MUSIC ACCULTURATION IN NEPAL

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INTRODUCTION

The rich musical culture of the Newars of Kathmandu and its adjacent valley is little known outside of Nepal itself (see Hedrick et al. 1973).[1] In the following pages we offer a description of this music. Our interest is theoretical as well as descriptive, however.[2] Even in Nepal, with its modes of living reminiscent of the Middle Ages, culture change is under way. Musically, as well as in other ways, Newars and their neighbors respond to influences from India and the West. The situation is most suitable, then, for the testing of a hypothesis having to do with the extent to which the fate of traditional forms of music in a preindustrial society is linked with what happens to the institutions that traditionally support music.

People do not sing or play music simply because they feel so inclined. Whether they sing songs or beat drums, and what they sing or play, is shaped by context. It is patterned. This observation holds true for any people, although the definitions of context and the nature of music vary greatly from one society to another. In the United States, we do not normally sing Christmas carols in Easter parades, croon love songs in churches, or hum lullabies in footbal stadiums, but we may whistle catchy tunes while walking down streets.

The regularity of this association between music and context has analytical implications in the study of culture change. In Nepal as we recorded music, it formed the basis for a working hypothesis: _The extent to which a genre of music survives or declines will depend significantly upon the viability of the institution(s) to which it is attached_. We expected, in other words, to find traditional music intact if the institutions were intact, but in decline if the institutions were in decline. Although apparently almost a truism, the hypothesis is potentially useful in our efforts to understand culture change situations in other parts of the world, as well as in our own society. As will be demonstrated below, the hypothesis was disproved. Its inadequacy is instructive: apparent truisms must be carefully examined if they are to serve as accurate guides rather than potentially misleading assumptions.

To present our findings in what follows, each of the various musical contexts will be described, the order of presentation corresponding

roughly to the prominence each has in Newari life (devotional music, festival music, the music of rites of passage, work music, recreational music and bazaar music). The music of peoples other than Newars is included when the musical event includes Newars as participants or spectators. For each musical activity, two kinds of information relevant to our hypothesis are offered. First, the extent to which the institutional context remains viable or shows signs of deterioration will be estimated. Second, for related music, which will be described only briefly due to limitations of space, the nature of borrowing from India or the West will be indicated if it has occurred. To verify the hypothesis, persistence or decline in musical contexts should correlate positively with the persistence of traditional music or its replacement by borrowed music.

DEVOTIONAL MUSIC (bhajan)[3]

Musical happenings are not simply spontaneous, as noted above. Their occurrence is highly patterned. The single most impressive quality of traditional patterning in Nepal is that nearly all music is embedded in religious custom, which among Newars combines Buddhism with Hinduism. Bhajan music offers a prominent example.

One evening in the summer, when the weather was cool and dry, we picked our way after dinner through twisting lanes that traverse the heart of Kathmandu, the ground dimly lit by the low-wattage light bulbs or kerosene lamps of vendors in their stalls, or by an occasional street lamp. Our destination was the small temple of Shwetakali Naradevi, and as we drew near, our ears picked out the unmistakable sounds of a bhajan. Although many bhajans take place at temples, as well as in private homes, this was a bit harder to get to than most, since it was not located on a platform easily reached from the street, but rather was approachable only by going in the dark through a verminous, mud-floored closet, and up a treacherous, ladder-like stairway.

The room itself was typical of those used for this purpose. At one end stood the image of a deity, its body enveloped in incense and illuminated momentarily by the flames of a ritual oil lamp. Calendar-like color prints lined one wall, some showing serene manifestations of Lord Buddha, others, Hindu deities such as the majestic Lord Shiva or the enchanting Lord Krishna. Near them, framed photos pictured earlier bhajan singers, while in one corner stood the locked cabinet in which instruments are stored when not in use. A brazier and other equipment for preparing and lighting the chillum pipe rested near the altar, for this was a temple where hashish is smoked during devotional sessions.

Only men were present. They arrived sometime between nine and ten in the evening, having eaten dinner and done their obeisances at the temple. The caretaker arrived first to sweep off the mat on which they would sit, to break out the instruments, and to get the chillum lit for a pre-session smoke to be shared with early arrivals. When all were assembled, quiet visiting faded away as each took his place.

As is characteristic of bhajans everywhere, the hand-powered reed organ (harmonium) was located at one end, across from a set of two hand drums (tabla). Forming an oval or a circle, the men aligned themselves between these instruments, facing the empty center, some holding simpler instruments, such as a triangle, a conch shell trumpet, small hand cymbals and sometimes other simple idiophones, such as the stick tambourine. The eight-to-twenty men normally present for this sort of occasion sing in unison in a program of music that normally lasts until about eleven-thirty, when the caretaker locks up and each finds his own way home to bed.

The musical session takes place as a religious ceremony. Once begun, the whole sequence must be carried out, although the number of songs in the middle section can be varied to suit the occasion. Once when the session began late, we counted only two in this part of the sequence. Normally more are sung, with words in Sanskrit, Nepali or Newari, and occasionally in Hindi. The lyrics (without musical notation) may be read from a large hand-written book positioned on the floor in front of the lead singer, but few feel the need to look.

The frequency of bhajans varies, as does the attendance of individuals. In Kathmandu, several temples meet every evening. On the whole, daily bhajans throughout the year are exceptional. Minimally, where they have not been completely abandoned, they occur once a year, on the birthday of Lord Krishna (Krishnastami), a time when many temples and homes meet for this purpose. Between the extremes of always and never, bhajans may be scheduled by the religious calendar for frequent performance in certain seasons. Individuals may attend as they choose.

There are reasons to believe that the custom is somewhat in decline. Participants in the temple bhajans of Kathmandu include some youths, but most are middle-aged and elderly. According to older men, a generation ago more young people would have joined in. Older Newars also insist that far fewer families now than a generation ago continue to hold regular home bhajans. Speaking of their own families, two middle-aged men reported that their fathers and grandfathers sang together in their homes, a practice they gave up in the 1950's. Time did not allow further systematic inquiry on this issue, but our tentative conclusion is that bhajans, though still widely performed, are less prominant than before, that a trend is discernible.

The fundamental pattern of bhajan performances is not obviously changed, but the instrumentation is. Bhajans paced by the nearly inseparable trio of harmonium, tabla drums and triangle appear to have replaced an older custom of singing to the sole accompaniment of a hand drum (generally the double-ended daffa) and small cymbals. Nepalis refer to the harmonium as "Indian," and although its early history in South Asia is uncertain, it appears to have come to Nepal from British India during the 19th century. A Kathmandu craftsman

known as Harmonium Maila claims that around 1913 he was the first in Nepal to manufacture the instrument which, before that time, was available only through importation from abroad. The tabla, of course, is also Indian in origin.

Distribution mapping provides inferential support for this reconstruction of organological history. Although drum bhajans occur in the city, the most common practice by far in Kathmandu is to use the harmonium. In the neighboring peasant town of Panga, just a few kilometers away, we found that of 12 neighborhood centers where bhajans are sung, only three use the harmonium, while the rest employ the daffa drum. A couple of kilometers farther into the fields, in the small hamlet of Katrichap, where the whole community presently constitutes a single bhajan neighborhood, only the daffa is employed. The distribution, in short, suggests recency in terms of the classic age-area hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, other things being equal, newer culture traits will be geographically less widespread than older. In sum, it appears that bhajans are not quite as commonly sung now as formerly, although they remain prominent. Also, the instrumentation is changing.

FESTIVAL MUSIC

Perhaps the most striking quality of daily life in Nepal is the frequency with which the work-a-day routine is broken to engage people in joyous religious activities which may include music. Such occasions constitute the major context for diversion in contemporary Nepal. So complex and important are family and community festivals, in fact, that one could easily write a book about them alone, as at least two authors have done (Anderson 1971; Shrestha and Singh 1972; see also Nepali 1965). Because the subject is complex, only the ten festivals that we observed during the months of July and August will be discussed in what follows.

Festivals, we find, remain alive and important for Newars and others in the Kathmandu Valley. Interviews to elicit memories of change reveal little evidence of decline either in the participation of people in festivals or in the time and expense devoted to such events. One exception is noteworthy for its relative slightness.

As concerns the month-long daily activities of Gunla, we were repeatedly told that fewer people now get up at three or four every day to walk three to six kilometers to the top of Swayambunath hill and back. In one specific case, we learned that in the hamlet of Katrichap the custom was abandoned by local men around 1970. Katrichap men are located far away for this particular activity, however, and their abandonment of a custom that added six hours of walking every morning for a month to the hard work of peasant farming need not be regarded as a large infringement of custom.

On the whole, then, festivals remain very much alive. In six

out of ten festivals, no striking changes in music were detected. In four of these, Ghantakarna, Nag Panchami, Panchadan and Gokarna Aunsi, music is incidental to other activities. Ghantakarna gives rise to a simple chant. In Nag Panchami, related worship may include devotional songs. Panchadan involves robed monks intoning hymns in praise of Lord Buddha. Gokarna Aunsi, approximately equivalent to Father's Day, brings several thousand people walking to the riverside at a place in the country known as Gokarna, where ritual baths are taken. Gokarna has no temple and no formal program, but since it attracts throngs of peasants it becomes the scene of juhari singing. Juhari is the youthful custom of peasants, Newari and Nepali, in which one or two young men improvise verses of love to which one or two young women respond coquettishly.

Two festivals much richer in music also remain essentially without acculturative change, Janai Purnima and Mataya. We celebrated Janai Purnima day at Khumbeshwar Temple in Patan. In and around the Khumbeshwar compound, six to ten sets of Nepali-speaking peasants engaged in juhari singing. Just outside the entrance to the compound, two men familiar to us from the bazaar in Kathmandu intoned an endless refrain as they read the words to several songs from a printed broadside pamphlet that they offered for sale. We shall return to this so-called basa geet singing when we discuss bazaar music. A far more distinctive aspect of Janai Purnima is the visit to Khumbeshwar of shamans in colorful garb (Jest 1966; Macdonald 1962).

Known as jakhri, a shaman may be of any caste or ethnic group, since his selection depends upon personal qualities and experiences. He may also practice nearly any occupation during the day to earn his living. In the evening, however, he functions as an intermediary with spirits, diagnosing and curing illness and giving advice concerning present and future problems. To accomplish these ends, he beats a handled, two-sided frame drum (dhyanro) with a curved stick, chants and dances a constricted, repetitive hop until, entranced, the spirits use his voice to speak.

Once a year, jakhri in ceremonial white robes and peacock-feathered headdresses walk for two days or more from all over the valley to perform their compulsory annual worship (mahapuja) at Khumbeshwar. In addition to hilltops and settlements along the way, they beat their drums, dance, and chant within the Khumbeshwar compound. Since two score or more may be present at once, they are the dominant musical activity of Janai Purnima.

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Patan is where the action is for Mataya. In a day-long procession, hundreds of men, women, and children form an endless queue that twists and turns through kilometers of streets, alleys and courtyards as each individual casts grains of rice, small coins and colored powder at every one of several hundred places or objects of worship. Spectators gather from throughout the valley to watch the spectacle,

which includes half-naked holy men bleeding from endless prostrations, costumed merrymakers, and musical groups.

Some music is provided by men singing Buddhist hymns to the accompaniment of daffa drums and small cymbals. Most of the music is performed by as many as a score of men, approximately three to thirteen of whom play side-blown wooden flutes, both large and small, while others accompany them with small cymbals and small two-headed, hand-struck madal drums. A single melody is played by all of these flute-drum groups, one identified with Mataya.

Among the merrymakers, we encountered one group of five or six who were hilariously drunk. To the accompaniment of flutes, madal and cymbals, they sang in such a ribald manner that we were astonished on translating to find that they were singing bhajan hymns. Their merrymaking, however, was uncommonly boisterous, and while many others clowned for the spectators, none sang in so uninhibited a manner, nor lost their way so completely in the maze of streets and alleys.

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While striking evidence of foreign influence was not found in six festivals, extensive acculturative change was documented in four. Two of the latter, Bhimsen Puja and Krishnastami, involved, on the whole, the borrowing of foreign instruments without the borrowing of music.

Bhimsen, the God of Wealth and Power, happens to be especially venerated in Patan, where each year his powers are celebrated in a torchlight procession. Winding through narrow lanes and byways, the procession creates an atmosphere of trance-like excitement as spectators and marchers alike get caught up in the shadow-lit pressing and pushing of men struggling to advance the towering palanquin of Bhimsen against a mob reaching out to touch and be blessed. A somewhat musical effect is created as large clashing cymbals spark a mob chant of "jai Bhimsen" ("hurray Bhimsen").

While this procession wended its way precipitously towards midnight, elsewhere along the way solitary musical groups, well spaced from one another, progressed more leisurely, circumambulating temples along their route. One such group offered the traditional nonmelodic rhythms of small cymbals and dhime drums, the latter being double-ended, rather large instruments struck with the bare left hand at one end and a light coiled stick at the other.

A second kind of Bhimsen group displayed Anglo-Indian influence in the shape of a man playing a harmonium supported by a strap over his shoulder. An associate played a round-bottomed membrane-topped indigenous drum (tamar) with a pair of drum sticks. To accomplish this, he walked backwards, while the drum was carried at the waist of an assistant. Drum and harmonium were surrounded by a group of perhaps ten men, several of whom carried small cymbals while they sang

religious songs, some of which were familiar to us from bhajans. Although groups of this sort were not as common as dhime groups, we did encounter one other in which the instruments were as above, with the addition of two side-blown flutes.

The mode of procedure of the latter groups built up a sense of drama. Singers, some walking backwards ahead of the core of instrumental players, gestured with the words of the song to indicate emotions of anger or challenge. The group divided into hostile moieties, and tempers seemed to leap back and forth from make-believe to real, perhaps because many of the performers were quite inebriated. At times, the group halted to play for several men who gathered to dance just ahead of the instruments.

At one location, a characteristic temple bhajan with the once foreign harmonium was underway, the participants absorbed in their own song and chillum pipe, sheltered in their oblivion from the activity around them.

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Foreign instruments without foreign music also occur prominently in the celebration of Lord Krishna's birthday. This was especially true in the parade in Kathmandu in which almost everything evinced a contemporary Western quality. In that sense, it was different from any other religious procession we witnessed, but was quite like modern national celebrations, including the birthday of the king and Children's Day. This Western influence appeared one day in advance, when a pickup truck circulated the streets of the capital with loudspeakers playing music and announcing the time and place. On the day itself, the procession led off with a marching group only partially Western in character. Dressed in Nepali clothes, they played Western brass and woodwinds to the beat of Nepali double-headed, hand-struck drums (donga?). The lead band was followed by processional elements more completely Western in character. First among these were groups of boys and girls in international scout uniforms. Each scout contingent carried banners bearing slogans from the sacred literature, some in English, for example, "Fearlessness is the First Divine Virtue. Lord Krishna."

Two additional marching bands then followed, the first a private band of a score of players in red Western-style uniforms, the other a military band. Both carried only Western band instruments, although they played in what appears to be a characteristic Nepali manner, that is, an individual player may frequently interrupt his playing to rest. At any one time, several may be resting while the remainder continue to play. The music, moreover, consisted of Nepali religious music, including the melody of a bhajan song for Lord Krishna ("Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna").

As in Western parades, trucks were converted into decorated floats. These followed the two uniformed bands and preceded groups

of marching men, most of whom were dressed in Western slacks and shirts. One of the floats was equipped with loudspeakers by means of which a male "cheerleader" led marchers and spectators in shouting "Krishnastami Day, Hurray," and "Hurray, our National Religion," much as celebrants in the Bhimsen shouted "Hurray, Bhimsen." He also led the marchers in singing a traditional bhajan song. Later, in the evening, bhajans were sung in many homes and temples, most of those in Kathmandu to the accompaniment of harmonium, tabla drums and triangle.

In contrast to the parade in Kathmandu, the Krishna festivities in Patan were almost entirely traditional in character. Customary juhari singing, however, appears to have succumbed in this town to the new competition of taped music broadcast loudly over a public address system to create a holiday atmosphere, much as at carnivals in the West. Only one set of singers was encountered where half a dozen formerly would have performed, probably because the new background music made unamplified singing very difficult to hear. The background music, for its part, consisted of Nepali pop tunes, including a rendition of the biggest hit tune of the summer, "Raja Mati." Since Nepali pop, with Western guitars and harmonium, emulates in some ways the Western-influenced music of Indian films, it brings us to the most distinctive examples of acculturative change encountered.

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It is quite noteworthy to find Western influences in contemporary festivals in the form of borrowed instruments. In two festivals, Gunla and Gai Jatra, even stronger influence is seen in the additional borrowing of foreign (mostly Indian) music.

To celebrate Gunla, small bands of devotees begin as early as three o'clock each morning for a month to walk the several kilometers it may take to cover the distance between their homes in and around Kathmandu and the hilltop of Swayambhunath. Some walk alone or in clusters without music. Others include small cymbals and one or several dha drums, the latter struck with a bare hand on the right and a straight stick on the left to produce a rhythmic marching beat. For perhaps most, this percussive core is augmented with the addition of Western band instruments, the clarinet and trumpet being especially favored. With these instruments, melodies can be played. The purpose remains devotional, yet the melodies are usually secular, the popular Nepali tunes of Radio Nepal or the foreign hit tunes of Indian movies being most favored. Occasionally one also hears an older British air.

At Swayambhunath, dha bands circumambulate the domed stupa. Popular tunes are abandoned as musicians shift exclusively to a traditional melody played only for this event. The effect is cacophonous, for the several groups playing at the same time make no effort at all to synchronize with one another. In addition, at one point in the circle they pass a platform where bhajan singing is amplified by a microphone, at another point ceremonial horns may be blown, still again they pass a Tibetan temple entrance where conch-shell trumpets

occasionally sound, while all around, individuals standing at the side beat their drums almost absentmindedly. Nor is that the whole of it. In addition to dha ensembles, a few of the circumambulating groups are made up of men singing Buddhist hymns.

One evening during Gunla, the dance of the demon Lakhe was performed. Wild and frightful in mask, long hair and red costume, the dancer gyrated in the street to the accompaniment of half-a-dozen men playing instruments. We encountered one such group in which the instrumentation was old-fashioned: madal drums, side-blown flutes, and small cymbals. The folklorist A.A. Baké filmed such a dance in 1931, and found even at that time that the harmonium had been added in some cases. By 1955 when he returned again, many had given up the old instruments to form Western bands (Baké 1959). A group we recorded included one clarinet, two trumpets, a bass horn, a snare drum, a large snare drum, and a pair of Western cymbals. These musicians favored Indian film tunes, as well as Nepali and older Western popular melodies, but included an occasional rendition of the melody traditional for this dance.

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The festival of Gai Jatra concerns the newly dead who have a dreadful journey to make. The dead make their way into the afterworld more easily if they are led by holding the tail of a friendly cow, which not only guides but can also nudge open the gates with her horns. To ensure such help, surviving relatives send a family member to lead a decorated cow or calf in the Gai Jatra procession, or they place in procession either one or two small boys dressed in cow costumes or men bearing a cow effigy. Those willing and able to spend more, commonly the lineage association (guthi), include in the procession the family priest and a musical group. The exact manner of this procedure varies from one community to another, as does the nature of the music.

In Kathmandu, three distinctive kinds of musical group were observed. Two are doubtless quite old in type. Of these, the least common were a kind also present but not numerous in Mataya and Gunla, clusters of men singing hymns to the accompaniment of daffa drums and small cymbals. According to Mrs. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, whom we encountered as anthropologist stumbled over anthropologist, these daffa groups were more common a few years ago. In the whole morning we counted only three among scores of groups.

More common, though still a minority, were those dominated by dhime drums. Although the number of drums varied, we usually counted two, and they were inevitably joined by a 20 cm brass gong (tainai), one or two pairs of cymbals about 30 cm in diameter (bhusya), smaller cymbals, and one or more pairs of 2 m-long, straight, copper horns (ponga). The horns produce only one or two notes, so the effect is rhythmical rather than melodic.

The comparatively new element musically is now the most common: miniature brass bands of European type. The biggest we saw comprised

nine men, of whom seven were dressed in uniforms of red jackets and caps. The smallest was limited to two players in shirts and slacks, one playing a trumpet and the second a cornet. Most comprised three to six players. Once again, in a religious procession the melodies most favored were current pop. In an unsystematic inventory, we counted five Nepali pop tunes and two Indian film hits, along with two _bhajan_ melodies. We were informed that older Anglo-American airs also were played.

Since communities vary in the way they celebrate _Gai Jatra_, we abandoned Kathmandu for Bhaktapur to witness a rather different procession where foreign influence is much less pronounced. In place of cows and little boys in cow costume, basketry cow heads rising seven meters high on poles draped with cloth were carried careening through kilometers of narrow streets, led by stick-dancers shuffling to a traditional melody played on traditional _daffa_ drums, small cymbals and side-blown flutes.

While this _daffa_-flute combination was by far the most common, we encountered another kind of traditional instrumental group that also played the stick-dance melody: several men sounding oboe-like _mohali_ reeds, accompanied by others with _daffa_ drums and small cymbals.

Our attention was drawn, however, to the relatively uncommon, Indian-influenced group which comprised, in the one we documented, a harmonium hung from the shoulders and three Anglo-Indian violins, along with the following Nepali instruments: three side-blown flutes, two double-ended hand drums (_madal_ and _dholak_), and small cymbals. Unlike other musical groups in the same procession, this group played pop tunes. The three that we taped were all Nepali compositions.

MUSIC IN RITES OF PASSAGE

Rites of passage are carried out at certain times in the lifetime of each individual. Except for processions in some instances, music plays little or no role in most of these events. So far as we could determine, music was absent from rituals associated with pregnancy and birth. A big family celebration is held to celebrate the first eating of rice (Newari, _junko_), but only wealthy families hire a band to play for the procession to and from the temple. In most families _junko_ is devoid of music. Some ten years later, prepubescent girls celebrate a purely ritual wedding (Newari, _ehi_). Again processional music is an option exercised by some but not all. A year or more later, at menarche, the daughter is secluded from sunlight and men for 12 days (Newari, _bara_). She receives visits from women and girls who usually sing and dance, but only to amuse themselves and not as part of _bara_ ritual. Boys are initiated into adulthood, generally between the ages of five and 14, in a rite (Newari, _Kaita Puja_) that involves no music, unless the family employs a processional band. Other rites that need not include music are assumption of the sacred thread by boys in the twice-born castes, and the attainment of high

old age (Newari, bura junko), although in the latter case well-off families hire musicians for the temple procession.

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In contrast to other rites of passage, music is virtually obligatory at weddings and funerals. Even at weddings, however, music is less important than among some of the other peoples of Nepal, since only in the homes of the rich is it customary to hire musicians to entertain during feasts. (Peasants, however, may entertain themselves by singing songs, including juhari.) Normally, music is limited to that of a band that plays for the procession to escort the groom to the home of the bride, and back again. The band extends its performance for a serenade of as much as an hour or so before and after marching each way.

Traditionally, wedding music is provided by musicians in the low-ranking damai or kusale castes (Ballinger and Bajracharya 1960:414-6; Heffer 1969). The exact combination of instruments varies. A damai band (damai baja) may include a double-reed, mohali, two kinds of kettle drum known as damaha and tamar, the coiled copper bugle called narasingha, and small cymbals. The kusale baja is usually made up of mohali, cymbals and "matrimonial drum" (dholak). Whether played by damais or kusales, when a traditional combination of five instruments is employed (three mohali reeds, two cymbals and one tamar), it is known as the "band of five" (panch baja). Castes other than damai and kusale may provide musicians. In agricultural communities, peasants (jyapu caste) often perform for themselves, calling upon relatives and friends to participate as best they can.

Unfortunately, we arrived in Nepal just at the end of the wedding season, those months auspicious for this purpose. Interviewing brought out the fact, however, that traditional bands are less and less employed, even in country hamlets. In their place, it is considered good form to hire a Western band, the size (variable from five to 15 or 20 players), and the presence or absence of parade uniforms, dependent upon the money a family is able to spend.

To learn more about this type of music, we found our way one afternoon to a tiny, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$m, dirt-floored shop where a couple of rickety bicycles could be rented, but where the sign at the door read in English, "Public Manoranjan [entertaining] Band. Proprietor Tutu Prasad." Mr. Prasad is the son of a man who many years ago retired from the royal army band, acquired some Western instruments, and went into business providing music for various occasions, especially weddings. His sign to the contrary, he does not speak English.

The caste and family occupation of the Prasads is not traditionally that of musician, for they belong to the oil-presser (sahi) caste, as do many but not all of those they employ from time to time. Included in the music played are certain airs traditional for weddings. For the most part, however, they play Nepali and Indian popular tunes,

along with an occasional "English" song (e.g., "Come September"). The musicians, who learned to play in the army or are self-taught, support their families primarily from other work. Even Tutu Prasad, whose main income is from music, runs a small bicycle rental business.

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The nature of wedding music has clearly changed in the 20th century. Not so the music of funerals, which still comprises a combination of mournful-sounding instruments. The two-headed cylinder drum (nayekhin), which resembles the dha in size and shape, is struck with a stick on the right side and a bare hand on the left (the opposite of dha practice). Drummers are preceded by one or more pairs of horn blowers with 2 m-long instruments (kaha) very similar in appearance and usage to the ponga of Gai Jatra. Brass cymbals (chhusya) 15 to 20 cm in diameter complete the instrumentation. The musicians, generally from untouchable castes, lead a procession which bears the body to cremation grounds at the edge of the river, where they continue their rhythmic, non-melodic music for 15 or 20 minutes until the body is left to burn.

OCCUPATIONAL MUSIC

The cadence of work only rarely is augmented by music among Newars, and that almost solely in peasant activities. Women sometimes sing for babies or when weaving. Solo or in unison, people sing as they plant or harvest rice. This seems to be the main field singing of the hamlet of Katrichap, where some informants maintain that the custom is dying with the older generation. At the last harvest, only three men sang, each separately. Later, at the planting of rice, a few old women sang as did a separate small group of men. In addition to harvest or planting songs, Khatrichap villagers formerly sang juhari (Newari, khayali) at times in the fields, but this summer it was tried only once by the only two women who know the technique. Since no men were present to sing in reply, they carried on alone.

In the neighboring fields of Panga, juhari singing is not presently done at all. With the changing of seasons, however, one hears music not now found at Katrichap. Spring and summer songs are voiced by men and women as they work. (Women alone at their weaving also sing these songs.) As in the case of rice planting and threshing songs, these are religious in content and may be sung in bhajans, normally with the daffa drum rather than the harmonium. (And just as daffa bhajans now are considered "old fashioned," so too are these songs.)

These differences in the musical customs of Katrichap and Panga suggest that field songs are in decline in this area. The communities are culturally identical in most ways. The settlements, located in sight of one another, are entirely or mainly populated by Newari peasants of the Maharjan branch of the Jyapu caste. Katrichap children go to school in Panga, marriages take place between the two communities, and local activities bring Khatrichap adults to Panga from time

to time. It is probably correct to assume that of the traditional music described, forms present in one but absent in the other were formerly found in both. If musical decline characterizes these settlements, however, it does not necessarily do so for other settlements in the valley, and particularly in those more distant from Kathmandu. In the appropriate seasons, a drive into the countryside still brings one to numerous field groups engaged in song.

RECREATIONAL MUSIC

In the hamlet of Katrichap, when the weather is good and the season right, young people gather at the tree-covered platform on one side of the settlement to talk and laugh. Eventually a boy or girl sings, to be followed by someone else, and someone again, until an hour or more has passed. It is indicative of the continuing absence of competing forms of entertainment that people still enjoy themselves this way in Katrichap as well as in rural settlements throughout the valley. Even in Kathmandu, young people sing when they are on picnics, lounging at the university or gathering in homes. Radio competes, but the threat remains largely in the future.

According to old people in Katrichap, folk songs about love and marriage were the most sung a generation ago, along with occasional broadsides (basa geet) purchased in town bazaars or at festivals. Now, Nepali pop is added, learned from Radio Nepal or sung from booklets in which the words are reproduced as heard on the radio. Indian film songs, familiar from urban theaters, are also sung, generally in broken or incomplete Hindi.

To confirm these findings, we carried out a simple test at Khumbeshwar Temple, where peasants and townspeople from surrounding parts of the Kathmandu Valley gathered to celebrate Janai Purnima, as we have seen. Beginning with a boy who timidly sang into our portable tape recorder, and who found intense pleasure in hearing his own voice played back, we engaged boys and young men in a spontaneous simulation of village or neighborhood entertainment. Surrounded by a crowd eager to perform, by the end of an hour, when rain forced us to stop, we had collected 34 songs of the type now sung for amusement by young people who know them by heart. Our findings conform to those of Katrichap: half of the tunes were traditional (13 folk songs, 3 children's songs, 1 devotional song); the other half were modern (11 Nepali pop, 6 Indian film).[4]

In Kathmandu, we compared these findings to the singing habits of educated young people. The tastes of this urban elite are strikingly more influenced by borrowing, for they add, with or without guitar, the songs of Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, and other Western stars.

BAZAAR MUSIC

At times in the bazaar of Kathmandu, we found ourselves part of a group of people listening to a pair of men singing in unison from a printed booklet. Known as basa geet, the practice is reminiscent of European broadsides insofar as the words to songs were for sale for a coin or two (half a rupee) each, all sung to the same tune. Any one pair of singer-hawkers uses a single melody for all of the booklets they sell. (However, at least two different melodies are in use at the present time.) The words for the most part deal with traditional religious themes: an episode concerning the deities Shiva and Parvati, the heroism of the legendary ruler Hari Chandra, the fierce fight of two monkey gods as told in the Ramayana.

The two singers interviewed by us were not Newars. One a Chetri and the other a brahman, they come from a single village, but only teamed up as singers about seven years ago, after some time of working and living in Kathmandu. Neither had any previous experience with music, which is not a family or village occupation. They turned to it simply because it seemed a chance to earn a living. In all, three or four pairs of men live this way in the Kathmandu Valley. This particular pair normally spends mornings in the Durbar Square area of Kathmandu, and afternoons about 15 minutes walk away at the Asan Tole area. On holidays, however, they follow the crowds, as they did for Janai Purnima, when they made their way to Patan. At the time we interviewed them, they had two different booklets in stock, and claimed to produce new ones several times each year. Each basa geet team arranged for the printing of what they sold independently of others, and those we spoke with claimed to be writers of the verses they sang. Their craft apparently supports them as well as ever, perhaps because the competition of radio is offset in their business by an increase in the number of potential customers who can read.

* * *

In the bazaar of Patan on Krishnastami Day, two Newars of the gaine caste plied their traditional craft, playing violins they make tnemselves to provide accompaniment for their ballads (see Helffer and Macdonald 1966, 1968; Macdonald n.d.). Five days of the week they are normally found at Swayambunath, where they meet tourists at the stairs to this, a must on the agenda of any visitor to Nepal. There they sing in an effort to sell hand-made violins (sarangis) as souvenirs. The other two days they play in the peasant community of Kirtipur, near Kathmandu, where they have their homes. But holiday crowds attract them, and while they played in front of a temple in Kirtiur for Gai Jatra, Krishnastami brought them to Patan.

Their repertoire of Newari and Nepali language songs belongs to the oral tradition of their caste. To this they may now add the Nepali and Indian pop tunes of Kathmandu, to the chagrin of interested folklorists. Occasionally, a new ballad is composed. Magar Gaine, a man now in his seventies, wrote a song describing the death of King Tribhuvan in 1955. In 1960, the termination of a hated ministry inspired some unknown artist to compose. But few current events become the

TABLE 1

Musical Acculturation in Nepal

Musical Context	Institutional decline[a]		Borrowing of Instruments and Music							
			Neither[b]	Instruments				Melodies		
								Indian	Western	
	yes	no		1[c]	2[d]	3[e]	4[f]		1[g]	2[h]
Devotional Music										
Bhajans	X			X						
Festival Music										
Ghantakarna		X	X							
Nag Panchami		X	X							
Panchadan		X	X							
Gokarna Aunsi		X	X							
Janai Purnima										
Juhari		X	X							
Jhakri (shaman)		X	X							
Mataya		X	X							
Bhimsen Puja		X	X							
Main procession		X	X							
Small groups		X		X						
Krishnastami										
Parade (Kath.)		X			X	X				
Loudspeaker (P.)		X					X	X		
Juhari (Patan)	X		X							
Gunla										
Procession		X			X			X	X	
Lakhi Dance		X				X		X	X	
Gai Jatra										
Kathmandu		X				X		X	X	
Bhaktapur		X		X						
Rites of Passage										
Weddings		X				X		X	X	
Funerals		X	X							
Work Music										
Field songs	X		X							
Recreational Music										
Leisure songs		X					X	X	X	X
Bazaar Music										
Basa geet		X	X							
Gaine		X						X		

[a] Measure of decline: frequency of performance as judged by informants.

[b] Evidence: borrowing is considered absent if observation & inquiry so indicate.

[c] Harmonium only.

[d] Western band with Nepali drums.

[e] Western band instruments only.

[f] Guitar, harmonica & other western instruments.

[g] Old pop tunes

[h] Current hits

subject of *gaine* songs. Rather, the lyrics of most deal with such themes of perennial interest as the sadness of a bride unhappily wed or the meaning of life when youth is gone.

Two *gaine* we talked with and visited in their homes, one a man about 40 years old, the other, about 50, felt that their music supported them less well now than in the time of their fathers. In the days of Rana palace life, *gaine* were employed from time to time to play for social gatherings, including weddings. In addition, musicians were more appreciated in the marketplace when they did not suffer the competition of radio music. Fortunately for these two, however, these developments took place just as tourists began to offer an alternative. The continuing, if somewhat lessened, vitality of the craft is evidenced by the fact that each of these men has only one grown son, the one aged 21 and the other 13, both of whom work in a traditional manner as musicians.

CONCLUSIONS

As originally formulated early in our stay in Nepal, the working hypothesis of this paper seemed more threatened by the weakness of being a truism than by the possibility of being invalid. It seemed to summarize much of what was observed: the first music we encountered was that of *bhajans*, performed by men who meet in the traditional setting of a temple. Rock music, in contrast, we heard in hotel restaurants, bars and coffee shops, all foreign institutions relatively new to Kathmandu. Marching music, in which men in Western uniforms play Western instruments, seemed most at home in a modern stadium where it is performed for such non-traditional events as royal birthdays or Children's Day. Further, the hypothesis seemed truistic as a predictive instrument. With more hotel restaurants, more rock or other pop music will be played. With a lessening of devotional fervor and related activities, *bhajans* will be sung less, and so on.

As is now evident, the hypothesis as stated is inadequate. Specifically, it does not fit the facts of traditional music among Newars, for we find that as of now the institutions that support (or pattern) music have largely resisted change, whereas the music performed in them has changed in a striking manner.

To arrive at this conclusion, we estimated the vitality of institutions by attempting to ascertain how frequently they recur and the extent to which people participate in them. In other words, an institution which has not fallen off perceptibly in popularity is regarded as still vital. Change in music, for the purposes of this study, was measured in terms of recent (mostly 20th-century) borrowing, either of instruments or of contemporary music from nations more industrialized than Nepal, specifically India and the West.

Using these measures, we find that the institutional contexts of traditional music remain largely intact. As described above, some

evidence indicates that the popularity of musical events is falling off in certain instances. But the extent of decline, where it occurs, is generally rather slight, with the major exceptions of bhajans and field songs in and around Kathmandu. Music, on the contrary, has been heavily infiltrated by foreign elements. Western instruments now are played in various traditional contexts. Also, Indian and Western popular melodies now are prominant in several, although with but one exception, the latter tend to be older pieces of a type played by Anglo-Indian army bands. Largely absent are current hit tunes in rock-and-roll, rhythm-and-blues, country, or Western film styles.

The hypothesis proves inadequate because it does not allow for the squeezing out of old forms. When people are exposed to the possibility of borrowing, they are given an opportunity for that moment to make decisions about how a new trait will integrate with surviving customs, should they decide to borrow. Clearly, Newars borrowing music and instruments found it possible to add new musical elements to existing institutions. We would not assume that to be true of every society. Even among Newars, some institutions, notably funerals, seemingly are less open or not open to modification in this regard. The towns of Patan and Bhaktapur are strikingly more conservative than nearby Kathmandu. On the whole, however, Newars are open to musical borrowing, and this has affected the fate of traditional forms of music: old genres did not disappear through the extinction of host institutions, but through replacement within institutions.

Because we have found that survival of an institutional context does not ensure the survival of related music, we state our conclusion in the form of a revised hypothesis: the extent to which a genre of music survives or declines varies independently of the viability of the institution(s) to which it is attached.

NOTES

[1]The only recording relevant to this paper is presently out of circulation: "Musik der Nevārī-Kasten." Recording and commentary by Felix Hoerburger. Klangdokumente zur Musikwissenschaft KM 0003, 1971. Formerly available from Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Bundesrepublik Deutschland (West Germany).

[2]Field research was carried out between July 1 and August 31, 1974, in the Kathmandu Valley, where most Newars live. Earlier research by one of us (E.M.M.) in the summers of 1972 and 1973 prepared the way. In 1974, generally accompanied by Mr. Rajendra Bahadur Shrestha, M.A., who was employed as translator and research assistant, we documented musical events by attending and participating as far as possible in ten festivals that took place during our stay, as well as in more ordinary activities, including temple devotions. Open-ended interviews with professional and amateur musicians supplemented direct observation. In order to control to some extent for urban-rural

variation, we attempted to balance information obtained in Kathmandu with investigations carried out in the nearby peasant communities of Panga and Katrichap, located respectively only five and six kilometers from the edge of the city, yet inaccessible except on foot along paths rendered bog-like by the monsoon rains. As a baseline for inquiries concerning the time variable, attention focused also upon the musical biographies of individuals in a three-generational joint family residence in Kathmandu.

[3]Newars, speaking a Tibeto-Burman language, constitute 55% of a total Valley population of approximately 600,000. (In contrast, 39%, including the royal family, speak Nepali, an Indo-European language, and 4.5% speak Tamang, which is Tibeto-Burman.) Three towns clustered within a few kilometers of each other provide the urban nucleus of an otherwise peasant-populated agricultural plain ringed by mountains. All three towns are dominated by Newars, who make up 68% of the population in Kathmandu (total population 121,000, 78% of the population in Patan (total 48,000) and 98% in Bhaktapur (total 34,000). Newars also comprise nearly the whole population of certain peasant communities nearby, including Panga (3,000) and Katrichap (200) located close together, not far from Kathmandu, and included in our study. Most Newars speak Nepali as a second language. Unless otherwise indicated, terms are given in the official, more widely used Nepali language rather than in Newari.

[4]We believe these finding to be representative of peasant and poor young people throughout the Kathmandu Valley, but because the sample is small and spontaneous, such an extrapolation is necessarily subjective and subject to error.

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