

GURUNG MUSIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY*

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As Dor Bahadur Bista has defined, Nepalese culture is a "unity of diversity" (Bista, 1982:2). The cultural identities of Nepalese people derive from both ethnic and national back-grounds. Correspondingly, the study of Nepalese cultural identity should be approached from these perspectives: from the perspective of national culture and from those of ethnic cultures. I assume that in the intersection of these approaches lies the cultural identity of contemporary Nepalese people.

The process of nation-building has in a sense been going on in Nepal since the times of Prithvi Narayan Shah. However, a suitable background for creating integrated Nepalese culture was not established before the political change in 1951. As a result of that, mutual communication and a flow of influence among ethnic groups and administrative ruling groups became possible.¹ The process of nation-building has required conscious effort in order to establish a national culture. During the former King Mahendra's reign, in particular, the formation of the nation-state and national culture

*The material for the ethnomusicological study of Gurung music, part of which is presented in this article, was collected mainly in three Gurung villages in the Lamjung district as well as among the Gurungs of Kathmandu, firstly in 1975-1976 and again in 1985. I am greatly indebted to all my Gurung friends, especially to Dhan Bahadur Gurung, Yukta Gurung, and the late Bhasu Gurung.

I am grateful to Dr. Alan Mcfarlane, who commented upon the first draft of the article and who helped me to recognize some aspects for further clarification. Discussions with another Gurung expert, Dr. Simon Strickland, have also thrown light on my understanding of the Gurungs.

¹The process of nation-building at large is discussed a.o. in Krader (1968) and Gellner (1983). The process of nation-building specifically in Nepal is described and analyzed a.o. in Gaige (1976) and Upreti (1985). The role of the mass media in the nation-building of Nepal is portrayed in Bhatt (1982) and Khatri (1976).

was greatly emphasized through announcements and campaigns. At the present moment it is fruitful to examine how national culture, which evolves as an essential part of the process of nation-building, has influenced the cultural identity of Nepalese ethnic groups.

In this article, cultural identity is studied from the point of view of the Gurungs. The outlining of Gurung cultural identity has been undertaken through the study of their music and musical behavior. The study is based on the paradigm of ethnomusicology, according to which people's music and musical behavior reflect their culture and changes within it (a.o. Merriam, 1964 and Herndon and McLeod, 1981). Ethnomusicological studies from around the world provide convincing evidence about music both as a reflector and as an effector in culture.² The relationship between music and cultural identity has been a theme which has raised considerable interest among ethnomusicologists (see Bohlman, 1988).

Gurung Traditional Music and Cultural Identity

Although outside contacts due to the salt trade and foreign army service of men have long since been an essential part of Gurung culture, rural Gurung villages, have until recently, functioned as rather self-sufficient entities.³ The local environment, rice-farming and small-scale livestock breeding, in addition to army service, have provided their basic physical needs. The traditional belief system and the order of the Gurung Society have offered frameworks and other social and psychological needs. Gurung lifestyle and survival have centered around the traditional cultural and social system.

The Gurung traditional cultural identity has been closely linked with their ethnic identity, which has evolved from their traditional society. Awareness of ethnic identity derives from contacts with other ethnic groups. Interaction with other ethnic groups has aroused awareness of the Gurungs' own ethnicity. They have constructed their cultural identity in relation to other cultures within the neighborhood. Certain features of

²The studies of Nepalese music have concentrated mainly on describing musical behavior or instruments of different ethnic and caste groups (for a forthcoming account on the literature of studies of Nepalese music, see Tigney and Wegner, in press). The effects of national politics on people's musical behavior in Nepal has been far less examined. At first, the question was raised by Anderson and Mitchell (1978). Recently, the influence of media music on Newari musical practice has gained an enlightening analysis by Ingemar Grandin (1989).

³Anthropological studies on the Gurungs have been provided a.o. by Bernard Pignede (1966), Alan McFarlane (1974), and Ernestine McHugh (1985).

the Gurung culture, such as the *Rodi* institution⁴ and the rites of passage, especially the rites after death (*G. pae*), have served as cultural icons and criteria of Gurung identification.

The caste hierarchy, in which the Gurungs are themselves included as a caste, adds an important dimension to the examination of traditional Gurung identity. In Nepal, interaction among ethnic groups is to a great extent conducted and limited by the rules of caste hierarchy. Due to caste hierarchy, ethnic cultures living within close proximity have remained quite uninfluenced by one another. This also concerns the Gurungs: their cultural traits have maintained some features distinct from coexisting fellow cultures.

Communication of cultural dimensions of ethnicity is carried out in rites of passage, rituals and ceremonies (DeVos, 1975:26). When looked at from the ethnomusical perspective, the central role of music in traditional Gurung rites of passage, rituals, and ceremonies is recognized. Both the *Rodi* and the rites after death as well as the *Purputē*, a rite for blessing the first-born male child of a Gurung family, employ a great deal of music.⁵ Thus, it may be claimed that communication of Gurung identity is carried out in rites and ceremonies consisting largely of music. In this respect music serves as an essential criterion of Gurung cultural identity.

Music is a constant phenomenon in Gurung villages and is an essential part of their sound milieu. It exists as an inseparable part of Gurung social and cultural life: it marks the significant events of the Gurung individual and village life, and it transmits and reflects the social norms of the society.

The Gurungs learn their music from early childhood. Musical behavior is a means to enculturate Gurung children into Gurung society and culture. The children follow and imitate the adults' music-making and begin to play as soon as their arms are long enough to reach the ends of the *mādal*⁶ drum. In the course of musical *Rodi* evenings,

⁴The *rodi* is a socially organized institution for evening gatherings of the Gurung youth (see Andors, 1976). Evenings in the *Rodi* houses consist mainly of music-making. The singing, playing, and occasional dancing usually last until after midnight. Although there have been discussions about the moral nature of the *Rodi*, and in places attempts were made to finish this tradition, at least in Lamjung it still seems to flourish.

⁵Gurung weddings are celebrated to the accompaniment of music performed by the semi-professional musicians of the Damai caste. If desired, a Gurung musical group may also be invited to give a performance.

⁶A cylinder-shaped, two-headed wooden drum, which is most common in the hill area.

many social norms and emphases of the Gurung society and culture are conveyed. Patterns for reciprocal and collective activities are also learned and stressed in the music-making. *Rodis* occupy a central position in maintaining an old Gurung musical tradition called the *Ghātu*. *Rodi* groups arrange the setting and equipment for *Ghātu* performances.

Important and essential musical genres in the repertoire of the Gurungs are also the *Sorathi* and the *Krishna Chalitra*. All these are epic musical dance dramas which have religious dimensions. These genres will now be addressed briefly in order to reveal their social and ethnic importance in Gurung society.

Public musical performances of the *Ghātu*, the *Sorathi*, and the *Krishna Chalitra* are important social gatherings in Gurung village communities. These musical performances are used to mark special occasions within the community, such as that of welcoming a visitor, blessing a house, the first male child of a Gurung family or a new marriage, and also to celebrate a day of religious importance or the victory of a football team from the village. Performances provide an important social setting for people to meet each other; they gather almost all the villagers together. Characteristic features of the Gurung society, reciprocal activities and hospitality patterns are displayed on these musical occasions. All villagers, including people belonging to lower castes, are equally welcome. This displays the egalitarian nature of the Gurungs. The audience comprises all ages from children to village elders, men and women, prestigious and ordinary villagers. Sometimes the noise virtually drowns out the music. People belonging to other castes can also be seen in the audience, but usually most of them stay away. This is explained by the Gurung villagers, that "they have their own music, our music does not interest them".

The *Ghātu* is the most complex form of musical performances performed by the Gurungs. The complete performance of the *Ghātu* lasts "three days and nights". It takes place once a year at the time of full moon in mid-May during the Baisakh Purne festival.⁷ After that festival, rice is planted. The performance is meant to please the gods in order to guarantee a good rice crop. This performance is preceded by another, shorter performance of a part of the *Ghātu*, which takes place in February during the Shree panchami festival. The purpose of it is "to call for the gods", as explained by the *klebri* shaman of the village.

The story of the *Ghātu* tells about the life and death of King Pasuram and Queen Yamawati. Scholars disagree about the historical event on which the *Ghātu* is based.

⁷Baisakh Purne is the festival of Lord Buddha's incarnation.

According to Jagman Gurung, the story is based on the life histories of the King and Queen of Gorkha, Pramasru Raja and Yamphabati Rani (2035:64, footnote 13). Donald Messerschmidt relates it to a legend of the Ramayan epic (1976:73, footnote 9).

It is very possible that the story of the *Ghāṭu* dance varied in different areas. The written and oral descriptions of its content differ from each other as well. However, there are some basic elements which are present in each of these descriptions. The *Ghāṭu* includes several parts which can be performed separately. Each of these parts has its own theme, such as rice planting, weddings, flowers, a hermit, hunting, and battle. The part, which features the *sati*, the custom according to which the Queen allows herself to be burned alive with her deceased husband, is only performed during the Baisakh Purne festival. Other parts of the story may be performed separately.

The language in which the *Ghāṭu* is sung is unknown. It is neither Nepali nor Gurung. While some written sources claim that it is old-fashioned Nepali (Gurung, 2035; Thapa, 2030; and Messerschmidt, 1976), the leader of the musical group simply calls it the "*Ghāṭu* language". The audience does not understand the meaning of the words, but they are able to follow approximately what is going on. Not even the singers understand the words exactly. However, they can explain the meaning of single sentences if asked. The forgotten language demonstrates the archaic nature of the *Ghāṭu*.

The *Ghāṭu* is performed by a male chorus, three to four male *mādal* drummers, and two to three young female dancers. The dancers should be of premenstrual age and skillful. Their dancing should be graceful and fluid. According to Gurung belief, only such girls can be "touched by the gods", i.e. to fall into a trance, which is an essential part of some performances. Each part of the *Ghāṭu* has a few basic melodies which are slightly varied during long performances. Performance practice, the vibrated style of singing, the undulating of voices, and the heterophonic style of group singing, create the characteristic and unique sound quality of the *Ghāṭu*. The style of dancing is very slow; the dancers bow slowly down around their axis and move up again. Occasionally small finger gestures decorate the dance. Because the *Ghāṭu* is oral tradition, the leader of the musical group, the *guru*, must know the long story by heart.

The *Sorathī* is said to originate from the fourteenth century, before Nepal was formed. It is claimed that it was brought by Aryan people from the Indian peninsula. In addition to the Gurungs, it is performed by another Nepalese ethnic group, the Magars. It is transmitted orally as well. The language in which the *Sorathī* is sung may be old-fashioned Nepali. The audience finds it easier to understand than the singing of the *Ghāṭu*. This may indicate that the latter is an older genre, or that the two texts are in different languages.

The story tells of King Jaisinge, whose first six wives did not give him a child. He then married another woman and this youngest wife gave him a daughter. The six older queens became jealous of this. They bribed the astrologer, who was asked to forecast the future of the baby. The bribed astrologer told the King that the future of the child was bad and that she would cause trouble for His Majesty. As a solution, the astrologer recommended that the baby be thrown into a river in a golden box. Upon hearing of the baby's bleak future, the King ordered blacksmiths to prepare a golden box, in which the baby would be thrown into the river. However, the box became trapped in the net of two fishermen, one of whom took the baby as his own daughter.

Years later, the King was on a hunting trip and he stopped by the house of a fisherman in order to ask for water. He saw the beautiful daughter of the fisherman and fell madly in love with her. He wanted to marry the girl. Finally, he discovered that the beautiful young woman whom he was planning to marry was his own daughter. The story has a happy ending: the girl and her mother are reunited.

The *Sorathi* is performed by male singers, two to four male drummers, four male dancers and a male actor. Two of the male dancers are dressed in women's clothing.⁸ There is also a masked man, a *jogi*, who plays several roles during the performance. He is the astrologer, the blacksmith who makes the golden box, and the fisherman who finds the baby. He does not participate in the dance; instead, he plays his roles by using various devices appropriate to the text of the song.

In the very beginning of every performance the performers ask the Hindu goddess Saraswati for a blessing. According to a belief, people who are touched by the Goddess Saraswati begin to tremble. Thus, when a selected, sensitive person starts to tremble, people know that the Goddess is attending the performance. The trembling is made to stop at the end of the performance.

The singing style of the male chorus is heterophonic. Vibrato is used, but it is not as strong as in the performance of the *Ghātu*. The style of dancing is livelier: the dancers move around a rather large dancing area in two pairs, making mirroring figures on the ground. They give quick steps and decorate the dance with wide arm movements.

The *Krishna Chalitra* (N., Krishna's story) is a dance drama, which does not belong to the oldest strata of the Gurung musical repertoire, but which was composed

⁸The reason for men dressing themselves in women's clothing is that, according to Gurung custom, adult married women should not dance in public. The performers also assert that this custom "entertains and amuses the audience".

around 1910 by a Gurung man on the basis of Hindu mythology. The story tells about the life of Lord Krishna. The text is in Nepali. The performance displays seven episodes from Krishna's life. The themes of the episodes are Krishna's birth, his childhood, Krishna and Radha, the snake, Krishna's love, the *holi*⁹, and the seizing of the garments. The editing of religious texts, the style of performance, the melodies, rhythmic patterns and choreography were devised by Subba Narjung Gurung, a man who lived in the village of Ghanpokhara in the Lamjung district, at the beginning of this century.

The *Krishna Chalitra*, like the *Ghāṭu* and the *Sorathī*, is performed when ordered by someone. Its performance, however, also has a special context: it is usually the core of the *Purputē* ceremony. The *Purputē* is, as the Gurungs say, "a happy occasion to honor the first son of a Gurung family". It is arranged when the son reaches the approximate age of one. The tradition originates from an event in which Lord Krishna's birth was celebrated all through the night. The *Krishna Chalitra* has a clear function in the *Purputē*: the dance drama is performed to bless the first son so that he will grow to become like Lord Krishna. The happy celebration of the *Purputē* and the music of the *Krishna Chalitra*, bring almost all the villagers together.

The *Krishna Chalitra* is performed by four male dancers, four *madal* drum players, and a group of male singers. Two of the male dancers perform a male role, two a female role. According to a custom, every household should send one person to participate in the performance within the context of *Purputē*.

The melody of the singing stays in the pentatonic scale, like that of the *Ghāṭu* and *Sorathī*. The singing style is less heterophonic and uses much less vibrato. The dancing takes place over a considerably large area (5x5 meters), and involves a lot of lively movements. Hand gestures do not have a role in the dance. Sometimes drum players also dance in order to provide a balance between rhythm and dance.

Each performance of the *Krishna Chalitra* begins with an introductory prayer (N. *satak*), in which the performers ask for a blessing from the gods of the sky, of the earth, and from the gods of all directions, as well as from the sun, moon, and stars. The prayer is sung without drum accompaniment. In other parts of the performance, the correct playing of certain rhythmic patterns is sanctioned by religious norms. According to beliefs, a mistake causes danger from witches and evil spirits. Tales about the breaking of *mādal* drums are told among the villagers. People who become "touched by the Goddess Saraswati" begin to tremble while a certain rhythmic pattern is played.

⁹*Holi* is a custom of sprinkling colored water.

Trembling does not end until the performance is over. The complete performance takes thirteen hours -- in the *Purputē* it lasts throughout the night.

Traditional Gurung musical performances, especially those like the *Ghātu* and the *Sorathī* and, to a certain extent, the *Krishna Chalitra*, are closely connected to traditional Gurung social and religious systems. Many practices and beliefs related to traditional music derive from a shamanistic world view. Old Gurung music transmits the values and priorities of traditional Gurung society. It has a central role in enculturating children to the Gurung culture and world view.

The Gurungs themselves also recognize the importance of traditional music for their cultural and ethnic identity. When speaking about music they emphasize the value of traditional Gurung music. It is regarded as an important part of Gurung culture and as a supporter of ethnic identity. This attitude is shared by old and young, rural and urban Gurungs. Young rural Gurungs claim that, for instance, the *Ghātu* music is their favorite because "it is our own music". Old rural Gurungs say that "it distinguishes us from other people".

There are, of course, other kinds of music in rural Gurung communities. The activities of Gurung shamans, the *poju* and *klebri* include a lot of music-making, both chanting and playing of musical instruments. Oral narrations of the sacred book, the *pé*, which are done in the course of funeral rites, are chanted. The playing of musical instruments as an accompaniment to chanting is done to drive away evil spirits or to please gods. Although the rites after death certainly display the beliefs and order of Gurung society, the music performed in the course of the rites is not recognized by the ordinary Gurungs as a source of cultural identity. It may be that in this case, the religious importance precedes the music. The music in the rites after death is only performed by specialized authorities and is not allowed to be made either by a layman or within an improper context.

In older times, the Gurung youth used to sing old Gurung songs, i.e. local songs in the Gurung language, in *Rodī* houses. Nowadays, however, only a few of the older people know these songs. Songs adapted from radio programs and musical cassettes have replaced them. Thus, old Gurung songs of the locality no longer function as a cultural criterion for the Gurungs.

The central role of Gurung dance-dramas as a manifestation of Gurungness becomes even more evident with the study of Gurung music in an urban context. In rural surroundings, the Gurung village social system supports the people's cultural identity as Gurungs. In contrast, urban Gurungs have to look to their rural "roots" for support of their

traditional cultural identity.¹⁰ In 1951, the Gurungs of Kathmandu established an informal Gurung association. Its purpose is to act as a support-network for urban Gurungs and to maintain their culture and identity in the urban surroundings. The urban Gurung support system, functioning as the Gurung association, relies among other things upon music. In the gatherings of the urban Gurungs, rural traditional music is transmitted to display the "roots" of ethnicity. Musical performances of the *Sorathi* are used to gather together urban Gurungs as well as to collect money for charity purposes. In an urban context, traditional Gurung music serves not only as a source but also as a significant supporter of Gurung identity.

Gurung Musical Practice

Musical activity among Gurung villagers is remarkable: music accompanies the everyday life of the village, marking the special occasions, and it is an integral part of every Gurung's life cycle. Every Gurung takes an active part in music-making at some period of his or her life. Nevertheless, their musical creativity is not allowed to flow freely but is limited by social norms. The limits of creativity are set by the social and cultural system as a whole and specifically arise from the caste hierarchy and from the question of gender.

As has been described, rural Gurung communities use various musical activities. there are formal public performances of large dance-dramas, sacred music for religious usage, and music performed by other ethnic groups when invited by the Gurungs. Informal music is made for recreation, such as *Rodi* evenings. Musical activities are, for the most part, tied to the natural agricultural cycle of the village. Most of the public musical performances take place during the months between late November and mid-May, during the time between the harvesting and planting of rice.

The Gurung musical repertoire reflects their cultural situation: it consists of both the traditional music of Gurung society and the music which they have either imitated or adapted from mass media, radio programs, musical cassettes and films.

The characteristics of music spread by mass media are different from those of ethnic music; the former is greatly influenced by Indian film and popular music.¹¹ Even if the melody of a song originates in an ethnic repertoire, as it most often does in the so-called folk songs (*N. lok git*), the performance practice and the arrangement added in recording studios make it sound very different. Music created in the instances of Nepalese

¹⁰For more, see Moisala (in press).

¹¹Ingemar Grandin has given a full and detailed account of the development and conditions of the Nepalese "mediaized" musical genres, as he calls them (1989:112-141).

mass media, *lok gīt*, as well as *ādhunik gīt* (N., modern songs), is a kind of hybrid music, which combines Nepalese musical tradition with Indian film music, which, in its turn, has adapted influences from not only Western music but also from other musics around the world. This kind of new Nepalese media music has become widely adapted among ethnic groups. Due to its large target group and adaptation it can also be called pan-Nepalese music.

Gurung villagers, especially those who have a keen interest in music, listen to radio programs in order to learn new songs. The words will be written down and the melodies are learned by ear for imitation purposes. Songs imitated or adapted from mass media are sung especially by the Gurung youth in *Rodī* houses and in the performances of the dance theater of the youth, called *Thetār* (N., theater). The *Thetār*, as a performance genre, was introduced to the Gurungs by *gurkha* soldiers who had adopted it from India. A performance consists of several short songs which are danced by different combinations of dancers. It is performed on similar occasions as are other musical performances: when somebody invites it and pays for the music. Many *Thetār* groups are connected to a local school. Thus, earnings of the musical group are used for the needs of the school.

Before it is performed in the *Thetār*, a media song is arranged to suit the musical resources of the group. *Thetār* songs are sung by a group of young girls, who are accompanied by a couple of *mādal* drum players and a harmonium player. Melodies are not pentatonic but modal. The style of singing is not heterophonic and no vibrato or undulating of voice is used. The most popular themes of songs performed in the *Thetār* are love, the King of Nepal, Nepalese culture, and the mountains of the Himalayas.

Younger Gurung villagers have also begun to compose songs in the "media style". These songs often have patriotic texts. The most important events for *Thetār* groups are competitions between groups from different villages. Cultural competitions are organized by government authorities, and the songs with clearly Nepalese themes are highly praised.

Performances of Pan-Nepalese music in *Thetār* compete for popularity with more traditional Gurung musical performances. Sometimes the competition is demonstrated in a concrete way: the performances of the *Thetār* and the *Ghātū* may be arranged at exactly the same time at different ends of the village. In that way the audience is forced to make a conscious decision between these events.

Although the Gurungs recognize the importance of traditional musical genres as a criterion of their identity, the frequency and importance of performing those long-

lasting musical performances seem to be diminishing. People either cannot afford the time or costs required by the performances. Alternatively, they no longer relate to the shamanistic priorities associated with traditional music. Younger, educated villagers also regard them as musically boring.

However, attitudes towards pan-Nepalese music are more seldom articulated or verbalized than those towards Gurung music. It seems that the Gurungs do not have a similar kind of urge, need or ability to express their attitudes towards broadcasted music. They take it for granted and are surprised when asked for an opinion about it.

It is evident that these two different strata in the musical repertoire of the Gurungs, traditional music and music adopted from the media, are musically very different. What is more significant, in the examination of their cultural identity, is that these musical genres represent different cognitive spheres. More traditional Gurung musical performances represent the values and beliefs of traditional Gurung society. Newly-adopted music from Nepalese mass media stresses the importance of national integration and culture.

Gurung Cultural Identity and Nation-Building

The Gurungs used to define their ethnic and cultural identity in relation to other ethnic groups and cultures living within close proximity. The caste hierarchy stresses the distinctiveness of the caste groups and their culture. The caste system supports the maintenance of musical traditions of different castes as separate. Musical traditions of different castes living in the same Gurung village have not mixed, but coexist separately. Although there usually are people belonging to different ethnic groups living in the same village, their ethnic music has hardly become mixed.¹² People of different ethnic backgrounds may attend each other's performances as part of the audience, but they do not easily begin to perform each other's music.

¹²I have been told about three occasions in which people belonging to another caste have performed music that is traditionally a part of the Gurung repertoire. However, I have never witnessed such an occasion. Without more detailed enquiry on the subject it is questionable what aspects of the performance were adapted: the text or theme of the song, the melody, rhythms, instruments, or performance practice. It has occurred to me how the Nepalese may identify two musical performances as the same only on the basis of the theme of the song and the rhythmic patterns played by the accompanying drums. In terms of melody and the style of performance, the music may have been quite different.

Nowadays, the Gurungs are challenged with adjusting themselves to the Nepalese national culture and with defining their cultural identity in relation to it. The Gurung population lives in increasing contact with, and within the context of, the Nepalese nation-state. The national administrative and educational systems have connected Gurung rural societies with the state. Mass communication reaches Gurung villages mainly through Radio Nepal. Mass media and education in Nepali gradually displace the oral Gurung language and increase the usage of Nepali (see Hutt, 1986). All these national factors, the administrative system, the school, and the mass media - including pan-Nepalese music created by it - are important channels for spreading national values and culture.

Many rural Gurungs see integration into Nepalese culture as a gateway to an ever-improving life. The solutions to financial distress, no longer offered by the traditional Gurung economy, are expected to be found through modernization and Nepalization. This creates a fertile soil for the adaptation of national culture and the identification of people as Nepalese.

The Gurungs have two simultaneous cultural identities: on the basis of their ethnic background they regard themselves as Gurungs and within the context of Nepal they identify themselves as Nepalese. Bista has claimed that most of the Nepalese people do not have any problem identifying themselves with an ethnic group on one level, and with Nepali society in general on another level (Bista, 1982:2). The study of Gurung music, however, reveals that the cultural identification of the Gurungs as Gurungs and simultaneously as Nepalese is not without problems and requires constant effort from them so as to balance these cultural domains against one another.

Nepalese mass media, Radio Nepal, as well as the recording and film industries, create and promote a new style of music for the purpose of national unification (see Anderson and Mitchell, 1978). Pan-Nepalese music represents a cognitive sphere different from the traditional Gurung world view. As a part of national culture it emphasizes and transmits national values. Pan-Nepalese music demonstrates the sentiments of national culture, it encourages national unification and ethnic integration. Ethnic characteristics are to a large extent omitted in it.

Due to economic distress and the willingness to modernize their culture, people have the necessary motivation to conceptualize, accept and adjust themselves into the Nepalese national system and cultural identity. Pan-Nepalese music becomes accepted as part of the Nepalization of life.

Nation-building means that there are new pressures to maintain Gurung cultural identity among both rural and urban societies. The changing situation has caused the

Gurungs to become more aware of their ethnic cultural identity. They have become more conscious of the value of their traditional music as a supporter of their ethnic identity. Urban Gurungs strive to keep Gurung musical tradition and identity alive in urban surroundings. They have turned to the villages in order to find authentic Gurung culture.

The Gurungs have always been "men of the Kings". They were proud of their impact when the nation was united. National "Nepalization" of the culture is welcomed by the Gurungs. They see it as part of modernization and as the hoped-for resolution to financial distress. Pan-Nepalese media music, created for national unification, supports on its part the adaptation of Nepalese cultural identity. It represents modernization and development. As a contrast to that, traditional musical rituals are beginning to be regarded as an obstacle to progress and modern development. However, at the same time, they are understood to be essential criteria and supporters of ethnic identity.¹³ This reveals a cognitive conflict experienced by the Gurungs.

The two coexisting cultural identities of the Gurungs seem to be irreconcilable due to the different cognitive spheres related to them. The difficulty in reconciling these cultural identities arises from national cultural planning. It seems that the retention of highly articulated ethnic minority cultures is omitted from national culture, which aims at ethnic unity and integration. Ethnic musics are not recorded or appreciated by official national institutions. Rich traditional ethnic music, which for the most part is closely related to traditional belief systems, and which has found its functional and collective basis in traditional societies, has not obtained a role or function in national developmental work.

The view of the Gurungs, however, is different. They consider Gurung culture as a part of national culture. Maintaining and supporting Gurung traditions, in their opinion, enriches Nepalese national culture.

In the formation of the nation-state, culture plays an important role in creating the feeling of nationalism and national sentiment. Ideally, culture forms a bridge of understanding between the people and the state organization. If the goals, ideals and attempts of both the nation-state and ethnic cultures are related, the smooth development of nation-building is guaranteed. Cognitive and affective consistencies motivate people to obtain and sustain identities.

¹³It is well-known by anthropologists that what is said by people often differs from what they actually do. It is understood that, in that case, people speak about ideals, i.e. how they would like things to be -- even though they are not able, for one reason or another, to make their ideals come true.

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