

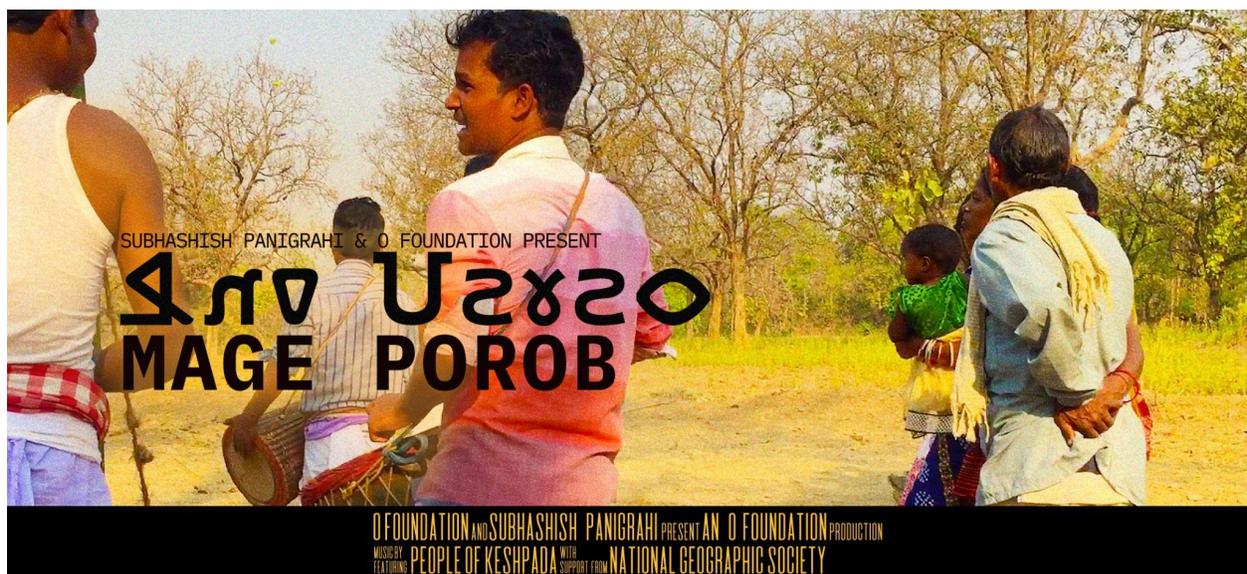
Mage Porob (2019 documentary)

Subhashish Panigrahi 

Abstract (Summary)

The *Mage Porob* festival of the Ho people pushes all -- young and old -- from their village homes to gather for a community dance. No one stops dancing until the sun sets. The film goes deeper asking what is the Ho way of life beyond Mage Porob?

Keywords: Ho, Warang citi, Munda, Odisha, India, indigenous, language, endangered



Theatrical poster (© Subhashish Panigrahi, CC-BY-SA 4.0. 2020)

Plot Summary

The Ho people remember their ancestors and deities as the *dehuri* (elder and priest) offer the prayers and best flowers, fruits, leaves and meat. ([Kujur](#)) But a festival is not a festival without a community dance.

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All conflicts come to an end when Mage Porob drags the villagers to the dancing field. Even a mother with a baby taps her feet to the rhythms of *dama* and *dumeng* while holding the next dancer with one hand and the baby with the other. The entire village becomes an assembly line. The once-successful music arranger who is now partly disabled still keeps the drummers in sync with his coordinated hand gestures.

The dancing field is that place where young members of the community get to meet and approach their future partners. The *Sarapancha*, an elected local political leader, also joins the dance group for a short while. The real world problem pauses as buckets of water are sprinkled to settle the dust right before the dance starts.

The Ho way of life goes much beyond Mage Porob. The people, their language and culture have seen so much change around since the community started moving out of the Chota Nagpur Plateau of present-day Jharkhand and Odisha. ([Damodaran](#))

Plot synopsis

The Ho people are an indigenous group that has made the lush nature their home for ages now. Majority of the community are in the eastern states of India -- Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. This documentary is merely a window to the vast expanse of the Ho people, their language and culture. Set in the Keshpada village of the Mayurbhanj district in Odisha, the entire film is narrated by many members of the local community. The film is an outcome of a collaboration with the entire Keshpada village and the Birbasa student group in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, apart from funding support from the National Geographic Society. ([Rajpal](#))

Mage Porob was filmed in 2018 and was released in 2019 for a limited view. It was made public in 2020 with an Open Access with no restriction to the native speaker community. The film follows the festive life of the Ho community. The film's namesake Mage Porob is one of the most important festivals of the Ho people, and to some extent the other Munda people of which the Ho group is a part of. According to the Ho

All that change and the nature that every Ho calls home has shaped their animist cultural and religious practices. The film is touched by the free-flow conversations between the villagers that cite folklore, songs and the meticulous jamming of *dama* (kettle drum) and *dumeng*, two signature percussion instruments that are seen in every single Ho cultural gathering. ([Reichel](#)) While the entire film was shot in the Keshpada village, some of the annotative additions along with subtitling were done in collaboration with the Veer Birsa Munda Ho Students Union Odisha (*Birbasa*) in Bhubaneswar.

genesis legend, *Sing bonga*, the god of creation created *Luku kola*, the first man on the earth. ([Paty](#)) Mage porob is a celebration to pay tribute to *Sing bonga*. This film was shot around the time of the year when the Keshpada village was busy preparing for the festival. Women cleaned the houses and prepared fresh *rasi*, a rice-based fermented alcohol and the sal trees were in full bloom. The film would allow the audience to immerse themselves in the tight-knit Ho culture that ensures how men and women respectfully offer *rasi* to each other and drink as a family. The storyline also follows the sacred worship of "*guan bunga*" (IPA: / guã: bunɡa: /), the cattle shed worship by a family elder. When the *rasi* starts settling and men beat *dama* and *dumeng*, the entire village comes to the village ground. Boys bring buckets of water to sprinkle and settle the dust. But when the whole village starts dancing, with women holding babies in one hand and their partners on the other, the dust would not settle so easily.

The Ho people are an Adivasi (a term used across South Asia to broadly include the

indigenous peoples) group that belong to the Munda family. The 2011 census of India recorded the Ho population to be 1,421,418 who are spread primarily in India across the Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha West Bengal, and a small percentage in

Bangladesh and Nepal. The Ho language, which is written with the Warang Citi writing system, is listed as a vulnerable language in the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. ([Mosley](#))

Datasheet

Title	Mage Porob
Name in Ho	ᱠᱟᱨ ᱯᱟᱨᱠᱟ
Name in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	/məgeː poːroːbə/
Director	Subhashish Panigrahi
Cast	Lalit Mohan Singh Banara (self), Mathura Deogram (self), Ladura Singh Haiburu (self), Laxmi Haiburu (self), Singo Haiburu (self), Kuna Kandeyang (self), Dibakar Melghandhi (self), Cheley Munduri (self), Pritam Munduya (self), Bhola Purty (self), Tuna Purty (self), Buddha Rout (self), Bagun Singh (self), Dabung Singh (self), Jena Singh (self), Mathura Singh (self), Sidio Singh (self), Mangal Sinku (self), Phurmi Singh Sundi (self), Bipin Chandra Tiyu (self), Debendra Tiyu (self), Khuduray Tiyu (self), Matai Tiyu (self), Rama Tiyu (self), Santanu Tiyu (self)
Genre(s)	Documentary
Country of production	India
Country of Origin	India
Filming location(s)	Keshpada, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, India
Year of Production	2018
Release Dates	30 June 2019 (India) - limited 4 May 2021 (India) - internet
Duration	41 minutes (appx.)
Genre	Documentary

Distribution company	O Foundation (OFDN)
Production company	O Foundation (OFDN)
Digitization sponsorer	National Geographic Society
Producer	Subhashish Panigrahi
Screenwriter	Subhashish Panigrahi
Music	Keshpada villagers
Background score	Subhashish Panigrahi
Recordist	Subhashish Panigrahi
Keywords	Ho, Warang citi, Munda, India, Keshpada, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha, indigenous, language, endangered
Budget	US\$3,076 (estimated)
Film website	https://theofdn.org/film/gyani-maiya/
Permanent archive	Film (https://archive.org/details/mage-poroba), Collection (https://archive.org/details/mage-porob-collection)
Entertainment Identifier Registry (EIDR)	
 DOI	http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/t2cb-bg17
 IMDb	https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14637834/
Summary	No Ho can resist when the drummers beat dama and dumeng.

Technical details

Film type	Documentary Feature
Language	Ho
Spoken Language(s)	Ho
Colour Info	Color
Frame Rate	24 fps
Aspect Ratio	2.35:1
Stereoscopy	No
Captions	English (Closed Caption), English (Open Caption)

Additional credits

Overall coordination	Laxmidhar Singh, Lalit Mohan Singh Banara, Mangu Sinku, and Birbasa (Veer Birsa Munda Ho Students Union Odisha)
Interviews, translation, and coordination	Lalit Mohan Singh Banara and Santanu Tiyu
Captioning translation	Santanu Tiyu Mangal Singku Sibanath Hasdah Biswajeet Sinku Kuna Kandeyang Rabindra Boipai Vishal Bandra Rajiv Sawayan Sunaram Singh
Additional stills and footage	Prateek Pattanaik
Additional music	From Freesound: Pig Oink Cerdo Sound Effect, FX Sounds (CC-BY-SA 3.0). Andy_Gardner (CC0 1.0); Goat, LukeIRL (CC-BY 3.0); Walking barefoot on wooden deck.MP3. SoundsForHim (CC0 1.0); Stream, Water, C.wav, Inspector. (CC-BY 3.0); Mokroluskyt_padla.WAV. 13FPanska_Mokrolusky_Tomas (CC0 1.0); Bleating goats. Seenms. CC-BY 3.0. Additional Foley sounds recorded by Subhashish Panigrahi, CC-BY-SA 4.0.

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