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An Ethnomusicological Study of Maithili and Japanese Folk Songs

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Abstract: Folk songs are the soul of a nation as they allow one to peep through the region's culture and facilitate the emotional understanding of a state. Folk songs are found in the rural areas in their authentic form, and the rural folk of the nation primarily fosters seasonal folk songs. This paper attempts an ethnomusicological study of seasonal folk songs of Maithili and Japanese language and finds the themes and metaphors that enrich the fabric of folk songs. Mithila, a region in the Indian state of Bihar, is renowned for its rich heritage of folk songs that the natives sing during different seasons. The tradition includes "*chaumasa*," which represents songs from the four major months. Similarly, Japan boasts a celebrated tradition of folk songs, which are classified into various categories, including those characteristics of the seasons, such as the "*Shiki no Uta*" or songs of the four seasons. This paper attempts to analyse the seasonal motifs and beliefs of the two distinct cultures from an ethnomusicological perspective. A few selected seasonal folk songs from both languages will be compared to bring out possible differences and similarities between the two geographically distanced regions.

Introduction

Folklore, as the name suggests, narrates the lore or stories of the people of an ethnic group. These stories comprise folktales, myths, legends, etc. The lore associated with these ethnic groups recounts their oral traditions. These oral traditions provide insights into the lore regarding their way of life and the perspective that shapes their worldview, usually reflected in their idioms, proverbs, music, songs, etc. Thereby, one can infer that folklore also comprises oral literature and resources that express the emotions and thoughts of the folks. Songs, one of the strong mediums to express one's feelings, are a significant part of people's lives. However, the style of songs and their subject matters differ based on various factors such as society, ethnicity, culture, etc. Yet, songs seem to disseminate in the company of human emotions. The bond between human emotions and songs is also expressed through folk songs that, needless to say, originate from humans and are passed down through generations. In other words, folk songs deal with matters associated with the daily socio-cultural and religious life of the same people who created it. The presence of century-old folk songs in any society establishes their relevance and timeless appeal to the common mass, whether preserved in their original form or augmented with contemporary events and themes with time. Folk songs give a vivid picture of the society in which they flourish and unveil the soul of their people.

Nevertheless, the soul of a nation dwells chiefly in its villages, which remain relatively untouched and unscratched from the clutches of urbanisation that takes away the simple way of life of the rural people. These folk songs act as a shield that preserves rural people's raw and natural way of life because the lyrics are close to one's mother tongue, and the background of these folk songs reminds one of their native places. In the standard dictionary of folklore, mythology and legends, folk songs encompass the poetry and songs of a particular society or group whose

literature is upheld not in a written or printed form but rather via generations of passing down such rich culture through oral tradition. (Leach & Jerome, 1972). In India, the Hindi word *Lokgeet* is often translated as folk songs in English. *Lokgeet* comprises two words, *lok* and *geet*, in which the word *lok* refers to people, and *geet* denotes songs. Defining the word *Lok*, Upadhyay (1957) writes that the unlettered, unsophisticated group of people, bound by their traditional values, living away from the modern civilisation in their natural surroundings, can be termed as *Lok*. However, *geet* refers to the word song; therefore, the Hindi word *Lokgeet* seems synonymous with folk songs.

On the other hand, *Min'yō* (民謡) or folk song is a common term for Japanese scholars and people. The word *Min'yō* is taken from the Sung dynasty literature of China. The literal meaning of the kanji “*min*” (民) is “people,” and “*yō*” (謡) is “chanting,” especially *Nō* (能) chanting. However, Hughes (2008) has translated the kanji *yō* as “song”, yet in both translations, it is evident that folk songs are born and inhabited in the lives of common people. The concept and definition of the word *Min'yō* differ significantly as per the timeline and ideological background of the era. Before the 1890s, *Min'yō* was known by other names such as *Hinaburi*, *Hinata*, *Inaka-Uta*, *Kuniburi*, and *Kunibushi*, which were popular among the rural populace of Japan. Since folk songs are songs of rural people, they named them conveniently according to their understanding of traditional songs. Hence, folk songs were called *Inaka Uta* (country songs) in one region and *Hina Uta* in another area of Japan. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regional, traditional idea around folk songs shaped the contemporary concept of *Min'yō*. Moreover, Machida and Asano (1964) discuss the history of the folk songs of Japan, emphasising that the word *Min'yō* was first used during the Edo period (1603-1868) by Confucius scholars to denote the countryside traditional songs. Until the middle of the Meiji period (1868-1912), *Fūzoku* (風俗), *Uta* (歌), *Zoku* (俗), *Zokuyō* (俗謡), etc., were popular words to represent traditional rural songs of Japan. The connotation of all these words revolves around customs, manners and songs as seen in their kanji, such as 俗, 歌 and 謡. Therefore, it can be inferred that the word *Min'yō* carries a scholarly connotation, and Japanese folk songs strongly connect with the customs and rituals of ancient Japan. Lomax (2017), on the other hand, argues that orally transmitted lyrical verses such as folk songs are a part of the cultural heritage that might contain crucial information and principles of the previous generation. He emphasises that texts of folk songs can be analysed from the perspective of culture. In other words, the study of folk songs can be a tool to measure the culture of a particular region, group, or ethnicity.

Ethnomusicology and Folk Songs

The current paper deals with the seasonal folk songs of Maithili and Japanese language. During the preliminary literature review, similar motifs were found in the text of these seasonal folk songs, leading the way towards a comparative method. Therefore, the current paper is a comparative, cross-cultural study where analysis is based on the selected seasonal folk songs of Maithili and the Japanese language.

Since the study investigates the music of two ethnic regions, i.e., Bihar (in India) and Japan, the study falls under the area of ethnomusicology.

Nettl (1973) explains that the study of ethnomusicology was formerly known as comparative musicology, as it dealt with music and folk music from non-European and Western cultures. Ethnomusicology is a study that examines the traditional music of various civilisations from a socio-cultural viewpoint and provides scope for the descriptive and analytical approach, which is problem-oriented and comparative. However, around 1950, Jaap Kunst coined the word “ethnomusicology” to indicate the unsatisfactory nature of the comparative orientation in folk music. However, later scholars such as Merriam (1964) discuss it from a dual point of view, anthropological and musicological. The anthropological view touches on the cultural aspect of folk music, whereas the musicological view deals with more technical sound-music and tone analysis. Therefore, the current research seems closer to Merriam’s interpretation of folk music from an anthropological point of view that attempts to seek cultural connections as they exist in the seasonal folk songs of Maithili and the Japanese language. Since text analysis forms the primary method of current research to explore seasonal folk songs, observation based on this text analysis will complement the current study to create a structure centred on the idea described by Merriam (1964), who investigates the process of researching folk songs as follows:

- Collection of data (songs) from the available text or through fieldwork of recording,
- Categorisation of data (songs) into themes or subjects for analysis of motivating force and reflections of informal or formal practices,
- Analysis of data referring to the research questions and seeking a rationale behind the obtained result.

The field of ethnomusicology supports researchers to investigate traditional music or songs in the context of culture. Regarding the definition of ethnomusicology, Merriam (1964) also notes it as “*the study of music in culture*”. Considering cultural connections between seasonal folk songs of Maithili and the Japanese language, the current paper mainly focuses on the role of folk songs in the familiarisation of any culture. It also shows how shared socio-cultural practices are reflected in the text of these seasonal folk songs. This argument is further reinforced by Lomax (1968), who emphasises, “*In theory, song texts ought to be heavily loaded with normative cultural indicators*”. Therefore, adopting a similar approach, the current paper also analyses the text of selected seasonal folk songs found in the Mithila region of Bihar in India and Japan to seek “cultural indicators” that reflect culture in these songs.

Seasons in India and Japan

India and Japan both celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of their seasons, and each season shapes their cultural traditions. In India, including Bihar, the cycle is more nuanced with six seasons: *Vasanta Ritū* (Spring), *Griṣma Ritū* (Summer), *Varṣā Ritū* (Monsoon), *Sharada Ritū* (Autumn), *Hemānta Ritū* (Early Winter), and *Shishira Ritū* (Winter). On the contrary, seasons in Japan are mainly divided into

four: *Haru* (春) or Spring; *Natsu* (夏) or Summer; *Aki* (秋) or Autumn; *Fuyu* (冬) or Winter. In both regions, each season brings its festivals. For example, people in Bihar celebrate *Holi* and *Vasant Panchmi* during *Vasanta Ritū* (Spring) and *Chath Puja* during *Sharada Ritū* (Autumn). On the contrary, in Japan, *Hanami* (花見) or cherry blossom viewing, is enjoyed in spring, and *Momijimi* (紅葉見) or maple leaves-watching, is observed in autumn. In both regions, seasons highlight its unique relationship with the climate, festivals, cultural practices, and the daily life of its people. Therefore, it is imperative to mention here that folk songs make references to these festival's cultural and farming activities. For example, in Mithila region of Bihar, the farming community sings the following line:

बरसो हो इन्दर देव बरसो हो, की खेतवा में जोत लागल हो

Baraso ho indar deva baraso ho, kī khetavā meñ jot lāgal ho

The farming community has a close connection with nature and season. In ancient times, the farmers depended on natural resources for good-quality crops. The folk saying mentioned above describes the life of earlier times when farmers used to pray to *Indra Deva*, the king of heaven who was also revered as the rain god in Hindu mythology to shower rain. Before the propagation of modern agricultural equipment, wastage of crops was inevitable due to droughts or floods. However, in modern times, the development in science that has led to the proliferation of scientific farming equipment, besides various government policies, have all helped the peasants to adopt a scientific method of agriculture, which is why perhaps such songs are losing their popularity and significance among people in contemporary times.

A Maithili Seasonal Folk Song

माघ हे सखि मेघ लागल, पिया चलल परदेश यो

māgha hē sakhi mēgha lāgala, piyā calala paradeśa yō

अपनो वयस ओताहि बितओता, हमर कोन अपराध यो

apanō vayasa ôtahi bita'ôtā, hamara kōna aparādha yō

फागुन हे सखि आम मजरल, कोइली बाजे घमसान यो

phāguna hē sakhi āma majarala, kō'ilī bājē ghamasāna yō

कोइली शब्द सुनि हिय मोर सालय, नयना नीर बहि गेल यो

kō'ilī śabda suni hiya mōra sālaya, nayanā nīra bahi gēla yō

चैत हे सखि पर्व लगईछई, सब सखी गांगा सान यो

caita hē sakhi parva laga'īcha'ī, saba sakhi gaṅgā snāna yō

सब सखी पहिरे पियरी पीताम्बर, हमरा के देव दुःख देल यो

saba sakhi pahirē piyarī pītāmbara, hamarā kē dēva duḥkha dēla yō

बैसाख हे सखि उसम ज्वाला, घाम सं भीजल देह यो

baisākha hē sakhi usama jvālā, ghāma sam bhījala dēha yō

रगरि चन्दन अंग लेपित हूँ, जो गृह रहिताथि कन्त यो

ragari candana aṅga lēpita hūṁ, jōm gr̥ha rahitāthi kanta yō (Rakesh, 2012)

The song mentioned above is being sung from the perspective of a newly-wed wife who sings to lament that in the month of *Magh* (a month of the Hindu

calendar), her husband has left for another city and has been spending his days happily. However, when the weather is cloudy and romantic, she alone is forced to bear the pain of separation as she longs for her husband. She further sings that in the month of *Phaguna*, when the mangoes have blossomed, hearing the nightingale sing ardently pierces her heart, and tears flow from her eyes. She further continues that in the month of *Chaitra*, the festival season has arrived, and all her friends have gone for a dip in the holy river *Gaṅgā* wearing yellow garments, while she is left to bear this loneliness. She concludes the song by mentioning the month of *Baisakha* when the heat is scorching, her body is drenched in sweat, and she applies sandalwood paste to her skin, longing that her beloved was here at home.

The above-mentioned Maithili seasonal folk song displays the theme of nature. The song revolves around four prominent seasons of India, including Bihar and several representatives of nature found in this folk song's lyrics, which serve as "cultural indicators and shall be discussed at length in the analysis of the current paper. This song also successfully contains cues of socio-cultural practice, such as migration, that has a strong connotation with the history of the society of Bihar. This seasonal folk song depicts the emotional anguish of a newly-wedded bride whose husband has migrated to another city for employment. It is essential to highlight that migration has been a socio-cultural phenomenon in Bihar even since the pre-independence era of India. The relevance of this socio-cultural phenomenon can be understood by the single vivid fact that migration dominates the content and subject matter of most of the folk songs of Bihar.

A Japanese Seasonal Folk Song

春来れば 田堰小堰さ 水コア出る 泥鰌コ鰍コアせア 喜んで喜んで海さ入
ったど思うベアネ(コリヤコーリヤ)

*Haru kureba taseki koseki sa mizu ko~a deru dojō ko kajika ko~a se ~a
yorokonde yorokonde umi-sa haittado omou be ~a ne (korya kōrya)*

夏来れば 田堰小堰コア 溫くなる 泥鰌コ鰍コアせア喜んで喜んで 湯コさ
入ったど思うベアネ

*Natsu kureba taseki koseki ko~a nukukunaru dojō ko kajika ko~a se ~a yorokonde
yorokonde yu ko-sa haittado omou be ~a ne*

秋来れば 野山小山は 赤くなる 泥鰌コ鰍コアせア 頸出して頸出して 山コ
ア火事だど思うベアネ

*Aki kureba noyama koyama wa akakunaru dojō ko kajika ko~a se ~a kubi dashite
kubi dashite yama ko~a kuwaji dado omou be ~a ne*

冬来れば 田堰小堰さ 薄氷張る 泥鰌コ鰍コセア かげでかげで 天井コ
ア張ったど 思うベアネ

*Fuyu kureba taseki koseki sa sugama haru dojō ko kajika ko se ~a kagede kagede
tenjō ko~a hattado omou be ~a ne (Machida & Asano 1960)*

The above Japanese folk song depicts that scene of paddy weirs in different months of the year. The song explains that paddy weirs are drained when spring arrives, and loaches and sculpins (two distinct types of fish species) happily enter the water. However, in the summer season, when the paddy weir gets warmed up,

loaches and sculpins are delighted, thinking to have entered warm water. Furthermore, when hills and dales turn red in autumn, loaches and sculpins stick their heads out of the water, assuming there is a mountain fire. Finally, when winter arrives, paddy weirs are covered with thin ice, loaches, and sculpins swim under the water, wondering if there is a ceiling under the shade.

The song mentioned above is a famous folk song from Aomori prefecture in the Tohoku region of Japan, sung during rice plantation. Initially, this song was a Heike Biwa folkore song for the Tsugaru clan. As Machida and Asano (2008) mention, Mr. Tateyama collected this song in the Nishi Tsugaru district; this song became popular in Japan and was sung in various dialects. This folk song has a natural theme in which the singer talks about the four seasons and their influence on the rice field. Therefore, the song mentioned above also displays cultural indicators in its text that are peculiar to the Japanese sense of season.

A Comparative Analysis of Seasonal Folk Songs of Maithili and Japanese Language

Since folk songs originate within society, the socio-cultural practices of that ethnic group or society highly influence the lyrics of the folk songs. Folk songs also contain text and rhythm that may provide historical accounts, legends and myths associated with the past. In this way, folk songs are a valuable channel to understand society, beliefs, cultural approaches, hobbies, interests, and values that a culture possesses. The abundance of peripheral elements in folk songs is a challenge for scholars since the same folk song can be studied from various aspects. In the context of folk songs, as Burne (1914) explains, “*Song is so many-sided and so all-pervading a form of human expression that it is hard to say from what point of view it may best be approached*”. There are various ways of researching folk songs, such as from a linguistic standpoint, musicological perspective, folkloristic perspective, etc. However, the current research follows Merriam’s method of examining folk songs, which includes data collection, categorisation, and analysis. To analyse the data, Lomax (1968) emphasised analysing the text of the folk song to recognise the “cultural indicators”. Therefore, this paper has applied a similar method to categorise both folk songs under two themes after analysing the text of the selected Maithili and Japanese seasonal folk songs to identify “cultural indicators.” For example, the selected seasonal folk songs of Maithili and Japanese language are associated with the specific months of the year, however, it also reflects the food culture, and ritualistic prayer services etc., during special occasions.

Nevertheless, the selected seasonal folk songs of Maithili and the Japanese language explained in the current paper broadly display the following two major themes:

- i) Nature and Rural Imagery
- ii) Cultural Symbolism

They shall be further discussed in detail from the ethnomusicological perspective.

i) Nature and Rural Imagery

Nature and music have a deep connection with the emotions of human beings. These are two phenomena that promptly touch the human mind emotionally. As one gazes at the countless aspects of nature or listens to music or songs, the tendency of the human mind is to first feel it, even before thinking about it. Emotions that originate in the human mind while sitting in the lap of the Himalayas or Mt. Fuji, or while paying homage to the holy river *Gaṅgā* or during the pilgrimage of *Kumano Kodō* are pure forms of human emotions. Perhaps, in earlier times, poetry, or folk songs with the theme of nature must have emerged when early humans tried to give perceptible shape to those feelings that developed just after witnessing significant features of their surrounding nature.

In the context of selected seasonal folk songs of Maithili and Japanese language, nature and rural imagery emerged as a prominent common theme in both folk songs. In the Maithili language, seasonal folk songs are dedicated to various seasons of the year. Folk songs dedicated to specific months include *Barahmāsā*, *Chemāsā* and *Chaumāsā*, in which *Barahmāsā* refers to twelve months of the year, *Chemāsā* refers to six months of the year, and *Chaumāsā* refers to four significant months of the year. The selected Maithili seasonal folk song is a famous *Chaumāsā* that also signifies *Virah* (separation) and the reunion of the lovers and couple in connotation with the months of the year. *Virahinī*, a female lover suffering from the pain of separation, expresses her feelings through folk songs concerning unique characteristics associated with each month of the year.

As we compare the two seasonal folk songs of Maithili and Japanese language, it is observed that both the songs display the cyclical nature of the seasons and portray human emotion and transition of life. The seasonal folk song of Maithili language follows the cycle of the seasons through the *Magha*, *Phaguna*, *Chaita*, and *Baisakha* (names of the month according to the Hindu calendar). It highlights nature and rural imagery, such as blossoming mango trees, singing *koel* or nightingale, and the spiritual ritual of taking a dip inside the holy river *Gaṅgā*. The elements of nature express deep personal emotions, especially that of longing and sorrowness of the newly wedded lady (the singer) originating in her husband's absence. In the selected Maithili folk song, each season conveys a new emotion, from the anticipation of the lively lifestyle of her husband in another city to the intense yearning of the wife in his absence, showing how the season transcends its meaning to reflect the psyche and pain of separation. In other words, it can be said that in Maithili seasonal folk songs, nature, and its rural imagery, such as trees and birds, are tied to seasons and express human emotions. Similarly, the Japanese folk song follows the transition of seasons through *Haru*, *Natsu*, *Aki*, and *Fuyu* and displays symbols of rural imagery. For instance, it uses *dojō* (泥鰌) and *kajika* (鰐), i.e., the fishes, loaches, and sculpins; *noyama* (野山), i.e., fields and mountains, to reflect the cyclical stages of life. In the selected Japanese folk song, seasons also signify a detailed agricultural task that a farmer performs and his emotion towards nature. This emotion has been portrayed using loaches and sculpins in the lyrics of the folk song, as these fishes also form a part of the Japanese food culture of rural Japan for, they are famous delicacies enjoyed throughout Japan. In other words, the selected

Japanese seasonal folk song amalgamates references to Japanese seasons, nature, food culture and rural life.

ii) Cultural Symbolism

Early humans started their lives in the lap of nature, and this nature was present in their lives in the form of boons and banes. For example, the same river that quenched their thirst could also abolish every souvenir of their existence. Possibly, this is the reason that early humans gave the status of deities to countless elements of nature. For example, whether it is *Helios* (the sun god in Greek mythology), *Amaterasu* (the sun goddess in Japanese mythology), or *Sūryadeva* (the sun god in Hindu mythology), since primitive times, the sun is a prime element of nature in every civilisation and has been given the status of deity. With the advancement in society, deities, customs, beliefs, rituals, and cultures associated with nature have come into vogue. The sun and other elements of nature, such as trees, rivers, and mountains, form an integral allegory found in the mythologies and have been accorded a godly status. In selected Maithili seasonal folk song, taking a bath in the holy river of *Gaṅgā* is mentioned. This is when the singer sings “*chaita hē sakhi parva lagañchañ, sab sakhi gaṅgā snāna yō*” or in the month of *Chaita* (April–March) when festivals are approaching, and her friends are going to take a bath in the holy river *Gaṅgā*. It is imperative to mention here that the sacred river *Gaṅgā* is part of the traditional belief of the Hindu community as it is believed that taking a bath in the holy river of *Gaṅgā* purifies the soul of a person and liberates one from all sins. In this context, folk songs represent and propagate traditional beliefs and rituals. Moreover, in the selected Maithili folk song, a *koel* or nightingale has been referenced twice when the singer sings *phāguna hē sakhi āma majarala, kō'ilī bājē ghamasāna yō* and *kō'ilī śabda suni hiya mōra sālāya, nayanā nīra bahi gēla yō*. In the former reference, she introduces *koel* singing in the month of *Phāguna* and in the second reference she says that listening to the *koel*'s voice, gives her unbearable pain that makes her cry as her husband is not near her. In India *koel* is symbolic of romantic relations and is used as a simile to describe the characteristics of loved ones which is why the reference to *koel* or nightingale was found not only in the above Maithili folk song but also other contemporary songs and poetry.

On the other hand, Japanese seasonal folk songs carry the underlying theme of the Japanese rural ecosystem and food culture apart from apparent themes of nature and seasons. If one closely observes, it is not a secret that rice-fish farming is an underlying theme of the song. However, it is fascinating to observe that Japanese folk songs with the theme of seasons and nature have the underlying theme of food culture. Moreover, it is well-known that fish is a significant part of Japanese food culture. In the Japanese seasonal folk song, the mention of *dojō* (泥鰌) or pond loach and *kajika* (鰍) or sculpin signifies not only the rural food culture but also part of religious ceremonies and festivals of Japan as they are offered and eaten during spiritual ceremonies and released to ward off evil spirits or as a memorial service. In ancient times, these fishes were referred to as *hitoaji chigatta sakana* (ひと味違つた魚) or fish with a difference. Moreover, for Japanese common people, these fishes symbolise resilience.

Conclusion

The significance of research in the field of folklore is slightly different from other branches of area studies as it deals with more complex nuances that lie in traditions, customs and primitive values handed down in the form of stories and songs. Bihar and Japan are rich in these complex nuances as both regions possess an abundance of folk stories and folk songs. In Bihar, *Lokgeet* deals with various subjects; for instance, *Lokgeet* is associated with marriage, seasons, religious activities, dance, rituals, customs, agriculture, and other socio-cultural subjects. These songs are an expression of joy, sorrow, gratitude, and family values possessed by them. Similarly, in Japan, *Min'yō* deals with numerous subject matters. For instance, folk songs are associated with the seasons, occupations, religious activities, festivals, celebrations, and other cultural activities in Japan. However, Bihar is a state where many languages are spoken, and as a result, one can find folk songs inspired by different regional cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, as far as the connection of these folk songs with the occasion or event is concerned, they remain broadly similar in both countries.

Nature has been perceived by every individual differently; for example, Newton and William Wordsworth took inspiration from nature and contributed remarkably in their respective fields of science and literature, which seem poles apart. However, in every case, nature has played the role of the ultimate teacher, and the respect for this divine teacher has been articulated through the stories and folk songs. Rural folks of both regions have a strong connection with folk songs, and this strong connection between folks and folk songs is further reflected in their seasonal folk songs. Since folk songs are already present in the socio-cultural life of rural folks where they are leading their lives surrounded by the natural world, it would not be an overstatement to say that the dependency of rural people on nature for economic, social, religious, and day-to-day activities strengthens their reliance and deeply attaches them to the various manifestations of nature. Hence, trees, mountains, seasons, flowers, rain, birds, etc., resonate in their seasonal folk songs.

Maithili and Japanese folk songs have themes of nature and seasonal changes, echoing rural life experiences associated with trees, birds, and fish, symbolizing life's cycle. Maithili and Japanese folk songs highlight respective cultural symbolism wherein Maithili songs focus on rituals, festivals, and symbols of longing because of migration and new life, such as the nightingale bird (*Koel*) and blossoming mangoes; on the other hand, Japanese songs underline fields, mountain and emphasize resilience through rural ecosystems and food culture of the concerned region. In Maithili and Japanese folk songs, nature mirrors emotional turmoil and life changes, portraying the close relationship between humans and the natural world.

In conclusion, it can be said that folk songs have helped to preserve cultural motifs that they employ, which may have been lost with the propagation of modernisation. These song's texts have helped maintain the peculiarities and unique characteristics of the concerned societies. Therefore, a folk song can resonate with the famous lines of the renowned work *Hōjōki* by Kamo no Chōmei that goes “*yuku kawa no nagare wa taezu shite, shikamo moto no mizu ni arazu*” (ゆく川の流れは

絶えずして、しかも元の水にあらず) that means just as a river never stops flowing yet the water never remains the same. Likewise, the inception and culmination of folk songs also remain unknown, yet it accumulates within its layers of cultural elements and continues to transform and resurrect.

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