Tejaji - World Oral Literature Project



Dr. Madan Meena

The Kota Heritage Society works to promote traditional local culture and has supported the recording and archiving of a Hadoti Ballad as part of the World Oral Literature Project based at Cambridge University, England.

Tejaji is a warrior snake deity honoured throughout SE Rajasthan and into Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in rural areas where the danger of snake bites is very real. The 19-hour ballad in the unwritten local language of Hadoti describes his heroic deeds and tragic death from a snake bite on his tongue. (It supports the belief that a thread tied in Tejaji's name will save the afflicted person from death as promised by the snake.)

The Ballad has never been transcribed and recorded to the necessary international standard. Dr Madan Meena and Victoria Singh are co-grantees. Although the main recording is of the Mali Community in Thikarda village near Bundi, who sang the ballad during five nightlong sessions, Madan also spent 21 other nights recording in over 20 villages during the monsoon period of July and August 2010 as part of the Project. A book of the Ballad has been published using the Hindi script, and has been distributed to the musicians, other participants in the project and schools in the area. It is also for sale to the public at Rs. 750 and to members for Rs. 500.

At a workshop on the challenges of archiving oral literature in Cambridge in December 2010, Dr Meena presented this Ballad to an audience of academics.

An English translation of the story of the Ballad, which is very detailed, is available to members on this page on logging-in.

The World Oral Literature Project also hosts the collection of Madan Meena's work and you can visit his webpage on their website by clicking here.

Tejaji 2022-23 Projects



Recording of the complete Tejaji Ballad at village Jaichandpura near Jaipur. This version is in the Dhundhari dialect.

Other Oral Literature Projects 2022-23



Recording of Kalbelia songs in Jaipur at Virasat Foundation (RAAP studio) with Meva Sapera and Kusum Sapera. More recordings have taken place in Barmer as well. These songs are being compiled into a book.



Manganiyar song recordings in Barmer at villages Konra, Jane-ki-Beri and Jaisinder. These include the songs and ballads sung in Marwari, Sindhi and Dhati languages of the region. They switch according to the language of their patrons.



Recording of the Pauwa Bhopa bards in Sirohi district during the 2022 monsoon. Their repertoire includes songs based on Kabir, Meera and heroic personalities.

Tejaji 2020-21 Projects

Two projects are ongoing in 2020 - 2021 but have been delayed due to Covid-19 lock down.

1. Translation into Hindi of Hadoti transcription of Tejaji from Ramnagar area near Sultanpur, Kota

district.

2. Translating the 2019 Tejaji recording from Kharnal near Nagaur where Tejaji was born.

Dhanraj Kalbelia - Sings Tejaji Gatha



Teja Dashmi,September 2018

This young man, Dhanraj Kalbelia of Thikarda taught himself the *Tejaji Gatha* from our book and has now become an expert singer and is in great demand.

The transcripts of *Tejaji* recordings from *Johar Kheda* and *Sursura* (Ajmer District) have been completed. During the monsoon of 2017 one more style of the Tejaji ballad was recorded by Madan in the Nagaur belt of Marwar region under a Senior Research Fellowship from the Department of Culture. The translations of these three Tejaji recordings will be completed soon.

We published *Raja Bharathari-ki-Katha* on the Sahapedia website recorded with the *Jogi of Banda* village in Sawai Madhopur.

Tejaji Celebrations and Book Launch at Thikarda

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The Bhopa

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The Musicians

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Dancing

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Presenting First Book

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A Selection of Participants

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  Dal Bati Churma
- 
  Acting the Tejaji Ballad
- 
  Playing the Algoza
- 
  Singing the Tejaji Ballad
- 
  Snake Fresco on Tejaji Temple
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Tejaji Maharaj Temple Fresco