

Recordings and Notes by RODERIC KNIGHT, Oberlin college



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4028

TRIBAL MUSIC OF INDIA

The Muria and Maria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh



BISON HORN MARIA DANCE, PHOTO BY RODERIC KNIGHT

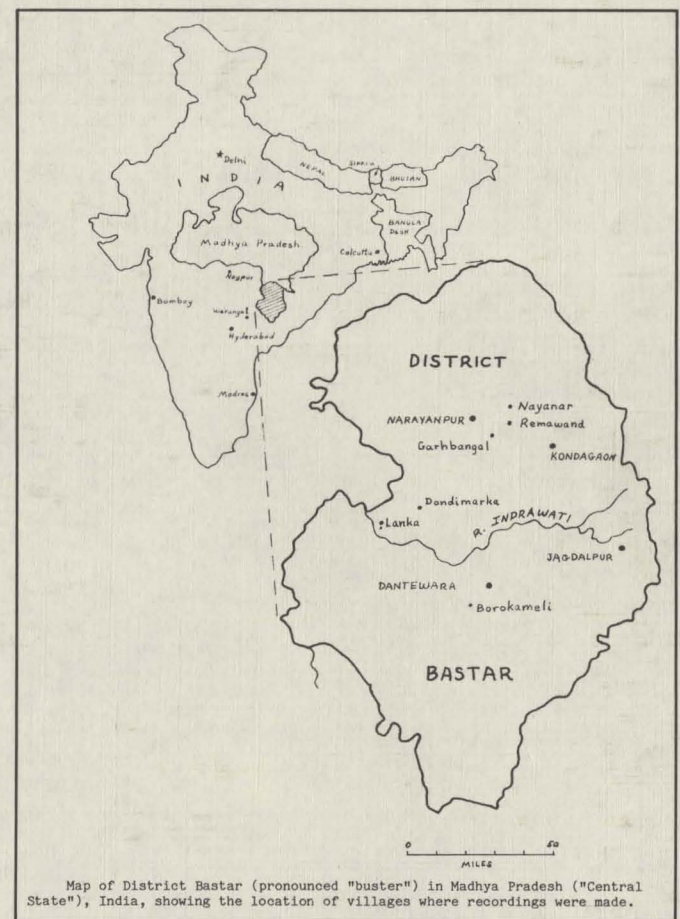
COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

SIDE A

1. Karsar—Clan god festival music
2. Marmi Pata—Wedding Song
3. Dito Endana—Stilt Dance
4. Karsana Pata: "Dippara Loporo"
5. Kach Tehendor—jaws harp
6. Ghotul Pata: "Tokaring Warawarang"

SIDE B

1. Forest Birds
2. Geri Endana—Stilt Dance
3. "Hulki"—song for Lingo Pen
4. "Chandu Binu"—stick dance song
5. Suler (flute) duo
6. Dandami Maria Song
7. Hill Maria Dance
8. Hill Maria Song
9. Hill Maria Dance



Cover Photo: Dance of the Bison Horn Maria

© 1983 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP.
632 BROADWAY, N.Y.C., 10012 N.Y., U.S.A.

TRIBAL MUSIC OF INDIA
The Muria and Maria
Gonds of Madhya Pradesh

Recordings and Notes by RODERIC KNIGHT, Oberlin college

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4028

TRIBAL MUSIC OF INDIA

The Muria and Maria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh

Recordings and Notes by Roderic Knight, Assoc. Professor of Ethnomusicology
Oberlin College Conservatory of Music

The Muria and Maria are tribal peoples of India, living in the forested hills and plains of Bastar District, at the southern tip of the central state of Madhya Pradesh. Together the Muria, numbering some 150,000 and the Maria, divided between the Dandami or Bison-Horn Maria with 200,000 and the Abujh or Hill Maria with only 15,000, represent about 9% of the largest tribal group in India, the Gonds, of whom there are some four million, living in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The Gonds are a Proto-Australoid people, and their language, Gondi, belongs to the Dravidian group (Mitchell, 1947:683).

Verrier Elwin, in his encyclopedic but lovingly-written book, The Muria and their Ghotul, notes that the Gonds of Bastar trace their origins to the kingdom of Warangal which flourished to the southwest of Bastar from about 1150 to 1425 (1947:20). (Bastar was itself a kingdom and separate state until India's independence from England in 1947.) Distinctions between the Muria and Maria and the various subgroups within them are mostly sociological and geographical. The Hill Maria live in the Abujhmar mountains to the northwest, with elevations over 3000 ft., in villages mostly inaccessible by road. They practice slash and burn agriculture, supplementing their diet with fish, small game killed with bow and arrow, and forest produce. They keep cows and pigs in small numbers.

The Bison Horn Maria live in the southern part of the Bastar plateau, where the elevation is about 2400 ft., in flat to rolling countryside. They are also agriculturalists, but plow established fields near their villages. Their name (applied by outsiders, not themselves) derives from an impressive bison horn and cowrie shell headdress worn by drummers at wedding festivities (Elwin, 1947:10). In the eastern parts of the region they regard themselves as Muria (as shown on census returns), possibly because they perceive the Muria as holding a higher social status in the district (Elwin, 1947:14). W. V. Grigson published the first (and still) definitive work on the Maria, concentrating mostly on the Hill Maria, in The Maria Gonds of Bastar (1938). More recently, Edward Jay studied life in a single Hill Maria village in A Tribal Village of Middle India (1970).

The Muria live in the northern and eastern parts of Bastar and may be divided into various subgroups by locality. The Muria presented here are known (or at least were more commonly known in the past) as the Jhoria Muria and live in close proximity to the Abujhmar mountains, in the Narayanpur and Kondagaon Tehsils (administrative divisions) of the district. Elwin notes that the Muria regard themselves as Hill Maria who have settled in the plains (1947:15). Historically, it is more likely that the opposite is true--that the Hill Maria are former plains dwellers--but whatever the case, the geographical and social differences have clearly served as a tonic for Muria culture, for still today, forty years after Elwin worked with them, the Muria have the most varied and vital cultural expressions of all the Gonds of Bastar. This is undoubtedly due, in large part, to the institution of the ghotul, a youth club and dormitory to which all boys and girls of the village belong from around the age of puberty until marriage, for not only does the ghotul provide an atmosphere in which friendships are welded and proper social behavior learned, but it serves as the major focal point for virtually all of the performing arts of the Muria. Thus, far from being the province of a separate caste or a profession respected in proportion to the age of the performer, singing, drumming, and dancing are the special responsibility of the ghotul youths among the Muria. Depending on the vitality of the individual ghotul and the season of the year, song and dance form an almost nightly activity in the ghotul. Of course this close connection with the ghotul can spell the decline of music and dance as well, for as Elwin notes, not only do "Boys and girls grow up and make a once dull ghotul interesting; others marry and deprive a formerly lively ghotul of its most prominent members" (1947:667).

The institution of the ghotul is, or has been, a part of Maria life as well, but for various reasons has either disappeared or failed to inspire music and dance to the same extent it has among the Muria. Already forty years ago Elwin described the ghotul among the Bison Horn Maria as "moribund," presumably the victim of outside influences or criticisms, and changing attitudes on the part of the villagers. Among the Hill Maria, the ghotul

has always been an institution for boys only, and this affects its character. As Jay notes, girls "go there in the evening for dancing and singing, [but] they sleep in small houses of their own, usually within their parents' compound" (1970:67). The reason for this is that most of the inhabitants of Hill Maria villages belong to one clan, meaning that marriage partners must be selected from other villages. In this situation, one aspect of ghotul life as it is known among the Muria--the development of intimate boy-girl relationships--would be inappropriate, since there would be few eligible partners.

Muria villages are larger and more "cosmopolitan," including families from many clans; also the clan system itself is considerably scrambled, so more social fluidity and intimacy are possible. In the past, there were two types of ghotul, one in which the elder members oversaw a rotation of partners that assured close friendships but no permanent pair bonding, the other in which pair bonding was in fact the rule, with partner switching not allowed. The latter type predominates today. Village elders and government officials will sometimes assert that the young women do not stay in the ghotul but only sit in the evening. This statement appears to be a defense against curiosity seekers, something the Muria have long had to contend with. It is true that the women do not always stay, as for example when visiting officials are hosted at the ghotul, but in general they do. Surprisingly, very few children are born of ghotul relationships. There is some reason to believe that the Muria have knowledge of contraceptive methods, possibly using substances available in the forests. If a child is born out of wedlock, the situation is usually handled quite civilly: either the couple agree to marry, or the man to whom the woman may be betrothed agrees to accept her child. In all ghotul matters there is never any thought of wrongdoing, for the ghotul is regarded as a sacred place in which no evil is done. The ambience is joyful, but it is governed by social morals and respect.

The coeducational nature of the Muria ghotul, plus more frequent contact with other peoples as a result of living nearer the roads have combined to make the Muria performing arts richer and more varied than those of neighboring groups.

Music in the ghotul, then and now

In seven years, from 1935 to 1942, Elwin visited no fewer than 347 Muria ghotuls. He found a wide variety in the number of youths attending, the condition of the buildings, communal esprit de corps, and expertise in performance, but if anything shines through his 700-page book on the ghotul, it is the importance of music and dance, whether for personal enjoyment around the fire in the evening, for marking various religious and seasonal events, or for wedding festivities and ghotul expeditions, in which members of a ghotul travel from village to village, performing for each other and swapping songs.

Unfortunately Elwin made no recordings (although he did take a gramophone to some villages for the purpose of sharing some of his favorite music with the Muria), but he did study the songs and dances extensively. Song texts and dance diagrams are scattered throughout the book, along with many notations of song melodies. The notations, incidentally, are the work (probably the least-known) of Walter Kaufmann, who accompanied Elwin for a brief period in 1941 and transcribed the songs directly to paper.

Since this time, very little has appeared on Muria music. Kaufmann produced two short articles (1960, 1961), and in 1980 Geneviève Dournon produced a record (*Le Chant du Monde* LDX 74736). The present recording and notes are intended to further fill in the gap in our current knowledge of this music.

Although it may not be possible to do as extensive a study as Elwin's today, it is still possible to assess the relative health of the ghotul. It is clear that ghotul activities continue, if not with quite the same vitality as in Elwin's time. In villages near towns, influence from non-Muria neighbors may cause the ghotul system to break down. Often if Muria boys or girls attend school, for example, they may decide not to spend their evenings at the ghotul, although the two activities are not mutually exclusive. On the other hand, ghotul activities that are

flagging sometimes receive an additional boost from an anthropologist (the Anthropological Survey has a number of Indian anthropologists working in Bastar), or a village teacher interested in keeping traditions alive. The ghotul at Nayanar is a case in point. Elwin visited there several times and was quite fond of it. Although he did not remark on any outstanding performance skills, he describes the physical setting as follows:

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there--the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. (1947:329)

Since then Nayanar has become quite famous. The ghotul buildings stand as before, but an added attraction is the polished performance put on by the current members--a product of training by a school teacher in the village. They have twice performed at Republic Day celebrations in Delhi, and they received an award in 1975. Some of the recordings presented here were made at Nayanar in 1979.

Other ghotuls are following suit, developing routines featuring songs and dances drawn from different festivals throughout the year. The incursion of commercialism that this trend represents is a reflection of an increased interest in recent years among non-tribal Indians (and non-Indians as well) in Indian tribal music. School children often perform tribal dances for assemblies and other school functions, and government officials in tribal areas are fond of asking dance troupes to perform for visiting dignitaries.

Although this increased awareness of interest is beneficial in some ways, the potential threat that it poses to traditional ghotul life has not been lost on the tribal leaders of the area. By 1982 it was clear that they were no longer in favor of the path that was being beaten to Nayanar by visitors seeking an "evening at the ghotul," and in late 1981, acting on a growing resentment over being asked to give outside performances on demand, the ghotul leaders had refused to perform for some visiting dignitaries at Jagdalpur (D'Monte, 1981:4).

It seems as if the headlong advance of the "dance troupe" movement has been partly checked, at least, and there is good evidence of continued traditional ghotul activities. Even the Nayanar ghotul members go off on the usual ghotul expeditions to perform in other villages, and the young men still go on hunting trips with bows and arrows to hunt small animals required in various rituals or desired for eating.

Ghotul girls, referred to as motiari, may adorn their hair with plastic flowers and combs bought in the bazaar rather than use the wooden combs and forest flowers of the past, and many may wear the familiar Hindu open-midriff blouse under the casually-draped cloth that traditionally formed the only chest covering, but they still sing their ghotul songs loud enough to waft on the night air to the next village.

Ghotul boys, known as chelik, generally still wear the traditional loincloth and distinctive Muria turban, plus silver bracelets and armbands, and the rafters of an active ghotul are heavy with drums and dancing stilts. Market fairs (known as marhai), clan-god festivals, and weddings provide ongoing opportunities for Muria music and dance to flourish. Thus it appears that the new dance troupe approach exists mainly as an overlay, not a replacement for the traditional events.

References

- D'Monte, Darryl
 1981 "Tribal Tales from Bastar." Bombay: The Sunday Observer, Dec. 27, p. 4.
- Dournon, Geneviève
 1980 "Inde: Musique tribale du Bastar" (LP disc, notes in French and English). Le Chant du Monde LDX 74736
- Dubey, K. C. and M. G. Mohril
 1965 Fairs and Festivals of Madhya Pradesh. Census of India.
- Elwin, Verrier
 1947 The Muria and Their Ghotul. Oxford.
 1968 The Kingdom of the Young. (Abridged from The Muria and their Ghotul.) Oxford.
- Grigson, W. V.
 1938 The Muria Gonds of Bastar. Oxford.
- Jay, Edward
 1970 A Tribal Village of Middle India. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India.

- Kaufmann, Walter
 1960 "The Songs of the Hill Maria, Jhoria Muria and Bastar Muria Gond Tribes". Ethnomusicology 4(3):115-28.
 1961 "The Musical Instruments of the Hill Maria, Jhoria, and Bastar Muria Gond Tribes". Ethnomusicology 5(1):1-9.

- Mitchell, A. N.
 1947 "The Language of the Muria." Appendix 2 in Verrier Elwin, The Muria and their Ghotul. Oxford.

-----*-----

I would like to acknowledge the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars for the grants (1979 and 1981) under which this work was done, Dr. Hiralal Shukla (Bhopal University) for assistance with transliteration and translation of the song texts, Mr. S. H. Ahmad and Mr. Vikas Bhatt (Anthropological Survey of India) for assistance and advice in the field, Oberlin College students Rolf Groesbeck and Jean Hasse for assistance with transcription and music copying, and Mae Logan for assistance with typing. Thanks also to Claudius Nenninger for companionship and assistance in the field.

THE RECORDINGS

SIDE ONE (A)

- A-1. Karsar, recorded at Nayanar (7:20)

Karsar is clan-god festival music. Among the Hill Maria, it is known as Koqsar or Kaksar and represents their most impressive and joyful festival. It is the culminating event of the harvest season, staged in various locations some time between December and April. As Dubey and Mohril note in Fairs and Festivals of Madhya Pradesh, Koqsar, or actually, the final event, known as Pupal Korta Tindana, in addition to honoring the clan gods, marks the end of a taboo on sexual relations that is imposed during the growing season because of a "fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex" (1965:115). It is an occasion when young men and women participate together in dances and seek out their future marriage partners. Although Elwin does not identify it by name, surely this is the event he is describing in this passage:

But when four or five hundred dancers spread themselves over a great field, and move round to the light of torches, the blowing of hunting horns, the clang of bells, the waving of innumerable plumes, the earth itself seems to come alive . . . by dawn even the outsider can appreciate the ecstasy and delight of the boys and girls who can dance untired for hours before their gods. (1947:546)

The Muria apparently do not celebrate Koqsar as such, but this performance from the repertoire of the Nayanar ghotul seems intended to represent a small glimpse into the Koqsar festival music.

The performance begins with a signal on the hakum, a buffalo-horn trumpet. The principal instrument is the mandri, a 2-1/2-foot long, slightly conical drum slung from the shoulders and played with both hands. A sticky paste is applied to the right head to lower its pitch. The chelik playing the mandri (and all the other instruments) dance as they play, moving in a large circle and executing various turns and reversals in a carefully planned sequence.

Next the hakum announces the entrance of the kotoloka or pitorka, played by a single chelik. It is a wooden slit drum, semicircular or trapezoidal in shape, hung from the neck with the opening facing downwards and beaten with two sticks. Another horn signal marks the entrance of several chelik playing small shallow kettle drums of clay called kundur. These are strapped to the waist and played with two small sticks. They add a steady high-pitched counter-rhythm to the mandri drums. A final horn signal announces the entrance of several chelik whose only instruments are a set of brass clapperless bells (hirnang) and a large clump of brass pellet bells (muayang) strapped at the small of their backs. A hip-jerking dance step sets them in motion. With these last chelik also enter the motiari, each playing a pair of iron cymbals about 3-1/2" in diameter, called chitkul. They dance in a circle inside the drummers, executing a series of forward, side and back steps as they sing.

The two songs performed each begin with a trademark of Muria and Maria music, the relo chorus, a series of vocables that nearly always start off a song and are often used as a refrain as well. According to Dr. Hiralal Shukla, linguist at Bhopal University, rela is a type of tree (Hindi: Amala tataka) with fragrant flowers and totemic value for the Muria, and the chorus may be (or may have once been) an invocation to this tree.

Marmi Pata (A-2)

We may note some interesting features of the performance: all elements are synchronized rhythmically but they are out of phase with each other in different ways. The drum parts establish a four-count phrase and maintain it throughout. The first song consists of three four-count phrases repeated many times without breaks and thus remains in phase with the drum part. But it does not begin on what may be perceived as the beginning or "downbeat" of the drum phrase, so is "out of phase" in this respect. The second song also consists of three phrases, but each is six counts long, so the song, now 18 counts long, moves out of phase with the drum part and its four-count phrases. The length of the dance step remains fixed, so it too is in or out of phase with the song, depending on which one is sung. The first melody spans an augmented tetrachord, the second a perfect fifth. The two are in "third-relation" to each other, the first using a "Lydian" (raised-fourth) scale on A, the second a "major" scale on F.

The opening relo choruses are shown below. The text (not shown) inquires about visiting villagers, in the form of a dialogue: "Where is this boy from? He is from Ramanar. Why has he come? To see our dance. Suppose our dance is not so good? Then he will at least enjoy the food."

A-2. Marmi Pata (Wedding Song), recorded at Remawand (3:55)

This song is sung while dancing at wedding festivities, which usually take place in March or April. It is about the motiari's obligation to the ghotul before marriage and to the home afterwards. It is sung antiphonally by six to eight singers who join hands and dance in a curving line as they sing. In this performance the singers chose not to dance, but on another occasion they demonstrated the 12-count dance step, as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	clap	9	10	11	clap
Adv	Hop	Adv	Hop	Step	Swing	Step	Swing	Step	Swing	Step	Swing
on	on	on	on	to R	L over	to L	R over				
R	R	L	L	on	R and	on	L and		(Same as 5-8)		
				R	return	L	return				

In the transcription below (somewhat idealized rhythmically as transcriptions tend to be), the dance steps fall on the quarter note beat. Note that there are twenty-one beats, meaning that the dance and song are continuously out of phase with each other. At some points in this performance there is a slight pause when the choruses switch; this would not be the case when dancing. Normally the dance is begun first, then the song begins, but the reader may acquire a grasp of the phase shifting in this performance by trying the dance steps shown above, starting on the first words of the chorus.

In this unaccompanied song the distinctive voice quality of the Muria female voice may be clearly heard. It is not the high, easy-flowing voice associated with Hindi film music, but a huskier, more robust sound with a slight edge to it, not unlike the voice quality of Balkan singers. (Note: the "w" in Gondi is a bilabial semivowel, approaching a "v" in sound, and often written thus. The letter "w" is used consistently here.)

(Each verse, ending with a short chorus, is sung first by half of the group (A), then repeated by the other half (B). The first statement by Group A is cut off in the recording.)

- (B only) 1. Rerela rerela rela rela, rerela rerela rerela.
(Chorus:) Ehe elo, oyo...
- (A, B) 2. Dindare raju to raju elo, dindare raju to raju roi.
(Dear friends, [let's sing about] the youth from the kingdom of the young.) (Cho. after each)
- (A, B) 3. I de re raju to yawo elo, i de re raju to yawo roi.
etc (Dear friends, still now our king [the youth to be married is addressed thus] has not arrived.)
- 4. Au yare bona to inmare elo, au yare bona to inmare.
(But friends, where is he? Why do you not say?)
- 5. Ghotul de dayanar to yatek elo, ghotul de dayanar to yatek roi.
(Dear friends, our queen [young woman to be married] is ready to leave the ghotul.)
- 6. Titang ke tinwar to handar elo, titang ke tinwar to handar roi.
(Whether she's had dinner or not, she will leave the ghotul.)
- 7. Hardere kai to watna re elo, hardere kai to watna re.
(Stretching her cupped hands out towards the road, she walks from the ghotul.)
- 8. Adarame lehka to handare elo, adarame lehka to handara.
(Friends, in this manner she will leave the ghotul.)
- 9. Bata e dami to yatek elo, bata e kami to yatek roi.
(She doesn't know or care about home duties before marriage.)
- 10. Kam tune surta to wayar relo, kam tune surta to wayar roi.
(But after marriage she will do her duties well.)

A-3. Dito Endana (Stilt Dance) recorded at Garhbangal (3:20)

The stilt dance is a newcomer to ghotul activities, having been introduced in the mid sixties. The stilts, however, are part of age-old Muria tradition associated with the rainy season and the god Bhimul, one of whose functions is to bring rain. The stilts have a hollow footrest filled with pebbles so any movement turns them into rhythmic instruments. They are made in July for the Amavas Pandum, a festival corresponding to the Hindu festival of Hareli. Elwin describes their use:

During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off. They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground. (1947:651)

Two songs from the Karsar dance (A-1)

(starts slightly lower)

A
Ri-ri lo-yo-ri-lo ri-lo, ri-ri lo-yo ri-la ri-ri-lo e

B
Ri-lo-ri-ri-lo ri-lo ri-lo ye ri-lo ri-lo o e

Marmi Pata (A-2)

(rises 1/2 step during song)

Re-re-la-re-re-la re-la re-la re-re-la re-re-la re-re-la
Din-da-re-Ra-ju to Ra-ju e-lo din-da-re Ra-ju to Ra-ju roi

e-he e-lo o-yo

In late September, at the Korta Pandum the boys break their stilts and pile them on the shrine of Bhimul Pen. These stilt piles can still be seen along the paths between villages, but some stilts are now kept year round for the stilt dance. Fighting is not part of the dance, but some complicated moves, such as clicking the stilt handles together, are typical.

In this performance the dancers are accompanied by only two drummers, one playing the kundir and another the parrai, an hourglass-shaped drum of clay used in some villages in place of the mandri. A paste of rice is put on each head to lower the pitch, but no variation is achieved by squeezing the laces, since they are very tight. (A memory springs to mind regarding this drum: one afternoon I was awakened from a nap by random drum strokes. It turned out to be a chicken fluttering up to peck the rice off a parrai hanging on the fence!) A striking feature of this performance is the use of hemiola between the drums and stilts. The style is one we associate more with Africa than India. The drums play six-pulse rhythms that may be heard in either duple or triple time, while the stilts define the duple beat. The kundir plays an unchanging part while the parrai introduces variations in rhythm and tone color.

stilts	L . . R . . etc.
kundir	R . R L R L
parrai (basic)	L . R L R .

There are songs for this dance as well. They are included in another performance on this record (B-2).

A-4. Karsana Pata (Recreational song) "Dippara Loporo" ("In the Small Forest"), recorded at Remawand (4:30)

This and the remaining two bands were recorded as part of a dozen or so songs that were sung on a quiet evening in the ghotul at Remawand. These are not dance songs, but are sung purely for enjoyment as the chelik and motiari sit around the fire. They are topical and often amorous, mentioning flowers, the forest, birds (including the common mynah, native to this area and so-named by the Muria), farm work and boy-girl relationships. New songs are introduced primarily through song-swapping in other villages.

As with Marmi Pata (A-2) this song is sung antiphonally and begins with a relo chorus. In this case the relo chorus recurs throughout the song, in addition to a chorus that is sung at the end of each verse. Other stylistic features of the songs reappear here as well: a narrow range (in this case five pitches that could be likened to 4-5-7-1-2 of the major scale), a tendency to slide between pitches in descending passages, and a complementary tendency for the whole song to rise in pitch over the course of the performance. The rhythm in non-dance songs tends to be less metered, a feature that is especially apparent at the changeover from one group of singers to the other. A distinctive feature of this song is a "hiccup" (a rest) in the third phrase of each line.

The overall form is a straightforward verse-refrain alternation, but internal repetitions upon repetitions make it more complicated. In this song, one group always sings the verse, the other the refrain. Each line of the verse consists of three short, equal phrases. The first two contain the same text repeated with slightly different endings; the third is the "hiccup" phrase. Its text remains fixed except to match the last four syllables of the first phrase. It thus forms a "mini-refrain" within the verse. Each line of the verse is repeated, creating the form A A' B A A' B. The first verse, in this case using the relo chorus vocables instead of a text, may be transcribed as follows:

Karsana Pata: "Dippara Loporo"

(A) (rises 1/2 steps during song)

Re-re lo — yo — re-la re-la re-re

(B)

Ye, e — ye — re-la re-la

The chorus, sung after each verse, modifies this slightly. It has only five phrases, corresponding to A A' B A' B, or three relo phrases and two "hiccup" phrases, the first of which is modified with an A ending. With a little concentration, it should be possible to follow this organization along with the text and transcription.

Karsana Pata: "Dippara Loporo"

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| | A | A' | B |
| 1. | Rere loyo rela rela | Rere loyo rere | Ye, e ye rela rela (repeat) |
| | A | A' | B |
| Cho. | Rere loyo rela rela | Rere loyo rere | Ye, e ye rela rela
Rere loyo rere Ye, e ye rela rela |
| | A | A' | B |
| 2. | Dippara loporo barang Lahari (repeat) | | Ye, e ye barang Lahari (Where in this small forest is brother Lahari?) |
| 3. | Dippara loporo reka Lahari (etc.) | | (He is standing there in the small forest by the <u>reka</u> berry tree.) |
| 4. | Rekar tindalai dairo Lahari (etc.) | | (He has gone to eat the <u>reka</u> berries.) |
| 5. | Waina ayo waina, Laharu (etc.) | | (Please come, why have you not come back, Laharu?) |

A-5. Kach tehendor (iron jaws-harp), recorded at Remawand (1:40)

Of this instrument, Elwin notes that it is "said to make music so sweet that even a snake would dance to it," but it is not popular because it is supposed to damage the teeth" (1947:528). It is virtually identical to the European form of the instrument, made by local blacksmiths. A chelik may carry one tucked in his turban and play it for personal enjoyment or entertainment. Along with nearly all of the instruments on this record, it is regarded as one of the eighteen instruments invented by Lingo Pen, legendary founder of the ghotul.

The technique consists of plucking the prong, sucking in to amplify and sustain the tone, then breathing in and out while continuing to pluck the prong. The principal melodic interest lies in the overtones isolated by changing the size of the mouth cavity. At one point a second player joins in, then drops out again.

A-6. Ghotul Pata "Tokaring Warawarang" ("Wagging Loincloth," a taunting song) recorded at Remawand (2:00)

Songs are begun and ended spontaneously in the ghotul, so the relo opening of this song is partly cut off. It was begun by a single chelik, who was joined shortly by another. It is a taunting song, a type Elwin mentions as the most popular and entertaining (1947:372). Although consisting of only two verses, this song pinpoints an item for ridicule: to have a short loincloth is regarded as a sign of poverty. The style is slow and languid, not unlike Scottish ballad singing. The range is wider than the other songs heard thus far, spanning an octave and including five pitches comparable to 5-7-1-3-4-5 of a Dorian scale (i.e., with low pitches 3 and 7). The unmetered rhythms allow for a more elaborately ornamented melodic line. The recording ends with a night bird heard in the distance as the ghotul activities end for the night.

"Tokaring Warawarang"

- Rere lo rerela rerela rela
 - Ingo beke daitoni Kora, beke daitoni
(Yes, Kora [name of leafy vegetable, used here to describe a man of disheveled appearance], where are you going?)
Kinnering jarajara, tokaring warawar (repeat)
(with your tears falling and your loincloth-tail wagging.)
 - Ingo, saga daitonan dada, saga daitonan
(Yes, I am going to see my elder brother)
Kinnering jarajar, tokaring warawar (repeat)
(With my tears falling and my loincloth wagging.)
- (3. repeat): kinnering warawar, tokaring jarajar
(with my tears scattering and my loincloth falling.)

SIDE TWO (B)

B-1. Forest Birds, recorded at Remawand (3:10)

The interest the Muria show in their environment is quite apparent from the many song texts that mention the forest, flowers, birds, and animals. Muria and Maria villages are usually out of earshot of any motorized transport or machinery, if not inaccessible to it, and thus the most familiar everyday sounds, besides the domestic animals and fowl around the village, are the forest birds. If this selection resembles something from a "jungle sound effects" album, it only shows that such sound effects are not far from wrong, since the excerpts here have not been subjected to any enhancing, overdubbing or mixing. With the

exception of the opening thirty-five seconds, they were all recorded within a half hour period at midday on a sunny January day, just at the edge of the village. The first excerpt was recorded at daybreak and includes two coucals calling to each other. Their call resembles the sound of hollow wood, something that has not gone unnoticed by the Muria, who call this bird pitorka, and sometimes refer to the kotoloka slit drum heard in Karsar (A-1) by the same name.

B-2. Geri (or Dito) Endana (Stilt Dance), recorded at Nayanar (4:45)

This performance of the stilt dance includes eight to ten chelik on stilts, others playing mandri drums, and a group of motiari singing and dancing with jagar, slender wooden poles about three feet long with iron jingles hanging at the top. The motiari form a line, and with their left arm over the shoulder of the next dancer, stamp the tip of the jagar on the ground with the right hand as they move to the right. The stilt dance performed here is essentially the same as that described before (A-3), but the mandri drums perform a unison accompaniment that changes with the dance. The motiari string together four different songs, each repeated several times. They all share the same tonal material, comparable to pitches 5-6-1-2-3-5 of a major scale, and bear a resemblance to each other in their melodic shapes. In each, verse and chorus are sung to the same melody, and some verses reappear in more than one song. Replacing the relo chorus are the words "Nima nana nima" which are more typical of Bastar south of the Indrawati River, or the Dandami Maria area. Another feature of these songs is the use of falsetto, which may also be heard in the Dandami Maria song on Band 6. The melodies (A-D) and some of the verse lines are shown below.

Geri Endana (B-2)

Verse

A 
 Ni-ma na-na ni-ma ni-ma na-na ni-ma wai-ra na-ru-li wai-ya-

Chorus


 ya-ya-yo wai-ya me ya-yo pi-nu wa-su-ta na-ru-li wai-ya- (1st time only)

B 
 Ni-ma na-na ni-ma wai na-na wai-ya wai wai-ya wai-ya wai-ya wai na-na wai

C 
 Ri-li ri-na-no- ri-li ri-na-no-wai ke-ru pa-nu sa

D 
 Wi-ta wi-ya ye wi-yu-ko po-ya-la wi-ta

Geri Endana (B-2)

Verse 1. Nima nana nima, nima nana nima waira, naruli waiya
 (You and I, you and I will come tomorrow.)

Chorus: Ya, yayo waiya, me yayo, pinu wasuta naruli waiya
 (Mother, my mother, please come. [No] it is cold--I will come tomorrow.)

2. Keru panu sagu, kera panu sagu waira, naruli waiya
 (We have prepared a dish of banana leaf shoots; please come and have some. [No] I'll come tomorrow.)
3. Sonor kisi sonu, sonor kisi sonu waira, naruli waiya
 (The fire is burning with golden flames.)
4. Jiya guta reli, jiya guta reli waira, naruli waiya.
 (My heart feels uneasy--I'll come tomorrow.)
5. Panu lewa gori, panu lewa gori waira, naruli waiya.
 (Even if you don't eat the banana dish, please come.)
6. Achore mannit, (etc.)
 (It will be better if I come the day after tomorrow.)

Verse for D: Wita wiya ye, wiyuko poyala wita
 (When will the sun show its light?)

B-3. "Hulki" (Song for Lingo Pen, founder of the ghotul) recorded at Garhbangal (3:25)

Hulki is danced as part of ghotul expeditions undertaken in November to provide a break from harvesting activities. Chelik and motiari of one village visit another and engage in a friendly competition. Although I was unable to witness such an event, Elwin describes it as follows: ". . . the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted" (1947:509). This hardly sounds enjoyable, but he also notes that "It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun" (1947:511).

For this dance no instruments are used, but the chelik wear a tubular anklet (siringong) filled with pellets on one foot, and this can be heard jingling lightly as they dance. Chelik and motiari intermingle in a line formation, placing one hand on the waist of the partner to the right, the other on the shoulder or upper arm of the second partner to the left. Thus tightly linked, they execute a series of intricate steps that moves the line in one direction, then another, through various curving paths. The chelik lead off with the song, and the motiari repeat each verse. Elwin gives the texts for six different songs performed on Hulki expeditions. The one sung here corresponds to his first and is clearly the basic Hulki song. It opens with a chorus unique to Hulki ("Tena namur nana re") and specifically mentions Lingo, who might be described as the patron saint of the ghotul.

For the Muria, Lingo was the first musician, and also the discoverer of fire and mahua, a liquor distilled from a forest flower (Bassia latifolia). The story of Lingo relates that he was the youngest of seven orphaned brothers. When all the older brothers had married, Lingo lived apart in a building at the edge



Chelik in the ghotul.

of the village (the first ghotul). There he kept eighteen musical instruments and played them all at once. When accused by his brothers of seducing their wives, he proved his innocence by enduring several ordeals. He was so unaffected that the music of his eighteen instruments was audible through each one. "The magic of his music drew the boys and girls to him. Because of Lingo, no evil can come to the ghotul" (condensed from Elwin, pp. 240-53).

This recording is excerpted from a performance twice this long. A notable feature of this performance is that the motiari answer the chelik a fifth higher, creating a bi-tonal effect. This bitonality, though unusual, is not unique. It appears to result from the men and women spontaneously and independently choosing a comfortable pitch level at which to sing their part. The tonal material has a "Mixolydian" flavor: $\flat 7-1-3-4-5$, but the third is more "neutral" than major; in fact, the third in the men's part varies between neutral and flat. The rhythm is somewhat languid and free, making the transcription less precise than in the previous examples.

4. Lingo na wehle daka ra leyor re
Lingo na wehle pata ra leyor re
(Boys, these dance steps were taught by Lingo.)
(Boys, this song was taught by Lingo.) (repeat verse 1)
5. Pirwir sulur kita ra leyor re (etc.)
(Boys, Lingo created the pirwir rattle drum and sulur flute.)
6. O tena namur nana re nana re (etc.)

(This performance continued with topical lines about flowers, foods, and the railway line that now pushes its way through South Bastar for iron ore.)

B-4. "Chandu Binu," a stick dance (Kola or Dandar Endana), recorded at Nayanar (2:50)

This song presents a striking contrast to Hulki. It moves more quickly, has a six-tone scale spanning an octave (2-3-5-6- $\flat 7$ -1-2), and the text is entirely topical, commenting in a satirical

"Hulki" (B-3)

Men

0 te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na re, te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na re,

0 te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na — re

Women

Te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na re, te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na

te-na na-mur na-na — re na-na — re

1. O, tena namur nana re nana re (3 times)
(Oh [what is] the name of the supreme being?)
2. Bumta malik badur re leyor re (etc.)
(Boys, who is the lord of the earth?)
3. Bumta malik Lingo ra leyor re (etc.)
(Boys, the lord of the earth is Lingo.)

vein about the morals of Muria girls, and touting the latest developments in Bastar District. During my visit there it proved to be very appealing to other villages besides Nayanar. As I moved from place to place, the members of one ghotul wanted to hear what I had recorded in the neighboring ghotul, and this song always caught their attention. I found myself an unwitting agent

"Chandu Binu" (B-4)

Chorus

sticks: Chan — du Chan-du Bi-nu du-ni-ya-cho bai — le re du-ni-ya-cho x

Verses 1+2

He Chan-du jiu-lo mi-lo he Chan-du-jam he Chan-du-jam

Verses 3+5

sticks: Ja-ra ja-ra ja-ra ja-ra na bo-he Chit-ra-kot cho-i pa-ni re — Chit-ra-kot cho-i pa-ni —

Verses 4,6,7,8

Dan dan dan nan-di bo-he-se In-da-ra-wa-ti nan-di re — In-da-ra-wa-ti nan-di —

of diffusion as motiari asked to hear this song over and over so they could learn it. Later the next day I could hear them singing it softly to themselves as they went about the village.

The song may be contemporary, but stick dancing itself is as traditional as Hulki. It is the principal feature of other ghotul expeditions known as Poos Kolang and Chait Dandar, the former also dedicated to Lingo Pen and undertaken with great care and seriousness (Elwin, 1947:486-502). In stick dances chelik and motiari both take part, each holding a pair of sticks about two feet long. These are struck against each other and against one's partners' sticks as the dancers move in opposing concentric circles and other formations. The steps are learned with great care and practiced before an expedition, for mistakes are considered an ill omen and are punished with fines. Usually the dancers sing as well, but in this performance four motiari stood to one side and sang. The text of this song aroused my curiosity, since the subject matter was noticeably different from the other songs. A village elder in Remawand set the record straight: it was composed by the Gram Sevak (government village servant) of the village of Bastar, about ten miles from Jagdalpur, and the former seat of the Gond kingdom of Bastar. The text is in Halbi, a dialect of Marathi, and was presumably taught to the Nayanar ghotul for their trip to Delhi several years ago.

All this aside, it is still a very appealing song. The excerpt here includes the first two of three melodies that were sung for the dance. They are transcribed below. Some of the nuances of rhythm escape transcription, but the metrical organization is still clear. It is another example of hemiola such as we have seen already in A-3. For every eight steps of the dance (four stick claps), the singers sing a twelve-count phrase. This is not easily heard in the first phrase, but in subsequent phrases it becomes quite clear.

"Chandu Binu" (B-4)

Chorus: Chandu, Chandu Binu duniya cho baile re
(Chandu and Binu are wives of the world.)
Verse 1. He, Chandu jiuilo milo he Chandu jam
(Chandu has seen a new life; she has tasted the guava.)
2. Bastar cho ilor Chandu Bastar cho jam
(She has been given the guava from Old Bastar village.)

(After the opening chorus, the verses are sung in the order 1-2-1-1-1-2, followed each time by the chorus.)

3. Jara jara jara jara na bohe, Chitrakot choi pani re
("Jara jara" runs the water at Chitrakot Falls.)
4. Dandandan nandi bohese, Indarawati nandi re
("Dandandan" runs the water of the Indrawati River.)
5. Gadagada o bijli mare Bastareya rani
(The Queen of Bastar throws the thunderbolt (electricity) with the sound "gadagada.")
6. Rawghat le bijli mare Bastareya raja
(The King of Bastar throws the thunderbolt from Rawghat.)
7. Sarak sarak motar jayse, puruk puruk baje re
(Motor cars traverse the roads, honking their horns "puruk puruk.")
8. Janam jug le rel ili rel dakhuk maja re
(After many generations, we are pleased to see a rail line (for iron ore) in Bastar.)

B-5. Sulur music, recorded at Garhbangal (2:15)

The sulur is a four-hole transverse flute. It is included, along with two string instruments--one plucked and one bowed--among the eighteen instruments of Lingo Pen, but all these melodic instruments appear to be rare today. In none of the three Muria villages recorded here was there a string player, and only Garhbangal had flute players, both of whom were well beyond their ghotul years.

The music is intended to accompany the dance of the Anga, a wooden horse-like representation of a deity carried on a large H-shaped frame by four dancers. The dancers, in a state of trance, move in unison, their movements dictated by the Anga. The short excerpts here would normally be repeated for the duration of the dance, but the musicians deemed them complete pieces as presented. Each consists of an introduction, followed by a string of short phrases of equal length separated by short gaps. The whole string is repeated several times, then finished off by a closing phrase. The flutes play in unison, but with differences in ornamental details. The scale is pentatonic: 1-b3-4-5-b7, with the tonal center evident from both beginning and ending pitches. The pieces have a range of a twelfth, from pitch three below to pitch seven above the tonal center. The rhythm is somewhat free, but may be felt in four. The first piece is entitled "Pargao Par" or thanks to all the deities, and the second is "Anga Karsana Par," music for the Anga's dance.

B-6. Dandami Maria song, recorded at Borokameli (1:25)

This short excerpt of Dandami Maria singing can hardly serve to represent the repertoire as a whole, but it does provide an example of some of the stylistic features that are common. Here the singing is responsorial instead of antiphonal, and the use of falsetto is notable. The dance step is similar to those described earlier--with left arms on neighbors' shoulders, the dancers stamp the ground with the dancing staff (jagar) held in the right hand, and perform a series of sidestepping movements as they sing. Some songs are performed as here, without drums, but usually they are accompanied by drums, the drummers wearing the bison horn and cowrie shell headdress described earlier.

A fragment of the text sung is as follows:

1. Nimayo welaga, ...
2. Nima welaga, nimayo waiya
("You please come, please come".)

B-7. Hill Maria dance, with dabka frame drum, recorded at Lanka, at the foot of the Abujhmar mountains (1:55)

This dance was performed by several men to the accompaniment of one drum, played with a short stick in the right hand and a thin wand in the left. The performance was on the occasion of a visit by the newly-posted Tribal Development Officer to the region. This example is excerpted from a 3-1/2 minute performance. The dancers walk in a counterclockwise circle, pausing after each step with knees bent to drag the trailing foot forward. After eight steps the dancers turn outwards, making a small clockwise circle around themselves, then after eight more steps they turn inwards and make a counterclockwise circle.



Two sulur players (B-5).

B-8. Hill Maria song, recorded at Lanka (1:10)

This song was performed by women on the same occasion as the previous example. The excerpt is from the end of a six minute performance. Two groups sing antiphonally, with each entry overlapping the end of the previous one. The text alternates between a *relo* chorus and extemporized verses poking fun at the visitors, both sung to the same triadic melody.

Some fragments of the text:

Tire tire agna bati tirere; Kore kore na babuloke kore le
 ("Our visitors have crooked limbs; they walk as if lame;
 their lips are red.")

The dance step is extremely simple: as with the men, the women form a column, moving in a counterclockwise circle, not a line with arms linked as do the Muria. There are four steps: a small step forward with the right, a large step backward with the left, two small side-steps to the right with right and left, then begin again.

B-9. Hill Maria dance, recorded at Dondimarka, in the heart of the Abujmar (1:55)

After a full day's hike from Lanka, the party reached this village, where no white man or non-tribal Indian woman (such as the officer's young wife, who was along) had ever visited before. Being the cold season, it was not the most suitable evening for singing and dancing, but some young men of the village performed several songs nonetheless. Five boys dancing are accompanied by three boys playing on one large kettle drum, called *dolu*. The dancers link arms over shoulders and wheel as a unit, counterclockwise around the drummers. They take slow, hopping steps and sing a three-note melody on pitches $b7-1-3$. The excerpt here is from a 4 1/2 minute performance. Each phrase in full voice is answered by one in falsetto. The text is largely unintelligible, but some of the words mimic the sounds of animals. The unadorned simplicity of this song, presenting little to the listener but much to the performers, evokes beautifully the isolation of the Abujmar.



Chelik and motiari at the door of the ghotul. Photo by S. H. Ahmad.



Motiari at the marketplace. Photo by S. H. Ahmad.



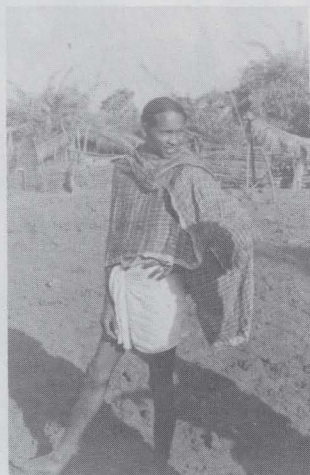
Bison Horn Maria girls at Borokameli (B-6).



Karsar dance (A-1). Instruments shown here are (l-r) the mandri drums, chitkul (small cymbals), and hirnang/muyang bells around the waists of the dancers.



Playing the kach-tehendor (A-5).



A young Hill Maria man



Chelik on stilts and motiari with jagar for the Geri Endana (B-2).