Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland

<http://journals.cambridge.org/JRA>

Additional services for *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

Art. VI.—Andamanese Music, with Notes on Oriental Music and Musical Instruments

M. V. Portman

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland / Volume 20 / Issue 02 / April 1888, pp 181 - 218

DOI: 10.1017/S0035869X00020025, Published online: 15 March 2011

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0035869X00020025

How to cite this article:

M. V. Portman (1888). Art. VI.—Andamanese Music, with Notes on Oriental Music and Musical Instruments. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 20, pp 181-218 doi:10.1017/S0035869X00020025

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

ART. VI.—*Andamanese Music, with Notes on Oriental Music and Musical Instruments.* By M. V. PORTMAN, Esq., M.R.A.S.

THE subject of Oriental Music is one which offers a large field for research, in which very little work has, as yet, been done.

The music of Arabia was very thoroughly investigated by Villoteau. Short papers have been written on the music of Persia. Eichhorn has written on the music of Afghanistan. Willard, and later Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, have described the music of Hindostan at some length. Javanese music has had some attention paid to it; and Père Amiot, and later, Tradescant Lay, and Van Aalst, have described the musical system of China. Many small notes have been made on the music of most Eastern countries; but these, even when they are really accurate, are generally mixed with a mass of extraneous matter in some book of travel, scientific paper, or report, so that they are not easily procurable. In order to investigate Oriental Music, it is necessary that the inquirer should be a musician, somewhat above the ordinary amateur grade, and should also be acquainted with the language and customs of the people amongst whom he is inquiring. What is really wanted in England is a complete and exhaustive collection of all the musical instruments used throughout the world by Oriental and Extra-European nations, and this collection should be accompanied by such a mass of information, that the facts regarding the music of these nations may be laid before the student in a complete and intelligible form. The Questions drawn up by the late Mr. Carl Engel, for "The British Association for the Advancement of Science," and published in "Anthropo-

logical Notes and Queries," will greatly assist the investigator. Full scores of Oriental orchestral music we are entirely without, and these should be accompanied, where possible, by the words of the songs, or plays, etc.

The Sacred music of Oriental nations would be a most interesting field for research, and a collection should be made of the treatises which the more civilised Asiatic nations possess on music.

In making these researches the greatest care is of course necessary. Engel's admirable work, "Study of National Music," might be consulted with advantage, and I should myself be glad to assist any inquirer.

The music of Asia may be divided into distinct branches, which have little or no connection with each other.

1. The music of pure aboriginal, and savage tribes.
2. The music of the Chinese.
3. The music of Siam, Burma, the Malay Peninsula, and Java.
4. The music of Hindostan, which differs greatly in different parts, and of which the ancient classical music, about which much has been written, and many fanciful theories have been evolved, differs almost entirely from the music performed in the present day.
5. The music of Persia and Arabia.
6. The music of Thibet and Nepaul.

Without going over ground which has been already traversed by others, I will give what little information I have been able to collect regarding these systems of music.

With regard to the first class, I have made considerable researches into the music of the Andamanese, a race of whom I have been for some years in official charge.

The Andamanese are decidedly fond of their own music, but do not care much for that of other nations. Even among themselves the songs of more distant tribes, which differ in rhythm and intonation, are not much appreciated. Foreign music merely attracts their attention as a novelty. Their ear is not acute for discerning small musical intervals.

Experiments were made by me with several European and Oriental musical instruments of different "timbre." They have not good musical ears. The "Öngés" appear to have more highly developed musical capabilities than the other tribes. Those who are considered, amongst themselves, to be the best singers, can generally nearly hit any note given to them on a European instrument, but the majority of the Andamanese, on whom I experimented, were about a semitone out. They are very slow at picking any European, or Asiatic tune, which may be sung or played to them, though quick enough at learning the choruses of each other's songs. The reason of this probably is that the rhythm is different from that to which they are accustomed, and the tunes are not in their ordinary song-compass; nor are the notes in their accustomed sequence.

The voices of the men are of medium loudness, rather rough, and steady, growing deeper and fuller in tone with age, up to about 35 years. After this it becomes very rough, husky, and tuneless. [The Andamanese age very quickly.] The boys' voices are clear and not unpleasant. The women's voices are clear but of bad intonation. "Falsetto" is common among both sexes, though their general "timbre" is not as nasal as that of more civilised Oriental races. The notes of the "Öngé" tribes are quite smooth and round, and entirely free from nasal intonation. The usual compass of the voice in both sexes is about an octave. The man's is generally from C-c, though I have met men who can sing from B^b-e. Women generally sing from G-g. The prevailing male voice is barytone. The prevailing female voice is contralto. All the notes of the women are distinctly head and not chest notes.

With the exception of the "Pukuta Yemnga," about to be described, the Andamanese have no instrumental music; their music consisting only of songs in solo and chorus, which chorus is invariably sung by both sexes if available, and is accompanied by a dance. They have no professional singers. The following appears to be their system of song. The men sing in unison; some women, with the children in

false alto, an octave above; the remainder of the women sing in what I believe is intended for a perfect fifth, but what is occasionally a minor sixth above the men. Difference of pitch in the voices introduces other notes, which can only be called "out of tune." Their singing is in regular duple time. This is more particularly marked in the choruses, when you have the rhythmical accompaniment. The continuance of one note, or of a sequence of notes, a little distance apart, which is an attribute of Oriental music, often leads persons who do not know the meaning of the word to call Andamanese solos "recitative," which term, as meaning "musical declamation," does not in the least apply. They have only one species of song, which may treat of all subjects. They have no religious, nursery, or love songs. The principal subjects on which songs are composed are pig-hunting, fish-shooting, turtle and dugong spearing, fighting, making boats, bows, etc. The music, rhythm, accent, and intonation is no clue to the sense of the song, and a person not knowing the language would be ignorant as to whether a fight, hunt, or the making of a boat, was being described. Every one composes songs. A man or woman would be thought very little of, who could not do so. Even the small children compose their own songs. Each person composes his own, and it is a great breach of etiquette to sing another person's song, particularly if the composer be dead.

The only notes in use in their songs are the following, and in this order:

The leading note, $\frac{1}{4}\sharp$. The Tonic. The Tonic, $\frac{1}{4}\sharp$.

The whole range of notes is therefore not equal to a superfluous second.

The general sequence, or progression of notes, used by the South Andaman tribes, is

Tonic. Tonic, $\frac{1}{4}\sharp$. Leading note, $\frac{1}{4}\sharp$.

I of course presume the Andamanese leading note to be a semi-tone below the tonic.

Of the northern tribes we have more to learn, but I doubt

if any great difference will appear. The "Öngé" tribes appear to have our diatonic intervals, but we know little of them. The songs conclude on what I assume to be the tonic, but which is in reality the second note of the scale.

In their solos, "Ritardando" and "Accellerando" are freely used, the chorus only being in strict time, which is invariably duple.

They have no traditions regarding music, except that the "Chāōga-tábanga" or "ancestors" (a great people, like the Greek Heroes, or Demi-gods), by their account, used to sing, and, as it is not etiquette to sing the song of a dead person, these are soon forgotten. As to their manner of composition, any person, wishing to compose a song for the evening's entertainment, *i.e.* dance, makes up the song to his satisfaction by continually trying it over, while engaged in anything which does not excite, or distract him.

I append some Andamanese songs, in score, which will illustrate my meaning.

As the Andamanese alter and clip at will the ordinary words of their language, to suit the rhythm of their songs, they may almost be said to possess a poetic dialect. This being the case, I have in the following instances translated the song into the vulgar tongue, and from that into English.

(The numbers refer to the songs in score.)

Song No. 1.—Composed by an Andamanese man named "Bulubulla," of the "Áka-Bálawa" tribe, resident in "Aila Juru." It relates how, when he was on a cruise in the local steamer, he sang a song, and another man learnt it.

Solo.

Guma Nyunga-lá díá chél lálót rámit lóto éno díá chél
lálót rámit-lá. Nyunga déra tó óro bóí lá, Nyunga
déra óro, bóí lá.

Chorus.

Nyunga déra óro bóí lá.

In the ordinary Áka-Bía-da language,

Wai Guma Nyunga-la díá ót-éniré, bíрма chélewa-len
ót rámit lóto wai ádik eb ákan pódiré, á ídat ooré.

In English.

Master Nyunga-la sang with me on the steamer, and he learnt my song.

Chorus.

Nyunga-la learnt my song.

This will be repeated many times, and perhaps one or more verses made up.

Song No. 2.—A song by the same composer, describing how, when out with me in a small steamer, we passed up the coast of the North Andaman at night.

Solo.

Bír-a lóť érema ógar lá ebngéra chál édo ké dók,
ebngéra chál lá. Bé chóke wáp lóm, dákar
tárai lóť tá.

Chorus.

Bé chóke wáp lóm, dákar tárai lóť tá.

In Áka-Bía-da.

Wái bíra lóť érema ógar lá chálet kágre, eb árachál
dókré. Chóké íjí dákar tár lóťiré.

In English.

From the country of the Yerewas the moon rose, it came near. It was very cold, I sat down.

Chorus.

It was very cold, I sat down.

Song No. 3.—Composed by an Andamanese man, named "Ríala," of the "Áka Jawa" tribe, resident at "Yéretíl." It relates how, while on a cruise in the local steamer, he sang to the North Andamanese, saying he was coming to meet them.

Solo.

Dó ngól áka-teggi leb, dákar jád ál ngáka yábngo,
d'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

Chorus.

D'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

In Aka-Bía-da.

Dó ngól áka-teggi leb, dáka jádia kágké, áka yábnga
lat. D'ót ógar lár lóti¹ré.

In English.

I am coming to see you, the moon has gone down.

Chorus.

The moon has gone down.

Song No. 4.—By the same composer, saying that it was his fate, although one born in the interior jungle, to be always travelling about in the steamer.

Solo.

Bádinga yába chána ur chál yá leb dábéti¹ré, ára chélia
lat góno tet ló¹t gutoi dá¹b cháti tong ló¹t tár, lódo
chár béria óba ngíká.

Chorus.

Ár lódo chár béria óba ngíká.

In Aka Bía-da.

Bádinga yábada, chána d'ábéti¹ré ára chélia lát dá¹b
góno tet ló¹t gutoré, dá¹b cháti tong lá, dón ik ár
lódoké.

In English.

I did not see, but I know I was born from my mother,
for the work of the steamer, I was born in the jungle,
where the Góno¹ and Cháti¹ are, but I go often
in the steamer.

Song No. 5.—Composed by “Woichela,” an Andamanese man of the “Aka Jawai” tribe. It relates how he was cutting a bow, and did it all himself.

Solo.

Ykngat kópa lóko tétán, oitán, uchobá d'ón kíchal
uchubá dá kó dídá, oh! oh! oh!

Chorus.

Uchuba dá, kó dída, oh! oh! oh!

¹ Edible roots.

In Áka Bía-da.

Bá ngóda pórngata, íkngát kópa lóka tétán, uchuba
d'ón kichal dó, dóla uchuba, dóla dédalíré, oh!
oh! oh!

In English.

Solo.

You did not make this, I made it, I, I, I, made it.

Chorus.

I, I, I, made it.

Song No. 6.—Composed by “Bulubulla,” an Andamanese man of the “Bójigiáb” tribe, resident at “Pich láka chákan,” in “Báratán.” It relates how Máia Póro saw a big turtle in the water, from the composer’s boat, and laughed at it.

Solo.

Máia Póro béringa lá día yádi cháuma leb ngíji dál ló
páál láka en ngíji dála-da, Póro l’ót yéngo bía lí dá.

Chorus.

Póro l’ót yéngo bía lí dá.

In Áka Bía-da.

Máia Póro béringa día yádi cháuma lik ngíji édal lót
pàreka óbada. Póro ót yéngiké b’édal-da.

In English.

Solo.

Máia Póro from my boat saw a big turtle in the water,
and hit him in the eye. Póro laughed when he
hit him in the eye.

Chorus.

Póro laughed when he hit him in the eye.

Song No. 7.—Composed by “Bía Mulwa,” an Andamanese man of the “Áka Kól” tribe, resident at Long Island. It relates how at the close of the day they were returning through the jungle slowly, when they heard the noise of a canoe being cut. [Other verses describing the cutting of it,

would probably be added to this song.] The music of this song is not given.

Solo.

Bódo dá láta dá teggi ló tid lára dáka ké ába idéb chá
lómro.

Chorus.

Ké ába idéb chá lómro.

In Áka Bía-da.

Bódo dá lát dó óyo díd láraké ó teggi ké yábada
mócho át láraké.

In English.

Solo.

At the end of the day we were going slowly, and heard
the noise of a canoe being cut.

Chorus.

We were going slowly.

Song No. 8.—Composed by “Chána Lucla,” an Andamanese woman of the “Áka Balawa” tribe, married to a man of the “Áka Kédé” tribe. She relates how putting the steering oar straight, she took the canoe out to sea, and then brought it back.

Solo.

Dó ngen ár geu dāngalí dát kópa léra gólobáka, idéb
kópa léra dó ngen ó déra élojro.

Chorus.

Dó ngen ó déra, élojro.

In Áka Bía-da.

Tun íkngát kópa léra lát góra wai dói ngen óyo
d’árlómké jurulen.

In English.

Solo.

I straightened the helm, and took the boat out into the sea, and then brought it back.

Chorus.

I then brought it back.

Song No. 9.—Composed by “Bía Boi,” an Andamanese man of the “Bojigiab” tribe, resident at “Duratán.” It relates how he was cutting a canoe.

Solo.

Pus-é lóringá ló dudé pólé, pus-é lóring ó lá ; miáté ba lóringá lá.

Chorus.

Miáté ba lóringá lá.

In Áka Bía-da.

Bájé lóringa ló dudépól. Bájé lóringa-da Métat lóringa-da.

In English.

Solo.

I am cutting the under part of a canoe's prow, I am cutting a canoe.

Chorus.

I am cutting a canoe.

Song No. 10.—Composed by “Kála,” an Andamanese man of the “Áka Bía-da” tribe, resident at “Góp-láka-báng.” It relates how, when standing at the bows of a canoe, he saw some fish.

Solo.

Kápró, kápró dekan, kápró á, Bár lekó, tia á-bada.

Chorus.

Bár lekó, tia á-ba-da.

In Áka Bía-da.

Dól ába kápi, k'ól bedig, dól dekan kápiké, dól kápi.
Wálak-lek ót yát, díá yába-da.

In English.

Solo.

I was standing, yes I was standing up. I was standing.
In front of me are fish, but they are not mine.

Chorus.

In front of me are fish, but they are not mine.

The two following songs composed by "Tôké," an Andamanese of the "Áka Jawai" tribe, resident at "Péwiltāur," are given to show a two-line chorus of peculiar rhythm, used chiefly in the northern part of the Middle Andaman.

Solo.

Juruwin lá dik ératá pucha lá beat
Róko ló dig, kó tiá la
Bang abgádí, gá daií biá.

Chorus.

Biát.

Rōkolō dīg || kō tiā lā
Bāng ābgādī, || gā daií biā.

Also

Solo.

Ebn wól lóko pail-í dīji, bói dédat kópo lót yubró,
Kála dón wólo bé.
Nura lóij, rát kópa lót,
Yubró kála, dón wólo bé.

Chorus.

Nūřālōij || rát kōpā lōt
Yūbrō kālā, || dōn wōlō bē.

The following song composed by "Ílí," an Andamanese man of the "Áka Cháriár" tribe, resident at "Pait-terbuliu," North Andaman, will serve to show the rhythm and style of song in use among the tribes in the North Andaman.

Solo.

Bóruatá.	u u u -
Órumu.	- - -
Ó rábirá.	- u u -
Kétóá	- - -
Rábéu	- - -
Ké rebelé	- u u -
Rábé láá	u u - -

Rai ebeté	- u u -
Éyo ketó	- - u -
É rá belá	- - u -
Dála róé	- u - -
Éba béá	- u - -
Tá lá	- -
Óbe tárá	u u u -
Ébe téu	- u - -
Rai ebeté	- u u -
Uwá	- -
Íyu u.	- u -

Chorus.

Rai ebeté	- u u -
Uwā	- -
Íyu u.	u u -

The following song, composed by myself whilst on an expedition against the "Járawa" tribes, shows how a song may have two choruses.

Solo.

Járawá la tinga ódó, páliát érá tinga ómá, lebatérá,
ting erák íómá leb.

Chorus.

Ting erák íómá leb.

or,

Solo.

Járawá la tinga ódót, páliát érá, tinga ómá leb-at-íse.

Chorus.

Járawá bóimá leb-at-íse.

I have not thought it necessary to copy out more songs because the above fully illustrate the music of the Andamanese and their poetry; and, as explained, none of the songs have the value of antiquity. The "Öngé" songs

I have as yet been unable to procure. The next point for notice in the singing of the Andamanese is a peculiar "finale," as follows:

Solo.

Óbé dáté ár éá.

or,

Óbaé bóyubé dáté,

answered by

Chorus

Té áré áré á.

all of which has absolutely no meaning.

This solo with the North, and North of the Middle Andaman tribes is

Solo.

E' ábé árá, é ábé tárá.

answered as before.

This finale closes the song, and a pause ensues, in which the only sound heard is the rhythmical time beat, which has a very weird effect, and which ends in the time being suddenly broken, when a confused rapid rattle of beats is heard, the time changing from || continually repeated to || which after a few bars ceases entirely.

I will now describe the "Pukuta Yemnga," the only musical, or rather rhythmical instrument of the Andamanese. It is an instrument of percussion, and is a shield-shaped piece of wood, which is placed with the narrow end in the ground, and struck with the foot. Any man can make one. It is almost invariably made of "Chálanga" wood [*Pterocarpus dalbergioides*, "Padouk"], and is ornamented on the concave side with patterns in coloured earth put on generally by the women.

Holes, called "Áka-tób-lánga-da," are cut in the broad end for a rope to be fastened to, which rope the performer holds in his hand. He has also, as a rule, an arrow in his hand, the pointed end of which he sticks into the instrument near

the holes. It is used as a rest, and, with the rope, may be shifted to either hand. Ornaments of tassels are also occasionally tied on to these holes, and hang down underneath. No acoustic reason is given for the holes, and many "Pukutas" are found without them. The "Wólo" or Adze, is the only tool used in making the "Pukuta," which is not smoothed or finished in any way. The convex side of it follows the shape of the tree from which it has been cut; this side being generally the outer edge of the tree, with the bark removed, and the knots cut off. A big "Pukuta" takes a man (and it is usually made by one person) about a week to make.

When in use, the convex side of the "Pukuta" is uppermost, the pointed end is stuck in the ground, and kept in position with one foot. A stone is then placed under it, to keep it steady, and give it support.

Though the Andamanese sing when engaged in any employment, yet the dance is their only real musical performance. This may take place on the meeting of friends, after a successful day's sport, during the various initiatory ceremonies, in short, any event is made the pretext for a dance, which constitutes one of the greatest enjoyments in Andamanese life. It is also performed with certain observances of etiquette at a ceremony about 70 days after the funeral of a man, when his bones are distributed amongst his relatives.

The dances of the Andamanese are "the ordinary dance, or Kóinga," "the Yádi-Gumul dance," which is only used at that ceremony, and "the Reg-jiri-gumul dance," which is peculiar to that ceremony. There also occur minor differences in these dances among the different tribes, which merely consist, on the men's part, of a different mode of swinging the hands, and on the women's part, of a greater or less accentuation of the curtesy. The principal dance of the Andamanese, which with a few variations prevails throughout all the tribes in the Great Andaman, is as follows, and though seen at its best when a large party meet together who have not seen each other for some time, and therefore

vie with each other in the energy of their steps, or the newness of their songs, yet may be observed in most encampments of any size every evening. Although men, or rather boys, do take the women's part in the "Orchestra," yet a dance is not considered to be correct in the absence of women.

The "Pukuta Yemnga" having been placed at one end of the dancing ground (called "bulum"), which has been swept clean, the leader takes his stand at it, facing the ground. A number of women sit in a row on his left, and a cluster of men are behind him and on his right. The men who are going to dance sit or stand about at the edge of the ground.

The leader then commences a Solo, and, arriving at the Chorus, the women and men take it up and repeat it many times. The former sit upright with their legs straight before them, crossed a little above the ankle, and slap the hollow between their thighs with one open hand which is held at the wrist by the other. The men who are not dancing clap their hands, all in exact time. The leader strikes the "Pukuta" with the inner part of one foot, principally with the heel.

After about one bar of the chorus has been sung, the dancers commence with great vehemence. They do not form any figure, but go where they choose, and stop when they are tired.

The step of the men's dance is, Strike the ground with the right heel, the toes not being raised off the ground; then with the left heel, the whole foot being raised off the ground, and then again with the right heel. $\frac{2}{4}$ This completes one step, and is repeated for some time till the right foot is tired, when they commence with the left foot. All this time the body is bent slightly forward from the hips, the back curved well inwards; and the arms being outstretched, the first fingers and thumbs of both hands are interlaced. [There are many ways, however, of holding the fingers, this being purely a matter for the dancer's taste.] As the leader becomes tired, he is relieved at the "Pukuta" by another, and joins in the dance. The leader continues to

sing for some time, and when tired is succeeded by the man who relieved him. This obtains always.

The step of the women's dance is, "Swinging their arms backwards and forwards, and alternately raising their heels from the ground. Then raising their hands they will cross their wrists, then go back, after a little while, to the first position." They also every minute or so advance a few steps.

The men when tired, but not wishing to cease dancing, have a step called, "Dénāōké," which is performed thus: "they simply stand and raise their heels alternately, keeping their toes on the ground." A great feature in this dance is that occasionally several men ceasing from their steps will cross the floor with a trotting motion, shouting the while. The time in all their motions is perfect, and very interesting to watch. As the Andamanese are always stark naked, with the exception of a leaf worn by the women, and their ornaments, the sight is a curious one.

The dances take place in the evening and at night in the dense jungle, often with no light but that of the flickering fires, and the effect is very weird. Sometimes they light a torch or throw a blazing mass of resin on the ground. They quite lose themselves in the excitement of the dance.

Special ornaments are worn by some, viz. a circular band of leaf round the head, with bunches of fibre stuck in it, and bunches of the same fibre are stuck in their waistbelt behind. The young men often dress and paint extensively for the dance, and are proud of their dancing.

A peculiar effect is produced when occasionally the music, *i.e.* the song, ceases, and nothing is heard but the rhythmical beat. Women occasionally relieve men at the "Pukuta," but do not often sing. A few differences may be noticed from the above, as, for instance, the Áka Yéri and Áka Cháriár tribes, when dancing, swing their hands from the hip to the chin in time with the dance. From what I have seen of the Járawa and Öngé dance, it would seem to be in imitation of the act of coition.

In the ceremonies of "Yádi-gumul-lé," or eating turtle, and "Reg-jíri-gumul-lé," or eating the breast of the pig,

under certain circumstances and conditions, a dance peculiar to each ceremony obtains. For a description of the ceremonies I must refer you to Mr. E. H. Man's work "On the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands." The "Yádi-gumul-lé" dance is as follows: "Men, and occasionally women, taking bunches of leaves in both hands, jump in the air with both feet together, bending down, and striking the ground with the branches as they return to the earth, and then rising erect for a second jump."

The "Reg-jí-í-gumul-lé" dance is similar, but one foot, the left, is kept permanently on the ground, while the right is alternately in the air, or beating the ground. The bunches of leaves are used in the same way.

No song or "Pukuta" is used in these two dances, and they are performed to merely the rhythmical clapping of hands and slapping of thighs. Only those who have gone through the ceremonies may assist the initiate at these dances.

The Nicobarese possess two musical instruments, one a seven-holed flageolet, which is evidently that of the Burmese, and the other a stringed instrument, called "Danang." It is made of the large bamboo, is about three feet long, and has three frets and one string of cane. Two holes are made in the bamboo for sound-holes. This instrument is laid across the knees when played, and produces a very good and powerful tone. It is in my opinion borrowed from the Indian "Sítár." The Nicobarese have many dances and songs, which have not yet been collected.

For information on the second class of music, I must refer you to the works of "Amiot," "Tradescant Lay" and "Van Aalst."

With regard to the third class, the music of Burma, Siam, and Java is more pleasing to European ears than that of any other Asiatic country. The instruments are of excellent quality of "timbre," and the scale is not so offensive to European ears.

The following remarks on Burmese music may be of interest; but in giving them I wish it to be understood that much more work remains to be done in this subject, and hereafter errors may be detected in what I now write.

The Burmese appear to be fond of music, but chiefly when in combination with dancing and acting. Their ear is good, and they can be taught European music. They have professional musicians, who attain considerable proficiency in their own music, which is taught entirely by ear. The quality of their voices is soft, but nasal in intonation, and not particularly pleasing. The compass is about one octave. The prevailing male voice is "barytone," B $\flat$ -a or B-f. The prevailing female voice is "mezzo-soprano," B $\flat$ -e. They possess books and collections of songs, but have no musical notation, nor have they any knowledge of Harmony, which is a purely European musical science. The Burmese scale requires to be determined by some experienced acoustician, the "temperament" differing from ours. I have heard a "Pátala" tuned to almost our diatonic scale of A Major.

This "Pátala" or Bamboo Harmonican, is the basis of all Burmese music, and to it all orchestral instruments are tuned. As it is tuned, diatonically, orchestral chromatics are forbidden. The music contains frequently repeated phrases, with different variations, and in different octaves. Duple time is generally used.

The following is a list of the instruments in use in Lower Burma. "Boung," a Drum. "Saeng," a circle of Drums. "Pam-ma," a Brass Drum. "Hné," an Oboe. "Boung-hsé," a long Drum. "Oo-hsé," an upright Drum. "Be-oh," a Tam-tam. "Wun-let-hkouk," a bamboo Clapper. "Hsaing-di," a circle of Gongs. "Maungi," a Gong. "Jeg-wainh," Cymbals. "Hsaing-aung," a crescent Gong. "Pá-lwé," a Flageolet. "Saung," a Harp. "Pátala," a Harmonican. "Mee-gyoung," an alligator-shaped Guitar. "Theyau," a Fiddle.

I will now describe these in detail.

"Boung" is a conical wooden drum, with heads and braces of deer-hide. Only the larger end is played on, and

is covered with a cream-coloured paint, with a black centre. It is not tuned by the braces, but by placing in the centre of the black spot a lump of paste, consisting of boiled rice and soda lye earth, and the reason of painting the head of the drum is to prevent this composition, which is a strong alkali, eating into the hide.

The "Saeng" consists of a number (generally 21) of these drums, placed round the inside of a circular frame, being suspended from its upper rim by hide cords. A large bass drum is suspended to a bamboo pole attached to the outside of the frame. The performer sits in the centre of the framework, and plays on the drums with his hands, striking them with a peculiar flick of the first and second fingers. The tone is soft and dull. The "Pam-ma," being simply a large "Boung," requires no separate description.

"Hné" is an "Oboe," with a large detached metal bell, seven holes in front and two holes behind. It is an instrument of the orchestra. Its compass is three octaves, of which the middle one seems to be little used. The lower octave has a coarse rough tone, but the highest octave has a beautiful flute-like tone, which is very effective. Five oboes are generally used in a full orchestra. The reed is of coarse contrivance, being thick, and made of a number of folds of palm leaf, at folding which the players are very dexterous. A brass bodkin is usually attached to the "Hné" for keeping the centre of the reed clear. "Boung-hsé" and "Be-oh" are mere ordinary drums, of the shape of the Indian "Tam-tam." "Oo-hsé" is a peculiar kind of upright drum, in form being of the genus kettledrum, and somewhat resembles the "Darabukkeh" of the Egyptians. "Wun-let-hkouk" is an ingenious bamboo clapper. It consists of a piece of bamboo two joints long, which is split down to the second joint, and part of the second joint is cut away for the hand. It is used to mark the time, and is often played with the foot. Gongs the Burmese are famous for. They are of two shapes, crescent and circular, and are either used singly or in a circle. The edges of the single gongs are thin, and incline inwards; those which are used in circles

like the circle of drums, have their edges of the same thickness as the rest of the instrument, and at right angles to the face of the gong. They are tuned by adding solder, wax, etc., to the inside of the centre knob. Their tone is often exquisite, and the circle of gongs, which are played on by being struck with pieces of wood, are an excellent addition to the orchestra. The cymbals are equally fine, and are of all sizes.

"Pá-lwé," the flageolet, is made of bamboo, with seven holes in front, and a thumb hole. It has often another hole above the top finger hole, which is covered by paper or wax, and is similar to the same class of hole in the Chinese flute called "Ti-tzü." The instrument has no mouthpiece, the end being simply put to the mouth.

"Saung," the harp, is a most beautiful instrument. The body is canoe-shaped, and made of wood covered with deer-skin, and sometimes painted. A long curved neck projects upwards from the body, and the strings, made of silk and of different thicknesses, are fastened to thick tasseled cords on the neck, the other ends being tied to a bar on the centre of the body. The strings are thirteen in number, and are tuned in unison with the "Pátala." The tuning is effected by the cords being raised or lowered on the neck. The body acts as a sounding board, and has round holes cut in the belly covering. The tone of this instrument is very fine. Of its origin I can say nothing, but it should be compared with the harps of the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians, which it greatly resembles, and will probably solve many problems regarding them, as it appears to me to show decided traces of Assyrian origin.

"Pátala," the bamboo harmonican, is the basis of all Burmese music. On it beginners are taught before they learn any other instrument, and to it the other instruments are tuned. The number of its notes varies from 18 to 23. The notes are merely strips of the "*Bambusa Gigantea*," strung together by holes bored on the nodal points, and suspended over an ornamented trough which serves as a sounding board. The tone is remarkably liquid and beautiful.

It is played by one performer, who sits before it, having a hammer with a cloth or cork head in each hand, with which he strikes it. There is also a "Pátala," composed of metal bars instead of bamboo, which greatly resembles the glass harmonican used as a toy by English children. It is not a genuine Burmese instrument, but an adaptation from a European harmonican.

"Mee-gyoung," the alligator-shaped guitar, is considered to be one of the most ancient instruments in Burma, and on account of its ineffectiveness is going out of use. It is made of wood in the likeness of an alligator, is strung with three wire strings, and has frets. It is played with a plectrum.

"Theyau," the fiddle, bears a striking resemblance to the European viol family. It is strung with three silken or horsehair strings, and is played like a violoncello. It is difficult to say whether this is a genuine Burmese instrument or no. I am of opinion that, though the Burmese may, in common with other adjacent races, have had a stringed instrument played with a bow, yet that the shape of the present "Theyau" has been influenced by some member of the viol family, possibly introduced by the Portuguese. It may also be affected by the Hindu "Sarinda."

Burmese instruments may be divided into three classes.

1. The instruments of the lower classes.
2. The instruments for chamber music.
3. The instruments for orchestral music.

The instruments of the first class are: "Boung-hsé." "Be-oh." "Wun-let-hkouk." "Pá-lwé." "Pátala." "Théyau." These would generally be used singly or combined, as "Patala" and "Wun-let-hkouk," "Be-oh" and "Jeg-wainh," "Theyau" and "Wun-let-hkouk."

The instruments of the second class are: "Saung." "Patala," and "Mee-gyoung."

The instruments of the third class are: "Hné." "Hsaing-dí." "Saing." "Pam-ma." "Wun-let-hkouk." "Jeg-wainh." Of which a good orchestra would consist.

With regard to the conducting of an orchestra and matters

of combinations of instruments, information is much to be desired. Libretti, and scores of the Burmese Pooays, would be most valuable.

Similar instruments, though more highly finished, and of a better class of manufacture, are to be found in Siam and Java.

With regard to the fourth class I can only give the opinions of others. Lieut. Day, of the 43rd Regt., writes that he hopes shortly to publish a work on the music of Southern India, which differs from that of Bengal and Northern India, and I will not therefore attempt to anticipate this work by producing any of his remarks here.

Mr. C. B. Clarke writes with regard to Bengali music, "Bengali music is founded on the Seeta, the octave is divided into twelve semitones. In the middle octave the Seeta has ten frets, which can be set before commencing the tune. Thus seven frets can be set to the Major scale, while the two extra frets may be set to F $\sharp$ and B $\flat$. When once set no occasional sharps or flats can be played, except the F $\sharp$ and B $\flat$. By permuting the nine out of eleven semitones a large number of "modes" can be got. The Bengalis use thirty-six. The common major mode is one of the modes they use, but it is not a favourite one, as they consider it thin. They never use exactly our minor mode. The seventh is used both sharp and flat very freely, and in immediate juxtaposition, and the superfluous second frequently occurs. The intervals are nearly always small. You may hear many long tunes without sixths or octaves, and very few fifths. Another peculiarity is the persistent way in which the melody will remain for bars on B, C, and B $\flat$, or similar sequences of notes. A Bengal melody usually consists of two strains, each imperfectly divisible into two portions. It may fairly be compared to an English psalm tune, to common long metre, but each of the four "lines" is longer. A marked peculiarity of the Bengali melodies is, that they generally commence in the lower part of the octave and rise to the octave, and ninth in the third line, then gradually fall to the close of the fourth line. The

time is very generally common time. Two Bengali boat songs are appended.

Signor Remenyi, the eminent Hungarian violinist, remarks, "Hindu music is wedded to theories which are not generally known; it is overburdened with a complicated system of scales, and above all, it is held in the bondage of a traditional caste. Far from an absence of system in Hindu music, there is a morbid superabundance of it. Hindu music is in the same position as European music of the eleventh century."

It would appear that an ancient Sanskrit form of notation similar to our Tonic Sol Fa in construction existed. The only other Asiatic nation which, as far as I am aware, has a similar notation, is the Chinese. I am in hopes that this subject having been opened, others may be induced to communicate more valuable information regarding it.

I may remark, in conclusion, that all the instruments mentioned in this paper have been brought to England by me, and placed in the "Pitt-Rivers" Museum at the University of Oxford.

What few books and papers I have been able to collect, I have placed in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society.

[The following is a list of the works with which Mr. Portman's generosity has enriched our Library :

- "Chinese Music." By J. A. Aalst. Shanghai, 1884.
- "The National Music of the World." By the late H. F. Chorley, edited by Henry G. Hewlett. 2nd ed. London, 1882.
- "Notes on Siamese Musical Instruments." Lond. 1885.
- "An Introduction to the Study of National Music." By Carl Engel. Lond. 1866.
- "The Literature of National Music." By Carl Engel. Lond. 1879.
- "Short Notices of Hindu Musical Instruments." Calcutta, 1877.
- "Hindu Music from Various Authors." By Sourindro Mohun Tagore, Mus. Doc., Founder and President of the Bengal Music School. 2nd ed. Calcutta, 1882.
- "Musical Scales of the Hindus." By S. M. Tagore. Calcutta, 1884.
- "Victoria Sámrájyan, or Sanskrit Stanzas." By S. M. Tagore. 2nd ed. Calcutta, 1882.
- "Fifty Tunes, composed and set to Music." By S. M. Tagore. Calcutta, 1878.
- "The Five Principal Musicians of the Hindus." By S. M. Tagore. Calcutta, 1881.
- "The Twenty Principal Kavyakaras of the Hindus; or, Extracts from the Works of Twenty of the most Renowned Literati of India." By S. M. Tagore. Calcutta, 1883.

R.H.D.]

ANDAMANESE MUSIC.

~~~~~
Song No. I.

Met. ♩ = 132.

*Children's
Voices.**Women's
Voices.**Men's
Voices.*

CHORUS.

SOLO.

*Dance Step.**Beating of
"Pukuta," and
Clapping, etc.*

RHYTHM.

Guma Nyunga-lá díá chél lá-lót rámit, lóto éno

The second part of the musical score continues the melody. It features the same vocal parts (Children's, Women's, Men's) and a dance step. The lyrics are: díá chél lá-lót rámit-la. Nyunga déra t'oro bói lá. The tempo marking *rit.* (ritardando) is present at the end of the phrase.

Nyunga déra t'óro, bóí lá.

Nyunga déra t'óro, bóí lá.

Nyunga déra t'óro, bóí lá.

Nyunga déra t'óro, bóí lá.

Song No. II.

Met. ♩ = 138. (The Solo is not in strict time.)

Bír - á lót ére má ógar - lá ebng érá,

chál édo - ké dók ebng éra chála, Bé chóké wáp lóm

Bé chóké
Bé chóké
Bé chóké
Bé chóké
dáka tár - ai lót tá Bé chóké

wáp lóm dáka tár - - ai lót tá.

wáp lóm dáka tár - - ai lót tá.

wáp lóm dáka tár - - ai lót tá.

wáp lóm dáka tár - - ai lót tá.

Song No. III.

Dó ngól áka teggi leb dáka jád ála ngáka

yábng - ó. D'ót ógar léra, lóto cháli beo.

D'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

D'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

D'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

D'ót ógar léra lóto cháli beo.

Song No. IV.

Bádin - ga yába chána ur chel ya leb d'áb - éti -

- ré, ára chélia lat gono tét lóť gu - toi d'áb cháti

tong lóť ár Lódo chár béria óba ngí - ká.

Lódo chár béria óba ngí - ká.

Lódo chár béria óba ngí - ká.

Lódo chár béria óba ngí - ká.

Lódo chár béria óba ngí - ká.

Song No. V.

[illegible]

uch óba - á. Uch - óba - dá kó dédá oh! oh! oh!

Uch - óba - dá, kó dédá oh ! oh ! oh !

Uch - óba - dá, kó dédá oh ! oh ! oh !

Uch - óba - dá, kó dédá oh ! oh ! oh !

Uch - óba - dá, kó dédá oh ! oh ! oh !

The score consists of four vocal staves and two piano staves. The vocal parts are in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are repeated on each vocal staff.

Song No. VI.

Maia Pó - ro bér - ingá - lá díá yádi chá - uma leb ngiji dál

The score for Song No. VI includes four vocal staves and two piano staves. The vocal parts are in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves.

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for piano accompaniment, with the first two in treble clef and the last two in bass clef. The fifth staff is the vocal line, written in a single-clef system. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes. Above the vocal line, there are four vertical tick marks, each aligned with a measure. The lyrics "páál láka, eb ngiji dál lá - ka Poro lóť yengo, beá lí dá." are written below the vocal staff.

páál láka, eb ngiji dál lá - ka Poro lóť yengo, beá lí dá.

The second system of the musical score consists of seven staves. The top four staves are vocal lines, each written in a single-clef system. They all share the same key signature (one sharp) and 2/4 time signature. The lyrics "Póro lóť yengo, beá lí dá." are written below each vocal staff. The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment line in bass clef. The sixth and seventh staves are also piano accompaniment lines, with the sixth in bass clef and the seventh in treble clef. The melody in the vocal lines is consistent with the first system, featuring eighth and quarter notes.

Póro lóť yengo, beá lí dá.

Póro lóť yengo, beá lí dá.

Póro lóť yengo, beá lí dá.

Póro lóť yengo, beá lí dá.

Song No. VIII.

Do ngen ár geu dan - gali dät, kopa léra golo -

- baka í - dät kopa léra dó ngen ó déra éloj - ró.

Do ngen ó déra éloj - ró.

Do ngen ó déra éloj - ró.

Do ngen ó déra éloj - ró.

Do ngen ó déra éloj - ró.

The score consists of four vocal staves and two piano staves. The vocal parts are arranged in two pairs, each with a treble and bass line. The piano accompaniment is in 2/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are 'Do ngen ó déra éloj - ró.' repeated four times.

Song No. IX.

Pus - é, ló - ringá ló dúdé pólé, pus - é ló -

The score for Song No. IX features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal part is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piano accompaniment is on two staves. The lyrics are 'Pus - é, ló - ringá ló dúdé pólé, pus - é ló -'.

- ringó - lá, Mía - té ba loring - á lá.

Mía - té ba loring - - á lá.
 Mía - té ba loring - - á lá.
 Mía - té ba loring - - á lá.
 Mía - té ba loring - - á lá.

Song No. X.

Káp - ró, Káp - ró dekan, Ká - pró - á, Bár - lek - ó, tía - á - bada.

Bár - lek - - ó, tía a - bada.

Bár - lek - - ó, tía á - bada.

Bár - lek - - ó, tía á - bada.

Bár - lek - - ó, tía á - bada.

EAST BENGAL BOAT SONGS.

No. I.

(The stroke of the oar on the first beat of each bar.)

No. II.