

Folk Music of India (Orissa)



(LAS 7183)

FOLK MUSIC OF INDIA (ORISSA)

Orissa is a particularly intriguing region of India. Here the Aryan culture of North India meets that of the Dravidian South. There are a number of aboriginal tribes who preserve much of their original way of life, particularly in the highland interior. However, these tribes have, in many instances, been influenced by each other as well as by the larger Aryan and Dravidian groups. Many of these aboriginal communities have also been influenced by Christian missionaries. Three major linguistic groups, Aryan, Dravidian and Munda, are found in this area. The main language is Oriya, and Aryan language closely related to Bengali. The aboriginal tribes, however, speak languages either of the Dravidian or Munda groups, although the influence of Oriya is now considerable.

This recording includes representative songs of various tribes and castes in Orissa, reflecting the diversity of language and variety of music to be found in this region.

This record is the result of a survey of the music of Orissa made in 1963-4 during a period of Overseas Research Leave granted by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The recordings were made in collaboration with Drs. Lamsweerde of The Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam.

Paraja Tribe. Most of the Parja songs are in a colloquial Oriya although their native language is a dialect of the Dravidian Gondi. (Recorded at Sano Chandri village, Korpaput district, Orissa.)

NOTES ON TRACKS:

1) Salutation Song. (2:28)

Greetings are offered to the Hindu goddess Lakshmi and Sita. The singers are accompanied by five one-stringed, long-necked, plucked lutes (toila or dudunga).

2) Courtship Song. (2:46)

Men and women alternate in singing: the men beg the women not to leave them, but the women are determined to go home, saying they will meet, if necessary, in the “other” world. Toila also accompany this song.

3) Love Song. (3:17)

Women sing in reply to wedding proposals, and present the conditions of acceptance. Konda Paraja Tribe. This group lives just over the border from Orissa, in Andhra Pradesh. Their language is mainly Oriya. (Recorded in Araku Valley.)

4) Narrative Song. (3:18)

This concerns the tribe's first contact with the British and gives their impressions. The Instruments are again the toila. Pano Caste. This music is made in a community of low-caste Hindu farmers and professional musicians. (recorded at Ganeswarpur, Puri district.)

5) Festival Music. (2:59)

This is performed at the Spring festival of Holi. The instruments are: two oboe-like instruments with finger holes (Orissi mohori), two wooden frame drums (changu) beaten with two sticks, one of cane and the other of wood; two clay kettledrums (nagara) beaten with two knobbed sticks.

6) Flute with Drum Accompaniment. (2:27)

The flute is of the recorder type with six finger holes (boinsi, bansuri) and the drum (dhol, dholak) is two-ended and slightly barrel-shaped.

7) Twin Conch-shell Solo. (5:32)

Two conches (shankh; turbinella pyrum, Linn.) are played simultaneously. The natural pitch of the two is a semitone apart, but by breath control the player alters their pitch slightly and thus varies the beat frequency. (The performer is Antarjyami Muni of the Mali - gardener - caste; the recording was made in Bhuvaneshwar.) Saora Tribe. This large tribe, of the Munda language group, is spread throughout Orissa. Those who live in the plains have assimilated Hindu culture, though in mountain regions the tribesmen have retained much of their own individuality, despite Christian missionary influences. (Recorded in Kutang, Ganjam district.)

8) Wedding Tune. (1:24)

This is played on a two-stringed stick zither (jantarungrai), then on a two-stringed fiddle (gogonjerenrai), and finally by both instruments.

9) Wedding Song. (1:19)

This song offers consolation to the bride on leaving her family. The instrument is a two-stringed fiddle (renai), played by a male member of the tribe.

10) Housework Song. (1:05)

This describes the chores of daily life. The instruments are the Jantarungrai and gogonjerenrai.

11) Saora Christian Song. (1:37)

This is sung here during a procession returning from church. The text, in the Saora language, is by a missionary. The instruments are a barrel-shaped, two-ended drum (mridanga) and two sets of cymbals (tenar jap and turjupi).

12) Domestic Song. (1:31)

Recorded at Guma Village, Ganjam district. Sung by a woman of the Paika (soldier) caste while pounding rice. It deals with a domestic disagreement during which man and wife insult each other.

13) Dance Drama. (1:10)

Called in Oriya language “Sabhavati Pura Natak,” the drama concerns Shyam Kumar, the son of Krishna, his infatuation with Sabhavati, her abduction, and the ensuing battle between Shyam Kumar and Sabhavati's father, Raja Gandharbi, who is finally defeated. The music begins with a flute passage signifying Shyam Kumar's possession of Sabhavati; in the song following, the news is brought to her father. The instruments; small side-blown bamboo flute (bansi); barrel-shaped, two-ended drum (mandiala, mandal), beaten with the hands; one pair of small cymbals (tal and ginni). (Performers of are the Valmiki Caste, agriculturists and laborers, at Araku village in Andhra Pradesh.)

Bonda Tribe. This small, isolated tribe lives in the Bonda Hills, generally unaffected by surrounding cultures; their language is of the Munda group. Their songs are often improvised and impromptu. (Recorded near Govindapalli, Koraput district.)

14) Greeting Song (2:31)

This was improvised to welcome the recording party; it also expresses an interest in material gain for performing. The instrument used is an open clay pot, the neck surmounted by a hoop of rings.

15) Harvest Festival (Pausa Parva) Song (2:49) AND 16 (1:23)

The text, based on words such as “relo, relo,” is largely meaningless but is thought to bring good fortune for the harvest.

17) Wedding Song (2:43)

This is sung by the women of the groom's family who are delighted to welcome the bride

because she will help with the domestic chores. The instrument is the open clay pot.

18) Dance Music. (2:35)

This music accompanies the Dhimsa dance, a line dance performed by men and women of several tribes in Orissa. The instruments are: oboe-type with finger holes (mohorĪ); clay kettledrum beaten with two leather straps (tamuk; two-handed cylindrical drum (dhol), one side played with one hand, the other with a stick; and a small clay kettledrum beaten with two cane sticks (khordĪ). (The performers are professional musicians of the Dom Caste, at Sunabeda, Koraput district.

NOTES WRITTEN BY N.A. JAIRAZBHOY

TRACKS AND TIMES:

- 1) Salutation Song. 2:28
- 2) Courtship Song. 2:46
- 3) Love Song. 3:17
- 4) Narrative Song. 3:18
- 5) Festival Music. 2:59
- 6) Flute with Drum Accompaniment. 2:27
- 7) Twin Conch-shell Solo. 5:32
- 8) Wedding Tune. 1:24
- 9) Wedding Song. 1:19
- 10) Housework Song. 1:05
- 11) Saora Christian Song 1:37
- 12) Domestic Song 1:31
- 13) Dance Drama. 1:10
- 14) Greeting Song. 2:31
- 15) Harvest Festival 2:49
- 16) Harvest Festival 1:23
- 17) Wedding Song 2:43
- 18) Dance Music 2:35



THE LYRICHORD ARCHIVE SERIES

PO Box 1977 Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10011 Ph: 212 404 8290 Fax: 212 404 8291
email: nick@lyrichord.com Web: www.lyrichord.com

© and (P) Lyrichord Discs Inc. These texts (including images) are published under copyright by Lyrichord Discs Inc. All rights are reserved.
The texts, and the music associated, with them, may only be republished, duplicated or sold, with written permission from Lyrichord Discs Inc.