included for sahanāī players who may have this seventh hole, outside of the flute-based box.

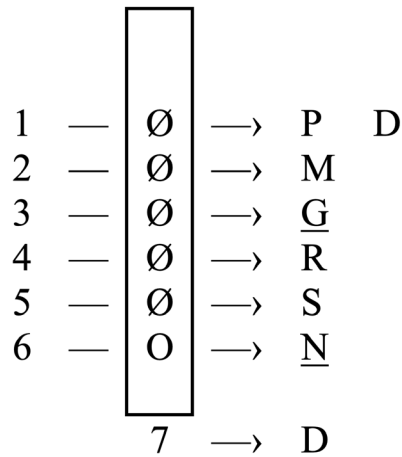



Fig. 5.3 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for five-hole tuning, with seventh hole shown for sahanāī players. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

The modes as produced by using each sequential hole of the six-hole flute as tonic are similar to the Western music modes based on each scale degree, or sequential note, of the Western major scale. For readers with knowledge of this system, Shah includes a keyboard diagram as well, based on the C major scale. He positions the keyboard vertically so it aligns with the flute-based spatial configuration of higher notes going up and lower notes going down (see Fig. 5.14).

Using instruments as reference points to explain music theory implies the need for a material referent, implying that music is not just created in the imagination and realized on the instrument. The process goes the other direction as well: the instruments themselves also shape how music creators think about their music. The material object used to produce sounds in a particular way is used as a central referent for the concepts people have about those sounds. If we think of music in Rheinberger's terms as an 'epistemic thing' about which musicians and theorists are developing concepts, the instrument is a 'technical thing,' which, as a significant part of producing melodies, is central to the episteme, or the system of understanding and verifying knowledge about those melodies,

developed by those who interact with this instrument.[19] How do we verify the system of melodic modes in *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*? By going to a bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī and trying it out. As phenomenological ethnomusicology reminds us, the sounds produced by the instrument exist as empirical phenomena outside of subjective perception.[20] So, the instrument is a basis for verifiable knowledge across different performers' experiences. Thus, we can say that the process of conceptualizing and realizing music takes place both in the imagination and in the body's interaction with the instrument, and the body's interaction with the instrument influences the musical imagination.

Shah's diagrams as reproduced above ground the musical motion of melodies in the bodily motion used to create them on their instruments. The particular sequence of notes in a mode comes from lifting fingers up one after the other to produce the sequence on the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī. The sense of sequentialness is felt in the fingers, and this bodily motion is what makes the musical sounds. Musical and human motion overlap for the performers, and also for the audience in what Iyer refers to as empathetic ecological perception—the audience does not just hear musical sound, but hears and often sees a performer making that sound, and thus understands the sound as produced in a specific, embodied way, within a particular performance context that is also shaped by cultural norms and the specifics of the immediate situation.[21]

19 Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a Theory of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube* (Stanford University Press, 1997); Paulo de Assis, 'Experimental Systems in Music: Specifying MusicExperiment21's Use of Rheinberger's Experimental Systems,' unpublished paper delivered at International Conference on Artistic Research (2017), ResearchCatalogue.net, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/351463/351464

20 Berger, 'Phenomenological Approaches in the History of Ethnomusicology;' Berger, 'Phenomenology and Phenomenological Ethnomusicology.'

21 Vijay Iyer, 'Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition, and Expressive Microtiming in African-American Music,' *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 19.3 (2002), pp. 387–414 (pp. 393–96), https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2002.19.3.387; Martin Clayton, Byron Dueck, and Laura Leante, *Experience and Meaning in Music Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199811328.001.0001

## Fingerings, Modes, and Melodies

Subi Shah uses both musical notation and recordings to demonstrate his theory of melody through musical sound. He also refers to both Western and Hindustani classical systems as points of comparison. The differences between the Nepali modes Shah describes here and the Western major scale-based modes are that 1) the last mode, open-hole tuning, is based on the flat seventh rather than the natural seventh scale degree as in the Western modes, and 2) each mode includes more pitches than those of the Western modes. In the note groups as Shah lists them, he uses all the terms note group (ṭhāṭ), tuning (dhun), and mode (chāl) at once, to describe each of these sets of pitches. What in some music-theoretical systems is a set of nesting concepts, each more narrowly applicable than the other, appears to condense in Shah's system, as in the example below.

> Group 2 – five-hole tuning
> S R G̲ M P D̲ N̲ Ṡ

To illustrate how these pitches are used when playing melodies, here Shah includes 'ascending and descending notes,' as is common in books describing rāgs and their characteristics:[22]

| Ascending and descending notes for five-hole tuning: | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G̲ M P D̲ N̲ S |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G̲ M P D N̲ S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (a) S N̲ D̲ P M G̲ R S |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N̲ D P M G̲ R S |

But while rāg*s* have characteristic patterns in ascent and descent, it is unclear from the diagrams whether Shah means that you can play either way, mixing an (a) ascent with a (b) descent, or whether you must follow (a) with (a) and (b) with (b). Looking at the notated songs, the former seems most likely; the song tune *He Bir* alternates

22 See for example Dhakal, *Saṅgīt-Suras*.

between the options in the different sections of the song.

The options given for ascending and descending notes also reflect the influence of instrument construction and playing customs on melodic mode construction. In the song tune, 'Life is Fading' (*Jindagī Oilāyo*), the melody includes only flat D̲ although natural D is also mentioned as an acceptable part of this mode. Attention to the flute gives us a clue as to why the note D (the sixth note of the mode) gets this treatment here. In this fingering, where five holes are covered to produce the tonic, the sixth note falls on the top hole. This top hole is the only one that is included in each mode in all three possible states: closed, half-covered, and open. In this case, in five-hole mode, the notes that can be produced at this hole are P (closed), D̲ (half-covered), and D (open).

Embodied knowledge of bā̃surī and muralī playing is useful in interpreting this situation. The same pitch obtained by playing this first hole half-covered can also be produced by a common alternate fingering that allows the player to maintain a more stable grip on the instrument: covering both the second and third but not the first hole. In our experience watching Jyamrung sahanāī players, this fingering is more common than the half-hole fingering; it allows the player to play faster and still obtain an accurate pitch. In each of the modes it is the notes played using this hole that are given three note options (closed, half-covered, and open) rather than the one or two options given for all other holes. Thus, it is possible to assert that these modes are constructed in this way to avoid half-hole fingerings, and thus afford easier fast playing and more accurate pitch production.

In the discussions we have had about modes with sahanāī players from Jyamrung, they were more likely to talk in terms of fingerings (*aũlā*) than of modes (chāl), but the phrase *aũlāko chāl* (way of moving your fingers) was also commonly used. For example, Shah includes one rāg, Tauḍi, in two places in his book; the first one is in four-hole mode and called Tauḍi, and the second one is in five-hole mode and listed as Tauli. The associated time of day is the same in both listings, but the second one is played with two additional tāls and associated melodies in between the first sixteen-beat tāl and the final eight-beat tāl. When recording all the

rāgs with the Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā, they told us that this was the same rāg listed twice. 'It's the same rāg; just the fingerings are different,' said the group leader Ram Bahadur Sundas, member of our team and grandson of Subi Shah's research collaborator Amrit Bahadur Sundas (conversation with Stirr, Rijal, and Brown, 28 June 2022).[23]

The discussion about this rāg shows us a few things. First, absolute pitch is not a defining factor in determining a tune's identity—tunes or rāgs can be played at different absolute pitches, and it is the relationships between intervals that defines the tune or rāg's melody. Second, musicians playing within this system are adept at playing tunes at different locations on the instrument. Tunes that Western music theory would define as major pentatonic, for example, can be played in at least four different modes because the intervals that differentiate the modes are not used in these tunes. An example of this in *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* is the song tune 'I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water' (*Khannã Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī*), which Shah lists as an example for six-hole, five-hole, three-hole, and two-hole modes. This emphasis suggests that the knowledge of how to play tunes at multiple locations on the instrument is an important aspect of this system.

In his short summary that concludes *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, Subi Shah notes two things he considers very important. First, that the village elders and bãsurī, muralī, and sahanāī players continue to use this system of referring to tunes and modes by the number of holes covered on the instruments. And, that 'various folk song melodies and various folk tune melodies have a location where they start, and to add to that, a custom of playing the tonic from other locations as well is still found in the villages.' This suggests that both knowledge of the modes, and knowledge

23 Because of this, the musicians in Ram Bahadur Sundas's pañchai bājā insisted that the rāg did not need to be recorded twice or repeated in the book's text. It was only on listening to the recordings Shah made of Amrit Bahadur Sundas's pañchai bājā, when we finally got access to them from Music Nepal's archives in 2024, that we realized: the rāgs and tāls listed here are documentation of what this group played in this recording session.

of what can be done musically on the instruments, are the most important things about Nepali tunes to Subi Shah. We have tried to use his examples to show how these things go hand in hand—how theory is developed from bodily interaction with instruments, and how that theory in turn shapes how musicians describe what they do on their instruments.

Shah is concerned that the tunes he writes about are being lost, along with their theories:

> Mainly, sahanāī players, bā̃surī players, and muralī players who play various types of tunes are found all over the kingdom of Nepal. It is only because there are no books written about our ancient theory that we are now in this dilemma. Because Nepali music has not been able to develop theoretically, and instruments have not made progress, so much of ancient Nepali music is about to be lost.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, although other Nepali musicologists like Shah's good friend and neighbor Ram Sharan Darnal[24] and folklorists like Kalibhakta Pant[25] described various performance traditions, no one was pressing for the embodied theories that underlie the pañchai bājā's musical knowledge to be taught in institutional settings. When Shah says that Nepali music has not been able to develop theoretically, he is referring to this musical knowledge that has evolved and remains embodied in the praxis of the pañchai bājā and bā̃surī and muralī players of his region, whose knowledge has been placed lower on a musical hierarchy in comparison to that of the standardized Hindustani classical and Western systems.

Subi Shah was a descendant of the Thakuri rajas of Jyamrung and his home was in the village palace. Nevertheless, we can detect a critique of dominant caste and class relations in this lament for the situation of the 'Nepali classical music' played by 'experts… many among whom are sahanāī players from the Damai caste.' He is saying that the music that has come to be associated with villages and with hereditary Dalit performers has been overlooked

24 Darnal, *Saṅgīt Saurabh*; Darnal, *Nepali Bājā*.
25 Pant, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)*.

for shiny new foreign concepts and musical systems. Although he himself studied foreign systems, he worries that people will uncritically adopt them at the expense of their own systems of musical knowledge. *Introduction to Nepali Tunes* sets out this local system with detailed examples so that it may come to the attention of a broader audience of performers, musicologists, and others interested in Nepal's musical heritage. And, he resists the hierarchy of music-theoretical perspectives that has developed in recent history, calling for attention to local knowledge in all its depth, breadth, and connection to histories long forgotten.

# *Introduction to Nepali Tunes*

*Subi Shah*

---

To this day I have not found any books written on the theory of Nepali tunes, but it is clear that various types of tunes, from free-form tunes, to tunes with organized patterns, to song tunes, are being played according to certain rules.

And, the ways of producing these tunes can be divided into different types. Among these tunes, many of them are found to bear ancient names, while the names of many others have disappeared. Therefore, it becomes necessary for all musicians to research Nepali tunes. In fact, according to ancient customs, Nepali tunes can be categorized on the basis of how they are played on the sahanāī (double reed shawm), bā̃surī (transverse flute), and muralī (vertical flute); the main four branches are as follows:

1. Folk tunes (*lok dhun*)
2. Modern folk tunes (*ādhunik lok dhun*)
3. Modern tunes (*ādhunik dhun*)
4. Classical tunes (*śāstrīya dhun*)

Even though the various types of tunes listed above have been in use since ancient times, due to the lack of theoretical books, all these tunes have been viewed simply as Nepali folk tunes. In fact,

it is not correct to refer to all groups of musical sound as folk tunes alone. Because a folk tune is something that is seen as an object that is a blank slate that provides a way for various types of musical ideas to develop in multiple rhythmic ways. If any rhythmic group of musical sounds or song tune is played on an instrument, it should not be referred to only as a folk tune, but should be given its separate, proper name, such as instrumental folk tune (*swarālaṅkṛit lok dhun*),[26] folk song tune (*lok gīti dhun*), patriotic tune (*rāṣṭriya dhun*), auspicious tune (*maṅgal dhun*), modern song tune (*ādhunik gīti dhun*), classical tune (*śāstrīya dhun*), etc. For these various reasons, the main roots of all song tunes, including classical tunes, are understood to be folk tunes.

The main instruments on which these melodies are played include the sahanāī (double reed shawm), muralī (vertical flute), bā̃surī (transverse flute), and sāraṅgī (small bowed upright fiddle) and ṭuṅgnā (long-necked lute) among the Nepali stringed instruments of the hill areas. Likewise, the customs of playing on leaves[27] and whistling can be included in the means of creating folk tunes. Less commonly, the *murchuṅgā* (metal mouth harp) and *vināyo* (bamboo mouth harp) are also among these instruments.

When playing the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, using the patterns (chāl) of rāgs and rāginīs, care must be taken to play the notes that are part of the rāg. When playing with attention to the notes in this way, the name of the tuning is associated with the hole from which the note is played, and that name becomes the

26 The Nepali for what we have translated as 'instrumental folk tune' is *swarālaṅkrit lok dhun*, a term that refers to a type of tune that does not come from a song and has no associated lyrics, and which is known as a folk tune. The compound word is made up of *swar* (notes) and *ālaṅkrit* (ornamented), so the term connotes an ornamental combination of notes. This is not to suggest that these tunes use more ornamentation than others; rather, Shah is distinguishing them from tunes that come from songs.

27 The custom exists in many rural areas of Nepal of folding leaves into musical instruments. The leaf is folded and placed between the lips, through which a stream of air is then blown, and different pitches are produced through adjusting the airstream as one does when whistling. The vibrating leaf amplifies the sound.

ṭhāṭ, the mode or tuning.[28] For example: six-hole[29] tuning, five-hole tuning, four-hole tuning, etc. The basis for many tunes is formed and maintained according to these names. The organized form of this system is presented below in a simple way, with its ordinary rules and example tunes.

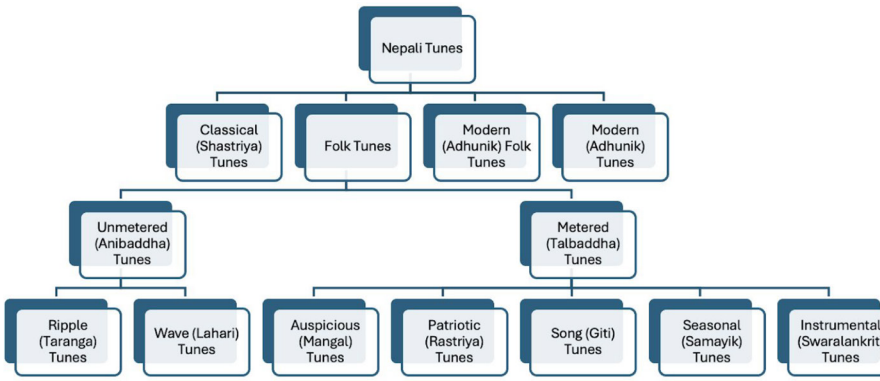



Fig. 5.4 Subi Shah, genealogy of Nepali tunes. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

28 *Ṭhāṭ* (ठाट) is a system of classification for rāgas found in Persian treatises and made popular in contemporary musical discourse by Indian musicologist Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande. A ṭhāṭ is a set of pitches within which rāgas are classified, or from which rāgas are created. Ṭhāṭs themselves do not have the characteristic melodic patterns or emotional associations that rāgas do; they exist for the purpose of classification only. Here Shah is creating such a classificatory system based on the sets of pitches obtained by using each of the holes of the six-hole bā̃surī or muralī as the tonic note for a scale. Sometimes the word 'mode' is used as a translation for ṭhāṭ. Because Shah mostly uses dhun or 'tune' rather than ṭhāṭ, I've translated this usage of dhun as 'tuning.' Because the main pitches are not really altered, as they can be in rāgs (the komal re in rāg Malkauns being different than the komal re in rāg Bhairavi), or different piano tunings (i.e. just tuning, Pythagorean tuning), the sense of 'tuning' I draw on here is closest to what a guitarist would mean when changing the pitches of strings to create way to easily play a particular set of notes (i.e. open tuning, dropped D tuning, taro patch tuning in slack key, etc.).

29 The word Shah uses here is swar, which in most cases we translate as 'note.' Swar can also be spelled swor. Its meanings include 'voice' and 'sound' as well as 'note.' Our translation in this specific instance is not a literal one and is meant to emphasize the colloquial meaning, which names the mode according to the number of holes covered on the flute to produce the tonic: chha-sware (pronounced 'sworay') dhun as 'six-hole tuning.' Also, 'six-note tune' in English implies that the tune contains only six notes, which is not the case here.

***

Regarding the classical tunes that fall within the abovementioned template for Nepali tunes: except for the customs existent since ancient times of playing the bā̃surī, muralī, sahanāī, and sāraṅgī in villages throughout the kingdom of Nepal, none of the abovementioned classical music can be found within today's popular song, instrumental, or dance forms. In the kingdom of Nepal, a flourishing classical tradition is considered to have existed since the Malla times. According to the theory that many classical musicians in India believe, all classical music comes from the classical music of Vedic times; Amir Khusrau was the first to create various tāls and rāgs by cutting the pakhawāj in half without ruining it, and turning it into a tablā.[30] Likewise, because the notation from Vedic times was difficult, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar simplified it by creating a new style of notation.[31] As this notation was also not simple enough, Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande developed various rules for classical music along with the new notation system that became widely used. These rules and this notation system have become known as Bhatkhande notation.[32]

Thus, the classical music that is popular today has come to

30 Amir Khusrau (1253–1325 C.E.) was a Sufi poet and disciple of the saint Nizamuddin Auliya, known for his poetry and contribution to the development of music in the northern subcontinent. He is credited with developing several instruments and the song genre qawwali, as well as inventing several rāgas and contributing to the development of the ghazal. See Regula Burkhardt Qureshi, 'Whose Music? Sources and Contexts in Indic Musicology,' in *Comparative Musicology and the Anthropology of Music*, ed. by Bruno Nettl and Philip Bohlman (University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 152–68; Yusuf Saeed, 'The Debate on Amir Khusrau's "Inventions" in Hindustani Music,' *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*, 36 (2008), pp. 220–32, 256; Schofield, *Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral*.

31 For a readable account of Paluskar and Bhatkhande's musical innovations in the early twentieth century nationalist milieu, see Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*.

32 Paluskar's and Bhatkhande's notation systems are similar to each other, and notation today sometimes mixes aspects of both. Shah mixes both systems in his use of both the *S* (Bhatkhande) and—(Paluskar) symbols to indicate sustained notes; Shah uses *S* for vocals and—for instrumental lines in sargam. The sargam syllables (S, R, G, M, P, D, N) used in the transcriptions in these books are drawn from Bhatkhande notation. For a comparison of Paluskar's and Bhatkhande's notations with a focus on how rhythm is depicted, see https://www.tablalegacy.com/notation-systems

be not the classical music from Vedic times, but rather Indian classical music. And, the classical music that followed that theory did not enter Nepal from the Malla times to the time when Mathbar Singh Thapa was Mukhtiyār.[33] The main thing is that, looking at the musical tradition of the Malla times, the books and the dance traditions created during that time clearly show that the Kathmandu valley had developed its own types of classical music and dance.[34] Looking at the bhajan songs for gods and goddesses

33 The Malla dynasty in Nepal lasted from 1201–1769. The Shahs of Gorkha conquered the Mallas of the Kathmandu Valley in 1769, and the idea that classical music was not welcomed there from the Shah's rule forward had more to do with interpretations of conqueror Prithvi Narayan Shah's deathbed proclamation, the Dibya Upadesh, in which he called upon courtiers not to admit foreign musicians. But, as there is in fact significant evidence that musicians from India were indeed welcomed into the Shah courts during their rule, and that Shah kings including Prithvi Narayan celebrated and supported local performances, it is now thought that this message was meant as a caution against admitting foreign agents, especially agents of the East India Company, into the court in the guise of musicians, as described in Regmi, *Music, Myth, and Melody: A Brief History of Nepali Music*. A painting in possession of the Narottam Das Indira Shrestha Guthi in Kathmandu shows Rana Bahadur Shah, who reigned from 1777–1799, being entertained by musicians from Akbar's court; another painting apparently by the same artists depicts Saraswati singing on a raised platform (*dabali*) in the courtyard of Kathmandu's Hanuman Dhoka Palace, accompanied by musicians and captioned 'Miya Tansen, Ram Raja, Sri Saraswati,' in Ramesh Pokharel, 'Classical Music in the Shah and Rana Era: 1768–1951 A.D.,' *SIRJANĀ – A Journal Of Arts and Art Education*, 6.1 (2019), pp. 62–71, https://doi.org/10.3126/sirjana.v6i1.39674. Mathbar Singh Thapa was a courtier of the elite Thapa family. He was Mukhtiyar, or Prime Minister, from 1843-1845, having risen to power by having many of his rivals killed. In 1845, he too was assassinated by his nephew Jung Bahadur, who then eliminated his rivals in the bloody Kot Massacre, consolidating power around himself and founding the Rana regime which reduced the Shah kings to figureheads until 1950. His political travails are discussed in Rishikesh Shah, *Modern Nepal—A Political History* (Manohar, 1990). Regarding the (re)entrance of Indian classical musical styles into Nepal, in Mathbar Singh Thapa's lifetime the Gorkhali state was reaching out diplomatically to other smaller states on the subcontinent, such as Punjab and Gwalior, in the face of growing British power. It is likely that increasing court exchanges brought increased interaction with the artistic worlds of other courts. Jung Bahadur welcomed foreign musicians to the court, and their numbers increased after the siege of Lucknow, as not all the musicians of that area followed Wajid Ali Shah to Calcutta. The Rana patronage of musicians continued to grow throughout their years of rule, and they are known for inviting the Misra lineage of classical performers from Banaras , and for bringing in many Nepali artists to train in music and dance and serve in their palaces, perhaps most famously the singer Melwa Devi in the early twentieth century.

34 These would include the *Dāphā* and *Kārtik Nāch* traditions still performed today. On *Dapha*, see Widdess, *Dapha: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City.*

of that time, we can see that the name of the song, the name of the rāg, and the names of the original instruments are written down. But musical notation is not found in any books. Likewise, among dances, classical types of traditional dance and classical dances in the *chārya* style continue to exist today.[35]

In the written methods for song and dance, the influence of Indian styles is not seen. Likewise, in the eastern and western hill areas as well, Indian classical music had not had an effect, and still today the Gandharvas perform in villages according to their tradition. They continue to play tunes based on rāgs and rāginīs, [and various others including] song tunes. The shadow of Indian music has not fallen upon them.

In the same way, bā̃surī and muralī players also play unmetered tunes, metered tunes, and various types of song tunes, according to their own theory, the details of which are systematically explained below.

Indian classical music rules do not match with these rules, and these tunes continue to be played according to their own traditional rules. Among these tunes, only a few are played according to named rāgs. Most of the names of the rāgs have already been lost. It has become necessary to search for the names of the rāgs according to the tunes.

Throughout the eastern and western hill villages of the Kingdom of Nepal, the custom of playing the pañchai bājā has continued since ancient times, each with its own regional customs. In this way, the rāgs and rāginīs of the tunes played on the sahanāī with the pāñche bājā are important. Along with tunes played in rāgs and rāginīs for specific times and according to the four quarters of the day and four quarters of the night, various song tunes have become part

*Music, Performance, and Meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal.* On *Kārtik Nāch*, see Harimana Shrestha, *Kāttī Pyākhā: Kārtik Nāch* (Jyeṣṭha Nagarik Samāj-Nepāl, 2009), and Monica Mottin, *Rehearsing for Life: Theatre for Social Change in Nepal* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108235853

35 For an account of Chārya dance published in the same textbook as Shah's 'Pāṅgdure (Maruni) Folk Dances,' see Saptamuni Bajracharya, 'Chārya Nṛtya, Gītkā Kehi Parichaya (Some Introductions to Charya Dance and Song),' in *Nṛityakala* (Sajha Prakashan, 1981), pp. 169–86. For more on the beginning of a Chārya revival in the 1990s, see Richard Widdess, 'Carya: The Revival of a Tradition?,' *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 12 and 13 (1997), pp. 12–20.

of the old sahanāī players' repertoire. In particular, various tunes are played following the regular patterns of the pañchai bājā's own tāls. Not even the shadow of Indian classical music has fallen on the tunes played in this way. The names of rāgs and rāginīs appear to be unique. The details of this are written below. From these, the regulated forms of Nepali tunes will become clear.

The fact that the methods of classical singing, instrumental performance, and dance entered the Valley after Jung Bahadur became Shree 3 Maharaj,[36] and were further raised up during the time of Shree 3 Maharaj Bir Shamsher,[37] is clear from the meeting of classical musicians that took place at the Bagadi conference.[38] And, since that time, classical music slowly became lost and found its home in bhajan groups, as is shown by the books containing the names of the rāgs and tāls for each bhajan, which are found with bhajan groups of every neighborhood.[39]

The main thing is that the names of the rāgs and rāginīs that are played on the sahanāī in the tāls of the pañchai bājās can still be found in the villages.[40] But because it is only the elderly sahanāī players who can play them, they are in the situation of becoming lost. For this reason, I cordially entreat all music researchers to collect the ancient tunes played on the sahanāī in a timely fashion, and to

36 Jung Bahadur Rana (b. 1817–d. 1877) was the general who, through a bloody coup in 1846, installed himself as Prime Minister, relegated the Shah monarchs to figureheads, and ushered in 104 years of oppressive autocratic rule by his descendants, which ended in 1951 after a mass movement and Indian assistance to King Tribhuvan set up a constitutional monarchy. Shree 3 Maharaj was the title adopted by Jung Bahadur and subsequent Rana prime ministers, while the kings remained Shree 5 Maharaj.

37 Bir Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana (b. 1852–d. 1901), Prime Minister from 1885–1901, known to have been a great lover of music.

38 Bir Shamsher held a music conference at Bagadi in Nepal's tarai region in December 1899–January 1900 (Poush 1956 v.s.), inviting famous musicians from India and Nepal. This conference is said to have lasted up to a month; the most comprehensive discussion of it in English can be found in Regmi, *Music, Myth, and Melody: A Brief History of Nepali Music*.

39 Such books are found in rural and urban neighborhoods, held by dāphā and bhajan groups, as witnessed by the translators of this text in many places in and beyond the Kathmandu Valley. See David Henderson, 'Emotion and Devotion, Lingering and Longing in Some Nepali Songs,' *Ethnomusicology*, 40.3 (1996), pp. 440–68; Widdess, *Dapha: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City. Music, Performance, and Meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal*.

40 See Tingey, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Panchai Bājā*.

write them down in notation to preserve Nepali classical tunes.

These are examples of tunes from Dhading Jyamrung VDC.[41]

# Tunes Played by the Pañchai Bājā of Dhading Jyamrung VDC

Collected from Nāike Amrit Bahadur Pariyar's Group[42]

## Tunes Played in the Four Quarters of the Day

1. Rāg: Bhimal - Played after the first light of morning
   - Chautāl six beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats

   Four-hole tuning



Video 5.1 Rāg Bhimal, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112757. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:58 minutes.

41 Pañchai bājā players usually differentiate between 'tune' and 'rāg.' A rāg, in this case, has a traditional fixed melody and associated set of tāls, performed for specific times of day and occasions, and according to Ram Bahadur Sundas of Jyamrung, rāg performances should not be mixed with tunes, though tunes can follow once the rāg has finished. Tunes, on the other hand, can be performed on nearly any occasion, can be traditional or modern, and can be modified to a greater extent. New tunes are composed all the time, while it is quite rare to compose new rāgs for the pañchai bājā. VDC stands for Village Development Committee, an administrative unit that preceded the current administrative unit of Rural Municipality.

42 *Nāike* is the title for the leader of a *pañchai bājā.* Amrit Bahadur Sundas (Subi Shah refers to him by the surname Pariyar, which is a common surname for members of his caste in Jyamrung, but was not his preferred surname) was the leader of the Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā in Subi Shah's time, and is the grandfather of Ram Bahadur Sundas, the current leader of this same ensemble and the main coordinator for Jyamrung recordings on our team.

2. Rāg: Byān Charī - Played in the first quarter of the morning
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats[43] Four-hole tuning
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats



Video 5.2 Rāg Byān Charī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112758. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:34 minutes.



Video 5.3 Rāg Byān Charī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112844. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:24 minutes.

3. Rāg: Tauḍi - Played in the first quarter of the morning
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats Four-hole tuning
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats



Video 5.4 Rāg Tauḍī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112759. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:32 minutes.

43 According to the pañchai bājā musicians of Jyamrung, ek tāl in this context refers to a tāl in which the damahā is struck on the first beat of every four beats, in a sixteen beat cycle. This is not to be confused with the ek tāl in Hindustani music, which is a twelve-beat tāl. Similarly, Chautāl, as mentioned under Rāg Bhimal, calls for the damahā to be struck on the first and fourth beats of a six-beat tāl.

4. Rāg: Rām Kālī[44] - Played in the second quarter of the morning
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats

   Four-hole tuning



Video 5.5 Rāg Rām Kālī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112760. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:53 minutes.



Video 5.6 Rāg Rām Kālī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112842. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:57 minutes.

5. Rāg: Sāraṅgā - Played in the third quarter of the day
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats
   - Chautāl six beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats

   Six-hole tuning



Video 5.7 Rāg Sāraṅgā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112761. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:27 minutes.

44 The pañchai bājā musicians of Jyamrung told us that another rāg, rāg Kharkha, follows Rām Kālī in the cycle of daytime rāgs. While Subi Shah did not list this one, we recorded it and link to it here: https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112762

6. Rāg: Gaurī Sāraṅgā - Played in the fourth quarter of the day
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats Four-hole tuning
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats



Video 5.8 Rāg Gaurī Sāraṅga, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112763. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:00 minutes.



Video 5.9 Rāg Gaurī Sāraṅga, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112841. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:18 minutes.

## Tunes Played in the Four Quarters of the Night

7. Rāg: Sanje - Played in the evening
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats Four-hole tuning
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats



Video 5.10 Rāg Sanje, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112764. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:20 minutes.

8. Rāg: Dagā - Played in the first quarter of the night
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats

   Six-hole tuning



Video 5.11 Rāg Dagā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112765. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:13 minutes.

9. Rāg: Belā - Played in the second quarter of the night
   - Ek tāl sixteen beats
   - Khyālī tāl eight beats

   Four-hole tuning



Video 5.12 Rāg Belā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112766. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:13 minutes.



Video 5.13 Six-Sore Bela Rāg/Rāg Bela in Six-Hole Tuning, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112857. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:28 minutes.

10. Rāg: Kalyān - Played in the third quarter of the night
    - Ek tāl sixteen beats
    - Khyālī tāl eight beats

    Four-hole tuning



Video 5.14 Rāg Kalyān, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112767. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:32 minutes.

11. Rāg: Aruṇ Baruṇ - Played in the fourth quarter of the night
    - Ek tāl sixteen beats Four-hole tuning
    - Khyālī tāl eight beats



Video 5.15 Rāg Aruṇ Baruṇ, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112768. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:51 minutes.

12. Rāg: Tauli[45] - Played in the second quarter of the morning
    - Ek tāl sixteen beats Five-hole tuning
    - Chaukaḍī Chautāl fourteen beats
    - Chautāl six beats
    - Khyālī tāl eight beats
13. Rāg: Tune for asking for the bride[46]
    - Ek tāl sixteen beats

45 According to the musicians, the two rāgs Tauḍi and Tauli, are the same 'but with different fingerings.' The audio recording Subi Shah made of the Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā in earlier decades when led by Amrit Bahadur Sundas, is of a five-hole version of Tauli following the tāls listed above. This alternate version appears to have been recorded to demonstrate different fingerings and different tāls (the tāls listed here) in comparison to the first audio recording of the same rāg. This version is held in Music Nepal's archives.

46 In Amrit Bahadur Pariyar (Sundas)'s Pañchai Bājā recordings, held at Music



Video 5.16 Rāg for Asking for the Bride, plus Phāgu Tune, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112769. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:34 minutes.

According to the introduction to the above Nepali tunes, which have been in practice since ancient times, Nepali tunes can be clearly seen to be built on three different groups of notes.

When choosing the notes, according to the rules of the Vedic and grammarian[47] tradition, the notes used in Nepali tunes are divided into three groups: high notes (*tikho swar*), low notes (*ghora swar*), and middle notes (*madhya swar*). And, each group is divided into seven notes. Tunes produced according to these rules from the various groups of notes, and in practice since ancient times, can still be found with old bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī players. However, today's younger generation of bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī players seem to be more attracted to playing tunes using Bhatkhande rules,[48] filmi tunes, and modern song tunes. When playing bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī according to the ancient rules, one player plays the tonic note as a drone (*swar rākhne*) and the other plays various tunes.

---

Nepal, Shah lists this as 'Rāg for Asking for the Bride.' I have heard it referred to as both 'rāg' and 'dhun' (tune). This slippage in terminology indicates how closely related the ideas of rāg and tune are in this repertoire. When pressed for further explanation, Ram Bahadur Sundas noted that rāgs have ceremonial importance and specific performance times and occasions, while tunes are not so tied to time or occasion, and that rāg and tune should not be mixed together while playing. We went together to see a concert performed by a pañchai bājā from Baglung in Kathmandu in 2024 ('Naumatiko Nau Rāg,' sponsored by the Nepal Academy) and Ram criticized this group for playing a popular folk song tune as the second or 'khyālī pharkāune' part of a rāg. Also, this recording segues into a performance of Phāgu, which the performers refer to as a tune.

47 Shah is referring to the Sanskrit grammarian tradition; grammarians' commentaries on the Vedas systematized the language, and he is making an analogy between such systematization and his attempt to systematize Nepali musical notation. It is notable that Shah's work is one among many such commentaries on local traditions, coming near the end of the twentieth-century impetus to systematically describe languages and musical systems in South Asia.

48 This most likely refers to music written down in Bhatkhande notation, including classical Hindustani music as taught in music courses like those at Kathmandu's Lalit Kala Campus, established in 1894.

In this way, when playing the tonic, the rules of the type of tune should be followed—which type of song tune, which type of unmetered *taraṅga* tune,[49] or which type of metered instrumental tune—and the appropriate hole of the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī should be chosen to play the tonic. This rule of playing the tonic leads to seven note groups, and in this way, whichever hole is closed to play the tonic establishes the name of the tuning.[50] For example: close six holes for six-hole[51] tuning, close five holes for five-hole tuning, close four holes for four-hole tuning, etc., and the tunings are named like this. So with each number of holes that are closed to play the tonic, different types of note groups are produced, and the twelve notes as termed according to the rules of Bhatkhande classical music are produced from this process.

The main thing is that as stated above, the custom of using notation from either Bhatkhande or staff notation systems for playing Nepali instrumental and song tunes on the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, is not found in the villages. Their own rules are used and the tunes are produced from the process of playing within the note groups. The process of producing song tunes from various note groups on this basis and the abovementioned process of producing new note groups by playing within the group given by the tonic, and producing a song in a regular form according to the same, still practiced today among village bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī players, is given below.

As note placement should also be notated for Nepali tunes according to the way they are played, rules for note placement have been prepared according to how the notes are produced; each of the seven notes is represented in place according to ancient rules, by the letter 'lā' where it is placed in the tune, the rules of which are made clear in the templates given below. The main thing is that in the tunes played on the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, the rules of their upward

49 In Shah's diagram of tunes above, taranga 'ripple' tunes fall under anibaddha or unmetered tunes, along with lahari tunes. Throughout this text, Shah appears to be using taranga to stand for all unmetered tunes. In *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*, Shah uses lok lahari as a term to mean unaccompanied songs. Lahari is also used this way in the hills of eastern Nepal.

50 While Shah uses the word dhun (tune) here, we are translating it as tuning when he uses it in this specific sense, because he is equating it with note group or ṭhāṭ, rather than using the sense of a tune as a specific melody.

51 Shah writes 'six-swore dhun' here. Instead of the direct translation of 'six-note tune' we write 'six-hole tune' for this phrase and others like it, to avoid the implication that the tune only consists of six notes.

and downward motion differ according to their note group, which is given by the drone pitch and the way the tune is played. Just as ten ṭhāṭs are used in Bhatkhande theory, in Nepali melodic theory, seven modes (chāl) are used, and seven different tunings (dhun) are made according to these modes. According to these rules of the modes, each tonic produced by covering a certain number of holes produces its own note group, seven note groups in total. And, to show each note group with its note placement, six-hole, five-hole, four-hole, three-hole tunings, etc. are written here, from which the note group for each mode will be clear. These rules are given systematically below.

Names for the seven notes based on the modes of Nepali tunings are not found to be in use today, and what is seen to be in use is the name given according to the mode as played according to the rules of the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī. No notes are given separate names as in classical music rules, and since there has been no classical music influence in the villages, they still sing and play according to their own rules.

In Vedic times Bharatamuni wrote the names of the seven notes in the *Nāṭyaśāstra: Ṣāḍja, Ṛiṣabh, Gāndhār, Madhyamā, Pañcham, Dhaivat, Niṣad*, and as time went on and those with musical knowledge taught what was in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* according to classical music theory, because guru lineages used the oral tradition method of teaching, and as studying classical music became difficult, in the process of making it easier, first Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar composed a method of writing notation according to the seven note names, but as that notation system was also difficult and the Sā Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni notation system composed by Pandit Vishnu Bhatkhande, was accessible to all, that method remains in use, and is known as the Indian notation method.[52]

In this way various countries use notation methods according to their own theories. Among which the Western staff notation system began in England through the efforts of S. A. Glover[53] and John

52 Vishnu Digamber Paluskar's system was slightly earlier and very similar to that of Vishnu Bhatkhande, whose system became the most popular one in the end. Shah refers to this 'Indian notation method' as Bhatkhande notation multiple times in this text. This notation system is perhaps most commonly referred to as 'sargam notation' today.

53 Sarah Anna Glover (1786–1867) invented the Norwich sol-fa system, also known today as moveable do, because the syllable do represents the tonic note of the scale no matter the absolute pitch being referenced. The sargam system as developed by Bhatkhande and Paluskar follows the same logic, with the syllable

Curwen[54] with the seven note names as follows: Do Re Mi Fa So La Si.[55] Although this western notation system has come into use it has not fully been able to have an effect; only Do Re Mi Fa appear to have been adopted in practice.[56] Likewise another Western notation was developed in France by Galin,[57] also known as Chevé[58] notation, and this notation uses numbers for each of the seven notes. This notation too has not been that useful.[59] As Western notation theories were created, the neumes notation system developed in Rome,[60]

---

*sā* representing the tonic note regardless of the absolute pitch being referenced.

54 John Curwen (1816–1880) was a Congregationalist minister in England who assisted in popularizing the Norwich sol-fa system (moveable do) invented by Sarah Anna Glover. He renamed it 'tonic sol-fa' and founded Curwen Press for music publishing, and Tonic Sol-Fa College for teaching music according to this system. H. C. Colles and others, 'Curwen, John,' in *Grove Music Online* (Grove, 2001).

55 Si (the 7th scale degree) is written as Ti in Curwen's system, and the use of Si is from the French lineage detailed below.

56 One can assume that Shah is talking about this system's adoption in Jyamrung or perhaps also in Kathmandu in the 1960s here.

57 Pierre Galin (1786–1821), a mathematician and music educator in France, developed a movable do system that represented scale degrees with numbers. He never published his ideas, but his business manager Aimé Paris plagiarized them and propagated them as his own. See Kenneth Simpson, *Some Great Music Educators* (Novello, 1976).

58 Emile-Joseph-Maurice Chevé (1804-1864) was a surgeon and the husband of Aimé Paris's sister Nanine. Seeing the potential of the notation system Paris was promoting, he too devoted his life to popularizing it by writing textbooks, along with his wife Nanine. In addition to the system of numbers for pitches, they also developed syllables to indicate rhythmic duration. Their textbooks were adopted at the École normal supérieure and other well-known French educational institutions. The system became known as the Galin–Paris–Chevé system. John Curwen came across it, and it influenced Curwen's developments of Sarah Anna Glover's sol-fa system, as noted in Edwin Gordon, *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Music Learning Theory* (GIA, 2007), p. 85. In Hungary in the 1930s, Zoltán Kodaly adopted versions of both the tonic sol-fa system using note-name syllables for pitches, and the Chevé system's syllables for duration, and added hand movements. This system is now widely taught around the world as the Kodaly method, and it was the method that Anna Stirr was taught in school.

59 It is true that number or cipher notation did not catch on in the Western world as much as syllabic solfége systems and staff notation did, but this notation system influenced the development of similar systems in the Francophone and Anglophone worlds. Chevé's system of syllables for rhythmic durations became incorporated into Kodaly's widely-used system, and cipher notation is popular in many places, including in China and among Tibetan and Himalayan musicians in Nepal today. So, it is perhaps a stretch to assert that this system has not been useful!

60 Perhaps he refers to the broader Roman empire; also, neumes are the predecessors of staff notation, and are more complex than Shah suggests. For more on European neumes, see Kenneth Levy, 'On the Origin of Neumes,' *Early Music History*, 7 (1987), pp. 59–90, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261127900000541,

and according to this theory, for the octave, a semicolon, period (full stop), and dash were used for the articulation of notes. It is clear that this system was attempting to connect with the Vedic hymn (*ṛichā*) system,[61] and slowly this theory developed into the staff notation that is used today as international notation. In this system the seven notes are named A B C D E F G. And, with the use of five lines and four spaces and marks to indicate accidentals, the twelve notes can be shown.

With all this in mind, in order to create a Nepali notation system, instead of Sā Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni, the letters Cha Ṭa Ta Ka Pa Ya Sa (च ट त क प य स) encompass the names of the seven notes, and the three note groups are indicated according to these note names. For the high note group, above each note is a straight line that indicates it is in the high note group. Likewise for the low notes, under each note is a straight line that indicates it is in the low note group. And the middle notes are written with plain letters. In this way the three parts (three octaves) are divided. And, the seven natural notes and five altered notes together make the twelve notes, to write which the seven notes must be left natural, and among the five altered notes, a straight line is written under each letter for each flat note and above the letter for a sharp note, and in this way all the twelve notes are written with letters according to their names. In this way, even though the letters are divided according to the note names, to best identify note placement and pitches, a staff notation is also used, with nine lines and eight spaces and the syllable 'lā' that has been used since ancient times written according to folk rules to clearly show how various tunes are produced. The template for this is below. And, the movement of each tune and how it is produced according to its tune group and form is also clarified.

As mentioned above, the groups of letters indicating the names

and Carl Parrish, *The Notation of Medieval Music* (W.W. Norton, 1957). Various open access textbooks provide pictorial examples of the evolution of neumes; for an excellent example, see MIT's Chromatone project: MIT Chromatone, 'Evolution of European Notation Systems |,' MIT GitHub Project, Chromatone, 2017, https://chromatone.center/theory/notes/staff/evolution/

61 *Ṛcha* (ऋचा) is the word for an individual verse of a Vedic hymn. *Ṛcha* refers to these verses not just as written lines of text but as sounded units; it can also be translated as 'mantra.' It is not clear to us how systems of Western musical notation may have been attempting to connect with the Vedic *ṛcha* system as Shah suggests.

of the seven notes shows the outline of the twelve notes and the outline of the note groups developed on each of the seven types of movement groups, according to the ancient rules of Nepali tunes. These are all made in the ways shown below.

1. The natural[62] Nepali note names
   - Cha Ṭa Ta Ka Pa Ya Sa[63]
   - (च ट त क प य स)
2. The twelve notes including the five altered notes
   - Cha Ṭa Ṭa Ṯa Ta Ka K̇a Pa Ẏa Ya Ṣa Sa
   - च ट ट त त क क॑ प य य स स
3. An introduction to the notes in the three groups
4. Forms of high notes
   - चं टं तं कं पं यं सं
   - Ċha Ṫa Ṫa K̇a Ṗa Ẏa Ṡa
5. Forms of low notes
   - च़ ट़ त़ क़ प़ य़ स़
   - Ċha Ṭa Ṭa K̦a Ṗa Ẏa Ṣa
6. Forms of middle notes
   - Cha Ṭa Ta Ka Pa Ya Sa

**According to the Rules of Nepali tunes, the Seven Modes (chāl) are as follows:**

1. Group 1 – six-hole tuning mode (*chha-swore dhunko chāl*)
   - Cha Ṭa Ta Ka Pa Ya Ṣa Sa Ċha
   - S R G M P D N̲ N Ṡ
2. Group 2 – five-hole tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ṯa Ka Pa Ẏa Ṣa Ċha
   - S R G̲ M P D̲ N̲ Ṡ

62 'Natural' (*śuddha*) here refers to unaltered, as in not sharp or flat.

63 There are two things to note about this Sa: first, it is pronounced Sa, not Sā. Second, it represents the 7th scale degree rather than the tonic note (Sā) in Bhatkhande's sargam notation. As noted above, Shah's tonic note is represented by the syllable Cha.

3. Group 3 – four-hole tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ṯa Ka Pa Ẏa Ṣa Ċha
   - S Ṟ Ṝ M Ṁ P Ḏ Ṉ Ṡ
4. Group 4 – three-hole tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ta Ḳa Pa Ya Sa Ċha
   - S R G M Ṁ P D N Ṡ
5. Group 5 – two-hole tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ṯa Ta Ka Pa Ya Ṣa Ċha
   - S R Ṝ G M P D Ṉ Ṡ
6. Group 6 – one-hole tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ṭa Ṯa Ka Pa Ẏa Ṣa Ċha
   - S Ṟ R Ṝ M P Ḏ Ṉ Ṡ
7. Group 7 – Open tuning mode
   - Cha Ṭa Ṭa Ta Ka Pa Ya Sa Ċha[64]
   - S Ṟ R G M P D N Ṡ

# Places of Notes in Various Notation Systems

## Places of Notes in Vedic Classical Notation

| | |
|---|---|
| Ṣaḍja | Ṣaḍja |
| Niṣād | Niṣād |
| Dhaivat | Dhaivat |
| Pañcham | Pañcham |
| Madhyam | Madhyam |
| Gāndhāra | Gāndhāra |
| Ṛṣabh | Ṛṣabh |
| Ṣaḍja | Ṣaḍja |
| Ascending | Descending |

Fig. 5.5 Subi Shah, places of notes in Vedic Classical Notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

64 Having introduced the letters Shah suggests for note names, from here on we

## Places of Notes in Bhatkhande Notation

| | |
|---|---|
| S | S |
| N | N |
| D | D |
| P | P |
| M | M |
| G | G |
| R | R |
| S | S |
| Ascending | Descending |

Fig. 5.6 Subi Shah, places of notes in Bhatkhande notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

## Places of Notes in Western Solfege Notation

| | |
|---|---|
| Do | Do |
| Ti | Ti |
| La | La |
| So | So |
| Fa | Fa |
| Mi | Mi |
| Re | Re |
| Do | Do |
| Ascending | Descending |

Fig. 5.7 Subi Shah, places of notes in Western Solfege Notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

replace them with the Bhatkhande system, as Shah himself does for the rest of the book.

## Places of Notes in Western Neumes[65] Notation

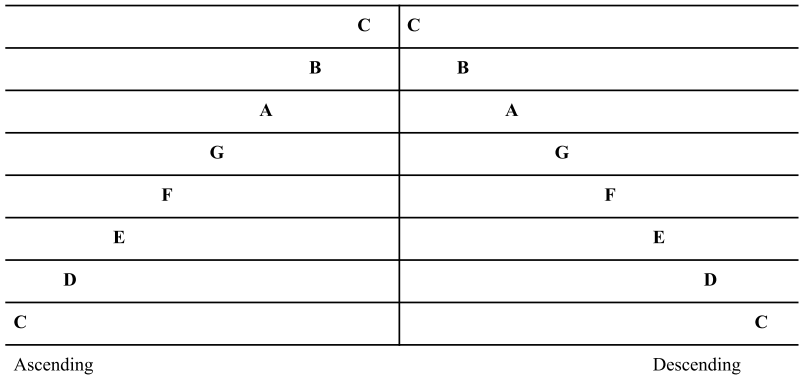



Fig. 5.8 Subi Shah, places of notes in Western 'Neumes' Notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

## Places of Notes According to Nepali Modes

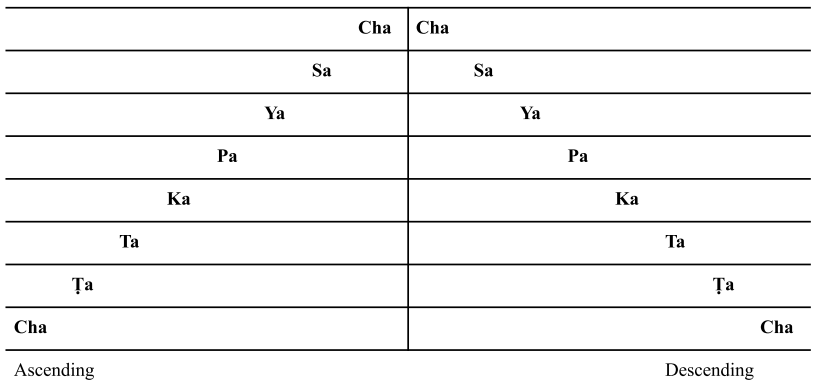



Fig. 5.9 Subi Shah, places of notes according to Nepali Modes. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

65 Although Shah writes 'neumes' here, this notation does not represent neumes, which are symbols that indicate the shape of the melodic line and sometimes also the durations of notes, but do not reference specific pitches. Rather, this notation refers to the custom of using letters for the seven note names of the diatonic scale, which is first credited to the fifth century Roman statesman Boethius. For more on the history of neumes in European musical notation, see Parrish, *The Notation of Medieval Music* (W.W. Norton, 1957).

## Places of Notes in Nepali Tune Notation

| | |
|---|---|
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| Ascending | Descending |

Fig. 5.10 Subi Shah, places of notes in Nepali Tune Notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

## Places of Notes in Nepali Tunings

| | |
|---|---|
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| La | La |
| Ascending | Descending |

Fig. 5.11 Subi Shah, six-hole tuning (and all other tunings).[66] © Subi Shah. CC BY.

66 Shah includes the same figure eight times for each tuning. When I talked to Shah about this the first time he showed me the manuscript in 2005, he said 'they are all written in the same way; the way you can tell them apart is by looking at where it says three-hole, four-hole tuning, etc.' So, in Western solfege terms, Shah's notation system is clearly based on a 'moveable Do.'

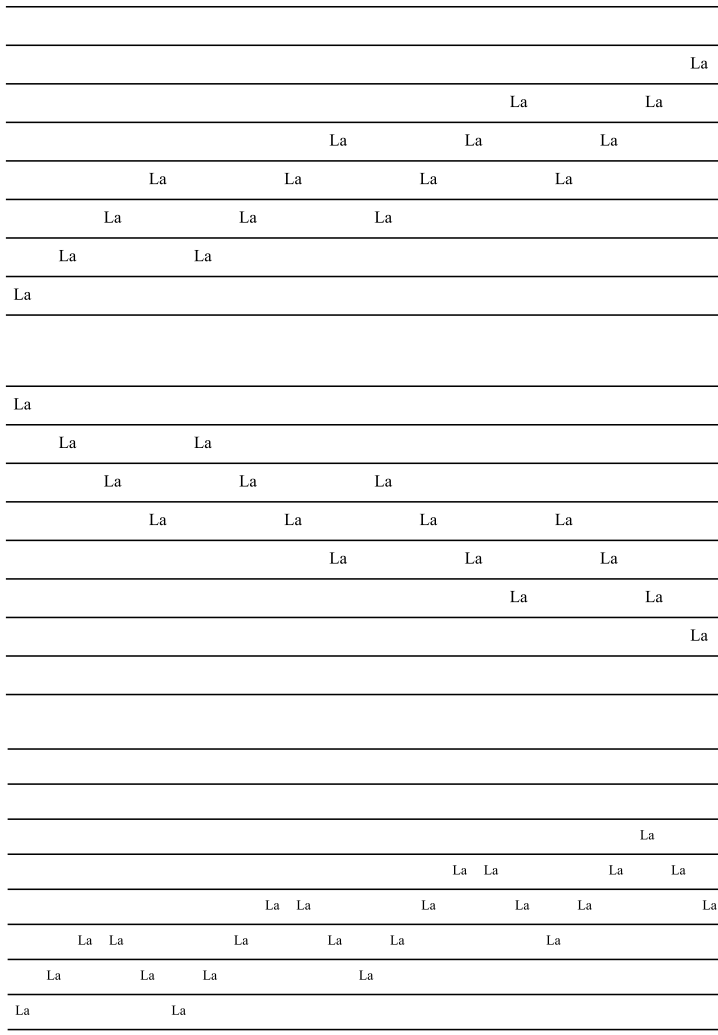
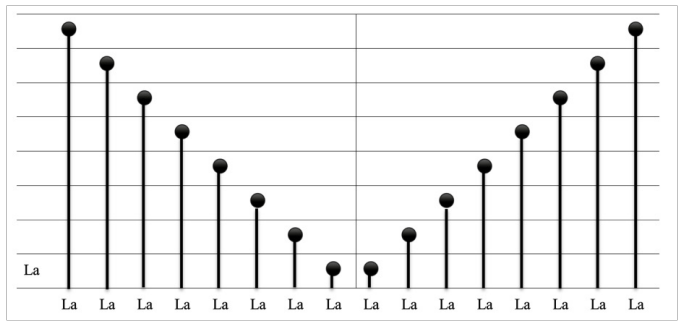


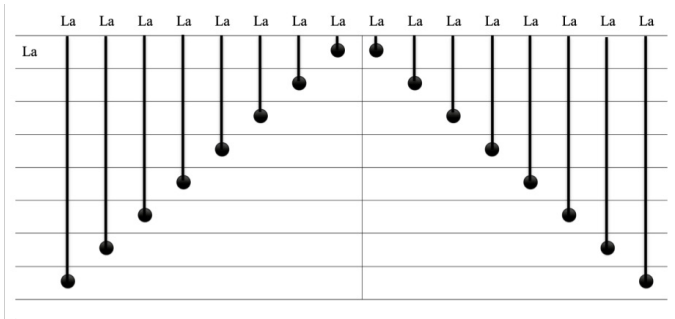

Fig. 5.12 Subi Shah, practice melodies in 'Nepali notation.' © Subi Shah. CC BY.

In the above divisions of the middle note group, the placements of the seven notes, as derived from how they are played on the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, are clarified so that it will be easy to play them on the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī. Likewise, the way of writing the note placements for the low and high notes according to the modes are given below. Specifically, to indicate a high note, a black dot is placed at each note with a vertical line pointing upwards, and 'lā

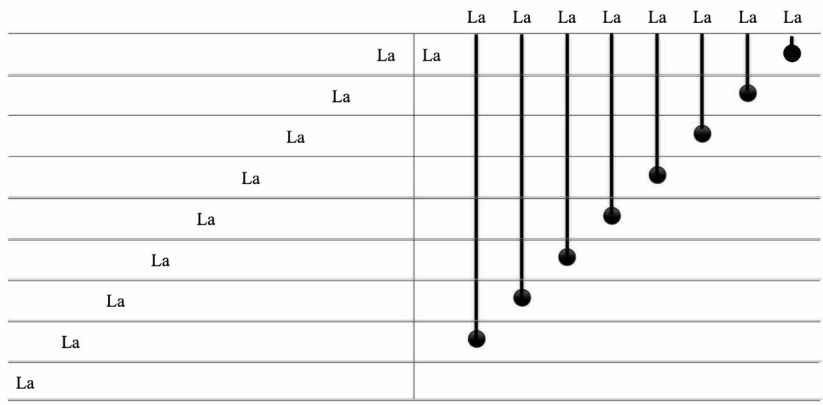
lā' is written above the eight syllables, and to indicate a low note, a black dot is placed at each note with a vertical line pointing downwards, and 'lā lā' is written below the eight syllables. In this way, though the notes are divided into low, middle, and high notes, the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī can only play two octaves, but the various modes can extend for some notes below or above the middle notes. And, the abovementioned rules are clearly shown in the boxes below, in order to show how they can apply to the three octaves of the harmonium. The most important thing to note is that according to the classification of Nepali tunes, the bā̃surī and muralī-derived branch of tune classification includes only folk tunes, while those in the branch derived from the sahanāī can include all these folk tunes and the tradition of playing classical tunes in rāgs with various names continues to this day. Calling on all music lovers to promote Nepali classical music, I am writing down its form and rules including those for writing high and low notes.

## Placement of Notes in Low and High Octaves[67]




67 This is how Subi Shah depicted the notation for the upper and lower octaves, as he describes above. ला is 'Lā,' and from each syllable 'Lā' that depicts an individual note, a line connects to a black dot on the staff that indicates a pitch. The syllables written within the staff represent the notes in the middle octave.
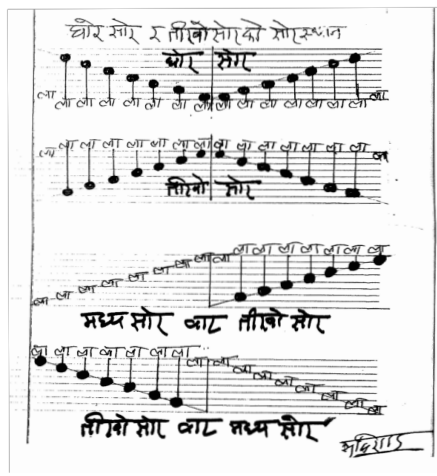


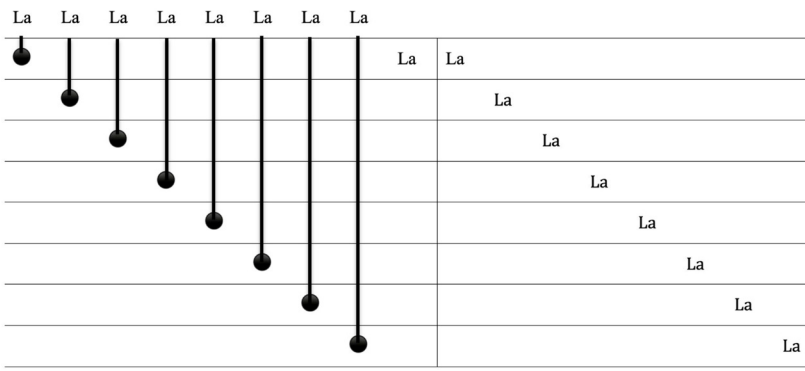







Fig. 5.13 Subi Shah, placement of notes in low and high octaves. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

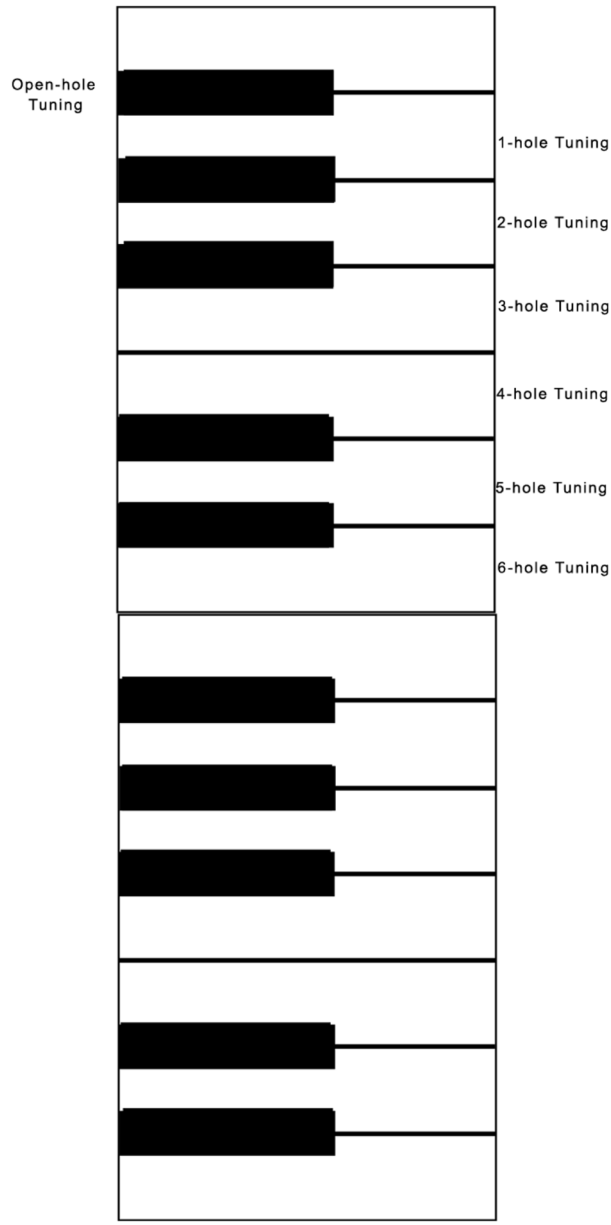



Fig. 5.14 Subi Shah, keyboard diagram showing tunings/note groups as modes of a C-Major scale. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

## Song Tunes According to Rules of Nepali Modes

1. Song Tune in Six-Hole Tuning: *Rām Sāĩlā* (Third Brother Ram)
2. Song Tune in Six-Hole Tuning: *Khānnã Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī* (I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water)[68]
3. Song Tune in Five-Hole Tuning: *Jindagī Oilāyo* (Life is Fading)
4. Song Tune in Five-Hole Tuning: *Khānnã Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī* (I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water)
5. Song Tune in Five-Hole Tuning: *Jalesī Pānpāte*
6. Song Tune in Four-Hole Tuning: *He Bir Hīda Aghi Sarī* (Hey Brave One, Walk On)
7. Song Tune in Four-Hole Tuning: *Najāū Dājyū Bideśa* (Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad)
8. Song Tune in Three-Hole Tuning: *Khānnã Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī* (I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water)
9. Song Tune in Three-Hole Tuning: *Jānai Lāgyo Jānai Lāgyo* (Almost Gone)
10. Song Tune in Three-Hole Tuning: *Bhajumana Nārāyaṇa* (Hymn to Narayana)
11. Song Tune in Three-Hole Tuning: *Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl* and *Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl*
12. Song Tune in Two-Hole Tuning: *Khānna Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī* (I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water)
13. Song Tune in Two-Hole Tuning: *Baĩsālu Nānī* (Youthful Girl)
14. Song Tune in One-Hole Tuning: *Munāle Māilī* (Sprout, Second Sister)
15. Song Tune in One-Hole Tuning: *Najāū Dājyū Bideśa* (Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad)
16. Song Tune in Open-Hole Tuning: *Pānī Paryo Gairī Mā* (It Rained in the Hollow)
17. Song Tune in Open-Hole Tuning: *Kã̃ Gaera Ke Hune Chha Ra* (What Good is it to Go Away?)

68 This translation was given by Subi Shah in conversation with Anna Stirr in 2005. He said that it referred to water pumps which were new at the time of the song's composition.

# Rule 1: Six-Hole Tuning

Video 5.17 Introduction to Nepali Tunes Intro and Chha-Swore Dhun (Six-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112775. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:54.

The note group made on the basis of closing all six holes of the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī is called six-hole tuning. In this note group built from having all six holes closed, both Ni are included, and the other notes are natural. Because the notes of two full octaves can be played in this tuning, tunes can be played that include both the high and middle notes. Sahanāī players have extensively adopted this six-hole tuning. The reason for this is that the sahanāī has seven holes and can play even more notes. Ordinarily, bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī learners practice in this six-hole tuning. Many different kinds of folk tunes can be found in this six-hole tuning. Here are some models of their forms.

## Flute Fingering Diagram for Notes in Six-Hole Tuning[69]

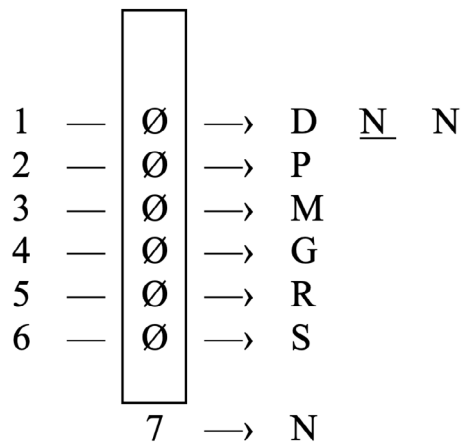



Fig. 5.15 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in six-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

69 The flute diagrams throughout our translation have been corrected to apply

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | 1) S R G M P D N S |
| | Ascending Notes | 2) S R G M P D N S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | 1) S N D P M G R S |
| | Descending Notes | 2) S N D P M G R S |

## Unmetered Tune in Six-Hole Tuning

S - - - - - - - , S R G - - - - -, $^{GS}$(R)G - - $^{GS}$(R)G - -,

$^{GS}$(R)G - - $^{GS}$(R)G - - $^{S}$(R) (SSSS) – S - - - - - - -,

S R G P $^{N}$(D) Ṡ Ṙ Ġ - - - - $^{ĠŠ}$(Ṙ)Ġ - -, $^{ĠŠ}$(Ṙ)Ġ - -, $^{Š}$(Ṙ)Ṡ - -,

$^{Š}$(Ṙ)(ṠṠṠṠ) - - - - -, Ṡ - - - - - -,

P$^{N}$(D) Ṡ Ṙ Ġ - - - - - - -, $^{ĠŠ}$(Ṙ)Ġ - -, $^{ĠŠ}$(Ṙ)Ġ - -,

$^{Š}$(Ṙ)Ṡ - -, $^{Š}$(Ṙ)(ṠṠṠṠ) - - - - -, Ṡ - - - - - N,

D P - - , P D N $^{N}$(D), P D P G, $^{Š}$(Ṙ)Ṡ - -, R G P D,

$^{N}$(D) - - -, P G R ), $^{S}$(R) (SSSS) – S - - - - - - -,

Ṡ - - -, - - - - |

## Khyālī Bhākā Song

*Rām Saĩlā bāṭomāthi bāṭomuni jhapke tite pātī,*
*Rām Saĩlā jhapke tite pātī saĩlā jhapke tite pātī,*
*Rām Saĩlā chhādī jāne māyā saṅga nabolekai jātī,*
*Rām Saĩlā nabolekai jātī saĩlā nabolekai jātī.*

---

to a six-hole *bãsurī* or *muralī* flute (or a sahanāī with a seventh hole that can be used to make a lower seventh scale degree in this six-hole tuning). The manuscript we worked from included diagrams created by someone other than Subi Shah, and these diagrams incorrectly represented the correspondence of fingerings and scale degrees for the six-hole flute. It is important that the diagrams reflect what would be played on the six-hole flute, because this is the basis for Subi Shah's textual descriptions of the modes and tunings. The flute diagrams we use here reflect both the description of the modes and tunings in the text, and the keyboard diagram drawn by Shah.

*Rām Saĩlā dālai miṭho ghiu hāle gābai miṭho chukle,*
*Rām Saĩlā gābai miṭho chukle saĩlā gābai miṭho chukle,*
*Rām Saĩlā mana bhane katākatā ṭhikkai pārchhau mukhle.*
*Rām Saĩlā ṭhikkai pārchhau mukhle saĩlā ṭhikkai pārchhau mukhle.*

*Rām Saĩlā ṭalakane rāto ṭikā gājalako kosa,*
*Rām Saĩlā ṭalakane rāto ṭikā gājalako kosa,*
*Rām Saĩlā rasa chākhne bhamarā ta malāī keko doṣa?*
*Rām Saĩlā malāī keko doṣa saĩlā malāī keko doṣa?*

Ram Saila, above and below the road are drooping wormwood stalks,
Ram Saila, drooping wormwood stalks, Saila, drooping wormwood stalks,
Ram Saila, better not to speak with a lover who's leaving,
Ram Saila, better not to speak, Saila, better not to speak.

Ram Saila, lentils are tasty with ghee added, and taro stalks with lemon,[70]
Ram Saila, taro stalks with lemon, Saila, taro stalks with lemon,
Ram Saila, even if your heart is wandering, you win people over with your speech.
Ram Saila, you win people over with your speech, Saila, you win people over with your speech.

Ram Saila, sparkling red tika and lines of eyeliner,
Ram Saila, lines of eyeliner, Saila, lines of eyeliner,
Ram Saila, a bumblebee wants to taste nectar, how am I to blame?
Ram Saila, how am I to blame, Saila, how am I to blame?

70 *Chuk* is lemon juice or the juice of the large *nibuwā* citrus fruit boiled until it becomes a thick syrup, which preserves it indefinitely.

## Rām Sāilā[71]

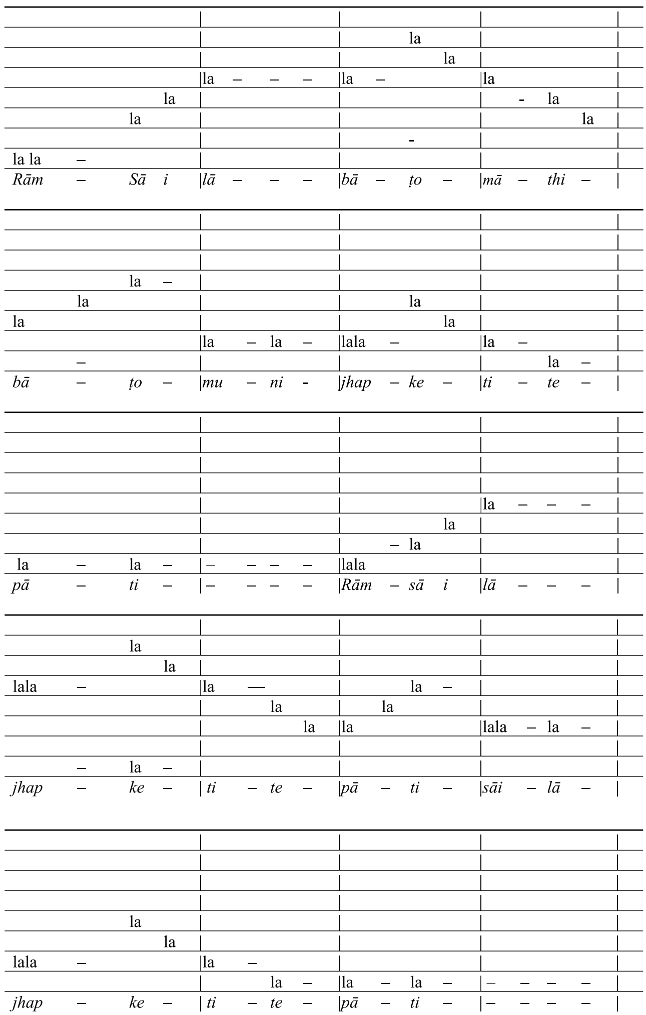



Fig. 5.16 Traditional. ‘Rām Sāilā’ in Shah’s Nepali Notation. Arrangement. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

71 Shah also provides these songs in sargam notation. We transcribe Shah’s own notation and all the sargam notation for this first set of examples only, and hereafter present the unmetered tunes in sargam notation, and the metered tunes in staff notation with the sargam in the lyric line. The staff notation consistently uses middle C for Sā in all modes, with flat and sharp notes notated as accidentals rather than as a key signature. This is consistent with Shah’s way of understanding equivalence among systems, and with his piano diagram. Shah’s notation and sargam notation are both equivalent to a ‘moveable Do’ solfege system in which the tonic note Sā can represent any pitch.

# Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Rām Sāilā*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| r\| | S | - | G | M | \| | P | - | - | - | \|\| | P | - | N | D | \| | P | - | M | G | \|\| |
| | *Rām* | - | *Sā* | *i* | \| | *lā* | - | - | - | \|\| | *Bā* | - | *to* | - | \| | *mā* | - | *thi* | - | \|\| |
| | G | M | P | - | \| | R | - | R | - | \|\| | R | - | M | G | \| | R | - | S | - | \|\| |
| | *bā* | - | *to* | - | \| | *mu* | - | *ni* | - | \|\| | *jhap* | - | *ke* | - | \| | *ti* | - | *te* | - | \|\| |
| | S | - | S | - | \| | - | - | - | - | \|\| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | *pā* | | *ti* | - | \| | - | - | - | - | \|\| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| r\| | S | - | G | M | \| | P | - | - | - | \|\| | P | - | N | D | \| | P | - | M | G | |
| | *Rām* | - | *Sā* | *i* | \| | *lā* | - | - | - | \|\| | *jhap* | - | *ke* | - | \| | *ti* | - | *te* | - | \|\| |
| | G | M | P | - | \| | R | - | R | - | \|\| | R | - | M | G | \| | R | - | S | - | \|\| |
| | *pā* | - | *ti* | - | \| | *Sāi* | - | *lā* | - | \|\| | *jhap* | - | *ke* | - | \| | *ti* | - | *te* | - | \|\| |
| | S | - | S | - | \| | - | - | - | - | \|\| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | *pā* | - | *ti* | - | \| | - | - | - | - | \|\| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Fig. 5.17 Traditional. ‘Ram Saila’ in Sargam Notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. CC BY.
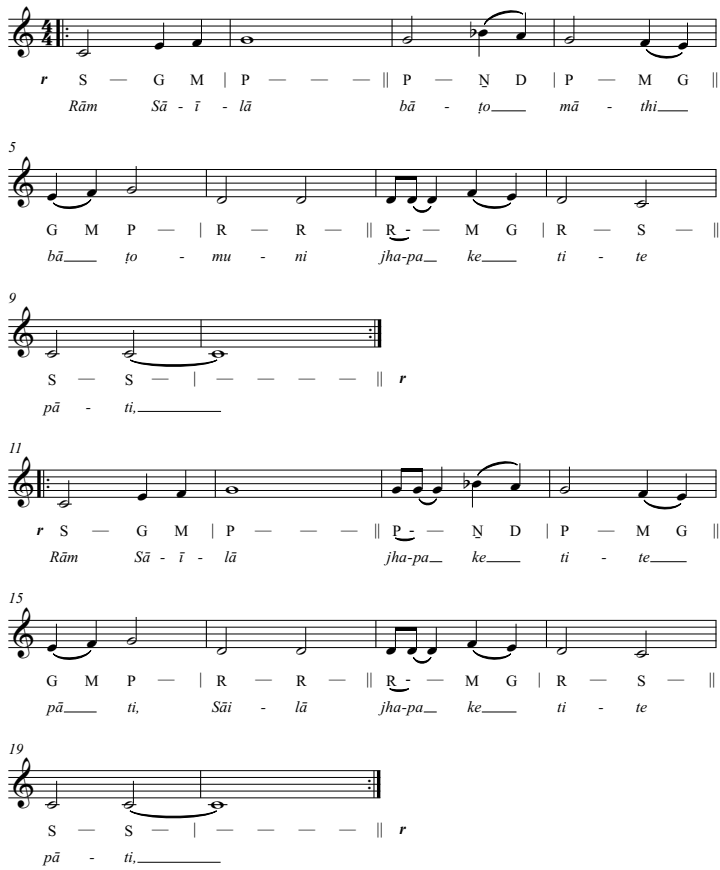



Fig. 5.18 Traditional. ‘Ram Saila’ in Staff Notation with Sargam Notation. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Jhyāure Song: *Khānna Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī*/I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water



Audio 5.1 'I won't drink machine-pumped water,' Instrumental, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112795. *Lok Bhākāma Ekal Prayas*, EMW 2005. CC BY-NC-SA. © Subi Shah. Subi Shah, performer and recording. Duration: 2:24 minutes.

*Keṭā: Khānnã ma ta kalaiko pānī, mūlko pānī dine ki nadine?*
*Keṭī: Mūlko pānī dhamilo chha ni, kalkai pānī khāe ni huncha ni.*
*Keṭā: Kailomailo lugā dhuna dhobī lāi diũlā,*
*Ãjulīle ubāera mūlkai pānī piũlā.*
*Khānnã ma ta kalaiko pānī, mūlko pānī dine ki nadine?*
*Keṭī: Ādhā dina bitihālyo thāṅnā muṅnā siũdā,*
*Dāiko jiu jhāṭṭielā mūlko pānī piũdā.*
*Mūlko pānī dhamilo chha ni, kalkai pānī khāe ni huncha ni.*
*Keṭā: Himaichulī pakherīmā chamrīgāī charne,*
*Mūlkai pānī khāne bānī keko thalā parne.*
*Khānnã ma ta kalaiko pānī, mūlko pānī dine ki nadine?*
*Keṭī: Bihanako jhulke ghāma lāgihālyo gāũmā,*
*Tirkhā meṭna jāũ ta saṅgai mūl phuṭekai ṭhāũmā.*
*Dubai: Samjha māyā bãki yai kām chha, jāũ ta aba sabailāi rāmrām chha.*

Boy: I won't drink machine-pumped water, will you give me water from the spring or not?
Girl: The water from the spring is cloudy, you might as well drink machine-pumped water.

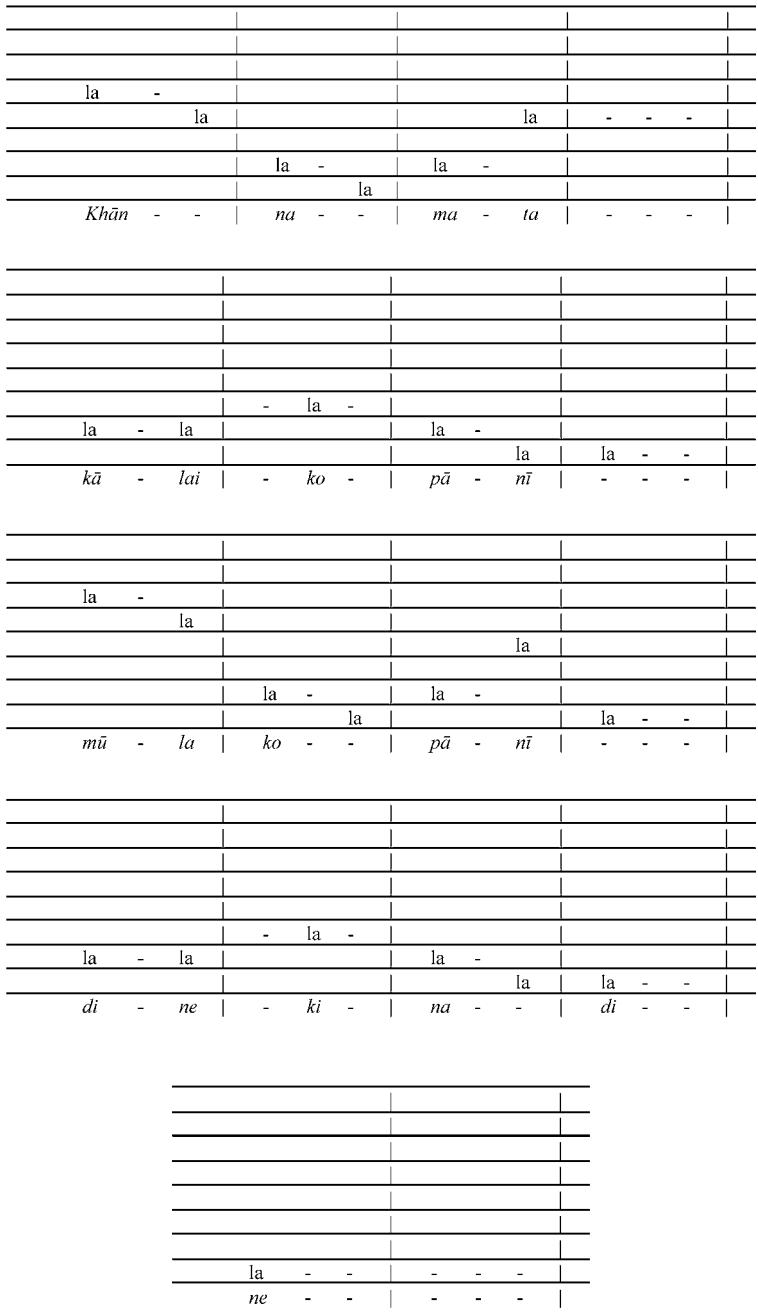
Boy: We'll give the dirty clothes to the washerman to wash,
Scooping it up in our palms, we'll drink water straight from the spring.
I won't drink machine-pumped water, will you give me water from the spring or not?
Girl: Half the day has gone by, sewing sheets and coverings,
Older brother, you'll make your body sick drinking water from the spring.
The water from the spring is cloudy, you might as well drink machine-pumped water.
Boy: The yak roams on mountain slopes and peaks,[72]
I'm used to drinking water from the spring, how would it make me sick?
I won't drink machine-pumped water, will you give me water from the spring or not?
Girl: The light of the morning's sunrise is upon the village,
Let's go together to quench your thirst, where the spring bubbles up from the ground.
Both: Remember, my love, this work is left to be done, let's go now, blessings to everyone.[73]

72 The standard spelling and pronunciation for *chamrīgāī* is *chaurī gāī*; rather than a full yak, this animal is a yak-cow hybrid hardier at lower elevations and thus more suited for the climate of Dhading's higher hills.

73 While at first glance this song's theme and apparently pre-composed dohorī format suggest that it might have been created by health workers or promoters of newfangled water pumps, the decision to drink from the spring at the end is the opposite of what one might expect from such a song. Perhaps it was composed by villagers who continue to prefer spring water over well water. And, we can imagine many metaphorical meanings!

# Nepali Folk Song Tune

**Jhyāure tāl 6 beats; 6-hole tuning** **Nepali Notation**



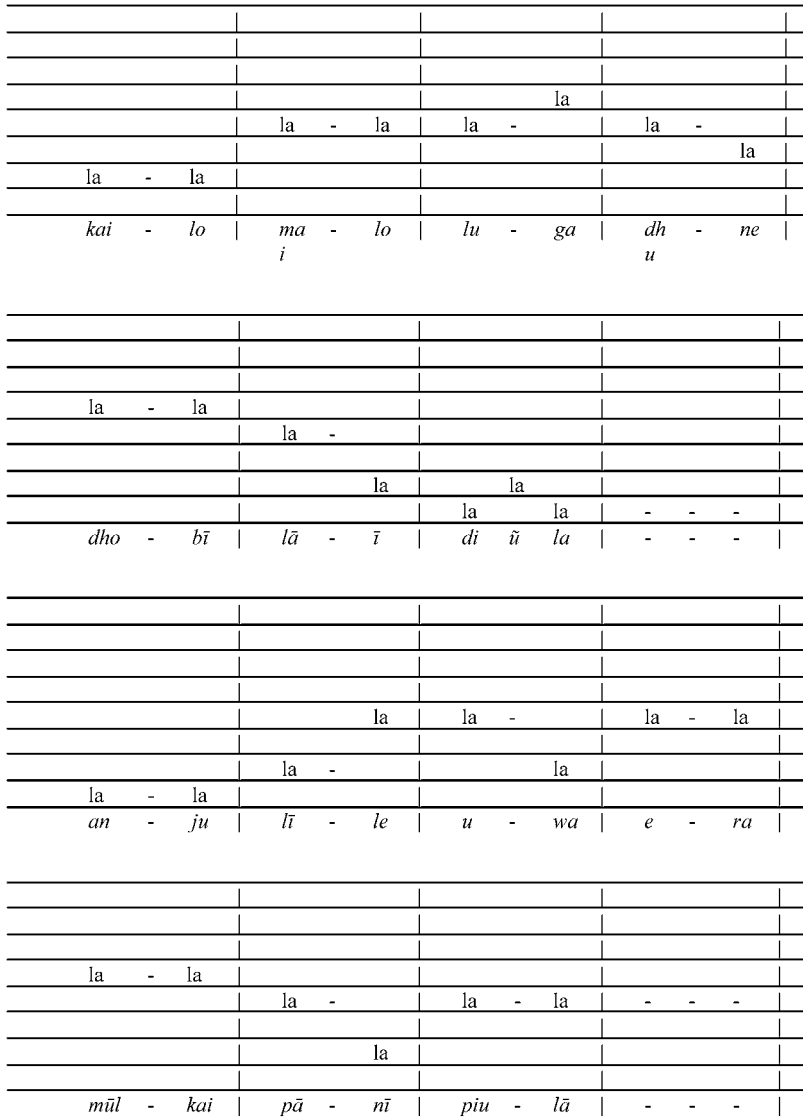



Fig. 5.19 Traditional. 'I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water' in Shah's Nepali Notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. CC BY.

## Jhyaure Song / I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water
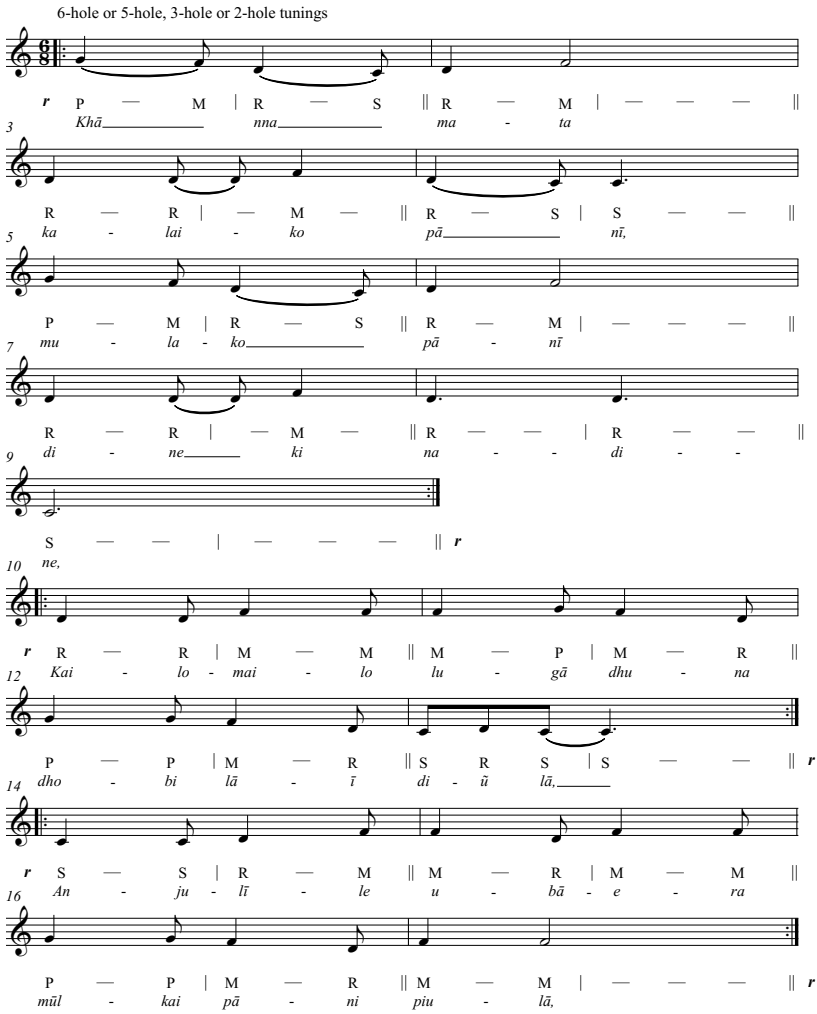



Fig. 5.20 Traditional. 'I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water' in Staff Notation with Sargam Notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Rule 2: Five-Hole Tuning

To play five-hole tuning on the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, you must close the first five holes and leave the sixth and last hole open to play the tonic, and this note is called 'Sā.' Because this tuning is very easy to play, as well as being very captivating, it is extremely popular in the villages. It is used to play a wide variety of folk tunes and folk songs. In the note group of five-hole tuning, both Gāndhāra and Niṣād are flat, both Dhaivats can be produced, and all other notes are natural. Although the entire middle octave can be played, the upper octave can go up only to flat Niṣād and the lower octave cannot go below flat Niṣād.[74] Tunes in five-hole tuning are popular and can be easily played by ordinary bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī players. The sample tunes are as follows.

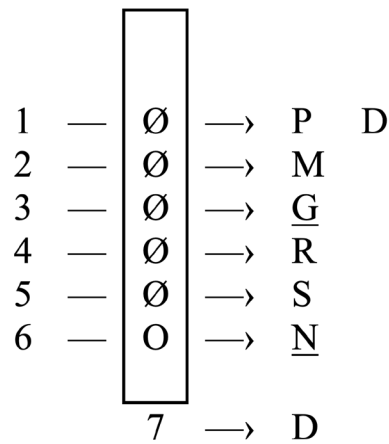



Fig. 5.21 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in five-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G M P D N S |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G M P D N S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M G R S |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M G R S |

74 Shah inserts here in his handwriting, 'the *Niṣād*s of their respective octaves.'

## Unmetered Tune in Five-Hole Tuning



Video 5.18 Pāñch-Swore Dhun (Five-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112776. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:01 minutes.

S- - - - - - -, Ṇ S R - $^{\text{G}}$$^{\text{R}}$$^{\text{S}}$$^{\text{Ṇ}}$(R) - - -,

$^{\text{G}}$$^{\text{R}}$$^{\text{S}}$$^{\text{Ṇ}}$(R) - - -, $^{\text{G}}$$^{\text{R}}$$^{\text{S}}$$^{\text{Ṇ}}$(R) - - -, $^{\text{G}}$$^{\text{R}}$$^{\text{S}}$$^{\text{Ṇ}}$(R) - - -, $^{\text{G}}$$^{\text{R}}$$^{\text{S}}$$^{\text{Ṇ}}$(R) - - -,

R S R - , $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S), $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S)

Ṇ S - - - - - -, Ṇ S R Ġ M - - -,

M Ġ R S $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) - - -, P P M M Ġ $^{\text{G}}$(R) $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) - ,

Ṇ S R Ġ M - - -, $^{\text{R}}$(Ġ) R $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) - - - - -, 2

Ṇ D P M Ġ R S Ṇ, S - - - - - - -,

Ṇ S R Ġ M - - -, $^{\text{R}}$(Ġ) R $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) - - - - -, 2

Ṇ S R Ġ M P D Ṇ, Ṡ - - - - - - -,

Ṇ D P M Ġ R S Ṇ, S - - - - - - -,

Ṇ S R Ġ M - - -, $^{\text{R}}$(Ġ) R $^{\text{Ṇ}}$(S) - - - - -, 2

## Jhyāure Bhākā Song: *Jindagī Oilāyo*/Life is Fading



Audio 5.2 ‘Life is Fading,’ Instrumental, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112787. *Lok Bhākāma Ekal Prayas*, EMW 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Subi Shah, performer. Duration: 2:35 minutes.

*Jindagī oilāyo Bijulā din kāṭaũ kasarī?*
*Ghumāīmā ghumāī chakaṭī bunne,*
*Gudarī ṭhokera, Bijulā din kāṭaũ kasarī?*

*Jindagī oilāyo Bijulā…*
*Āipugẽ ma ta Thankoṭko phedī,*
*Biraha bokera, Bijulā din kāṭaũ kasarī?*
*Himai ra chulī tyo pallo paṭṭi chamrīko charana,*
*Janamai ra liẽ salyānko bhirmā kã̃ holā marana?*
*Jindagī oilāyo Bijulā…*
*Ãja ra maile ghã̃sai ra kāṭẽ kholāko gāisarā,*
*Pāṭīko bāsa bã̃kī chha sāsa ko bhanlā hoi barā.*
*Jindagī oilāyo Bijulā…*
*Sabai ra lugā kailo ra mailo dhobīle dhoidine,*
*Birānu deśmā mariyo bhane ko holā roidine.*
*Jindagī oilāyo Bijulā…*

Life is fading, Bijula, how will we pass the days?
A cushion is woven by going around in circles
A mat is braided by hammering, Bijula, how will we pass the days?
Life is fading, Bijula…
I arrived at the foot of Thankot
Carrying sorrow, Bijula, how will we pass the days?
Life is fading, Bijula…
On the other side of the snowy mountain peaks are yak pastures,
I took birth on the cliff of Salyan;[75] who knows where I will die?
Life is fading, Bijula…
Today I cut fodder by the riverside,
Living in a public resthouse, I still have breath left, who will check up on me?
Life is fading, Bijula…
All the clothes are dirty and the washerman will wash them,
If I die in a foreign land, who will cry for me?
Life is fading, Bijula…

75 There are two nearby places in Dhading called Salyan: Salyankot or Salyan Fort, and Salyantar or Salyan Ford. Salyan as a common place name refers to a place with pine trees. Because the Salyan in this song refers to a cliff, it's more likely that it's referencing the hilltop fort of Salyankot, rather than the floodplain village of Salyantar. Nevertheless, there are also cliffs near Salyantar, so a listener could imagine either village, the myriad other places named Salyan in Nepal, or any cliff topped with pines.

Jhyāure Bhāka Song / Life is Fading

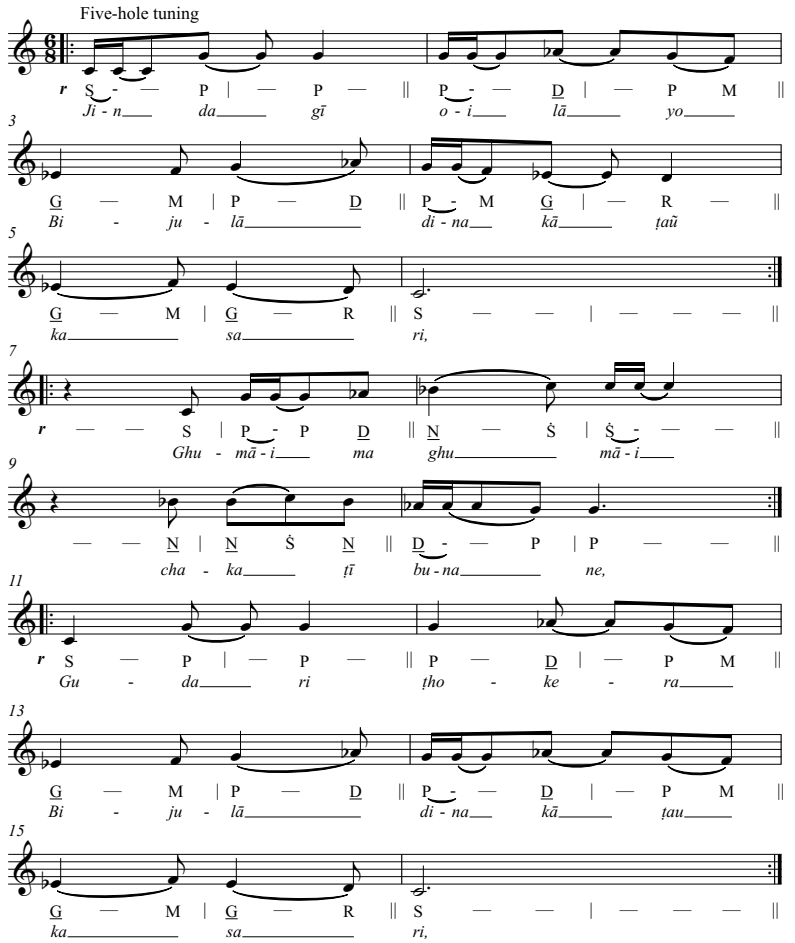



Fig. 5.22 Traditional. Jhyāure Bhāka Song: *Jindagī Oilāyo*/Life is Fading. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Jhyāure Song: *Khānna Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī*/I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water

Six-hole or five-hole, three-hole or two-hole tunings

Please see the instrumental audio recording, lyrics, and notation for this song above under six-hole tuning.

## Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jalesī Pānpāte Jhamke Bulākī*/ Dangling Gold Nose Ring

*Jalesī pānpāte jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*[76]
*Himai ra chulī tyai pallopaṭṭi bhoṭmāthi parchha chin,*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*
*Māyāko khojī garera hĩḍdā bitigo varṣadin.*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*
*Śiraimā lāune phūlako mālā dhāgole gãsera,*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*
*Manako kurā mukhaimā lyāī bola na hãsera.*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*
*Lahareghāṭko ṭunīko ḍuṅgā ḍorīle tāneko,*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchyau ki sunaiko?*
*Purānū māyā bheṭ hũdā āja lāj kina māneko.*
*Jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?*

Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring, with its intricate points like paan leaves?
On the other side of the mountain peak is Tibet, and beyond it, China,
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?
I've been going around looking for love, and a year has gone by.
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?
A garland of flowers to wear around the head, strung together with thread,
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?
Bringing what's in your heart to your mouth, speak, please, and smile.
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?
In Lahareghat there's a boat of mahogany, pulled by a rope,
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?
My former love, when we met today, why were you shy?
Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring?

76 *Pānpāte* refers to paan leaf-like points on gold and silver jewelry, often seen on earrings, nose rings, and bracelets. A *bulākī* is a type of nose ring worn in a septum piercing. It often has a dangling, leaf-like pendant that hangs over the wearer's mouth.

Audio 5.3 Track 6: Jhamke Bulākī. https://open.spotify.com/track/2jd1SVCowOnmqVABhqCTLA. Subi Shah, all instruments. Kathmandu, Music Nepal, 2007. © Music Nepal. All Rights Reserved. Duration: 5:38 minutes.

## Khyali Bhaka Song / Jalesi Pān Pāte
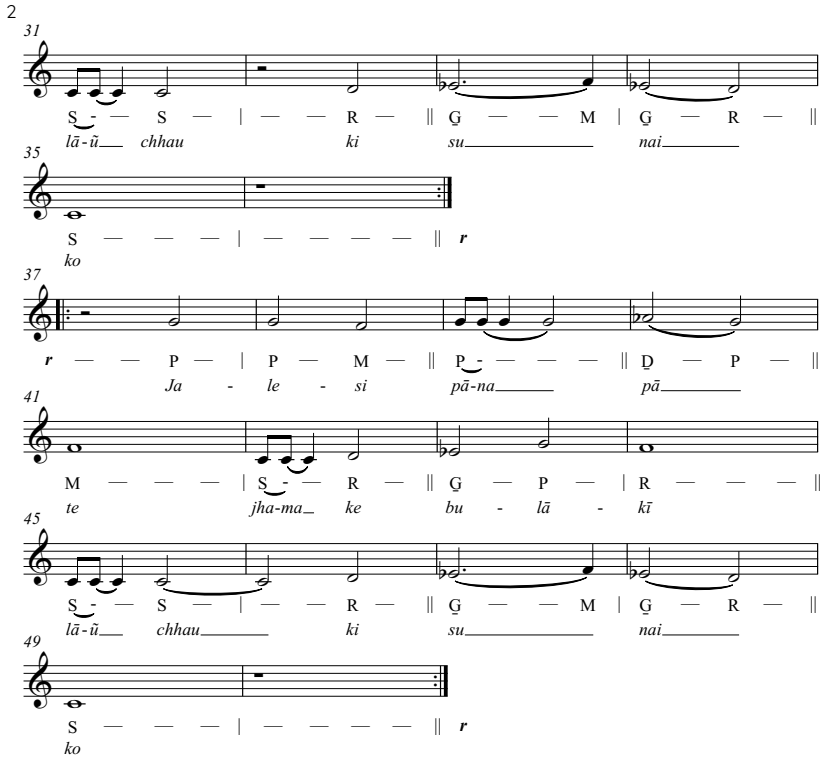
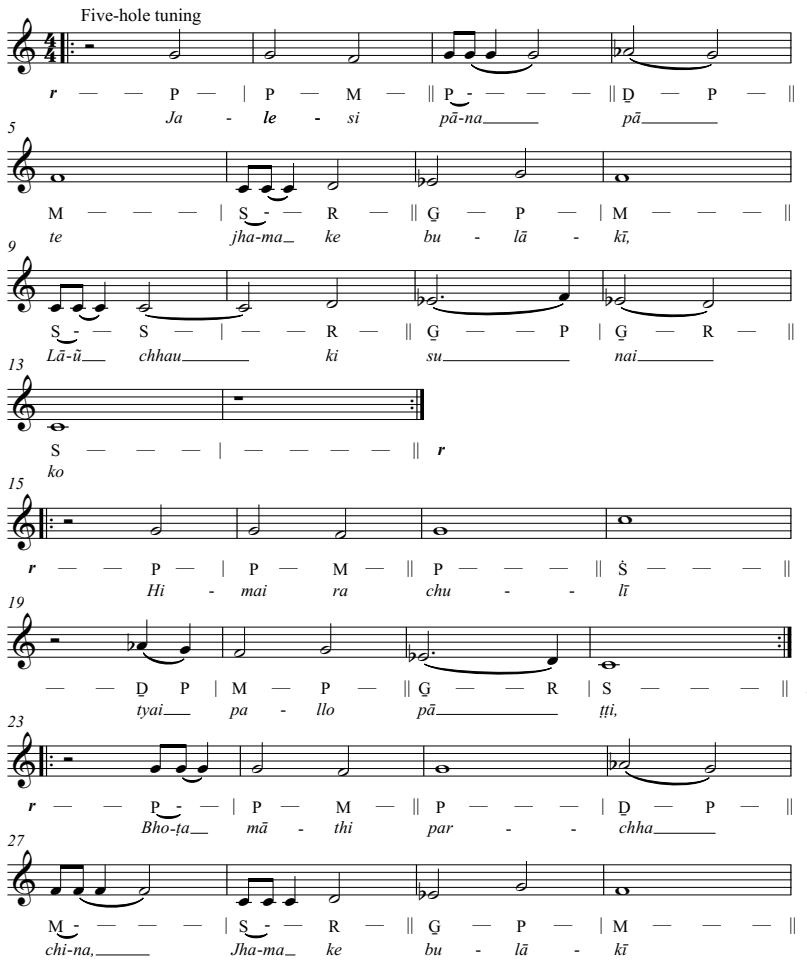





Fig. 5.23 Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jalesī Pān Pāte Jhamke Bulākī*/ Dangling Gold Nose Ring. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Rule 3: Four-Hole Tuning

According to folk rules, a four-hole tune is played on the sahanāī, muralī, and bãsurī by covering four holes and leaving the fifth and sixth holes open to make the tonic. That note is considered the 'Sā' of the middle octave, and in this tune Re, Ga, Dha, and Ni are flat.

And, both the Ma notes can be produced. This four-hole tuning, when played from the Dha of the middle octave, can include all the notes of the middle octave and the high octave up to flat Dha. Because playing four-hole tunes is difficult for the fingers, only experts play the tunes of rāgs and rāginīs. Folk songs are not often played in this

pattern. Mainly, this mode is for tunes in Malkosh.[77] Here are some model examples of the patterns played in four-hole tuning.

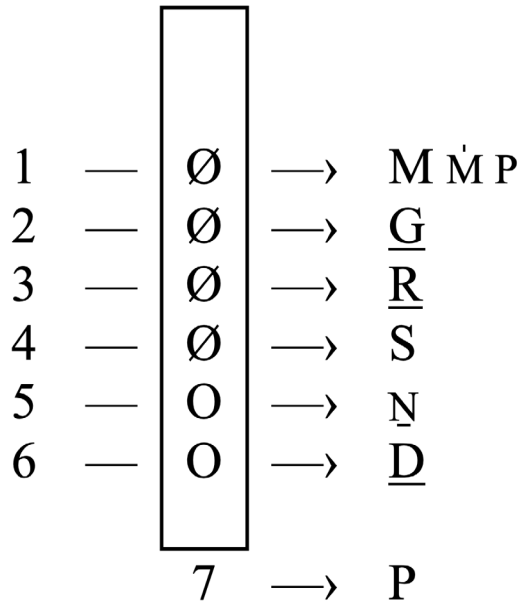



Fig. 5.24 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in four-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G M P D N Ṡ |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G Ṁ P D N Ṡ |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M G R Ṡ |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P Ṁ G R Ṡ |

77 Malkosh is a regional name for the rāg that is perhaps more commonly known as Malkauns.

## Unmetered Tune in Four-Hole Tuning



Video 5.19 Chār-Swore Dhun (Four-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112777. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:59 minutes.

S - - - - - - -, Ḍ Ṇ S - - - - -,

$^{(\dot{D}\dot{S}\dot{N})}$S - - $^{(\dot{D}\dot{S}\dot{N})}$S - - $^{(\dot{D}\dot{S}\dot{N})}$S - - $^{(\dot{D}\dot{S}\dot{N})}$S - -,

Ḍ Ṇ S - - - - -, $^{M\underline{G}S}$(M) S Ṇ S Ḍ Ṇ - -,

S - - - - - - -, M - - - - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ S G̲ M Ḍ N̲ Ṡ, Ṡ - - - - - - -,

N̲ Ṡ Ḍ N̲ Ḍ M - -, $^{G}$(M) G̲ S - N S D N,

S - - - - - - -, $^{M\underline{G}S}$(M) S Ṇ S Ḍ Ṇ - -,

S - - - - - - -, M - - - - - - - |

## Khyālī Bhākā Song: *He Bir*/Hey Brave One

Lyrics: M.B.B. Shah[78]
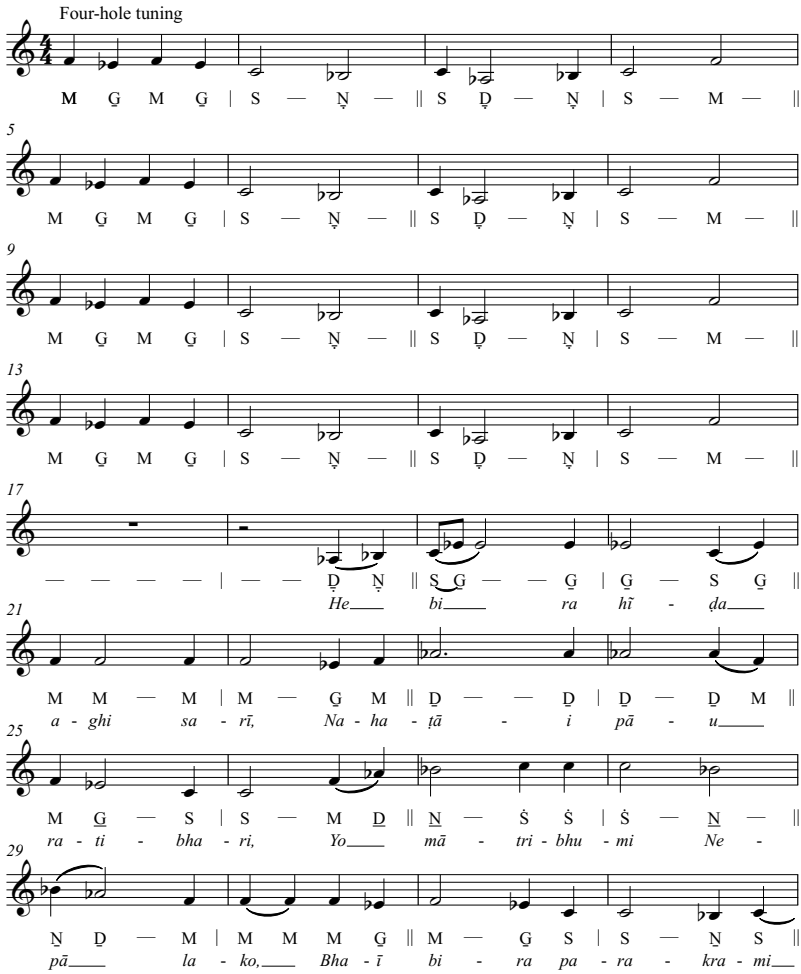
*He bīr hĩḍa aghi sari,*
*Nahaṭāī pāu ratībhari.*

78 M. B. B. Shah is how King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah signed his poems and musical compositions. In other words, this song was written by Nepal's King Mahendra (1920–1972). It has been set to music by multiple composers, with variations on this same melody. A version recorded by singers Koili Devi and Janardan Sam, arranged by Janardan Sam, on the album *Usaiko Lagi*, can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngknS3asgtE. The version Subi Shah offers here is different from this recording: while the recording has instrumental interludes and the phrase *He bir* returns to mark the ends of musical phrases, the one Subi Shah transcribed does not include these in its arrangement.

*Yo matṛibhūmi Nepalako,*
*Bhaī bīra parākramī santati.*
*Khukurī, saṅgin, talbāra yā,*
*Hatiyār je lina sāmumā,*
*Naparos yadi timī bira hau.*
*Bhane birakā ti chhātīmā,*
*Timrai ho leū nāgarik,*
*Hak, kãdhmā kãdhai garī.*
*Satyatā timro chha hatiyār,*
*Ḍara naleū kei kati*
*Naḍarāī samjhī lamkãdai,*
*Hĩḍa dhāl yai ho deśako.*
*Jātamā je chhaũ sabai,*
*Haũ ek santati deśako.*

Hey Brave one! Walk on ahead,
Don't stop your feet at all.
Be this motherland Nepal's
Mighty descendants.
Be it khukuri, bullet, or the sword,
Whichever weapon you carry,
May it not fall at the front, if you are really brave.
On the chests of the brave ones,
Lies what's yours, take it, citizen's
Rights, carrying them shoulder to shoulder.
Your weapons are with you,
Have no fear at all.
Unafraid, remembering, stretching on ahead,
Walk on, this is the shield of our country.
From whichever castes we all come,
We are united as descendants of the country.

# Khyāli Bhākā Song / He Bir / Hey Brave One
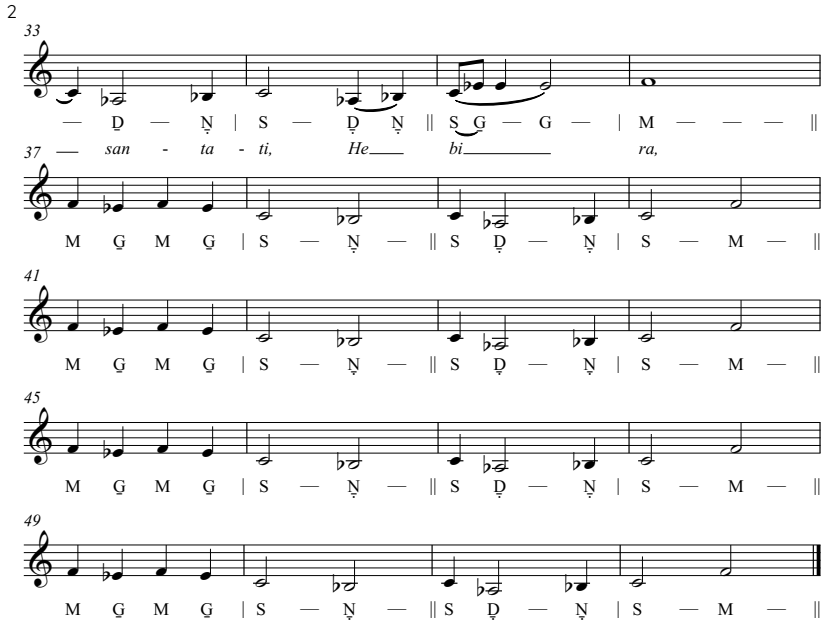





Fig. 5.25 M. B. B. Shah. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *He Bir*/Hey Brave One. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Charitra Bhākā Song: *Najāū Dājyū Bideśa*/Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad

*Najāū dājyū bideśa.*
*Timile chhāḍī bideśa gaemā hāmro yo deśa,*
*Ãkhāmā ãsu liera basnechha āja roera.*
*Najāū dājyū bideśa.*
*Alapatra pārī swadeśa ruchāko kina pardeśa?*
*Halo ra kuṭo liera bãcheko rāmro chha hera.*
*Najāū dājyū bideśa.*
*Chhoḍera timī yo deśa nabujhī jānchhau kun deśa?*
*Charīle ḍākchha roera āū hai dājyū pharkera.*
*Najāū dājyū bideśa.*

Older brother, don't go abroad.
If you leave and go abroad, this country of ours,
Will sit here, eyes full of tears, crying.
Older brother, don't go abroad.
Leaving your own land stranded, why do you desire a foreign land?

Look, it's better to survive by plow and hoe.
Older brother, don't go abroad.
Leaving this country, which country will you go to, without knowing anything about it?
A little bird will call you, crying, return home, older brother.
Older brother, don't go abroad.

Charitra Bhākā Song / Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad
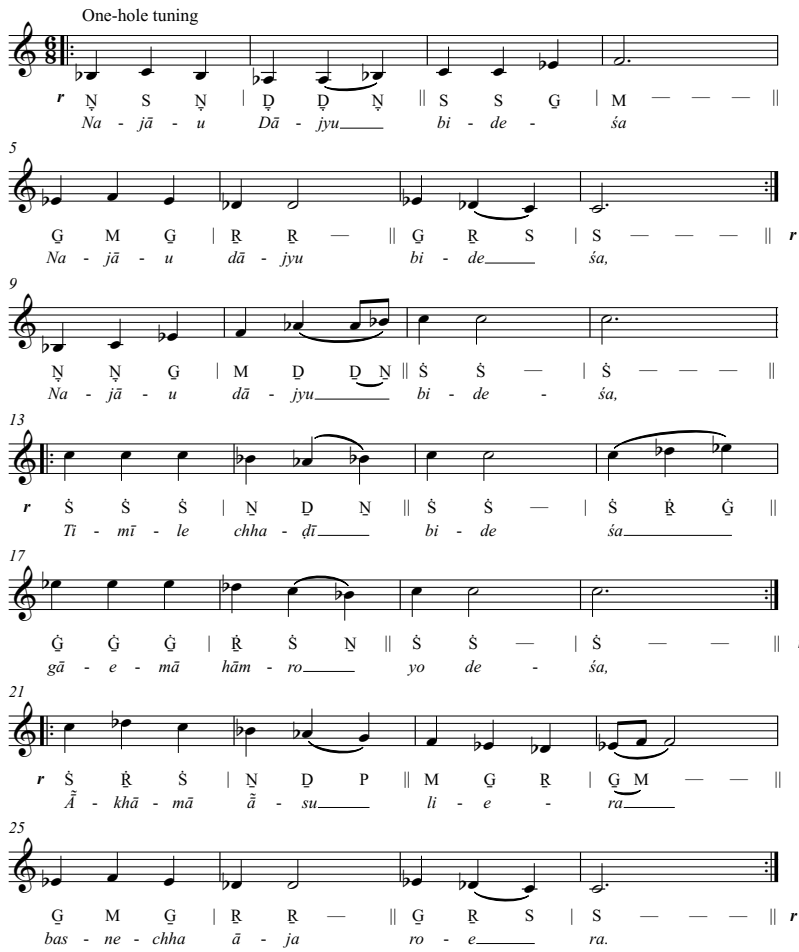



Fig. 5.26 Traditional. Charitra Bhākā Song: *Najāu dājyu bideśa*/Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Rule 4: Three-Hole Tuning

According to the rules of playing bã̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, this three-hole tuning is extremely popular. The rules of this three-hole tuning are to cover the top three holes of the bã̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī, and leave the bottom three holes open, and play using the notes that this allows.

The Sā of this three-hole tuning lies right in the middle, and because it is easy, anyone can play it. Beginners can play both metered and unmetered tunes as well as folk song tunes. Most of the time, folk song melodies are found to be sourced from this three-hole tuning. In three-hole tuning, both Ma notes can be used, and all the other notes are natural.

The lower octave is included down to Pa, and all the notes of the middle octave are included. The high octave can go up to the high Pa. Because of this, many folk song tunes can be easily played. Here is a model of this tuning.

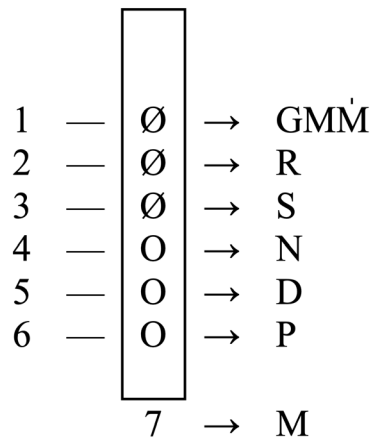



Fig. 5.27 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in three-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G M P D N Ṡ |
| | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G M P D N Ṡ |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M G R Ṡ |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P Ṁ G R Ṡ |

## Unmetered Tune in Three-Hole Tuning



Video 5.20 Tīn-Swore Dhun (Three-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112778. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu, 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:00 minutes.

Ṇ S - - - - - - -, Ṇ $^{N}$(S) - - - - - - -,

Ṇ S G M P - - -, N -, N -, Ṡ - - -,

$^{N}$(Ṡ) - N D P - - M, G - - R S - Ṇ -,

S - - - - - - -, Ṇ $^{N}$(S) - - - - - - -,

P Ṇ S G - - - -, G M P D P - - M,

G - - - R S Ṇ -, S - - - - - - -,

P Ṇ S R - - - -, M — G R S Ṇ - -,

S - - - - - - -, Ṇ - $^{N}$(S) - - - - - - -,

Ṗ Ṇ S G - - - -, G M P D Ṡ - - -,

$^{N}$(Ṡ) - - - -, P M R, Ṇ - - - - - - -,

S - - - - - |

## Jhyāure Song: *Khānna Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī*/I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water

Six-hole or five-hole, three-hole or two-hole tunings

Please see the instrumental audio, lyrics, and notation for this song above under six-hole tuning.

## Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jānai Lāgyo*/Almost Gone
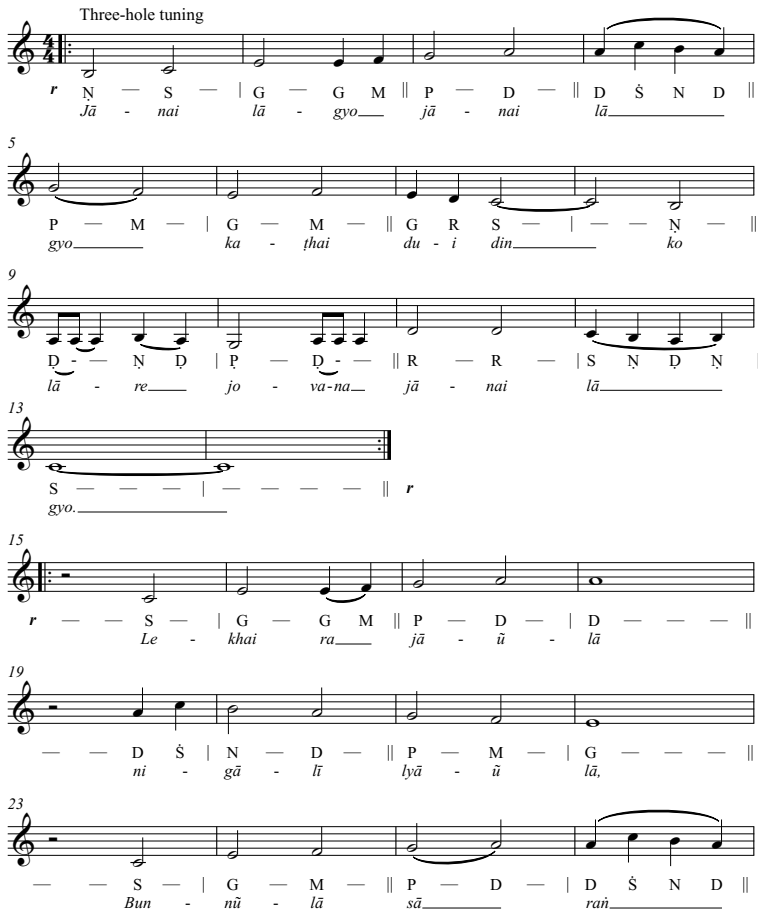


Audio 5.4 'Jānai Lāgyo/Almost Gone, Instrumental,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112796. *Lok Bhākāma Ekal Prayās*, EMW 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Subi Shah, performer. Duration: 2:18.

*Jānai lāgyo jānai lāgyo kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Lekhai ra jāũlā nigālī lyāũlā*
*Bunũlā saraṅga kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Chhakkale ṭopī phāṭera ho ki*
*Man bhayo bharaṅga kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Khetako pānī dhamilo pārne*
*Māchhāko bhurāle kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Dārī ra juṅgā jhasjhastī hũdā*
*Birsechha chhurāle kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Sikārī dāile tīraimā hānyo*
*Charīlāi dāgera kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*
*Kalkatte koṭa purāno bhaichha*
*Kuyetro lāgera kaṭhai*
*Duī dinko lāure jovan jānai lāgyo*

It's almost gone, it's almost gone, poor thing,
This fleeting youth is almost gone.
We'll go to the ridgetop and bring back bamboo
And weave a tray, poor thing
This fleeting youth is almost gone
Is it shock that has torn this hat?
My heart is despairing, poor thing.
This fleeting youth is almost gone
Making the water in the paddy field murky
Are the minnows, poor thing

This fleeting youth is almost gone
While beard and moustache have overgrown
The razor blade has forgotten all about them, poor thing
This fleeting youth is almost gone
Older Brother hunter threw a spear
Aiming for a bird, poor thing
This fleeting youth is almost gone
The coat from Calcutta's gotten old
And frayed, poor thing
This fleeting youth is almost gone.

Khyālī Bhākā Song / Almost Gone



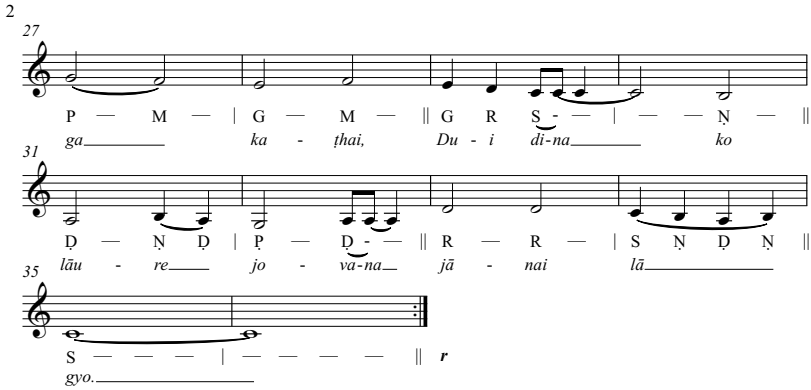



Fig. 5.28 Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jānai lāgyo*/Almost Gone. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Auspicious Folk Song (Mangal): *Bhajamana Nārāyaṇa*/ Reverence for Narayan

Audio 5.5 'Reverence for Narayan,' ('Mangal Dhun') Instrumental, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112783. *Lok Bhākāma Ekal Prayas*, EMW 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. Subi Shah, performer. Duration: 3:23.

*Bhajamana Nārāyaṇa Raghuvira Govindam.*
*Chara achara jalathala sarvamahi vyāyakam. Bhajamana Nārāyaṇa Raghuvira Govindam…*
*Prathama avatāra prabhu matsya rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Śaṅkha chakra gadā padma saṅkha sura chhedanam. Bhajamana…*
*Dvitīya avatāra prabhu kamaṭha rūpa dhāraṇam.*
*Sura asura sahāya bhaye mandrāchala dhāraṇam. Bhajamana…*
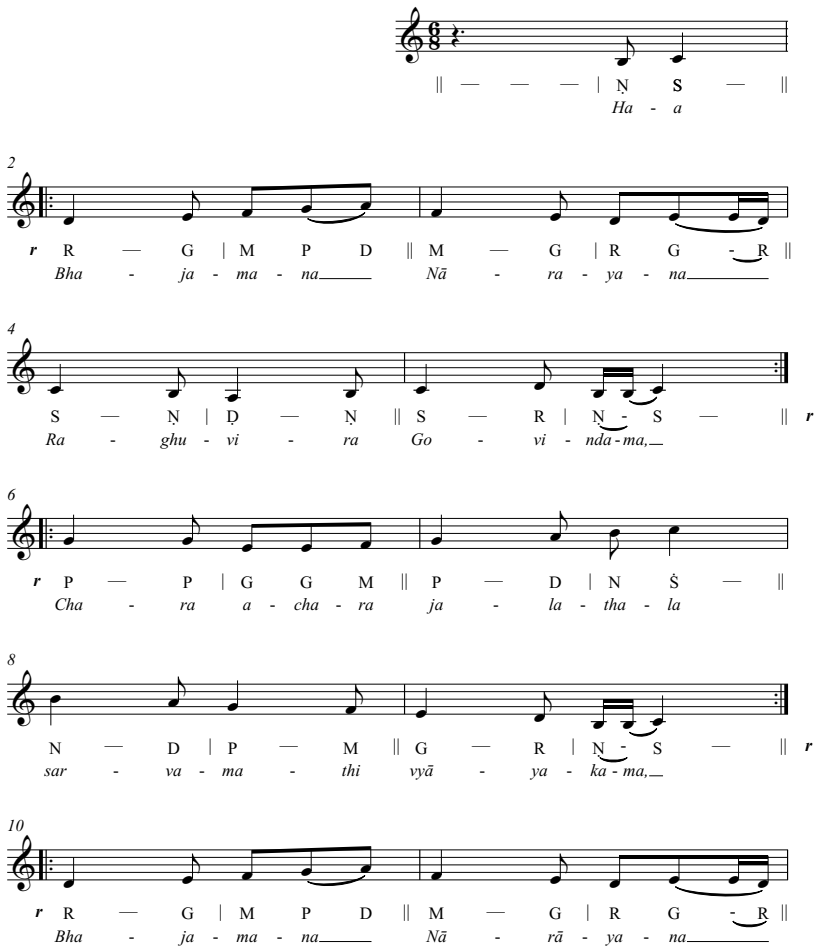
*Tritīya avatāra prabhu varāha rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Daitya Hiraṇyākṣa mārī veda pṛithivī pālanam.*
*Bhajamana…*
*Chaturtha avatāra prabhu nṛisiṁha rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Khamba phorī prakaṭa bhae bhaktawāla rakṣaṇam.*
*Bhajamana…*
*Panchama avatāra prabhu vāmana rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Tīna pāda pṛithivī liye bhakta Bali tāraṇam. Bhajamana…*
*Ṣaṣṭhama avatāra prabhu Paraśurāma rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Pitṛi vachana satya kiye kṣatri sakala nāsanam.*
*Bhajamana…*
*Saptama avatāra prabhu Rāma rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Gṛihyako tyāgī vanako gaye Rāvaṇādi pātanam.*
*Bhajamana…*
*Asṭhama avatāra prabhu Kṛiṣhṇa rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Bālakeli bahuta bhaye Kaṁsāsura māraṇam. Bhajamana…*
*Nawama avatāra prabhu Buddha rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Naṣṭa dharma prakaṭa bhayo sādhujana pālanam.*
*Bhajamana…*
*Daśama avatāra prabhu Kalki rūpa dhāraṇam,*
*Martya sakala dhwaṁsa bhaye dharma prati pālanam.*
*Bhajamana…*

Reverence for Narayan Raghuvira Govindam
To the one who pervades the animate and inanimate life, the ocean and ground, and the entire earth. Reverence for Narayan Raghuvira Govindam.
The first avatar of the Lord took the form of a fish,
Conch, wheel, club, lotus, the remainder is sound.
Reverence…
The second avatar of the Lord took the form of a giant tortoise,

He helped the gods and demons churn [the ocean of milk]
with Mount Mandara. Reverence…
The third avatar of the Lord took the form of a giant boar,
Killing the envoy of the demons, Hiranyākṣa, he restored
the earth . Reverence…
The fourth avatar of the Lord took the form of a man-lion,
He emerged breaking out of a pillar to protect his
devotees. Reverence…
The fifth avatar of the Lord took the form of a dwarf,
With three steps he took back the world from Bali.
Reverence…
The sixth avatar of the Lord took the form of Parshuram,
Keeping his promise to avenge his father, he destroyed all
the Kshatriyas. Reverence…
The seventh avatar of the Lord took the form of Ram,
Leaving his household he went into the forest, and
destroyed Ravan. Reverence…
The eighth avatar of the Lord took the form of Krishna,
He was very playful as a baby, and killed the demon
Kamsa. Reverence…
The ninth avatar of the Lord took the form of Buddha,
He emerged to protect good people from destroyed
dharma. Reverence…
The tenth avatar of the Lord will take the form of Kalki,
Protecting dharma from the mortal world's destruction.
Reverence…[79]

79 Many thanks to Jesse Knutson for translation assistance with this Sanskrit-influenced Nepali.

## Auspicious Folk Song (Mangal Dhun) / Reverence
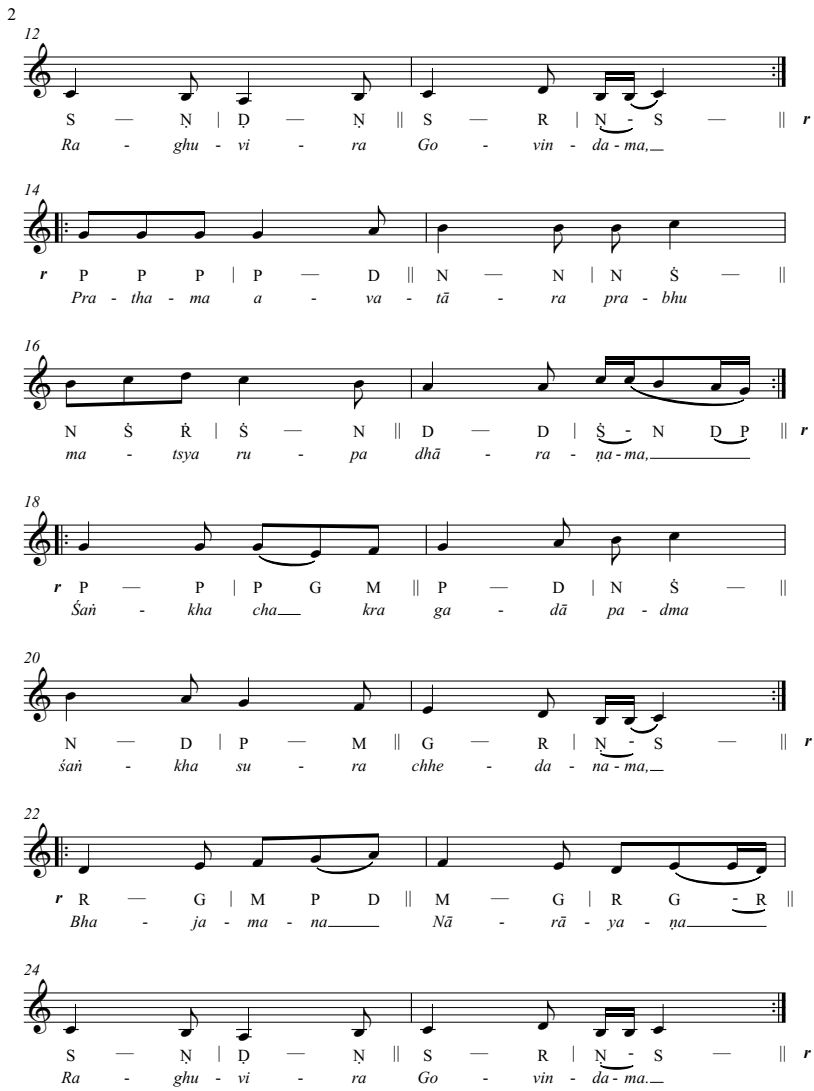





Fig. 5.29 Traditional. Auspicious Folk Song (Mangal): *Bhajamana Nārāyaṇa*/ Reverence for Narayan. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Soraṭhī Songs



Audio 5.6 Sorathi Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl Songs, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112722. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Raju Maharjan, mādal. Anna Stirr, Rita Thapa Magar, Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, vocals. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2005. Duration: 5:38.



Video 5.21 Soraṭhī Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112728. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, performers. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar, Umesh Magar, mārunī. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādale. Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar, pursunge. Pitambar Sundas, dance guru. Ram Bahadur Sundas, jhyali. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Mohan Rana, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhetri, group vocal leaders. Sankhu Sohraghar, Dhading, 10 December 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:06 minutes.

**(Part 1) Lāmī Tāl:**

*Manai bhayo virakta.*
*Kaise rāja chalāũ?*
*Tīnai kāl bitisakyo,*
*Godai āja khālī bhayo.*
*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ,*
*Chaudhai rānī khālī bhayo.*

My heart is desolate
How will I rule the kingdom?

Three stages of life have already passed,
My lap is empty today.
Not one, not two,
Fourteen queens are barren.

**(Part 2) Chhoṭī Tāl**

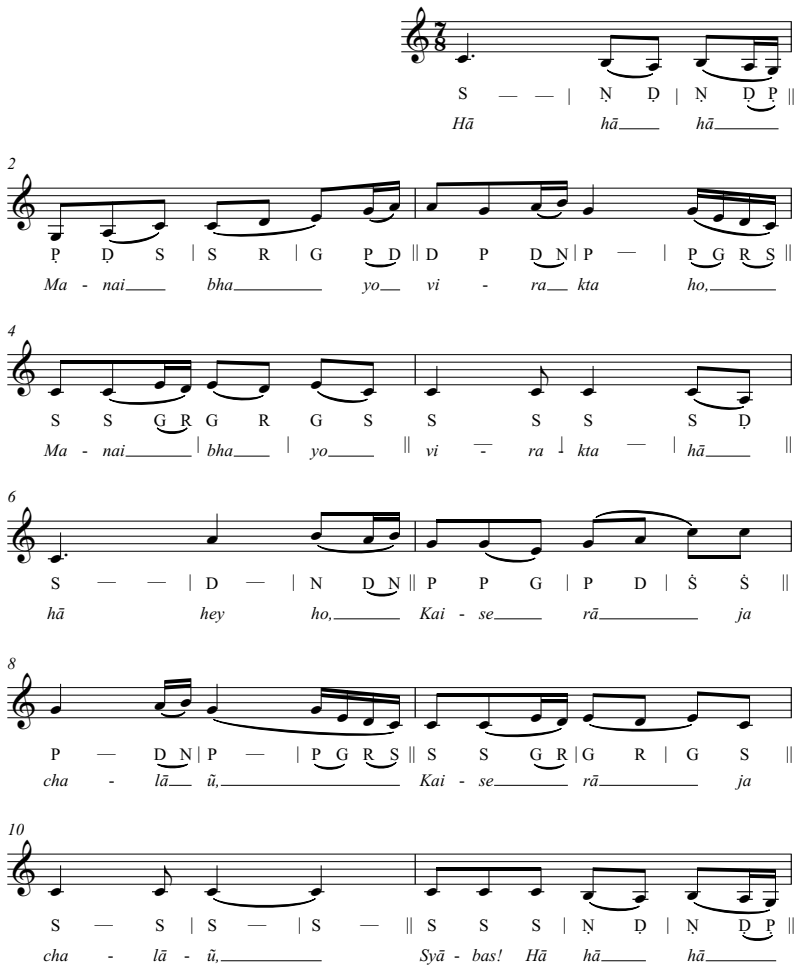
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*
*Punasako jāla kāṭī,*
*Kasle bahira lānchha ra?*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai,*
*Manai bujhāī basideū.*

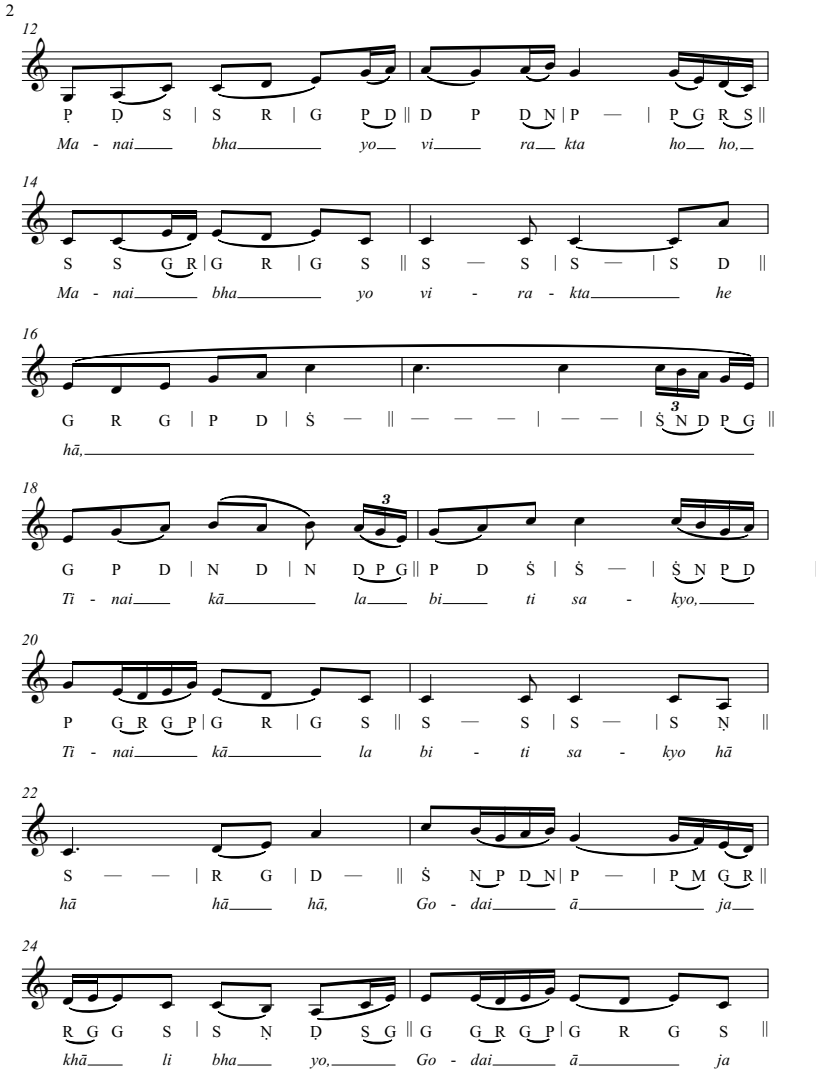
Console yourself,
Can anyone cut the net woven by past lives,
And throw it out?
Don't sob and cry, King,
Console yourself.

*Ekai nāhĩ dubai nāhĩ*
*Baru herana jāũla*
*Dhurumā dhuru naroū rājai*
*Manai bujhāī basideū*

Not one, not two,
We'll go search for a bride.
Don't sob and cry, King,
Console yourself.

# Sorathi Lami Tal




2
12
Ṛ Ḍ S | S R | G P D ‖ D P D N | P — | P G R S ‖
Ma - nai bha yo vi ra kta ho ho,
14
S S G R | G R | G S ‖ S — | S — | S D ‖
Ma - nai bha yo vi - ra - kta he
16
G R G | P D | Ṡ — ‖ — — — | — — | Ṡ N D P G ‖
3
hā,
18
G P D | N D | N D P G ‖ P D Ṡ | Ṡ — | Ṡ N P D ‖
3
Tī - nai kā la bi ti sa - kyo,
20
P G R G P | G R | G S ‖ S — | S — | S Ṇ ‖
Tī - nai kā la bi - ti sa - kyo hā
22
S — — | R G | D — ‖ Ṡ N P D N | P — | P M G R ‖
hā hā hā, Go - dai ā ja
24
R G G S | S Ṇ Ḍ S G ‖ G G R G P | G R G S ‖
khā li bha yo, Go - dai ā ja

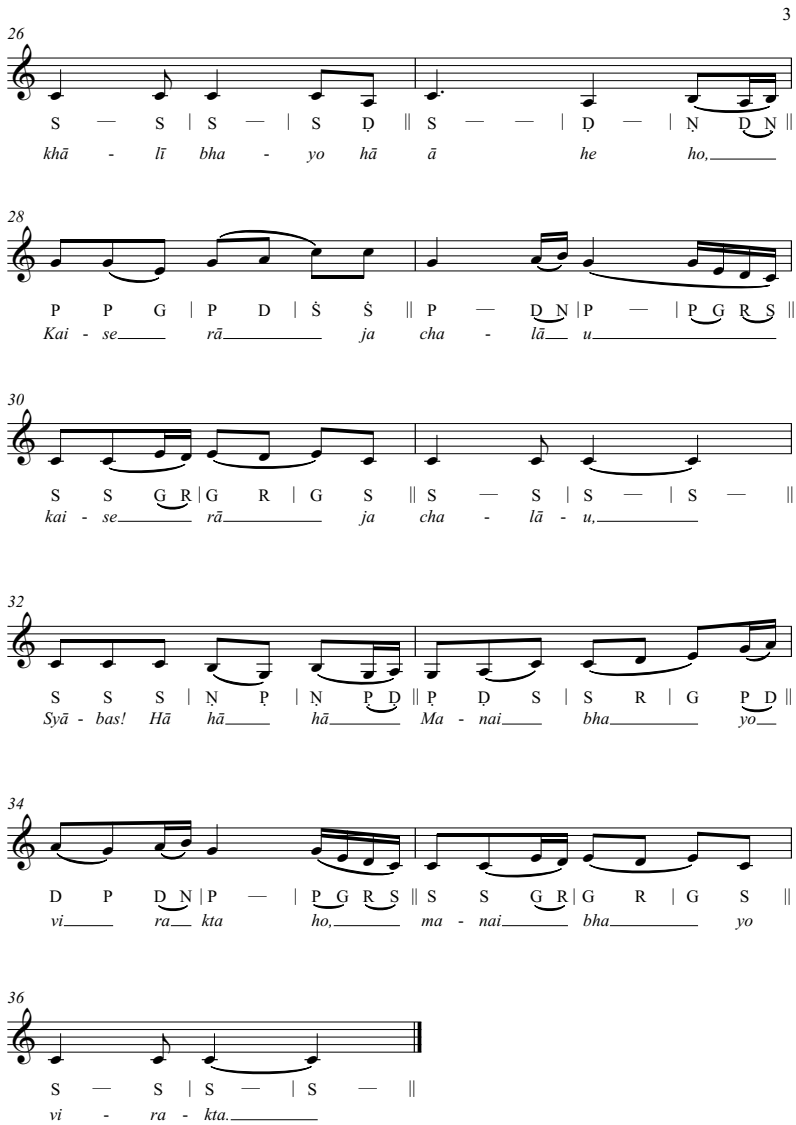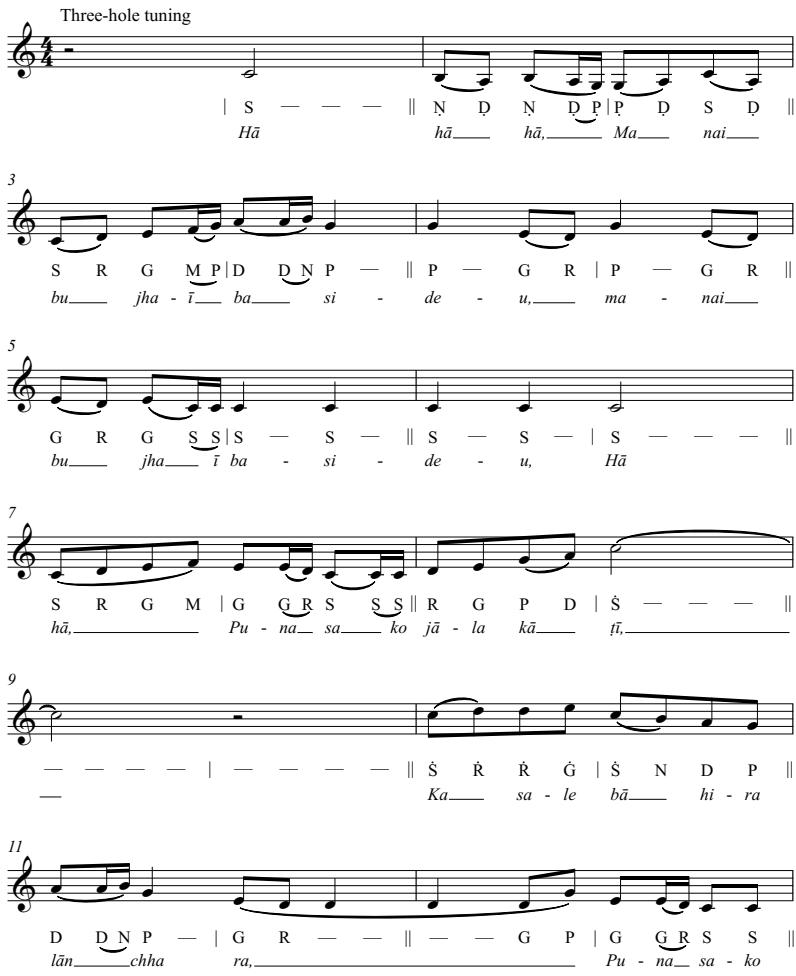



Fig. 5.30 Traditional. Soraṭhī (Part 1) Lāmī Tāl: *Manai bhayo virakta*/My Heart is Desolate. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

# Sorathi Chhoti Tal / Console Yourself
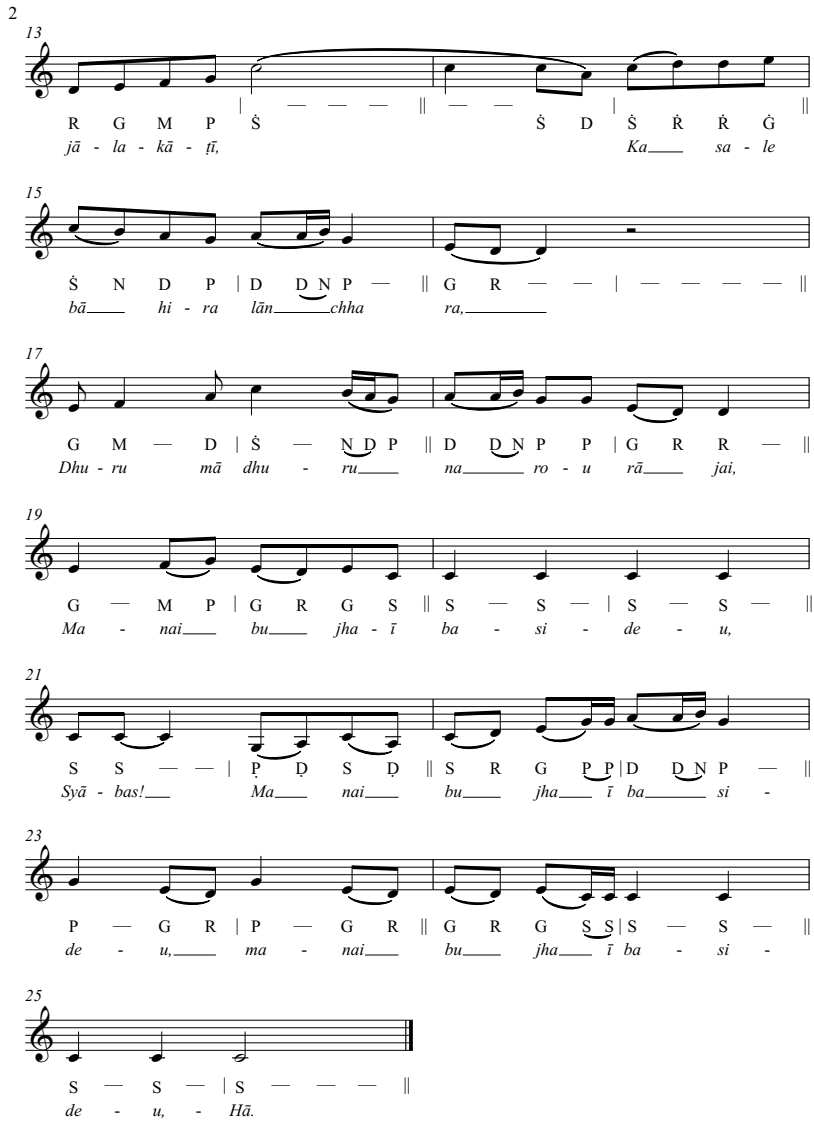





Fig. 5.31 Traditional. Soraṭhī (Part 2) Chhoṭī Tāl: *Manai bujhaī basideū*/ Console Yourself. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Rule 5: Two-Hole Tuning

Only real experts play this two-hole tuning. To play this tuning, the first and second holes of the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī are closed and the lower holes are left open when playing the drone pitch.

This group of notes has both versions of Gandhār (Ga), Ni is flat, and all other notes are natural. Because the Sā of the two-hole tuning is in a bit of a difficult place, there are not many folk songs with melodies from this tune. In this note group the notes from the Ma of the middle octave to the Ma of the high octave can be played easily.

If you can play this two-hole tune on the bā̃surī, muralī, or sahanāī, extremely charming tunes can be created. Here are some examples of note groups formed from two-hole tuning.

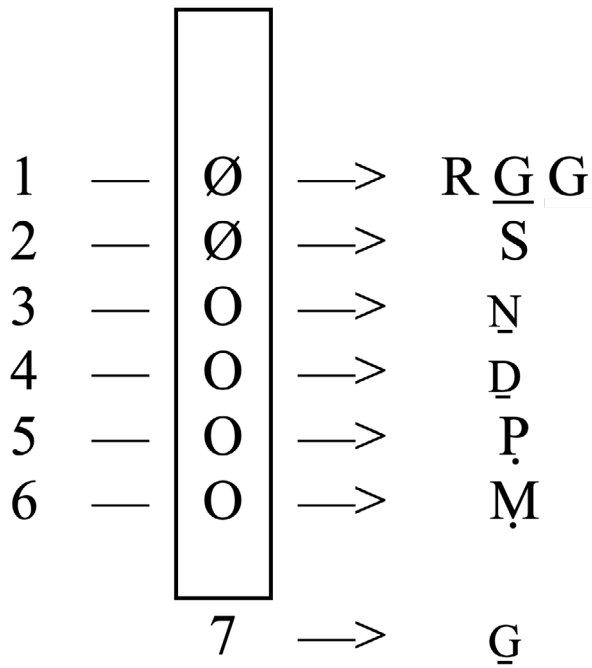



Fig. 5.32 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in two-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G̲ M P D N̲ S |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G M P D N̲ S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (a) S N̲ D P M G̲ R S |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N̲ D P M G R S |

## Unmetered Tune in Two-Hole Tuning

Video 5.22 Duī-Swore Dhun (Two-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112779. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:53 minutes.

Ḍ Ṇ̲ S - G̲ M D Ṇ̲, Ṡ - - - - - - -,

D - Ṇ̲ ᴺ(D) - - - -, M G̲ S Ḍ Ṇ̲ S - -,

Ḍ Ṇ̲ S G̲ M D Ṇ̲, Ṡ - - - - - - -,

ᴺ(Ṡ) - - - D Ṇ̲ - (D)M - - - G̲ S - -,

ᴺ(Ḍ) - - - , Ṃ Ḍ Ṇ̲ S - - - - - - - -,

M G̲ S - - - - - Ṇ̲ Ḍ Ṇ̲ S - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ̲ S - - - - - |

## Jhyāure Song: I Won’t Drink Machine-Pumped Water

Six-hole or five-hole, three-hole or two-hole tunings

Please see the instrumental audio, lyrics, and notation for this song above under six-hole tuning.

## Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Uḍī Jāne Rānī Charī*/The Queen Bird Flies

*Keṭā: Uḍī jāne rānī charī*[80] *tirīmirī chhāyẽ,*
*Birseu kyāre mero māyā?*
*Baīsālu nānī ḍhalkī ḍhalkī kahẽ jānī?*
*Keṭī: Silāmeko gāi goṭha parālale chhāko,*
*Timīlāī khojdai āirāko.*
*Nakkale dājai māyā kina mārthẽ ājai?*
*Keṭā: Rachhānako thākrai bhari pākī hālyo simī,*
*Ṭhikkai pārchhau mukhle timī.*
*Latrī sakyo sārī man ta timro ḍẽḍā pārī.*
*Keṭī: Varṣā lāgyo gaḍyāṅ guḍuṅ pānī mātra parne,*
*Dāile kina śaṅkā garne?*
*Jīvan bitne thāũ joḍi milyo ghara jāũ.*

Boy: The queen bird flies into dappled shade,
You've probably forgotten my love.
Youthful girl, where are you going, moving so sweetly?
Girl: The perilla-grower's cowshed, roofed with straw,
I've come here looking for you.
Handsome older brother, why would I forget you today?
Boy: On the poles in the dishwashing area, the pole beans are already ripe,
You win people over with your speech.
Your sari's dragging on the ground while your mind's across the hills.
Girl: The monsoon's come, it's all thunder and rain,
Why do you doubt me, brother?
We're a good couple, let's go home to the place where we'll spend our lives.

80 The *rāni charī*, literally 'queen bird' is a small passerine bird known in English as the scarlet minivet.

Khyālī Bhākā Song / The Queen Bird Flies
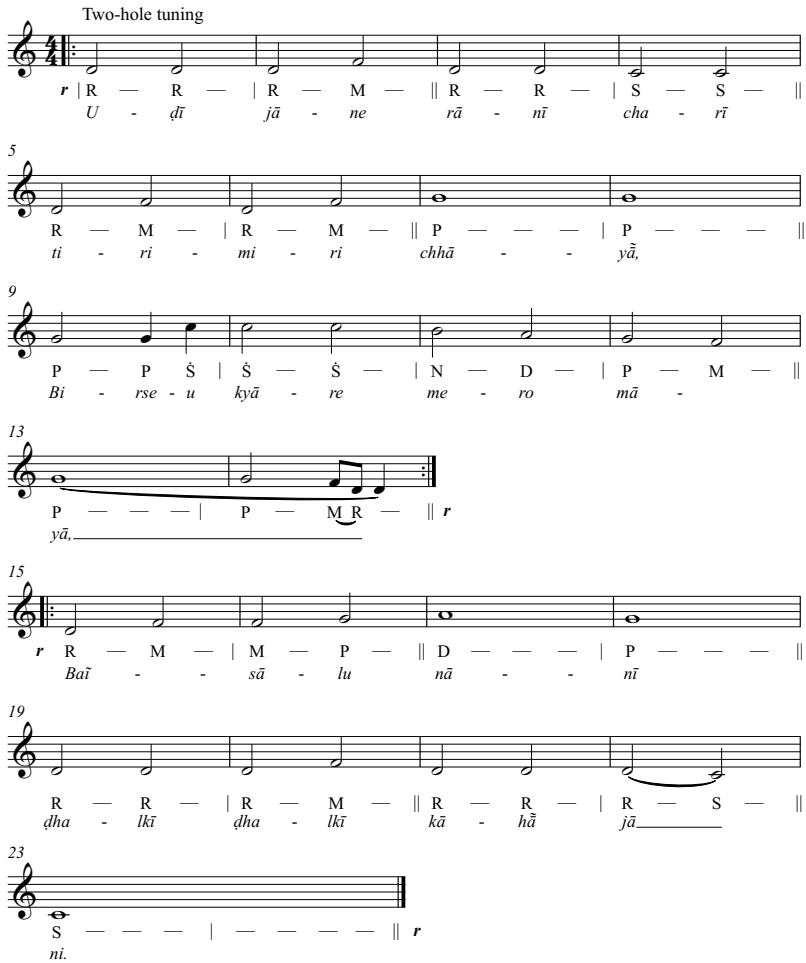



Fig. 5.33 Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song/*Uḍī jāne rānī charī*/The Queen Bird Flies. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Rule Six: One-Hole Tuning

To play this one-hole tuning, the topmost hole should be closed to play the tonic. One-hole tuning is very popular in the villages. In

the rules of this note group, both Ṛiṣab (Re) notes are used, Ma is sharp, but if flat Ni is used then Ma is natural.

On the bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī, many rāgs and rāginīs along with folk tunes can be played in one-hole tuning. In one hole tuning, rāgs can be easily played using the middle octave from flat Ga all the way up to flat Ga in the high octave. In *dhasan tāl*[81] these flat-note rāgs may sound quite gentle but they also present a kind of purity. In one-hole tuning, because the way to play notes above and below Sā is by using all the holes below the note used for Sā, it is very easy to play and therefore very popular. Below are some examples of how to play in one-hole tuning.

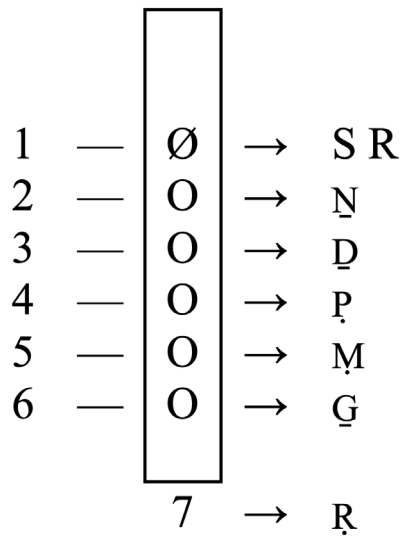



Fig. 5.34 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in one-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

81 This is neither a pañchai bājā tāl, nor a Newar tāl, nor a pan-ethnic/pan-genre folk tāl in Jyamrung; unable to match this tāl to a local musical tradition or to find anyone who knows what it might be, we wonder if it is an adjectival description rather than the actual name of a tāl. In that case, *dhasan* as a form of the verb *dhasnu* (which has many meanings, most with the sense of something giving way, like a hill subsiding in a landslide or a drum skin giving way when hit to produce a sound) could refer simply to a tāl being played, or, if referring to tempo, perhaps to a medium tempo tāl contrasting with faster tāls.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G M P D N S |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G M P D N S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (a) S N D P M G R S |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M G R S |

## Unmetered Tune in One-Hole Tuning



Video 5.23 Ek-Swore Dhun (One-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112780. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:55 minutes.

S - - - - - - -, Ḍ Ṇ S - - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ S - Ṛ Ġ Ṛ, S - - - - - - ,

S S ˢṆ S Ḍ – Ṗ – Ṃ - - - - - - -,

Ṃ Ṗ Ṇ Ṇ S - Ġ Ṛ, S - - - - - - -,

Ṇ S Ṇ S Ṛ - - -, S Ṇ Ḍ Ṗ Ṃ - - -,

Ṃ Ṗ Ṇ Ṇ S - Ġ Ṛ, S - - - - - - -,

Ṇ S Ġ M P - - -, P Ḍ P M Ġ - Ṛ -,

S - - - - - -, Ġ Ṛ S - - - - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ S - - - - -, - - - - - - - - |

## Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Munāle Māilī*/Sprout, Maili

*Kopilā phūla thāmera basne kalilo munāle,*
*Munāle Māilī.*
*Purāno māyā bheṭ bhayo āja bẽcheko hunāle*
*Hunāle Māilī*
*Varṣaimā lāgyo hilo ra mailo pānīle rujhāune,*
*Māyāko bheṭa sapani jastai man kele bujhāune?*
*Uḍante charī ghumera jẽdā sagara chhũdaina,*
*Chhin chhinko bheṭa amilo piro khapilo hũdaina.*
*Lekhai ra bāṭa charīmā jharyo khuṭṭaimā ragata.*
*Ekale jīvan kati din bẽchne chhoḍdina aba ta.*

A tender sprout holds a budding flower,
A sprout, Maili.
I've met my former love today because I've survived,
That's why, Maili.
The monsoon has begun, it's dirty and muddy, with drenching rain,
To see my love is like a dream, how can I console myself?
A bird on the wing flies around, yet doesn't touch the sky,
Momentary meetings are sour and spicy, they aren't lasting.
The bird came down from the ridgetop with blood on its leg,
How long can I live this solitary life? I won't leave you now.

## Khyālī Bhākā Song / Sprout, Maili

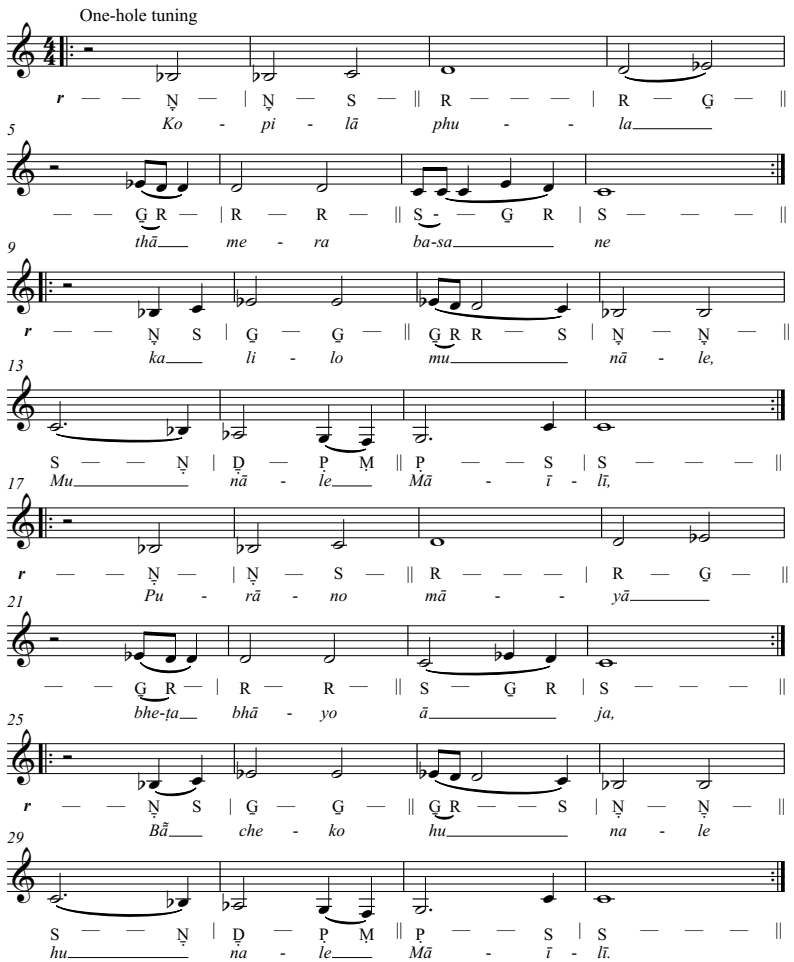



Fig. 5.35 Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song/*Munāle Māilī*/Sprout, Maili. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Charitra Bhākā Song: Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad

Please see the lyrics and notation for this song above under four-hole tuning.

## Rule 7: Open-Hole Tuning

When playing in this open-hole tuning, all the holes of the sahanāī, bā̃surī, or muralī are open for the tonic. But because the notes that come after it must be used in one-hole tuning, when playing, the second and third holes should be closed, with the first hole and all remaining holes open. Producing a note group in this way both Riṣab (Re) are used. And, sharp Madhyam plays very well. Even though both Riṣab are used, flat Riṣab can be a little hard to produce. In this open-hole tuning, from Re of the middle octave to Re of the high octave are easily played. Because the nature of this tuning is a bit strident both the middle and higher octaves are used. Because the place where Sā is produced has all the holes open, one can go fully up and down from there. Because all the notes up and down are equally available in open-hole tuning, many folk tunes and song tunes are played using this tuning. Here are some examples.

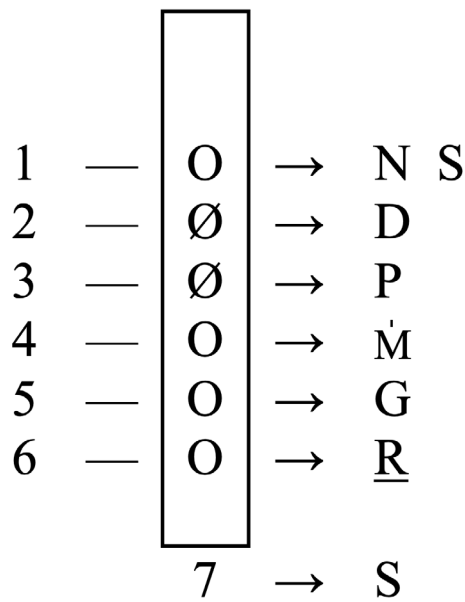



Fig. 5.36 Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in open-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ascending Notes | (a) S R G̲ M̤ P D N S |
| | Ascending Notes | (b) S R G M̤ P D N S |
| 2 | Descending Notes | (a) S N̲ D P M̤ G R S |
| | Descending Notes | (b) S N D P M̤ G R S |

## Unmetered Tune in Open-Hole Tuning



Video 5.24 Khulla-Swore Dhun (Open-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112781. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:49 minutes.

S - - - - - - -, R S Ṇ (Ḍ) - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ R G M̤ - - - (G) - - - R S - -,

S - - - - - - -, R S Ṇ (Ḍ) - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ R G M̤ - - - (G) - - - R S - -,

S - - - - - - -, R S Ṇ (Ḍ) - - - -,

Ḍ Ṇ R G M̤ - - - (G) - - - R S - -,

S - - - - - - -, Ḍ Ṇ R G M̤ - - -,

P D P M̤ G - - - , P M̤ G R G - - -,

R G M̤ G P M̤ G R G - - - R G R S,

S - - - - - - - |
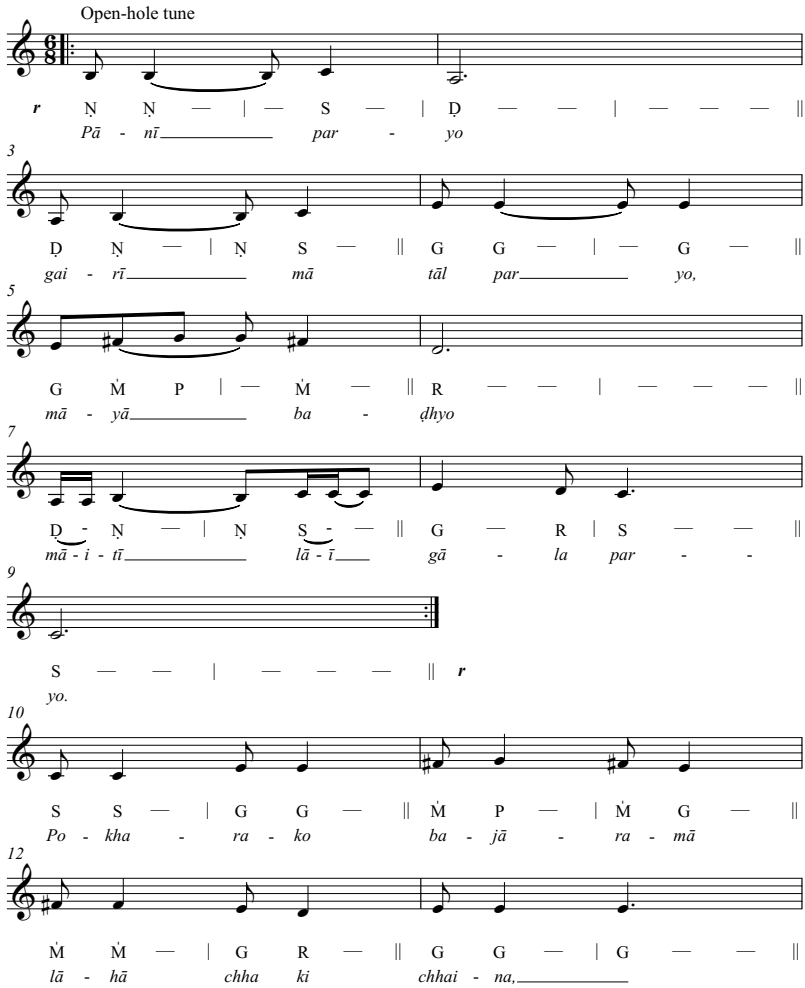
## Jhyāure Song: *Pānī Paryo Gairīmā Tāl Paryo*/It Rained and a Lake Formed in the Hollow

*Pānī paryo gairīmā tāl paryo, mayā baḍhyo māitīlāī gāl paryo.*
*Pokharāko bajāramā lāhā chha ki chhaina?*
*Piratī le neṭo kāṭyo thāhā chha ki chhaina?*
*Pānī paryo gairīmā tāl paryo…*
*Hiũde kodo ropihālaũ pānī pare sarlā,*
*Jathābhābī mayā lāũdā roī hĩḍnu parlā.*
*Pānī paryo gairīmā tāl paryo…*
*Bāra hāte paṭukī ta kambaramā kasa,*
*Lākhāpākhā nalāū ãkhā mana thāmī basa*
*Pānī paryo gairīmā tāl paryo…*

It rained and a lake formed in the hollow; love grew and her family scolded.
Is there sealing-wax to be found in Pokhara bazaar or not?
Do you know that my love has gone far away or not?
It rained and a lake formed in the hollow…
Let's plant the winter millet, it might grow if it rains,
If you fall in love all over the place, you might have to spend your life in tears.
It rained and a lake formed in the hollow…
Bind your waist with a twelve-foot[82] sash,
Don't let your eyes look here and there, keep a hold on your heart.
It rained and a lake formed in the hollow…

82 The unit of measure *hāt* is based on a generalized idea of the length from elbow to fingertips. So, while we've translated it as a 'twelve-foot sash' the real length of such a sash could be quite a bit longer.

# Jhyaure Song / Pani Paryo



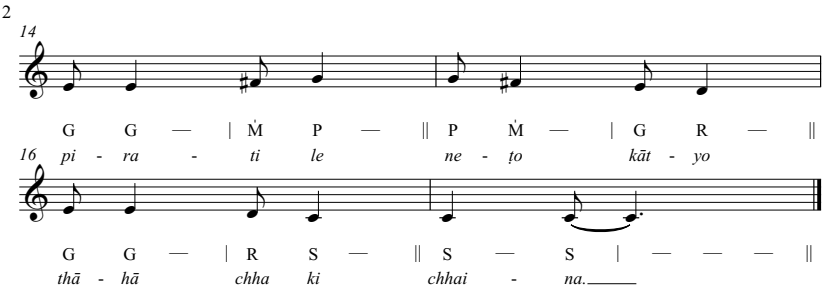



Fig. 5.37 Traditional. Jhyāure Song/*Pānī Paryo Gairīmā Tāl Paryo*/It Rained and a Lake Formed in the Hollow. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

## Jhyāure Song: *Kã̄ Gaera Ke Hune Chha Ra*/What Good Is It to Go Away?

*Kã̄ gaera ke hune chha ra? basa mayā jovanai dhānera.*
*Katā paryo Bhādgāũ śahar katā paryo Ṭhimī?*
*Māyā garne mai po raichhu nirmayāko timī.*
*Kã̄ gaera ke hune chha ra…*
*Uḍī jāne rānī charī tirī mirī chāyā,*
*Jasto timlāī pānī tirkhā ustai malāī māyā.*
*Kã̄ gaera ke hune chha ra…*
*Ũbho herũ Kāli lekha ũdho nira gaṅgā,*
*Tyo mayālāi dekhepachhi manai hune chaṅgā.*
*Kã̄ gaera ke hune chha ra…*
*Lekālīle nunai lyāyo piṭhiũmā bokī,*
*Timro hāmro khelne thāũ ujār banne ho ki?*
*Kã̄ gaera ke hune chha ra…*

What good is it to go away? Stay here, love, saving your youth
Where is Bhadgaon city, where is Thimi?
I'm the one who gives all the love, you belong to this suitor
What good is it to go away....
The queen bird flies into dappled shade,
Just as you feel thirst for water, that's how I feel love.
What good is it to go away....
Looking up there's Kali ridge, looking down, the blue river,

When I see that love of mine, my heart becomes a kite.
What good is it to go away....
The mountain-dweller brought salt, carrying it up on his back,
Might the place where you and I play become desolate?
What good is it to go away....

Jhyaure Song / What Good Is It To Go Away?
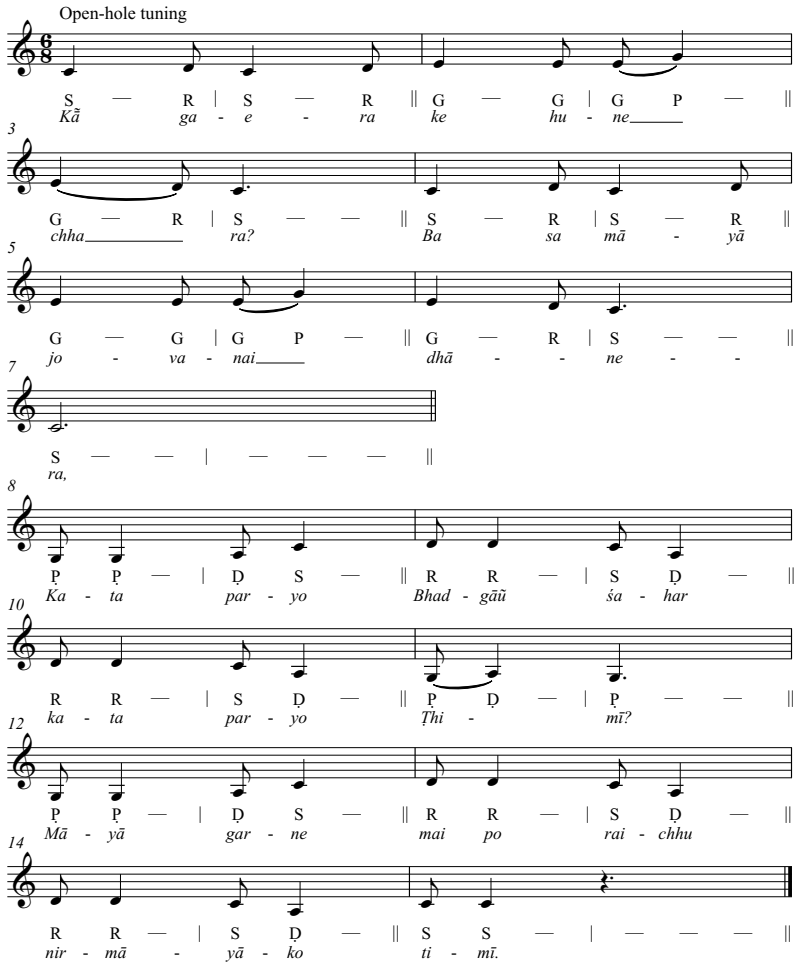



Fig. 5.38 Traditional. Jhyāure Song/*Kã̃ Gaera Ke Hune Chha Ra*/What Good Is It to Go Away? Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY.

The unmetered tunes,[83] metered instrumental tunes,[84] and folk song tunes, presented in sequence according to the seven rules, are the particular tunes of bā̃surī, muralī, and sahanāī players who have played them since ancient times. The most popular among the tuning rules are six-hole, five-hole, three-hole, one-hole and open-hole tunings, and the other tunings, because of their rules, are played by experts. Among them, many are sahanāī players from the Damai caste.

Village elders use the names written above, and some also use the terminology of 'this-or-that-many holes.' The main thing is that wherever [on the instrument] the melodies of various folk songs and various folk tunes start, a custom of playing the tonic from yet another place will still be found in villages.

Mainly, sahanāī players, bā̃surī players, and muralī players who play various types of tunes are found all over the kingdom of Nepal. It is only because there are no books written about our ancient theory that we are now in this dilemma. Because Nepali music has not been able to develop theoretically, and instruments have not made progress, so much of ancient Nepali music is about to be lost.

Without using the Nepali percussion instruments that demonstrate the originality of Nepali classical music, the forms of Nepali classical music cannot be explained. Because the currently popular certificates and diplomas are showing classical music as Indian.[85]

Until certificates and diplomas are available from our own universities, we cannot call it Nepali classical music.[86] For that reason our folk music must be fully researched, and it is all Nepalis' duty to develop music based on our own rules.

---

83 Here, *tālvihīn taranga dhunharu*, literally 'ripple tunes without tāls.' May be referred to as 'airs.'

84 *Swarālaṅkrit lok dhunharu.*

85 Shah is likely referring to the certificates in performance that many Nepal-based music schools now offer, which are accredited by Prayag Sangeet Samiti in Allahabad, India.

86 This reference also underscores Shah's association of 'classical' with institutionalized music education based on authoritative texts.

Simply chasing after foreign music does not allow us to say that our music has developed. Because today, with pop songs in the name of folk songs, disco dance in the name of folk dance; the way things are going it will not be long before our ancient music is eliminated.

So, it has become essential for all Nepalis to preserve Nepali tunes—unmetered tunes, metered tunes, and song tunes in their ancient forms, in a timely fashion.

# Bibliography


Acharya, Govinda, *Lokgītko Biśleṣaṇ* (Pairavi Prakashan, 2005)

——, and Durga Rayamajhi, *Magar Jātiko Lokgīt tathā Loksaṅgīt* (Nepal Music Center, 2017)

Acharya, Sriram, *Saṅgītāmrit: Prathamāhuti*, 2nd edn (Sangitamrit Samiti, 1999)

Adhikari, Bodh Bikram, *Nepalī Dantya Kathā* (Nepali Bhasha Prakashini Samiti, 1939)

Allen, Matthew Harp, 'Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the Dialogue between "Classical" and "Non-Classical" in the Music of India,' *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 30 (1998), pp. 22–52

Alter, Andrew, 'The Significance of Tantric Sects for Drum Practice in the Central Himalayas,' *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 41 (2009), pp. 187–98, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0740155800004197

Andors, Ellen, 'The Rodi: Female Associations Among the Gurungs of Nepal' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1976)

Assis, Paulo de, 'Experimental Systems in Music: Specifying MusicExperiment21's Use of Rheinberger's Experimental Systems,' unpublished paper delivered at International Conference on Artistic Research (2017), ResearchCatalogue.net, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/351463/351464

Ayyagari, Shalini, 'Spaces Betwixt and Between: Musical Borderlands and the Manganiyar Musicians of Rajasthan,' *Asian Music*, 43.1 (2012), pp. 3–33, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.2012.0005

'Bagaḍīko Jalsa (The Gathering at Bagadi),' *History of Nepal*, 19 June 2017, https://modernnepalhistory.blogspot.com/2017/06/gathering-at-bagadi.html

Bajracharya, Saptamuni, 'Chārya Nṛtya, Gītkā Kehi Parichaya (Some Introductions to Charya Dance and Song),' in *Nṛityakala* (Sajha Prakashan, 1981), pp. 169–86

Bakhle, Janaki, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.

org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195166101.001.0001

Bandhu, Cuda Mani, 'Folklore Studies in Nepal: A Historical Survey,' *Nepali Folklore and Folklife: A Biannual Newsletter of the Nepal Folklore Society*, 2.3 (2006), pp. 4–8

Banerji, Anurima, 'The Laws of Movement: The Natyashastra as Archive for Indian Classical Dance,' *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 31.1–2 (2021), pp. 132–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801.2021.1878507

Baral Magar, Keshar Jung, *Pālpā, Tanahũ, Ra Syāṅgjākā Magarharuko Sanskṛti [The Culture of the Magars of Palpa, Tanahun, and Syangja]* (Asthami Books, 2012)

Bauman, Richard, *Verbal Art As Performance* (Newbury House, 1977)

BC, Shankar (dir.), *Jhumarī*, performed by Rita Thapa Magar and Mohan Ballav Rana (Kathmandu, 2020)

Beck, Guy L., *Sonic Theology: Hinduism and Sacred Sound* (University of South Carolina Press, 1993), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2z5510b

Berger, Harris, 'Phenomenological Approaches in the History of Ethnomusicology,' in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.013.30

——, 'Phenomenology and Phenomenological Ethnomusicology,' in *Theory for Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Harris Berger and Ruth Stone (Routledge, 2019), pp. 204–18, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315408583-9

Berliner, Paul F., *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (University of Chicago Press, 1978)

Bomjan, Pradeep, *Nepālī Prachalit Maulik Tālko Prayog Ra Mānak Nirmān* (Nepal Academy of Music and Drama, 2024)

Booth, Gregory, *Behind the Curtain: Making Music in Mumbai's Film Studios* (Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195327632.001.0001

——, and Bradley Shope (eds), *More than Bollywood: Studies in Indian Popular Music* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Budhathoki, Mahendra, 'Social Representations on Singaru Folk Songs in Nepal,' *Patan Pragya*, 11.2 (2022), pp. 82–92, https://doi.org/10.3126/pragya.v11i02.52043

Burchett, Patton E., *A Genealogy of Devotion: Bhakti, Tantra, Yoga, and Sufism in North India* (Columbia University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.7312/burc19032

Chakravorty, Pallabi, 'Hegemony, Dance and Nation: The Construction of the Classical Dance in India,' *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 21.2 (1998), pp. 107–20, 10.1080/00856409808723345

Chalmers, Rhoderick, 'Pandits and Pulp Fiction: Popular Publishing and the Birth of Print Capitalism in Banaras,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 7 (2002), pp. 35–97

——, '"We Nepalis" Language, Literature and the Formation of a Nepali Public Sphere in India, 1914-1940' (unpublished PhD Thesis, SOAS, 2003), https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00034025

——, 'When Folk Culture Met Print Culture: Some Thoughts On The Commercialisation, Transformation and Propagation of Traditional Genres in Nepali,' *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 31 (2004), pp. 243–56

Choeden, Tsering, and Yubakar Raj Rajkarnikar (dirs), *In Tune With Darjeeling* (Kathmandu, 2006)

Chowdhry, Prem, *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples: Gender, Caste, and Patriarchy in Northern India* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Chromatone, MIT, 'Evolution of European Notation Systems |,' MIT GitHub Project, Chromatone, 2017, https://chromatone.center/theory/notes/staff/evolution/

Clayton, Martin, Byron Dueck, and Laura Leante, *Experience and Meaning in Music Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199811328.001.0001

Colles, H. C., and others, 'Curwen, John,' in *Grove Music Online* (Grove, 2001)

Darnal, Ram Sharan, *Gāyan Śailī* (Sajha Prakashan, 2004)

——, *Kāṭhmaṇḍu Upatyakā Ka Prachīn Samasāmayik Gītharu* (Nepal Music Center, 2010)

——, *Nepalī Bāginā Ra Kalā* (Bhrikuti Academic Publications, 2003)

——, *Nepalī Bājā* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2005)

——, *Nepalī Saṅgīt Sādhak* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1981)

——, *Nepalī Saṅgīt-Sanskṛiti* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1988)

——, *Saṅgīt Parikramā* (Sajha Prakashan, 1981)

——, *Saṅgīt Saurabh* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2002)

——, *Saṅgītko Vistrit Avalokan* (Pilgrims Book House, 1984)

——, *Vishwa Vikhyat Saṅgītkār* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1984)

Dennen, David, 'The Third Stream: Oḍiśī Music, Regional Nationalism, and the Concept of "Classical",' *Asian Music*, 41.2 (2010), pp. 149–79, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.0.0063

Devkota, Laxmi Prasad, *Munā Madan* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1936)

DhadingPost, 'Gorkhā Ra Dhadiṅgmā Ajhai Rājāko Nāmmā Jagga,' *Dhading Post*, 25 March 2015, https://dhadingpost.com/2015/03/25/2848/

Dhakal, Nararaj, *Saṅgīt-Suras*, 2nd edn (Taleju Prakashan, 2016)

Dinnerstein, Noe, 'Ladakhi Lu: Songs, Cultural Representation and Hybridity in Ladakh,' *Himalaya*, 32.1 and 2 (2013), pp. 73–84

Diwas, Tulsi, Cuda Mani Bandhu, and Bhim Nepal, *The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal: Future Directions*, Unesco Kathmandu Series of Monographs and Working Papers (UNESCO, 2007)

Dura, Yambahadur, *Deubahādur Durā: Ṭhāḍo Bhākākā Loknāyak [Deubahadur Dura: Folk Performer of Thado Bhaka Songs]* (Self, 2022)

——, and Binod Neupane, 'Thado Bhaka: A Source of Social Intercourse,' *Marsyangdi Journal*, 3.1 (n.d.), pp. 51–57

Dutta, Aniruddha, 'The Freedom to Dance: Performance and Impersonation in Lagan,' in *Mimetic Desires: Impersonation and Guising Across South Asia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2022), pp. 127–47, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824894108-009

Edwards, Daniel W., 'The Daudaha (Inspection Tour) System Under the Ranas,' *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 3.Addendum (1976), pp. 7–34

Feld, Steven, 'Communication, Music and Speech About Music,' in *Music Grooves*, ed. by Charles and Steven Feld Keil (University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 77–95

Fisher, William T., 'Retold Tales: Towards an Understanding of Spirit Possession in Central Nepal,' *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, 9.2 (1989), pp. 5–16

Gaenszle, Martin. *Ancestral Voices: Oral Ritual Texts and their Social Contexts among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal* (LIT Verlag, 2002)

Gautam, Punam (dir.), *Mārunī* (Kathmandu, 2019)

Geertz, Clifford, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton University Press, 1980), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1fkgcrh

Gellner, David N., 'Priests, Healers, Mediums and Witches: The Context of Possession in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal,' *Man*, 29.1 (1994), pp. 27–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/2803509

Gordon, Edwin, *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Music Learning Theory* (GIA, 2007)

Greene, Paul D., 'Sounding the Body in Buddhist Nepal: Neku Horns, Himalayan Shamanism, and the Transmigration of the Disembodied Spirit,' *The World of Music*, 44.2 (2002), pp. 93–114

Gurung, Anjana, Shiva Paudel, and Kanhaiya Singh, with Subi Shah, *Sorathi*, with Subi Shah, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of

Folk Music, UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터 (1994), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub3.php, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExYpfgibpgc

——, Kanhaiya Singh, and Dipak Raman, *Hasi Deu Boli Deu Rasaile*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music (UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터, 2018), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub3.php, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=891i2zM0skk

——, Kanhaiya Singh, and Dipak Raman, *Salaam Mero Hajurlai*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music, UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터 (UNESCO ICHCAP 유네스코아태무형유산센터, 1999), III, Folk Songs of Nepal, https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub9.php, https://tinyurl.com/3zk72x2y

Gurung, Kishor, 'Ghantu: A Narrative Ritual Music Tradition as Observed by the Gurungs of Nepal' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1992)

Gurung, Pritam (dir.), *Sati Ghātu* (Kathmandu, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Grf3L1zgI6g

Haider, Najaf, 'Language, Caste and the Secretarial Class in Mughal India,' in *The Evolution of a Nation Pre-Colonial to Post-Colonial: Essays in Memory of R.S. Sharma*, ed. by D. N. Jha (Manohar, 2014), pp. 249–62

Halid, Raja Iskandar Bin Raja, 'The Nobat: From Muslim Antiquity to Malay Modernity,' in *Performing Arts and the Royal Courts of Southeast Asia, Volume One* (Brill, 2023), pp. 139–60, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004686533_008

Hansen, Kathryn, *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India* (Manohar, 1992)

Hausner, Sondra L., and David N. Gellner, 'Category and Practice as Two Aspects of Religion: The Case of Nepalis in Britain,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 80.4 (2012), pp. 971–97, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfs083

Henderson, David, 'Emotion and Devotion, Lingering and Longing in Some Nepali Songs,' *Ethnomusicology*, 40.3 (1996), pp. 440–68

Hitchcock, John, *The Magars of Banyan Hill* (Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1966)

Holmberg, David, 'Transcendence, Power and Regeneration in Tamang Shamanic Practice,' *Critique of Anthropology*, 26.1 (2006), pp. 87–101, https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X06061485

Hood, Mantle, 'The Challenge of Bi-Musicality,' *Ethnomusicology*, 4 (1960), pp. 55–59

Hutt, Michael, *Nepali: A National Language and Its Literature* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1988)

Iyer, Vijay, 'Embodied Mind, Situated Cognition, and Expressive Microtiming in African-American Music,' *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 19.3 (2002), pp. 387–414, https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2002.19.3.387

Jangam, Chinnaiah, 'Politics of Identity and the Project of Writing History in Postcolonial India: A Dalit Critique,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50.40 (2015), pp. 63–70

Jangam, Deepak, and Beni Rawal, *Saṅgīt Surabhi* (Bhrikuti Pustak Tathat Masaland Bhandar, 2003)

Joshi, Satya Mohan, *Hāmro Lok Saṁskṛiti* (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1957)

Kamath, Harshita Mruthini, *Impersonations: The Artifice of Brahmin Masculinity in South Indian Dance* (University of California Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.72

——, and Pamela Lothspeich (eds), *Mimetic Desires: Impersonation and Guising Across South Asia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824894108

Kandel, Ramprasad, *Nepalī Lokbājā: Folk Musical Instruments of Nepal* (Nepal LokBājā Sangrahalaya, 2004)

——, *Pangdure Naach*, Precious Drops from Nepal's Fountain of Folk Music, 2 vols (Kathmandu, 2017), I, Music Museum of Nepal <https://archive.unesco-ichcap.org/eng/ek/sub2017_3/sub9.php>

Karthak, Peter J., *Nepali Musicmakers: Between the Dales of Darjeeling and the Vales of Kathmandu* (Himal Books, 2018)

Khadgi, Pratik, *Nāy:Khī Bājã Sa:Chĩ* (Nepal Khadgi Samaj, 2024)

Khajum, Aaita, *Chyabrungko Nalibeli* (Vishwa Yakthung Mundhum Samaj, 2014)

Khaptari Magar, Prasad (dir.), *Sewai Hamaro* (Kathmandu, 2023), https://www.youtube.com/

Krauskopff, Gisele, 'Nepalese Chiefs and Gods,' *Diogenes*, 44.174 (1996), pp. 3–26, https://doi.org/10.1177/039219219604417402

Laderrière, Mette, 'The Early Years of Female Impersonation in Kabuki,' *Maske Und Kothurn*, 35.2–3 (1989), pp. 31–38, https://doi.org/10.7767/muk.1989.35.23.31

Lama, Santbir, *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim* (Sushila Nepal, 2013)

Lamichhane, M., *Lok Sahitya Samajik Pratibimba* (Oxford International Publications, 2015)

Lamichhane, M., *Lok Varta Kehi Pakshaharu* (Brother's Books, 2017)

Lecomte-Tilouine, Marie, *Hindu Kingship, Ethnic Revival, and Maoist Rebellion in Nepal* (Oxford University Press, 2009)

——, 'The Cult of the Earth Goddess among the Magar of Nepal,' *Diogenes*, 44.174 (1996), pp. 27–44, https://doi.org/10.1177/039219219604417403

——, and Anne de Sales, *Encounters with the Invisible: Revisiting Spirit Possession in the Himalayas* (Taylor & Francis, 2024), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003490920-1

Levine, Nancy E., 'Spirit Possession and Ethnic Politics in Nepal's Northwest,' *Himalaya*, 9.1 (1989), pp. 11–20

Levy, Kenneth, 'On the Origin of Neumes,' *Early Music History*, 7 (1987), pp. 59–90, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261127900000541

Lidke, Jeffrey S., *The Goddess within and Beyond the Three Cities* (D. K. Printworld Pvt. Ltd., 2017)

Liechty, Mark, 'Selective Exclusion: Foreigners, Foreignness, and Foreign Goods in Modern Nepali History,' *SINHAS*, 2.1 (1997), pp. 5–68

Lohani, Laxman, *Rodhighar* (Self, 1958)

Lomax, Alan, 'An Appeal for Cultural Equity | Association for Cultural Equity,' *World of Music*, XIV.2 (1972), https://www.culturalequity.org/alan-lomax/appeal

Lorea, Carola Erika, 'Pregnant Males, Barren Mothers, and Religious Transvestism: Transcending Gender in the Songs and Practices of "Heterodox" Bengali Lineages,' *Asian Ethnology*, 77.1/2 (2018), pp. 169–214

Macdonnell, Arthur, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary with Transliteration, Accentuation, and Etymological Analysis Throughout* (Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 319, https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/macdonell/

Macfarlane, Alan, *Resources and Population: A Study of the Gurungs of Nepal*, 2nd edn (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 2003)

Maharjan, Sanuraja and Moore, Robert, *Madal: Learn the Most Popular Drum of Nepal* (Kumari Printing, 2010)

March, Kathryn S., *'If Each Comes Halfway': Meeting Tamang Women in Nepal* (Cornell University Press, 2002), https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501728457

Maskarinec, Gregory, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts I*, Harvard Oriental Series (Harvard University Press, 1999)

——, *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts II: Texts of the Bhuji Valley*, Harvard Oriental Series (Harvard University Press, 2009)

——, *The Rulings of the Night: Ethnography of Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995)

Mason, Michael Atwood, and Rory Turner, 'Cultural Sustainability: A Framework for Relationships, Understanding, and Action', *Journal of American Folklore*, 133.527 (2020), pp. 81–99

Mathema, Subba Parshuram Bhakta, *Saṅgīt Praveshikā*, 5th edn (Sajha Prakashan, 2009)

Michael, Bernardo, 'The Tarai: A Part of Moghlan or Gorkha? Perspectives from the Time of the Anglo-Gorkha War (1814-1816),' *Himalaya*, 29.1 and 2 (2010), pp. 7–17

Moisala, Pirkko, *Cultural Cognition in Music: Continuity and Change in the Gurung Music Culture of Nepal*, Suomen Etnomusikologinen Seura (Gummerus, 1991), IV

——, 'Gurung Music and Culture,' *Kailash*, 15 (1989), pp. 207–22

——, 'Heritagization of Tamu Music—from Lived Culture to Heritage to Be Safe-Guarded,' *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 15.4 (2019), pp. 321–29, https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180119890135

Morcom, Anna, *Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance: Cultures of Exclusion* (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199343539.001.0001

Mottin, Monica, *Rehearsing for Life: Theatre for Social Change in Nepal* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108235853

Mumford, Stan Royal, *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989)

Nayar, Sobhana, *Bhatkhande's Contribution to Music: A Historical Perspective* (Popular Prakashan, 1989)

Nepal, Devi, *Chanda Parāg* (Bhundipuran Prakashan, 2006)

Nepal, Manjul, *Samjhanākā Pailāharu: Gītī Yātra Samsmāran* (Ananda, 1988)

Neupane, Devendra, 'Mother's Groups among the Gurung of Bhujung Village of Lamjung District' (Tribhuvan University, Patan Multiple Campus, 2011)

Newmark, Peter, *Approaches to Translation* (Oxford University Press, 1981)

Onta, Pratyoush, 'Activities in a Fossil State: Balkrishna Sama and the Improvisation of Nepali Identity,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 2 (1997), pp. 69–102

——, 'Creating a Brave Nepali Nation in British India: The Rhetoric of Jati Improvement, the Rediscovery of Bhanubhakta, and the Writing of Bir History,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 1 (1996), pp. 37–76

——, 'The Career of Bhanubhakta as a History of Nepali National Culture, 1940-1999,' *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 4 (1999), pp. 65–136

Ortner, Sherry, *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 1989), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691218076

Panou, Despoina, 'Equivalence in Translation Theories: A Critical Evaluation,' *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3.1 (2013), pp. 1–6, https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.1.1-6

Pant, Kali Bhakta, *Hāmro Saṁskṛitik Itihās (Our Cultural History)* (Self, 1972)

Parajuli, Krishnaprasad, *Nepālī Lokgītko Ālok (Light on Nepali Folk Music)* (Veena Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 2000)

Parajuli, Motilal, *Soraṭhī Nṛtyanātikā (Saiddhāntik Adhyayan)* (Dikshant Pustak Bhandar, 2006)

——, and Jivendra Dev Giri, *Nepali Lok Sahityako Ruprekha* (Sajha Prakashan, 2011)

Parrish, Carl, *The Notation of Medieval Music* (W.W. Norton, 1957)

Pignede, Bernard, *The Gurungs*, trans. by Alan Macfarlane (Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1966)

Pokharel, Ramesh, 'Classical Music in the Shah and Rana Era: 1768 - 1951 A.D.,' *SIRJANĀ – A Journal Of Arts and Art Education*, 6.1 (2019), pp. 62–71, https://doi.org/10.3126/sirjana.v6i1.39674

Pollock, Sheldon Ivan, *A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics*, Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought (Columbia University Press, 2016)

Poudel, Shiva, *Dohorī Gīt* (unpublished MA thesis, Tribhuvan University, 2002)

Pun, Pratibhā, *Purkhyaulī Loknāch: Ek Chinārī* (Lālbahadur Pun, 2018)

Putcha, Rumya, *The Dancer's Voice: Performance and Womanhood in Transnational India* (Duke University Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478023760

Putcha, Rumya S., 'Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance,' *Dance Research Journal*, 45.3 (2013), pp. 91–110, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767713000260

Qureshi, Regula, 'Female Agency and Patrilineal Constraints,' in *The Courtesan's Arts in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Bonnie Gordon and Martha Feldman (Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 312–31, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195170283.003.0019

——, '"Muslim Devotional": Popular Religious Music and Muslim Identity under British, Indian and Pakistani Hegemony,' *Asian Music*, 24 (1992), pp. 111–21, https://doi.org/10.2307/834453

Qureshi, Regula Burkhardt, 'Whose Music? Sources and Contexts in Indic Musicology,' in *Comparative Musicology and the Anthropology of Music*, ed. by Bruno Nettl and Philip Bohlman (University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 152–68.

Rahaim, Matt, *Musicking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani Music* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012)

Raheja, Gloria, and Ann Gold, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (University of California Press, 1994), https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520914216

Ramakrishnan, E. V. (ed.), *A Cultural Poetics of Bhasha Literatures in Theory and Practice* (Orient Blackswan, 2024)

Ramusack, Barbara N., *The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521267274

Rayamajhi, Narayan (dir.), *Naramailo*, prod. by Subi Shah (2006), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zT_YRFxpU0k

Regmi, Dhrubesh Chandra, *Music, Myth, and Melody: A Brief History of Nepali Music* (Bookhill, 2023)

Regmi, Dilli Raman, *Medieval Nepal*, 3 vols (Rupa Publications, 1965), II

*Report of the First All-India Music Conference Held in Baroda, March 20th to 25th, 1916*, (First All-India Music Conference, 1917)

Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg, *Toward a Theory of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube* (Stanford University Press, 1997)

Rice, Timothy, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* (University of Chicago Press, 1994)

——, 'Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology,' in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195109108.003.0006

Rijal, Lochan, 'The Transmission of Music in Nepal—Gandharva Tradition' (Kathmandu University, 2014)

Rimal, Pradip, *Nepālī Lok Samskṛiti: Sāhitya, Saṅgīt, Kalā* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1971)

Saeed, Yusuf, 'The Debate on Amir Khusrau's "Inventions" in Hindustani Music,' *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*, 36 (2008), pp. 220–32, 256

Sagant, Philippe, 'The Drums of Nyishang (Nepal),' trans. by Matthew Cunningham, *Ateliers d'anthropologie. Revue Éditée Par Le Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative*, 49 (2021), 49, https://doi.org/10.4000/ateliers.14217

Salami Magar, Man (dir.), *Saraswoti Bandana*, performed by Junu Shris and Tara Budhathoki, Nachari 2 (Kathmandu, 2016)

Sales, Anne de, *Je suis né de vos jeux de tambours. La religion chamanique des Magar du Nord* (Societé d'ethnologie, 2000)

Sapkota, Ram P., and others, 'A Village Possessed by "Witches": A Mixed-Methods Case–Control Study of Possession and Common Mental Disorders in Rural Nepal,' *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, 38.4 (2014), pp. 642–68, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-014-9393-8

Sayami, Prakash, *Nepālī Saṅgītko Ek Śatak (A Century of Nepali Music)* (Bhavak Abhiyan Nepal, 2009)

Schofield, Katherine Butler, *Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009047685

Shah, Rishikesh, 'Ancient and Medieval Nepal,' *Kailash*, 16.1 and 2 (1990), pp. 71–115

——, *Modern Nepal - A Political History* (Manohar, 1990)

Shah, Subi, *Glimpses of Balan Ballads* (Self, 1988)

Shah, Subi, 'Nepālko Vartamān Saṅgītko Sandarbhamā Nepālī Lok Vādyaharūko Upayuktatā Tathā Prāsaṅgikatā', in *Nepālī Lok Vādya Saṅgīt Saṅgoṣṭhī* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1991 [2047 v.s.]), pp. 9–21

Shankar, S., *Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation, and the Vernacular* (University of California Press, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520952348

Sharma, Namrata, 'Ensuring Rights of Gender Minorities,' *The Rising Nepal* (Kathmandu), 20 December 2023, https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/36480

Shrestha, Harimana, *Kāttī Pyākhā: Kārtik Nāch* (Jyeṣṭha Nagarik Samāj-Nepāl, 2009)

Shris (Thapa), Dharmaprasad, *Magarātī Saṁskṛiti*, 2nd edn (Magar Academic Group, 2014)

Simpson, Kenneth, *Some Great Music Educators* (Novello, 1976)

Singer, Milton, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (Praeger, 1972)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorthy, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?,' in *Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, ed. by Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak (Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 208–311

Stiller, Ludwig F., *The Rise of the House of Gorkha: A Study in the Unification of Nepal 1768-1816* (Manjusri, 1973)

Stirr, Anna, *Singing Across Divides: Music and Intimate Politics in Nepal* (Oxford University Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190631970.001.0001

——, 'Sounding and Writing a Nepali Public Sphere: The Music and Language of Jhyaure,' *Asian Music*, 46.1 (2015), pp. 3–38, https://doi.org/10.1353/amu.2015.0008

Subramanian, Lakshmi, 'Court to Academy: Karnatik Music,' *India International Centre Quarterly*, 33.2 (2006), pp. 125–38

——, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Takakuwa, Yoko, 'Masquerading Womanliness: The Onnagata's Theatrical Performance of Femininity in Kabuki,' *Women: A Cultural Review*, 5.2 (1994), pp. 151–61, https://doi.org/10.1080/09574049408578194

Thapa, Dharmaraj, *Gandakīko Suselī* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1973)

——, and Hansapure Subedi, *Nepālī Loksāhityako Vivechanā (Analysis of Nepali Folklore)* (Pathyakram Bikās Kendra, Tribhuvan University, 1985)

Thapa, Dinbahadur, *Dhaulagirīkā Lokgītko Pahichān: Jhyāmregīt* (Dia Prakashan, 2010)

Thapa, Nar Bahadur 'Naru,' *Kirāt Magar Itihās* (Nirantar Prakashan, 2010)

Tingey, Carol, *Heartbeat of Nepal: The Panchai Bājā* (Royal Nepal Academy, 1990)

Tiwari, Shobha, *Loksaṅgītarpaṇa (The Treasure of Folk Music)* (Sajha Prakashan, 2003)

Toffin, Gérard, 'Royal Images and Ceremonies of Power in Nepal (17th–21st Centuries),' *Rivista Di Studia Sudasiatici*, 3 (2008), pp. 145–80

Turner, Ralph Lilley, *A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language* (K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1931), https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/turner/

Varoni de Castro, Renato Moreira, 'Performance and Autoethnography in Historical Ethnomusicology: Differentiating the Viola and the Violão,' *Per Musi*, 34 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1590/permusi20163402

Vázqez, Rolando, 'Translation as Erasure: Thoughts on Modernity's Epistemic Violence,' *Historical Sociology*, 24.1 (2011), pp. 27–44, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6443.2011.01387.x

Wegner, Gert-Matthias, *Drumming in Bhaktapur* (Heidelberg University Press, 2023), I

Weidman, Amanda, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (Duke University Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822388050

Widdess, Richard, 'Carya: The Revival of a Tradition?,' *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 12 and 13 (1997), pp. 12–20

——, *Dapha: Sacred Singing in a South Asian City. Music, Performance, and Meaning in Bhaktapur, Nepal*, SOAS Musicology Series (Ashgate, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315258515

www.wisdomlib.org, 'Singaaru, Singaru: 1 Definition,' 13 July 2024, https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/singaaru

Yelle, Robert, *Explaining Mantras: Ritual, Rhetoric, and the Dream of a Natural Language in Hindu Tantra* (Routledge, 2003), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203483381

Zoller, Claus Peter, 'On the Relationships between Folk and Classical Traditions in South Asia,' *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 20–21 (2001), pp. 77–105

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| Abhinaya | Gestures in dance; acting. |
| Aśik dine | Giving blessings. |
| Bahun | Hill Brahmin; a Hindu caste. |
| Baiṭhān | Sitting, crouching down. |
| Barnāune | See *garrā bā̃dhne, garryāune.* |
| Battī selāune | Literally ‘extinguishing lamps;’ here the name for the song and ritual to end the performance. |
| Bhaktī | Devotional worship. |
| Bhākā | Melody. |
| Bhajan | Devotional song. |
| Bharat | Younger half-brother of Ram in the *Rāmāyana*. |
| Bhāv | Emotions, feelings, themes in poetry, song, and drama. |
| Bol | A syllable representing a drum stroke; a set of syllables representing a set of drum strokes. |
| Charan | Verse of a song or poem. |
| Chautāra, chautārī | A platform for sitting on, built of earth, stones, plaster, or brick, and usually constructed under a tree or at a crossroads. |
| Charitra | A genre of Nepali dance-drama that uses a six-beat rhythmic cycle or *tāl* of the same name, and depicts stories from the Puranas. |
| Chhetri | Kshatriya; a Hindu caste. |
| Chhoṭī Tāl | A four-beat tāl used in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Damāhā | Medium-sized kettledrum played in the pañchai bājā. Played with a stick. |
| Ḍolakhī | Medium-sized barrel drum played in the pañchai bājā. Played with sticks and does not have khari paste on either side. |
| Ganga | The river Ganges. Also used for a river in general. |
| Garrā | A troupe that performs pāṅgdure dances. |
| Garrā Bãdhne | Literally 'binding the troupe;' the name for the song and ritual to sacralize the performance space and protect the troupe from evil spirits. |
| Garryāune | Another name for the song and ritual to sacralize the performance space and protect the troupe from evil spirits. Also known as *barnāune*. |
| Gīt | Song. |
| Guru | Teacher. |
| Gurung | An ethnic group. |
| Guru paramparā | The practice of passing a tradition and all its associated knowledge from teacher to student in an oral and embodied fashion, rather than in writing. |
| Hanuman Dhoka | The older royal palace of Kathmandu. |
| Indrajatra | A festival honoring Indra, the god of rain, during the harvest season in the Kathmandu Valley. |
| Jāgram | An all-night ceremony honoring a deity. |
| Jaṅgalī | Of the jungle; name for a poetic meter. |
| Jhyāure | A genre of Nepali song and dance that uses a six-beat rhythmic cycle/tāl. |
| Jhyāure bhākā | Songs based on jhyāure tāl that do not follow the structural rules of the jhyāure genre. |
| Kami | A Hindu artisan caste, known for metalworking. |
| Karṇāl | A long, straight horn played in the pañchai bājā. |
| Kartāl | A type of hand percussion with a wooden clapper. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Kartāle | Player of the kartāl. |
| Karuṇā | Compassion, pity. |
| Khaĩjaḍī | A small frame drum. |
| Khyālī | A genre of Nepali song and dance that uses a four-beat rhythmic cycle/tāl. |
| Khyālī bhākā | Songs based on *khyālī tāl* that do not follow the structural rules of the khyālī genre. |
| King Jayasingh | The king in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| King Vaidanga (Baidanga) | The father-in-law of King Jayasingh in the Soraṭhī dance-drama; Queen Hemaiti's father. |
| Krishna, Kṛṣṇa. | The Hindu god known for his flute playing and amorous play with milkmaids; avatar of Vishnu and center of the Vaishnava *bhakti* devotional worship style. |
| Krishna Charitra | The Puranic story of the life of the Hindu god Krishna. |
| Kumal | An ethnic group known for pottery. |
| Kumale | 'Mr. Potter.' The foster father of Sunrupa, King Jayasingh and Queen Hemaiti's daughter, in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Kumalni | 'Mrs. Potter.' The foster mother of Sunrupa in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Lakshman | Ram's loyal younger brother in the Rāmāyana. |
| Lāmī Tāl | A seven-beat rhythmic cycle or tāl used in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Lawarpãṅge | The clown role-type in pāṅgdure dance. |
| Mādal | Double-headed barrel drum popular in Nepal and the greater Himalayan region. |
| Mādale | Mādal-playing dancer in pāṅgdure dances. |
| Magar | An ethnic group. |
| Mailī | A kinship term, also used as a name or nickname, meaning second daughter or second sister. |
| Mallar, Malhar | An ethnic group known for fishing. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mallare | 'Mr. Fisher.' The friend of Kumale ('Mr. Potter') who assists in pulling baby Sunrupa in from the river in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Mārunī | The particular form of women's dress used in pāṅgdure dances; the female role-type in pāṅgdure dances (originally danced by men, now danced by men or women); another name for pāṅgdure dances. |
| Minister Sujan | King Jayasingh's chief minister and according to most traditions, his nephew, in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Mujurā | Small cymbals. |
| Mujure | Cymbal player. |
| Narsiṅgā | A long, curved horn played in the pañchai bājā. |
| Naumatī bājā | See pañchai bājā. |
| Pākhe | Of the fields or moors; rural; name for a poetic meter translated as 'field meter.' Slang: hick or country bumpkin. |
| Pañchai bājā | Shawm, drum, and horn ensemble that in Dhading includes the instruments ṭyāmko, damāhā, ḍholakī, sahanāī, narsiṅgā, and/or karṇāl. Also known as naumatī bājā. Naumatī bājā derives from Naubat, the Perso-Arabic ensemble from which this one is descended. Pañchai bājā may derive from a term for previous court ensembles in northern India before the arrival of the Mughals. The terms do not refer to 'five' (*pāñch*) or 'nine' (*nau*) instruments, as is often erroneously supposed. |
| Pāṅgdure dances | The group of dances and dance-dramas, their songs, and musical traditions, performed by troupes using the pāṅgdure role-types. Also known as *mārunī, singāru, nacharī, purkhyāulī nāch*, and more. |
| Purānas | Vast written and oral traditions of Hindu lore. |
| Puranic/Paurāṇik | Of the Puranas. |
| Pursuṅge | Lead male role in pāṅgdure dances. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Queen Hemaiti | The fifteenth queen of King Jayasingh and mother of Sunrupa in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Rām, Rāma | The hero of the Rāmāyana. |
| Rāmāyana | The Hindu epic tale of Ram. |
| Sahanāī | A shawm of medium size, played in the pañchai bājā. |
| Sakhī lagāune | Literally 'establishing friendship,' gendered female, with another connotation of sanctification or sacralization; here, the ritual of sacralizing the performance space and the bodies of the performers, binding them together for the duration of the performance to protect them from evil spirits. See *barnāune*, *garrā bãdhne, garryāune.* |
| Sāĩlī | A kinship term, also used as a name, meaning third daughter or third sister. |
| Sangīt | Music; the integrated arts of music, dance, and drama. |
| Sārkī, Sarki | A Hindu artisan caste known for leatherworking. |
| Saraswati | The Hindu goddess of music and wisdom. |
| Sāt mula | 'Seven times inauspicious' or 'seven ill omens.' A state of especial inauspiciousness that an astrologer is coerced into proclaiming applies to Sunrupa in the Soraṭhī story, thus forcing King Jayasingh and Queen Hemaiti to abandon her as a baby. |
| Shyām, Shyāma | Dark; another name for Krishna. |
| Sindoor | Vermilion powder applied to the part of a woman's hair to signify married status. |
| Sita, Sitā | Wife of Ram and Daughter of King Janak, in the Rāmāyana. |
| Soraṭhī | Dance-drama about King Jayasingh, Queen Hemaiti, and their abandoned daughter, who at last becomes Queen Soraṭhī. |
| Sunrupa | The abandoned princess in the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Suvarna Malati | Sunrupa's name once restored to her royal status in one version of the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Suvarnarekha | Another version of Sunrupa's name once restored to her royal status in one version of the Soraṭhī dance-drama. |
| Syābās! | An exclamation signifying 'well played!' |
| Tāl | Rhythmic cycle. |
| Tamang | An ethnic group. |
| Ṭhado bhākā | A genre of jhyāure style song with a specifc poetic meter. |
| Ṭhakan (hānne) | A rhythmic cycle used to sacralize the performance space, and call the goddess Saraswati to possess those who are her mediums; also used to release the mediums from possession. |
| Ṭhego | A word, phrase, vocable, or set of vocables inserted into a line of a song to alter the poetic meter. |
| Ṭukkā | Chorus or type of verse of a song or poem. |
| Tyamko | Smallest drum in the pañchai bājā. A tiny kettledrum played with two sticks. |
| v.s. | Abbreviation for Vikram Sambat, the calendar used in Nepal. It is about fifty-seven years ahead of the Western calendar, with some variation as the first month of this calendar, Baisakh, falls in April–May. |

# List of Figures


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Uday Bikram Shah, Jyamrung Darbār in the 2000s. © Uday Bikram Shah. CC BY-NC-SA. | p. 43 |
| 2.2 | Subi Shah after retirement from the army at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY. | p. 49 |
| 2.3 | Subi Shah, his turntable and his records in his room in Kathmandu, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY. | p. 50 |
| 2.4 | Subi Shah greeting a crowd at the Rastriya Sabha Griha, 1990s. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY. | p. 51 |
| 2.5 | Subi Shah, genealogy of folk songs popular in the central part of the Gandaki area. Transcription © Anna Stirr. CC BY. | p. 53 |
| 3.1 | Some members of the Sankhu Sohraghar *garrā*: Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar (mārunī), Rita Thapa Magar (singer), Umesh Magar (mārunī), Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar (pursuṅge), Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale), Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale). © Anna Stirr. 10 December 2023. CC BY. | p. 81 |
| 3.2 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols for khyālī tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 92 |
| 3.3 | Subi Shah, genealogy of khyālī songs. Transcription © Anna Stirr. CC BY. | p. 94 |
| 3.4 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols for charitra tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 105 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3.5 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols for soraṭhī lāmī tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 118 |
| 3.6 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols for soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 119 |
| 3.7 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols for jhyāure tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 132 |
| 3.8 | Subi Shah, Khaijaḍī bols for chuḍkā. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 142 |
| 4.1 | Mādals as used in pāṅgdure dances, held by mādale dancers in Sankhu Sorhaghar, Dhading. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar (mādale), Sarki Thapa Magar (mādale), Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar (mārunī), Umesh Magar (mārunī), Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar (pursuṅge). © Anna Stirr. 7 January 2023. CC BY. | p. 148 |
| 4.2 | Subi Shah, drawing of mādal bodies. Left: made by drilling; right: made by carving. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 170 |
| 4.3 | Subi Shah, drawing of mādals being covered with skins. Left: Before removing the middle of the *mathurā*; right: after removing the middle of the *mathurā*. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. CC BY. | p. 171 |
| 4.4 | Subi Shah, drawing of mādals with kharī paste added. Left: male side (small side); right: female side (large side). Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 172 |
| 4.5 | Subi Shah, names of the different parts of the Mādal. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 172 |
| 4.6 | Subi Shah, picture of hands for left-handed playing: left hand fingers open. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 179 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.7 | Subi Shah, picture of hands for right-handed playing: right hand fingers open. Facsimile of Subi Shah's original by Anna Stirr. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 179 |
| 4.8 | Subi Shah, Mādal Exercises 1–15. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 184 |
| 4.9 | Subi Shah, Mādal bols used in jhyāure tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 191 |
| 4.10 | Traditional. Song in Jhyāure Tāl: Sālībhina Jāũ/Sister-In-Law, Brother-In-Law, Let's Go. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 202 |
| 4.11 | Subi Shah, sixteen-beat bol for beginning khyālī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 205 |
| 4.12 | Subi Shah, ordinary eight-beat bol for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 206 |
| 4.13 | Subi Shah, sixteen-beat bol for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 206 |
| 4.14 | Subi Shah, four-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 207 |
| 4.15 | Subi Shah, forty-eight and forty-beat bols for bringing the tāl around. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 208 |
| 4.16 | Subi Shah, forty-four and thirty-six-beat bols for ending or establishing the tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 210 |
| 4.17 | Traditional. Song in Khyālī Tāl: Nadī Wari Nadī Pari/Beds of Flowers. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 222 |
| 4.18 | Subi Shah, six-beat bol to start charitra tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 225 |
| 4.19 | Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 226 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.20 | Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 227 |
| 4.21 | Subi Shah, twelve-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 228 |
| 4.22 | Subi Shah, twelve-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 228 |
| 4.23 | Subi Shah, six-beat bols for playing in songs. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 229 |
| 4.24 | Subi Shah, Bols signaling dancers to crouch down, mixed with soraṭhī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 229 |
| 4.25 | Subi Shah, Bol to end the tāl, mixed with soraṭhī. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 230 |
| 4.26 | Subi Shah, Bol for establishing the tāl after the dancers crouch down. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 230 |
| 4.27 | Traditional. Song in Charitra Tāl: Tamu rakṣa gare saramāswatī/Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 254 |
| 4.28 | Subi Shah, taking charitra tāl into other tāls. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 256 |
| 4.29 | Subi Shah, Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 259 |
| 4.30 | Subi Shah, Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 260 |
| 4.31 | Subi Shah, fourteen-beat bol in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 261 |
| 4.32 | Subi Shah, twenty-four-beat beginning bols in Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 262 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.33 | Subi Shah, mixed bol for transitioning between Lāmī Tāl and Chhoṭī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 263 |
| 4.34 | Subi Shah, eight and four-beat ordinary chhoṭī tāl bols. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 263 |
| 4.35 | Subi Shah, twenty-four-beat chhoṭī tāl beginning bols. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 264 |
| 4.36 | Subi Shah, final cadential bol, mixed with Lāmī Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 265 |
| 4.37 | Traditional. Song in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl and Chhoṭī Tāl. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 280 |
| 4.38 | Subi Shah, bols in Garrā Bā̃dhne Tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 284 |
| 4.39 | Traditional. Garrā Bā̃dhne Gīt/Song for Binding the Troupe. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 290 |
| 4.40 | Subi Shah, Ṭhakan hānne bols Types 1 and 2. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 293 |
| 4.41 | Subi Shah, full iteration of thakan hānne tāl. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 294 |
| 5.1 | Anna Stirr, Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā performing at Jyamrung Darbar. © Anna Stirr. 29 June 2022. CC BY. | p. 309 |
| 5.2 | Subi Shah playing the bā̃surī. © Dhruva Shah. CC BY. | p. 316 |
| 5.3 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for five-hole tuning, with seventh hole shown for sahanāī players. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 317 |
| 5.4 | Subi Shah, genealogy of Nepali tunes. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 325 |
| 5.5 | Subi Shah, places of notes in Vedic Classical notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 342 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.6 | Subi Shah, places of notes in Bhatkhande notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 343 |
| 5.7 | Subi Shah, places of notes in Western Solfege notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 343 |
| 5.8 | Subi Shah, places of notes in Western 'Neumes' notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 344 |
| 5.9 | Subi Shah, places of notes according to Nepali modes. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 344 |
| 5.10 | Subi Shah places of notes in Nepali Tune notation. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 345 |
| 5.11 | Subi Shah, six-hole tuning (and all other tunings). © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 345 |
| 5.12 | Subi Shah, practice melodies in 'Nepali notation.' © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 346 |
| 5.13 | Subi Shah, placement of notes in low and high octaves. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 348 |
| 5.14 | Subi Shah, keyboard diagram showing tunings/ note groups as modes of a C-Major scale. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 349 |
| 5.15 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in six-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 351 |
| 5.16 | Traditional. 'Rām Sāilā' in Shah's Nepali notation. Arrangement. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 354 |
| 5.17 | Traditional. 'Ram Saila' in sargam notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 355 |
| 5.18 | Traditional. 'Ram Saila' in staff notation with sargam notation. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 355 |
| 5.19 | Traditional. 'I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water' in Shah's Nepali notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 359 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.20 | Traditional. 'I Won't Drink Machine-Pumped Water' in staff notation with sargam notation. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 360 |
| 5.21 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in five-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 361 |
| 5.22 | Traditional. Jhyāure Bhāka Song: *Jindagī Oilāyo*/ Life is Fading. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 364 |
| 5.23 | Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jalesī Pān Pāte Jhamke Bulākī*/Dangling Gold Nose Ring. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 367 |
| 5.24 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in four-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 368 |
| 5.25 | M. B. B. Shah. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *He Bir*/ Hey Brave One. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 372 |
| 5.26 | Traditional. Charitra Bhākā Song: *Najāu dājyu bideśa/*Older Brother, Don't Go Abroad. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 373 |
| 5.27 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in three-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 374 |
| 5.28 | Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Jānai lāgyo*/ Almost Gone. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 378 |
| 5.29 | Traditional. Auspicious Folk Song (Mangal): *Bhajamana Nārāyaṇa*/Reverence for Narayan. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 382 |
| 5.30 | Traditional. Soraṭhī (Part 1) Lāmī Tāl: *Manai bhayo virakta*/My Heart is Desolate. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 387 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.31 | Traditional. Soraṭhī (Part 2) Chhoṭī Tāl: *Manai bujhaī basideū*/Console Yourself. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 389 |
| 5.32 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in two-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 390 |
| 5.33 | Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Uḍī jāne rānī charī*/The Queen Bird Flies. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 393 |
| 5.34 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in one-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 394 |
| 5.35 | Traditional. Khyālī Bhākā Song: *Munāle Māilī*/ Sprout, Maili. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 397 |
| 5.36 | Subi Shah, flute fingering diagram for notes in open-hole tuning. © Subi Shah. CC BY. | p. 398 |
| 5.37 | Traditional. Jhyāure Song: *Pānī Paryo Gairīmā Tāl Paryo*/It Rained and a Lake Formed in the Hollow. Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 402 |
| 5.38 | Traditional. Jhyāure Song: *Kã̄ Gaera Ke Hune Chha Ra*/What Good Is It to Go Away? Arrangement © Subi Shah. Transcription © Mason Brown. CC BY. | p. 403 |

# List of Tables


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Mādal bols according to drum head. | p. 176 |
| 4.2 | Dance Steps and Counting for Jhyāure Tāl. (These step patterns apply to all bol patterns below.) | p. 188 |
| 4.3 | Dance Steps and Counting in Khyālī Tāl. | p. 204 |
| 4.4 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl. | p. 205 |
| 4.5 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl. | p. 206 |
| 4.6 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl. | p. 206 |
| 4.7 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl. | p. 207 |
| 4.8 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in khyālī tāl. | p. 209 |
| 4.9 | Dance steps and counting for charitra tāl. | p. 224 |
| 4.10 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl. | p. 225 |
| 4.11 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl. | p. 226 |
| 4.12 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl. | p. 228 |
| 4.13 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl. | p. 228 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4.14 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in charitra tāl. | p. 228 |
| 4.15 | Dance steps and counting for Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. | p. 258 |
| 4.16 | Dance steps and counting for Soraṭhī Chhoṭī Tāl. | p. 259 |
| 4.17 | Dance steps and counting for the below bols in Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl. | p. 261 |
| 4.18 | Dance Steps and Counting for one and four-beat ordinary chhoṭī tāl bols. | p. 263 |
| 4.19 | Dance Steps and Counting for twenty-four-beat chhoṭī tāl beginning bols. | p. 264 |
| 4.20 | Dance Steps and Counting for Garrā Bãdhne Tāl. | p. 283 |
| 4.21 | Ways of Counting ṭhakan hānne tāl. | p. 292 |

# List of Video Recordings

## Mādal Demonstrations for ‘Pāṅgdure (Mārunī) Folk Dances’



Mādal Demonstration for ‘Pāṅgdure:’ Khyālī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112703. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:50 minutes.



Mādal Demonstration for ‘Pāṅgdure:’ Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112704. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:07 minutes.



Mādal Demonstration for ‘Pāṅgdure:’ Soraṭhī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112705. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:09 minutes.



Mādal Demonstration for ‘Pāṅgdure:’ Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112706. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:14 minutes.



Khaijaḍī Demonstration for ‘Pāṅgdure:’ Chuḍkā Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112707. Ganesh Gurung, khaijaḍī. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:22 minutes.

# 2005 Interview with Subi Shah: Genres and their Structures

*(Videos provide subtitles for audio recordings)*



'Uṭha Lai Lai,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112805. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl Mādal Bols, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112806. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Khyālī – 'Kholā Pāri Jaũlā/We'll Go To The River,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112807. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Khyālī – 'Nadi Wari Nadi Pari/Beds of Flowers,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112807. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:01 minutes.



Khyālī – Mādal Bols, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112809. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Charitra Introduction and 'Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112810. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Charitra – 'Maranu Bhayo/I'm Dying,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112809. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Charitra – 'Dudhaiko Bālikā/Nursing Baby Girl,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112812. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Charitra Song – 'Kṛṣnajīko Pāumā/At Lord Krishna's Feet,' https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112813. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Types of Dances, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112814. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Jhyāure, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112814. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.



Jhyāure Bhākā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112814. Subi Shah, song and mādal. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA.

## Pitambar Sundas and Lal Bahadur Pariyar Singing



*Asāre Songs*, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112840. Pitambar Sundas and Lal Bahadur Pariyar, singers. Jyamrung. 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:26 minutes.

# Mādal Demonstrations for *Mādal*

*(These follow the notation provided by Subi Shah in Mādal)*



Introduction to Mādal Bols, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112708. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 6:22 minutes.



Mādal Practice, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112709. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 6:45 minutes.



Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112710. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 4:35 minutes



Khyāli Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112711. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 4:28 minutes.



Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112712. Raju Maharjan and Kamal Oli, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 7:35 minutes.



Taking Charitra Tāl Into Soraṭhī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112714. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 1:05 minutes.



Taking Charitra Tāl Into Khyālī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112714. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 00:55 minutes.



Taking Charitra Tāl Back Into Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112715. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 00:56 minutes.



Mādal Bols used in Soraṭhī Tāls, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112715. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 3:47 minutes.



Mādal Bols used in Garrā Bāndhne Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112717. Kamal Oli, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 1:11 minutes.



Mādal Bols used in Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112718. Raju Maharjan, mādal. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 3:00 minutes.

## Supplementary Mādal Demonstrations for *Mādal*: Sankhu Sohraghar

*(These are local stylings and exemplify alternatives to what Subi Shah notated)*



Soraṭhī Tāls, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112732. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:02 minutes.



Charitra Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112732. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:34 minutes.



Jhumari Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112733. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal, Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:15 minutes.



Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112735. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:08 minutes.



Garrā Bāndhne/Barnāune Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112736. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. Sankhu Sohraghar. 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:21 minutes.

# Supplementary Mādal Demonstrations for *Mādal*: Jyamrung

*(These are local stylings and exemplify alternatives to what Subi Shah notated)*



Jhyāure Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112748. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. 1:00 minutes.



Khyāli Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112749. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:52 minutes.



Soraṭhī Lāmī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112750. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:19 minutes.



Soraṭhī Chhotī Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112751. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:27 minutes.



Soraṭhī Tāl Rākhne Bol, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112752. Pitambar Sundas, mādal, Jyamrung. 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:22 minutes.

# Pāṅgdure Dance Performances and Pujā in Sankhu Sohraghar

*(These are local stylings and exemplify alternatives to what Subi Shah notated)*



Calling Saraswati to Dance: Saraswati Pujā, Mādal Tāls and Garra Bẫdhne Song for the Ceremony Preceding Pangdure Dances, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112724. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 17:42 minutes.



Ṭhakan Hānne Tāl, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112729. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal. 2023. Sankhu Sohraghar. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:39 minutes.



Charitra Dance 1, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112729. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 12:00 minutes.



Charitra Dance 2, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112726. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 12:54 minutes.



Jhumari (Khyāli) Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112727. Jalkanya Devi Yuva Club, Sankhu Sohraghar. Purna Bahadur Shrestha, singing guru. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādal guru. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Khadga Bahadur Ale Magar, pursuṅge. Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar and Sarki Thapa Magar, mādale. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 7 January 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:26 minutes.



Soraṭhī Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112728. Pitambar Sundas, dance guru. Ukha Bahadur Thapa Magar, pursuṅge. Dhan Bahadur Ale Magar and Umesh Magar, mārunī. Resham Bahadur Thapa Magar and Dol Bahadur Thapa Magar, mādale. Ram Bahadur Sundas, jhyālī. Rita Thapa Magar, Sita Thapa Magar, Anand Thapa Magar, Darsan Chhettri, Mohan Rana, and other club members, group vocals. 10 December 2023. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:06 minutes.

## Popular Dances Performed in Non-Pāṅgdure Styles

*(These well-known dances are performed by pāṅgdure troupes as well, but the troupes with which we worked were not performing them in their specific pāṅgdure styles)*



Jhyāure Dance at Jyamrung's Māghe Sakranti Melā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112731. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Villagers from Jyamrung and nearby areas in Dhading, dancers. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:34 minutes.



Kauḍā Chuḍkā Dance, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112730. Tamu Kalākār Sangh. Kathmandu, 2024. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 18:41 minutes.

## Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai/Naumatī Bājā: Rāgas and Tunes



Rāg Bhimal, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112757. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:58 minutes.



Rāg Byān Charī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112758. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:34 minutes.



Rāg Tauḍī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112758. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:32 minutes.



Rāg Rām Kālī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112760. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:53 minutes.



Rāg Sāraṅgā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112761. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:27 minutes.



Rāg Gaurī Sāraṅga, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112763. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:00 minutes.



Rāg Sanje, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112764. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:20 minutes.



Rāg Dagā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112765. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:13 minutes.



Rāg Belā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112766. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:13 minutes.



Rāg Kalyān, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112767. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:32 minutes.



Rāg Aruṇ Baruṇ, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112768. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:51 minutes.



Rāg Tauḍī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112759. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:32 minutes. (Same as Number 3).



Rāg Karkha, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112762. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.



Rāg for Asking for the Bride, plus Phāgu Tune, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112762. Sankha Devi Jyamrung Pañchai Bājā. Lal Bahadur Pariyar and Pitambar Sundas, sahanāi; Lal Bahadur Sundas, dholakī; Ram Bahadur Sundas, tyamko; Rupesh Katuwal, damahā; Rijan Sundas, jhyālī; Sijan Pariyar and Dhan Bahadur Pariyar, narsiṅgh. Jyamrung. 29 June 2022. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:34 minutes.

## Supplementary Sahanāī Videos Demonstrating Pañchai Bājā Rāgas and Tunes

*(Not all these tunes and rāgas appear in Shah's writings, but we include this entire set of videos at the performers' request, to expand the selection of pañchai bājā repertoire available for reference)*



Rāg Gaurī Sāraṅga, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112841. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:18 minutes.



Rāg Rām Kālī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112842. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:57 minutes.



Mangal Dhun (Bhaju Mana Narayana), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112843. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:02 minutes.



Rāg Byān Charī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112844. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:24 minutes.



Soraṭhī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112845. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:02 minutes.



Malaśrī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112846. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:38 minutes.



Bali Dine Bela/Tune for the Time of Sacrifice, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112847. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:16 minutes.



Dulahī Māgne Bhākā/Tune for Asking for the Bride, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112848. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:37 minutes.



Dulahī Anmāune Bhākā/Tune for Consoling the Bride, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112848, Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:02 minutes.



Junglemā Bajāune Bhākā/Tune Played in the Jungle, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112850. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:00 minutes.



Junglemā Kawaj Khelne/Tune for Marching in the Jungle, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112851. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:01 minutes.



Phāgu Tune, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112852. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:09 minutes.



Battī Selāuna Jāne Bhākā/Tune for Extinguishing the Lamps, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112853. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:29 minutes.



Battī Selāera Pharkīdā/Tune for Returning after Lamps are Extinguished, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112854. Duration: 1:11 minutes.



Sam (Sājh) ko Arati/Evening Arati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112855. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:02 minutes.



Rāg Tinsore/Three-Hole Rāg, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112856. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:40 minutes.



Six-Sore Bela Rāg/Rāg Bela in Six-Hole Tuning. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:28 minutes.



Ādha Rātko Rāg/Midnight Rāg, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112857. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:21 minutes.



Ādha Rātko Khyālī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112859. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:15 minutes.



Sāt-Sore Soraṭhī/Seven-Hole Soraṭhī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112860. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:16 minutes.



Purāno Rāgako Khyālī/Khyālī for an Old Rāga, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112861. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:04 minutes.



Malāi Lāījāũ Na/Take Me With You, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112862. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:08 minutes.



Mār Pārne Bela Bajāune/Tune Played while an Animal is Sacrificed, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112863. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 1:03 minutes.



Bajāū Muralī/Play The Flute, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112864. Nanda Bahadur Sundas, sahanāī. Jyamrung, 2024. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:57 minutes.

## 2005 Interview with Subi Shah: Conversations about Tunings, and Unmetered Flute Airs in Each Tuning

*(Videos provide subtitles for audio recordings. Recordings include tape recorder being played, with Subi Shah's commentary and flute playing. The original tapes have not been found)*



Introduction to Nepali Tunes Intro and Chha-Swore Dhun (Six-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112775. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 3:54 minutes.



Pāñch-Swore Dhun (Five-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112776. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 4:01 minutes.



Chār-Swore Dhun (Four-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112777. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 5:59 minutes.



Tīn-Swore Dhun (Three-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112778. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 2:00 minutes.



Duī-Swore Dhun (Two-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112779. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:53 minutes.



Ek-Swore Dhun (One-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112780. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:55 minutes.



Khulla-Swore Dhun (Open-Hole Tuning), https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112781. Subi Shah, muralī. In conversation with Anna Stirr, Rashil Palanchoke, and Rubin Shrestha. Kathmandu. 2005. © Anna Stirr. CC BY-NC-SA. Duration: 0:49 minutes.

# List of Audio Recordings

## Songs for *Mādal*

*(These audio recordings featuring madal and vocals reproduce the notated songs in Shah's book Mādal, with their intended purpose of mādal practice in mind)*



Jhyāure-Sālī Bhena Jāũ/Sister-In-Law, Brother-in-Law, Let's Go, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112719. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.



Khyāli-Nadī Wāri Nadī Pāri/Beds of Flowers, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112720. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.



Charitra-Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati/Please Protect Us, Mother Saraswati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112721. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.



Soraṭhī-Lāmī Tāl and Chhotī Tāl Songs, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112722. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.



Garrā Bā̃dhne Gīt/Song for Binding the Troupe—Sevai Hāmaro, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112723. Raju Maharjan, mādal; Sangam Gurung, Mohan Rana, Anna Stirr, and Rita Thapa Magar, vocals. Rubin Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, production. Kutumba Studios and Cowlee Studios, Kathmandu, 2025. © Lochan Rijal Productions. CC BY-NC-SA.

## Subi Shah's Full Demo Album *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās*



Track 1—Announcement, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112782. Subi Shah. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 2—Bhaju Mana Narāyana, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112783. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 3—Jhamke Bulakī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112784. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 4—Yo Pāpi Jarivanle, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112785. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 5—Jhyamkāulī Nānī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112786. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 6—Jindagī Oilāyo, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112787. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 7—Uṭha, Lai Lai, Basa, Lai Lai, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112788. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 8—Dhākā Ṭopī, Mai Mātrai Ho Ki, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112789. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 9—Baisalu Nānī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112790. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 10—Sālī Bhenā Jāũ, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112791. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 11—Sailī Mailī̧ https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112792. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 12—Tamu Raksha Gare Saraswati, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112793. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 13—Bhram Paryo Jhokum Ṭhulo, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112794. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 14—Khānna Ma Ta Kalaiko Pānī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112795. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 15—Jānai Lāgyo, Jānai Lāgyo, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112796. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 16—Himālīko Sailī Ra Mailī, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112797. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 17—Hai Kina Holā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112798. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 18—Dhānna Jovan Dhāneko, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112799. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 19—Āū Bhane Māyāko Gharmā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112800. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 20—Rāto Ghoḍā, Kyā Milyo Joḍā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112801. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 21—Sundarjī, Tapāile Gardā, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112802. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.



Track 22—Closing Words, https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112803. Subi Shah. *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās.* Kathmandu, East Meets West Music Box, 2005. © Subi Shah. CC BY-NC-SA.

More information about each of these tracks is available in the CD booklet for *Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās* at https://hdl.handle.net/10125/112804. The liner notes were written by Subi Shah and translated by Anna Stirr and Manjul Nepal. This album was recorded by Subi Shah in his home in Kathmandu using two cassette recorders. The audio was edited by Anna Stirr and released by Mangal Maharjan's company East Meets West Music Box in 2005, conceived as a demo release. The studio album that followed with Music Nepal in 2007 was *Subi Shahko Ekal Prayāsa*, which only contained eight tracks.[1] Thus, despite the unclear audio of the first album, we include it here as a record of Subi Shah's playing and as documentation of the tunes that were not re-recorded. The PDF of the CD booklet contains Shah's notes about each tune in Nepali and in English translation. These tracks and CD booklet appear here courtesy of the estate of Subi Shah, under a CC BY-NC-SA license.

## From Studio Album *Subi Shahko Ekal Prayāsa* (Music Nepal, 2007)



Track 6: Jhamke Bulākī (Instrumental), https://open.spotify.com/track/2jd1SVCowOnmqVABhqCTLA. Subi Shah, all instruments. *Subi Shahko Ekal Prayāsa*. Kathmandu, Music Nepal, 2007. © Music Nepal. All Rights Reserved.

1 Subi Shah, *Ekal Prayāsa*. Music Nepal (2007). For a commercial link to the full album see https://open.spotify.com/album/4on4lIQr6mjk8WgjjZweoa

# Indexes

## Index of Topics


*abhinaya* 79
*ādhunik gīt* 306, 324
*anibaddha* (unmetered tune) 337

*Baḍā Hākim* 44–46
*bāginā* 27
*Bāginā* (newspaper) 52
Bāisī and Chaubisī states 11
*baiṭhān bol* 105–106
Baldeng Gadhi (fort) 58–59, 62
Baldeng (kingdom) 12, 58–59, 62
Balihang, King of Baldeng 12, 58–59
Bandhu, Chuda Mani 25–26
*Basic Theory of Folk Dance* 1–3, 36–37, 75, 153
*bãsurī* 2, 301, 307, 313–316, 318, 320–326, 328, 336–338, 346–347, 351–352, 361, 367, 374, 390, 394, 398, 404
*bhajan chuḍkā* 137, 141, 143
*bhākā* (tune) 2, 36–37, 46, 76, 83, 87, 90, 94, 100–102, 107, 123–126, 128–129, 134–135, 140, 163, 187, 203–204, 210, 222, 257. *See also jhyāure bhākā*
*bhakti* 62, 283
*bhangīt, lawaj* 83
Bhatkhande notation 306–307, 326, 336–338, 343
Bhatkhande, Vishnu 17–18, 21, 302, 305–308, 314–315, 325–326, 338, 341
*bhāv* 79
Bhojpuri language 61–64, 161
Bhujel 7, 9
*bol* 3, 35–37, 48, 78–79, 82, 92–95, 99, 102, 105–107, 109, 118–121, 130, 132–133, 142–143, 145, 149–155, 166, 174–178, 180–182, 184–185, 187–188, 191, 193, 202, 205–210, 222–230, 254, 257–266, 280–281, 283–285, 291–294, 296–299, 308. *See also baiṭhān bol*
Brahmin 6–7, 9
British Gurkha regiments 192
Buddhism 6–7, 55–56, 61, 65–66, 155–157
Budhi Gandaki river 58

cadential pattern 93, 187, 222, 283
caste 4–7, 13, 18, 22–23, 44, 52, 64, 69, 71, 80, 82–83, 95, 106, 108, 135, 138, 146, 157–158, 165, 167–168, 179, 295–296, 310–311, 322, 330, 370, 404
certificates and diplomas (university) 404
*charan* (verse, *antarā*) 36–37, 85–87, 93, 95, 105, 107, 120–121, 125, 133, 153, 187, 192–193, 229
*charitra* 2, 16, 30, 38, 46–47, 50, 52, 55, 57, 60, 62, 74, 77–80, 82, 85, 95–96, 98–102, 105–107, 152–153, 166, 175, 223–226, 228, 230, 254, 256–257, 283–284
*chārya* dance 56, 328
Chhetri 7, 9, 71, 135, 383, 421
chorus. *See ṭukkā* (chorus, *sthāyi, mukhrā*)
*chuḍkā* 2, 39, 48, 55, 75–76, 78, 80, 82, 95, 135, 137–144
*chyābruṅg* 149
classical form 177, 281, 297
classical music 16, 22, 34, 50, 149–

150, 177, 298, 302–303, 319, 322, 326–329, 337–338, 347, 404
classical tune 324, 326, 330, 347
classicization 17–18, 20–21, 303–304
colonialism 1, 18, 22, 65, 303–305
cross-dressing 65–66, 68
cultural grey-out 17, 20

Damai 5, 7, 9, 69, 310, 322, 404
*ḍamaru* 157, 164, 166
*ḍamphu* 127, 165, 175, 178, 187, 296
Darbār 7–8, 10, 14–15, 43–44, 49–50, 69–71, 309
Darnal, Ram Sharan 27, 29, 146–148, 165, 322
Dasaĩ, Dasain 10, 14, 32, 143
*dauḍāhā* 11, 45
Delhi Sultanate 57, 310
democratic republic 7
Dhading Besi 6, 32, 38
Dhading District 44–45, 53, 55, 69, 283
*dhotī kachāḍ* 82
*dhun* (tune, tuning) 312, 314, 319, 323–325, 336–338
documentation 4, 16–17, 28–29, 31–32, 56, 59, 321
drum 2, 13, 16, 34–36, 76, 127, 145, 147–149, 151–152, 156–157, 162, 164–165, 167, 169, 174, 176, 178, 187, 298–299, 308, 394. *See also mādal* (drum)

'epistemic thing' 317
ethnicity 5, 67, 95, 106
ethnography 2, 28, 31

female impersonation 63–68
fingerings (flute and *sahanāī*) 314–315, 317, 320–321, 335, 351–352, 361, 368, 374, 390, 394, 398
folklore, *lok sāhitya* 4, 22–27, 59, 180
folk rules 47, 101, 187, 203, 230–231, 257, 259, 280, 285, 340, 367

Gandaki area 53
Gandaki river 58
*garrā bãdhne* 96, 153–155, 159–160, 166, 175, 186, 282–285, 290, 295
garrā (troupe) 39, 79–81, 96, 153–155, 159–160, 166, 175, 186, 282–285, 290, 295
gender 4–5, 65–69, 158. *See also* hijra, koti (third gender)
gestures 93, 106–107, 120–122, 133. *See also abhinaya*
Ghale 7, 9, 58
*ghãṭu* 76, 157, 225
*gīt* (song) 83, 95, 100, 102, 107, 109, 121, 133, 142–143, 306
*Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song* (*Nepālī Lokgītko Jhalak*) 1–3, 30, 37–38, 40–41, 53, 87, 211, 302, 309, 337
goddess 6, 13, 66, 74, 99, 139, 155–156, 158–162, 283, 290, 311, 327
goddess possession. *See* spirit and goddess possession
Gorkha 3, 6–11, 16, 44–47, 58, 61, 69, 76, 129, 143, 161, 327
Gurung 7, 9, 12, 14, 23, 61, 71, 76, 83, 129, 134, 143–144

hand position 79, 179. *See also mudrā*
Hanuman Dhoka Palace 14, 327
hijra, koti (third gender) 66
hillside meter (*pākhe chhanda*) 24, 124–125
Hinduism 6, 8, 13, 44, 57, 60–61, 65, 77, 100, 134, 155–156, 283, 304, 306, 310–311, 419

India 18, 21–22, 24, 35, 56, 62–66, 127, 146, 157, 298, 303–307, 326–327, 329, 404
Indrajatra 14, 46, 77, 108
*Introduction to Nepali Tunes* 1–2, 8, 30, 40–41, 101, 186, 301–302, 304, 307, 309, 312–314, 318, 321, 323, 351
Islam 9, 61, 65, 156

*jāgrām* 80
Jalkanya Devi 73–74, 79, 95, 108, 158, 161, 223, 257, 295, 383
Jalkanya Yuva Club 13
*jaltaraṅg* 148, 178
*jāmā* 82
*jhyāure* 2, 24, 36–37, 39, 46, 48, 50, 52, 55, 61, 75–78, 80, 82–83, 87, 95, 101, 122–126, 128–130, 132–134, 152–154, 163, 166, 175, 187–188, 191, 202, 204, 257, 299
*jhyāure bhākā* 2, 36–37, 87, 123–125, 128–129, 163, 187
jungle meter (*jaṅgalī chhanda*) 125–126
Jyamrung 3, 5–11, 13–16, 29, 31, 38–40, 42–44, 47–48, 50, 55–56, 58, 69–72, 74–76, 99, 102, 134, 145, 150–151, 153–155, 157, 159, 161, 168, 186, 203, 223, 282–283, 299, 301–302, 306, 309–311, 313–315, 320–322, 330–336, 339, 394

Kabuki 64
Kami 7, 9, 23, 83
Kandel, Ram Prasad 40, 146–147, 160–161, 165
*Karṇālī Lok Saṁskṛiti* 24–25
*kartāle* 82
Kathak 20, 315
Kathmandu 3, 10–11, 14–17, 19, 25–27, 35, 39–40, 46–50, 53, 57, 68–73, 77, 79, 86–89, 96–97, 99, 112, 126, 128, 130, 144, 146–147, 151, 154, 157, 161, 167–168, 174, 192–193, 210–211, 231, 266, 285, 299, 311, 327, 329, 336, 339, 351, 362, 369, 375, 395, 399
*khaĩjaḍī* 76, 135, 137–138, 141–143, 165, 187, 296
*kharī* 165, 167–174, 178, 180–181, 296
Khas Malla (Yatse kingdom) 11, 57, 60
*khyālī* 2, 36–37, 46, 48, 50, 52, 55, 60, 74–78, 80, 82–83, 85–87, 90, 92–95, 100, 119, 135, 140–141, 143, 153, 163, 166, 175, 202–207, 209–210, 222, 257, 259–260, 292, 299, 312, 336
*khyālī bhākā* 2, 36–37, 76, 83, 87, 90, 94, 135, 140, 163, 203–204, 210, 222, 257
Kirat 23, 58, 61
Krishna 12, 60, 62, 78, 83–84, 98, 135–136, 160, 223, 380
Kuchipudi 66
Kumal 7, 9, 13, 61, 83, 160–161
Kutumba 40

Lalit Kala Campus 298, 336
language, Nepali. *See* Nepali language
*lauṇḍā nāch* 66
*lawarpāṅge* 82
Liechty, Mark 19
literature 23–24, 26, 33
*Lok Bhākāmā Ekal Prayās* (album) 30, 39
*lok dohorī* 23, 299
*lok-laharī chuḍkā* 135
*lok wāṅmaya* 23, 27

*Mādal* (book) 1–3, 29, 36, 41, 51, 73, 78–79, 130, 145, 147, 149–150, 153–155, 157, 163, 165, 204–205
*mādal* (drum) 2–3, 16, 29, 32, 34–39, 41, 48, 50, 52, 69, 73–76, 78–80, 82, 86–87, 90, 93–97, 99, 101–102, 106–109, 112, 117–118, 120–121, 123, 126–128, 130, 133, 138, 140–141, 145–155, 159–160, 162–182, 186–188, 191–193, 202–203, 205, 210–211, 222–225, 230–231, 254–255, 257–258, 260, 266, 280, 282–285, 290–292, 294–299, 307, 313, 316, 383
*mādale* 46, 48, 58, 69, 79–82, 93–95, 99, 106–108, 118, 120–122, 132–133, 143, 148, 160, 223, 257, 281, 283, 285, 295–296, 383
*mādal taraṅg* 148

Magar 5–7, 9, 12–14, 23, 58, 72, 147
Magarat 57–59, 67
Maharjan, Mangal 29–30
Maharjan, Raju 90, 99, 102, 112, 118, 130, 151, 154, 180, 182, 193, 211, 225, 231, 254–255, 260, 266, 285, 292, 383
Malla era (Kathmandu Valley) 19
Maoist 7–8, 13, 70
*mārunī* 2, 11–13, 37, 46–48, 56–58, 60, 62–70, 73, 75, 78–82, 87, 93–95, 106–108, 120–122, 133, 143, 148, 202, 210, 222–223, 230, 257, 281–282, 295, 383
melody 2, 4, 16, 27, 35–37, 52, 61, 75, 83, 85, 87, 95–96, 100, 112, 123–125, 135, 137–138, 141, 160–161, 178, 192–193, 265, 281, 297, 301, 308, 310–312, 317–321, 324, 330, 337, 346, 369, 374, 390, 404
meter (*chhanda*) 2–3, 24, 26, 28, 37, 41, 56, 61–62, 77, 83, 85–87, 95, 98, 109, 123–126, 128–129, 133, 135, 137–138, 150, 185, 280–281
metered tune 312, 328, 354, 405
mode 21, 33, 134, 149, 301, 307–308, 312, 314–321, 325, 338, 341–342, 346–347, 349, 352, 354, 368
modernism 17–18, 33, 166, 304
*mudrā* 79
*mujure* 82
Mukhtiyar 327
multilingualism 22, 33–34
multimodality 34
*muralī* 2, 84, 136, 301, 313–315, 318, 320–326, 328, 336–338, 346–347, 351–352, 361–362, 367, 369, 374–375, 390–391, 394–395, 398–399, 404
Music Nepal 30–31, 40, 302, 321, 335
Myagdi (district) 151, 159

*nachari* 57
nationalism 2, 17, 21–22, 302–304, 326
Nātyaśāstra 21
*naubat* 310, 315
*Nāya:khĩ Bājā Sa:chĩ* 149
Nepal Army 10, 12, 15, 45, 306
Nepali language 4, 22–23, 26, 28, 33–34, 44, 61, 68, 158, 160, 204–205, 306
Nepal Television 29, 31, 38, 40
Newar 5–7, 9, 13, 24, 29, 44, 56, 69, 77, 147, 149, 174, 299, 394
Nilkantha Rural Municipality 32
notation. *See also* Bhatkhande notation
  cipher 34–35, 308, 339
  Nepali 18, 308, 340, 346
  *sargam* 4, 17–18, 28, 31, 34–36, 47, 149, 222, 306–308, 316, 326, 338, 341, 354
  time unit box system (TUBS) 35
*Nrityakalā* (*The Art of Dance*) 2, 29, 55
Nuwakot 3, 7–11, 44

Oli, Kamal 154, 188, 205, 225, 260, 284

Palpa 14, 58–59, 159, 161
Paluskar, Vishnu 17–18, 305–307, 326, 338
*pañchai bājā, naumati bājā* 2, 4–5, 8, 15–16, 29, 38, 40, 76, 134, 154, 299, 309–312, 314, 322, 328–332, 394
Panchayat 7, 18, 25, 306
*pāṅgdure* 1–2, 8, 11–15, 18, 21, 29, 31–32, 34, 36, 38–39, 43, 45, 47–48, 50–51, 55–83, 87, 90, 93–96, 105, 107–108, 123, 130, 133, 135, 140–141, 143–145, 147–149, 151–158, 160–163, 174, 191, 222, 260, 281, 283, 291
*pāṅgdure chuḍkā* 140
pan-Himalayan style 146
Pant, Kalibhakta 18, 25–26, 61, 322
Parbat (district) 57, 151, 159

patronage 7–9, 47, 58, 70–72, 148, 167, 305–306, 311, 327
performance 1–5, 7–9, 11–16, 19, 23–29, 31–32, 34–35, 37–39, 49, 56, 59–60, 62–76, 78, 80, 85, 96, 112, 135, 144, 150, 153–156, 158–161, 163, 167, 260, 283, 295, 298–299, 303–304, 307, 309–310, 318, 322, 327, 329–330, 336, 404
Pokharithok Bazaar 45
possession. *See* spirit and goddess possession
Prayag Sangeet Samhiti 298
preservation 6, 16–17, 68
prosody 2, 4, 26, 28, 34
*purkhyāulī nāch* 57
*pursuṅge* 46, 48, 58, 69, 75, 79–82, 87, 93–95, 106–108, 120–122, 133–134, 143, 148, 159, 223, 230, 257, 281, 295

Radio Nepal 14, 16, 30, 40, 48–49, 52, 146, 157, 301–302, 307
*rāg* 2, 4, 29, 32, 38, 40, 47, 186, 301–303, 308, 311–312, 314, 319–321, 324–326, 328–330, 332, 335–336, 347, 367–368, 394
Rajput 57, 60
Ramayana 62, 135
Ramleela 62
Rana (regime) 6–7, 11, 14, 19, 24, 327
Rāṣṭriya Nāchghar/Sanskritik Sansthan (Cultural Corporation) 24, 29, 38, 146
rhyme 34, 211
rhythm 2, 4–5, 14, 27, 34–35, 37, 46, 55, 78–79, 83, 86–87, 141, 145–146, 149, 151, 153, 155, 174, 185, 258, 281, 298, 308, 324, 326, 339
ritual 6–12, 14, 23, 32, 56, 63, 71, 74, 77, 96, 153, 155–160, 162, 169, 186, 299, 309, 311–312
role types 63, 79
rolling pattern 79, 93, 154, 210, 222, 254
Royal Nepal Academy, Nepal Academy 16, 25

Sahajiya 65
*sahanāī* 2, 38, 301, 308, 310–318, 320–324, 326, 328–329, 331–334, 336–338, 346–347, 351–352, 361, 367, 374, 390, 394, 398, 404
Śakta 6, 66, 156–157
*sangīt* 21, 83, 163
Sankha Devi 6, 9, 134, 309, 311, 330–336
Sankhu Sohraghar 6–7, 13, 32, 38
Saraswati 66, 73, 78–79, 96, 100, 153, 155, 157–162, 186, 231–232, 254, 283, 285, 290–291, 294–295, 327
*sargam* notation. *See* notation: *sargam*
*śāstras* 20–21
*śāstriya* 20–21
*sāt mula* (seven ill omens) 85, 110
*selo* 203, 297, 299
Shah, Chandra Bikram 8, 10, 14, 44, 70
Shah, Druva 10, 16, 29, 39, 49–51, 69–70, 316
Shah (dynasty) 4, 8–11, 69–71, 156, 327
Shah, Nara Bhupal 8
Shah, Naru 10
Shah, Pratap Singh 10
Shah, Prithvi Narayan 9–10, 12, 58, 65, 327
Shah, Ram 9, 58
Shah, Sharad Chandra 19, 299
simple language movement 32
*siṅgāru* 56–57, 60, 62–63, 65, 67–68
Sinja kingdom (Khasa kingdom) 57, 59, 61
sitar 48, 315–316
Śiva, Shiva 42, 77, 164–166, 285
song. *See gīt* (song)
*soraṭhī chhoṭī tāl* 119, 259–260, 281, 350

*soraṭhī* dance 3, 16, 21, 60, 62, 75, 108, 117, 120, 122, 258, 265, 281, 302, 309
*soraṭhī lāmī tāl* 106, 109, 112, 118, 258–259, 261, 266, 280–282, 350
*soraṭhī* story 16, 62, 64, 72, 74, 78, 83, 85
*sor* (tonic) 308, 312, 315–317, 320–321, 325, 336–339, 341, 354, 361, 367, 393, 398, 404
spirit and goddess possession 66, 80, 155, 157–159, 162, 295, 327
*Subi Shahko Ekal Prayāsa* (album) 30, 39
*sugam sangīt* 163. *See also ādhunik gīt*
Sundas, Pitambar 38, 69, 74–75, 102, 122, 134, 154, 203, 223, 281–282, 330–336, 383
Sundas, Ram Bahadur 5, 39–40, 75, 122, 134, 281, 311, 314, 321, 330–336, 383
*swar* (note) 324–325, 336

*tāl* 16, 32, 38, 48, 56, 75, 79, 102, 106, 109, 117–119, 130, 145–146, 150–151, 153–154, 163, 166, 175–176, 182, 185–187, 203–204, 223, 254, 256, 258, 260, 290–291, 296–299, 312, 320–321, 326, 329–330, 335, 394, 404
  bringing the *tāl* around 79, 187, 208
*tāl kāṭne* 79, 153–154
*tāl phirāune* 79, 93, 153, 187
Tamang 7, 9, 23, 45, 58, 83, 299
Tantrism 6, 12, 14, 65–66, 156
*ṭhāḍo bhākā* meter 46, 126–127
*ṭhakan hānne* (tāl) 78–79, 153, 155, 162, 175, 186–187, 283, 290–294
Thakuri 4, 6–7, 69, 322
Thapa Magar, Resham Bahadur 79, 81, 95, 108, 122, 154, 159, 162, 203, 223, 257, 281–282, 291, 294–295, 383
Thapa Magar, Rita 5, 32, 38–39, 72–73, 79, 81, 95, 99, 108, 112, 122, 211, 223, 231, 257, 266, 281, 285, 295, 383
Thapa, Mathbar Singh 327
*ṭhāṭ* 314–315, 319, 325, 337–338
time unit box system (TUBS). *See* notation: time unit box system (TUBS)
tonic. *See sor* (tonic)
treatise 17, 20–21, 78, 303–304, 325
*ṭukkā* (chorus, *sthāyi, mukhrā*) 36–37, 85–87, 93, 95, 105, 107, 109, 120–122, 133, 142–143, 153, 192–193, 229
tuning 148, 178–179, 301, 308, 312, 314, 316–317, 319, 324–325, 330–335, 337–338, 341–342, 345, 349, 351–352, 361, 364–365, 367–368, 374–376, 390–394, 398, 404

UNESCO 26, 30, 40
unmetered tune 40, 302, 308, 312, 328, 337, 352, 354, 362, 369, 374–375, 391, 395, 399, 404–405. *See also anibaddha* (unmetered tune)

Vaishnava 62, 65–66, 283
vernacular language 4, 33–34
von Fürer Haimendorf, Christof 11

women 18, 39, 56–57, 61, 63–66, 68–69, 73–74, 78, 80–81, 83, 87, 94, 100, 110, 123, 129, 134, 167, 193

# Index of Songs by First Lines

*Adhi kholā bhaṅgālīmā māchhā mārnu bhurā duwālī pharkāī*, At the fork of the Adhi river, fish for minnows by diverting the stream 127

*Aĩseluko jhāṅmuni kati chiso pānī*, Below a stand of raspberries, what cool water! 86

*Ākāsaibhari naulākhe tārā ek tārā jūnsita*, Nine hundred thousand stars in the sky, one star next to the moon 101

*Alachhilāī balachhī ta nāmardalāī dwālī*, A hook for the lazy and a trap for the unmasculine 86

*Alkāṭāra siũdiko bāra, māitī ghara nabasne ko chha ra*, A cactus fence in Alkatar, who does not stay in their natal home? 123

*Asāre māsko dabdabe hilo chhunalāī ghin lāgyo*, The wet, sticky mud in the month of Asar is disgusting to touch 101

*Āū āū gopenī saṅgai jānchhu ma pani*, Come, come, milkmaids, I'll come along too 100

*Āūmā āū didī ra bainī*, Come, come, sisters 99

*Baĩsālu nānī laha laha timro jovan*, Youthful girl, *laha laha*, your youthful energy 88, 350

*Bajyo mādal dhīn tāṅg tāṅg dhīn dhīnā*, The mādal plays dhīn tāṅg tāṅg dhīn dhīnā 175

*Bāsai basera yo piratī nalāī ta jānna gharaimā*, Taking shelter, I won't go home until you agree to love me 129

*Bhajumana Nārāyaṇa Raghuvira Govindam*, Hymn to Narayana, Raghuvira Govindam 350

*Bhalai samāchār li āẽ*, I come bringing good news 114, 115

*Bhancha re mālurai sānumāyā lām ki nalām*, They say, mālurai, should we have a little love, or not? 129

*Bhijyo māyā jāl*, The net of love is drenched 138

*Chārai kāla bhaesamma*, By the fourth stage of life 114

*Charī bharara charī bharara laijāũlā kānchīlāi relmā sarara*, As a bird flies bharara, as a bird flies bharara, I'll take you away, Kanchhi, on the train, sarara 128

*Chaudha barisa banibāsa kelle po pāryo*, What caused Ram, Sita, and Lakshman 84

*Chautārīko chheu*, Beside the resting place 140

*Chham chham bālikā kahã̃ gayo*, The lively baby girl, where did she go? 84

*Ḍamphu mā re bajdā bajyo himī ḍimī gardai mādalu jhyāntunā*, When the ḍamphu is played, it resounds playing himi dimi, the mādal resounds jhyāntunā 126

*Ḍamphumāre bajyo bajyo tyai ta dimī dimī*, When struck, the ḍamphu plays dimi dimi 175

*Deśai bhari jyotiṣīko mana lobhāī*, Manipulating the country's astrologers through their greed 84

*Ḍhalkīmā jāne sānnānī bolāũdā ni nabolne*, Little girl, running away, not answering when called 140

*Dhanna jovan dhāneko maile, rojī keṭā pāũlā ki bhanera*, With great difficulty, I'm saving my youth, so I might get the boy I

choose 123
*Dhīnādhī nādhīnā dhīn tāng tāṅg tālīle*, With the beat of dhīnādhī nādhīnā dhīn tāṅg tāṅg 175
*Dhīn dhīnā mādal kã̃ bajyo kosī kinarmā*, Dhīn dhīnā, the mādal plays—where? On the riverbank 175
*Dhīn tāṅg dhīn tāṅg mādaluko kati mīṭho bolī*, Dhīn tāṅg dhīn tāṅg, what sweet speech the mādal makes 175
*Dhurī māthi lāgnelāgne tyasai dhwāso bhwāso majherīmā lāgne leu*, Soot covers the roof-tree, and green algae covers the ground where the rain falls from the eaves 127

*Ekai nāhĩ̃ dubai nāhĩ̃*, We'll go and search for a bride 113

*Gairābārī ṭãkī ra koirālo, samjhyo mayā ãnsuko wairālo*, In the field down in the hollow, tãkī and koirālo flowers grow, remembering love, a flood of tears 124
*Ghumī ghumī sarovara*, Around and around the lake 115
*Gokulmā kṛiṣṇale dāĩ hālī khele*, In Gokul, Krishna played a game of threshing 136
*Guḍu mā re guḍu guḍu champaikalī hukkā jhirai hāli kholana*, The champaikalī hookah makes a gurgling sound, stir it with a pointed stick 127

*Hāmlāī lāne bhae*, If you want to take me 139
*Hãsī lāko more piratī*, We were smiling when we fell in love 97
*Hātai ṭhekiyā kāhã̃ jānchhau golenī*, Where are you going with a yogurt jar in your hands, round girl? 98
*Hāta kāṭyo barai pālise churāle*, A hand was cut, *barai*, with a polished bangle 129
*He Bir Hīda Aghi Sarī*, Hey brave one, walk on 350
*Himaichulī pallo paṭṭi surke gayo pairo*, On the other side of the Himalayan peaks, there is a long and narrow landslide 124
*Himai ra chulī tyai pallā paṭṭi, bhoṭ māthi paryo chīn*, On the other side of snowy mountain peaks, up from Tibet is China 89
*Himai ra chulī, tyo pallopaṭṭi, bāgh māryo ḍhuṅgāle*, On the other side of the mountain peaks, a tiger was killed by a rock 125
*Ho bāra varisako somabāre aũnsī*, Oh, on this once-in-twelve-years Monday new moon 99
*Ho dūdhaiko bālikālāī*, Oh, this nursing child 97

*Ĩṭako gāro jhiṅgaṭī chhāno*, A wall of bricks and a roof of tiles 85

*Jalesī pānpāte jhamke bulākī lāũchhyau ki sunaiko?* Will you wear this dangling gold nose ring, with its intricate points like paan leaves? 350, 365
*Jamunāko tīramā*, On the banks of the Jamuna 137
*Jamunāko tir yahã̃ niramohī āī*, To the banks of the Jamuna, the heartless one came 83
*Jānai lāgyo jānai lāgyo kaṭhai*, It's almost gone, it's almost gone, poor thing 89, 350, 376
*Jhamkaulī nānī jhamkaulī*, You'll sparkle, girl, you'll sparkle 88
*Jindagī oilāyo bijulā din kāṭaũ kasarī?* Life is fading, Bijula, how will we spend our days? 128, 350

*Kã̃ gaera ke hune chha ra*, What

Good is it to Go Away? 350, 402, 403
*Kahã̃ jānchhau golenī*, Where are you going, round one 137
*Kekaīko khelale ramajilāī banabāsa*, Kaikeyi's games led Lord Ram to live in the forest 98
*Khānnã̃ ma ta kalaiko pānī*, I won't drink machine-pumped water 350, 356
*Kholā khālī jāũlā māchhā mārī āũlā*, We'll go to the river and come back with some fish 85
*Kopilā phūla thāmera basne kalilo munāle*, A tender sprout holds a budding flower 396

*Mādale ho sakhe, mādale ho sakhe*, Oh, mādal playing friends, oh, mādal playing friends! 160, 285
*Mādale ho sakhe, tero maya sama rasa*, Oh, mādal playing friends, may your love remain 99
*Manai bhaigayo dubidhā*, My heart is in a dilemma 117
*Manai bhayo virakta*, My heart is desolate 113, 266, 383, 387
*Manai bujhāī basideū*, Console yourself 266
*Manai kholī bola sujana*, Speak open heartedly, Sujan 114
*Manai merī santoṣa*, My heart is content 116
*Maranu bhayo bālai maranu bhayo*, I'm dying, child, I'm dying 96
*Marsyāṅdīko gairī kheta ghumāī ghumāī kulo*, By the Marsyangdi River, canals surround the rice paddy 88
*Māthi devī thāna*, The goddess's shrine is up above 139
*Māyālāī chinera*, Recognizing you, my love 140

*Nadīwāri nadīpāri kusumako ghārī*, Beds of flowers on both sides of the river 210
*Najāū dājyū bideśa*, Older brother, don't go abroad 350, 372
*Nautunāko bajāra lāure āe kaiyaũ hajāra*, In Nautuna Bazaar, Gurkha soldiers have arrived by the thousands 129

*Pāni paryo gāũ gharmā kuiro tala jharyo himālai ḍhākera*, It rained in the village, the fog descended and covered the mountains 127
*Pānī paryo relīmai gairīmā tāl paryo*, It rained, *relimai*, a lake formed in the hollow 129, 350, 400, 402
*Pānī salala jovan bhaijāne belaimā sāĩlī relaimā*, Flowing like water, salala, in the prime of my youth, Saili, away on the rails 128
*Phūlai ṭipī chadhāū, kṛiṣṇajyūko pāumā*, Pick flowers and offer them at Lord Krishna's feet 98
*Phūlko thuṅgā kyā mīṭho bāsanā, dantabirī kholerai hãsana*, Bouquet of flowers, what a sweet fragrance, smile and show all your teeth 124
*Pokharāko bajāraimā lāhā chha ki chhaina?* Is there sealing-wax to be found in Pokhara bazaar or not? 124

*Rāmle bajā ho ki śyāmle bajāko*, Was it Ram playing or was it Shyam playing 84
*Rām sāĩlā bāṭaimuni bāṭaimāthi jhapke titepātī*, Ram Saila, below the road and above the road, bowing wormwood stalks 101, 350
*Rāto cholo sārī*, Red blouse and sari 140

*Sãchchai bāta bhanideū*, Tell me

truly 116
*Sālghārī majurlāī*, Peacock in the sal grove 139
*Sālghārīmā sālko pāta belghārīmā bela*, Sāl leaves in the the sāl grove; in the bel grove, bel 124
*Sālībhinā jāũ saṅgaisaṅgai sisāghāṭa tarera lāhura*, Let's go, sister-in-law and brother-in-law together, crossing Sisaghat to Lahore 192
*Samjhanā rahyo kaṭhaibarī māitī gharaiko*, Poignant memories of my natal home remain 136
*Sānūmā sānū kusume rumāl dhobīle nachhune*, Smaller than small, silk handkerchief, that the washerman won't touch 126
*Saramāswatī māīlāī phūla pāti chaḍhāī*, Offering flowers and leaves to Mother Saraswati 100
*Śirmā lāuni bindulī tirthaimā chhoḍiyo*, The sindoor I wear on my head was left on the bank of the holy river 100
*Siru ra pāte khukurī mero hātkāṭe bijāune*, My long and slender khukurī can cut and pierce one's hand 125
*Sundarījī tapāīle garda*, Beautiful one, because of you 88
*Suvarnaiko gharamā sunai buṭṭe jhyālamā*, In a golden house, in its gold-embellished windows 100

*Tāmāko ghailo nauraṅge dãphe pittālko ghapanī*, A copper pitcher, nine-colored pheasant, a brass lid 101
*Tamu rakṣa gare saramāswatī*, Please protect us, Mother Saraswati 231, 254
*Timī kãko kãko*, You're from where again 139
*Titarīko māsu karuwāko tel*, Partridge meat, a pitcherful of oil 86

*Uṭha lai lai basa lai lai*, Get up, *lai lai*, stay there, *lai lai* 87

*Vindrā banmā kṛiṣṇale muralī bajāe*, In Vrindavan, Krishna played the flute 136

# About the Team

Alessandra Tosi was the managing editor for this book.

Adèle Kreager proof-read this manuscript and compiled the index.

Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal designed the cover. The cover was produced in InDesign using the Fontin font.

Annie Hine typeset the book in InDesign. The font is Noto Serif.

Jeremy Bowman produced the PDF, paperback, and hardback editions and created the EPUB.

The conversion to the HTML edition was performed with epublius, an open-source software which is freely available on our GitHub page at https://github.com/OpenBookPublishers

Lucy Barnes was in charge of marketing.

This book was peer-reviewed by two anonymous referees. Experts in their field, these readers give their time freely to help ensure the academic rigour of our books. We are grateful for their generous and invaluable contributions.

# This book need not end here...

## Share

All our books — including the one you have just read — are free to access online so that students, researchers and members of the public who can't afford a printed edition will have access to the same ideas. This title will be accessed online by hundreds of readers each month across the globe: why not share the link so that someone you know is one of them?

This book and additional content is available at
https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0246

## Donate

Open Book Publishers is an award-winning, scholar-led, not-for-profit press making knowledge freely available one book at a time. We don't charge authors to publish with us: instead, our work is supported by our library members and by donations from people who believe that research shouldn't be locked behind paywalls.

Join the effort to free knowledge by supporting us at
https://www.openbookpublishers.com/support-us

## We invite you to connect with us on our socials!



BLUESKY
@openbookpublish
.bsky.social



MASTODON
@OpenBookPublish
@hcommons.social



LINKEDIN
open-book-publishers



INSTAGRAM
openbookpublishers_

## Read more at the Open Book Publishers Blog

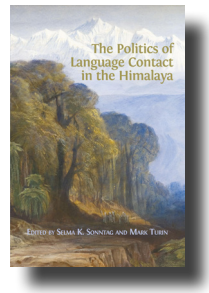
https://blogs.openbookpublishers.com

# You may also be interested in:

## The Politics of Language Contact in the Himalaya

*Edited by Selma K. Sonntag and Mark Turin*

https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0169

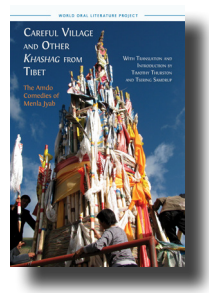



## Careful Village and Other 'Khashag' from Tibet

### The Amdo Comedies of Menla Jyab

*Menla Jyab; translated and edited by Timothy Thurston and Tsering Samdrup*

https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0452

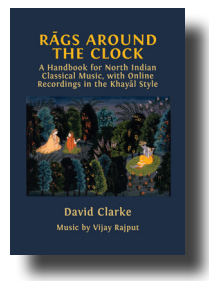



## Rāgs Around the Clock

### A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style

*David Clarke; music edited by Vijay Rajput*

https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0313



# MUSIC AND DANCES FROM CENTRAL NEPAL

## The Works of Subi Shah

### VOLUME 1

EDITED BY ANNA MARIE STIRR, MASON BROWN, HIKMAT KHADKA, AND LOCHAN RIJAL

In this book, performer, educator, and writer Subi Shah presents an essential commentary and analysis of Himalayan folk music and performance. Having documented this musical tradition since the 1960s, Shah has created in-depth analyses of song, dance, music, poetry, and drama within their local and spiritual contexts. Shah's detailed contribution to this field is invaluable reading for students, scholars, and musicians alike.

*Music and Dances from Central Nepal* is the first English translation of Shah's works. This collection includes three published works—*Madal*, 'Pangdure (Maruni) Folk Dances', and *Glimpses of Nepali Folk Song*—and three unpublished manuscripts—*Introduction to Nepali Tunes*, *Sorati*, and *Basic Theory of Folk Dance.*

This book stays true to Shah's voice and style, equipping the reader with the translated text, and tools such as audio and video examples, musical scores, and glossaries, which enrich our understanding of Himalayan performance.

In keeping with Shah's intentions to make his work available to all, and to keep these traditions of Himalayan folk music and performance alive, these highly accessible translations will be a valuable resource for a larger readership to explore this field. In doing so, this book makes an effort to decolonise ethnomusicology through the promotion of a Nepali artist's theories and analysis within a Himalayan tradition.

This is the author-approved edition of this Open Access title. As with all Open Book publications, this entire book is available to download for free on the publisher's website. Printed and digital editions, together with supplementary digital material, can also be found at http://www.openbookpublishers.com.

*Cover image: Dancers from the Jalkanya Yuva Club in Sankhu Sohraghar, Dhading, Nepal, performing Charitra dance (2023). Photo by Anna Marie Stirr, all rights reserved. Cover design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal*

