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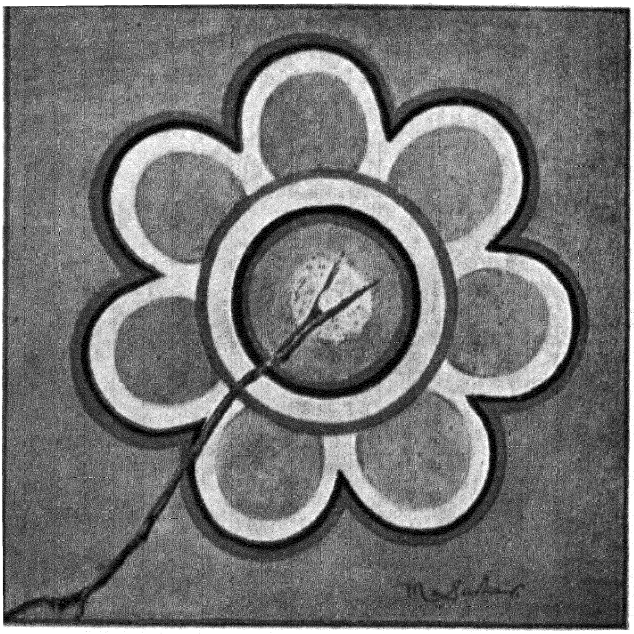

The diagram of the *Dāndā-Kattā* or *bhelwā-phāri* ceremony.

[See PP. 126—8 and Illustrations 3 and 4].

Oraon Religion & Customs.

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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RANCHI

1928.

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PREFACE.

In the Preface to my earlier volume on *The Oraons of Chōtā-Nāgpur*, published in 1915, I promised to follow up that work by another volume in which the religious beliefs and socio-religious customs of the tribe would be dealt with in detail. During the twelve years that have elapsed since the publication of my earlier work on the Orāons, I have continued my investigations into the religion and customs of this tribe. And a considerable portion of the results of those investigations is embodied in this book. Some of these results were from time to time published in the form of articles in the *Journal of the Bihār and Orissā Research Society* and in *Man in India*, and they have been incorporated in this volume with modifications and additions made in the light of further researches.

I desire to express my gratitude to Colonel T. C. Hodson, M. A., I. C. S., (*Retd.*) the distinguished successor of Dr. A. C. Haddon as Reader of Ethnology in the University of Cambridge, and the author of *'Primitive Culture of India,'* and valuable monographs on *'The Nāgā Tribes of Manipur'* and *'The Meithies'*, for the *Introduction* he has kindly written for this volume. I should also like to tender my sincere thanks to my esteemed friend Mr. P. C. Tallents, M. A., I. C. S., formerly Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar and Orissa, for having kindly read through the last chapter of the book, partly in manuscript and partly in proof, and suggested some verbal alterations.

The method of transliteration followed in this volume in rendering Orāon and other Indian words, is as follows:—

अ	is	represented	by	*a*	ढ	is	represented	by	*ḍh*
आ	,,	,,	,,	*ā*	ण	,,	,,	,,	*ṇ*
इ	,,	,,	,,	*i*	त	,,	,,	,,	*t*
ई	,,	,,	,,	*ī*	थ	,,	,,	,,	*th*
उ	,,	,,	,,	*ū*	द	,,	,,	,,	*d*
ऊ	,,	,,	,,	*oo*	ध	,,	,,	,,	*dh*
ए	,,	,,	,,	*ē*	न	,,	,,	,,	*n*
ऐ	,,	,,	,,	*oi*	प	,,	,,	,,	*p*
ओ	,,	,,	,,	*ō*	फ	,,	,,	,,	*ph*
औ	,,	,,	,,	*ow*	ब	,,	,,	,,	*b*
					भ	,,	,,	,,	*bh*
क	,,	,,	,,	*k*	म	,,	,,	,,	*m*
ख	,,	,,	,,	*kh*	य	,,	,,	,,	*y*
ग	,,	,,	,,	*g*	र	,,	,,	,,	*r*
घ	,,	,,	,,	*gh*	ल	,,	,,	,,	*l*
च	,,	,,	,,	*ch*	व	,,	,,	,,	*wa*
छ	,,	,,	,,	*chh*	श	,,	,,	,,	*ś*
ज	,,	,,	,,	*j*	ष	,,	,,	,,	*ṣ*
झ	,,	,,	,,	*jh*	स	,,	,,	,,	*s*
ट	,,	,,	,,	*ṭ*	ह	,,	,,	,,	*h*
ठ	,,	,,	,,	*ṭh*	ं	,,	,,	,,	*m*
ड	,,	,,	,,	*ḍ*	ँ	,,	,,	,,	*ñ*

Dated Ranchi,
The 15th September, 1928.

S. C. Roy.

INTRODUCTION.

GOOD wine needs no bush. A book on the Orāons by Sarat Chandra Roy needs no introduction. A book like this sane, clear, scientific, sympathetic, comprehensive is of prime importance to the student of anthropology, to the student of religion and to the administrator who seeks or should seek to understand the forces which govern human activities, and it is full of charm and interest for the general reader who desires to know something at once accurate and intelligible of the Peoples of India.

The student of anthropology soon learns that the secret of his science is "to see life steadily and to see it whole." No belief exists in isolation. Every custom is but a part of a whole and neither the whole nor the parts can be justly appraised unless, as here, their functions, their interdependence and their organic relations are made clear, are recorded faithfully, are synthesised, are intelligently surveyed and explained. The nature of man, the nature of spiritual beings (is not man himself a spiritual being, at least in part?), the nature of Nature, of natural phenomena and natural processes, as viewed and understood by the Orāons—as indeed by many another society—are of deepest interest and are faithfully presented here.

We know that Religion in the abstract can and must be handled dispassionately—without prejudice or passion—and we are learning that—despite controversy and sectarianism—Religion in the concrete is "a mode of behaviour, a system of intellectual beliefs, and a system of feelings" held by and current among human beings who form a society, live in a definite part of the world and are therefore to be studied by constant reference to history, geography, social and economic conditions and to the universal facts of psychology. The Orāons live in a part of India which has its special characteristics and their views as to the nature of Nature, of the world in which and by which they live and move and have their being, are based upon their experiences, personal and communal, of their peculiar environment.

They speak a language which belongs to the Dravidian family. They are settled among speakers of the Mūṇḍā (Austro-Asiatic family) group of languages. They are in constant contact with Hindu and Hinduised groups. There are features in their intellectual beliefs, their traditional beliefs, their tacitly assumed and unquestioned beliefs, which —apart from resemblances due to the common elements of the universal pattern—are unmistakably borrowed from their Mūṇḍā or Hindu neighbours. We must endeavour to know why this feature and not another was selected for adoption, and whether or in what direction the features so selected

have been modified and adapted. In our quest for this knowledge we shall find precious aid in this book.

Not without wisdom has the author reserved for the end an examination of modern conditions and disclosed the constant activities of the people. We demand to know how far individuality or personality are creative forces in the evolution or transformation of religion and of social life in general. Religion is a personal thing: it is a social thing, for man is a social animal. We cannot escape from society. We must not deny individuality. The pattern allows a wide range of variation. Fortunately, as in other sciences, the variations attributable to individuality adjust themselves when masses are under scrutiny. It is thus permissible to deal with these problems of belief and behaviour since the constraints of social conditions—which are notably rigorous in communities like the Orāons—are always operative in the direction of conformity.

The distinguished author—versed in modern anthropological science, to which he has contributed so much—finds himself in accord with Professor Malinowski in his general attitudes towards Religion, Magic and Science and supports his views with many notable facts. It is probable that we are but flogging a dead horse when we emphasise the importance of the practical knowledge possessed by the Lower Culture. To label them as prelogical, mystical, unreal, is to libel them.

Their mental mechanism is of the same order as our own. The Orāons have pushed their schemes of classification of 'spiritual beings' as far as the sternest systematist could desire. Much of the trouble that has been experienced by students of primitive mentality is due to the use of terminology in translation without any attempt to secure accurate correspondence not only between the most restricted meaning of the terms but also between the different connotations attached thereto. Our own terms,—soul, spirit, and the 'isms —which plague the student, are vague enough but when used to convey the meaning of other societies are seriously misleading.

Especial importance attaches to the notable corrections of fact and of interpretation which earlier authorities have perpetrated. There are perhaps matters where a modern investigator finds great, even startling differences between the data recorded forty or fifty years ago and those which his improved technique enables him to discern to-day. In part these very differences afford a measure both of the direction and of the extent of the developments in this period. What was, is not. What is, is not what will be.

In these pages light is thrown on many problems of age-long interest and I will not inflict further discussion upon the reader because it is my proud duty, as it is my sincere pleasure, to proclaim myself among those who have always

derived great advantage from the learning and ability of this modest and accomplished scholar whose disinterested and persistent labours for the advancement of science merit high and early recognition. Read his book carefully, mark its sincerity and sympathetic intelligence and you will learn from it the wisdom of serene tolerance.

T. C. HODSON,
Reader in Ethnology in the
University of Cambridge.

July, 1928.

ORAON RELIGION AND CUSTOMS.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION, MAGIC AND SCIENCE.

THE system of belief and practice, doctrine and behaviour, which generations of Orāon society have gradually evolved and organized to face the unknown supernatural world and restore confidence to the mind of the community and the individual when it is shaken by crises and dangers, may be studied separately in its two aspects of Religion proper and Magic, although, as among other primitive tribes, the two are not unoften combined in actual Orāon practice.

The Orāon recognises a Supreme Deity symbolised by the Sun, superior and inferior nature-spirits, and potentially beneficent ancestor-spirits and maleficent spirits of certain dead human beings, besides beneficent and maleficent impersonal powers and forces. Totemism has almost lost its religious aspect among the Orāons, and shamanism is involved in the Orāon's Magic rather than in his Religion proper. And the Orāon's present religion may be described as a system of animism or rather spiritism set on a background of a still more primitive and vague animatism, in which the soul or spirit is not discriminated from the body or object it inhabits and an impersonal magic force of the nature of 'mana' is attributed not merely to

certain living beings and certain objects of external nature but also to some objects of human art.

Generally speaking, the Orāon's ideas and doctrines concerning chiefly what he now regards as the more important personal powers and beings of the supernatural world and his ways of dealing with them or rather entering into relations with them constitute his Religion proper and his ideas about and methods of dealing with, or rather dodging, controlling or pressing into service the innumerable supernatural impersonal forces and energies that confront him at almost every step constitute his Magic. In fact, this Magic is rather pseudo-Science than Religion.

In religion proper, the attitude of Orāon society, as that of other primitive societies, towards the supernatural is one of reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural powers and beings, and dependance on and conciliation and propitiation of and prayerful submission to them, and the result expected is averting the ill-will and securing the good will of the supernatural beings, and good luck to man in crops and cattle, health and progeny. Although it appears that originally none of the Orāon spirits was regarded as beneficent, contact with higher culture has since helped in investing a few of them with a beneficent or rather potentially beneficent nature.

The concept of personality that to some extent distinguishes the beings which are the objects of Orāon religious ritual from the forces dealt with by Orāon Magic, is, however, often fluid and vague. No images of the deities and spirits are made. But the more important deities and spirits are sometimes visualised by individual Orāons in the shape of

human beings or animals. Thus, the principal village-deity Chālā Pāchchō or Sarnā Būṛhiā invariably appears in the shape of an old woman with matted locks of snow-white hair. Some of the spirits, however, such as Chāṇḍī, the goddess of hunting and war, are remarkable for shape-shifting which is indeed a characteristic of most of the spirits and deities of the Orāon pantheon. Except Chālā Pāchchō and Devī Māi to whom both personality as well as a more or less definite form and individuality are ascribed, the other spirits, though endowned with personality, are, in fact, group-spirits of which there are more than one belonging to the same class and bearing the same or similar attributes and characteristics.

In Magic, the attitude of the Orāon is mainly one of defiance of and control and domination over impersonal mysterious powers, and the result intended is the expulsion of evil or compulsion of natural or supernatural forces and powers in the production of desired favourable conditions or results such as good weather or rain.

Orāon religion, like similar other religions, is primarily concerned with ancestral and certain other disembodied souls, and Nature spirits and deities. The rites employed to establish harmonious relations with them are mainly supplications and prayers, offerings and sacrifices, and the ceremonial sharing of sacrificial food besides certain special observances and taboos. Orāon Magic, as I have said, is primarily concerned with mysterious impersonal forces and powers residing mostly in natural or artificial objects, and the instruments employed in dealing with them are principally charms and spells, adjurations and incantations as also certain traditional observances and taboos. The help of beneficent

personal spirits or rather of the Supreme Spirit is also sought to control these impersonal powers or forces. Whereas Orāon magical rites are all performed only as means to definite practical ends, Orāon religious rites, though mainly concerned with the immediate practical interests of life, are really ends in themselves and hallow and consecrate everything they touch,—food, sex, life and death,—and stimulate emotion beyond mere response to practical needs.

The Orāon does not, however, attribute all the phenomena of Nature and all the good and ills of life to spiritual agencies—to personal spirits, ghosts and deities or to mysterious impersonal forces and powers. He recognizes that natural causes and conditions as well as human effort and human industry may ordinarily produce definite desired results. As the result of generations of observation of the processes of nature and through elementary reasoning based on such observation, this tribe, like other tribes on a similar level of culture, has accumulated a store of working knowledge concerning the effects of certain elementary mechanical processes, the apparent movements and functions of some of the heavenly bodies, the habits and haunts of animals and birds, the properties of plants, fruits and flowers, barks and roots, the nature and qualities of different kinds of soil and the variations of the weather. This modest lore constitutes the Orāon's rudimentary science. And the Orāon generally counts upon the regular and uniform action of such natural laws or sequences as tribal observation for countless generations has succeeded in ascertaining.

But experience has also driven home to the Orāon's mind the inconvenient truth that expectations based on such natural

laws as he knows are apt to be mysteriously frustrated at times through unseen adverse forces, and that, as if by way of partial recompense, unexpected and unaccountable turns of good fortune, too, may once in a way come to him through similar unseen favourable influences and agencies. In order to avert any unforeseen untoward contingencies or to neutralise their ill-effects when they actually occur, the Orāon knows no other expedient than recourse to magical practices or religious rites or to both. Thus, the Orāon's Magic begins where his positive Science ends, or rather his Magic supplements and forms part of his Science. And Religion supplements and subordinates, but does not actually supplant his Magic. Whereas his science satisfies his intellectual need and his magic his practical needs, his religion is meant primarily to satisfy a psychic need.

Although the Orāon is cognisant of the natural causes of growth and is fully alive to the value of work and industry, he does not wait to seek the aid of religion and magic till his individual or tribal exertions fail and known natural laws appear to miscarry. By way of precaution, he has come to employ magical and religious rites in conjunction with his normal activities of hunting, fishing and agriculture, in order that the course of such activities may run smooth, and the desired goal may be duly attained without a hitch. He recognizes and appreciates both the natural and the supernatural forces and agencies shaping human destiny and seeks to utilize them both for his benefit according to his lights.

Although magic is not unoften found in combination with the Orāon's religion, the two never fuse, and the ministers

of Orāon religion are generally different from those of Orāon magic. Whereas religion among the Orāons, as among other primitive tribes, is essentially the business of the community, magic is ordinarily the business of the specialist. The community, as a whole, represented by the Panch or village-elders, constitute, in theory, the priesthood for the propitiation of the general deities and spirits of the Orāon pantheon, although, in practice, only one or other of the elders of the village or of the clan, who is proficient in the ritual, conducts the sacrificial rites in the presence of the Panch. The head of each Orāon clan and the elders of each Orāon family are responsible for the propitiation of the clan or family spirits respectively, and any capable member of the clan or the family, as the case may be, may conduct the sacrificial ceremonies to propitiate them. It is only in respect of the village deities that a special priest or priests have come to be appointed or elected by the Orāon village community as their representatives to offer sacrifices and otherwise propitiate and placate such deities and spirits.

The Village-Priest and his Assistants.

The priests who are entrusted with the periodical propitiation of the village deities of the Orāons are called Pāhāns (Orāon, *Naigās*) and, in some villages, Baigās, and have generally one or more assistants. They are really representatives or mouth-pieces of the community, and at the propitiation or pūjā of the village deities and spirits, the village community or, at any rate, representative people of the village are generally present, and the propitiation or worship is really congregational. The principal, and, in many villages, the only, assistant of the village Pāhān is the

Pānbharā, who is also called the Pūjār or Ṭahalu in some villages. Besides this functionary, there are in some villages another assistant of the Pāhān called the Sūsāri, (or in a very few villages the Mūrgi-pākoā). But, ordinarily, the Pānbharā, Pūjār, Sūsari or Mūrgi-pākoā are all one and the same man.

These offices are in some villages hereditary, in others the incumbents are changed at stated intervals, generally once in three years, and their successors are selected by a supposed supernatural process of election, or, as the Orāons put it, 'selected by the deities themselves.' The Pāhān performs the Pūjā or propitiation of the village-deities by offering sacrifices to them at the jhākrā or sarnā and other seats appointed for them. The Pūjār or Pānbharā supplies the water necessary for the ceremonies and for cooking the sacrificial meat and otherwise assists the Pāhān at the Pūjās. In villages where there is a separate Susāri, the latter cooks the sacrificial meat and other food for the feast that follows. In villages where there is a Pāhān Khūṇṭ, but the post of the Pāhān is not hereditary, the Pāhānship does not ordinarily pass out of the Khūṇṭ. To this rule, too, exceptions are not unknown. But in these exceptional cases, if there are any Bhūinhārs in the village, the Pāhān must be selected from among the Bhūinhārs and so, too, the Pāhān's assistants must be Bhūinhārs as well. Deviations from this rule very rarely occur. A bachelor is debarred from election as Pāhān. Each year at the end of the Sarhūl festival in April, the 'marriage' of the Pāhān with the Pāhānāin (Pāhān's wife) has to be celebrated at the Pāhān's house, in token, it is said, of the marriage of the Sun with the Earth, so that the Earth may

fructify. Where the Pāhān happens to be a widower, the Pāhān's married son, if any, and his wife have to go through a similar ceremony.

In villages where the office of the Pāhān is not hereditary, the method of electing a new Pāhān is as follows. All the adult male villagers assemble at the Sarnā on the full moon (15th) day of Māgh, (January-February) and in a few villages (e. g. Tingria, thānā Bero) in Aghān (December-January) bringing with them from the out-going Pāhān's house the Sarnā sūp or the winnowing basket upon which the Sarnā deity or Chāla Pāchchō is believed to sit, and which has been the emblem of the Pāhān's office and has been used at every Pūjā at the Sarnā and carefully and religiously kept hung up from a beam of a compartment in his house known as Chālā kūṭṭi or compartment sacred to the Sarnā spirit. They also bring along with them a *sāl* (*shorea robusta*) pole split into two at one end and attached in the manner of a fork to this *sūp*. The out-going Pāhān also comes from his house to the Sarnā carrying a new *sūp* on which he brings some *āruā* rice from his own house. A young bachelor, known to be particularly sensitive to supernatural influences, has his eyes blind-folded with a piece of cloth, and the old Sarnā-sūp is put into his hands. Each one present takes up a few grains of rice from the new *sūp*, and throws the rice on the old *sūp*, saying, "Do enter, O Chālā Pāchchō, the house of the man with whom thou art well pleased." Now the blind-folded young man or Pāichālābānā, as he is styled, proceeds to the village, holding one end of the *sāl* pole, at the other or forked end of which the old Sarnā-sūp is attached. The out-going Pāhān follows with the new *sūp*,

scattering a few grains of rice along the road after every few steps, and with a jug from which he goes on dropping water. Only three or four other men accompany them, the other villagers waiting at the Sarnā. The blind-folded boy is supposed to be led by the Sarnā spirit seated on the *sūp* to the house of the person to whom the deity takes a fancy. On arrival at the door of the house of such a person, the blind-folded young man places the old Sarnā-sūp at the threshold of his house. The person thus indicated by the sūp is recognised as the new Pāhān. The party will then go back to the Sarnā, the newly elected Pāhān carrying his new *sūp* and the Pāichālābānā carrying the old Sarnā-*sūp*.

Even in villages, where the Pāhānship is hereditary, should the family of the Pāhān be extinct or converted to Christianity or some other religion (such as Ṭānā-ism) thereby necessitating the election of a new Pāhān, the above procedure has to be followed for the election of a Pāhān.[1]

The same procedure is next followed to elect the Pāhān's assistant or assistants—the Pūjār or Pānbharā or Ṭahalu or Sūsāri. Every one present throws a few grains of rice from the new *sūp* to the old saying, "Now Sarnā Būrhiā, go and choose thy Sūsāri or Pūjār or Pānbharā (as the case may be)."

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1. This would appear to be the only justification for the entry made against Pāhānāi lands indiscriminately in respect of all villages in the Bhūinhāri Registers prepared by Government under Bengal Act II of 1869 (Choṭa-Nagpur Tenures Act), to the effect that "the Pāhān for the time being, duly elected according to the custom of the Kōls (aboriginals), remains in possession of these lands." This entry has misled even the highest Courts.

After selecting first the Pāhān and next the Sūsāri or Pūjār in the village, the villagers again go back to the Sarnā, and the same procedure is again followed to elect the other assistant, if any, of the Pāhān that may have to be appointed. The last time, however, all the villagers present at the Sarnā follow the Pāichālābānā into the village and do not wait at the Sarnā.

In some villages where there is a Mahādāniā spirit (literally, spirit receiving human sacrifice) to be described in the next chapter, a separate priest for the propitiation of that dread spirit is appointed. As this spirit appears to have been originally a deity of the Hindu landlords, the Mahādāniā Pāhān holds his post by descent from the first Mahādāniā-Pāhān appointed by the landlord of the village. The village Pāhān enjoys during the term of his office some rent-free lands as his Pāhāhnāi service lands, and similarly the Mahādāniā Pāhān generally has some special service lands known as Mahādāniā khet.

Temples.

The Orāons erect no temples except that in some villages, in intimation of Hindu practice, a small shed is erected for the Devī Māi or Mother-goddess who is apparently a deity borrowed from the Hindus. For the other principal village-deities of the Orāon pantheon, one or more *sāl* groves, now in some villages dwindled down into one or more solitary trees, constitute their shrine. Stones are generally employed as symbols of the Orāon deities, originally probably nature-spirits, whereas wooden khūṇṭās or pegs (consisting of worn-away ploughs) with bits of iron-nails pinned on top mark the seats of Orāon ghosts or human spirits to whom sacrifices

are offered. Devī-māi is represented by small clay cones (generally seven in number) roughly resembling breasts of women.

The Magician and His Training.

Whereas the Nāigās (Pāhān) or priest of the village-deities must ordinarily belong to the aboriginal Pāhān family, any Orāon or non-Orāon who feels called to the profession by psychic temperament inducing a vision of the god Mahādeo or some other god or spirit, may set himself up as a Bhagat or Sōkhā. Any one who is attracted to the profession by love of gain, may also go in for training in the necessary rites and penances, incantations and spells under some adept in the technique of the magic art and, in time, set himself up as a regular medecine-man variously known as Māti or Ōjhā or Deōṇṛā. The Bhagat or Sōkhā finds out through his mediumistic powers the name of the witch or sorcerer who has set up some spirit or other to cause any sickness or other calamity and the sacrifices demanded by the spirit so set up. The Māti or Ōjhā or Deōṇṛā not only performs divination but also neutralises the ill effects of the 'evil eye' and exorcises spirits and conducts necessary sacrificial rites to subdue or placate or expel them. In plying their art, the former class of diviners depend on the exercise of their supersensual vision for successful divination, the latter class combine with the practice of the vision the aid of a familiar spirit or shādhak bhūt.

All magic, is not, however, approved by the tribal conscience. The Orāon makes a clear distinction between beneficent or public magic and maleficent or private magic. In the practice of maleficent or 'Black' Magic

the aid of some familiar spirit is usually availed of to harm men or cattle. Such magicians as well as witches are feared, despised, shunned and when detected, persecuted and punished with heavy fine and sometimes with excommunication or, if possible, expulsion from the village. The ordinary magic-doctor, though feared, pulls on fairly well with the community, and his magic is regarded as useful so long as he does not seek to work evil magic by setting up some spirit to harm his fellow-men or their cattle. But anti-social magic is condemned by the tribal conscience and punished by the tribal code.

Religion and Morals.

The Orāon's standard of morality or, in other words, of what is good and what is bad in human conduct, is determined by custom and tradition. The elders of each Orāon village community and Pāṛhā federation (composed of a group of villages) are the recognised custodians of such tribal custom and tradition. That standard, though mainly sub-conscious in origin, is known to have been materially influenced from time to time by individual Orāon elders of exceptional intelligence and force of character, and, much less frequently in the past but more often at the present day, by younger Orāons of intelligence and character and zeal for social or religious reform who have come in close contact with a higher culture, either Hindu or Christian or both.

The ideal of an Orāon's life at present is to live on good terms with his tribe-fellows and with the gods and spirits, and to possess sufficient lands and crops and cattle and a large progeny of healthy male children, to be free from debts and to have enough to eat and drink, so that he may

be care-free and full of life and spend his leisure in drinking and jollity, dancing and singing. The customary tribal code of morality requires the Orāon to avoid quarreling with or harming other tribe-fellows or seducing their wives, and to pay one's debts. The traditional tribal code has come to recognize a divine sanction for moral conduct. Dharmes, the Supreme Spirit, who sees all that men do, and, as some say, knows all that men think, is believed to be the guardian of morality, punishing all offences against customary morality with sickness, death, or other calamity. Besides reparation to the wronged tribe-fellow, tribal custom prescribes the sacrifice of a white cock or a white goat to Dharmes for expiation of certain offences against social laws. As for witchcraft and other forms of maleficent magic, the social sanction for such anti-social practices is at present expulsion from the community; but, not long ago, the offender had sometimes to pay for such an offence with his or her life. Even if a person who has entered into a secret compact with some spirit to secure prosperity to himself and cause harm to other people and their cattle, escapes detection and punishment at the hands of man and prospers in life for a time, it is an article of faith with the Orāon that such an anti-social wrong-doer is sure to come to an evil end through the agency of the very same spirit; for such a spirit is proverbially prone to take offence at the slightest suspicion of remissness or neglect on the part of its votary. The Orāon believes that it is in this life, and not in an after-life, that a man is visited with punishment for his misdeeds; though in some cases, however, the sons may suffer for the sins of their parents.

As I have shown in a previous work,[2] the Orāon's religion, which is essentially communal or tribal has helped to strengthen social unity and quickened the sense of social responsibility, and his concept of rightness is bound up with his social or tribal consciousness. As Orāon society has not risen from tribal consciousness to a world-conciousness, his concept of rightness is not concerned with the essential rightness of things.

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2. *The Orāons of Chōtā-Nāgpur, Calcutta, 1915.*

CHAPTER II.

DEITIES, SPIRITS, AND OTHER SUPERNATURAL POWERS.

ALTHOUGH for purposes of scientific classification, the deities and spirits of the Orāon pantheon might be broadly divided into the two main classes of Nature Spirits and Human Spirits and each of these two classes might again be subdivided into Greater and Lesser or Superior and Inferior gods and spirits, we shall do well to begin with the Orāon's own classification of supernatural powers. Of these the Orāon appears to recognize as many as ten different classes.

The highest divinity recognised by the Orāon is Dharmes or the Supreme Being, the Creator of the Universe, who is placed in a class apart.

Similarly the spirits of dead ancestors known as Pāchbā'lār (plural of 'Pāchbāl') are placed by the Orāon in a separate class by themselves.

In a third class are placed the tutelary deities and spirits of an Orāon village. Some of these are regarded as Deotās or gods and the others as Bhūts or ghosts. To the former section belong Pāṭ or Pāṭ Rājā,Chālā Pāchchō or Sarnā Būṛhiā and Devī Māi. To the latter section belong Dārhā and Desāuli and in some villages, Duāriā or Duārsini, and Mahādāniā. Besides these general villages-deities and spirits there are special spirits which are sacrificed to as village-spirits on some rock or tree in particular villages. Among

minor village spirits are Bansakti or Banjāribhūt, Gāṛhāḍhōṛā-chatūr-simān and Tūsā-bhūra.

To a fourth class belong certain class spirits. These are Chāṇḍī, the spirit of hunting and war who is specially propitiated by young men, and the Āchrael and Jōdā which are the special spirits worshipped by women.

Next in importance to the village-spirits are the Khūṇṭ Bhūts or tutelary spirits of each different branch or Khūṇṭ of the original founders of a village. These are not unoften spirits of dead persons.

A sixth class of spirits is composed of the household spirits Bāṛṇḍā and Chigṛināḍ or Dāhā Chigṛi to which sacrifices are made on behalf of each separated family at least once in a generation. Pōs Bāi, Hānkar Bāi and Kitrō Bāi are said to be daughters of Bāṛṇḍā and are among the minor spirits of this class.

In a seventh class are grouped the spirits or rather mysterious powers residing in or connected with certain objects or symbols such as the Māndar Sālā the Jātrā Khūṇṭā, the Bairākh or village-flags, and certain other village emblems and totem-symbols, certain musical instruments such as a sword actually used in killing a human being, and some weird natural objects such as an abnormally gnarled bamboo-shoot or tree-root, or some weird-looking fantastic-shaped rock or a roaring cataract, or a very old holed tree in the hollow of which rain-water collects, some suspicious-looking wide-spreading shady tree, or even a spot on the outskirts of a village or at a bend in a hill-pass, where according to tradition some notable hero came by his death and to which every

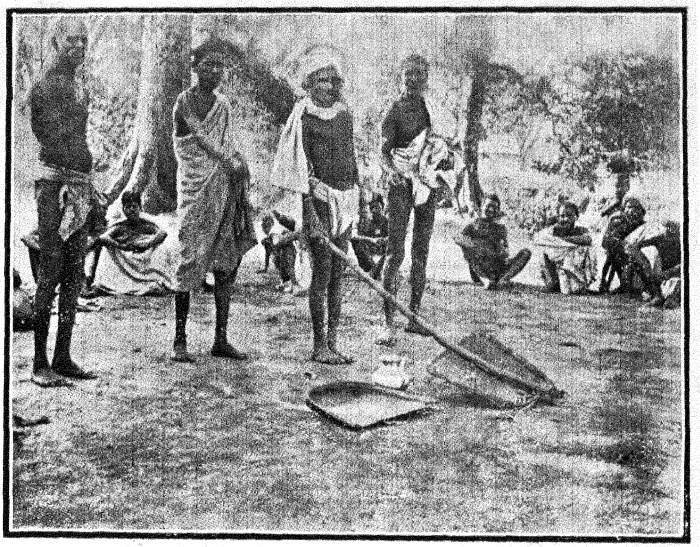

Illustration 1.

Election of a new *Pāhān*. The blind-folded young man is holding a pole attached to the *Sarnā Sūp*, and the out-going *Pāhān* at his back is scattering rice as the *sūp* is moving forward.

[*See Page 8.*]

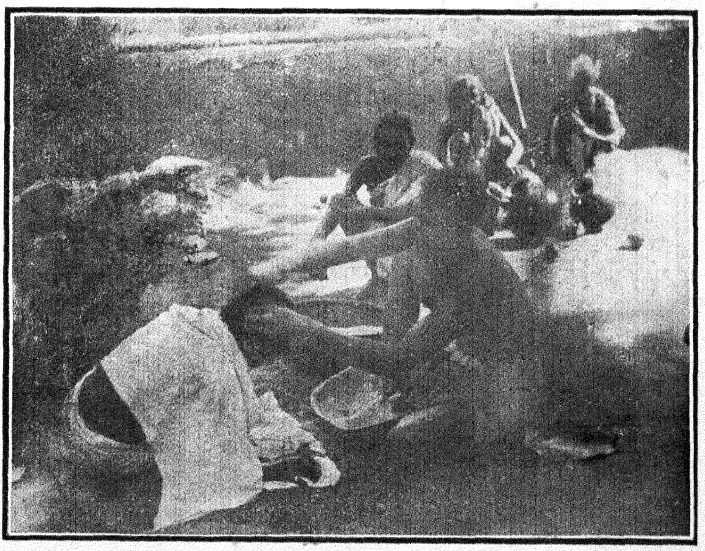

Illustration 2.

The *Pāhān* at the *Sarhūl* ceremony blessing each man bringing rice-offering to the *Sarnā*.

[*See Pages 201-202.*]

passer-by must throw the tribute of a pebble or a tree-leaf or a clod of earth.

An eighth class consists of the tramp or stray spirits (*bhūlās*) such as Muā, Malech and Chūrel who are spirits of persons dying unnatural deaths, and the Sāt-Bahini spirits who are spirits of water-falls. These spirits are not objects of worship nor receive sacrifices, but are mischievous spirits who have to be scared away or exorcised by the spirit-doctor. To the same class belong the Bāghout and Ulaṭ-gōunṛi.

In a different class are placed the familiar spirits or Pūgṛi bhūts of individuals who secretly offer sacrifices to such spirits for their own private ends. When, such ends are anti-social, as is often the case, these Pūgṛi-bhūts are connected with magic and witchcraft rather than with Religion proper.

Finally, there are the forces of evil known as 'najar gūjar' and 'bāibhāk,' which are quite distinct from gods and spirits. The Orāon stands in constant dread of the mysterious occult powers or forces residing in 'the evil eye' *(najar)* possessed by certain people or in the 'evil mouth' *(bāibhāk)*, that is to say, words of intentional or unintentional malice or envy, and, to a lesser degree, in the 'evil touch' *(chhūt)* of alien tribes and castes and of persons of their own tribe when under ceremonial pollution, and in other vague and indefinite evil powers, contact with which produce evil effects on health, cattle, crops, food and drink. Some animals and reptiles are also believed by the Orāon to possess the 'evil eye' and to be able to cause disease and death by a mere glance.

The mysterious powers of this tenth and last class are not, indeed, directly connected with the Orāon's religion,

though the help of the gods or rather of the Supreme Spirit, is sought to neutralise the evil effects of these occult powers or forces. Indeed, tradition asserts that the earlier religion of the Orāons centred round the Supreme Spirit or the Spirit of Good, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, round the 'evil eye' and 'the evil mouth' as representing the spirit of evil. As a matter of fact, the 'evil eye,' and the 'evil mouth,' and the malice of a witch or sorcerer are to this day of greater concern to the Orāon than the gods and spirits. For, the mischief-making propensities of the latter are believed by the Orāon to be often roused into activity by some malicious suggestion or evil word and evil eye of a witch or sorcerer.

Whereas a Mūṇḍā attributes certain misfortunes to himself or his family or cattle to the direct action or malice of some spirit or other, the Orāon attributes similar trouble to the evil eye or evil word of some malicious witch or sorcerer which either acts directly to the injury of men or cattle or has the effect of arousing some spirit to mischievous activity against men or cattle.

As I said elsewhere, "If a Mūṇḍā gets a sudden attack of headache or griping in the stomach, or pain in the legs, or falls down in a fit of epilepsy, he at once concludes he must have come in collision with some invisible spirit,—that he must have trodden some spirit under his feet, or jostled against it while walking or working on his fields or elsewhere. As a means of reconciliation with the offended spirit, he scatters a little powdered turmeric around himself. The Orāon, who suspects magic or witchcraft where the Mūṇḍā scents a spirit, always takes particular steps to ward off the evil eye of

witches or the malicious attentions of sorcerers. Such Orāons as know the proper spells, when going out on a journey, take up a handful of dust, mutter the *bandhni* spell over it and scatter the dust all around his own body to fortify it against the evil eye, and the 'bān' or spiritual arrow-shot of the magician during the journey or during his stay outside his village."[3] In more serious trouble, the Mūṇḍā at once concludes that some spirit has been offended by the neglect of his votary in offering the regular sacrifice at the appointed time, and has caused the trouble on its own initiative, and at once consults the spirit-doctor and arranges for the required sacrifices. In similar trouble, the Orāon, on the other hand, at once goes to the witch-doctor to find out the name of the witch or sorcerer who has brought about the evil and then compels the witch or sorcerer to appease or provide the means to appease the spirit who has been put up to the mischief.

I shall now proceed to give a more detailed account of each of these classes of supernatural beings and powers.

I. Dharmes or the Supreme God.

The Orāons now name the Supreme Deity as Dharmes; but, the older name, still sometimes used, is Biṛi-Belās or the 'Sun-Lord,' and the Sun is still sometimes referred to as the visible symbol, if not actual representation, of Dharmes. Even now when the clouds are tinged with a reddish hue by the rising or setting sun, the Orāon says, 'Dharmes khhoṭras' or 'God has cut himself' (and thereby tinged the clouds with His blood). In this connection it is interesting

3. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, XLIV (1914), P. 329.

to note that the allied tribe of Mālers or Sauriā Pāhāṛias of the Sāntāl Parganās, when referring to the death of any person say, 'Beṛ piṭiā' or 'the Sun [God] has assailed [him],' and when referring to the prosperity of a man, say, 'Beṛ Chichchā,' 'the Sun-(god) has given [him]' although they no longer apply the name Beṛ or Beṛu or Beḍō Gōsāi to the Supreme Spirit but designate Him as Ugjō-Gōsāi. Beṛō Gōsāi has now come to be regarded by the Mālers as a separate Sun-God, though when Lieutenant Shaw[4] prepared the first published account of the tribe in 1795, Beḍō (lit, the Sun) was the name generally applied by the Māler to the Supreme Deity. The name 'Dharmē' or 'Dharmes' is unknown to the Mālers. The Khoṇḍs, another Dravidian-speaking tribe, also designate the Creator as Beṛu Pennu, and the name Dharam Pennu is also known.

Now-a-days, the Orāon sometimes applies also the purely Hindu name of Bhagwān to the Supreme Spirit; and even in the Orāon story of the genesis of man and the spirits either (as in some versions) the Hindu goddess Pārvatī, the consort of Siva, or (as in other versions) Sītā, the wife of Rām Chandra—a reputed incarnation of God,—is spoken of as the wife of Dharmes. The Rev. P. Dehon appears to have been misinformed when in his article on *The Religion and Customs of the Orāons*, he wrote, "When they use Dharmes the idea of God is entirely separated from the Sun, whilst while they use Bhagavan they naturally look to the Sun as the Kols do.'[5] It is true that in using tthe name 'Dharmes,' the Orāon now-a-days refers only to the Supreme Spirit and does not ordinarily think of the Sun at all, but so also in using the

4. *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. IV.
5. *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (1906) Vol. I, P. 125.

Hindu name 'Bhagwān,' the Supreme Deity alone is meant and there is no reference whatever to the Sun. When the Sun is particularly meant, the term used by the Orāon is either 'Biṛi' or 'Sūruj' or Sūruj Bhagwān' (the Sun God) but never simply 'Bhagwān.'

The appropriate colour for Dharmes is white—the colour of the Sun; and the fowl or goat sacrificed to him must be of a white colour. And in offering prayers or sacrifices to Dharmes, the Orāon must turn his face to the east—in the direction of the rising Sun. I have often heard Orāon elders speaking of Dharmes as Biṛi Be'lās or the Sun-king. So Colonel Dalton writes of the Orāons, that "like the Mundas, they acknowledge a Supreme God, adored as Dharme or Dharmesh, the Holy One, who is manifest in the Sun."[6]

Col. Dalton, however, was in error in attributing to the Orāon the idea that "Dharmes cannot and does not interfere, if the spirit of evil once fastens upon us," and that, according to the Orāon, "it is therefore of no use to pray to Dharmesh or to offer sacrifices to him."[7] Nor was Dalton correct in supposing that "though acknowledged, recognised, and reverenced, he (Dharmes) is neglected, whilst the malignant spirits are adored." True, the Orāon has no temple or sacred grove or other seat specially assigned to Dharmes nor has he any special season for offering sacrifies to Dharmes, but the Orāon offers the sacrifice of a white cock to Him at every important feast such as the Sarhūl and also when other helpers fail. Again, at every sacrificial ceremony, the Orāon offers a libation of a few drops of water in the name of Dharmes and a libation of a few drops of liquor to his ancestor-spirits

6. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, P. 256.
7. *Ibid.*

or Pāch-bālāro, before libations of liquor and sacrifices of fowls or animals are offered to the particular spirit or spirits for whose propitiation the ceremony is specially meant.

Finally, in extreme distress, when other deities or spirits fail him, the Orāon offers prayers and sacrifices to Dharmes as a last resource.

The fact that Dharmes controls the other gods and spirits is particularly symbolised by the arrangement of the sacrifices at the principal Orāon religious festival known as the Sarhūl. At this festival held at the village Sarnā or sacred grove of Sāl (*Shorea robusta*) trees, fowls are sacrificed under the main Sarnā tree to each Orāon deity and principal spirit as well as to Dharmes. Each fowl, before being offered up in sacrifice, is fed on a small handful of rice placed on the ground. These separate handfuls of rice are placed in a row, each in the name of a particular god (*deotā*) or spirit, and at the head of the row, a little apart from the rest, is placed a handful of rice meant for the white cock to be sacrificed to Dharmes. This arrangement of the rice-grains, as several Orāon priests explained to me, is meant to symbolise their belief that Dharmes will, when necessary, control, other spirits and see that they behave properly. When a white cock is offered in the name of Dharmes, the Orāon priest prays,—*Nin Dharmē, Bābā hekdāe, ākkām baldām, ādin samṛhākē. Emhāe khann mālā iri, nighāe khann iri; ninhim bābā hekdāe sāmṛhākē.* "Thou Dharmes art our Father. Whether we know or do not know (i.e., whether through ignorance or neglet we fail to propitiate any particular spirit) do Thou restrain him (i.e., the offended spirit). Our eyes do not see; Thy eyes see."

Just as the Sun sees all that goes on upon the earth and in the heavens, so Dharmes, it is believed, sees all that man and the spirits do and, as some say, knows all that they think. And the Orāon has a notion that Dharmes punishes offences against customary morality. As an expiation for such an offence, the sacrifice of a white cock to Dharmes is considered indispensable.

From all this it may not appear unreasonable to argue that Dharmes was, in origin, a Nature deity, and that the original animatistic conception and awe of the great luminary itself as a god may have been naturally followed in time by the conception and worship of a Supreme Spirit dwelling in and shining through the luminary and reigning supreme over the earth, dispersing darkness and its terrors, purging sin and subduing all evil and bringing all blessings to the earth and its inhabitants. But at the present day, at any rate, the idea of God or the Supreme Spirit is to all intents and purposes separated in the Orāon's mind from the great luminary of the day. And the Orāon thinks, and there appear to be good reasons to think with him, that God has been known to the tribe or revealed Himself to them from the very beginning of the creation of man, not as *a* deity but as *the* Deity. And it would appear more reasonable to hold that Dharmes is not the personification of an element of nature nor the personified power of society, nor the Chief of the host of spirits and ghosts that infest the world. The Orāon regards him as anterior to all, the Author and Preserver, Controller and Punisher of men, gods and spirits —of all that exists in the visible and the invisible universe.

There is one fact in connection with the Orāon cult of Dharmes which may seem to be of particular significance. The only ceremony in which Dharmes alone is invoked and in which sacrifice is offered to Him alone is the Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā (tooth-breaking) or Bhelwa-phāṛi (Bhelwa-twig splitting) ceremony referred to in the Orāon legend 8 of the genesis of the race. And at this ceremony the traditional Orāon story of the genesis is ceremonially recited by the officiant. The sacrifice consists of an egg which is inserted in the forked end of a split *bhelwā (semicarpus anacardium)* twig and is, in the manner of imitative magic, broken with prayers to Dharmes for "breaking the evil eye and evil mouth" of evil-minded persons, wizards, witches and malicious spirits, "even as the egg is broken," so that no harm may occur to the Orāon's crops,—and health, plenty and prosperity may attend him and his family. This ceremony of egg-breaking is also performed, but without the recitation of the legend, on the occasion of the *chhaṭhi* or purification ceremony on the eighth day after the birth of a child and again in connection with a marriage ceremony, and also after the cremation of a dead Orāon. From the traditional Orāon legend of the origin of man and his institutions we learn that this magical ceremony of Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā was the original method of the Orāon's approach to supernatural powers for security from evil. Orāon tradition asserts that this ceremony was prescribed by Dharmes Himself and adopted by the Orāons when their crops were first injured by beasts and other pests.

Tradition asserts that the more primitive belief of the Orāons centred round Dharmes as the Spirit of Good, and

8. See *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, Appendix.

the 'evil eye' (*najar*) and the 'evil mouth' (*bāi bhāk*) representing the spirit of evil. The cult of deities and spirits and the propritiatory or religious ceremonies connected with them are said in the Orāon legend of genesis to have been instituted afterwards when the intense heat from the furnaces of the iron-smelting Asurs began to scorch up everything green. According to the legend it was not till Dharmes in the garb of a magician killed the males of the iron-smelting tribe of Asurs by a trick and their widowed females implored Him to provide them with means of subsistence that He ordained that they should inhabit the earth as spirits and live on such sacrifices and offerings as the children of man might make to them.

It is interesting to note that the second part of the Orāon legend of the genesis, which refers to the cult of spirits, is common also to the Mūṇḍās of Chōṭā Nāgpur, and whereas the peculiarly Orāon ceremony of Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā, in which Dharmes is the only Deity appealed to, is presided over by the Orāon Panch, representing the whole Orāon village community, the propitiation of the village gods and spirits is the function of the village priest or Pāhān (Orāon, *Naigās*); and in an Orāon village in which there still live one or more families of the old Mūṇḍā settlers the Pāhān or village priest is generally a Mūṇḍā by birth. The reason assigned for this by the Orāon is that the Mūṇḍās being the earliest settlers on the Chōṭā-Nāgpūr plateau have better knowledge of the deities and spirits of the land and of the proper methods of propitiating them. It is not surprising, therefore, that some or most of the village gods and spirits of the Orāon pantheon are apparently borrowed from the Mūṇḍās, and a

few are borrowed even from their Hindu neighbours, or perhaps both the Orāons and the Mūṇḍās borrowed some of their deities and spirits from the same source or sources. As we proceed we shall discuss the respective sources from which the conception of the different classes of deities and spirits of the Orāons may have been derived.

II. The Pach-Balar or Ancestor-Spirits.

The Orāon's belief in ancestor-spirits appears to be the natural outcome of his conception of the human soul, although the belief in their beneficent nature is of later growth due to contact with other cultures. The Orāon conceives of the human soul as the shadowy counterpart or double of the physical body of the individual, and this shadowy double is believed to carry with it the vital principle. The soul, it is believed, temporarily leaves the body daily or rather nightly during the hours of sleep and occasionally in sickness, trances and similar conditions.

To the Orāon his dreams are realities. What the Orāon remembers as dreams are, he believes, what his soul actually saw, heard and did when it went out of the body during sleep or sickness and visited places far and near,—usually places which it had lately visited in the flesh but sometimes also new and unfamiliar places. It is because the soul leaves the body in sleep that an Orāon avoids waking a sleeping man all on a sudden; he will call him several times by name, thereby allowing the wandering soul time to return into the body.

Although the Orāon does not appear to adopt any specific measures to bring back the wandering soul of a sick man and restore it to its body or to prevent the departure of the

soul by such devices as stopping up the various exits of the body in sickness and similar other conditions, there is one class of cases in which he seeks to seize and destroy the wandering soul in order that the person, being thus deprived of his soul, may die. This he does in the case of what he calls a *chōr-dewā* or the thievish spirit of a wizard or witch. Whereas ordinary human souls leave the body involuntarily in sleep and death, and wander about invisible like the wind, the soul of a wizard or witch may leave the body at will and go wherever it chooses in a material shape as a *chōr-dewā* or thievish spirit.. The material shape usually assumed by a *chōr-dewā* with a view to escaping detection is that of a black cat or of a human pigmy not higher than a man's thumb. In this shape, the soul of a wizard or witch effects its mischievous designs of causing fatal sickness to sleeping persons by biting off the ends of their hair, or licking up the saliva trickling down the corners of their mouths, or by nibbling at the dead skin on the soles of their feet. The Chōr-dewā is also believed to eat the boiled rice which the Orāon puts by for the morning meal; and to prevent this, the Orāon housewife sometimes places a bit of charcoal over this rice to scare it away. When this night-hag is detected in its assumed shape going about its mischievous errand, the Orāon, it is said, at once falls upon it and either seriously wounds it or kills it, and the physical body of the *chōr-dewā* is, it is believed, sure to be found lying similarly wounded or dead at home.

As for the ordinary Orāon, the Supreme God—Dharmes,—it is believed, protects his soul from harm when it leaves the body in sleep or sickness and wanders aimlessly about.

And at times the ancestor-spirits of an Orāon guard his soul while it thus wanders about in sleep or sickness. Thus, Charra Orāon of village Sākrā, an old man of seventy, gave me a vivid description of one of the excursions of his soul during the sleep of the body in the course of which his soul strayed to the confines of what appeared to him (his soul) to be a populous and prosperous village and was in fact the under-ground settlement of the dead forefathers of his own hamlet. On the borders of the settlement, he (his soul) met a hoary-headed old man sitting on a low stool (*māchia*). As soon as the latter saw him he forbade Chārrā on pain of death to enter the settlement and called out to a young man whom he ordered to conduct him back to his body. Chārrā firmly believes that if he had not been thus sent away but had actually entered the settlement and met his own dead ancestors and near and dear relatives, his visit would have been unduly prolonged so as to render difficult his timely return to his physical body and thus to cause his death.

Again, the Orāons of our days believe that the spirits of their deceased fathers or grandfathers often come to attend the sick-beds of their living sons and grandsons, and many an Orāon has told me with circumstantial details how in severe illness while the body lay in a state of physical insensibility or sleep they perceived their deceased relatives patiently seated by their bed-side guarding their sick-rooms against the intrusion of mischievous spirits. An old Orāon told me that once during an attack of fever, he saw two of his dead ancestors entering his hut, one of them carrying a stick in his right hand and a small basket (*nāchuā*) in his

left hand, but that as soon as he called out, "Who are you?" the spirits vanished into thin air.

When an Orāon who is ill shows no signs of improvement, he or his relatives call upon their ancestor-spirits, complain of their apparent indifference and pray as follows,—"*Khekhel ḳiā Pāchbālār rādar; Kūḳ māia Dharmes rādas. Emān erdar ḳā mālā? Emhāi nāṛi chepan hoārḳi ḳālā. Māl bhujhārdar? Emān eō, sādhōr?*" "Underneath this earth you ancestor-spirits dwell, [as] overhead dwells Dharmes. Do you see us or not? Do remove our illness (lit., our fever-rain taking away go). Do you not understand? How long will you torment us (i.e., leave us in such torment)?"

The soul of a deceased Orāon is believed to enter into the community of the Pāch-bā'lar or ancestor-spirits on the annual Kōhā Benjā (great marriage) or Hāṛbōṛā (bone-drowning) day when the bones of all the Orāons of a clan who have died in the course of the year are ceremonially drowned or deposited in the clan ossuary or Kūṇḍi. Until this admission into the community of its dead ancestors, a recently departed soul sometimes seeks the company of its living relatives. But such visits, it is said, cannot last long. Many are the stories I have heard from my Orāon friends of the recently dead appearing apparently in flesh before their living relatives in their waking hours. Thus, to cite one instance, a middle-aged Orāon of the name of Bownā narrated to me the following story of his own personal experience: One winter morning his mother's cousin-brother living in a village only a few miles from his own came to Bownā's house and accosted Bownā's father Sūkrā, saying,—"So, Bhāṭū (brother-in-law), you are building a new hut!"

Sūkrā who was then actually engaged in constructing a new hut asked the guest to be seated, and, according to customary rules of hospitality, Bownā took charge of his guest's stick and gave him some tobacco-powder and lime to chew. After some conversation, Bownā's mother handed a yam and a knife to her cousin and asked him to peel the yam which she wanted to cook for him. The guest took the yam, peeled it and cut it up into slices. He then went out of the house on the pretext of having to answer a call of nature. An hour and more passed by, but still the guest did not return. So Bownā and his father became anxious, went out of the house and looked about for their guest in all directions but no trace of him could be found. They then returned home and Bownā went in to see if his uncle's stick was left in the lumber-room where he had kept it over a bundle of rice. To his astonishment he found that the stick too was missing. That afternoon Bowna's mother had to go to a market at some neighbouring village, and on meeting there the elder brother of her morning's guest narrated to him the strange conduct of his younger brother. On this the elder brother exclaimed, "How was that? He died yesterday!" All present there at once concluded that it was the soul of the deceased which was moving about seeking the company of its living friends and relatives.

Until the annual Hāṛbōṛā ceremony the corpse either remains buried in the village burial-ground *(masān)* or, if death has taken place before the rains, is cremated and the bones temporarily buried in the *bāri* land attached to the house of the deceased or sometimes inside an extra hut. On the annual hāṛbōṛā day following the death, before the bones

are carried to the kūṇḍi of the clan to be finally deposited there, either a fowl or, as in the case of an old and well-to-do Orāon, a pig is sacrificed and its blood ceremonially dropped into a small pit dug in the yard in front of the deceased's hut; and the spirits of the dead ancestors of the clan are invoked by a Panch (an elder of the clan) who prays,—"*Phalnā* (names) *gotra-gāhi pāchcho pāchgi ḳhekhel ḳiā rādar; isin hū* (or, if the deceased be a female, *idin hū*) *sangē nānḳē.*" "O! male and female ancestors (lit., old men and women) of such-and-such (names) clan, you are [dwelling] under the earth; do you also take him (or, her) into your company." Thenceforth the departed soul takes its place among the ancestor-spirits of the clan. Souls of all deceased persons of either sex except those of infants whose ears have not been perforated, pregnant women, and women dying in childbirth whose child has not survived, as well as persons bitten to death by a tiger from whom the tiger-spirit or *bāghout* has not been ceremonially driven away or persons dying of small-pox whose bones have not been taken out after the provisional burial of six months or more and reburied in the Kūṇḍi, are thus ceremonially admitted to the community of the Pāch-bālār.

Although the spirits of deceased members of a clan live in an underground settlement of their own near their village Kūṇḍi, they are still regarded as forming one family or clan-group with their living descendants and kinsmen whose welfare is now their special concern. They sometimes appear and speak to their living relatives in their dreams, watch over them in their sickness, and often foil the attempts of other spirits to do them harm. A few years ago the young

daughter of one of my Orāon servants just returned from her husband's place became subject to hysterical fits. Her parents called in a māti or spirit-doctor for her treatment. And with the help of his art, the māti discovered that when the girl was coming from her husband's house to her parents, a *bhūt* (mischievous spirit) of her husband's village followed her and would have by then made an end of her had not the Pāchbālar of her father's family foiled the efforts of the other spirit. The ancestor-spirits are believed to be able to transform themselves at will into any shape they choose, and go wherever they will, fleet as air.

In the case of a serious illness in the family, a vow is sometimes taken to offer, on recovery, a grey *(ḳāsri)* fowl to the ancestor-spirits. On the evening of the annual Hāṛbōṛā ceremony food is laid out near the kūṇḍi on leaf-plates and in leaf-cups by their descendants for the newly dead, and for the other Pāch-bālār. And it is believed that the shades of the departed Orāons of each clan come out of their underground settlements at night to partake of the food provided by their descendants and relatives.

Although except the annual *Hāṛboṛā* ceremony (a kind of 'All Souls' Feast') there is no special religious festival at which offerings or sacrifices are made solely to the ancestor-spirits, those spirits are invoked and offerings are made to them by their living relations at every feast and on every suitable occasion. Thus at the *Sārhūl*, the *Karmā*, and the *Phāguā* festivals, the first loaves of rice-flour bread made at most Orāon houses are broken into pieces and offered to the *Pāch-bā'lār* spirits of the family by name—so far as their names are remembered. At the *Jitiā* festival, rice-gruel is

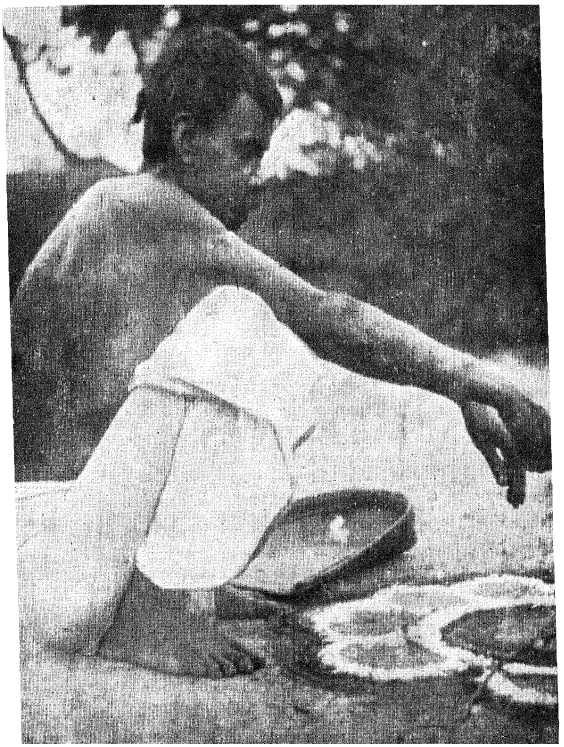

Illustration 3.

An Orāon *Māti* performing the Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā ceremony. Note his braided scalp-lock. A portion only of the magic diagram with the *bhelwa* twig forked into the egg at the centre of the diagram, is shown.

[*See Pages 24 & 251.*]

similarly offered to them on six leaf-plates, two for the spirits of dead ancestors and ancestresses (*Pāchchō Pāchgi* or *buṛhā buṛhī*), two for the spirits of dead children, one for the spirits of deceased daughters of the family, and one for the remaining deceased members of the clan. And at the two *Nawā-ḳhāni* festivals of the year—once in the month of Sāwan (July-August) when the new *gōndli (Panicum miliare)* is first ceremonially eaten and again in Bhādo or Aswin (August-September) when the new *gōṛā* (upland) rice is first ceremonially eaten,—a little of the *gōndli* or *gōṛā* rice, as the case may be, besides boiled rice and vegetables, has first to be similarly offered to the ancestor-spirits before their living relatives proceed to partake of them. The *Nawāḳhāni* is, in fact, a festival in honour of the *Pāch-bā'lār.*

Again, at every meal throughout the year the orthodox Orāon, before he takes up the first morsel of food, puts down a few grains of rice from his plate and drops a little vegetable or other curry on the ground for his ancestor-spirits, without, however, invoking them by name. On being asked why this is done, the reply generally given is that their forefathers have always done the same. But the more 'well-informed' Orāons explain this as a token of gratitude to their ancestor-spirits who, they say, have been providing food and clothing for their descendants and thus enabling them to continue their line.

Finally, orthodoxy requires that not only should an offering of at least a few drops of water be made to the *Pāchbā'lār* at every *pūjā* or sacrifice and at every auspicious ceremony, such as a birth or a marriage, but whenever an Orāon happens to mention the name of any of his deceased

ancestors, the offering of a little water should be made to the spirit of such ancestor, for it may turn up unobserved in response to the call.

The Orāon does not, like his Mūṇḍā neighbour, permanently install the spirits of his dead relatives as household deities with their seats in a corner of his own hut, but only temporarily accommodates them in his compound until the annual *hāṛbōṛā* ceremony following their death, when they are reunited to the shades of their predeceased relatives.

The Rev. P. Dehon in his article[9] already referred to has stated that, according to the Orāon, "a dead man has two shades, the heavy one that goes to *markhā* or the heaven of the Orāons, and the other one that remains among them." But all the inquiries on the point that I have made among the unsophisticated Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr proper for over twenty-five years go to show that the Orāon has no idea of a heaven up above where the soul goes after death. *Merkhā* (not 'Mārkhā') is the Orāon term for the sky, and the Orāon appears to have no notion of a heaven or a hell in the theological sense. The blessed abode of the souls of the duly cremated dead is not in 'heaven' or the sky but *under the earth*. Nor does the Orāon appear to have any definite notion of a man having 'two shades.' The nearest approach to such an idea that I could find in the minds of some comparatively more intelligent Orāons was the vague distinction that they made between the *jiā* or physical life and *ekh* or shade or soul. Whereas of the *jiā* or physical life of a dead man they would say, "it has passed away like the wind, and gone we don't

9. *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* Vol. I, p. 135.

know where" (*tāḳā mānjā, eḳsānu urḳhāḳi ḳerā*), with regard to the spirit or soul all Orāons agree in saying that it becomes one of the *Pāchbā'lār*, and that these reside under the earth *(ḳhekhel ḳiā rādar)*. Perhaps the informant of the Rev. P. Dehon was one of his Orāon converts whose account of the matter was coloured by his own Biblical notions. Or, more probably, his informant's idea of two souls may have been due to Hindu influence which is comparatively very strong among the Orāons of the Palāmau district where Father Dehon lived and worked as a Missionary and gathered his information. And, as a matter of fact, the following story that was related to me by an Orāon of the Palāmau district shows how Hindu ideas have there coloured the more genuine Orāon ideas such as are still found in the Ranchi district. "Old Māhto Orāon," my informant (Bifāi Orāon of Palāmau) said, "died in a year of epidemic, leaving four sons behind him. The sons carried their father's corpse along the road by the side of the *Devī-māṇḍā* or the seat of the goddess *Devī-Māi* and rested the bier in front of it for a while on their way to the *masāṇ* or burial and cremation ground. At the *Devī-māṇḍā*, the bereaved sons and relatives set up a loud wailing and flung themselves on the ground in grief. In the meanwhile, the *sipāhis* or messengers of Dharmes came and carried away the soul of the dead man on an wooden litter (*ḍōli*) towards 'heaven.' When the heavenly messengers arrived at the banks of the river Baitarani (Hindu Styx), they placed the litter by the river-side. An old man gifted with second sight actually saw this and I have heard this from his lips. And that day a number of men died in the village of the deceased Māhto Orāon."

The Orāons of the Ranchi District or Chōṭā-Nāgpur proper, as I have said, do not appear to have any notion of two souls, one going up to the sky above and the other remaining on the earth below; nor indeed do they appear to have any notion of a heaven up above where souls go after death. In fact, it is a common saying with the Orāons that "*Khekel ḳiā Pachbālār, merḳhānū Dharmē,*" "the ancestor-spirits dwell underneath the ground and the Supreme Spirit in the sky." And I have been told by some Orāon school-boys that when they told their illiterate parents and other village-elders that Geography teaches them that down below (meaning, in the antipodes) there is a continent inhabited by human beings they expressed no surprise but merely corrected their school-going children by giving them the further information that there are villages just like their own in the nether regions below their feet, but only the houses there are more substantial than those here on earth and that there are no *zemindars* (alien landlords) there but the *bāḳṛis* (manorial houses) and *gaṛhs* (forts or palaces) are occupied by their own dead relatives.

When an Orāon speaks of a 'heavy shade' or *oṭhṭhā eḳh* and a 'light shade' or *nebbā eḳh,* all that he really means is that some living men—those with 'light shades'—are more susceptible to supersensual influences, to dreams and visions of supernatural objects and beings, than those with 'heavy shades.' These expressions do not appear to have any particular reference to the 'shades' of *dead* persons. And the Rev. P. Dehon was mistaken in thinking that the *Chhāin Bhitarnā* ceremony and what he called the *Korman* ceremony are respectively performed for two different 'shades.' He

was further mistaken in supposing that the 'light shade' of a departed Orāon which is conducted back to its old house by the *Chhāin Bhitarnā* ceremony finds in the house a permanent "resting place to remain there peacefully among its old acquaintances." As a matter of fact, by the *Chhāin Bhitarnā* or, to give it its proper Orāon name, the *ekh-mānkhnā* ceremony, the shade of a deceased Orāon is brought back to his former house to remain there only as long as it is not admitted into the community of the *Pāch-bā'lār* by the '*ūtūr-khilā*' ceremony—the ceremony by which his relatives finally make over the soul or spirit of the dead man to the community of those of his pre-deceased relatives..

Whereas the Mūṇḍās and other Mūṇḍā-speaking tribes install the spirits of the dead as household deities in a corner of their huts consecrated to them as the *āding* or *bhitar*, the Orāon only gives a temporary accommodation to the souls of his dead relatives, and that usually not inside their huts but in a portion of the compound of the house, until the next *hāṛbōṛā* ceremony when the spirit is sped home to its permanent habitation under the earth (*khekhel khiā*) near the *kūṇḍi*. It appears probable that the *chhāin bhitarnā* ceremony has been borrowed by the Orāons from their Mūṇḍā neighbours. Although such distantly allied tribes as the Khoṇḍs of Oṛissā and the Goṇḍs of the Central Provinces appear to practise a similar ceremony of calling back the shades of the dead to their old homes—not improbably in imitation of their Mūṇḍā-speaking neighbours such as the Savars in Oṛissā and the Kōṛkūs in the Central Provinces,—no analogous ceremony is known to the Sauriā Pāhāṛiās of

the Santāl Parganās who are the nearest kinsmen to the Orāons.

As we shall see in our account of the funeral ceremonies of the Orāons, some of the rites and invocations in connection with those ceremonies would appear to indicate that their original object was to keep the spirits of the dead out of harm's way, to cut off all connection with them so as to avoid all chance of their evil attentions being directed towards their living relatives.

As a matter of fact, all departed souls would appear to have been originally conceived of as evil spirits,—all of them, though regarded as ancestor-spirits (*Pāch-bā'lār*), were at one time regarded by the Orāons as mischievous spirits or *nāsan bhūts* as well. The present division of departed souls into beneficent ancestor-spirits composed solely of spirits of persons dying a natural death whose souls alone are now regarded as *Pāch-bā'lār* and maleficent or evil spirits of the dead, consisting of such spirits as those of pregnant women or of women dying in childbirth who may become *nāsan* (or destructive) *bhūts*,—this differentiation of the spirits of departed souls, would appear to be a later development of Orāon belief under the influence, as it seems, principally of the Mūṇḍā cult of beneficent or potentially beneficent ancestor-spirits and, to some extent, also perhaps of the Hindu cult of the *Pitrīs*.

With the Sāuria Pāhāṛiās of the Rāj Māhāl Hills who believe that the souls of the dead live underground and sometimes reappear above the earth in the shape of a *Pōṛi* or will-o'-the-wisp and emit a grunting sound, the avowed object of their *Pāo-ṭe-ḳipaw eṛbē* ceremony is to cut off the connec-

tion of spirits of the dead with the village of their living relatives. The *Kaip eṛbu mājiē* or the priest who officiates at the ceremony, offers fowls and liquor to the spirits of the dead on the borders of a Sauriā Pāhāṛiā village once a year and prays,—"From to-day do not enter our village." The severed head of the fowl is left on the ground and the rest of its meat is roasted in fire and eaten on the spot by those present and no portion of the sacrifices may be taken back to the village. Whenever the phenomenon of the *ignis fatuus* or will-o'-the-wisp is seen to appear, the Sauriā Pāhāṛiā imagines that some spirit of the dead is revisiting the earth and apprehends the occurrence of an epidemic in the village; and a hen's egg is forthwith offered on behalf of the village on the route which the *Pōṛi* spirit is likely to take in its approach to the village. The *Pōṛi* spirit is represented as having its mouth and eyes on the back of the head and its feet also turned backwards. The apprehension of the Pāhāṛiā that the *Pōṛi* spirit may cast its looks behind and turn its steps towards the village perhaps led to the conception of the *Pōṛi* spirit with its eyes and feet turned backwards.[10] In the *ūtūr-ḳhilā* ceremony of the Orāons, this fear is expressed by the officiant of the ceremony in the words used in his address to the soul of the deceased, "*Aḳḳu em ningān tāidām chi'idām. em taram ḳhann ḳūḳ biṛdrān. neḳā.*" "Now we are sending thee away. Now (i.e., henceforth) may [thy] eye [and] head turn thy way [and not ours]."

Thus there appear to be good reasons to think that the conception of ancestor-spirits as beneficent deities is a later

10. These data about the Sauriā Pāhāṛiās are from the author's notes of his own field-work among the tribe.

development among the Orāons, facilitated by contact with the Mūṇḍās and with the Hindus just as the present Orāon custom of putting up stone memorials or *pūlkhis* appears to have been developed through cultural contact with the Mūṇḍās, and the present Orāon custom of throwing the charred bones of the dead into some stream or pool of water has been developed probably through contact with the Hindus. In some Orāon villages of the Ranchi *thānā* (Police area) where the Orāons have adopted the language and many of the customs of the Mūṇḍās, the Mūṇḍā custom of burying the bones under a flat stone slab has been adopted in *toto*. The word '*kũṇḍi*,' it may be pointed out, appears to be a corruption of the Sanskrit word '*kũṇḍā*' (Hindi *kuṇḍ*), meaning, a basin, hole or pit [containing water].

In a typical Orāon village, each Orāon clan ceremonially puts up a long stone slab by the side of the *kuṇḍi* or pool or stream of water into which pieces of the charred bones of the dead men of the clan are finally consigned. These stone-slabs known as *Pūlkhi* stones stand as the visible symbols of the ancestor-spirits of each different clan, and, during the annual ceremony of the final disposal of the bones of the Orāons of a village who have died during the year, each *pūlkhi* stone is washed and anointed with vermilion and oil by the women of the clan whose husbands' dead ancestors are represented by the stone. The women also paint ornamental figures on these *pūlkhi* stones with rice-flour moistened in water. Meals of *khichṛi* or rice and pulse purboiled together are also laid out in leaf-plates in front of these *pūlkhi* stones. Special *pūlkhis* are similarly erected in memory of important personages, particularly old Orāon partiarchs, on their own

lands. Ceremonies connected with such *pūlkhi* stones will be described in connection with Orāon funeral customs.

The ancestor-spirits are believed to reside under the earth near their clan-*pūlkhi* at the *kũṇḍi* where the last remnants of their bones have been finally deposited. And even when a family migrates to a new village, the bones of the deceased members of the family are carried to and ceremonially disposed of in the *kũṇḍi* of the ancestral village by the side of their ancestral *pūlkhi* stone. But when a family has long settled down in a new village, it may think of setting up a new *pūlkhi* by the side of the *kũṇḍi* of the new village and thenceforth using this *kũṇḍi* as the place for the final disposal of its dead. This can only be done by an expensive ceremony. A customary payment of one rupee and a quarter is made to the *Panch* of the adopted village for the license to set up a new *pūlkhi*-stone. All the relatives of the old village are invited to the adopted village, as also all the Orāons of the latter village. They are entertained with plenty of liquor and then all proceed to the *kũṇḍi* of the village. A stone slab, from about three to ten feet or more in length and from one and a half to about three feet in width, is carried to the side of the *kũṇḍi*. Then the stone slab is planted upright on the ground, a little apart from the *pūlkhi* stones of the Bhūinhārs of the village. The man on whose behalf it is set up lends a hand in the operation. He then sacrifices a pig to his ancestor-spirits. While he does so, one of the *Panches* addresses the spirits. The following was the address of the *Panch* to the ancestor-spirits of an Orāon named Bellā while the latter was setting up a new *pūlkhi*-stone in his adopted village:—

"*Hūdi innāntim chiā lāgdam pūna ḳūṇḍi. Bellās-hū ḳhindias; adighinim panchārgē soā rupeeā chichchās; adighin dān chiā-lāgdas Bellās. Innāntim emhāi Bellās gāhi ḳūṇḍi mānjā; isānim urmi ullā hūḍṛōs; ḳhād-ḳharrāh hormār Isānim huḍṛor. Isānim ḳūṇḍi ḳhindiās; Kāodā partā gusān gāḍḍin ḳūṇḍi ḳhindiās.*"—"See (*lit.*, take) from to-day, we are providing [you] with a new *ḳūṇḍi*. Bellā himself has purchased it. For this he has paid one rupee and a quarter to the *Panch* [of this village]. For this, Bellā is offering sacrifice. From to-day ours (i.e., our *ḳūṇḍi*) is that of Bellā's [too]. To this place for all time he will enter (i.e., be admitted); all his family will enter here. [Even] here he has purchased [this] *ḳūṇḍi*; in the stream near the Kāoda hill he has purchased [this] *ḳūṇḍi*."

The man then sprinkles the blood of the sacrificed pig on the new *pūlḳhi* stone. Then they all return to the house of the man on whose behalf the *pūlḳhi* stone has been set up. There the sacrificed pig is cooked, and the guests are all feasted with plenty of rice, pulse-soup, vegetables and the meat of the sacrificed pig. Now-a-days, such Orāon families as have given up eating pork, sacrifice a goat.

III—VILLAGE DEITIES AND SPIRITS.

(1) Chālā Pāchchō.

Among the village deities and spirits to whom periodical sacrifices are offered by the Orāon village-priest or Pāhān on behalf of the village community, *Chālā Pāchchō* or the 'Old Lady of the Grove' now ranks as the chief. She is also known as *Sarnā Būṛhiā* or *Jhāḳṛā Būṛhiā*. She is the most popular of Orāon deities and receives sacrifices attended with the most elaborate ritual at the annual spring festival known as the *Khaddi* or *Sarhūl* held in her honour. The most

friendly and sociable among the Orāon deities and spirits, she rejoices when the Orāon is happy and seeks to share their happiness with them. Thus, when in moon-lit nights Orāon young men and women dance at the *ākhrā* or village dancing-ground, the *Chālā Pāchchō* in the exuberance of her delight at the sight sometimes comes out to join the dance by entering the body of one of the young female dancers who forthwith begins to shake her head violently and show other signs of possession by the spirit. And the music proceeds with greater *eclat* and the dances become more lively. And when the spirit leaves one girl she goes on to possess another. And thus the deity and her people enter into communion in song and dance as they also enter into communion at the periodical sacrifices by sharing the same sacrificial meat and drink. Before the Pāhān or any member of his family drinks rice-beer in the house, a leaf-cup filled with rice-beer from each pot of beer to be drunk must be offered to *Chālā-Pāchchō* by placing it at the door of the *Chālā-kuṭṭi*. Similarly the Orāon must offer to *Chālā-Pāchchō* and share with her the first-fruits of his fields.

Thus the Orāon would appear to enter into closer relations with *Chālā-Pāchchō* than with any other spirit or deity except perhaps the ancestor-spirits. It is interesting to note that the Orāons believe that *Chālā-Pāchchō* is such a mighty deity that hungry dogs and greedy vultures dare not touch the remnants of the sacrificial feast left at the *sarnā* nor even the cast-away leaves of the sacrificial feast.

In every Orāon village there is a grove of *sāl* (*shorea robusta*) trees, known as *Chālā* or *Sarnā*, sacred to this deity. In some villages in the more open parts of the district, the

Sarnā grove has now dwindled down to a small knot of trees only and in a few villages the old *sāl* trees of the *Sarnā* having disappeared under the axe, some other tree now serves the purpose of the *Sarnā* grove. The taboo against cutting down any tree of the *Sarnā* grove is in such cases got over by offering some sacrifices to the *Sarnā* deity.

Chālā Pāchchō is said to be visible at times in the shape of an old woman with matted locks of white hair. She ordinarily resides in the sacred *Chālā-ḳūṭṭi* or compartment sacred to her in the house of the village-Pāhān. Here her seat is on the sacred winnowing-basket *(Chālā-ḳeter* or *Sarnā-sūp)* to which is attached the sacred knife *(Chālā-ḳānṭō)* for cutting sacrificial fowls. The door of this compartment must always be left open so that the deity may come out and go in at her own sweet will. At the annual *Sarhūl* festival she is conducted in procession on her sacred *sūp* to the *Sarnā* grove where she is represented by a block of stone at the foot of the *Sarnā* tree; and there offerings of a number of fowls, besides a sheep or a goat or a pig, are offered to her by the village priest in the presence of the assembled villagers. The sacrificial meat must be cooked at the sacred grove and consumed on the spot by the male Orāons of the village but not by women.

Although the traditional legend of the genesis of Orāon spirits identifies the *Chālā-Pāchchō* as well as *Dārhā-Deswali* with the disembodied spirits of the wives of the Asurs killed by Dharmes, the attributes and functions of *Chālā-Pāchchō* clearly indicate that she is in origin a Nature-deity, representing the spirit of vegetation. The matted locks of white hair on her head may not inconceivably be a symbol of the

bunches of white *sāl* blossoms that crown the trees in spring; and at the close of the *Sarhūl* festival the village-priest inserts *sāl* blossoms into the thatches of every house in the village in order that every family may be blessed with abundance of food-grains in the ensuing year.

The Orāons assert that most of their spirits and deities except Dharmes or the Supreme Spirit, have been borrowed from outside—mostly from the Mūṇḍās. But the claims of *Chālā Pāchchō* to rank as a genuine Orāon deity might seem difficult to contest. The *Chāl Nād* of the Sauriā Pāhāṛiās would appear to be the same spirit as the *Chālā Pāchchō* of their congeners the Orāons. But the Orāon conception of the spirit as a friendly power with whom he may enter into close relationship marks the comparative advance of Orāon over Sauriā culture.

Although, like the Orāons, most other tribes of Chōṭā Nāgpūr celebrate the *Sarhūl* and offer sacrifices to this deity, it is among the Orāons that the festival is attended with the most elaborate ritual. As I have said, the Sauriā Pāhāṛiās or Mālers of the Santāl Parganās who appear to be the nearest congeners of the Orāons recognise this spirit as one of their principal deities under the name of *Chāl* or *Chāl Nād*, to whom sacrifices are offered under a *sāl* tree just outside the *basti* or settlement as among the Orāons.

(2) Pāt.

Pāṭ, sometimes called *Pāṭ Rājā*, is the master of all the village *bhūts* or spirits, whom it controls and keeps under check. It thus protects the village from sickness and other misfortunes. In some Orāon villages, *Pāṭ* has its seat on a hill, and in some villages under some bush or tree on the

outskirts of the village. *Duāriā* or *Duārsini* is said to be the attendant spirit of *Pāṭ Rājā*. *Pāṭ* is said to ride a pony and to patrol the village in times of epidemic; but the pony alone but not its rider is visible to human eyes. .

At one time *Pāṭ* would appear to have been the foremost of the village-deities. But in many Orāon villages, particularly on the central plateau of the Ranchi district, *Pāṭ* has now fallen into the background and *Chālā Pāchchō* holds the foremost place among the deities and spirits of the village. In some villages, *Pāṭ* is still a general village spirit and master of the village *bhūts*, and the name '*Deswāli*' or '*Deswāli-Pāṭ*' is also applied to it. In such villages, the village Pāhān offers periodical sacrifices of a grey (*ḳāsea*) or reddish (*gōlā*) goat to *Pāṭ*. In other villages, only the head of some individual family offers periodical sacrifices to *Pāṭ* on some hill once in several years. In some villages, this sacrifice is known as *Pārtā Pūjā* or *Pāhāṛ Pūjā* or Hill worship. At village *Sāḳrā* in Thanā Maṇḍār, there is a piece of stone about nine inches in height standing on a rock near the village. Periodical sacrifices are offered to the *Pāhāṛ-Deotā* (which would appear to be the same as *Pāṭ*) represented by this piece of stone. On the day after the *Kadleṭā* festival in the month of *Sāwan*, the village Pāhān sacrifices a cock to the *Pāhāṛ-Deotā* before this stone, and again the day after the *Kharrā Pūjā* in *Aghān*, the village Pāhān sacrifices a red cock in the name of the *Pāhāṛ-Deotā* before this stone. In most villages in the central plateau of the Rānchi District, the name '*Pāṭ*' is now remembered only for its association with the *ḳhūṇṭ* spirits which are collectively spoken of as *Khūṇṭ-Pāṭ* and also as *Khūṇṭ-dāṇṭ*,

but the separate identity or individuality of *Pāṭ* is ignored and no separate sacrifice is offered to *Pāṭ*. In these villages the *Dārhā* spirit or *Dārhā-Deswāli* is regarded by the ordinary Orāon as the leader and master of the village *bhūts* or spirits. The popular Hindu conception of *Mahādeo* (a relic perhaps of primitive ideas) as the master of *bhūts* or ghosts may also have helped in dislodging *Pāṭ* from that position; for, *Mahādeo* is the tutelary deity of a class of Orāon spirit-doctors who acquire their power over the *bhūts* or spirits through that deity, and at their exorcising seances they erect a small mud-altar which they sanctify with *mantrams* or incantations and call the '*Pāṭ*'; and, on this *Pāṭ*, offerings of tender grass-shoots (*dūb*), areca nuts and *āruā* rice are placed for *Mahādeo*.

(3) Dārhā-Deswāli.

Dārhā is the most dreaded of the village spirits (as distinguished from deities). This spirit acts as the guard or gate-keeper of the village which it is believed to protect from the incursions of spirits from outside. It has its seat on a plot of upland known as *Dārhā-ṭōnk̤ā* or *Dārhā-ṭāṇ* situate on or near the boundary of every Orāon village. The whole or, more generally, a portion of this land is left fallow. A breach of this taboo is believed to bring death to the family or cattle of the owner of the land, although he may secure a bumper harvest from the *Dārhā-ṭōnk̤ā* for a year or two.

In some villages, *Dārhā* is said to have another spirit named *Deswāli* for its wife; and in a few villages a separate grove is allotted to *Deswāli* for her seat. But in most Orāon villages *Dārhā-Deswāli* is regarded as one and the same spirit; and in some, as we have seen, *Pāṭ* is known as *Deswāli*. In

some Orāon villages in the Palāmau district, the *Dārhā* spirit is said to have a female companion of the name of *Chenṛi*.

Dārhā is said to be sometimes visible in the shape of a young stalwart riding a pony. Ordinarily *Dārhā* does no harm to the villagers but protects them from the incursions of outside *bhūts*; but should there be any remissness on the part of the villagers in providing the spirit with the proper sacrifices at the appointed time, *Dārhā* marks its displeasure by afflicting men or cattle with some terrible calamity; and elaborate and expensive sacrifices are then required to pacify it.

The *Dārhā*, like other *bhūts*, are incited by witches (*ḍāins*) and mischievous sorcerers to cause trouble. Epidemics to men or cattle are believed to be ordinarily caused either by the *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūts* of a Bhūinhār clan or the *Pūgṛi-bhūt* of an ordinary rāiyat, when there has been any delay or remissness in providing them with their periodical sacrifices or, more frequently, when they have been incited to it by some witch (*ḍāin*) or sorcerer (*sōḳhā*).

In villages where *Pāṭ* has fallen into the background, *Chālā Pāchchō* is believed to parade the village to subdue such epidemics. Some say that, with a small stick (*ṭempa*) in hand, she rides on the back of the *Deswāli* spirit who, for the nonce, assumes the shape of a mare with bells jingling from her neck, and the *Dārhā* spirit, it is said, follows in the shape sometimes of a sturdy young man and sometimes of a dog; and the epidemic soon subsides.

At stated intervals, varying in different villages from three to twelve years or more, a buffalo has to be sacrificed to this spirit. In the intervening years, some lesser animals such as a goat or a sheep are offered besides fowls.

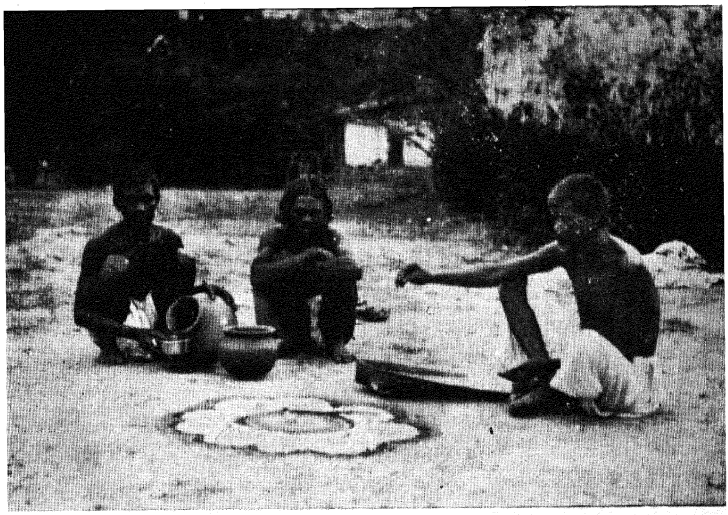

Illustration 4.
The *Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā* or *Bhelwaphāṛi* Ceremony. (Note the hen's egg at the centre with a twig attached to it).
[*See Page 24.*]

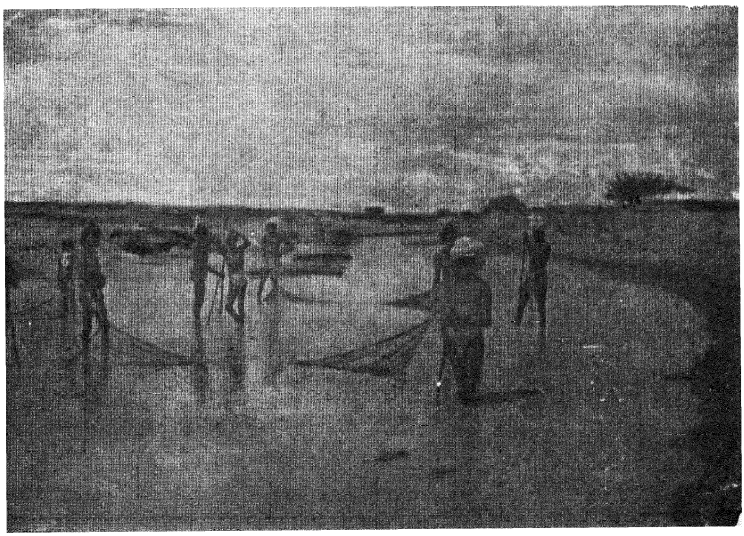

Illustration 5.
Ceremonial fishing during the *Sarhūl* festival.
[*See Page 198.*]

Thus, in one village I found that the annual sacrifice to the *Dārhā* spirit at the *Dārhā-ṭōnk̤ā* or *Dārhā-ṭāṇṛ* consists of a buffalo in one year, no animal in the second year (except a grey fowl offered in its name every year at the *Sarhūl* festival), a sheep in the third year, and no sacrifice at the fourth year and again a buffalo in the fifth year. But generally a buffalo is sacrificed at longer intervals, and in some villages only once in a generation. The person who holds the *Dārhā* or *Deswāli* field meets the expenses of the ordinary sacrifices from the produce of the field. The villagers generally contribute towards the expenses of special sacrifices. Besides these sacrifices, *Dārhā* receives at times of epidemic, a special *pūjā* (propitiation) at the *Dārhā-ṭāṇṛ* in the presence of the assembled villagers when a white cock is first offered to *Dharmes*, and then a *tāmbā* or copper-coloured cock to the ancestor-spirits and a *rānguā* or red cock to the *Dārhā* spirit. Either the village Pāhān or the tenant of the *Dārhā*-field offers the sacrifices on the *Dārhā-ṭōnk̤ā*.

Of the sacrifices to *Dārhā-Deswāli*, every Orāon family in the village receives an equal share of the meat, irrespective of the number of members in the family. A share equal to that allotted to each family of the village is also sent to each village of the Pāṛhā federation, and for each *Dūdh-bhāyā* village, if any, of the Pāṛhā.[11]

Whereas *Chālā Pāchchō* is represented by a stone at the *Sarnā*, the *Dārhā* spirit is represented by a wooden stake driven into the ground at the *Dārhā-ṭōnk̤ā*, and the old stake is replaced by a new one at the interval of several years, when a buffalo is sacrificed, and the spirit is told to remain quiet

11. Vide *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpur*, pp. 414 etc.

for a generation or so when it will again be offered buffalo-meat.

It would appear that whereas Orāon deities or Nature-gods are represented by stones, as in the case of *Chālā Pāchchō*, the Orāon spirits or ghosts, with the exception of the ancestor-spirits (who are not represented at all except collectively by the *Pūlkhi* stones), are represented by *khuṇṭās* or wooden pegs or stakes driven into the ground to make them remain quiet underground. Three pieces of the liver (*ūmbālkhō*) with a bit of flesh of the neck of the sacrificed animal are placed on top of the wooden stake (*khuṇṭā*) and a small thin iron rod is then pinned down on the *khuṇṭā* with the meat on it—so that the spirit may not rise again until its turn for receiving sacrifices come once more, and the old *khuṇṭā* is replaced by a new one. The top of the *khūṇṭā* is covered over with an earthen-ware vessel which is then plastered over with mud. The male Orāons of the village consume the rest of the flesh of the sacrificed animals.

(4) The Mahādāniā Spirit.

In a few Orāon villages, sacrifices are offered to a spirit still more terrible even than *Dārhā*. This village-spirit is known by the Hindu name of *Mahādāniā*, but in some places I have heard some Orāons call it by the name of *Dāhā-Pāchchō*. In fact, in such villages the *Mahādāniā* has taken the place of the *Dārhā-bhūt*. The *Mahādāniā* is generally believed to be a male spirit. The name *Mahādāniā* is derived from the Sanskrit words *mahā*, meaning 'great,' and *dān* meaning 'gift or sacrifice'; and to the *Mahādāniā* spirit human sacrifices formerly used to be offered, and, it is said, that until recently in years of famine or drought, human sacrifice was secretly

offered. It is still believed that in out-of-the-way villages, the practice of human sacrifice has not yet been altogether abandoned. The introduction of this spirit into an Orāon village, with the institution of human sacrifice in its honour, is invariably attributed to the Hindu landlords who have generally allotted some land in the village as service land to a special priest known as the *Mahādāniā Pāhān.* The post of this functionary is hereditary. In a few villages, the village Pāhān performs the sacrifices to this spirit as well and enjoys the rent-free *Mahādāniā-ḳhēt,* a portion of which is left uncultivated as in the case of the *Dārhā-ṭāṇṛ.*

It is interesting to note that even at this day, young Orāons—even the sturdiest young men—will not dare go alone at certain seasons to any distance from their own villages, for fear of being kidnapped or spirited away for purposes of *oṇḍḳā* or human sacrifice.

The origin of Mahādāniā villages is explained by the Orāons by the following myth. A sparrow (*sārjūlā*) lived on a *semar* (*Bombax Malabaricum*) tree. A huntsman shot at the sparrow with his arrow, and away flew the sparrow and its blood fell in different villages of the country. Those villages in which the blood of the sparrow's head fell became *Mahādāniā* villages, and those in which the blood from its wings fell became *Kāṭowri* villages.

Once every nine or ten or twelve years, the *Mahādāniā* spirit has to be propitiated with a 'big sacrifice' which formerly, as I have said, consisted of a human being, but is now substituted by either a buffalo or a cow or both a cow and a sheep and, in some villages, by the image of a man made out of the stump of the date-palm, and in others, again,

by some blood taken from a part of the sacrificer's body besides fowls and sheep or cow or buffalo. At the end of this sacrifice, a mottled (*mālā*) fowl is sacrificed by way of *baiṭhāon*, so that the spirit may keep quiet until the next big sacrifice. Besides this *bānoāri* sacrifice, as it is called, at long stated intervals, the spirit also receives sacrifices of a goat or a sheep in some villages (as at Silāgāin) in the month of *Aṣāṛh* or *Srāban* (July-August), and in others (as at Tetrā) at the time of the Hindu *Daśāharā* festival in *Āświn* or *Kārtik* (September-October). The *Mahādāniā* Pāhān has to abstain from eating all juicy fruits such as the jack-fruit and the *ḍahū* (*Articarpus Lakoocha, Roxburghii*) fruit and juicy pot-herbs from after the rice-harvest in November-December until the *Sarhūl* festival in March or April.

Ordinarily, the seat of this spirit, like that of the *Dārhā* spirit, is marked by a wooden peg with a thin iron rod stuck into it in the manner described above. In one village, at least, I found that at the instance of the Hindu landlord, a roundish stone has been placed within an enclosure made of bricks placed one upon another to mark the shrine of the *Mahādāniā* spirit.

The *Mahādāniā* spirit, if not properly propitiated at the appointed time, is believed to bring on most terrible epidemics and death to the villagers. It is only the '*Gāon-deōti*'—a term vaguely applied to the tutelary deity of the village and is taken by most Orāons to mean *Devī-Māi* and by some *Chālā Pāchḍhō*,—that is said to be able to subdue this spirit.

(5) The Devī Māi.

This is the Mother-goddess borrowed, with the name, from the Hindu neighbours of the Orāons. Near the entrance

to most Orāon villages there is a *Devī-āsthān* or *Devī-māṇḍā* or altar for this deity usually by the side of a *palās* (*Butea frondosa*) tree. In many villages, a thatch supported by four wooden posts shelter the symbols of *Devī Māi*. This is done in conformity with Hindu usage, although no temples are erected for the genuine Orāon gods. The only symbols that may be seen in this *Devī-māṇḍā* are three, five, or seven lumps of earth in the form of small cones to represent what are regarded as the breasts of the Mother-goddess. A *trisūl* or three-barbed iron spear, and in some villages, a small flag also mark the seat of *Devī-Māi*. It is interesting to note that the idea of the Mother-deity and of women's breasts as her symbols is not alien to the Orāon mind, but is a genuine ancient Orāon conception. In some of the Orāon *Dhūmkuṛiās* or bachelors' dormitories (as, for instance, in one of the two *Dhūmkūṛiās* at village Borhāmbey, in the Rānchi *thānā*) may be seen planks of wood with female breasts carved on them; and there are reasons to believe that these as well as the representation of the female organ or *yōni* on one of the wooden posts supporting the roof in most *Dhūmkuṛiā* houses, originally represented the Mother-goddess. *Devī Māi* looks after the health and welfare of the village and protects it from epidemics. Offerings of goat's milk and sweets are made to *Devī Māi* in the month of *Srāban* (July-August). In times of epidemic, a sheep is sometimes offered.

(6) Mahādeō.

Mahādeō is the tutelary deity of the class of spirit-doctors known as *Bhagats*, rather than a general village deity. In a very few Orāon villages, however, there is a *Mahādeō-Māṇḍā* or *Mahādeō-āsthān* (seat of Mahādeō) usually by the

side of the *Devī-āsthān.* And in such villages *Mahādeō* is regarded as a village-deity. This deity is represented by a roundish stone. A three-pronged spear of *trisūl* is also planted by its side. It is believed that a Mahādeō stone suddenly rises of itself from underneath the earth and then the village Pāhān or some other village elder has a dream of the deity ordering him to institute his *pūjā* or worship in the village to make the village prosperous. Generally in the month of *Srāban* (July-August), a goat is sacrificed to this deity, either by the village Pāhān or by anyone else who knows the proper rites. The villagers contribute subscriptions towards the price of the goat.

When an Orāon woman of the village or of a neighbouring village has had no children, she pours oblations of milk on the *Mahādeō* stone from time to time and makes a vow of certain sacrifices to be offered on the attainment of her desire; and when she is blessed with a healthy son, the vow is fulfilled and offerings of sweets are also made to this deity. The baby's head is then shaved by the side of the *Mahādeō Māṇḍā,* and a lock of the hair is offered to the deity and the rest of the hair is thrown into some stream or pool. Such a boy is named '*Mahādeō*' after the deity. This deity, as its name signifies, has been borrowed from the Hindus. And, as a matter of fact, it is only in the villages with a mixed population of Hindus and Orāons that *Mahādeō-māṇḍās* are found, and the Orāons make offerings to *Mahādeō* in imitation of their Hindu neighbours. Here, again, it may be noticed that the conception of stones in phallic shape to represent the procreative force of nature or rather the power or deity who blesses human beings with offspring is an idea

not alien to the Orāon mind. There are reasons to believe that the *Māndar-sālā* stones, if not the *Chāṇḍi*-stones too, are genuine phallic symbols of Orāon origin.

(7) Special Village Spirits.

Besides the general village spirits which are common to most Orāon villages, particular villages may adopt one or more spirits as special village-spirits to whom periodical sacrifices have to be offered. Thus, for instance, at village *Bāṇḍi* (*thānā* Beṛō), a sheep or a buffalo is sacrificed alternately once in twelve years to a spirit known as *Chhāppar Būṛhiā* or the 'Old Woman of the Roof.'

The traditional story of the origin of the worship of this spirit is as follows. An old woman engaged some Orāons of village Bāṇḍi to thatch a hut. While the men were engaged in thatching, the old woman called out to her daughter, "Get out a pumpkin and prepare curry with it, as the labourers must have something to eat when they have finished thatching the roof." The men took fright at this, for in the jargon of spirits a 'pumpkin' stands for human meat, and they felt certain that this woman was really a female spirit and the village was doomed. And soon afterwards all the original Orāon settlers (*bhūinhārs*) of the village fled the village for fear of their lives. Later, other Orāons (the ancestors of the present inhabitants) came and settled in the village. A *māti* or spirit-doctor named Jādo Orāon of the neighbouring village of Mūrtō was one day ploughing a field in village Bāṇḍi. While he was engaged in ploughing, a woman exactly like his own wife came up and offered him a cup of water. He at once guessed that this was a spirit in the guise of his wife, took the cup and made a

pretence of drinking the water. On his return home, he got some blacksmith to make for him a handful of small iron bullets resembling grams. Next day while coming to work in the field, he tied up these iron grams at one end of his wearing cloth. While he was ploughing, the spirit in the guise of a woman again came up and offered a drink. Jādo told her, "Open your mouth. Here are some grams I have brought for you." At this the spirit opened her mouth, and Jādo put the grams into her mouth and, as she was munching them, began to belabour her with a stick, saying, "So, you have been seeking to deceive me!" The spirit then saw that here was a man of power and offered to obey his wishes, provided she was promised some suitable periodical sacrifice. Jādo promised, "You shall have a crab to eat." 'Crab,' in the jargon of spirits, means a big animal. Since then the villagers of Bāṇḍi, through their *Pāhān*, sacrifice a buffalo once in twelve years to this spirit who thus came to be a special village-spirit of Bāṇḍi.

Village-spirits to whom sacrifices are offered on behalf of the whole village are sometimes called *Gairahi Bhūts*. But this name is particularly applied to a special class of spirits who from having once been the family spirits (*mānita-bhūts*) of particular families or from having been the tutelary spirits (*ḳhūṇṭ bhūts*) of particular clans, came to be promoted to the rank of village spirits or *Gairahi bhūts* when, on the extinction of the family whose *mānita bhūt* it had been or of the original clan or *ḳhūṇṭ* whose *ḳhūṇṭ bhūt* it had been, the spirit began to cause trouble to the village owing to the stoppage of its periodical sacrifices.

Many villages have one or more of this class of *Gairahi bhūts* to whom sacrifices are periodically offered by the village-priest on behalf of the whole village. The expenses of the sacrifices are usually defrayed from the income derived in the shape of rents from what are known as *Gairahi bhutāhā ḳhets* which were in origin a part of the lands held by the family or clan whose special spirit it had once been.

Besides such *Gairahi* village-spirits, the Orāons of particular villages offer through their village-priest periodical sacrifices to the spirits of particular local hills or other awesome natural objects. Thus, for instance, at village Jamgāi (*thānā* Lohardāgā), there is a hill named *Chāṇḍi Pāhāṛ* on the top of which rain water accumulates in a hollow, and on the slope of which there are some markings which resemble the foot-prints of elephants; and there is another rock known as *Kāṭhi Ṭāngrā* on which a few stone boulders lie superimposed one above another and underneath the boulders is a *ḳhōh* or cave. These queer spots are believed by the Orāons of the village to be the abodes of particular spirits. And on an auspicious day in the month of *Sāwan* (July-August) every year, the Orāons of the village, led by the village priest proceed to these spots with a few fowls and some *āruā* rice and a jugful of milk. They first go to *Kāṭhi Ṭāngrā* where the *Pāhān* sacrifices a fowl at the mouth of the cave (*ḳhōh*). They next proceed towards *Chāḍri Pāhāṛ* and there on the supposed foot-prints of elephants on the slope of the hill, two fowls are sacrificed. On reaching the top of the hill, the *Pāhān* with the help of a wooden pole anoints the top-most crest of the hill with vermilion, and sacrifices two more fowls. Then they go to the hollow in which rain-

water accumulates, and there the *Pāhān* or his assistant (*Pūjār*) slowly and reverentially pours the milk into the water. They wait a few minutes there to watch and see how much of the water gets tinged white with milk. If they find all the water so tinged, they infer that there will be abundant rain-fall for the benefit of their crops, but if only a portion of the water appears to turn white, they apprehend only partial and insufficient rain-fall. Finally they go back to the supposed markings of elephants' feet and examine if the milk-tinged water from the hollow has percolated down to these foot-prints. If there is no sign of that, the residue of the milk in their jug is dropped on these foot-prints. It is said that, in former days milk, would always percolate from the hollow to these foot-prints, but now-a-days this, it is said, seldom occurs.

In the same village (Jāmgāi), and indeed in almost every village on the Chōṭā-Nāgpur plateau, there is some *mūi chiṭkhā* (*ficus religiosa*) tree known by some such name as *Hājri Pipar* on, in some villages, as *Bāṛṇḍā pipar*. When the rains are late in coming, the women sweep clean the floors and yards of every house with cowdung, bathe themselves and take water in earthen jars and go, in the morning, in a body to the tree and pour the water on its roots, and in some places the *Pāhān* also burns incense. The Orāons believe that, after this, at least a few drops of rain are sure to fall that day, or, at any rate, the rains will commence within two or three days. If this does not happen, they conclude that there must have been some important omission in the ceremony, and the rites are

repeated another morning. In some villages, unbleached thread is wound round the trees.

(8) Minor Village-Spirits.

Besides the more important village spirits described above to whom sacrifices are periodically offered on behalf of the village community, a class of undefined, indeterminate minor spirits are believed to reside in woods (*ban*) and rivers (*gāṛhā*) and streams (*ḍhōṛhā*) and in the nooks and corners within the four boundaries (*Chatūr simān*) of the village, and are collectively named as '*Gāṛhā-ḍhōṛhā-chatūr-simān*' or '*Ban saḳti*' and invoked on occasions of the periodical sacrifices at the sacred grove (*sarnā*) and also on occasions of special sacrifices for the removal of epidemics. No separate sacrifices are offered to these minor spirits of the woods and streams in particular.

The *ḍāris* (*tūsā*) or springs of a village or rather the spirits residing in them are also collectively named as '*Tūsā-bhūṛā*'; and in some villages, each spring has a separate name and the spring or rather the spirit of the spring receives separate sacrifices, along with other village-spirits during the *pūjā* for the pacification of the village by relieving it of some epidemic. Thus, in village, Dhūku Tingria (*thānā*, Beṛo) such sacrifices are offered at a number of springs,—namely, a black fowl for *Chālā-Tūsā* or the *Sarnā* spring, one for *Gulāichi-Tūsā* or the spring under a *Gulāichi* tree, and one for *Amm-nūā Tūsā* (or the drinking-water spring), a *ḳabrā* or striped fowl for *Kholtā-ḳūdar Tūsā* (the spring on *Bael ḳūdar* land which is supposed to be inhabited by a *Bāghout* spirit), a *ḳāsri* or grey fowl for *Gūrgūri-Tūsā* (the spring on *Gurgūr chuā* land), a *chind* or ash-coloured fowl for *Chiglo Tūsā* (or the Jackal spring), a white

fowl for *Lāndri-Tūsā* (the spring on the *Lāndri* field) and a mottled fowl for *Khorkhu Tūsā* (the spring on the *Khorkhu* field). But in most villages, no special sacrifices are offered to the spirit of a spring, but a stone at its mouth is anointed with vermilion by Orāon women when they draw water from it after being freed from ceremonial pollution due either to child-birth or a death in her family.

IV. CLASS-GODS AND SPIRITS.

(1) Chāṇḍi.

The first to come under this class is *Chāṇḍi*, a female deity who is believed to bring success in hunting and war. This is the deity *par excellence* of unmarried young Orāons. She too, like Mahādeō, is represented by a roundish stone, which like the Mahādeō stone, is believed to have issued out of the ground of itself. In so far as *Chāṇḍi* is propitiated for success to the village in hunting and war, this spirit may be also classed as a 'village-deity.'

But the *Chāṇḍi* stone is also sometimes used as a fetish which a huntsman may carry with him in a hunting expedition to ensure success in the chase. In an Orāon village there may be, and generally are, more than one seat (*āsthān*) on some upland or hill-slope for *Chāṇḍi*, and at each of these places she is represented by a stone. In some places may be found a smaller stone by the side of a big *Chāṇḍi* stone, and the Orāons of the village describe the smaller stone as the offspring of the larger *Chāṇḍi* stone,——'the baby of the old woman,' as I heard it called at village Sākrā (in *thānā* Māṇḍār) where old Orāons assured me that within the last twenty years the bigger stone has increased in size. *Chāṇḍi*

is the goddess of bachelors, and it is only bachelors and not married men who can offer sacrifices to her.

The great annual sacrifice to her is celebrated on the full-moon day in the month of *Māgh*. Eight days before that day, all the Orāon villagers assemble at the village *ākẖṛā* and declare that '*eṛā mōkẖhōt*' (goat-eating) will take place on the next full moon day. The young bachelors go from house to house, bidding every family to prepare rice-beer for the occasion. "*Māghegi pūrnmāsinu eṛā mōkẖhōr. Jaldi jhārābiō mākẖhlē, mālbio ḳāchri mānō.*" "In the month of Magh, on the full moon day, they will eat goat [meat]. Soon beer will (i.e. must) be ready, otherwise it will be unfit for use." On the next market-day a goat is purchased with money raised by subscription from the villagers. Early in the morning of the day of the full moon, all the young bachelors assemble at the *ākẖṛā* or dancing ground which is by the side of their Dormitory (*dhūmḳūṛiā*) and sit down or stand in two rows in the form of crescents, leaving a pathway between the two rows. The village Pāhān's wife, early in the morning, cleans and besmears the spot with cowdung diluted in water. One of the young bachelors, who owing to his supposed susceptibility to supernatural influences generally acts as the *pāi-chālāwā* [12] (mover of the divining instrument) on such occasions, has his eyes blind-folded. The *Sarnā sūp* which has been brought for the occasion from the Pāhān's house and filled with *āruā* rice is placed in front of the *pāi-chālāwā* and a *lōṛhā* or curry-stone (also brought from the Pāhān's house) is placed upon the ground with its ends pointing east and west. One of the

12. The same person ordinarily acts also as the *pāi-chālāwā* at the election of the village Pāhān.

boys throws a few grains of *āruā* rice over the *lōṛhā* saying—*Neḳhāi gusān ḳhūs lāggi ārē gusān ḳālāe.*" "Go to the person with whom you are well pleased." Each of the boys takes in his hands a little rice from the *sūp*. The blind-folded boy now places the palm of his right hand lightly over the *lōṛhā* which rolls forward towards the rows of boys, and his hands begin to shake, and he moves along in a stooping posture with his hands touching the *lōṛhā*. As the *lōṛhā* approaches them, the other boys move backwards in a body keeping to the arrangement in rows. The boy whose feet the *lōṛhā* touches is selected as the Bachelors' *Pāhān* for the *pūjā* of *Chāṇḍi*. As many boys as there are *Chāṇḍi āsthāns* in the village are thus elected as *Chāṇḍi* Pāhāns. One or more of the boys wash the feet of these newly-elected Pāhāns of the *Chāṇḍi*.

At about 10 A.M., the *Pāhān* thus elected bathes and goes to the *Chāṇḍi ṭānṛ* where the other boys have already collected fuel-wood, cooking-pots and jars of rice-beer supplied by the villagers. They have also planted a flag at the *Chāṇḍi ṭānṛ* and carried 2 or 3 drums (*nageṛāh*) there. The *Chāṇḍi Pāhān* puts three marks of vermilion (*sindūr*) on the *Chāṇḍi*-stone, and offers some *āruā* rice to *Chāṇḍi*. Then the other bachelors of the Dhūmkūria make similar offerings of *āruā* rice to *Chāṇḍi* by scattering some grains of rice on the *Chāṇḍi*-stone, all saying "*Ṭhiḳsē menḳē emhāi ḳaththān, siḳār emān piṭṭāgē*" i.e., "Listen well to our words—in order to enable us to kill game." The she-goat purchased on the preceding market-day is now fed with some *āruā* rice, and while it is eating the rice its head is cut off with a battle-axe (*bāluā*) by the boy-priest. The severed head of the goat is left on the *Chāṇḍi*-stone

for a short time and then taken up. The meat of the head and trunk of the goat is dressed and cooked by the Dhūmkūṛiā boys then and there. Rice is also cooked by them in separate vessels. And only the Orāon bachelors of the village make a merry feast of this. For the rest of the villagers, a pig is slain in the village and the meat is taken to the *Chāṇḍi ṭāṇṛ* and there first fried in oil and then boiled along with rice, thus forming what is called '*ṭahari.*' This frying and cooking is done only by married men who also strain rice-beer for the non-bachelors present. All this feasting and drinking at the *Chāṇḍi ṭāṇṛ* go on till sun-set or a little later, after which the bachelors go to the Dhūmkūṛia carrying their *jātrā*-flags and beating their drums. The rest of the villagers go back to their respective houses. The young men and girls dance and sing at the *ākhṛā* till midnight or later. The quaint method of propitiation of *Mūtri Chāṇḍi* will be described in connection with the *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl* festival.

Another peculiar ceremony connected with the *pūjā* of *Chāṇḍi* is that on the last three nights, and in some villages on only one night in the month of *Māgh* (January-February) as also on the last three nights (in some villages on only the last night) in the month of *Chait* (April) and on the night preceding the *Phāguā* ceremony,—the Pāhān of the bachelors, sometimes with 2 or 3 companions, at dead of night, takes a bath and goes to the *Chāṇḍi ṭāṇṛ* stark naked and with dishevelled hair, carrying in his hand a pumpkin gourd (*tūmbā*) filled with water. Arriving at the *Chāṇḍi ṭāṇṛ*, he bathes the *Chāṇḍi-stone* with the water of the gourd and puts oil and *sindūr* (vermilion) on it, saying—"*Bhālāse sewā nānā lāgdan. Isūm sindri chiārkī eṛpā kālā lāgdan Bārā kōs ṭerō kōsānti bārāe-kī*

enghāi paddānti ghōṛōnū bārāe-ki ḳhātrāe. "I am propitiating thee well; I am going home [after] offering thee oil and vermilion. May [game], come from [a distance of] 12 or 13 *ḳōses* on horse-back (i.e., swiftly) and fall in my village."

It is said that *Chāṇḍi* appears in various terrible shapes such as those of a tiger, a snake, an elephant, etc., on these occasions to the boy-Pāhān. If the latter gets frightened at this, he is sure to be punished (*dhāḳḳā, lit.*, to be pushed) with an attack of fever, or with gripings in the stomach, or some other ailment. More than one middle-aged Orāon, who acted in their younger days as Pāhāns of the bachelors of their villages, have, with evident belief in what they said, described to me how they had actually seen *Chāṇḍi* in such shapes. Thus, Jāṭā Orāon of village Māndrō (*thānā* Māṇḍār), who is now a Christian convert and therefore has no interest in inventing a story about the 'heathen' deities, told me with undoubted sincereity that as a boy he had once been elected Bachelors' Pāhān, and, as such, he had gone stark naked to the *Chāṇḍi ṭāṇṛ* of his village at midnight to propitiate *Chāṇḍi*. The first time that he went, as he was anointing the *Chāṇḍi*-stone with oil and vermilion, he first saw the spirit approaching him in the shape of a tiger and, as the tiger walked past him, it just touched him lightly and then disappeared. Then the *Dārhā*-spirit similarly walked past him in the shape of a huge serpent, and finally in the shape of a horse. The man explained the appearance of the spirit by saying that she comes to see if her *pūjā* is being properly performed. Here again we see that shape-shifting is believed to be a characteristic of most Orāon spirits.

Illustration 6.
Part of the *Sarhūl* Procession to the *Sarnā*. The man in front is carrying fowl, others are carrying utensils, rice, &c., in baskets, and water in earthen jars.

[*See Page 206.*]

Illustration 7.
Chasing the *Chep Rai* at the *Sarhūl*.

[*See Pages 213-215.*]

Illustration 8.
Two Orāons with their bodies painted in white, begging alms at a *Jātrā* to get rid of the disease-spirit.

[*See Page 301.*]

It is interesting to note that the water with which the *Chāṇḍi*-stone is bathed on the night of the full moon in the month of *Fālgun* is drawn in jugs secretly at night by the young bachelors from springs in their own village and also in neighbouring villages for successive nights during the week preceding, and the jugs are kept secreted inside ant-hills. After the *Chāṇḍi*-stones are bathed on the *Fāguā* day with this water, the jugs are broken by throwing them on the *Chāṇḍi*-stones. The *Chāṇḍi*-stones are then anointed with vermilion.

Another interesting custom connected with the *Chāṇḍi* is that on the new-moon day in the month of *Kārtiḳ* (October-November) the Orāon *dhāngārs* in some villages go to a particular field sacred to *Chāṇḍi* (e.g., *Tetar Chuā don* in Khāwās Khijri, *thānā* Bero) and go on stamping on the ground and feeling the mud with their feet. If the feet of any of them touch or are believed to touch some roundish or longish stone, he exclaims, 'I have touhed it!" And it is believed that this indicates that *Chāṇḍi* is pleased, and there will be success in the next *Fāgu siḳār* or spring-hunt.

(2) Āchrael.

As *Chāṇḍi* is the special deity of Orāon bachelors, as a class, *Āchrael* and her companion called *Jōdā*, are the special spirits of women. Once in a generation, each Orāon family or *ḳhūṇṭ* (group of families descended of the same stock) must celebrate the *pūjā* of *Āchrael* for the well-being of all the female children, married as well as unmarried, young and old—of the family or *ḳhūṇṭ*. The *Āchrael* spirit is not represented by any image or symbol such as a stone or a wooden peg. The married daughters, brothers' daughters, cousins' daughters, and cousin-sisters (by the father's side) of the

head of each family of the *ḳhūṇṭ* are all invited for the occasion and they all come, each with her husband, to attend the *pūjā* or sacrifices.

They arrive in the evening preceding the day fixed for the sacrifices (*pūjā*), each woman bringing with her one pot of rice-beer besides some rice, pulses, salt and other articles for a feast. Their husbands contribute towards the price of a pig or a sheep or a goat for the sacrifice. On the day fixed for the *pūjā*, the whole family or *ḳhūṇṭ* and all the female children as well as their husbands remain fasting from morning till noon or afternoon when the *pūjā* is held. All the married female children of the family or *ḳhūṇṭ*, with their respective husbands, after bathing and wearing new washed clothes, sit down in a row facing the officiant at the sacrifice. If any daughter of the family or *ḳhūṇṭ* happens to be absent, a clod of earth is placed in the row to represent her. The unmarried daughters sit at one end of the row, and a clod of earth placed by the side of each of them is meant to represent her future husband. The sacrificer is a male member of the family or *ḳhūṇṭ*. He sacrifices a pig or a sheep or a goat-kid of a grey colour. Before being sacrificed, the animal is fed on *āruā* rice which the girls and women seated in front of the sacrificer sprinkle on the ground before the animal, from a leaf-plate placed in front of them, saying,—"We are giving this to thee. Live on this and do not visit us with troubles." The husband of each woman also puts down an *anna* or so of copper coin on the leaf-plate. The sacrificer, while sacrificing the animal, prays,—"Do thou, O *Āchrael*, refrain from troubling our female children. Do not cause either sickness or sorrow to them." After the sacrifice, the

sacrificer sprinkles the blood of the sacrificed animal on all the girls of the family or *ḳhūṇṭ* and their husbands. In some places, a cloth is held like a canopy over the heads of each couple and some of the sacrificial blood is poured over the cloth, and the blood is allowed to percolate through and besmear their persons. The sacrificer takes up the rice and pice on the leaf-plates as his perquisites. The women and their husbands make their obeisance individually to all present. *Ṭahari* is cooked by boiling rice with the sacrificial meat. Feasting and drinking follow. Friends and relatives are invited to the feast. Men and women, fellow-villagers as well as outsiders, may partake of the meat of the goat sacrificed to *Āchrael.*

The following morning, the married women must return home with their husbands, although they may choose to come back again after a day or two.

Besides this periodical sacrifice to *Āchrael,* special sacrifices are offered to her when, after a child-birth, there occurs deficiency in the flow of the mother's milk, or the children fall repeatedly ill. A spirit-doctor is consulted and such sacrifices to *Āchrael* as may be dictated by him are offered by the father or brother of the woman. At the place of the sacrifice the woman sits with her husband by her side as at marriage, and the blood of the sacrificed animal is sprinkled on them. It is believed that the *Āchrael* spirit, if properly propitiated, prevents *Naihārāntā bhūts* or spirits of a married woman's father's village or clan from visiting her husband's village and causing trouble to her and her family.

(3) Jōdā.

This is another female spirit and a companion of *Āchrael.* She too receives sacrifices to maintain the daughters, nieces and sisters of the head of the family in health and happiness. On the morning following the day of the *pūjā* of Āchrael, the same man who sacrificed a goat-kid to *Āchrael* on the preceding day, sacrifices a female sheep to *Jōdā,* in the same way and with a similar prayer. The blood of the sacrificed animal is similarly sprinkled on the women and their husbands seated in a row in front of the sacrificer. The customary feast follows, and after this, the sons-in-law of the family with their wives and children return to their respective homes. *Jōdā,* like *Āchrael,* is not represented by any image or symbol. Unlike *Āchrael, Jōdā* does not receive sacrifices in all Orāon villages; in some villages her name, too, is unknown.

V. Khūṇṭ-Bhūts.

Next in importance to the village-spirits, are the *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūts* or clan spirits of the original families of the village. The descendants of the original founder or founders of an Orāon village are called Bhūinhārs. These Bhūinhārs are divided into *ḳhūṇṭs* or branches (*lit.* stumps or stocks) amongst whom the original clearances were divided; and these *ḳhūṇṭs* are entrusted with the propitiation of their respective *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūts* or spirits appearing on or otherwise attached to their respective *ḳhūṇṭ*-lands. As the process of making clearances in the primitive jungles for the purpose of establishing villages involved a disturbance of the spirits residing in the jungles, the duty of making periodical sacrifices to the spirits haunting their respective *ḳhūṇṭ* lands necessarily devolved on the Bhūinhār families or *ḳhūṇṭs.*

Additions have since been made to the number of original *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts* of each clan. The way in which such additions came to be made may be illustrated by the traditional origin of one or two typical *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts* of this class.

Thus, of a *ḳhūṇṭ bhūt* of the *Māhtō ḳhūṇṭ* of village Guddā (thānā Rānchi) it is related that long ago, a young man of the *ḳhūṇṭ* of the name of Buchā repeatedly planted a fishing-trap (*ḳūmni*) in a *don* (low-lying rice-field) to catch fish, but with ill success. At length he took a vow that in the event of his getting a *ḳūmni* full of fish he would sacrifice a buffalo and a sheep in alternate years to the *nād* or spirit of the field who was foiling his attempts. Before long his *ḳūmni* was filled with fish. And, true to his promise, he planted a *ḳhūṇṭā* or stake at the spot where the *ḳūmni* had been planted, and offered the promised sacrifices. And since then, once every three years, the members of the *Māhtō ḳhūṇṭ* of the village offer a triennial sacrifice of a buffalo or sheep alternatively. This spirit is named '*Būchā-Nad*', and may be said to be an instance of an earth-spirit or nature-spirit regarded as a *Khūṇṭ-bhūt*.

As an instance of a human-spirit appeased or worshipped as a *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūt*, we may mention the case of the spirit of a murdered person being propitiated as a *bhūt* of the Bhūinhār family or *ḳhūṇṭ* of the murderer. Ordinarily, when an instance of disease or death occurs in the family of the murderer and the ghost-finder declares that it is the spirit of the murdered man who has caused the affliction, the spirit is installed as a family *bhūt* or *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūt* and periodical sacrifices are offered to it. But I have heard of more than one instance in which the murdered man when on point of

death made a dying declaration of his intention to become a *bhūt* of the *Khūṇṭ* of his murderer, and persecute them unless sufficiently propitiated. Thus, in village Silāgāin (*thānā* Māṇḍāṛ), two Orāons, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a plot of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of the other man. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, "Here I establish myself," and then ran out again to the field in dispute and there dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field on to which he dropped down dead, is offered to the spirit of the murdered man at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the same spot for making similar offerings.

Ordinarily, some land belonging to the *ḳhūṇṭ* is fixed upon as the *āsthān* or seat of the *ḳhūṇṭ bhūt*, and there at stated intervals sacrifices are offered to it. If sacrifices are not offered at the stated interval, the spirit grows impatient or unquiet and inflicts sickness or other calamity on the members of the *ḳhūṇṭ* or their cattle and on the villagers generally. More often the Orāon *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts* become restless and long for sacrifices before the appointed time at the instigation or through the incantations of a witch or sorcerer, often one belonging to the family. When, as is generally the case, the hand of a witch or sorcerer is suspected, a witch-doctor is consulted.

Although the periodical sacrifices to a *ḳhūṇṭ bhūt* are ordinarily made by a member of the *ḳhūṇṭ*, now-a-days in some cases the village-*Pāhān* is invited to officiate as the sacrificer, and is paid a small remuneration for his services. A land which is troubled by some *ḳhūṇṭ-bhūt* is known as the *Bhūtḳhetā* land of the *ḳhūṇṭ* or family. When the *bhūt* or spirit is a powerful one who is likely to cause disturbance in the form of epidemics to the whole village, no rent is ordinarily payable to the landlord for such lands, as the propitiation of such a spirit is in the public interest and is a rather expensive affair.

What are known as the *Gairahi bhūtḳhetā* or *Mardānā bhūtḳhetā* lands, are in origin, as we have seen, the *ḳhūṇṭ bhūḳthetā* lands of some *ḳhūṇṭ* or *Bhūinhār* family which has become extinct, and the spirit having begun to create disturbance in the village for want of nourishment or sacrifices, the village community is obliged to adopt it as a village-*bhūt*. And the whole or part of the lands of the extinct family were converted into *gairahi bhūtḳhetā* lands and placed under the charge of the village headmen. The latter lease out these lands for short terms up to three years or so to different cultivators on rent, and the rents thus received are utilised for the sacrifices to the spirit. Fresh settlements of these lands are again made, and no cultivator can, by custom, acquire a 'right of occupancy' in the *Gairahi bhūtḳhetā* lands.

No image or representation of *Khūṇṭ bhūts* are made. Ordinarily, the *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts*, it is now believed, look after the health and crops and other belongings of their *ḳhūṇṭs*. The Orāon believes that when thieves or other mischief-makers attempt to steal or damage his crops, his *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts* resist

them and often foil their attempts. But when the *ḳhūṇṭ* spirits are displeased for want of appropriate sacrifices at the appointed time or at the instigation of some mischievous witch or sorcerer, the *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts* are said to bark like jackals, and bring trouble to the village. And special sacrifices are then required to pacify them.

VI. HOUSEHOLD SPIRITS.

The non-Bhūinhār Orāons of a village have no clan or family spirits of the class of *Khūṇṭ bhūts* described above. In their case the place of *Khūṇṭ bhūts* is, to some extent, supplied by a group of spirits to be described in this section. This sixth class of supernatural beings is composed of *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* or *Baṛ-Pāhāṛi* and certain other spirits known as *Chigṛi Nād, Gōesāli Nād,* etc. *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* or the Old Lady *Bāṛṇḍā* is believed to be the guardian spirit of each separate household. This spirit is also variously known as *Dāngṛā nād* or Bullock (-eating) spirit, *Saḳhṛi nād* or *Chūlāhi nād* or the Hearth-spirit, and *Pūrbiā nād* or the spirit of the East. *Dāngṛā nād* is obviously so named with reference to the fact that this spirit requires a periodical sacrifice of a bullock (*ḍāngṛā*); the names *Saḳhṛi*[13] *nād* and *Chūlāhi nād* apparently refer to the fact that every family has to offer sacrifices to this spirit after it has separated from its parent family and set up a separate hearth (*Chūlhā*) for itself. *Bāṛṇḍā* is believed to keep watch over the threshing-floors when the paddy harvest is taken there for threshing and it is with reference to this function of the spirit that it is called *Ūḍḍū Bāṛṇḍā* or *Keṭer Bāṛṇḍā,— Ūḍḍū* (Hindi, *ūṛiyā*) being the

13. *Saḳhṛi* means grains of boiled rice &c., left over in a plate or sticking to the hands and mouth after a meal.

ordinary grain-measure in the shape of a bamboo-basket containing about 30 seers (60 lbs.) of grains, and *ḳeter* being the ordinary winnowing fan employed in separating the chaff from the grain. It is interesting to note that *Bāṛṇḍā* or *Bāri Bāṛṇḍā* is the name for a dust-storm.

Bāṛṇḍā is popularly believed to be the spirit of one of the *Asūr* women whose husbands, according to the Orāon legend of the genesis of man and the spirits [14], were tricked into death by *Dharmes*. *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* or the Old Lady *Bāṛṇḍā* is said to have seven daughters of whom *Chigṛi Nād* or *Dāhā Chigṛi* is said to be a constant attendant of *Bāṛṇḍā*; and has a special day appointed for sacrifices to it. *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* or 'Old Lady *Bāṛṇḍā*' has seven daughters who are said to be *Bhūlās* or tramp spirits who wander about in jungles and near ant-hills, feeding on *pipar* (*ficus religiosa*) and *dumar* (*ficus glomoreta*) fruits; and to them no sacrifices need be offered. According to some Orāons, three of these daughters named respectively as *Hānḳar Bāi*, *Pōs Bāi* and *Kitrō Bāi* receive sacrifices along with their mother; but this is not generally admitted. According to Father Dehon, [15] *Bāṛṇḍā* is a male spirit, being the son of one of the *Asūr* women who, according to the legend, was pregnant and worked the bellows when *Dharmes* punished the *Asūrs*. I have not met with any corroboration of Father Dehon's account; on the other hand, *Bāṛṇḍā*, it is said, appears sometimes in the shape of an old woman and more rarely, in the shape of a female tiger with a long tail.

14. S. C. Roy, '*The Oraons of Chota-Nagpur*', pp. 442 ff.

15. *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. I, No. 9, p. 132.

A consideration of the *Bāṛṇḍā* or *Bāṛ-Pāhāṛi* cult among the Orāons and also among some of the Mūṇḍā tribes of Chōṭā-Nāgpur and the association of the *Bāṛṇḍā* spirit with the setting up of new households, would appear to lead to the inference that *Bāṛṇḍā* or *Bāṛ-Pāhāṛi* was in origin the spirit of the hill which was the original home or cradle of the family or rather the clan. The *Bāṛṇḍā* cult would appear to have been borrowed by the Orāons from their Mūṇḍā neighbours. Whereas it is found in more or less vigour among all the Mūṇḍā tribes, it does not appear to be known to the Mālers or to the Khōṇḍs who appear to be the nearest congeners of the Orāons, and the only tribes allied to the Orāons in Bengal, Bihār and Oṛissā.

Every non-Bhūinhār Orāon family of which any member or ancestor may have eaten the meat of sacrifices offered to the *Bāṛṇḍā* spirit, must, after it has separated from the parent family and set up a house for itself, offer the appropriate sacrifices to *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* and its associated spirits within a year or two of separation, and thereafter at stated intervals of from three to twelve years or at least once in a generation.

Sacrifices to Bāṛṇḍā.

The method of propitiation of *Bāṛṇḍā* and its companion spirits of the household is as follows.

A date,—generally the full-moon day in the month of Māgh (January-February),—is appointed for sacrifices to *Bāṛṇḍā*, and invitations are sent out to all the brothers and other *bhāyāds* or agnates of the head of the family. On the appointed day, the head of the family or some other adult male member remains fasting from morning, and, at about

noon, goes with his relatives and guests to some open space, preferably by the side of an ant-hill, taking with him the sacrificial things which must include a few (usually five) rice-flour cakes or bread, a pot of rice-beer, a little vermilion and a *sup* or winnowing-fan, besides a bullock or other animal (a pig or a goat) and fowls. Earthen-ware cooking-vessels, water and spices for cooking, meat-cutters and similar other articles are also taken there besides a little of the medicinal root (*bichahi*) used in brewing liquor, and some powdered mustard (*māni*) seeds and a little rice-flour and vermilion.

The spot selected for the purpose is cleaned with cowdung diluted in water, and one or three clods of earth are set up there to represent the *Bāṛṇḍā* spirit, and is anointed with rice-flour moistened with water and marked with vermilion. The feet of the animal to be sacrificed are washed, and its forehead anointed with rice-flour soaked in water, and is then marked with vermilion. The sacrificer and also his brothers and other agnates throw each some grains of *aruā* rice on the ground in front of the sacrificial animal; and the sacrificer prays to *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchchō* or the *Dāngṛā* spirit as follows:—

Hūdi, Dāngṛā Nād! Kheḍḍ-ḳhekḳhān bisirḳān ḳi dān ḳhindḳān; ḳi ḍāngṛā pāsā'lāgdan. Innāntim sapnā āmḳē chiā; nāṛi āmḳē ḳōrtā. Āchchhā sē rāḳē. Asūr-Asūrāinghi nād hiḳdi. Āḳḳu chigṛin gaṛōn, i ullān panara din nū; ār Dāhā Gōensāli nānōr."

"Take, O *Dāngṛā* spirit! Forgetting my hands and legs (i.e., at great sacrifice and with great trouble), I purchased this sacrifice, and I am sacrificing this bullock. From to-day do not give me [evil] dreams and do not give me fever.

Remain quiet. Thou are the ghost of the *Asūr-Asūräins.* Within fifteen days from to-day I shall set up *chigṛis* or bamboo-poles (i.e., sacrifice to the *Chigṛi* spirit); and shall [also] make [sacrifices to the] *Dāhā Gōensāli* [spirit]."

While the animal is eating the *āruā* rice placed on the ground the sacrificer gently strikes the butt-end of his axe three or seven times against the neck of the animal and then severs its head with the sharp edge of the axe. When the village Pāhān is present, he touches the neck of the animal with the butt-end of the axe and hands over the axe to the sacrificer to cut off the head. The severed head is placed over the clod or clods of earth representing the spirit. The eyes in the severed head are bandaged round with the entrails of the animal. It is explained that the goat represents the spirit, and the eyes are thus covered up so that the spirit may not return to the village and trouble the family. The fowls too are then sacrificed in the names of *Bāṛṇḍā Pāchḍhō* and her daughters. The rice-flour bread or cakes are also offered. Where the sacrifices are offered in front of an ant-hill, the blood of the sacrificed animals and fowls is dropped into the hollow of the ant-hill through a hole made at its top. The *sūp* or winnowing-fan is also dropped into the hollow of the ant-hill. A *sarḳhi* or small earthen-ware jug covered up at its mouth with an earthen-ware lamp is, in some villages, placed over the ant-hill. And the spirit is asked to stay inside the ant-hill till the time for sacrifices return again. The sacrificer says, "*O Dāngṛi nād, Ōḍḍū Bāṛṇḍā, Nehā Bāṛṇḍā,* do thou remain quiet for another five (or seven or twelve, as the case may be) years." In the course of the night, the white-ants repair the breach

made at the crest of the ant-hill. The reason now assigned for offering the sacrifices before an ant-hill is that an ant-hill resembles the kiln in which the Asurs in the legend of genesis were killed. As an ant-hill will go on increasing in size, the family too, it is believed, will multiply, if sacrifices are duly offered. The trunk of the victim is then dressed. What the Orāon calls the *bhitrāons* or the vital parts of the sacrifice consisting of the liver (*umbālkhō*), some meat from near the heart (*kārji*) and lungs (*phoksa*) are boiled with rice, and a little of this *ṭahari* or *suṛi* is first offered to the spirit by placing a little of it before each of the three clods of earth. The rest of the *ṭahari* is distributed among those present. Then the *bichchi* or yeast is mixed with water, and this water is poured over the *ṭahari* before the three clods of earth by way of *tapāon* or drink-offering. The rest of the meat of the trunk is also cooked with rice in another vessel and distributed among those present, a portion being set apart for distribution in the village. The meat of the head is then cooked with rice as *ṭahari* and when it is about ready, the powdered mustard is put into the meat. This *ṭahari* is then eaten. The leaf-plates and the refuse of the feast are all carefully collected and burnt in the hearth.

Now-a-days some families habitually neglect to offer sacrifices to the *Bāṛṇḍā* and associated spirits at stated intervals. But such families are rudely reminded of their remissness when some serious illness or other calamity comes upon the family and the spirit-finder, on being referred to, declares that it is *Bāṛṇḍā* who has inflicted the calamity. And then sacrifices are offered in the same manner as described above; and the sacrificer similarly prays,—

"Hūdi Dāngṛā nād; nin innā ḳahārārḳi se nāṛi ḳōrtāchḳi, dūḳh dāṇḍe nāndi sapnā chidi, en āḳḳān ḳi ḳheḍḍ-ḳheḳḳhan bisirḳān ḳi dān ḳhind-ḳān; ḳi ḍāngṛā pāsā lāgdan. Innāntim sapnā āmḳē chiā nāṛī āmḳē ḳōrtā; āchchhā sē rāḳē. Asūr Asūrāin-ghi nād hiḳdi. Āḳḳu chigṛi gāṛōn i ullān panara din nū. Ār Dāhā Gōensāli nānōr Dāngṛā nād-ghi āmḳhi heḳhē, ār sangē heḳhē."

"Take *Dāngṛā* spirit, thou hast been declared (caught) to-day as causing fever and giving trouble, [and] giving [evil] dreams. I have known (found thee out). By selling my hands and legs (i.e., my all) I have purchased sacrifices; and I am sacrificing [with the butt-end of an axe] this bullock (or pig or goat, as the case may be). From to-day do not give me [evil] dreams; don't send me fever. Remain in peace. Thou art the spirit of the *Asūr-Asūrāins*. Now, within fifteen days from this day, I shall set up *Chigṛi* and shall make (sacrifices to) *Dāhā Gōensāli*, [which is] the curry (i.e., sauce or companion) of [thee the *Dāngṛā* spirit]." The sacrifices are offered and then cooked and eaten in the same manner as described above.

Sacrifices to Chigṛi Nād.

A fortnight later, on the morning of the next new moon day, two long bamboo poles (*Chigūr*) pointed at the ends are planted, one on each side of the door-way of the house. The adult members of the family remain fasting until the sacrifices are offered. They may, however, drink rice-beer freely. Cakes of rice-flour are prepared for the ceremony by frying them in oil in an earthen-vessel over a new hearth improvised with three clods of earth.

In the afternoon, the Panch or elders of the village as well as the *bhāyāds* or agnatic relations of the family and also

other relatives and friends come on invitation and are treated to rice-beer and rice-flour cakes.

One of the elders who is selected as Panch performs the *Dāndā-ḳāttā* ceremony. A *māti* is called in to supervise the ceremonies. A mystic diagram is drawn with rice-flour, red earth from the hearth and charcoal-dust, in the shape of an egg fringed round with smaller figures each resembling the half of an egg. The sacrificer, swaying his body from right to left following the flame of a lighted lamp, recites the second part of the Orāon story of the genesis of *bhūts* and spirits,[16] and concludes by saying,—"To-day, the evil mouth of the twelve *Asūr* brothers and thirteen *Lōdhā* brothers have been pushed into the iron furnace with a pole twelve cubits [or] thirteen cubits in length, and their evil mouth turned into *Ūḍḍū Bāṛṇḍā, Nehā Bāṛṇḍā, Hānḳar Bāi, Pōs Bāi, Chiguṛgāṛi, Dāhā Gōensāli.* I have appeased them to-day. May there be no more fever and other sickness, no more evil dreams [or] fear of evil."

Sacrifices to Gōesāli Nād.

Gōensāli Nād is the tutelary spirit of the cattle of each Orāon family. On the same day on which the sacrifices to *Chigṛi nād* are offered inside the cattle-shed a fowl is fed on a handful of *āruā* rice placed on the floor by the head of the family and then pushed outside (*tūḳḳō ōthōrnā*). The fowl is then sacrificed to *Gōensāli Nād* or *Gōhār Dēōtā* or *Gōṇṛeā* by another man. While sacrificing the fowl, the man says, "*Hātrām ḳālā. Rōg pāpān hoārḳi ḳālā. Bemār semār āmḳē mānāchiā.*" "Now I have sacrificed to thee. Go away, carry-

16. S. C. Roy, *The Oraons of Chōtā-Nāgpur*, pp. 455, etc., etc.

ing with thee all sickness and sins. Do not afflict us with sickness and other calamities."

The *Sahorāi* festival in which the Orāons anoint the forehead and horns of their cattle with vermilion and oil and wash their hoofs and give them a day's rest and entertain them with a hearty feed, and light lamps in the cattle-shed at night, is really a festival of the Hinduised pastoral caste of Āhirs. The Orāons have easily borrowed and assimilated that festival as it is in consonance with their own *Gōensāli Nād pūjā.*

Sūrjāhi Pūjā.

In the month of Aghān (November-December) following the *Chigṛi Nād Pūjā,* a day is appointed for *Sūrjāhi Pūjā.* All adult members, male as well as female, of the family as well as the kinsmen of the family attending the *Pūjā,* remain fasting till the sacrifices are offered. The *Sūrjāhi* spirit is also known as *Dāṇṛ Rājā* or the King of Uplands, and the sacrifices are offered on a *ḍāṇṛ* or open upland. A white goat or white cock, *āruā* rice, vermilion and new earthen cooking pots besides pulses, spices, a knife, and a vegetable-cutter are carried to the selected *ḍāṇṛ* which has been cleaned and besmeared with cowdung and water beforehand. Generally the place selected for the *pūjā* is situate by the side of some stream or spring or tank. When all the men and women and the *Panches* or village elders and other guests have assembled there, the sacrificer feeds the goat on a handful of *āruā* rice placed on the ground and sacrifices it by severing its head with an axe. While doing so, he prays,—"O *Sūrjāhi* spirit! We are offering sacrifices to thee. From to-day don't give us trouble (*dhākkā, lit.* thrusts), keep us in

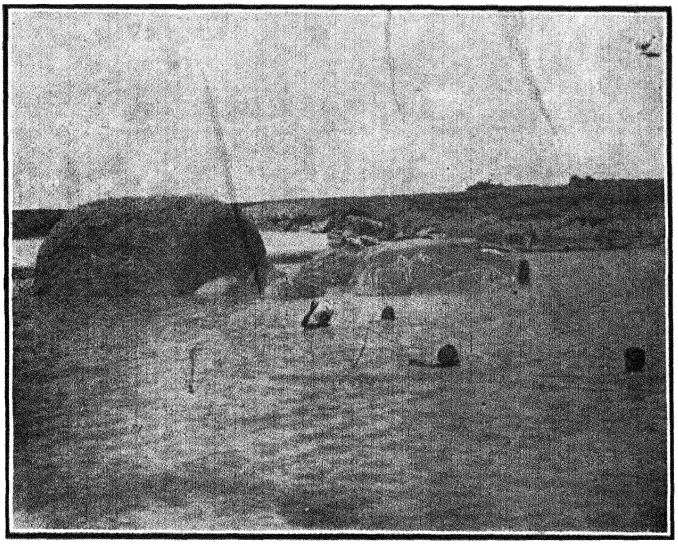

Illustration 9.

Orāon young men amusing themselves by swimming after the ceremonial fishing on the *Sārhūl* day in river Koel below village *Bhāḳsō*. The engraving on the boulder in the bed of the Koel represents the village emblem (also seen in the village flag) of *Bhāḳsō* (*thānā Lohardaga*).

[*See Page 198.*]

Illustration 10.

Emblem of village Karkari (thana Mandar),—a wooden horse on which a man rides when it is carried to a *Jātrā* on the shoulders of other men.

[*See Pages 82-83.*]

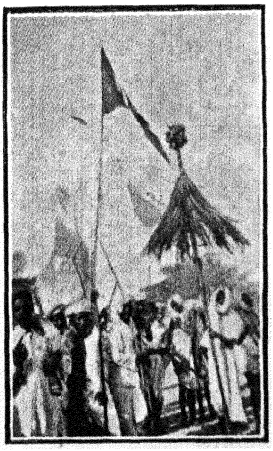

Illustration 11.

Village flag and village emblem (umbrella).

[*See Page 84.*]

health and in plenty." The *Sūrjāhi* or Sun-spirit would appear to be none other than *Dharmes* or the Supreme Spirit Himself. The name of the deity as also the nature of the sacrifice (namely a white goat or fowl) point to that conclusion.

It is only after all these sacrifices have been offered to the Household Spirits for the first time by a separated family, that the 'house' (*eṛpā*) is said to be completed (*ḳhojrās*).

VII. Fetishes and other minor Supernatural Powers.

The supernatural powers described in the preceding sections are, as we have seen, definite personal beings,—spirits and deities, with whom man can enter into communication,—a few of whom are not only endowed with personality and a conscious will like the rest but also with individuality, while others are what may be called 'group-spirits,' of which there are more than one of the same class. To all those deities and spirits, the Orāon villages, clans and families make periodical offerings and sacrifices, appeal for help or, at any rate, for abstention from mischief. In the present section, we come to a class of supernatural powers most of which are more or less impersonal in their nature and which, it is believed, may prove propitious or at least harmless, if approached or treated with appropriate observances and rites. To this class belong certain totem symbols, the village-flags and certain other village-emblems, certain musical instruments and weapons, some bizarre fantastic-shaped natural object or uncanny weird-looking bit of jungle or awe-inspiring hill or cascade, some particular tree or grove, a tank or a well or a cairn and so forth. In the case of some of these, the existence and action of an indwelling spirit appears to be dimly recog-

nized, and in others an immanent power or mysterious energy of the nature of *mana* is believed to inhere. If a distinction is to be made between the realms of religion and magic, this class of supernatural powers may be said to stand on the borderland between the two. An account of the more important among this class is given below.

(1) Totems and Totem-emblems.

Whether in its origin the institution of totemism had any relation to religion or not, certain practices still survive here and there among the Orāons to indicate that at a certain period in the history of the tribe, religion was intimately associated with Orāon totemism. So far as the actual animals, plants or other objects that form the totems of different Orāon clans are concerned, they no longer appear to be objects of any definite religious observances unless the taboos attached to the clan-totems may have owed their origin to an appreciation and awe of a certain *mana* or 'sacredness' inhering in them.

The totem-emblems of a few Orāon clans, however, still appear to receive divine honours and even sacrifices and offerings. Thus, in village Āmbōā (within the Police Circle of Lohārdagā) where the *Bhūinhārs* or descendants of the original Orāon founders of the village belong to the *ekkā* or tortoise clan, one wooden image of a pig with two wooden images of the tortoise (said to be the offspring of the pig) is kept in the village-priest's house and on the day preceding a *jātrā* or dancing tryst held periodically in the neighbourhood, the wooden images are ceremonially bathed in water, painted in appropriate colours and anointed with vermilion and offered a libation of rice-beer and the

sacrifice of a chicken. Similar rites are observed with respect to two wooden images of tigers at village Jāmgāin (in the Police Circle of Lohārdāgā) where the Orāon Bhūinhārs belong to the *Lāk̤ṛā* or tiger clan and the wooden images of a fish (together with similar images of crocodiles) in village Kānjiā (Police Circle, Māndār) of which the Orāon *Bhūinhārs* belong to the *Khālk̤hō* fish clan. And the images of their clan-totems are carried as fetishes to the *jātrā* ground on the shoulders of young men. On their way to the *jātrā*-ground, these totem-symbols receive offerings of bits of various articles of merchandise from people carrying such merchandise for sale to the market or *jātrā*-fair. And in whichever Orāon village on their way the party happen to make a temporary halt, the images are placed on the village dancing-ground *(ākhṛā)*, and the Orāons of the village offer a libation of rice-beer and in some cases a chicken, which is not however killed but is fastened to the wooden plank on which the images are carried. Such a chicken is released on the return of the party from the *jātrā*-ground, and may be taken away by anyone who likes. In some villages, before the party start for the *jātrā*-ground, a chicken is ceremonially fed on *āruā* rice and set apart with a vow to offer it in sacrifice to the wooden or brass emblem of the village when the party return home with success in any fight that may ensue at the *jātrā*.

It has to be noted that in the majority of cases, the wooden or metal images now-a-days carried to the *jātrās* do not represent the totems of the present *Bhūinhārs* or other Orāon residents of the village at all; in most cases they appear to be emblems arbitrarily adopted in comparatively recent

times according to whim or fancy or chance. In some of these cases, perhaps, they may represent the totems of the first Orāon settlers who have since been displaced by later immigrants, but of this I have found no positive evidence. In all cases, however, these and similar emblems connected with Orāon villages or *Pāṛhās* are believed to be connected with the 'luck' *(bān-gi)* of the village or *pārhā* concerned, and receive divine honours and offerings as described above. [17]

(2) Jātrā Flags.

The huge flags called *Bairāḵhs* which form the badges of different villages and the special pattern on each of which forms the distinctive emblem of a particular village which has the exclusive privilege of carrying and unfurling it at *jātrās* and similar gatherings, are as much concerned with the 'luck' *(bān-gi)* of the village as the wooden and brass emblems described in the last section. The flag-staffs are anointed with vermilion diluted in oil by the village *Pāhān* who also sacrifices a fowl and offers a libation of beer just before the young men of the village start for a *jātrā* meet. The young bachelors offer libations of milk to these flags. It is said that when, as sometimes happens, at one of the bigger *jātrā* meets or hunting meets, two or more villages or *Pāṛhās* fall out and fight, some one or more of these ceremonial flags or *bairāḵhs* are heard to crow like cocks to infuse courage into the hearts of the combatants of their respective villages. [18]

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17. For an account of totem-emblems, see *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpur*, pp. 338-342.

18. For a further account of village-flags and *Pāṛhā-flags*, see *ibid*, pp. 342-344.

(3) Jātrā Khūṇṭā.

In some villages where periodical *jātrās* or dancing-meets for the country around are held, a wooden post of from about five to seven feet in height may be seen planted by the side of the *jātrā*-ground. On the day on which a *jātrā* is held there, this post or *jātrā-ḳhūṇṭā*, as it is called, is anointed by the young men of the village with rice-flour diluted in water or with a kind of whitish clay, and in some villages, adorned with a garland or two of flowers. The *Pāhān* of the village sacrifices a fowl before this *jātrā-ḳhūṇṭā* in order that no quarrels and fights may occur, and the *jātrā* may pass off smoothly.

(4) Phallic and other Sex Emblems.

In some Orāon villages of the central plateau of the Rānchi district may be seen two or more pyramid-shaped mounds of earth on some open upland outside the inhabited portion *(basti)* of the village, and, in villages where a *jātrā* is held, by the side of the *jātrā*-ground. On *jātrā* days the young Orāon bachelors of the village anoint these *māndar-sālās*, as they are called, with a kind of whitish clay called *pōtni-māṭi* with which the young men also besmear their own bodies. An earthen-pot is placed upside down over the *māndar-sālās* and it is crowned with flowers with twigs attached. In some villages a chicken is also sacrificed. Before anointing the *māndar-sālās* with *pōtni-māṭi*, breaches made in the *māndar-sālās* by rain-water are repaired by the young bachelors with earth mixed with water, and, in some villages at least, with their own urine. Formerly it is said that this use of urine was universal among the Orāons. And this along with the shape of the *māndar-sālās* appears to indicate that the *māndar-*

sālās were in origin phallic emblems. The young bachelors after anointing the *māndar-sālās* and their own bodies with *pōtni-māṭi* bathe themselves and ceremonially walk three times in procession round the land on which the *māndar-sālās* stand. In some villages, the bachelors still sacrifice a fowl to the *Māndar-sālā.*

An emblem of the female organ of generation may still be seen in some of the Orāon *Dhūmkṝṛias* or bachelors' dormitories. This consists of a cleft in one of the main wooden posts supporting the roof of the *dhūmkṝṛia*-house. This cleft is meant to represent the vulva. In a few *dhūmkṝṛias* this post is also rudely carved into a rough semblance of a human female. No sacrifices or offerings are now made to it; but on *jātrā* days, the post is anointed with *pōtni-māṭi.* It is also interesting to note that in a few *dhūmkṝṛiā* houses (as in one of the two *dhūmkṝṛiās* in village Borhāmbey within the Police area of Rānchi), may be seen one or more planks of wood with human female breasts rudely carved in relief on them resting over the central beam supporting the roof. Although no religious or magical ceremonies are now connected with these emblems of generation or maternity, it may not be unreasonable to suppose that at one time they had some religious or magical significance bearing perhaps upon human fecundity and well-being.

Such, at any rate, is the acknowledged function of the *Mūtri Chāṇḍi* stone underneath which the *dhūmkṝṛiā* bachelors ceremonially micturate as part of the propitiatory rites of the *Chāṇḍi* spirit with the object of ensuring the increase of male members of the tribe.

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19. See *The Oraons of Chota-Nagpur*, pp. 239-242.

(5) Bull-Roarers.

Another sacred emblem connected with the Orāon bachelor fraternities is the Bull-roarer. The Orāon bull-roarer is a thin slat of either wood or bamboo from six to nine inches in length and from one and a half to three inches in breadth, and perforated at one end for the insertion of a string. When swung round, it produces a low humming sound which soon rises to a muffled windy roaring noise. In some Orāon *dhūmkūṛiās*, valves of the seed-pod of the *semar* (*Bombax malabaricum*) tree, perforated at one end, are used instead of slats of wood or bamboo. The Orāon no longer remembers the former religious or magical uses of these thin slats of wood or bamboo, rows upon rows of which may be seen suspended on strings from the beams of some of the *dhūmkūṛiās*.

Certain vestiges of the former magical use of the instrument would, however, still appear to linger in the practice of taking out, on occasions of dancing festivals, these bull-roarers and hanging them on long strings over the *ākhṛā* or dancing-ground. Although the Orāon cannot assign for this practice any other reason than its decorative effect (*sōbhā*) and the rattling sound that the bull-roarers produce when shaken by the wind, there are good reasons to believe that the object of this exhibition of bull-roarers is to scare away spirits, as is avowedly the case among the natives of the Banks Islands and of parts of North America. It is not an unusual phenomenon at these Orāon dances for one or more of the young female dancers to show signs of spirit-possession. The Orāons believe that certain disembodied souls are eager to take part in these dances and merriments

of which they were fond during their human existence; and this they can now do only by entering the bodies of one of the dancers. But as such spirit-possession is likely to be harmful to the person possessed, it becomes necessary to keep off such spirits from the dancing-ground. The sight of these bull-roarers and the sound made by them when shaken by the breeze were probably supposed by the Orāons as by the Banks Islanders to have the effect of scaring away spirits. The cracking of a whip by the Orāon spirit-doctor, the brandishing of sticks at the *Rōg-Khednā* or disease-driving ceremony of the Orāons, and the brandishing of swords at an Orāon wedding, are all similarly meant to scare away evil spirits. No sacrifices are offered by the Orāons to these bull-roarers, but they are carefully treasured up in the *dhūmkūṛiā* as part of its ancient parapharnelia. 20

(6) Weapons and Musical Instruments, etc.

A tool or weapon or musical instrument is believed to have a 'soul' which leaves it when the thing gets broken and returns to it after it is repaired, and finally leaves it when the object is altogether broken and thrown aside. A sword which has been used in killing a human being becomes an object of religious awe to the Orāons. They believe that a spirit "rides" such a sword, and, if the sword be taken out of the house, it will not rest till it has drunk blood again It is reverentially hung up on a wall inside the owner's dwelling-hut, and at every religious festival a few drops of beer are offered to the sword. On the occasion of any

20. *Vide* article on '*The Bull-roarer in India*,' in *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. XIII, pt. I, pp. 54-61.

religious or socio-religious ceremony in the house, a few drops of home-brew are offered to the sword.

Again, when an Orāon purchases a new sword or shield or a new musical instrument, such as a *nāgerā* or *rūnj* drum or a *narsinghā* pipe or bugle, he ceremonially anoints it with vermilion. This is known as the "marriage" *(benjā)* of the shield or the drum or the bugle. These weapons and instruments are obviously recognised by the Orāons as mysterious living 'powers' with whom they must enter into relations so as to make their '*mana*' propitious to themselves or, at least, innocuous. The first use of such an object is supposed to be full of risks and has to be made with caution and appropriate ceremonies. Even a new cloth is by some Orāons besmeared with turmeric-juice before it is worn; and this too is known as "marrying" the cloth *(Kichrin benjā)*.

A sword or spear possessing a 'weak soul' is said to turn soft and to bend when it is struck against any object and fail to make any impression on it, whereas a sword or a spear which has a 'strong soul' is said to shriek though with a suppressed voice when a tiger or other enemy is approaching its owner who is thus forewarned even before the enemy comes within sight. And, at night, if a thief attempts to enter the house, such a sword or spear, it is believed, sometimes makes a similar muffled sound to arouse the sleeping owner. Even an old bamboo-stick which has been in long use manifests its 'soul' by exuding sweat to indicate that it will rain in a day or two. Such a stick, it is said, knows its owner and will not strike its owner even if directed against him. After such a manifestation of its 'soul,' it too comes to be regarded with awe and is reveren-

tially marked with vermilion marks. To this day in many villages, before starting on their periodical hunting excursions, the Orāon hunters place on a spot cleaned with cowdung and water, their bows and arrows, swords, spears and other weapons, and burn incense (*dhuan*) before them and offer molasses (*gūṛ*) and clarified butter (*ghee*); and some Orāon *shikāris* set apart a fowl which they offer to the *Chāṇḍi* spirit on their return home with success. Musical instruments, though ceremonially 'married' when first purchased, are again ceremonially anointed with three vermilion marks by a woman of the house where it is taken for use during a wedding; and a few grains of *āruā* rice are also sprinkled over the instruments. If this ceremony is omitted the musical instruments will not, it is believed, sound properly.

(7) Wells and Tanks, Garden and Trees and Plants.

Again, when an Orāon has excavated a new tank or well, or planted a new fruit-tree or fruit-garden he similarly celebrates what is known as the "marriage" ceremony of the tank or well or spring, tree or garden before using the same. [21] It is believed that if the water of the tank or well or the fruit of the tree or garden is used before the "marriage" ceremony is performed, maggots will breed in the fruit of the tree or in the water of the well or tank, as the case may be.

Similar ceremonies are also observed in the case of paddy-seedlings when an Orāon cultivator makes the first annual transplantation of his rice fields. [22] Such "marriage" cere-

21. See *The Orāons of Chōtā-Nāgpur*, pp. 439-442.
22. *Vide* article on '*The Corn-spirit and the Tree-spirit in Chōtā-Nāgpur*' in *The Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. I, pp. 47-52.

monies are meant to make the produce of the fruit-trees and rice-plants innocuous and fit for man's use. Not only are wells and springs ceremonially "married" before they begin to be used at all, but an Orāon woman, after her confiinement and ceremonial purification following child-birth, must, when she first goes to draw water from the well or spring, mark the stone slab or wooden plank or masonry-work at its mouth with three marks of vermilion as at the inaugural "marriage" of the well or spring. A well, tank, or spring, like a fruit-tree, musical instrument or a sword is the receptacle of a mysterious power, and, as such, 'sacred,' and must be approached with proper caution and reverential fear. It is owing to this idea of their 'sacredness,' that wells, springs and tanks, like the hearth and the sacred grove are taboo to women during periods of ceremonial pollution.

The 'mariage' of a tank or well is celebrated by the Orāon with the following ceremonies. The owner of the tank or well and his wife, with friends and relatives, go in a 'marriage procession' to the side of the well or tank. There the couple are seated side by side, the wife to the left of her husband, both facing east as in an actual marriage. The *Panch* or village-elders take some rice-flour and dilute it in a little water drawn from the well or tank in question. This is called *āripan.* A little vermilion is also mixed with oil. A representative of the *Panch* covers up the couple with a new cloth and ceremonially marks each of them on the forehead with three vermilion marks. Then the master of the well or tank puts three vermilion marks on the stone-slab or wooden post or masonry-work by the side of the well or tank, and his wife puts vermilion marks on a leaf-plate on which *āruā*

rice and moistened rice-flour have been placed. She then sprinkles the *āripan* all around. Finally, the master of the well or tank draws a pail of water from it with his own hands, and the couple drink a little of this water.

A feast to fellow-villagers and relatives terminates the proceedings. So long as the tank or well is not thus 'married,' the owner may neither use its water nor catch or eat fish from it.

The marriage of a fruit garden or fruit tree is celebrated after their first blossoms come out. The rites observed are the same as in the case of a tank or well, with the following variations. In the case of a garden or grove, one of the trees is marked with vermilion and an unbleached cotton-thread is wound round its trunk in three plies, and the *āripan* is sprinkled on all the trees. Among trees, only the *karanj* (*pongamia glabra*), mango and jack-fruit trees are 'married' in this way. Until the trees have been thus 'married,' the owner of the trees must neither pluck nor use their fruit or flowers.

The use of the term 'marriage' in connection with the rites described in this section would appear to indicate that the original object of the essential human marriage ceremonies as well, so far at least as the Orāons are concerned, was to make the union of the two human strangers exempt from all unknown supernatural risks and dangers. The marriage of trees and gardens, wells and tanks is not, however, peculiar to the Orāons; it is in vogue amongst several order animistic tribes and Hindu castes in Chōṭā-Nāgpur and other parts of India.

Other trees that are regarded by the Orāons as sacred are the *Karam* (*Nauclea parvifolia*) and the *Jitiā Pipar* (*Ficus religiosa*). Branches or young shoots of these trees are set up to represent the divinities worshipped at the *Karam* and the *Jitiā* festivals respectively, both of which festivals appear to have been borrowed by the Orāons from their Hindu neighbours. These will be described in the next chapter. Wood of these trees as also of trees of a sacred (*Sarnā*) grove may not be burnt or otherwise desecrated by an Orāon. In some villages only such families as have adopted the *Jitiā* festival abstain from burning the wood of the *Jitiā Pipar* tree. Some Orāons, again, will not sit or tread upon a *tūnd* tree nor make a door-frame or lintel of *tūnd*-wood. This custom, too, is evidently borrowed from their Hindu neighbours who observe the taboo as *Tūnd* (*Cedrela-toona*) wood is used as planks for the *rath* or car of the god *Jagarnāth*. The wood of the *Bael* (*Aëgle marmalos*), Pipar (Orāon *Chiḳhū*) and *Gulaichi* (*Plumeria acutifolia*) plants may not be cut down by an Orāon. An *erenḍi* or castor-oil plant may be cut down only for use in the *Phāgua* festival; a *Karam* tree and *Bhelwā* (*semicarpis anacardium*) tree may be cut down only for use at the *Karam* and *Kadlōṭa* festivals. An Orāon may not burn a *Karam* tree nor make or build a door-frame of it, nor use its wood as fuel. The other trees named above may be burnt only when they dry up. But these taboos are now-a-days often neglected through economic stress.

Some individual trees acquire 'sacredness' by reason of being tenanted by a spirit, and others by reason of being the receptacle or source of some mysterious beneficent power as in the following instance. In some Orāon villages may

be seen an old *mahuā* (*bassia latifolia*) or mango or some other tree of which the trunk has become hollow *(phūnphi)* through age. Rain-water accumulating in this holed tree is believed to be efficacious in curing fever and certain other ailments. The patient takes some unbleached thread fresh from the spinning-wheel or, at any rate, which has never before come in contact with water, winds it in three plies round the hollow trunk of the tree and, with his finger, places three marks of vermilion on the trunk, as in marriage. The patient is then bathed in water taken out of the hollow of the trunk in a new earthenware vessel.

Sometimes an Orāon may be seen carrying to the *jātrā* ground a curiously gnarled bamboo stump of a fantastic shape, profusely anointed with vermilion. Owing to its fantastic shape, this is believed to possess a strong 'soul' and, as such, is regarded as sacred and sometimes treated as a fetish to bring luck.

(8) Cairns and Stones.

In several places in the Orāon country may be seen, either on the outskirts of a village or in a turning in a hill-pass, heaps of pebbles known as *Pāthal pūnji* or *Kūdhā pāṛhnā* to which every passer-by adds a pebble or a small twig or at least a dry leaf. In the case of many of these, tradition speaks of the spot as having been connected with some remarkable achievement or with the death of some ancient hero (*bīr*) of superhuman physical strength or extraordinary power, and a few of the cairns are said to mark the places where persons were bitten to death by tigers. To these cairns a pebble or a twig or a dry leaf is added by every passer-by either with the hands, or, if the person is carrying

a load, with his feet. The object of throwing pebbles on these cairns [23] is said to be to press down the spirit, so that it may not 'rise' or come out and harm the passer-by. Some way-farers, however, expect success in their errand or, at any rate, freedom from obstacles by offering the stone or twig or leaf at the spot. Some say that the *bīrs* or heroes of old acquired their superhuman strength and remarkable longevity through some mytthical water traditionally known as *bir-amm* [24].

These cairns stand midway between, on the one hand, the *Pūlkhi stones* which are dedicated to the ancestor-spirits and receive periodical offerings of food and other marks of reverence, and on the other, certain queer-shaped stones which are imagined to represent human heroes of old with their parapharnelia, who while engaged in some adventure or rash deed or going in procession, became suddenly petrified with all their parapharnelia through some supernatural agency. Their distant resemblance to human beings and their weapons and musical instruments, conveyances, etc., gave rise to the myths connected with these stone boulders. When they are mere natural boulders bearing a fortuitous, distant and often imaginary resemblance to human beings or their weapons etc., divine honours are seldom paid to them, but in a few cases, these stone objects are really the

23. Such are the Cairns e.g., on the boundary between villages Gārā and Kāmderā in thana Basiā, between villages Prayāgō and Tāngarbaisli, and between villages Deōgain and Panḍrā, and between villages Nehālu and Kapūria in thana Beṛō, between villages Kaliānpur and Sharka in thana Sisāi, and between villages Dārkānā and Tigāol in thana Chainpur.

24. Even now when a man shows a pugilistic attitude, he is tauntingly asked, "Have you drunk *bir-amm*" (hero-water)?

remains of some ancient Hindu temples and images of Hindu gods; and owing to their human shape are regarded as divine and are anointed with oil and vermilion even by the Orāons.

VIII. Tramp Spirits (Bhūlās) and other Disease Spirits.

We now come to a class of mischievous spirits and evil powers which are objects not of religious ritual but of magical rites and exorcism. These consist of spirits of persons dying unnatural deaths, certain water-spirits and other stray disease-spirits.

(1) Spirits of the unhallowed dead.

Souls of persons dying unnatural deaths are, it is said, ever hankering after a mate and for the joys of life. These are principally the *Chūril* or *Ulaṭgōṇṛi*, the *Mūā* and the *Bāghout* spirits.

Chūril spirits.—A *Chūril* or *Chūrel* or *Mālech* is the ghost of a woman dying in pregnancy or child-birth or within a few days of it. A *Chūril* spirit, it is said, carries a load of coal on its head, imagining it to be its baby. It is believed that if a *Chūril* spirit sees any man passing by its grave, it pursues him and takes delight in tickling him under the arms and, if possible, throwing him down senseless and embracing him. If, however, the man perceives the approach of a *Chūril* by its spectral figure which is sometimes visible or by the rustling and shaking of the branches of some neighbouring tree, and calls out the *Chūril* by the name it formerly bore in life, and asks—"So-and-so (names), is it you?", the spirit forthwith decamps. Or, when the *Chūril* attacks him, if the man can take away her load of charcoal, the spirit is

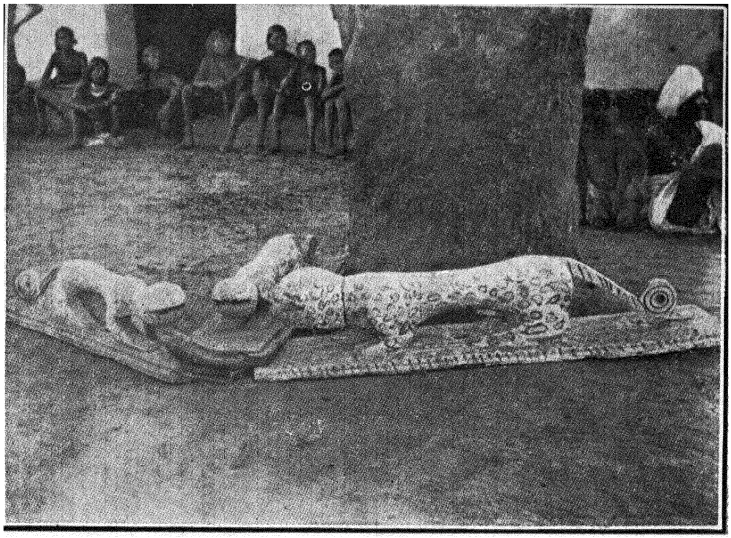

Illustration 12.
Wooden tiger emblems of village Prayago placed in front of the Dhumkuṛia. The inmates of the Dhumkuṛia are seated before the door.

[*See Pages 82-83.*]

Illustration 13.
Wooden plough-bullocks carried as village emblems to a *Jātrā*.

[*See Pages 82-83.*]

said to lose its power and to burst into tears. Drunken way-farers are naturally easy victims of this spirit. It is with the object of preventing such spirits from moving about, that the feet of women dying in child-bed are broken and turned backwards and thorns inserted on the soles of their feet. When a *Chūril* is visible, its feet appear, it is said, to be inverted with the heels forward. A person, particularly a drunken man, supposed to have been chased and tormented by a *Chūril*, is sometimes so seriously affected that it requires the services of a spirit-doctor (*māti* or *deōṇṛā*) to cure him by exorcising the spirit. When the trouble caused by a *Chūril* is not more serious than a griping of the stomach or such other ailment, a few mustard-seeds, two grains and a half of some pulse, a little iron-slag and a bit of charcoal are thrown outside the house in the direction of the spot where the *Chūril* was met with.

Mūā.—A *Mūā* is the spirit of a person dying of hunger or starvation (*mūrkūri*) or of strangulution or hanging (*tāngāl mūā*) or other violence (*pāsal mūā*). The *Mūā* does no harm to any body, and so requires neither propitiation nor exorcism. It is said that when there is continuous rain for seven days and nights, the *Mūā* spirits utter plaintive cries of "*Hāerē bābā ! Haire āiyō!*" "O my father! Oh my mother!" Should anybody exclaim, "What is it crying for?," the cries, it is said, are heard as issuing from near his own feet, although he cannot see the spirit. The *Mūā* and *Chūril* spirits receive no sacrifices.

Bāghout spirits.—These are spirits of persons bitten to death by tigers. These spirits are said to take the form of

tigers and prowl about at night near their old homes which they seek to enter.

To drive away the Bāghout, a spirit-doctor is called in. A man not belonging to the family is made to personate a tiger. His body is painted in colours like those of a tiger, coloured earth being used for the purpose. A tail is also provided. Thus arrayed, the man stands in the manner of a tiger on his hands and legs, to which four ropes are tied. Four men hold him by the ropes, and he is led on, all the while fretting and fuming and gnarling and gnashing his teeth and otherwise imitating the fury of a tiger. The spirit-doctor follows it, muttering his incantations and making a show of chasing it away. As this sham tiger is thus chased up to the borders of the village, the *Bāghout* spirit is also believed to be driven away from the village. A fowl or some other sacrifice, as dictated by the *māti*, is offered as a bribe to the *Bāghout* spirit by the *māti*. Then the sham tiger is bathed and brought back home. At the house, a feast is provided to relatives and fellow-villagers.

Pāṭi.—In this connection an old Orāon custom of killing a tiger that has been frequenting a village may be noted. When a tiger repeatedly visits a village, a *māti* or spirit-doctor is called in; and the magical method which he employs to lure the tiger on to death is known as 'Pāṭi.' This is as follows.

The corpse of a man or the carcase of some cattle killed by the tiger, or, at any rate, some limb of such a corpse or carcase, is procured and placed on the ground at some suitable spot. The *māti* now makes what is called '*pāṭi*' by reciting his incantations over this corpse or carcase

or portion of it. These incantations are believed to magnetise the animal to such an extent that the tiger cannot fail to be attracted to it and seek to eat the flesh which it would not have done under any other circumstances. The *māti* goes away, leaving a trained marksman with loaded gun in hiding within shooting distance from the spot. As soon as the tiger comes to the spot and seeks to eat the flesh, the man thus lying in wait for the beast takes his aim and kills it.

Water-spirits.—These are known as the *Sāt Bahīni* spirits or the Seven Sisters. Some say they are daughters of *Bārṇḍa.* They are believed to reside in watery places particularly in *ghāgs* or water-falls. They attack or rather "possess" children who may happen to approach their abodes or bathe in them. A child so possessed falls down in a fainting fit. To effect a cure, the services of a spirit-doctor is sought. The process and rites by which the spirit-doctor expels the *Sātbahīni* spirits are as follow. He is provided with some *rāṭā* or a kind of grass with long stems, a split bamboo, a few leaf-cups (*ḳhetā*), a lighted earthen lamp, seven pieces of turmeric, some incense, some rice-flour, pounded charcoal and reddish earth from the hearth. With the *rāṭā* he makes seven arrows, of the split-bamboo he makes a bow, and mixes together the rice-flour, charcoal-powder, and hearth-earth, moistens them with water and, with the paste thus formed, draws on the courtyard a diagram consisting of seven squares to represent the Seven Sisters. On each of these squares he places a leaf-cup and copper coin. He then shoots an arrow with his bow at each of the seven leaf-cups by turns, and while doing so recites certain incantations. Then he places one piece of turmeric on each of the seven

leaf-cups. He then takes up the lighted earthen lamp and waves it round and round before the face of the patient, and from time to time throws a little incense over the flame of the light with incantations and gestures meant to drive away the spirit. When, finally, from the examination of the flame, the spirit-doctor concludes that the spirit has left the patient, he takes up all the articles used in the ceremony and goes away with them to the junction of two roads or pathways (and where there is none within easy distance, to an open and frequented part of the road) and there leaves all the articles except the coins which he takes as his own perquiste over and above his usual fees. The patient, it is believed, gets well if there has been no hitch in the rites. It is further believed than any one happening to cross (*ningchāna*) the ceremonial articles thus left (*nikṣāri*) on the road will get similarly "possessed."

Other Disease-Spirits.—The Orāon regards the earth as full of invisible spirits. There is a common saying among the Orāons,—"*Khekhelnū nād nindkiri mann-nū ātkhā nindkiri*," "the earth is full of spirits [as] the tree is full of leaves." With the more important spirits that may bring disease and death, the Orāon, as we have seen, seeks to enter into permanent friendly relations, if possible; the others he deals with when occasion arises and as circumstances require. When one of the more important spirits who has been provided by the Orāons with a habitation and a name, is offended and brings some disease or other calamity, its votaries will make up with it by offering the required sacrifices in the prescribed manner. But there are hosts of other nameless stray malignant spirits, one or other of whom sometimes afflicts a village

or a family with disease and death. These are sought to be expelled from the village by magical methods which will be described in a later chapter.

IX. Pūgri Bhūts or Familiar Spirits of Individuals.

The class of spirits known as *Pūgṛi Bhūts* and *Dāin Kūṛi Bhūts* are secretly adopted as familiars by some Orāons for selfish and anti-social purposes. We have seen that sometimes *Khūṇṭ bhūts* are established by reason of a vow taken by a member of a *ḳhūṇṭ* or sept. When, however, the man or woman who takes the vow does so secretly for some selfish desire which is not revealed, the spirit in whose name the secret vow is taken becomes the *pūgṛi* or familiar spirit of the individual. Such secret vows are made generally to some *bhūt* or *bhūts* believed to reside at some particular spot (as, for example, on a *pipar* tree or by the side of some ancient tank); and on the fulfilment of his or her wishes the votary secretly makes periodical sacrifices as promised. When a wizard or a witch adopts a familiar spirit for effecting anti-social purposes, their *pūgṛi bhūts* are called *Biṣāhi nād* or *Dāin ḳūṛi bhūt.*

When the *Pūgṛi bhūt* does not receive the promised sacrifices at the appointed time, and the spirit craves for food, it is said to leap and jump about in search of food and thereby cause disease and death in the family and also among men and cattle in the neighbourhood. The *Dāin ḳūṛi bhūts* or familiar spirits of witches and sorcerers are put up to do mischief to others. The relatives of people thus troubled resort to one or more *mātis* to find out the cause of their troubles. And when the *māti* or *mātis* have revealed the name of the person whose *pūgṛi bhūt* has been doing all this mis-

chief, the person thus named is compelled by the village *panch* to offer the adequate sacrifices to his or her *pūgṛi bhūt* and give it an *āsthān* or fixed seat either by planting a wooden peg in some field belonging to the family, if the person is a Bhūinhār or, in the case of a non-Bhūinhār or a landless person, in a *nād-pāḳi* or a vessel filled with earth into which a wooden peg is inserted and which is generally put in a small bamboo-basket and kept in the house. It is thus converted into a family spirit. If the person has more than one *pūgṛi bhūt*, the peg is marked with as many incisions as the number of *pūgṛis*; and the spirits are collectively known as *Chār ḳhaṇḍī, pānch ḳhaṇḍī chhay ḳhaṇḍī, sāt ḳhaṇḍī bhūt*, as the case may be, according to the number of *pūgṛis* the person may have.

Ordinarily Bhūinhārs do not go in for such *pūgṛi bhūts* or familiars. When a Bhūinhār has such a familiar spirit, and it is found out, he is made to sacrifice to it and establish it on some land of his own. But still it remains a *pūgṛi bhūt*, or rather a '*pūgṛi bhūt* revealed,' and does not become a *ḳhūṇṭ bhūt*. It is curious that the periodical sacrifices to such a *bhūt* will not be offered by another member of the same *ḳhūṇṭ* for fear of the *bhūt* taking to him, although the periodical sacrifices to such a revealed *pūgṛi bhūt* may be offered through a member of another *ḳhūṇṭ*.

X. The Evil Eye (Najar) and other Mysterious Occult Energies.

To the Orāon the earth is not only full of spirits of all sorts and various degrees of power, but everything animate or inanimate and certain intagible things such as a name or a number is instinct with a soul or spiritual energy. Some

of these energies or forces are intensely active, others less so, and still others are dormant or almost so. It is only the more active energies that man has to reckon wtith. Some of these energies or occult influences are beneficent and others are maleficent.

The most dreaded of these maleficent occult influences is the evil eye. Some persons are born with an evil potency in their eyes, and whenever their 'evil eye' falls on other people or their food, drink, cattle and crops, harm is sure to ensue to them. People with an 'evil eye' are particularly averse to the sight of the happiness or hilarity or plenty of others and whenever the 'evil eye' of such a person falls on a healthy child, a well-dressed young beau or belle, plump and well-fed cattle or luxuriant crops, harm is sure to overtake them. The mischievous influence of the 'evil eye' is further strengthened by the 'evil mouth' that is to say, by the witch or other person with the 'evil eye' exclaiming or muttering to himself or herself 'how fine it looks!' When the 'evil eye' falls upon a young person merrily dancing at the village *ākhrā*, the victim may at once fall down in a fainting fit, or some more serious consequence may follow. A drop of blood may mysteriously appear on the clothes, and serious illness follows before long. When the 'evil eye' falls on some flour or bread or other article of food, it gets 'poisoned,'—the bread or other food will be imperfectly baked or emit a foul smell or cause diarrhoea or other sickness to those who partake of it. The aid of a witch-doctor is sought to neutralise the ill-effects of the 'evil eye.'

To avert the 'evil eye' from his crops, the Orāon cultivator plants in the middle of his standing upland crops a

wooden pole, over which is placed an earthen vessel with its up-turned bottom painted in black and white colours. To avert the 'evil eye' from his lowland rice-crops, the Orāon cultivator plants twigs of either the *bhelwā* (*semicarpis anacardium*) or the *piāl* (*Buchania latifolia*) trees on each of his fields on the morning following the *Kadleṭa* festival. To add further potency to the twigs which in themselves are beneficent powers, a little handful of the rice-offering made at the *Kadleṭa* festival is enclosed in a leaf and fastened to the twigs.

To avert the 'evil eye' from their own persons, young people put on rings and armlets made of iron previously exposed to the influence of an eclipse of the Sun.

To avert the 'evil eye' from children, an Orāon mother marks the brow of her baby with soot. *Cowrie* shells or other amulets are also worn on the neck or waist of a child to divert the 'evil eye'.

In certain circumstances persons may have a temporary 'evil eye,' so to say, in relation to some other person. Thus, when two Orāon women of the same village are brought to child-bed in the same half of the moon, they are not allowed to see each other for the first twenty days after delivery. On the twenty-first day, the two women are led blind-folded from opposite directions to a spot fixed beforehand, and then the coverings over the eyes of the two women are taken off simultaneously. It is believed that if the cloth over the eyes of one of the women is taken off before that over the eyes of the other, the glance of the former will forthwith attract to her own breasts all the milk in the breasts of the other woman, so that the child of the latter will pine to death

for want of mother's milk. If ever the eyes of either of the women are by chance uncovered in this way before those of the other, the two families, it is said, fall out at once. The help of sorcerers and witches is secured by each family to harm the other; and thenceforth no love is lost between the two families.[25]

Reptiles.

It is not only human beings that possess the 'evil eye' but some animals and reptiles, too, are credited with an occult power analogous to the 'evil eye.' This magic power is sometimes described as '*garha*' (fatility). The Doṛhā snake is particularly credited with this evil influence. It is believed that a man meeting a Dōṛhā snake is sure to be afflicted with some serious illness or even death, within a month or two, unless the ill-effects of the sight of the snake are magically neutralised. This can be done by frying with his own hands some rice or *ūrid* pulse or paddy grains. It is believed that the '*garha*' or evil influence will then burst even as the grains burst in the frying-pan. The fried grains etc. may not be eaten by adult persons but only by children, among whom it is distributed. In the rainy month of *Aṣārh* (July-August) this magic rite must be performed as soon as a Doṛhā snake is seen.

Names.

Certain names of men, animals, and reptiles and of places, are regarded to possess some evil influence either for all persons or for persons of certain classes or localities, and

25. *Vide* article on '*Magic and Witchcraft on the Chota-Nagpur Plateau*' in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London,* Vol. XLIV, 1914, p. 341.

either at all times or at certain times. The proper class-names of certain reptiles and animals must always be avoided at night to ward off the evil magic of those names. During the night, an Orāon will not call a snake a snake, *i.e.*, by its class name of '*nerr*' but must refer to it as an '*ep*' or cord nor will he call a tiger a tiger (*lāṛkṛā*) but must refer to it as the '*dighā ṛhōlā*' or the 'long-tailed one,' nor a bear a bear *(bhālu)* but must speak of it as *ṛhāni chuṭṭi* or 'the wooly-haired one.' Women always call a bear as the '*Khāni chuṭṭi.*' In the case of beasts and reptiles, however, this taboo is sometimes explained by saying that with the mention of their names they will themselves appear and harm the person calling them. But in the case of names of certain persons and places the taboo is attributed by all Orāons to the evil influence attaching to the name. Ordinarily it is a person having some physical deformity or abnormality whose name or sight is avoided, at any rate in the morning, for it is believed that the sight of his face or the mention of his name will make the whole day unlucky for the person who sees the face or utters the name, as the case may be. Sometimes I have found the Orāons of a village thus avoiding the names of persons who are as good and honest people as any of their neighbours. Again, the men of some Orāon villages do not take the names of certain other villages from midnight to sunrise, for fear of some misfortune which, it is believed, is sure to befall the man uttering the ominous name. Thus, the names of villages Pāli, Nāgṛi, Chaṭṭi, Tūkō and Gargāon are not mentioned at night by the Orāons of village Sākrā and some other neighbouring villages of *thānās* Beṛo, and Lohārdāgā. If the villages have to be referred to at all, this

is done by using some descriptive terms. Thus, village Tūkō is referred to as the 'Piṭh paddā' (the village where the market is held), and Chaṭṭi as "bhāṭṭi paddā" (the village where there is the grog-shop).

Touch-taboos (Sōtrā or Chhūtkā).

Some of the taboos against touching or coming in contact with certain things or persons, or taking food or drink touched by strangers and persons of certain other castes and tribes (particularly Lōhrās or blacksmiths) or by persons under ceremonial pollution, would seem to have arisen from the fear, in some cases, of unknown or powerful evil spirits believed to be connected with such persons, and, in other cases, of evil 'mana' believed to be associated with them. Sexual union with a non-Orāon is also considered to cause defilement of the nature of *Sōtrā* which may have a similar origin.

In this connection reference may be made to the Orāon's idea of pollution and danger from contact with the leavings of other people's food or drink. The evil or potentially evil power with which all strangers and aliens are credited is believed to pass on to the remnant of food or drink taken by them and even to the leaf-plates or leaf-cups or the unwashed metal cups or plates from which food or drink has been taken. And if an Orāon happens to walk across such plates or cups, he runs the risk of contracting pain in his throat by this *langhan* (crossing), as it is called. And when an Orāon gets such pains, the first inquiry made of him is whether he might have crossed such leavings. Similarly when an Orāon gets pain and swelling in his legs, it is suspected that he has either unwarily crossed some *bhūla* or tramp spirit on his way or

stepped over or across some mustard or other things impregnated with the force of some powerful spell pronounced over it by a sorcerer, or has stepped across some person suffering from similar pain. When, however, an Orāon gets some disease or other ailment through stepping across *nikṣāri* articles and sweepings of a house where there has been some disease, and the disease-spirit has been cajoled or constrained by *spells* to enter the sweepings etc., and packed off to some distance in a potsherd or leaf-cup and left on the crossing of path-ways or roads, it is the disease-spirit itself which is believed to enter the person who has thus unwarily stepped across the sweepings or other *nikṣāri* articles.

Spells.

If the 'evil eye' and the 'evil touch' are powerful occult influences, not less powerful is the 'evil sound' of words, the evil-working *mantrā* or magic spell. Unlike the 'evil eye' and the 'evil touch,' the evil-working sound or *mantrā* may be aimed at the intended victim from any distance in space. This is called the 'bān' or arrow-shot of the magician or sorcerer. It is so effective that, it is said, that some powerful sorcerers or witches may by some appropriate *mantras* even extract the liver of an intended victim without the latter perceiving it. The liver thus extracted is carefully preserved and guarded by the sorcerer for the twenty-four hours following the extraction. If within this period the victim calls in the aid of another magician who through counter-spells may succeed in preventing ants from touching the extracted liver, the liver will at the end of the twenty-four hours be restored to its owner and he will get well

again. If however, ants succeed in nibbling at the liver within the period, the patient will pine away and finally at the end of the twenty-four hours the sorcerrer will eat up the remnant of the liver whereupon the patient will die. The Orāon sorcerer sometimes carries with him a rag-bundle containing what are known as *nāsans* (destructive or hamful agencies). These *nāsan*-bundles contain human hair and nail-pairings, claws and fragments of bones and legs of chickens and other birds and animals, as also small quantities of rice, *ūrld* (*phaseolus Roxburghii*) grains, mustard seeds, and certain other grains. A witch or sorcerer desiring to harm a person, manages to mix with such person's food a fragment of a leg or bone, or a hair rolled up, or some nail-pairings from his *nasān* bundle, over which he pronounces appropriate spells. This bit of nail, or bone, or leg or hair is believed to grow by degrees inside the victim's stomach, and finally kills him, unless some other magician is called in time to counteract the power of the *nāsan*. This magician stands in front of the patient so that the sorcerer's mouth and navel respectively touch those of the patient; and in this posture he goes on reciting his spells or *mantrams* until the bone, leg, or nail-pairing or other nāsan comes out of the mouth of the patient into his own mouth. In some cases the victim is made to lie down with his head to the north, and the magician sucks the *nāsan* out of the man's navel. The *nāsan* is then thrown into a fire. When a witch or sorcerer drives on the wall of an enemy's house a *singi* or small hollow iron-tube in which a spirit has been confined or manages to cast on the body or clothes of an enemy or intended victim a *tikli* or thin and tiny circlet of

metal in which an evil spirit has been installed, and thereby bring disease or other calamity to the victim, the sorcerer is dealing with spirits and not with the class of impersonal forces or energies with which we are dealing in this section.

Good and evil 'mana' of Plants, and certain other objects.

Although in the Orāon language I have come across no term equivalent to the *mana*[26] of the Polynesians or the *orenda* of the Iroquian tribes, the idea of a mysterious impersonal force connected by such terms is recognised by the tribe. It is this mysterious energy or 'mana' inhering in them which is believed by the Orāon to give the twig or leaf of the *bheloā* (*semicarpis anarcadium*) its power of averting the evil eye, the leaves of a mango tree and the twig of the *piāl* (*Buchania latifolia*) a fertilizing influence, the perforated *rātijārā* stone-beads believed to have sprung up by themselves from under the ground in prehistoric burial places their power of curing a certain kind of fever, the prehistoric stone-celts believed to be 'thunder-stones' occasionally picked up in the fields, their power of curing certain diseases, and the vegetable love-charm or hate-charm sometimes used by the Orāon youth its magic potency. The *rāti-jārā* stone-beads already referred to besides similar other stone-beads of quartz or carnelian or other stones picked up in prehistoric sites in

26. The nearest Orāon term somewhat approaching the idea of 'mana' as applied to living beings would appear to be '*ekh*' or shadow, which is conceived of as having a mysterious virtue that can affect another person. A somewhat similar term is '*bāngi*' which is an adjective applied to a person who is believed to have 'good luck' in any undertaking he may take in hand.

Chōṭā-Nāgpur are, in consideration of their supposed *mana* or curative and protective virtue, worn as amulets by children as well as adults to ward off diseases. Iron which has been exposed in the open during an eclipse of the Sun is believed to acquire a mysterious power to ward off evil; and rings and bracelets are made of such iron and worn by the Orāon to avert lightening-strokes and certain other calamities. Charred remains of wood which has been used in burning a corpse are believed to have acquired a mysterious beneficent power and are tied up in a string and worn round the neck by the Orāon as a remedy for fever, and rags torn out of the cloth which a person had on while being bitten to death by a tiger are tied to the tails of cows, bullocks, and buffaloes as a cure for cattle-disease. Water, fire and sacrificial blood are regarded as beneficent mysterious powers which can counteract the evil influences of certain harmful powers. The *cowrie*-shell is regarded as a beneficent power and is worn on the neck or waist of a child or on the neck of cattle to protect them from harm.

Such are the different classes of supernatural beings, powers and energies with which the Orāon peoples the invisible world. Indeed to the unsophisticated Orāon everything in nature and art is instinct with life or with a potentiality of life and energy. In some objects this energy or soul lies dormant and ineffective but may, under certain circumstances, be roused to activity, and operate for good or evil without a conscious will; in yet others the existence or action of an indwelling spirit is dimly recognized; and finally there are the personal supernatural beings of different grades and powers with conscious will and personality.

Objects with dormant and ineffective souls hardly count; those with an immanent soul-force or '*mana*' unconsciously and involuntary exerting this spiritual energy are dealt with through magic rites, observances and taboos; the third class of supernatural objects in which the existence of a shadowy indwelling spirit is dimly recognized may be said to stand on the borderland between the realms of Religion proper and Magic; whereas the definite personal supernatural powers—spirits and deities—are the entities with which the Religion proper of the Orāon is primarily concerned.

The instinctive need for entering into relations with the higher supernatural powers has, as we have seen, led to their personification among the Orāons. The actual supersensual experiences of certain gifted or sensitive individuals amongst them who have had visions of the spirits and narrated their experiences about them to their fellow-tribesmen, must have helped in giving definite shapes and forms to some of these beings and brought the gods closer to man. Certain favoured persons, more sensitive than others, not only have visions of the gods and spirits, but enter into communion with them, when the spirits are believed to enter into their bodies and speak through them. The emotional reaction generated by situations of stress and risk to the individual, the family or the community, has resulted in the practice of rituals which in their turn have helped to intensify the affective tinge peculiar to the sacred. The thought-forms visualised by generations of primitive seers have woven round these supernatural beings legends and myths, though as yet rather scanty, which have further helped to quicken the emotion. Collective ritual and collective emotion at feasts and festivals and religious pro-

Illustration 14.
Wooden horse carried as village emblem to a *Jātrā*.

[*See Pages 82-83.*]

cessions and dances have served to intensify the emotional appeal of religion among the Orāons as among more advanced communities. And fermented liquor used in Orāon religious ritual may also have contributed its share, however humble, in stimulating or rather intensifying the religious emotion.

We have seen that besides objectifying the impersonal forces immanent in Nature, the Orāons have come to personify the supernatural entities who rule their destinies and also to individualize the more important among them. Indeed they have advanced a step further: they have not only personified or rather personalized and, in some cases, individualized the important supernatural powers; but have, in a sense, also 'socialized' them. Their attitude towards the supernatural world has naturally been determined and influenced by their contact and conflict with, on the one hand, the forces of Nature around them, and, on the other, with the social authority to which these tribes have been subject. Under the Rājā of the country, who stands apart from the tribal organization, there are headmen of groups of villages, and under them a sacerdotal headman and one or more secular headmen for each separate Orāon village-unit, and their *bhāyāds* or near agnates known as *Bhūinhārs*; next in rank to them are the *Jeṭh-rāiyats* or descendants of a subsequent or second band of old settlers in each village; and below them again the *gairōs* or ordinary raiyats; and lowest of all the destitute beggars and non-aboriginal village-servants and village-artisans who live on the wages or doles they receive from the other classes described above. The supernatural world too, has come to be similarly arranged by Orāon

society in a corresponding hierarchy. Highest in rank stands the Creator—Dharmes, who is also very significantly named as 'Biṛi-Belas' or the 'Sun-King.' Though acknowledged as the Supreme Deity, He, too, like the Rājā of the country, ordinarily stands apart and does not interfere in the ordinary routine life of the people. Next there are the tutelary deities and spirits of each separate village who have the largest hand in the well-being of the villagers and consequently receive the most elaborate sacrifices. Then come successively the family spirits including the ancestor-spirits, the clan-spirits, the class-spirits and the familiar spirits of individuals. Lowest and most insignificant of all is a class of miscellaneous minor spirits and tramp spirits called *bhulās* or 'wanderers' who are not objects of propitiation at all but are either sent away with a casual dole of food or expelled by force or exorcism.

Thus, Orāon religion may, as I have said, be characterized as a system of spiritism, more or less organized, set on a background of a much more primitive and vague animatism in which the soul or spirit was not discriminated from the body or object it inhabited and life or a potentiality of life and personality is attributed to all objects, natural or artificial. Under favourable conditions, this spiritism may not improbably develop, in time, into a full-blown polytheism, unless outside influences counteract its natural course of development.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS RITES AND CEREMONIES.

AS the gods and spirits of various grades of power that I have described in the last chapter are believed by the Orāons to able to influence, help or thwart the course of nature and of human events, Orāon society considers it essential for ever family, clan, and village-community to maintain harmonious and friendly relations with them. This is sought to be done by providing the gods and spirits with food and nourishment by way of offerings and sacrifices at stated intervals as well as on particular occasions of risk and apprehended or actual danger to the individual, the family or the village community. It is particularly the entry into a new stage in the life of the individual or in the annual round of the simple economic life of the community that involves unknown supernatural risks and dangers. And thus Orāon society has evolved special rites and ceremonies—religious and magical—calculated to ensure safety at the turning-points of an individual's life, and similar rites also to ensure safety and prosperity to each new stage in the cycle of the simple economic pursuits of the community. In the present chapter I shall describe the various religious and magical rites and ceremonies by which Orāon society marks the chief crises in the life of an individual in society. These crises occur at birth and childhood, puberty, marriage and death.

I.—BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD CEREMONIES.

(1) Observances during Pregnancy.

When the cessation of the monthly course and some minor signs indicate conception, the expectant mother has to take care about certain things. She must not be present at a cremation nor even touch a dead body. She must not remain outside her hut when lightning flashes are seen and the sound of thunder is heard. While going out of her house, she must cover herself completely with her *Sāṛi*-cloth, lest enemies or persons with the evil eye come to know of her delicate condition. For, if any one remarks—as only an enemy will do—that a particular female is in the family way, and if *churils* or the earth-bound spirits of women who died either during pregnancy or at child-birth, happen to hear this remark, two or three of these mischievous spirits will be continually after her and lose no opportunity of teasing and annoying her whenever they may find her alone. They will tickle her, throw her down and seek to torment her and do her harm in every possible way. To save her from such trouble, well-to-do Hinduized Orāons do not allow their women, when in the delicate state, to leave their houses after dark. Similarly, it is only in Hinduized Orāon families that any restrictions are placed on food and drink used by a pregnant woman. In all Orāon families, however, pregnant women are not allowed, even during illness, to take any medicine except a few well-known innocuous drugs. In some parts of the Orāon country, when a woman is with child for the first time, a pig is sacrificed to the sept-spirits of the woman's father as well as to the presiding deities of her father's village. This ceremony which is known as the Jōdā

Kāmnā is meant to protect the woman and the baby in the womb from the evil attentions of the sept-spirits (*Khūṇṭ bhūts*) of the woman's father's family and the village-deities of her father's village, and is described below.

(2) Jōdā Kamnā.

When an Orāon wife is with child for the first time the Jōdā Kāmnā ceremony is performed with the object of finally cutting off her connection with the ancestor-spirits and village-deities and spirits of her father. The father is invited for the occasion and comes to his son-in-law's place with a few kinsmen of his own. They are received with the usual formalities. Their feet are washed, and they are seated on a mat in an open space a little away from the house and are offered tobacco and lime to chew.

A pig, now-a-days often substituted by a female sheep, is then brought out and some grains of *āruā* rice are placed on the ground before it, and while the animal is eating the rice, the elders of the village sprinkle rice on its head, saying,—

"From this day may ye, Oh ancestor-spirits, *deōtas* (deities) and *bhūts* (spirits) of the pregnant woman's father have no concern whatsoever with her. Leave her ye ancestor-spirits, deities and ghosts." The pig is decapitated with an axe. Then the assembled guests enter the house of the husband of the woman and are regaled with rice-beer. When rice and meat have been cooked, they have a hearty meal. After chewing tobacco mixed with lime, and after mutual salutations the pregnant woman's people take leave of her husband's people. 27

27. See also *ante* p. 68.

(3) Difficult Labour.

Difficult labour is ascribed by the Orāon to some evil spirit or to the evil eye. To facilitate delivery, the woman is made to cough. In a case of difficult and protracted labour, the covers of all earthen vessels (such as are used in storing grains or other things and in cooking food, holding water or liquor, etc.) are taken off. In this way, so the Orāon believes, all impediments in the way of an easy delivery will disappear by what is obviously sympathetic magic. If this expedient fails, a handful of rice is fried on an earthen pan and distributed among all present. It is said, however, that this step hardly requires to be taken, inasmuch as the mere utterance of the words—"Put the frying-pan over the fire"—generally brings about a speedy delivery. Another curious expedient sometimes adopted in the case of a protracted delivery is as follows: If there is in the neighbourhood a tamarind tree which was ever singed with lightning, a man goes to such a tree, stands against it and strips off a portion of its bark where it touches his waist. The man now goes with this bark to the door of the lying-in room which is forthwith closed against him, thrusts one end of the bark through a hole in the door, and remains standing there holding the other end of the bark with his hands. The woman has to fasten her gaze on this bark to facilitate delivery. As soon as delivery takes place, the man is informed about it and takes out the bark, for, otherwise, it is believed, inversion of the uterus is sure to occur. The practice of *couvade* is unknown. And neither during the pregnancy of his wife nor during or after delivery, is the

Orāon husband required to observe any particular rules as to diet or behaviour.

(4) Sex of unborn Babes.

If a woman gets thinner during pregnancy and her eyes sink in their sockets, it is believed she is quick with a male child. Again, if during labour-pains the woman leans on her right hand against the ground while getting up, it is believed the child is on the right side of the womb and must therefore be a male. If she leans on her left hand, the baby is believed to rest on the left side of the womb and to be a female by sex. The number of knots in the umbilical cord is supposed to indicate the total number of children the woman will bear. Some Orāons believe that the whitish knots indicate the number of sons and the darker ones the number of daughters.

(5) The Birth.

As soon as a birth is about to take place, the men leave the hut, and ordinarily only a few elderly women remain in attendance on the expectant mother. Men are on no account allowed to see the delivery, for, it is believed, should they do so, the birth is sure to be hampered and the labour pains are sure to increase. Any female, even a girl, however, may be present. At the time of delivery the woman is made to kneel down on the ground, leaning backwards. An elderly female relative sits down, generally with her back against a wall of the hut, and supports her from behind. Another woman, usually of the family, sits in front of the parturient woman and takes the babe in her hands as soon as it is born. These two women are called *Kusrāins* or midwives. The newborn babe is forthwith bathed in tepid water or, in some

villages, in *Kānji*-water, that is to say, in rice-water which has been kept in an air-tight jar for two or three years.

(6) The Umbilical Cord and the Placenta.

One of the women now cuts the umbilical cord either with a knife or with a bit of potsherd and receives the humble remuneration of half an *anna* or an *anna* (penny). If, as occasionally happens, a baby is born enveloped in membranes, it is washed and taken to a manure-pit (*gāndūr gāṛhā*) where it is laid down by one woman and forthwith taken up by another woman of the family. The new-born babe of a woman who has lost one child after another, soon after birth, is similarly deposited on the manure-heap by one woman and taken up by another. This is believed to protect the child from the evil attentions of malignant spirits, for, it is said, that evil spirits do not care for a babe thus thrown into a manure-pit as an useless refuse. Such a boy is named either as *Feḳuā* (cast-away) or as *Gūndūrā* (belonging to cattle-dung) or as *Mādi* (pertaining to manure), probably to deceive evil spirits. The placenta and the umbilical cord, together with an old worn-out broom and an old winnowing basket, are now buried underground. In some villages these are buried under the floor of the hut, and, in other villages, either under that part of the courtyard where utensils are scraped and washed, or in the manure-pit belonging to the family. The stump of the umbilical cord, when it dries up and drops down, is buried under the threshold of the hut. The reason for thus burying the placenta is to prevent witches and sorcerers from stealing it and giving it to some barren woman to eat, in which case the latter woman will obtain a transfer of fecundity from the former to whom the

latter's barrenness will be transferred. When it is considered desirable to avoid too short an interval between two successive births, the person who digs the hole for burying the navel-string and the placenta raises the spade high above his head.

Until recently, it is said, an Orāon babe born with one or more teeth was, soon after birth, made to swallow a quantity of raw salt in order to put an end to its life,—for it was believed that such a child was a '*rakṣas*' or monster who would undoubtedly cause the death of one or other of its parents. Such a belief is to this day widely entertained, and the abominable practice connected with it is, it is said, not yet altogether extinct. A female child born with her molar teeth out of the line is believed to be destined to be a widow. In former times, it is said, such a girl could not always secure a husband. As soon as a child is born, the fact is notified to the men by the women of the family setting up either a plough or a small bamboo basket outside the door of the lying-in room according as the new-born babe is a male or a female child.

(7) Purificatory Bath.

The women who attend a birth are considered ceremonially unclean until the after-birth is disposed of, after which they purify themselves by bathing in a neighbouring tank, stream or well (but not in the village spring), and anointing themselves with oil mixed with pounded turmeric. It is only after this purificatory ablutions that the women are allowed to touch any articles outside the lying-in room, or, in the case of the women of other houses, to enter their own houses.

(8) Paisāri.

Either on the day of birth, or within two or three days of it, the new-born babe's father or other relative hands over to the village-priest (*Pāhān*) a red or grey chicken, a little *āruā* rice and two copper coins (*pice* or *paisā*) after these have been waved round the head of the baby. The village-priest makes the fowl eat some *āruā* rice and set it free at his own house, and after some days, sacrifices it to the principal village deities (*gāon deoti*).

In some villages the observances in connexion with the *Paisāri* ceremony are more elaborate. The village-priest is called in, and on his arrival a grey chicken (and in some places either a black or a red chicken) and a small quantity of *āruā* rice on a leaf-plate, and an *annā* or two as price of beer-offering are placed before him. The priest first takes up the leaf-plate in his hands and waves it round and round over the head of the babe and finally touches the babe's head with the leaf-plate which he now puts down on the ground again. He then takes up the chicken and similarly waves it over the head of the child, touches its head with it, and then takes the fowl, *etc.* home and there sacrifices the chicken to the presiding-spirits of the village, saying, "Here is the *paisāri*-offering to ye all for the welfare of this new-born babe. May the babe live up to a ripe old age." The heart of the sacrificed fowl is now extracted and a bit of flesh from its neck taken out, and both are enclosed in an envelope made of a folded-up *sāl*-leaf. This meat is then roasted over a fire. The rest of the flesh is boiled with rice in the form of *ṭahari*. The priest then scrapes off with his fingers bits of this roasted heart and offers them to the spirits (by dropping

the meat on a leaf-plate on the ground), and similarly offers a libation of rice-beer. Then the priest takes a draught of rice-beer. In a few villages, one or two other elders of the village (as *Panches*) are also present. They and the *Pāhān* take up each a leaf-cup in his hands. The three leaf-cups are now filled with rice-beer. And the three men pour on the ground a portion of the rice-beer each from his leaf-cup by way of libation to the ancestor-spirits, saying, "To-day we are making *Paisāri* of so-and-so (names the child's father). Divide this amongst yourselves—amongst all your relatives and friends—either on this side of the [river] Kōel[28] or beyond it." The sacrificial rice-beer left in the three leaf-cups is then mixed with the rest of the rice-beer in the vessels; and this sanctified liquor is distributed to all present. Then the *ṭahari* (sacrificial meat boiled with rice) is similarly distributed and eaten.

(9) Observances during the days of impurity.

During the first three days of the puerperium the mother and her new-born babe are secluded in the lying-in room. Not the mother or the child alone, but the whole house is considered ceremonially unclean; and no Orāon, not belonging to the family, will take any food in that house. So long as the mother is not all right, one or other of the two women who officiated as midwives at the birth comes to the birth-chamber twice every day. For three days or more, one of them massages the mother's limbs with mustard oil every morning and evening and applies dry fomentation to the baby and watches the mother and its baby at night. On the day

28. The Kōel is one of the principal rivers of the Orāon country.

following the delivery, the mother is in some villages given a bath in tepid water in which one or two stems of the *sinduār* (*Vitex Negundo*) shrub have been boiled to prevent the mother from catching cold. For her diet during the three days following the birth, she is given in some villages rice boiled in water with a few pieces of turmeric. This meal is believed to help in the involution of the uterus. In other villages, the diet for the first three days consists of rice, turmeric and *urid* (*Phaseolus Roxburghii*) lentils boiled together. The *urid* lentils serve to hasten the flow of milk in the breasts. For about a fortnight after delivery, the mother may not drink cold water nor eat edible herbs (*sāg*) boiled in rice-gruel. So long as the wound in the navel of the babe is not healed up, a fire is kept burning in the lying-in room. *Sinduār* wood and *Sinduār* leaves are used as fuel for this fire. It is worth noticing that no fire out of this room may be taken away by any one not belonging to the family.

(10) Precautions against evil spirits.

It is during the period of impurity following childbirth that evil spirits are most dreaded by a woman, for it is then that both mother and child are more liable to their attacks than at any other time. The Orāon explains this by saying that the smell of the blood-discharges attracts evil spirits—more particularly the spirits of women who died in child-bed. And to guard the mother and her babe against the attacks of these spirits, a cane or a stick, preferably an iron-tipped one, as also an axe or a sickle, or other weapons made of iron, are placed by the bed-side close to the mother's head. Iron, so the Orāon believes, is feared by evil spirits. A handful of mustard-seeds is also tied up at one end of the woman's

cloth, so that evil spirits may not approach her in the apprehension that the mustard-seeds will be flung at them should they venture to do so. It is believed that an evil spirit must pick up every grain of mustard—an almost interminable task —before it can proceed to other business.

Witches and wizards, too, are very much dreaded at this period. It is believed that they seek to approach a newly-delivered woman in the shape of black cats, and as soon as they can get at such a woman, they proceed to lick her limbs or lick up any blood-discharge, and this would inevitably result in the woman before long falling seriously, and sometimes fatally, ill. Occasionally the cat-shaped witch (*chōr-dewā*), it is said, succeeds in licking the woman's vagina and mysteriously extracting her heart, thereby causing her death. The explanation sometimes given by an Orāon woman for rubbing oil over the abdomen of a woman during the first few days of her puerperium, is that it is meant to make the abdomen too slippery for a witch to handle it with a view to extracting the heart. To guard the mother and child in their *taboo* state against the approach of these cat-shaped witches, one or both of the *Kusrāins* keep watch in the lying-in room. Every morning until the day of purification, one or other of these women carries to some tank or stream (but not to the village-spring) the clothes used in the lying-in room and washes them there.

(11) The Purification-Ceremony.

Generally on the fourth, and sometimes on the fifth day after delivery, the house is made ceremonially clean by besmearing the courtyard and the floors with cowdung diluted in water. All the clothes used by the members of the family

during the days of impurity are purified by boiling them in water mixed with ashes. The mat used by the babe and its mother in the lying-in room is washed by the *ḳūsrāin* by way of purification. The women who attended the birth are treated to a hearty dinner on that day and are presented with two jars of rice-beer. Well-to-do families also invite friends and relatives to a feast.

On that day, or on a subsequent day, when the mother goes to the village-spring for the first time after her delivery to draw water, she must put with her fingers three marks of vermilion diluted in oil on the stone-slab or piece of wood that marks the site of the spring. It is believed that if this ceremony is omitted, the spirit of the *ḍāri* or spring is offended, in consequence of which the water of the spring either emits an offensive smell or gets filled with small hair-like plants.

(12) Cutting the Evil Teeth.

On the eighth or ninth day after birth, a jar of rice-beer, which was set abrewing on the day of the purificatory ceremony, is taken out to the courtyard which has been swept clean beforehand and cleaned with cowdung and water. Either a professional spirit-doctor (*māti*) or some Orāon who knows the rites, is called in. In some places, the paternal grandfather or the sister's husband of the child is preferred, provided such a relative has the necessary knowledge. A hen's egg, a small *bhelwā* (*semicarpus anacardium*) twig, a little rice-flour, a little coal-dust, and a little burnt clay from the hearth, are placed before him; and with these he draws a diagram, representing a magic symbol on the ground. The egg is inserted into the forked end of the twig, and placed

over the diagram. The three colours, red (or the burnt clay of the hearth), white (of the rice-flour), and black (of the coal-dust) are believed to represent the rainbow—the largest and most powerful bow in heaven or earth—and therefore most potent in warding off the evil eye and the evil attentions of malignant spirits. A drop of the oil of the *bhelwā* fruit may spoil one's eye, and so the *bhelwā* twig is believed to scare away the evil eye. The man who officiates at the ceremony of 'cutting the [evil] teeth' sits in front of the diagram and recites in a sing-song tone a long story, the first part of which gives the traditional account of the origin and multiplication of mankind, and the institution of agriculture, and the second part commemorates the discovery of iron and gives the traditional origin of the gods and spirits.[29] All the time that the man recites this story, he goes on rubbing with his hands some *āruā* rice placed on a winnowing-basket. When the recital is finished, the man takes up the egg in his left hand, sprinkles rice over it with his right hand, and says, "O Dharmē, I am offering *āruā* rice to Thee. From to-day may so-and-so's house and family be shunned by evil spirits and by persons with the evil eye, [even] as bitter *jhingā* and bitter *lāuā* (pumpkin) are thrown away by men. May nowhere, in dense forests and woods, [either] stumps of trees [or] prickly thorns injure [them]. Now I am sacrificing this (egg) [to Thee]. Now I have offered it. Now I am breaking it." As he says this, he strikes the blade of a knife against the egg, and thus breaks it and pours the yolk into the leaf-cup containing rice-flour. The leaf-cup, with the

29. For this story, *vide* S. C. Roy's *The Oraons of Chōtā Nāgpur* (Ranchi, 1915) pp. 443—476.

rice-flour and the yolk in it, is now placed over a hearth. Such of the coal-dust and red earth as have been used in drawing the diagram are now scraped up with the hands, and taken respectively in the leaf-cup containing coal-dust and that containing red earth. These leaf-cups are now carried by the officiating priest to the road-side and deposited there. On his return to the house, he washes his hands and feet with water from a brass-jug placed before him, and makes obeisance to all present there. The baked yolk of the egg is now brought from over the hearth and placed before him. He first scratches out a little of the yolk with his finger-nails and offers it on the ground in the name of Dharmes saying, "Here, O Dharme; I am offering Thee the heart of the victim." The rest of the egg is distributed to the children. A libation of water to Dharmes and libations of rice-beer to the ancestor-spirits are also offered. Finally, the officiating priest and the guests are all treated to plenty of rice-beer. In some villages, until this ceremony which is called Dāṇḍā-kāṭṭā (splitting the [*bhelwā*] stick) is performed, the child is not taken out of the house for fear of evil spirits and the evil eye.

(13) The Name-giving Ceremony.

The 'Nāmē-pinjnā' or name-giving ceremony of an Orāon child is performed some time after birth,—from about a fortnight to six months or even a year afterwards. Until the name-giving ceremony, the baby is usually called according to the day of the week on which it was born. Thus, a child born on a Sunday is named Etwā if a male, and Etwāriā if a female; a child born on a Monday is called Sōmrā or Sōmā, if a male, and Sūmri, if a female. Similarly the names Mangrā and Mangri are given respectively to a male and a

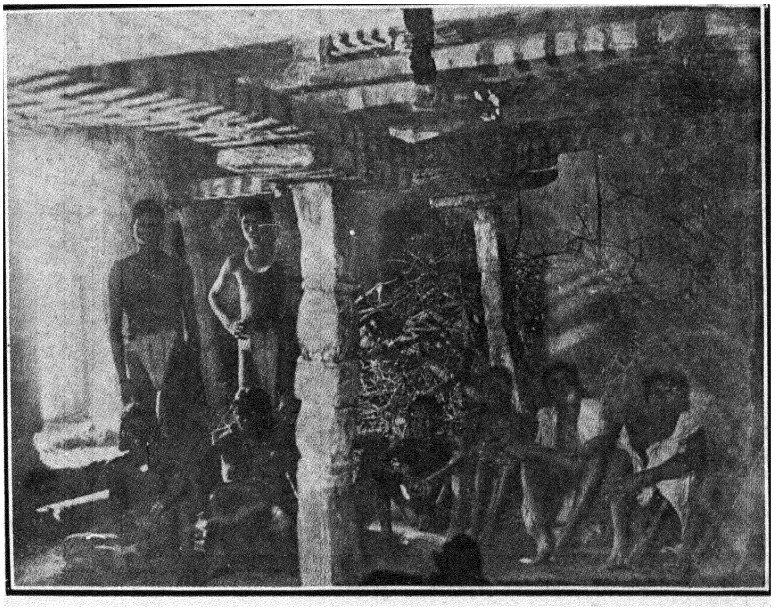

Illustration 15.

The interior of an *Orāon* Dhumkuria at Borhambey with its carved posts and painted beams from which strings of bull-roarers are suspended. Two of the inmates are standing and some seated on the floor.

[*See Page 86.*]

female child born on a Tuesday; Būdhuā and Būdhni respectively to a male and a female child born on a Wednesday; Birsā and Birsi respectively to a male and a female child born on a Thursday; Sukrā and Sukro respectively to a male and a female child born on a Friday; Sanicharwā and Sanichari respectively to a male and a female child born on a Saturday. If the baby is born on a festival day, it is usually named according to that particular festival. Thus, a child born on the day of the Jitiā festival in named Jitnā if a male, and Jitni if a female; a child born during the Karam festival is named Karmā, if a male, and Karmi, if a female, and a child born on the day of the Phāguā festival is named Phāguā if a male, and Phāgni if a female.

On the day appointed for the name-giving ceremony, either an unmarried boy or the village-Gōṛāit shaves the child's head with the exception of a tuft of hair on the crown. The hair is thrown into a running stream, if there is one close by, or, if there is none, into some tank. It is believed that hair thus thrown into a stream goes down the stream to the ocean and there in time joins the hair (similarly thrown) of the girl or boy who is to be his or her future spouse. In a case in which the head was shaved before, a portion of the hair must have been left uncut, and this is now shaved and thrown into a stream or tank. After the shaving of the hair, the Gōṛāit fills a large leaf-cup with water and places it on the ground. Some selected village-elder, in the presence of the other village-elders (*Panch*), takes up in one hand a few grains of rice, and drops three grains of rice one after another, into the water in the leaf-cup, while another man names a particular deceased ancestor of the child, either on the father's or on

the mother's side. Should all the three grains remain floating on the water and touch each other by their pointed ends (that is, by the ends by which the paddy-grains were attached to the paddy-stalks), the child is named after the ancestor in whose name the grains were dropped. If all or any of the three grains sink down in the water, three other grains are similarly dropped again into the leaf-cup in the name of some other dead ancestor to see if the grains float and touch each other by the ends. If again one or more of the grains sink down, the process is repeated with other grains and other names, until the grains touch one another so as to indicate the name to be selected for the child. It is not improbable that this practice was originally meant either as a means of divination to discover which of the deceased ancestors was reborn in the person of the infant, or as a means of securing for the child the protection of the spirit of the deceased ancestor whose name was thus appropriated. The Orāon himself, however, entertains no such belief at the present day.

From the day of the *nāmē-pinjnā*, the child is called by the name thus supernaturally indicated by the rice-grains, and the old name selected after the day of the week in which the child was born is often dropped. Sometimes however the old name is retained and is the generally known name, but the name selected by the mysterious process of the floating rice-grains is considered as the real (*āsal*) name. It seems probable that formerly this real name was not given out to outsiders for fear of the name being used as a handle for sorcery and witchcraft to harm the person. When the real name is thus selected, the Gōṛāit's wife anoints the child with oil and turmeric paste and bathes the child in cold

water. Finally the Gōṛāit is sent away with three *ḳhālās* (large bowls made of leaves) filled with paddy.

(14) The Chhaṭṭi Ceremony.

It is only in Hinduized or semi-Hinduized Orāon families that the Chhaṭṭi ceremony, by which the child is formally admitted into the community, is observed. This is generally celebrated on the sixth day from the birth, but sometimes later. Relatives and neighbours of the parents of the new-born child are invited to the house. On the appointed day the guests arrive each with a cash present of from half-an-*annā* to four *annās* for the child. In some villages the members of the child's family and their near kinsmen have their nails pared and their beards shaved on this occasion, and the babe's head is shaved with the exception of a tuft of hair on the crown. The guests are treated to a hearty dinner with plenty of rice-beer.

(15) Nose-Piercing.

When an Orāon girl is about five or six years of age, in some places a Sonār (goldsmith) or his wife is called in to pierce the septum of the girl's nose. In most places, however, a grown-up Orāon girl pierces the nose of a younger girl by thrusting a needle through it. A thin reed (*ḳharikā*) is inserted into the hole thus made. About a couple of years later, when the hole is sufficiently distended, this nose-stick is replaced by a nose-pin made of lac. After another three or four years, this nose-pin *(nāḳmūṭri)* is, in well-to-do families, replaced by a silver pin (*besar*) with an ornamental head. Unlike the ear-piercing, the nose-piercing is never attended with any ceremonies or feast. Where a goldsmith is called in, he is paid a pice or so as his remunera-

tion for piercing the septum of the nose, two pice and some rice on the second occasion when the lac nose-pin is put on, and one *annā* when the silver nose-pin is put on. Sometimes, as a magical remedy, the septum of a child's nose is pierced when it is in the habit of crying very often.

(16) Amulets and other devices to protect Children from Harm.

When a baby constantly cries, or refuses to drink milk, or vomits out what it has taken, or suffers from sleeplessness, the Orāon mother attributes such ailments to the evil eye or evil spirits. One of the means adopted by the mother to protect the child from harm is to take, of an evening, some mustard-seed or salt and three peppers in her hands, touch the babe's head therewith, and then wave them round and round the babe's head and put them on a broken fragment of an earthen vessel over a fire, saying—"May the eyes of the evil-doer burst even as these burst in the fire." Next morning this fragment of earthen pottery with its contents is taken up with the left hand and placed upside down on a public thoroughfare. While leaving it there, the person who has carried it breaks the fragment of earthen vessel by kicking it with her left foot, and leaves the place without looking at it. Another device by which it is sought to prevent the evil eye or evil spirits from harming a child is to attach one or more *cowrie* shells to its neck or waist so as to divert the attention of the evil spirit or the person with the evil eye. With the same object an Orāon child is sometimes marked with soot on the forehead just between the eye-brows. A child whose legs are presented first at birth, is supposed to be particularly liable to be struck with lightn

ing. To protect such a child from thunderbolts, it is made to wear a bracelet (*berā*) made on the *Sohrāi āmāwas* day (new moon in the month of Kārtik) with iron previously exposed to the influence of an eclipse of the moon.

(17) Eating the First Rice.

It is only in some Hinduized Orāon families that any ceremonies are observed on the day that the child is given a rice-diet for the first time. In such families, when the child is from about six months to a year old, the parents of the child invite a few relatives, and either the father or the mother puts a few grains of boiled rice into the child's mouth. Generally a Tuesday is selected for the ceremony; but Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays too, but no other day of the week, may be selected for the purpose.

(18) Shedding the First Teeth.

When a boy (or girl) sheds a milk-tooth, he (or she) spits saliva on it, covers it with a coating of cowdung, and throws it on the roof of the house saying aloud,—"Nighāi pāchchā enghāe pūnā" (Thine old, mine new). These words are said to be addressed to the mice to get their pearl-white teeth in place of the cast-off teeth.

(19) Tattooing.

At seven or eight years of age an Orāon girl has three parallel lines of punctures on her forehead and two on each of her temples made by a Mālār woman with a toothed iron instrument. Into these punctures she rubs a pigment made of powdered charcoal dissolved in oil. Four or five years later more elaborate tattoo marks are similarly made on her back and chest, arms and legs. The patterns selected are

generally floral. The Orāons of our days do not attribute any protective or other virtue to these tattoo marks.

II.—PUBERTY CEREMONIES.

(1) Cicatrization.

To make a man of him, an Orāon boy, at the age of twelve or thereabouts, has seven or more scars made on his arm in the following manner. Seven or more rings of cowdung are placed on the arm to be operated upon, and the skin inside each of these rings is burnt with a lighted wick. In a village where there is a Dhūmkūṛiā or common dormitory for all the bachelors of the village, these scars, called 'Sikā' marks, are made by the older boys on the arms of the younger boys when the latter are admitted into membership of the Dhūmkūṛiā fraternity.

(2) Tying the Hair for the first time.

The close of childhood used to be marked by the Orāons by an interesting ceremony which has generally fallen into disuse within the last thirty years or so. It is still remembered by middle-aged Orāons as having been in vogue in their younger days. On the morning following the full moon in the month of Māgh (January-February), all the men and women, boys and girls of an Orāon village would proceed to the house of the village headman (either the Pāhān or the Māhāto). For each boy or girl whose hair was to be tied for the first time that day, the parents had to take there one small straw-bag (*mōrā*) filled with unhusked rice measuring from half a *maund* to thirty *seers*. These *mōrās* would be ranged in two parallel rows in the courtyard of the headman's house, the *mōrās* meant for the boys being arranged in a row opposite

to those meant for the girls. And the boys would sit down in a row on their *mōrās* facing the girls sitting on the opposite row of *mōrās*. One woman from each family would now advance with a cup of mustard oil and drop a little oil on the head of each boy and girl seated on the *mōrās*. By the time that all the women, one after another, finished dropping oil on the heads of the boys and girls, oil would begin to stream down their head. In the meanwhile an Orāon woman would go on rubbing the oil with her hands over the hair of each girl and tying up the hair in a knot and inserting wooden hair-combs into it, and similarly a young man would rub the oil over the hair of each boy and tie up his hair and put combs into it. Then they would be danced about to music and taken to the houses of the different village headmen and treated to drink. A general feast in which all the Orāons of the village took part concluded the ceremony. It was only after this ceremonial hair-dressing (*juṛō-eṛā*) that a boy might be admitted into the Bachelors' Hall (*Dhūm-ḳūṛiā*), and a girl might be married.

Such are the Orāon ceremonies and observances during pregnancy, at child-birth, and in childhood. One or other of two main ideas appears to lie at the back of most of the customs described above. There is first the idea of protecting mother and child from supernatural evil influences to which they are considered particularly liable in their non-natural *taboo* state; and then there is the idea of restoring mother and child to the normal state and admitting them into the community, and making the child a worthy member of it. The idea of sacrilising the crises of an individual's life by

religious rites and thereby effecting a spiritual metamorphosis is, if at all, but dimly recognized.

(3) Initiation Ceremonies.

The ceremonies observed at the admission of Orāon boys into the village dormitories known as the *Jōnk̤h-eṛpā* or *Dhūmk̤ūṛiā* and of Orāon girls into similar dormitaries known as *Pel-eṛpā* and various customs connected therewith have been described in detail in my former work *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpur* to which the reader is referred. Special interest attaches to those rites and customs as the institution is fast decaying.

III.—MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

The Orāon's recognition of the necessity of marriage.

The Orāon considers marriage as essential for every person of either sex. Old bachelors and maidens are practically unknown in the tribe. Even most Orāon deities are believed to have each a consort. And as we have seen, the Orāon celebrates the marriage ceremonies even of his paddy seedlings, his fruit trees, his tanks and wells. The reason assigned for "marrying" such inanimate things is that unless they are ceremonially married worms will breed in the water of the tank or the well and maggots will breed in the fruits of the trees and gardens, and the paddy-seedlings will either rot or fail to germinate. It is probably to avoid similar supposed unknown risks and dangers that might otherwise result from the unsacralised union with a stranger that elaborate rites and observances have been evolved by Orāon society, partly by themselves and partly through contact with and imitation of their Hindu neighbours.

Marriageable age, and selection of husband and wife.

Twenty or twenty-five years ago, Orāon young men and women invariably used to select their own partners in life themselves, and their choice used to be communicated to their parents through their friends or relatives. Adult marriage was the rule. A young man would rarely think of marriage before he was at least eighteen or nineteen years old, and a girl would not be married before she was fifteen or sixteen or even later. But now this state of things has changed in most parts of the Orāon country. Mainly through contact with their Hindu and Hinduised neighbours and partly also as a protest against the premarital sexual laxity that not long ago prevailed—and still to some extent prevails in places amongst the non-Christian Orāon youth of both sexes—most Orāon parents now themselves select brides for their sons and bridegrooms for their daughters, although the consent of the parties to their marriage, when they are old enough to have an opinion of their own, is generally sought beforehand by the parents. In most cases now-a-days Orāon boys are married between their sixteenth and twentieth year and in some cases even at a lower age than sixteen and in a very few cases at a higher age than twenty; and Orāon girls are generally married between their thirteenth and sixteenth year, and in some cases at a lower age than thirteen and in a few cases at a higher age than sixteen. Such late marriages as now occur are mostly due to poverty or temporary social ostracism of a family. Generally speaking, among the Orāons the more well-to-do a family, the earlier is the age at which its girls are now married.

It is only in the cases of marriages of widows and widowers, that there is no limit to the age of either party. A widow is free to marry in any clan (*gotra*) except her father's. Subject to this restriction, widows and widowers are free to choose their own partners. The relations of the late husband of a widow have no right over her except when the younger brother of her late husband chooses to marry her. This is done in the *Sāgāi* form that is proper for a widow. But now-a-days this old customary right of junior levirate cannot be enforced against the will of the female.

Intercourse of the sexes.

As I have said, until lately young men and women among the Orāons were allowed free sexual intercourse with each other before marriage, with the only restriction that the couple should not belong to the same totemic clan or *gotra.* As a matter of fact, however, such intercourse between boys and girls of the same *gotra,* if not actually condoned, is punished only with a fine sufficient to provide for a feast to the villagers or at least the sacrifice of a white cock to Dharmes or God. Not long ago, among the Orāon bachelors and maidens, in the few villages where Hindu and Christian influences had not yet made much impression and the relations of the sexes before marriage were as loose as before, most Orāon bachelors had each his own sweetheart among the maidens of his village, but if a boy of the bachelors' dormitory was found to go with a maiden who was known to be the sweetheart of another boy, the headman of the bachelors' dormitory would punish the offending young man with a fine. Although the grains of *āruā* (sun-dried) rice and bits of turmeric that are thrown on the newly-wedded Orāon

pair are believed to expiate the sin of their premarital licence, it not unoften happened that a girl continued to be on intimate terms with her old sweetheart until she bore a child to her husband. Cohabitation with immature girls is not common. In cases where Orāon girls are now-a-days married before they attain puberty, the husband refrains from cohabiting with her until the wife attains maturity. Even in adult marriage a man does not cohabit with his wife immediately after marriage; nor is the practice of visiting one's wife at her parents' place by stealth for sometime after marriage known to the Orāon.

Forbidden degrees of actual or supposed consanguinity.

Marriage in the same totemic clan (*gōtra*) is regarded as a sin productive of dire calamity to the tribe, and is, on no account, permitted. Even sexual intercourse without marriage between persons of the same *gōtra* is considered in much the same light. Besides community of *gōtra*, the only other forbidden degrees of consanguinity in relation to marriage are, strictly speaking, a brother and sister and children of two brothers or two sisters. The old orthodox rule is said to be that if either of the parents of a boy was suckled at the same mother's breast with either of the parents of a girl, there can be no marriage between such a boy and girl. The reason assigned for the taboo on the marriage between a son and a daughter of the same mother though not of the same father is that they were suckled at the same mother's breast. In practice, however, the Orāon now recognises relationship up to three generations as a bar to marriage between members of different *gōtras*. As a corollary to the old rule prohibiting marriage among "milk-relations"

referred to above, we find that when an Orāon child by reason of the death of its mother in its infancy has been suckled at the breast of another Orāon woman, marriage is not allowed between the son or daughter of such a woman and her foster-child. Another artificial relationship which is regarded as a bar to marriage between two families is the ceremonial friendship of various forms customary in the tribe. When two Orāon boys have entered into a ceremonial friendship with each other, marriage between members of the two families is not permissible although they may belong to different *gōtras*. When however some member of either family migrates and permanently lives in a different village, his branch of the family is exempted from the bar against inter-marriage.

As a general rule, an Orāon has a natural disinclination towards marrying his son or daughter to a girl or boy of his own village, and such marriages are rather infrequent. This is probably a reminiscence of the times when, not very long ago, the Orāon families of a village in most cases belonged to the same totemic clan among whom intermarriage was not permissible. An Orāon will not marry his eldest son to the eldest daughter of another man. Marriages between such near relatives as are not sanctioned by custom are believed to be punished by Dharmes with either loss of sight or leprosy or malignant ulcers and the like. It is the husband of such a marriage who is said to suffer such punishment for it is he who sought the match. The wife is not visited with such punishment. The sin may be expiated by sacrificing a white goat or cock to Dharmes and drinking a few drops of the blood of the sacrificed goat

or fowl. Under Hindu influence, the drinking of water in which copper and leaves of the *tūlsi* or the sacred basil plant (*ocymum sanctum*, Willd) have been dipped is also prescribed. The *panch*, or council of village elders, as representative of the whole community, further levies on the offender a fine sufficient for providing a feast to the Orāon village community. Where, however, one of the offending parties belongs to a different tribe, the punishment inflicted on the Orāon offender is excommunication from the tribe until the non-Orāon partner is given up. Then alone can the Orāon offender be restored to his tribal rights by drinking a few drops of the blood of the sacrifical animal or fowl and by sipping a little water sanctified with copper and *tūlsi* leaves.

Monogamy is the rule with the Orāon; but an Orāon who is not blessed with issue from his first wife may take a second wife. Polyandry is unknown and so also the practice of lending or exchanging wives or any form of what might bear the semblance of "group-marriage." Although the virginity of girls is not always preserved till marriage, Orāon custom does not require that a wife should be deflowered by a person other than the husband or that at marriage she should have connection with other persons before she may cohabit with her husband. Marriage by purchase is the rule, except in the case of a *ghārdijoā*. A *ghārdijoā* or *ghār-dāmād* is either a boy selected by a childless Orāon as a prospective son-in-law brought to his own house and subsequently married to his daughter and installed as the prospective heir to all his property (except *Bhūinhāri* lands), or is a poor Orāon boy who has not means enough to pay the customary bride-price and therefore lives and works like Jacob at the house of

his prospective father-in-law for a year or two before marriage—the services thus rendered being regarded as the equivalent for bride-price. Except in the case of a *ghār-dāmād*, an Orāon does not ordinarily reside with his wife at her parents' house, either wholly or in part, but either the husband or the wife separately or both together pay short visits as guests to the latter's parents' house generally on ceremonial occasions.

(1) Betrothal.

When parents think of seeking a bride for their son, they set about it by employing some comparatively clever friend or relative to act as the *āgiā* or go-between. He makes enquiries regarding eligible girls, the circumstances of their parents, their family history, the number of their brothers and sisters, the name of their family and clan spirits (*deō-bhūt*) and particularly whether any woman of the family has been accused of witch-craft. When the *āguā* finds a suitable girl and the boy's parents consider her an eligible match for their boy, the *āguā* visits the parents of the girl generally after the Karam festival in *Bhādō* (August) and makes the marriage proposal on behalf of the boy's parents. If the girl's parents (or, in their absence, uncle or brother) entertain the proposal as worth considering they in their turn send one or more friends or relatives to see the boy and his house. They go there on the pretext of asking for some tobacco-powder and lime which Orāons are in the habit of chewing just as civilized people smoke the *hookah* or cigars and cigarettes. The boy's people may make a small present of four *annas* or so to the girl on this occasion.

Kheḍ-noṛhnā or feet-washing ceremony.

When both parties are satisfied as to the desirability of the match, the girl's father invites the boy's people to his house on an appointed day for the "feet-washing" (*ḳheḍ-nōṛhnā*) ceremony. On that day three or five friends and relatives of the boy go to the girl's father's house. They start at cock-crow or at such an hour that they may reach the bride's house before dawn so as to avoid seeing bad omens on the way. On their arrival, the female relatives of the girl come out with a small earthenware pot filled with mustard oil and one or more brass-plates filled with water, place the brass plates before the guests and anoint their feet and legs with the oil. The guests then put their feet into the plates of water and the women wash their legs. The guests then place in the oil-pot the small sum of an *annā* or two as a present to these women.

Sāgūn or Omens.

The guests now take their seats on a palm-leaf mat spread out for them in the *verandah* or in the *āngan* or in a room of the house, and then a male relation of the girl asks them whether they have seen any omens on the way. If they have come across any bad omens, the *āgua* or some other member of the party describes it; otherwise, he says,—"We have fared all right on the way."

Among good omens *(sāgūn)* may be named the sight, at starting from one village or arrival at the other village, of a vessel filled with water, of some lamp burning, or a corpse being carried.

Among bad omens may be mentioned the sound of a *ḍhechūā* (king-crow) cawing, the sight of a fox crossing the

path of the party from left to right, the sight of an empty vessel being carried to fetch water just when the party is leaving their village or entering the other village, the sight of cowdung being carried to a maunre-pit or to the fields.

If the omens seen on the way are reported to be satisfactory or, at any rate, not altogether bad, an earthenwere lamp is lighted inside the house with wick and oil (other than kerosene) and the guests are treated to a dinner. If the lamp goes on burning till the dinner is ended, it is considered an auspicious sign even if bad omens were met with on the way. But even if good omens or at least no bad omens had been seen on the way, and yet the lamp goes out before the dinner is over, the match is broken off, as the extinction of the light is believed to portend the death of one of the parties to the marriage, should marriage take place. If during their stay at the house, an earthen vessel gets broken, or a tree or a branch of a tree falls down even in the absence of any high wind, or an oil-pot gets over-turned so as to let oil fall on the ground, it is considered a bad omen, and the negotiations are broken off.

The ceremonial drinking of rice-beer (Neg Bōṛey).

After the lamp is lighted but before the men begin to eat, a jar of rice-beer known as *ḳhheta vinā boṛey* or *negboṛey* is brought out, water poured into it, and the liquor strained. When the beer is thus made ready for use, it is poured into another earthen vessel (*tāoā*), and from this vessel three *Sarḳhis* or earthenware jugs are filled, two of which are made over to the men of the girl's party and one to the headmen of the girl's village. One of the headmen or elders of the

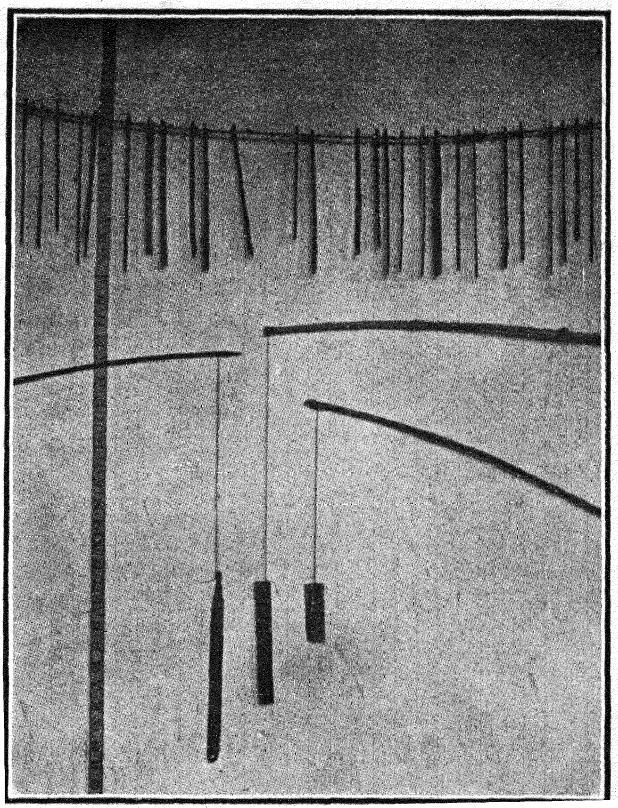

Illustration 16.

Orāon Bull-roarers suspended to a string. Three bull-roarers of different sizes attached to handles are shown by the side of a measuring tape.

[*See Pages 87-88.*]

boy's village who may be in the party takes a cup made of jack-fruit or *sākhuā* leaves, pours some of the beer (*boṛey-amm)* into it and drops the beer three times on the ground as an offering to the ancestor-spirits whose blessings on the betrothed are thus invoked: "*Phalnās-gāhi aur phalni-gāhi benjā-gāhi ṭhiḳ ṭhiḳ mānjā. Se irghāi ullā ḳoṛē ḳoṛē ḳālā. Irbā-rim pāchchō-pāchgi mānnār neḳār.*" "A marriage has been arranged between so-and-so (names the boy) and so-and-so (names the girl). May they spend their days well (i.e. in happiness). May both of them live up to an old age." This is followed by a set speech by one of the men of the boy's party which is replied to by a suitable set speech by a man of the girl's party. The boy's father or other guardian now pays one rupee to the girl as *mūhi erā* (or present on seeing the girl's face) and an *annā* or so as *bāsi-tisignā* or *dūrā ḳhūlāuni* (gate money). Then the guests are treated to plenty of liquor, after which all sit down to a hearty dinner. Just when they sit down to dinner, a man of the boy's side exchanges his plate of rice with that of a man of the girl's side sitting next to him. After this mutual exchange is repeated twice again, they all fall to eating. A woman of the bride's side pours water on the hands of the boy's relatives to wash their mouth and hands and the bride's father presents the woman with four annas or eight annas as *Bāi-noṛhnā* or 'mouth-washing money,' and the ends of their body-cloth are dyed yellow by the woman dipping them into a plate of water mixed with pounded turmeric. Dinnner over, powdered tobacco with lime is distributed to the guests. Then after exchange of salutations with the girl's people, the boy's party take leave.

(3) Sānni Pāhi (the small relationship-feast).

After harvest, the boy's father or guardian again invites the girl's people to his house, and on the appointed day the girl's father or other guardian goes with a few relatives to the betrothed boy's house. On their arrival there, their feet are washed by the women of the boy's family in the manner described above as *Kheḍḍ-noṛhnā*. Each guest pays two pice to the woman. When the guests' feet have been washed, the boy is called and he comes, preceded by one boy-companion and followed by another. They go on bowing to the feet of each guest. When the girls' people approve of the boy, they sit down. They are then given the ceremonial drink (*negbōṛey*) which is followed by a feast. When the guests are all warmed with drink, they call the bridegroom elect and makes him seat on the lap of the bride's father or other near relative. The latter presents a rupee to the boy while the other guests make him a present of from two pice to two *annas* or so each. They then take leave and are given tobacco-powder and lime to chew and a hearty send-off. The bridegroom salutes each of them by bowing down his head. Some straw is lighted by way of a bon-fire at the entrance to the house.

(4) Fixing the date of marriage (*Lagan bandhi*).

A week or so later, two or three men of the boy's side go to the house of the girl's parents to have a suitable date fixed for the celebration of the wedding. The third, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth days of the moon are considered auspicious days. Ordinarily, Thursdays and Saturdays and the days of birth of the bride and of the bridegroom must be avoided as inauspicious. Even if a

marriage takes place on a Thursday, the bride must not be taken away from her father's house on a Thursday. After the date is fixed, the guests are feasted and sent away.

(5) "Kōhā-Pāhi" (lit., the big relationship-feast.)

On a date appointed beforehand two or more messengers (*āgiās*) go very early in the morning from the girl's house to the boy's. On their arrival, the women of the house come out with a brass plate and a brass jug full of water with which they wash the feet of the guests. Then they are regaled with a ceremonial pot of rice-beer known as the *Jūṛūb-ḳhittūr-bōṛey*, and are treated to breakfast at about 11 a.m.

After that a pig or a goat is killed in the presence of the two messengers. These men as well as one or two men of the girl's side now skin and dress the slain animal. In the afternoon other friends and relatives of the girl's side, numbering from seven or eight to twenty or more, arrive accompanied by Gōṛāit musicians playing upon *nāgerā* drums and *narsinghā* pipes. On the arrival of the guests their feet are anointed with oil and washed by a few women of the house for whom the guests each puts a few pice in the oil-pot. The guests then salute the boy's people and take their seats. Some member of the family (who must not be a widow or a widower) brings out a leaf-mat known as *mainā-piṭri* or *neg-pāṭiā* (ceremonial mat), and the mat is turned upside down three times. The guests are now given tobacco and lime which they mix together and chew. Two jars of ceremonial liquor (*neg bōṛey*) called *ḳhe'tā-uinā-bōṛey* are then brought out and strained in their presence.

Two new earthen jugs are now filled with the liquor. One of these is handed over to the elders (*panch*) of the girl's

village and the other to the elders of the boy's village. The *panch* of the boy's village in company with their fellow-villagers then go to their village-*ākhrā* with the jug of liquor and a few leaf-cups; and similarly the *panch* and other men of the girl's side go with their jug of liquor and a few leaf-cups to some open place not far off. In each party a man of each *gotra* or clan takes up a leaf-cup in his hands, a little of the liquor is poured into each leaf-cup, and the man drops, by way of offering, a little liquor from his leaf-cups three times on the ground, first to the spirits of his own deceased ancestors, then to the ancestors of the betrothed boy or girl, as the case may be, and lastly to the *gāon-deoti* or the presiding spirits of his village. The rice-beer that is left over in each of the leaf-cups is then distributed to all the members of their respective parties who drink it as sacramental (*prasādi*) liquor. Then all return to the boy's house.

There, the rest of the *khetā-uinā-bōṛey* is drunk by all present. While the guests are engaged in drinking, the boy with a sword (or *pān-soṭṭā*, i.e., a iron-shod stick) in hand, and escorted by two companions, one walking before and the other behind him, proceeds to make obeisance to all. One of the two companions carries on his shoulders a carrying-pole, at one end of which is slung a large jar of rice-beer in a carrying-net and at the other end two jars of *mahuā*-beer in another such net. When the three boys stand before the assembled guests, three men of the girl's party come forward and each of them takes up one of the boys in his arms and sits down with the boy who is now seated on his knees. All the men of the girl's party then make presents of from one copper pice to a rupee each to the bridegroom elect. Then

each of the three boys makes obeisance (*gōṛ-lāgi* or touching the feet) to all present by touching the feet of each man with the hands and then touching his own forehead with the hands. During the time that this *gōṛ-lāgi* is going on, someone of the girl's party holds in one hand a lighted torch made of a sickle, round the iron blade of which a cloth soaked in oil has been wound and lighted.

Pūnp-mejhnā or Phūl-khūsi (Sticking flowers).

Now three young men of the boy's village come forward, each carrying a leaf-cup full of flowers, and stick flowers into the hair (if long) or over the ears of each guest (first of the girl's side and then of the boy's) and makes obeisance to him by touching his feet with the hands and then touching his own forehead. The men of the girl's side make three hats of leaves of straw and put one on the head of each of the three boys. Then the father or guardian of the girl makes a small payment of an *annā* or so to the boys. The men of the girl's side then regale themselves with the pot of rice-beer which the bridegroom has brought for the occasion of the ceremonial touching of the feet (*gōṛ-lāgi*).

On this occasion, the *panches* of both sides settle the amount of the bride-price and the number of cloths to be presented to the bride's people. The amount of the customary bride-price is different in different *pāṛhās*, varying from about rupees seven or nine to about rupees twenty-five. When the parties to the marriage belong to two different *pāṛhās*, in which the customary rates vary, the boy's people usually object to pay at the rate customary in the girl's *pāṛhā* if that rate be higher than that of the boy's *pāṛhā*. And the boy's party usually gain their point if they can cite instances in which men

of the girl's *pāṛhā* were married to brides of the boy's *pāṛhā* and paid bride-price at the lower rate customary in the latter *pāṛhā*. In such cases a compromise is generally effected. As for presents of cloths to be made by the boy's parents to the girl's relatives, the *panch* has no voice in the matter, and the demand of the girl's people on this score has to be met. As a rule, such presents consist of at least one cloth for the girl's mother and one for the girl's father's mother (if alive) and one for the girl's younger brother.

Bāhi-Joṛnā (Clasping the hands).

Two more pots of ceremonial rice-beer (*neg-boṛey*) are now brought out from the boy's house into the courtyard, and water poured into them, and a quantity sufficient for consumption by the *panches* is strained off into an earthen bowl (*ṭāoā*). The *panches* or elders of both sides sit down on a mat spread out east to west in length, the elders of each party occupying a different part of the mat. Two earthen jugs each with a spout attached to it are placed on the mat at the dividing line between the two parties, one jug representing the bride's side and the other the bridegroom's. A leaf cup containing a number of *baris* or small pulse-cakes and a small earthen pot containing oil, besides a silver coin (*rupee*) and a little *āruā* rice on a brass-plate are also placed there. The two jugs, called *saṛkhis*, are so placed that their spouts touch each other. The jug of the girl's side is placed on a little higher level than the other jug, so that liquor poured into the former may flow through the spout into the latter. When both the jugs are filled with rice-beer in this way, a silver coin or rupee is placed on the brim of the jug of the boy's side and a copper coin or pice on the brim of the jug of the

girl's side. In some places the *sarkhis* are placed side by side filled with water in the ordinary way.

The *Panches* or elders of both sides now indulge in mutual jokes and jests. Thus, a man of the girl's party says,—"One of our male-calves has run away. The cowherd says the calf has strayed to this place; so we have come here." A man of the boy's party replies, "The cowherd has deceived you. No he-calf has been to our place." One of the *panches* of the girl's side then makes over as many *baris* to the *panches* of the other side as the number of rupees demanded as bride-price. The number of *baris* is always in excess of the money actually wanted. The *panches* of the boy's side will give back only so many out of these *baris* as represent the actual number of rupees already agreed upon as bride-price. Then the *panches* rise from their seats, and all embrace one another by clasping one another by the arms and hugging one another to the bosom; and the guardians or Panches of the bride and bridegroom dance, locked in mutual embrace. They then resume their seats and drink up the liquor. Then the *panches* make obeisance to the rest of the assembled guests on both sides. The Panches of the village take charge of coins used in the ceremonies mentioned above and make them over to the guardian of the boy who now brings out two other pots of rice-beer, one for the girl's party and the other for the boy's people. The girl's party take their pot of rice-beer apart and drink it with the meat of the goat's leg, set apart for the purpose, which they themselves roast with some *bari* given to them. The people of the boy's side may not have anything to do with this pot of rice-beer or with the roasted meat and *bari*. While the meat is being roasted,

the girl's people are besmeared with oil by three young men of the boy's side who salute them and present them with another pot of rice-beer known as oil-rubbing (*isūng-ḳhasarnā*) beer.

Athkha Kadrikā.

A party of women of the boy's village, with their bellies swathed round with clothes so as to give the appearance of their being big with children now come up leaning on crutches and carrying a small quantity of tooth-picks and leaves on their heads, and one of them carrying a pot of strained rice-beer. They approach the girl's party, crying,— "Who will buy tooth-picks and leaves? Our husbands have gone to work elsewhere. We are in great difficulties, buy these, please." The men of the girl's party say, "What shall we do with tooth-picks and leaves? Will you live with us if we keep you (as mistresses)?" The women reply, "We have many children. Who will maintain us? Do buy our leaves and toothpicks. You will acquire religious merit (*dharam*) if you do so." Three *panches* of the girl's party take down the leaves and tooth-picks and the pot of beer. The beer is then drunk by the *panches* of the girl's side and the three women together. The women salute (*goṛ lāggi*) to all the assembled guests on both sides, and are paid two *annās* or so by the *panches* of the girl's side. Then all drink and are treated to a feast of boiled rice, curry made of *bari* (dried pulse-cakes) and goat's flesh. Then all take tobacco-powder mixed with lime. By evening the guests take leave after mutual *sālāms* (obeisance).

Next morning or on some subsequent day, at least two men known as *jūṛūb ḳhittū* go from the boy's house to the girl's place for the *ḳōhā-pāhi* ceremony; and the same proce-

dure is followed as in the girl's house, the only difference being that when the girl goes to make *gōṛ-lāggi*, her two companions who must be girls of about the same age and height as herself and wearing exactly similar clothing so as to confound the boy's people as to the identity of the bride-elect, instead of carrying a carrying-pole (which is taboo to females) carry on their heads, one a jar of water and another a jar of rice-beer, and after *baris* are given and taken as before, actual silver coins or rupees are paid by the boy's party to the girl's father or guardian as bride-price, together with the number of clothes (*sāṛis*) agreed upon.

(5) Preparations for the Wedding.

On the night of the *Kōhā Pāhi* ceremony at the bride's house, a large number of small roundish wedding cakes (*benjā lāḍḍu*) are prepared by girls in the houses of both parties. These cakes are made of rice-flour moistened in water, pressed into small balls and boiled in water; these are distributed among the young men (*dhāngaṛs*) of the village, every young man (even a married young man) getting his share of these cakes. Other articles made ready in the houses both of bride and bridegroom for the ceremony include one new winnowing-basket (*ḳeter*), one new basket of a large size (*dowrā*) and one of a small size (*bōgi*), one small new earthen pitcher (*ḳāṛsā bhāṇḍā*), one new earthen lamp (*ṭāṭṭi*) with four grooved projections for holding wicks, some tender grass shoots (*dūbbā ghāchhi*), a little vermilion (*sindri*), some sun-dried rice (*ābdā-tiḳhil*), some powdered *āruā* rice (*ābdā-tiḳhil-gāhi-gūṇḍā*), a little salt (*beḳ*), some mustard seeds (*mani*), pieces of raw turmeric (*ḳhenā balḳā*) with three or five bulbs each, a bundle of sheaves of paddy (*ḳhes*) with straw (*būsū*)

attached, some *ūrid* pulse (*Phaseolus roxbūrghii*), a little oil (*māni-isūng*) that has been pressed out of mustard seeds by a female member of the house whose husband is living, and who has remained fasting until the oil has been extracted, and two pots of beer (*boṛey*), one brewed out of rice another out of *māṛuā* (*Elusine corocana*). The stalks of paddy used for the ceremony are specially selected and set apart for the purpose at the time of the preceding harvest. These stalks are selected and made into a sheaf by some young bachelors in the morning after they have satisfied calls of nature; and they must not spit during the selection of the stalks nor leave the place even temporarily before the selection. None of these ceremonial articles may be touched by a widow.

On the morning of the wedding day, the *āngan* or open space in front of the house is cleansed with cowdung diluted in water, and the articles mentioned above are brought out to the *āngan*. Three boys select fine long sheaves out of the bundle of the paddy sheaves mentioned above. The *āruā* rice, turmeric, tender grass and mustard seeds are placed in the earthen pitcher (*ḳārsā-bhāṇḍā*), and the selected paddy stalks are also put into the pitcher in such a way as to make their ends containing the paddy stick out of the pitcher; and the leaves attached to the stalks are plaited together at the mouth of the pitcher so as to cover it up like a lid. Over this lid is placed an earthen lamp with two wicks laid cross-wise so that their ends project outwards. The two ends of each of the two wicks are lighted, being fed by oil and *ūrid* pulse placed in the hollow of the earthen lamp. In some villages a separate lamp-stand (*chaumḳā*) with a similar earthen lamp is provided and similarly lighted. The small

basket (*bowgi* or *nāchuā*) is covered over with *sāl* leaves, and ropes made of the remaining stalks of paddy are wrapped round it. In this basket are carried a new cloth (*māi-sāṛi*) for the bride's mother, a few measures of rice and oil and vermilion for the *isūng-sindri* ceremony to be described presently. This basket and the *ḳārsā-bhāṇḍā* pitcher are arranged side by side on the courtyard (*āngan*) cleaned with cowdung. The *Pāhān* or village-priest anoints the basket and the pitcher with a little rice-flour moistened with water and marks each of them with three vermilion lines. The rice-beer in the two pots is now strained and poured into one vessel. The *Pāhān* then ceremonially pours a little of the rice-beer over the basket and the pitcher, and invokes the *Gāon-deotis* or guardian-spirits of the village, saying,—"You are the *māliḳs* (masters) of the village, O *Gāon-deotis*. May the wedding pass off successfully; and may the couple never quarrel." Then all present drink rice-beer. And two women come out to the *āngan*, one of them taking on her head the ceremonial pitcher (*ḳārsā bhāṇḍā*) and the other the leaf-bowl in and around which are placed the paddy stalks left over after selecting those put into the *ḳārsā-bhāṇḍā*. And thus along with other women they dance the wedding dance to the accompaniment of music played by the village Gōṛāit and a few men of their own tribe. These preliminary ceremonies are gone through in the house of the bridegroom as well as of the bride.

(7) The Marriage Procession.

Generally, the bridegroom and his party start in procession for the bride's village early in the morning. The party includes both male and female relatives. Among the semi-

Hinduised section of the Orāons known as the *Bhagats*, the party halt under a mango tree on the borders of the village, and the bridegroom together with a woman whose husband is living goes to the tree, ties unbleached cotton thread in three folds or turns round its trunk, marking the trunk at each turn with marks of vermilion and of rice-flour moistened with water. The bridegroom ordinarily goes on foot; only in exceptional cases, when his family owns villages or has otherwise grown rich, the bridegroom may be seen riding a pany. In almost all cases, however, the bridegroom carries a sword or knife or sometimes only an iron-shod stick in his hand and is attended by musicians playing upon drugs and flutes. This sword or knife or stick is obviously meant to scare away evil spirits. Besides jars of rice-beer meant for ceremonial uses to be described presently, the party take with them provisions for one meal, as they do not take food at the bride's parents' place until the wedding is over. The bridegroom and bride have to keep fast until the actual wedding is over.

(8) The Welcome (Parchhānā).

On their arrival at the outskirts of the bride's village, the bride's people and their friends and relatives approach them in a body as if to attack or repulse the bridegroom and his party. Men and women on both sides sing indecent and abusive songs accompanied by dances; and young men on both sides, who carry sticks and clubs, whirl them in a mock-attack on the other side. Formerly this was something more than a mock-fight; and some thirty years ago one could see now and then a few members of either party actually receiving wounds in seeking to ward off blows from the opposite side. One man on each side carries a peculiar

lighted torch made of a sickle wrapped round at its blade with cloth and placed on a plate containing oil. An old woman of the bride's side now approaches the bridegroom's party. She carries on her head, over a pad of unbleached cotton thread, a brass jug filled with water in which is dipped a mango twig with its leaves sticking out at the mouth of the jug. She takes out the mango twig, and with it sprinkles water from the jug, first on the bridegroom and then on the rest of the party. The object of this sprinkling with water is, or at any rate was in origin, probably lustration, though now the original purpose is in many places forgotten and there is a tendency to explain it in the manner of the Hindus as a benedictory and not a lustral rite; although when it is suggested to an Orāon that the object is lustration he readily assents that it must be so.

(9) The Bridegroom pressing the Bride's Heels with his Toes (gūrkhi tirkhnā).

Two or more men of the bride's side now take up the bridegroom on their arms and carry him inside the bride's house; one or two relatives of the bridegroom sometimes follow him into the house, and the rest of the bridegroom's party go to the quarters (*ḍerā*) allotted to them. The bride and bridegroom have their feet washed and are then made to stand on a curry-stone under which are placed three or five bundles of thatching-grass and a yoke. The bridegroom stands behind the bride with the great toe and second toe of his left foot enclosing the bride's left heel as a fork. During this ceremony the couple are screened round on all sides with cloth screens. A few female relatives of the bride and bridegroom remain inside the screens. One or more male relatives of

the bride and bridegroom stand outside the screens, sword in hand, and go on brandishing their swords to ward off the evil eye and evil spirits. In some places, the couple are anointed all over their limbs with pounded turmeric diluted in oil by female relatives. The screens are then taken down and the couple are then bathed in water fetched in two new earthen pitchers from some neighbouring spring or tank by two unmarried girls. While the water is being poured over the heads of the couple, a woman of the bride's party rubs the head of the bridegroom with her hands and a woman of the bridegroom's party similarly rubs the head of the bride. The bridegroom then puts a mark of vermilion diluted in oil on the forehead of the bride with the ring-finger of his left hand and the bride similarly marks the forehead of the bridegroom. Then two elderly women take up on their heads, one the grindstone (*silouṭ*) and the other the curry-stone (*loṛhā*); some other women take up in their hands the *Kārṣā-bhāṇḍā* and the bundles of thatching grass and with these they perform a merry wedding dance. When the couple have been bathed, they are given a change of clothes. The bridegroom is then taken to the quarters allotted to his party.

(10) Isūng Sindri, or Anointing with Oil and Vermilion.

After a short time the bridegroom is again taken to the bride's house, where a mat is turned upside down three times and spread out with its length from north to south. The couple are seated on it, the bride to the left of the bridegroom, both facing east. The female relatives of bride bring a *ḳiā* or small red wooden receptacle (of the size of a snuff-box) containing vermilion, and so too do the female relatives of the bridegroom; and each party exchanges its vermilion-box

(*ḳiā-sindri*) with that of the other party. Then either an elder sister or elder brother's wife of the bride combs the hair of the couple and ties up the bride's hair into a knot and takes up vermilion from the vermilion-box (*ḳiā-sindri*), dilutes the vermilion in oil and smears the vermilion, thus diluted, on the forehead and the temples of the bridegroom and on the forehead and parting (*sinthi*) of the combed hair of the bride. In some places the vermilion marks are made by the bridegroom and bride on each other's forehead and temples, their female relations assisting them by holding and guiding their hands in putting the *sindūr* marks. During this ceremony one or more men go on playing upon reed-flutes and those who can afford to do so also call *Goṛāit* musicians to play upon drums and pipes. Young men and women sing marriage songs. Many of these songs, which relate to conjugal love and happiness and are full of indecent allusions and abuses, are composed in the local Hindi dialect. Such songs in the Orāon language as are sung on this occasion relate mostly to matter-of-fact things of every-day life. Thus, a most common Orāon song sung on this occasion runs as follows:—

Khoiōndrḳā ḳānnān,
Hoā bhāiyārē sendrā ṭōnḳā,
Chitrā māḳān lāoāgē,
Hoā bhāiyārē sendrā ṭōnḳā.

(Translation.)

The arrow by the son's bride brought,[30]
Do take it to the hunting-ground!
To kill the striped deer, brother,
Do take it to the hunting-ground!

30. *Khoiōndrḳā ḳānnān.* This refers to the arrow which the bride's parents hand over to her while sending her to her husband's place.

The *isūng-sindri* is now-a-days considered the essential part of a marriage ceremony. It may also be noted that from after this ceremonial tying-up of the bride's hair into a knot she may not take cooked food at the hands of a person not belonging to her tribe. That the anointing of vermilion constitutes the essential marriage rite is quaintly brought out in an Orāon folktale. It tells us that four friends went out together in search of employment away from their home. While in their travels they had to spend a night in a dense forest, they slept under a mango-tree, each taking his turn in keeping guard. The man whose turn came first was proficient in carving wood and he took up a fallen branch and chiselled it into a female human figure; the man whose turn to watch came next was a smith and adorned the figure with jewellery; the third friend was a weaver and dressed up the image in a *sāṛi* cloth; and the fourth man who was a vermilion-vendor anointed the wooden figure with vermilion on her forehead, and forthwith the image came to life. Then each of the four friends claimed the right to take her as his wife, and fell out amongst themselves. A holy man appeared on the scene, and they referred their dispute to him, and the verdict that he pronounced was that—"the man who made her image was her father, the man who clothed her was her brother, the man who decked her in jewellery was her maternal uncle and it is the man who anointed vermilion on her forehead who is her husband."

(11) Gūndāri dhūkna.

The young men of the village now bring into the room an earthen vessel (*bhāṇḍa*) in which they have put some pepper, kitchen-soot, dried dung of pigs, and similar other substances,

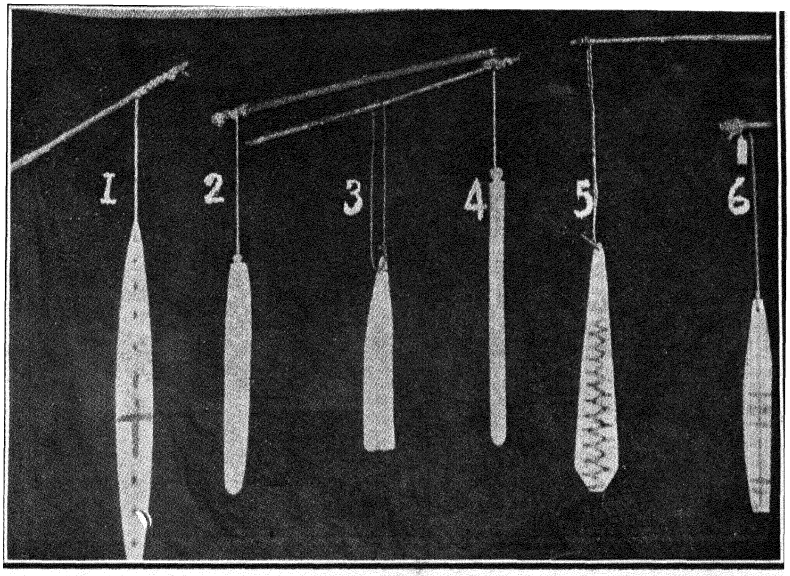

Illustration 17.

Bull-roarers in use among the Nāgās of Assam.

1. Angami bull-roarer from village Khonoma. Used as a toy. (Kheli sub-tribe) (19″ long).
2. Angami bull-roarer from Khizabarui. (Khizami sub-tribe) used as a toy or bird-scarer. (13″).
3. Angami bull-roarer. Village Larwie (10″).
4. Bull-roarer from the Khasia and Jaintia Hills. Believed to cause pestilence (15″).
5. Southern Sangtam bull-roarer. Calls up tigers (13″).
6. Sema Naga bull-roarer (11″).

[*See Pages 87-88.*]

and, after shutting the doors and other openings of the room, put fire to the contents of the vessel. The pungent smoke issuing out of it make people sneeze; and then the bridegroom's people pay the young men a few *annas* up to a rupee as a sop to make them stop the nuisance.

The females of the bridegroom's party now come with one pot of rice-beer from their quarters to the bride's house and the females of the bride's party also bring out one pot of rice-beer from the house. These are known as *isūm-sindri jhārā* or ceremonial rice-beer for besmearing vermilion. In some places, the Pāhān or priest of the bride's village or some elder of the clan pours libations of rice-beer on the ground to the village spirits (*gāon-deoti*) of the village and to the ancestor-spirits of the bride. The woman who rubbed oil and turmeric paste on the bridegroom gives him rice-beer to drink in a leaf-cup three times and similarly the woman who smeared the bride with vermilion gives her three leaf-cupfuls of rice-beer to drink. Then some women of the bride's party distribute liquor in leaf-cups to each of the women of the bridegroom's party and the women of the bridegroom's side distribute rice-beer in leaf-cups to the women of the bride's party. Then the bridegroom is taken back to his quarters after the bridegroom and bride together have saluted each guest individually.

(11) Khiri Tengnā (Propounding Riddles).

Three or five leaf-cups are now placed before the couple. A woman of the bride's party takes up one leaf-cup after another with two reeds to serve as a pair of tongs, fills each cup with rice-beer, carries the cup with the pair of reeds used as tongs, first to the lips of the bridegroom, then to

the lips of the bride (who are however not to drink a drop of the liquor) and finally throws it on to the roof of the hut. In some places each leaf-cup is ceremonially waved three times round and round in front of bride or bridegroom, as the case may be, and other women make the *ūlū-lū* sound with their pouting lips. Each time that this liquor known as *Khiri tengnā boṛey* (riddle-propounding rice-beer) is presented to the lips of the bridegroom, the woman tells him in jest, "*Ōnā Bābu! Uiyā ḳāloey; ābiri ḳhardōey, ḳūlḳirā āmmōnḳā, ḳhardōey āmm ōnā.*" "Drink Boy; when you go to plough, then you will feel tired; if you feel hungry, thirsty or tired, drink water (i.e., rice-beer)." The bride too is similarly addressed while rice-beer is presented to her lips. "*Ōnae, Māiā āmm. Gōbbare peshā ḳirḳi chūndḳi; āmm ōndārḳi ḳhārdḳi ōndāi āmm ōnāey.*" "Drink girl, [this] water. When you feel tired after collecting cowdung, [or after] husking [paddy], [or after] bringing water, take and drink [this] water." These cups of rice-beer ceremonially presented are not, as I have said, actually drunk by bridegroom or bride. Before the cups containing *Khiri-tengnā bōṛey* are presented to the lips of bride and bridegroom, in some places, by way of jest, some man or woman who bears some "joking relationship" with the couple (such as a sister's husband or wife's sister) presents empty leaf-cups to the lips of the couple saying, "Drink, Bābu, you are thirsty." "Ah! The *Māiā* (girl) is angry and refuses to drink." Empty leaf-plates are also placed before them and a pretence of serving rice on these plates and of washing the hands of the couple, as if after they have eaten, is made. Then actual rice-beer is given first to the bridegroom to drink and next to the bride,

and then distributed to all the assembled guests, male and female.

Now an old man or an old woman addresses the couple as follows, three times over again:—

Khiri ḳhiri māni ḳhiri; telā-ḳhōppānū men iri; mendāeḳā mālā, Bābū mindiḳā Māiā? Menjḳirāe. Bābūs sendrāḳālōs ḳārngā-ḳālōs. Eret-lāggo tir-lāggo lāngṛā mānōs ṭhūṭhā mānōs. 'Āsin lāngṛā āmḳebā, ṭhūṭhā āmḳebā, Māiā. Mindiḳā mālā? Āur Māiā, chūlhānū erḳhōs, chūnjḳānū ūmblōs Āsin ūmblōs āmḳebā; āur chūlhānū irḳhiōs āmḳebā, Māiā. Mindiḳā mālā? Dāngṛā mōchā ḳāōs. Ādin ōndrōs. Ādin irtḳey, Māi. 'Ādin āhṛā ādhā ādhā mōḳḳhē. Ādin, Bābu, mōḳhō-hōlē mōḳḳhāmḳebā, Bābu. Mendāe ḳā mālā? 'Āur bhūtang-lō tōḳḳhā ḳāo, mānnenti ḳhātrō. Ādigāhi ḳheḍ esrō, ḳhekḳhā esrō, ādin lāngṛi mānjā ādin ṭhūthi mānjā āmḳebā, Bābu. Mendāiḳā mālā Bābu? Nagad nānḳe ōnḳē; menā Bābu, ninhu Māiā, mēnāe. Nagad nānḳē, ōnḳē. Innāntim sangē nānḳē ōnḳē. Khiri ḳhiri ānti telāḳhoppānū mānē ḳhiri ānti telāḳhōppānū; menē iri; menā Bābu, menāe māiā innānti minjḳirāḳē, menā Bābu, menjḳirāḳe. Hubṛāntim munjrā āḳḳu, ḳālā āḳḳu. Chōā, ōl āggā.

"I am now going to tell you riddles—true riddles. In an ebony bush it looks upward. 31 Do you hear boy? Do you hear, girl? Go on hearing (i.e., retain in your memory what I say). The boy goes to hunt. He will be hit at with an arrow, he will become lame; [yet] don't you call him lame, O, girl. Do you hear or not? Again, he will pass stools into the hearth, micturate into the husking-mortar, [but yet] don't say he has made water, don't say he has passed stools. Do

31. The answer to this is, *Asāglāro*, i.e., a kind of hairy insect which is poisonous.

you hear or not? He will go to cut up the carcase of same dead cattle; he will bring that [home]; do you cook that. Both of you eat the meat half and half. O Boy, if she eats [much], don't say she has eaten [much.] Do you hear or not? And if she goes to pluck *bhūtang* from a *bhūtang* (*pākuṛ*) tree, and if she falls down [from the tree] and her leg is broken, [or] her hand is broken, don't say, O Boy, that she has become lame in her leg or mained in her arm. Do you hear or not, Child? Work well, drink well. Listen, boy; listen thou too, O girl. From this day work together and eat together. I have finished my speech. Now, go; get up and salute [all], both of you." After the couple salute all present, the same woman tells them, "*Irbārim ōl āggā, ōl ākkā rāku. Kālā derā.*" "Now, you have finished. Go to your quarters." The bridegroom is then escorted back to his quarters.

(12) Sabhā Sindri.

After the *Khiri-tengna* ceremony, the bride and bridegroom are taken to the marriage-platform (*māṇḍōā*) and their formal and open anointing with vermilion known as *Sābhā-Sindri* is performed. Both are seated on a mat turned upside down three times and then spread out on the mud-platform. The bride sits on the left of the bridegroom, with their faces to the east, the bride's sister or other near female relative marks the bridegroom's forchead and temples with vermilion diluted in oil. And similarly the bridegroom's sister or other near female relative marks the bride's forchead and temples with vermilion mixed in oil. Then bridegroom and bride are conducted together to every one of the guests and relatives and each one is saluted by the couple. Then the bridegroom is conducted back to the quarters of his party.

(13) 'Mandi-ona' or eating rice together.

Then some relatives of the bride take a pot of rice-beer, some tobacco leaves, and one small pot of oil, a jug of water, and some tooth-brushes made of tree-twigs to the quarters allotted to the bridegroom's party. When dinner is ready, the bridegroom is again conducted back to the bride's house and both bride and bridegroom are given a meal of rice and curry (*āmkhi*) made of *chhiḍḍa* or *baris* which are small cakes made of *ūrid* (*Phaseolus Roxburghii*) pulse and cucumber. When bride and bridegroom have eaten, dinner is served to all the guests. After dinner, tobacco and lime are distributed to the guests to chew. Then after mutual salutations, the bridegroom's party take leave of the bride's people, and lead the bride home with them. The bride's parents hand over to her an arrow which she has to carry till her arrival at her husband's house. This is meant to ward off the evil eye and to scare away any spirits that might seek to follow her or harm her on the way. The girl is carried some distance from her parents' home in the arms of some relative of her husband. For the first and last time the elder brother of the bridegroom may touch the new bride now; he usually carries her in his arms a short distance and then female relatives carry her, turn by turn, to some further distance. Formerly, it is said, while the bride was being thus carried to her husband's home, her people would make a show of rescuing her and carrying her off, whereupon the bridegroom's people would pursue her and bring her back and run away with her; she would be again rescued by her people, and this acting would go on for a distance of a mile or more, and then the bride's people would return to their village, leaving the bride with her husband's people.

CEREMONIES AT THE BRIDEGROOM'S HOUSE AFTER MARRIAGE.

(1) Reception of the Bride.

On arrival at the bridegroom's house, the bride's feet are washed with water in a brass dish by some female member of the family. Two baskets are placed, one next to another, in the courtyard of the house. The bridegroom walks behind the bride pressing her heels with his toes (as in the *gūṛkhi-tirkhnā* ceremony described above), and both put their feet together first into one basket and then into the other. The baskets are then again placed on their way one behind the other and they again put their feet successively into them as before. And this process is repeated till they reach the doorway of the hut when they both step into one basket and remain standing on it. The door is now shut against them or rather against the bride by a younger sister of the bridegroom who does not open the door until the bride pays her an *anna* or so. When the door is opened, the bride enters the room, and she may not leave it until the *ḍāṇḍā kāṭṭā* or the ceremony of "cutting the evil teeth" has been performed by a *māti* in the manner described above (pp. 126-8).

(2) Sindri-pābē.

After the *ḍāṇḍā kāṭṭā* ceremony, the bride is bathed in the house with water brought from the village spring or tank or well. Then a female member of the family, or, in some villages, the *Gōṛāitin* (wife of the village musician and messenger) anoints her forehead and the parting of her hair with vermilion. The day's proceedings terminate with a feast to fellow-villagers and relatives.

(3) First Bath and Meal.

Very early next morning the couple are conducted to the village *ḍāri* or spring, where the bride has to put three marks of vermilion diluted in oil at the mouth of the spring or on the wood or stone marking the spring. The leaf in which the vermilion was carried is thrown into the water of the *ḍāri*. It is said that, in former days, the bridegroom on this occasion would rub a kind of red earth over the head of the bride and cleanse and wash it, and so would the bride cleanse and wash the head of the bridegroom. But this custom has now fallen into disuse. Then the bride and bridegroom each draws a jar of water from the spring and the bridegroom carries the two jars home in a *siṛā bāhingā* or carrying-pole and nets. On the arrival of the couple at the house, the elder brothers of the bridegroom put down at the bride's feet an *anna* or so of copper coin and take up the water-jars and deftly pour some water on her head and she promptly enters the hut as if to avoid them. This signifies that from that day the new bride and her husband's elder brothers are taboo to each other. The bride and bridegroom are then seated apart in the same room. A meal of rice, pulse, etc. is first served to the bridegroom and then to the bride who is also given a portion of rice from the plate from which her husband has eaten. The bride sits quiet and does not touch the food unless and until some money (from four *annas* upwards) is paid to her.

(4) 'Erā-kirtānā' and 'Bāhārāont.'

A day or two later, a number of female relatives of the bride come to the bridegroom's house to take back the bride to her parents' place. On their arrival the bridegroom's

people give them water to wash their feet. They are then entertained with plenty of rice-beer which is followed up with a hearty meal of boiled rice, pulse-soup, vegetable curry, *etc.* The bride is then taken back to her parents' place. Generally the bridegroom is also invited and taken to his father-in-law's place along with the bride. Two or three of his relatives accompany the bridegroom on this occasion. In some instances the bridegroom is invited and taken to his father-in-law's place sometime later; but this must be done at any rate within the year of marriage. The bridegroom and his companions are entertained for a day or two as best as the means of the father-in-law allows, and then return home with the bride.

(5) Jhārā Gūṇḍā.

When going back to her husband's place, the bride takes with her as a present to her husband's family from her parents a pot of rice-beer (*jhārā*) and a small basketful of riceflour (*gūṇḍā*). These are carried by her female companions. It is believed that unless this present of *jhārā gūṇḍā*, as it is called, is sent with the girl, she will become barren, or, even if she has any issue, the children will be sickly and will otherwise suffer pain or some other trouble. On the bride's arrival at her husband's place, some female member of the bridegroom's family will distribute the riceflour to every Orāon family in the village.

For two or three years after her marriage, the girl now and then pays short visits to her parents' place, particularly on occasions of periodical religious or socio-religious festivals. Should she happen to go to or stay at her father's place on the occasion of the *Karam* festival during these years, her

husband's people generally send her presents of one pot of rice-beer, one new *sāṛi* cloth, two or three seers of parched rice (*chiuṛā*) and three or four seers of *āruā* rice, a seer or a half seer of molasses, besides one or more cucumbers, in a basket dyed red.

(6) 'Āch-ōthornā' or extracting thorns.

For three or four consecutive years or more after the marriage, the girl's people are every year invited to the girl's husband's place after the *Phāguā* festival. They come and stay for a day or two and are entertained with food and drink. The object of this visit is supposed to be to take out thorns that may have pricked the bridegroom's feet during the annual hunt at the *Phāgu* festival. But this traditional object is now only remembered through the name Āch-ōthorna, and there is no actual or pretented extraction of thorns.

(7) Ceremony at first Pregnancy:—'Jōdā-Kāmnā.'

When an Orāon wife is with child for the first time, a sacrificial ceremony is performed with the object of finally cutting off her connection with the ancestor-spirits of her father and the village-deities and spirits of her father's village. The father is invited for the occasion and comes to his son-in-law's place with a few kinsmen of his own. They are received with the usual formalities. Their feet are washed, and they are seated on a mat in an open space a little away from the house and are offered tobacco and lime to chew. A pig is then brought out and some grains of *āruā* rice are placed on the ground before it, and while the pig is eating the rice, the elders of the village sprinkle rice on its head, saying, "From this day may Ye, O Ancestor-

spirits, *deotas* (cities) and *bhūts* (spirits) of the pregnant woman's father have no concern whatsoever with her. Leave her, ye Ancestor-spirits, deities and ghosts." The pig is decapitated with an axe. Then the assembled guests go to the house of the husband of the woman and are regaled with rice-beer. When rice and meat have been cooked, they have a hearty meal. After chewing tobacco mixed with lime and after mutual salutations, the pregnant woman's people take leave of her husband's people.

(8) Divorce and Widow Marriage.

Ordinarily an Orāon can only take one maiden as his wife. It is only an Orāon having no issue by his first wife, who may be allowed to take even a maiden as his second wife in the regular *benjā* form. A widower may marry again even if he has children. But he can only marry either a widow or a divorced or deserted woman or a woman whose husband has left the country and has not been heard of for years. But in the last case, if the former husband returns later, he may take back his wife or may be bought off with a refund of the bride-price paid by him. In the case of a deserted wife, the husband has to be formally asked, before taking another husband, if he wants to take her back. In the case of a woman who has herself deserted her husband and does not want to go back to him, the bride-price paid by the husband must be returned before she can take another husband. If an Orāon bachelor wants to marry a widow, he has first to go through a mock marriage with a brass jar (*lōṭā*) or with a flower, which is marked with vermilion by the bridegroom by way of marriage and then marry the widow as a 'second wife.' By the second marriage a widow

severs her relationship with the family of her former husband unless the second husband be a younger brother of the former husband. The marriage of a widow or widower can only be celebrated in the *sāgāi* form. In this form of marriage the ceremonies are much less elaborate than in the regular marriage of a bachelor to a maiden. A small bride-price of five rupees or so is paid and a cloth presented to the bride by the bridegroom, and bride and bridegroom mark each other on the forehead with vermilion diluted in oil; the bridegroom also anoints vermilion on the parting of the bride's hair. Neither *ḳānṛsā-bhāṇḍā* nor *ḳāṛsā-ṭāṭṭi* nor *Choumḳā* nor *nāchuā* nor *mai-sāri* is taken to the bride's place, nor does any music accompany the bridal party.

The main grounds on which divorce is permissible are,—(1) that the wife is a *lāṇḍi* or run-away, that is, she habitually runs away from her husband's place; (2) that she is a *ḳuṛiā* or habitual idler and neglects her household duties, or cannot perform them properly, e.g. cannot climb trees to pluck edible leaves, *etc.* or cannot break clods of earth in the fields or manure the soil; (3) that she is a *chūrni* or thief who steals and sells grain, *etc.* from the house; (4) that she possesses the evil eye (*najar*) or is a witch (*ḍāin*); (5) that she has been caught in adultery; (6) that she has brought sickness or misfortune and ill-luck to her husband's family; (7) that the wife is barren, or the husband is impotent; (8) that either the husband or the wife is a lunatic; and (9) that either the husband or the wife has been converted to Christianity. Confirmed bad temper and frequent quarrels between husband and wife may also justify divorce. No special ceremonies or formalities are required to effect a divorce.

III. DEATH AND ITS ATTENDANT CEREMONIES.

(1) At the Deceased's House.

When an Orāon dies, a loud chorus of lamentation and wailing is set up by the female relatives of the deceased. The dead body is taken out into the courtyard of the house by the usual door, with its head to the south and feet to the north. As soon as the dead body is taken out of the hut, ashes are strewn on the floor and the doors are shut. The doors are not opened again until the party accompanying the funeral procession return from the *masān* or cremation-ground. When the corpse is brought out into the courtyard, it is bathed in cold water. If the body is that of a woman whose husband is living, vermilion mixed in oil is anointed on its forehead and in some places on the parting of the hair of the head by some other woman. In the case of important persons a small leaf-cup with some oil and a wick placed in it and lighted serve as a lamp by the side of the dead body. By the side of this lamp, where such lamp is lighted, and in other cases by the side of the corpse are placed a basket and a small earthen jar. Relatives and fellow-villagers, on hearing the wailings of the bereaved family, hasten to the deceased's house, each carrying some paddy (called *bāipi*) in a small basket (*nāḍhuā*) or on a winnowing basket (*sūp*). On their arrival they go round the empty basket kept by the side of the corpse, and then empty into it the contents of the baskets or winnowing-fans in their own hands.

(2) At the Cremation Ground.

In the meantime, a few fellow-villagers have constructed a wooden frame (*sārhā*) made of two long wooden poles and

a few cross-bars fixed across it. On this bier the corpse is laid on its back with the head to the north, and is then covered over with a new cloth. Whether the corpse be that of a male or a female it is only women who must carry it on the bier on their shoulders or with the hands, to the *masān* or cremation ground of the village. But a pregnant woman may not take part in carrying the corpse or in any other rite connected with the dead. In many villages the practice of women carrying the corpse is now being given up. Relatives, male and female, and fellow-villagers join the funeral procession. If the deceased was an aged person, music generally accompanies the funeral procession. Boiled rice, and some oil and copper coins are taken to the cremation ground for the deceased. If the deceased belonged to a well-to-do family, a small straw-bundle (*tipsi*) containing paddy is carried by some man behind the corpse, and women also take with them to the cremation-ground a few measures of paddy is small baskets and a little oil. At the cremation-ground, all the paddy, both that in the bundle and that in the baskets, is placed on the ground at the spot over which the head of the corpse rests. Female relatives pour oil over the head of the corpse. *Ūsnā* rice 32 and copper coins are also put into the mouth of the corpse by the women, and rice-beer is dropped into the mouth of the corpse by each relative. While putting rice into the mouth of the corpse, the women address the deceased saying,—" *Ōndā, ōnnā,*

32. Rice which is purboiled before husking is called *ūsnā* rice, and which is not purboiled before husking but only dried in the sun is known as *āruā* rice. All rice used in funeral rites must be *ūsnā* and not *āruā* rice.

ākḳu emān\ āmbḳāē. Ākḳu nighāe daharen irḳāē' Hūrmi rōg pāp hōārḳi ḳālā." "Take, eat. Now you have given us up. Now you have seen your way. Go, taking [with you] all our sickness and sins."

(3) Provisional Burial.

If a death has occurred before the setting in of the monsoon rains, the corpse is cremated at once. But if an Orāon dies after the sprouting of the new paddy seedlings of the year in June-July but before the harvest in November, the dead body is temporarily buried in the *masān* in the following manner. A pit, north to south in length, is dug. Three long branches of the *ḳaranj (pongamia glabra)* tree are each doubled up in the form of the letter **U** and let down into the pit so that the two ends of each branch stick out along and above the eastern and western walls of the pit, and the central portion of each branch lies flat on the floor of the pit. Then three *sāl* wood poles are placed crossways over them at the bottom of the pit with their length from north to south. The corpse is now carried three times round this pit, the carriers keeping the pit to their left. Then the corpse is let down into the pit. Copper coins, and,—in the cases of well-to-do persons,—even silver coins, are put into the mouth or tied up in a cloth and placed under the head of the corpse. These coins, it is said, are meant for the deceased to buy food with. The nearest relatives first throw each a handful of earth into the grave with his or her left hand, then others present similarly throw handfuls of earth with their left hands, so as to fill up the grave. Then one or more men take up spades and level the earth thrown into the grave. An earthenware jar (*gāgri*) filled with water is placed over a straw pad (*neṭō*) upon the grave at the spot

directly over the head of the corpse. Three tooth-brushes (*ḳaṛuṛḳā* or *dāntan*) made of twigs of the *sāl* (*shorea robusta*) tree are put into the jar. These tooth-brushes are known as *masṇā-ḳāṛuṛḳā* or 'tooth-brushes of the cremation-ground,' and are meant for the deceased to brush his or her tooth with. Three perforations are then made on one side of the jar to allow water to flow out. Pounded tumeric diluted in water is then sprinkled all around by way of purification.

Now all go to some stream or tank, and bathe. After bathing, the funeral party return to the house of the deceased. There, on a part of the courtyard which has been cleaned with cowdung diluted in water, a quantity of grain-husks has been piled, and on the return of the funeral party, this chaff is set fire to and oil poured on it so that it emits smoke. Over this smoke every one of the party places the palms of his or her hands by way of ceremonial purification. Turmeric diluted in oil has been kept ready. And as a further lustral rite, every one rubs a little of this turmeric paste on some part of his or her body, and then goes home. After the harvest, the corpse is exhumed and burnt in the manner described below.

When a death takes place after harvest and before the sprouting of the new paddy plants, the dead body is carried to the *maśāṇ* or cremation-ground in the same way as described above. There a pile of wood is arranged over six small wooden posts planted in two parallel rows of three each running north to south; one row being placed to the east of the other. The corpse is placed on this funeral pile with its head pointing to the south. Every near relative of the deceased puts two pice or more into its mouth. Then some wood is piled over the corpse, and a son of the deceased,

or, in his absence, some other near relative waves some fire on some straw round the mouth of the corpse, and this fire is then set to the wood. Every one present then places a few pieces of wood over the corpse. It may be noted that relatives, even from other villages, bring one or more pieces of wood for this purpose.

(4) Lustration after Cremation.

When fire is set to the pyre, the women leave the burning place (*masān*), and after bathing in some tank or stream (but not in a *ḍāṛi* or spring) go first to the house of the deceased where they undergo ceremonial purification through fumigation as described above and anoint their bodies with a little turmeric made into a paste with oil, and then return home. The men stay at the burning-place till the corpse is reduced to ashes. Then they bathe themselves in a stream or tank (but not in a spring), undergo lustration by fumigation at the deceased's house, and anoint themselves with turmeric paste.

In the case of corpses provisionally buried as described above they are taken out before the *ḳōhābenjā* or *hāṛbōṛā* ceremony to be presently described, and cremated, as I have said, in the manner described above, and the other rites as detailed below are then gone through both in their case as in the case of those dying after the harvest and before the sprouting of the new rice plants.

(5) Ūtūr Khilā.

On return from the cremation-ground a circular or square pit, about nine inches deep and six inches in diameter, is dug in the courtyard of the house of the deceased. Some fried cotton-seeds (*bāngūr*) or, in some villages, fried *ūrid* pulse (*phaseolous roxburghii*), fried *lōṭni* (a species of mustard),

Illustration 18.

The wooden post in the Bachelors' Dormitory at Borhambey provided with a slit to represent the female organ, and roughly carved into human head, neck and trunk.

[*See Page 86.*]

lōhsingā (slag of iron), and *lāoā* (a kind of fried rice) are kept in a cup made of three leaves of the *jitiā pipar* (*ficus religiosa*) tree, with the stems of the leaves joined together. Some pounded turmeric diluted in water is brought in another leaf-cup. The leaf-cups are placed by the side of the pit.

Then one of the village elders sits on the western side of the pit, with his face to the east, and sacrifices a reddish chicken or a pig, by severing its head with the hands in the case of a chicken or with a ploughshare in the case of a pig and severs the beak of the fowl or the snout of the pig and drops the blood and throws the beak of the fowl or the snout of the pig into the pit. Then every one present takes up a little of the contents of the first leaf-cup, waves them round the pit and throws them with the left hand into the pit, and then touches with the hands the turmeric diluted in water. While doing this, the sacrificer says,—"*Falnā* (names) *gōtra-gāhi pāchchō-pachchgi ḳheḳhelḳiā rādar, isinhū sangē nānḳē* "—i. e. "Ye ancestors of such-and-such (names) clan, who are in the nether world, do ye also take this person (deceased) into your company." Then all the *dōnās* or leaf-cups are thrown into the pit, and the pit is filled up with earth. Then a large piece of bread and three cakes made of rice-flour are prepared. A new earthenware jug is painted on the outside with rice-flour diluted in water, and some rice-beer and half-boiled rice are put into this jar. Then the three rice-flour cakes are perforated and strung into a thread in the form of a garland which is placed at the neck of the jar. The jar is covered up at the mouth with the rice-flour bread, and is marked with three vermilion marks. This jar is then wound round with a piece of new cloth. The *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* or *bhelwāphāṛi* ceremony as des-

cribed above (*ante* pp. 126-8) is also performed at the same time.

(6) 'Hōchōl-pūnp Pesā' or Gathering the Bones.

Then women go to the cremation ground (*masāṇ*) and pick up the remnants of the bones of the neck, arms, legs and chest of the deceased with their left hands. They place these on a brass-plate or on a new earthen-ware plate and then wash the bones in a new piece of cloth, anoint them with turmeric paste, and put them into the new painted earthenware jar described above. Some copper coins are put into the jar by members of the family and other relatives. As each bone is being put into the jar, each woman kisses the bone, though not actually touching the bone with the lips. The jar containing the bones is placed on a straw pad (*neṭō*), and a *ling* or *piūnṛi* or image made of *phūṭchirā* or *ḳūsa* grass to represent the deceased is placed in the jar with the bones. The half-boiled rice is laid out on three leaf-plates near the spot where the corpse was cremated. The part of the cremation-ground where the cremation took place is then cleaned with cow-dung and water by one woman and swept clean with a *sindūār* twig by another woman.

(7) Ekh-mānkhā or Taking back the Shade.

In the meanwhile, a small chicken, either grey or mottled in colour, is taken inside the room where the deceased person breathed his last. The chicken is fed on *ūṣṇā* rice from a winnowing-basket. In this room is now placed a brass jug *(lōṭa)* filled with water and over it a leaf-cup with oil and a wick in it which is lighted. A man remains inside the room while some women go out on the way towards the cremation-ground, carrying with them a ploughshare, a sickle,

three twigs in the form of tooth-brushes, some straw, a few pieces of burning charcoal, a brass jug filled with water, and some rice in a leaf-cup, and a little water in another leaf-cup. About half way to the cremation-ground the three twigs *(kaṛuṛkā)* are planted on the ground to serve as a frame for a miniature hut, and the straw is placed over the frame as a thatch. This straw-hut is now set fire to with the burning charcoal. While this symbol of a hut is burning, the women shout three times saying,—"*Bārā, falnā* (names) *nighāe kūmbā ōlā lāggi* !"—"Come thou, so-and-so (naming the deceased), thy hut is burning!" Then they return homewards striking the sickle against the ploughshare but otherwise maintaining strict silence. When they reach the door of the deceased's hut, they call out to the man waiting inside,—"*Bālin tisgārchiā,*" "Open the door." The man asks,—"*Nim ne hekdār? Nim āpan hekdār, ki biran hekdār?*" "Who are you? Are you our own, or strangers?" The women reply,—"*Āpan*" "Your own people." The man again asks, "*Dūkh rādār ki sūkh rā'dār?*" "Do you come in sorrow or in rejoicing?" The women reply, "*Sūkh rā'dām.*" "In rejoicing." The door is now opened and all enter and examine the flame of the lamp. If the flame is seen wavering, it is believed that the shade has come back to the house. If the flame does not waver but remains steady, the women again go out and repeat the '*ekh-mānkhā*' ceremony. When the flame wavers and it is inferred that the shade has come back, the ashes on the floor are examined to see if there are any traces of footsteps of any animals or reptiles. If such traces are found, it is believed that some spirit or witch has caused the death. But if no such trace is found, it is believed that it was a case of natural death.

(8) 'Kōhā Benjā' or the 'Great Wedding' or Hāṛ-bōṛā (Bone-drowning).

The different painted earthenware jugs containing the bones of the deceased Orāons of a village whose bones have been awaiting final disposal, are now carried in procession to the *ḳūṇḍi* or bone-drowning place by the side of a stream or pool or water-course. Ordinarily there is only one *ḳūṇḍi* for the Orāons of a village, where the Bhūinhār families of the village as also such old rāiyat *(jeṭh-rāiyat)* families as have given up the practice of taking the bones of their dead to the *ḳūṇḍi* or their old ancestral (Bhūinhāri) village, consign the bones of their dead. But each clan has a separate block or slab of stone planted or embedded by the side of the *ḳūṇḍi*. These stones are known as *pūlḳhi* stones. In some villages, a family or families belonging to a clan different from that of the Orāon Bhūinhārs or original settlers of the village, have selected a separate *ḳūṇḍi* of their own, a little apart from the *ḳūṇḍi* of the Bhūinhārs and other Jeṭh-rāiyats. As for other Orāon families of a village, they generally take the bones of their dead to the *ḳūṇḍis* of their respective ancestral (Bhūinhāri) villages for final disposal. Generally when the new village is at a considerable distance from its ancestral Bhūinhāri village, an Orāon family gradually gives up the practice of taking the bones of its dead to that village and consigns the bones to the *ḳūṇḍi* of its adopted village or, more rarely, establishes a new *ḳūṇḍi* of its own in the latter village.

The small earthenware jars containing the bones of the different deceased Orāons of the village are carried on the palms of their hands by their respective female relatives

who go dancing. Along with the funereal procession, another woman carries the sacred *ḳārsā-bhāṇḍā*, to bless the union of the souls of the recent dead with those of their predeceased kinsmen. Although the use of this benedictory *ḳārsā* has now fallen into disuse in several Orāon villages, the bone-drowning ceremony is still everywhere named by the Orāons as *Kohā benjā* (the great marriage) or *Pāchgi benjā* (marriage of the old people). The Orāons of the village, male and female, and relatives from other villages as well, accompany the procession. For each deceased, a female relative carries to the *ḳūṇḍi* the portion of half-boiled rice that has been left over after putting some into the pit as in the *ūtūr-ḳhilā* ceremony described above. In some places rice and *ūrid* (*phaseolus roxburghii*) pulse boiled together are so taken. The village drummers, generally of the *Gōṛāit* caste, accompany the procession with music. Arrived at the *ḳūṇḍi*, the men snatch away the urns from the women who have carried them, consign the bones into the water and smash the earthenware vessels to pieces by striking them against the *pūlḳhi* stone of the clan. The women then wash the *pūlḳhi* stones of their respective clans and anoint them with vermilion diluted in oil. In all these funeral rites the left hands only are used. In some villages the women also make drawings of ornamental figures with rice-flour moistened in water on the *pūlḳhi* stones.

Then the *Pāhān* or village-priest sprinkles all around, from a gourd, water mixed with pounded turmeric. Half-boiled rice, or rice and pulse boiled together (*ḳhichṛi*), is then laid out on leaf-plates by the women, first at the spot where all the jugs containing the bones had rested before the bones

were thrown into the *ḳūṇḍi*. Pieces of bread and cakes made of rice-flour are also put down on the spot. Half-boiled rice or *ḳhichṛi* is also laid out in three leaf-plates before the *pūlḳhi* stones for each of the dead persons. Then the men bathe in the pool or stream higher up than the spot where the bones have been thrown, and the women go for a bath still higher up the stream.

After this purificatory bath, a few of the village elders mix tobacco-powder and lime and offer a little to the spirits of the dead by dropping them on the ground near the *ḳūṇḍi*, and, by way of farewell, address the spirits of the dead as follows:—"*Pachbālar, nimāgē chūnā tāmḳū chiā lāgdam; em āḳku ḳālā lāgdam. Hūrmi mānja pūrā, ḳālā lāgdam.*" "Take, ye ancestor-spirits, we are offering you lime and tobacco; we are now going away. All ceremonies are completed. We are going." Then they all return to their respective villages. They first go to the house of the *Māhatō* or secular headman of the respective villages. The headman has kept ready some pounded turmeric diluted in water in small cups, one for the members of each clan to which the dead persons belonged. After they have all anointed themselves with this pounded turmeric diluted in oil, the village headman (*Māhatō*) takes up a brass dish filled with water and sprinkles the water with a sheaf of long grass (*phūṭchirā*) on them by way of lustration. Then all return to their respective homes. Then young men and women assemble in a dance-meeting or *jātrā* on an open space (*jātrā-ṭāñṛ*) just outside the village. In this *jātrā*, two or more *ḳārsā-bhāṇḍās* are carried on the head by some of the female dancers. This is known as the *Hāṛbōṛi jātrā*. This custom too has now fallen into disuse in many villages.

In the evening, the village *Gōṛāit* summons all the villagers to the house of the deceased, or, when there have been more than one or two deaths in the village during the year, to the village *āḳhṛā* (dancing ground and meeting-place). There one pot of rice-beer, a little oil besides rice etc., are brought from the house of each of the dead persons. The village priest or *Pāhān* sprinkles the oil on the ground in the name of all the ancestor-spirits of the village family. The rice is boiled, and *ḍūbḳi* is prepared by boiling pounded *ūrid* pulse (with fish, if available), and all eat and drink to their hearts' content.

(8) 'Paddā-kāmnā' or Pacifying the Village.

A day or two later, the village-priest performs the following rite for the purification or rather pacification of the village. The village elders assemble at the village *āḳhṛā* where a pot of rice-beer has been already brought from each Orāon house in which a death took place during the out-going year. One or two gourds filled with water are also brought to the *Pāhān*. In the water of one of these gourds is placed a bit of copper; and, in some places, a piece of silver coin is placed in the water of another gourd. With the gourd or gourds in hand the village-priest, leading the other villagers in procession, goes through the village, sprinkling the water on all prominent places and lanes in the village, and addresses the ancestor-spirits as follows:—"*Ennā Pāchchōpāchgi*! *Phalnā* (names the clan or clans to which the deceased persons belonged) *pāchbālārghi ḳūṇḍi ūdhrā lāgdam. Innā gāōnū gānjārnū niḳē sūḳhē rā'neḳā.*" "O ye ancestor-spirits! I am purifying the *ḳūṇḍi* of such-and-such clan [or clans]. May the village remain well and happy." In this way, the *Pāhān* and his

procession of villagers go through the village entering it at one end and passing out of it at the other end. There, a white fowl or a pig is offered in the usual way to *Dharmes* (the Supreme God) who is addressed as follows:—"*Hē Biṛi-belāi, em āḳḳu paddān ūdhrā lāgdam; āḳḳu emḥāi ḳām beś beśin mānā neḳā. Eḳsānūm ḳāon hōlē, ach hū āmbān chāḳḥpā neḳā.*" "O Thou Sun-lord! We are now purifying the village; now (i.e. henceforth) may our work (i.e. ordinary avocations) go on well (as before). If we go anywhere [out of the village] may thorns not prick us." In this way the village is rid of all evil influences; the agitation to which the admission of new souls gave rise in the spirit-world is quieted. And, finally, the villagers enjoy themselves at a feast at the expense of the bereaved families. In some villages, the villagers are treated to a feast in the house of each of the bereaved families by turns. Every family in the village contributes a pot of rice-beer for the feast in every one of those houses. On the day of the feast, the *Māhatō* and the *Pāhān* of the village each receives a perquisite of a few *annas* from the bereaved family or each of the bereaved families, as the case may be.

(10) 'Pūlkhi' or Memorial Stone.

The Orāon does not observe any special ceremonies at the death and burial of their village headman and other patriarchs. But in memory of important Orāons of the village and of very old men, their bereaved families sometimes put up memorial stones known as *Pūlḳhi*. Slabs of stone from about 3 to 10 feet or more in length and from 1½ feet to about 3 feet in width are planted upright either in the compound (*bāri*) of the deceased or on some field belonging to him. At the time of the *hāṛbōṛā* or bone-drowning cere-

mony, one or two bits of bones are set apart for this *pūlkhi*. These together with some husked as well as unhusked rice, some *ūrid* grains (*phaseolus roxburghii*), some cotton-seeds, a brass-plate, an iron spoon, a vegetable-cutter and some coins and such other belongings of the deceased as his sons and relatives choose, are interred, one or two days later in a hole dug either in the compound or on some field belonging to the family, and there the *pūlkhi* stone is set up. All the villagers attend and are treated to drink. Everyone present puts down a little rice into the hole. While putting up the *pūlkhi* stone, the son or other near relative of the deceased addresses the spirit saying,—"*Hūdi Pāchgi, nighāe nāmē pūlkhi gāḍḍa lāggi, engān innāntim eṛpāntā dūkh-dāndā, hurmin hoārki kālā. Innāntim āmbān dūkh-beddā nekā. Nighāe nāmē tū āchhāsē nānom ōnōm.* "See, old man, in your name this *pūlkhi* is being set up. From to-day do thou go taking away [with thee] all the calamaties of the house. From to-day let no sickness seek (attack) us. Through thy name (i.e., thy blessings or good will) may we eat and drink well (i.e., have plenty to eat and drink)."

When the Orāon *rāiyats* of a village decide to remove their *kūṇḍi* from their ancestral (Bhūinhāri) village to the village where they have settled down as ordinary *rāiyats*, they generally erect a *pūlkhi* stone by the side of the *kūṇḍi* of their adopted village or by the side of a new *kūṇḍi* which they select. The ceremonies described above in respect of memorial *pūlkhi* stones are also observed in the case of such funereal *pūlkhi* stones.

Such are the principal funeral rites by which the Orāon is sped on from the visible to the invisible world. Although

the annual bone-burial (*hāṛbōṛā* or *sānt-bōṛā*) ceremony is called the Great Marriage (*ḳōhā benjā*), it is generally said that the rites at a funeral should be the reverse of those at a wedding. Thus, whereas the right hand is used at weddings it is the left hand which must be used at funerals; whereas *āruā* rice is used at marriages, *ūṣnā* rice must be used at funerals.

(11) Other Customs and Beliefs connected with Death.

The funeral ceremonies detailed above are observed in the cases of all deaths except those of children and pregnant women or women dying in child-bed.

The corpses of children dying before their ears are bored are burried at the village *masāṇ* or *masṇā*, and no *hāṛbōṛi* ceremony is performed for them. The bodies of pregnant women or of women dying in child-bed are not burnt but are buried outside the village and on the boundary-line between the village and an adjoining village. Before such a corpse is buried, both the eyes are sewn up with thorns, and the hands and legs are broken and the corpse is laid in the grave with its face downwards deep in the ground, and thorns are pinned into the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. This is the only instance of mutilation of a corpse among the Orāons. A *māti* or spirit-doctor follows such a corpse to the *masṇā* carrying mustard-seeds which he goes on scattering all along the way and at the same time muttering *mantras* or magic spells. It is believed that the spirit of the woman, which becomes a *Chūril*, cannot reach back to her village until it has picked up all the mustard-seeds thus scattered which is an impossible task. A *Chūril*, it is said pursues any man who may happen to pass by the grave, and goes on teasing and

tormenting the man till he falls down in a swoon,—especially if the man is drunk. The man thus attacked generally falls sick and loses his life unless some powerful *māti* saves his life by his incantations and magical operations (*jhāṛphūnk*). If, however, the name which the *Chūril* bore in life is pronounced, the *Chūril* at once disappears. A *Chūril*, it is believed, runs after and seeks to possess every man that it meets, for, it is said, its carnal appetite remained unsatisfied in life, and it still longs for a mate of the other sex.

Neither a widow nor a widower nor any other relative of a dead Orāon has to wear any mourning garb or observe any special rules for any period after death or is secluded from society.

The Orāon has hardly any idea of the distinction between soul and life. The soul (*jiā*) is identified with the vital principle and is believed to resemble a shadow (*chhāi*) but to be lighter and more intangible. This shade or spirit finally goes underneath the earth when the bones are relegated to the *kūṇḍi*. The souls of the departed are believed to reside under the earth near the *kūṇḍi* in communities like those of the living. On the annual bone-depositing (*hāṛbōṛā*) day, leaf-plates of cooked rice and leaf-cups of boiled pulse are placed in the village-*śaśān* (bone-burial ground) by those in whose families there have been any deaths during the year, and similarly leaf-cups filled with purboiled rice and pulse are placed for the other *Pāch-bālār* by the other villagers. It is believed that at dead of night when no way-farers are to be seen on the roads, the souls of deceased persons of the village come out to the *hāṛbōṛā* (bone-burial) ground and eat the food

thus offered. Two of my Orāon friends [33] told me with evident conviction of the truth of their assertions that while returning home from a market at night and passing along the *ḳūṇḍi* of a certain village where the *hāṛbōṛā* ceremony had taken place that very day they heard the spirit of the dead shouting to one another, "Come ye all and let us eat what food our descendants have brought us. Those for whom no food has been brought should not partake of this food; for have they not descendants left?"

Throughout the year, at every meal before taking up the first morsel of food, the adult Orāon puts down a few grains of rice from his plate and drops a little curry on the ground in memory of his deceased ancestors. In this case the ancestors are not named. The Orāons now explain this as a token of gratitude to their ancestors for their having fed and clothed their children so as to help in the continuance of the family. Again, orthodoxy requires that whenever an Orāon utters the name of any his deceased ancestors, he should offer a little water in his name. Before every *pūjā* or other auspicious ceremony such as a marriage, water is offered in the name of the *Pāchbālāro*. The spirits of the deceased ancestors are still regarded as forming one family with their descendants living on earth. In dreams, these spirits of deceased ancestors appear before and talk to their descendants. In sickness, their descendants see them sitting by their sick-bed and watching over them. They foil the attempts of other spirits to do harm to their descendants. Thus, a young Orāon woman (Dhāno Orāin) was having

33. Bāndhnā Orāon and Situā Orāon of Masiatu on their way home from Kesa bazar heard this at Murto hāṛ-bōṛā.

hysterical fits after her first delivery. A *māti* who was called in declared that when she was being brought by her mother from her husband's house, some *bhūt* of her husband's village pursued her and would have by this time killed her, had not the *Pāchbālāro* of her father's family acted the role of *māti* by preventing it from doing serious harm.

Such are the various rites and ceremonies by which the tribe seeks to bring the world of the sacred into relations with the life of the individual in society and thereby ensure safety and impart sanctity and a meaning to life and make it worth living. We have also seen how these ceremonies are utilised as occasions for emphasising the relations of mutual harmony between the individual and the society and the dependance of the former on the latter by means of tribal feasts. These feasts, in their turn, help to intensify the feeling of social solidarity in the village, the clan and the tribe.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS FEASTS AND FESTIVALS.

IN the last chapter I have described the various rites and ceremonies by which Orāon society seeks to secure the active help or, failing that, the passive forbearance of the supernatural powers so as to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual and the family at the different turning-points in the life of an individual. We have also seen that when each such crisis is safely tided over, the community celebrates its rejoicing and its sense of renewed social solidarity with feasting and drinking and dancing. In the present chapter I shall describe the various rites and ceremonies,—religious and magical observances and precautions,—by which Orāon society seeks to ensure safety and prosperity to the village-community as a whole at each new stage in the annual cycle of its simple economic pursuits, and the feasting and rejoicing and social reunion that mark their successful termination. These pursuits are mainly food-gathering and hunting, cattle-tending and agriculture. Fishing is not a regular pursuit of the tribe but is occasionally practised by the Orāon at intervals of his agricultural labours. The only occasion on which fishing is regarded as something of a sacred ceremony is in connection with the *Sarhūl* festival. 34

I. Food-gathering Festivals.

Although the Orāons have long taken to agriculture, they still supplement the produce of their fields by edible flowers, leaves and berries, roots and tubers which their womenfolk

34. *Ibid.* pp. 160-161.

gather in their native woods and hills for food. Yams of different varieties, edible herbs, and the dried corolla of the *mohuā* (*bassia latifolia*) still form a not insignificant part of the Orāon's dietary. And there appear to be good reasons to think that the principal religious festival of the tribe, the *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl*, was in origin a festival of the food-gathering stage of the economic history of the tribe. The simple rites of this original festival of the food-gathering stage would appear to have since been overlaid by other rites connected with a more advanced economic life and elaborated by gradual accretions and additions of centuries through which the tribe progressed from mere food-gatherers and hunters to settled agriculturists. And thus the original festival of a food-gathering stage may have gradually taken on the complexion of an agricultural festival. Such adaptations or transformations or rather 'metabolism,' if I may so term it, of primitive customs and institutions with the progress of a people from the stage of culture in which they originated to a comparatively higher stage would form as interesting a study as the stray 'survivals' or attenuated 'vestiges' of an earlier in a later culture.

Orāon religious festivals that may, in this sense, be said to be connected with food-gathering are two in number. These are,—(i) the *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl* festival, and (ii) the *Phāgū* festival. The latter festival is, in fact, not a genuine Orāon festival but has been long ago borrowed by the tribe from their Hindu neighbours and identified by the Orāons in thought and in song with the analogous Orāon festival of the *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl*. And this is why I have here grouped this festival together with the *Sarhūl*.

(i) The Phāgu or the Festival of the Dying Year.

The *Phāgu*, as I have said, is really a festival of the Hindus. The Orāons have adopted it in a mutilated form, presumably because it stands for a similar idea as that which their own *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl* festival represents. Thus, in their principal song of the *Sarhūl* festival, they sing,—

"Haerē Khaddi mānōey! Hāerē Phāgū mānōey!"

"O, it is Sarhūl! O, it is Phāgū!"

The month of Phāgūn (February-March) not only marks the end of the Dying Year but also the birth of the New Year.

The day before the festival, Orāon young men bring a branch or young plant of the *ereṇḍi* or castor-oil (*Palma Christi*) plant and one or two branches of the *semar* (*Bombax malabaricum*) tree. Next morning these are planted in some open space and swathed round with straw. In villages where there are Hindu landlords, the landlord himself or someone on his behalf offers bread and burns increase before these branches. In other villages, either no offering is made or, as in some villages, the village-*Pāhān* makes similar offerings. Then fire is set to the branches amid loud shouts of rejoicing. The ashes or cinders do not appear to be used either to increase the fertility of the fields or in any other way. The *Dāṇḍā-ḳāṭṭā* ceremony is performed on the day of the festival in every Orāon family. And, in every house, bread made of rice-flour is baked that day and eaten, and rice-beer is strained and drunk. Drinking, dancing, and singing wind up the proceedings of the day. The only significance which the Orāons attach to this festival is that it marks the end of the old year.

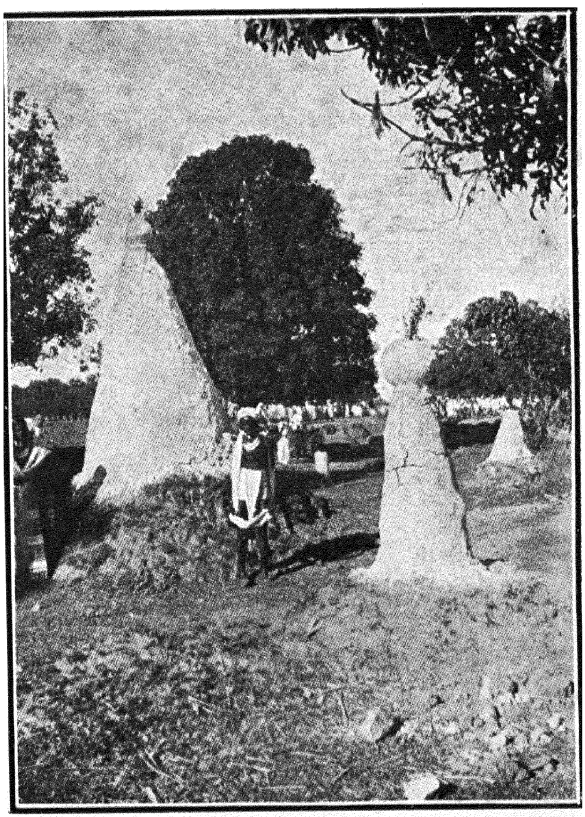

Illustration 19.

Māndār-sālās or Phallic symbols to which sacrifices are offered.

[*See Page* 85.]

The older connection of the *Phāgū* festival with food-gathering is still kept up in the custom that requires that it is only after the Spring-hunt and the *Phāgū* festival that Orāons may gather *mohuā* (*Bassia latifolia*) flowers, the corolla of which is dried up and used for food. And in some villages where the *Sarhūl* ceremony is held later than in other villages, the Orāons are permitted to gather new edible flowers and fruits of the season for the first time on the day of the *Jarjari-śiḳār*, which is the final hunt of the *Phāgū sendra*, and after offering some to the village-deity *Chālā-Pāchchō* at the village-priest's house the villagers may for the first time partake of them.

The *Phāgu* festival is now more closely associated with hunting among the Orāons. It is preceded and followed by a hunting festival known as the *Phāgū sendrā* which will be described in the next section. Since the first appearance of the moon at night in the month of *Phāgūn* until the night of the following full-moon, the *Dhāngaṛ Pāhān* goes stark naked every night with a jug of water, and in some villages with goat's milk, and ceremonially bathes the stone which represents the *Śiḳāri-Chāṇḍi* or the presiding spirit of hunting. On the morning following the *Phāgūā* day, young men of the village go out on a ceremonial hunting excursion known as the *Lōḍḍō sendrā*. They return before mid-day to the *Chāṇḍi* stone and there the *Dhāngaṛ Pāhān* sacrifices a fowl as a *bāiṭhāon* or sacrifice to make the spirit 'sit,' that is to say, remain quiet till the next turn for sacrifice comes up.

(ii) The Khaddi or Sarhūl Festival.

The month of *Chait* (March-April) ushers in the spring with its varieties of blossoming plants and trees and newly sprouting edible leaves and tubers. Of these, the *sāl*

blossoms form the most striking feature of blossoming Nature in the land of the Orāons. And so the Orāons hold a religious festival in spring in their sacred grove or *sarnā*, in which *sāl* blossoms form an essential element, and which is popularly known as the *Sarḥūl* or the Feast of *Sāl* blossoms, but which the Orāons in their own language name as the *Khaddi* and also *Khekel-benjā* or the Marriage of the Earth. Until this festival is celebrated in any village, no Orāon of the village may gather, eat or use the new fruits, flowers and edible leaves of the season. This Feast of *Sāl* Flowers, which is essentially the feast of New Vegetation, forms with its elaborate ritual the principal religious festival of the Orāons.

The Summons and Preparation.

When in early spring the *Sāl* trees begin to blossom, the village elders in every Orāon village hold a consultation and appoint a day for celebrating the *Sarhūl* in their village. One or two weeks before the date fixed in this way for the *Sarhūl* ceremony in a village, the *Pāhān* (priest) or the *Pūjār* (assistant to the priest) of the village under orders of the village *Panch* proclaims in the village that such-and-such a day has been appointed for fasting and the following day for the celebration of the *Sarhūl*.

From that day the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* go about collecting one wooden *pailā*, measuring about a pound, of either paddy or *māṛūa (Eleusine coracana)* from each house; and in some villages similarly the *Pāhān's* wife and the *Pūjār's* wife also go about collecting a small handful of either paddy or *māṛūa* from each family. These are asked for in the name of *Chilgi-māiyā*.

Out of the price realised by selling the grain collected by the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār*, the potter (*ḳūmhār*) is paid the price of the earthenware required for the coming ceremonies and the *Gōṛāit* is paid a few annas for playing music during the festival; in some villages, the village blacksmith (*Lohār*) is paid a few annas as price for the *Pāhān-chhūri* or knife used by the *Pāhān* at sacrifices, and in some villages he also supplies an iron *binṭhi* or *bainṭhi* (a kind of cutting instrument) and an iron *ḳarchhūl* (large spoon). In other villages old *bainṭhis* and *ḳarchhūls* serve. The *Pāhān* utilises the balance in purchasing the ingredients for four, five or more jars of *ārḳhi* (home-brewed liquor) to be prepared at his house for drinking by all in general at the festival.

Three days before the Sarhūl, at the *Pāhān's* house and in some villages also in the *Pūjār's* house, three or four seers of rice are boiled in water and placed in an earthen vessel on the cowdunged floor of the *Pāhān's* hut and covered over with a little straw. When the contents cool down, *bichchi* 35 is mixed with them and the mixture is stored in a large jar (*ghaṛā*) and left to ferment. On the Sarhūl day, these jars are taken to the *sarnā* groove and there more water is poured into the contents and the mixture is strained with a cloth sieve and the liquor thus prepared is drunk only by the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār* and the *Māhto* of the village.

Dāri-chhiṭnā (Toosā chhechdam).

At sunrise on the day before the *Sarhūl* festival, the *Pūjār* in company with a few Orāons of the village go to the sacred spring known as the *Sārnāḍāri* (*Chā'lā Toosā*) of

35. *Bichchi* is a tabloid made of a few vegetable roots with intoxicating properties, powdered and mixed with rice-flour.

the village, carrying two or more new earthen pans (*tāoās*) or, in some villages, small bamboo baskets (*nāchuās or baugi*), and also a little oil and vermilion. In a village where there is no permanent *Sarnāḍāṛi*, one is excavated for the occasion. The *Pūjār* and his companions bale out with the new pans or baskets all the water in the spring and cleanses the spring. The *Pūjār* then anoints the stone with vermilion moistened in oil (*isūmsindri*). In a few villages situated by the side of rivers, such as the Koel, the river serves the purpose of the *Sārnāḍāri*. After baling out the water of the sacred spring, where there is one, the party take a bath in some other spring or stream and thence go to the *Pāhān's* house, where they are treated to a pot of home-brewed beer called the 'spring-baling beer' (*ḍāri-chhiṭuā-hāṇṛi*).

Chigri-gāḍḍā.

On the same day, two tall bamboo poles are planted, one on each side in front of the doorway of the *Pāhān's* house. About two feet down the top of each pole a natural knot is left. A short stick with a small flag called *Chāṇḍi Jhāṇḍā* hanging from it, is attached to each pole at right angles to it. These flags are at other times carefully stored in a bamboo box in the *Pāhān's* house and when they are taken out for the ceremony, the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* sing—

Māghē māghē purūchā dō Nāyāngō, etc.

These flags are taken down and stored in the bamboo box after *Chhālā Pāchchō* has been installed again in the *Pāhān's* house by the *sūp-baiṭhānā* ceremony (see *post*).

The Omen-giving Water (Neg-amm).

About an hour or so after midnight, the *Pūjār* and either the *Pāhān* or the *Māhtō* or some other Orāon, each carrying

in a carrying-pole and net two earthen jars (*ghaṛās*) filled with water, go to the *Sarnāḍāṛi*. They take care not to come across any human being on their way, and if they cannot avoid meeting anybody, religiously avoid talking to such a person, nor do they talk to each other on the way to the *ḍāṛi*. Arrived there, the *Pūjār* takes each jar by turns, dips it perpendicularly with its mouth upwards into the water and fills it while holding his breath. The four [36] jars, thus filled with the sacred water, are similarly taken in the carrying-nets (*ūgi-epṭā*) and carried to the *sarnā* or sacred grove in pin-drop silence. Arriving at the *sarnā*, four grooves, forming the four corners of a rectangle, will be scooped out on the ground with one end of the *bāhingā* pole, and the jars will be placed, one upon each of these four grooves. The four scoops and the jars placed on them respectively represent the four directions of the compass. The jars are covered up, each with a small earthen vessel at its mouth.

At sunrise, the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār* and other elders of the village go to the *sarnā* to examine the water and read the omens from it. The *Pāhān* takes off the lid from each jar by turns and the men all examine the water to see whether it is as full as when it was left there. If the jars are found quite as full, it is concluded that rainfall will be abundant in the coming rainy season, but if the water in any one or more of the jars appears to be less than what it was when left there, it is apprehended that rain-water will not be abundant in the direction which the jar or jars respectively represent.

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36. Now-a-days, in some villages only two such jars are employed instead of four.

Catching Fowls, Fish and Crabs.

After reading the omen indicated by the sacred water, the *Pāhān* returns home with his companions and brings out a jar of home-brewed beer from his house, and they all drink it. A few villagers are then told off to collect, for the sacrifice, fowls from the different houses of the village. In a big village fowls may be collected in different years from different quarters of the village; but in a small village the same families may have to supply fowls in successive years. The number of fowls required is not fixed, and as many are collected as possible, but in no case less than five or six. A few young men go to some neighbouring stream or pool to catch fish for the *ḍūbḳi tiān*—a curry of which the principal ingredients are small cakes (*bari*) of *ūrid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*) pulse and fish which must be partaken of on the occasion of the *Sarhūl* festival.

Another batch of young men go to some low-lying fields to catch crabs for a magic ceremony to be described later. It is only for this crab-catching that the earth may be dug into on the *Sarhūl* day; on no other account may the earth be ploughed or dug up that day.

As the *Sarhūl* is the most important religious festival of the tribe, a goat and a pig, it is said, used until recently to be always sacrificed in addition to a number of fowls. But now-a-days the sacrifice of pigs on this occasion has almost fallen into disuetude, and even goats are not sacrificed in every village or in every year.

If a goat or a pig, or both, have to be offered in sacrifice, the village elders decide which of the villagers are to supply them that year. The sacrifices to *Chhālā Pāchchō* must be female animals, as the *Chhālā Pāchchō* is a female spirit.

The *Pūjār* then brings out a pot of rice-beer from the *Pāhān's* house and the *Māhtō* and other village elders and the fowl-catchers regale themselves with it.

The Ceremonial Bath.

Now the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār* and other village elders have to take a ceremonial bath. The village *Gōṛāit* with his band of musicians playing on drums and bugles and flutes escort the party to the bank of some stream or tank, and, leaving them there, return to the village. First, the *Pāhān* and then the *Pūjār* silently plunge into the water stiffly straight and take care that their hands do not come in contact with other parts of their bodies. In case either of them happens to touch any part of his body with his hands, it is believed to forebode a pest of mosquitos in the village in the ensuing year, After the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* have plunged into the water, their companions follow them and all take a ceremonial bath.

In the meanwhile, when the musicians have gone back half way towards the village, they make a halt and remain playing music. Now such women of the village as have been fasting since morning, start for the river or tank for a ceremonial bath. The *Pāhān's* wife and the *Pūjār's* wife, each carrying in a new earthen pan some *ūrid* pulse (*Phaseolus Roxburgii*) soaked in water, lead the party. After they pass the spot where the musicians are playing, the *Pāhān* and his party on their return from the river or tank arrive at the spot and halt there for a while. In the meanwhile, the village *Gōṛāit* or some other member of his family fetches a number of twigs of *tūnd* (*Cedrela toona*) or, failing that, of some other tree. The *Gōṛāit* and his people spread the twigs one by one breadthwise across the path, and leave the place escorting

the *Pāhān* and his party back to the *Pāhān's* house. The *Pāhān* and his party go on singing the following song:—

Telā ḍābsā Gōsāin, maḳḳā ḍābsā!
Gōsāin sārem !
Hāe-rē Khāddi mānōeẏ, Hāe-rē Phāgū mānōeẏ,
Gōsāin sārem.
Hiō-hi dal-dal ! Hiō-hi dal-dal!

Translation.

O Keond tree god! O Sāl tree god! [37]
The Phāgū god! The *Sarhūl* god!
O it is *Sarhūl* now! O it is Phāgū!
The Phāgū god! The *Sarhūl* god!
Come! Let us play! Let us play!

While singing the last line, the singers vehemently stamp their feet upon the ground. This song is repeated again and again alternating with ribald songs.

When the men have left the spot where the twigs have been spread by the *Gōṛāit*, the women with their clothes dripping with water come up in rows, the *Pāhān's* wife with the *Pūjār's* wife to her left occupying the centre of the front row and each of these two carrying on the head her pan of *ūrid* pulse. The women take up each a twig spread across their path. In the meanwhile, the *Gōṛāit* and his party of musicians return to the spot after escorting the *Pāhān's* party to the *Pāhān's* place. They now escort the women to the *Pāhān's* house with music, while the women go on singing:—

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37. The *Keond* is the *Diospyros tomentosa* tree and the *Sāl* is the *Shorea robusta*. The literal meaning of the word '*ḍābsā*' is 'stick.'

Mūno jhārā Gōsāin,bōthā jhārā!
Hāe-rē Khāddi mānōey! Hāe-rē Phāgū mānōey !
Gōsāin sārem !
Hiō-hi dal-dal! Hiō-hi dal-dal !

Translation.

New rice-beer god! Dregs of rice-beer!
O, it is Sarhūl; O, it is Phāgu!
The Phāgu god! The Sarhūl god!
Come! Let us play! Come! Let us play!

Drenching the Women.

Singing such songs, the women enter the *āngan* or courtyard of the *Pāhān's* house where the men have already collected, and a number of earthen jars filled with water have been kept in readiness. As soon as the women reach there, both men and women begin to pour out water from the jars on the women as well as on the ground. The women, thus thoroughly drenched, go on dancing and singing songs, mostly obscene, and also uttering filthy abuses.

Making rice-beer and rice ready for the Pūjā.

Now the *Pāhān* tells his wife, "Pour water into the pot for brewing rice-beer for offering"; and the *Pūjār* tells his wife, "Pour water into the pot for brewing rice-beer for *Māndnā Bharṇā*." The *Pāhān's* wife does so inside her hut and the *Pūjār's* wife on the courtyard or open space in front of the *Pāhān's* house. When the villagers see water being poured into the pots for making rice-beer, they all return to their respective houses to fetch their contributions of rice and, if possible, pulses for the sacrificial feast. One man from each family brings at least a handful of rice on a winnowing-basket. As each man brings his quota of rice, the *Pūjār*

mutters words of blessing. The winnowing-baskets containing rice brought by the men of each *ḳhūṇṭ* are arranged one above the other. Thus the rice-baskets are heaped up in two or more piles according as there are *ḳhūṇṭs* (such as the *Pāhān Khūṇṭ*, the *Māhto Khūṇṭ*, the *Mūṇḍā Khūṇṭ*) in the village. The baskets brought by the *gairōs* or non-*Bhūinhārs* are arranged each with the piles of the particular *Bhūinhār Khūṇṭ* to which they are respectively attached by near cognatic relationship and, where no such relationship exists, their baskets are placed on the same pile as that of the *Bhūinhārs* of their *ṭōlā* or quarter of the village. The *Māhto* or secular headman of the village now places a grindstone (*silouṭ*) on the *āngan* or courtyard of the *Pāhān's* house; and upon this grindstone are placed three bundles of straw and over them a yoke. He then fetches some mango leaves and makes three cups, each made up of one leaf with its ends doubled up and stitched with a reed-pin, and places the leaf-cups by the side of the *silouṭ*. The *Māhto* then calls out to the *Pāhān* and his wife to come out into the *āngan*: "Be ready, O *Pāhān* and *Pāhānāin*; the offerings of the people have arrived."

At the summons, the *Pāhān* comes up and sprinkles a little of the newly brewed rice-beer on the *sarnā-sūp* or winnowing-fan (*ḳeter*) used in ceremonies at the *sarnā* (sacred grove) and at other times hung up inside the Pāhān's house. He then puts down the *sarnā-sūp*, and both the *Pāhān* and his wife drink a little of the rice-beer brewed for the occasion. Then the *Pāhān* sits down on the floor with his legs folded across each other and the *sarnā-sūp* held close to his arm-pit. The *Pūjār* now enters the room with a new earthen

jug (*bāṭāri*) having a spout, under his arm-pit, and squats down on the ground by the side of the *Pāhān* just to the east of the latter. The *Pāhān's* wife fills the *Pāhān's sūp* with *āruā* rice and the *Pūjār's* wife fills the *Pūjār's bāṭāri* with cold water from a big earthen jar (*ghaila*). Then the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* get up, holding respectively the *sūp* and the *bāṭāri* under their arm-pits as before, and the *Pūjār's* wife pours the remaining water in her jar on the heads of the *Pāhān* and his wife. Then they proceed to the spot where the grind-stone has been placed, the *Pūjār* preceding the *Pāhān* and marking his way by a trail of water dropped out of the spout of his *bāṭāri*, and the *Pāhān* similarly leaving behind him a trail of *āruā* rice dropping down in dribblets from his *sūp* which is carried aslant under his arm-pit.

The *Pāhān* with his *sūp* then sits down upon the yoke and the *Pūjār* with his *bāṭāri* squats down on the *Pāhān's* right. Their wives now come up with their wet clothes on, and the *Pāhān's* wife sits by her husband's side, on his left, and the *Pūjār's* wife sits down on the left of the *Pāhān's* wife. The old sacrificial knife which was stuck into the left rim of the *sūp* is now taken out and handed over by the Pāhān to some member of his family and a new knife is inserted in its place.

"Marriage" (Isūm sindri) of Pāhān and Pāhānāin.

Now the village *Māhto* covers up the *Pāhān* and his wife with a cloth over their heads and faces. The *Māhto's* wife then approaches the *Pāhān* with a little vermilion in a small wooden receptacle (*ḳiā*) and mustard oil in a small earthen cup. She first rubs oil on the *Pāhān's* head and combs his hair with a wooden or bamboo comb, and then with

the middle finger of her right hand places a mark of vermilion over his brows and one vermilion mark on each of his temples. Then she similarly rubs oil on the *Pāhānāin's* head and combs her hair, and with her right thumb and right index-finger anoints vermilion on the parting of her hair. The *Pūjār* and his wife are similarly anointed with oil and vermilion.

Invocation of the Ancestor-spirits.

The *Māhto* next takes up one of the mango-leaf cups prepared for the ceremony (*neg*), fills it with rice-beer from the beer-pot, and holds up the cup, first to the *Pāhān's* lips and then to the *Pāhānāin's*, then to the *Pūjār's* and finally to the *Pūjrāin's* saying,—"They are very hungry and very thirsty, so I am making them drink rice-beer." Then with the auspicious ululation or ejaculation of sounds of "*ūlū-ūlū-ūlū*," he throws the mango leaf-cup on to the roof of the house. This process is repeated twice again. Then the *Māhto* fills three (*sāl*-leaf-cups) and fills them with rice-beer, keeps the first cup for himself, and hands over the other two to the rest of the assembled villagers. The *Māhto* holds his leaf-cup over the palm of his left hand, and with the thumb and ring-finger of his right hand sprinkles a few drops of the liquor on the earth, saying:—"*Pāch-bālāro inṇā em punā ḳhāddi nāndam. Nim pāchchō-pāchgi ḳhāṭṭārḳē mōḳh'ḳē onnḳē; Pāchbālāro, tāchinū māmānū rūsi-rāgē āmḳē mānā. Iārnū dōsti-nū ōr Kōil pār-Kōil rūsi-rāgē āmḳē mānā.*"

"O! Ancestor-spirits [of such-and-such (names) a clan]! To-day *sarhūl* is being celebrated. O! Ancestor-spirits (*lit.*, old men and women)! Do ye eat [and] drink. O! Ancestor-spirits! Don't ye be offended with our paternal and maternal

aunts and maternal uncles (i.e., with our agnatic and cognatic relations, namely, the non-*Bhūinhārs* of the village), with our friends and associates, with those living on this side of river Koel or on the other side (ie., those at home and abroad)." While uttering this invocation, the *Māhto* goes on dropping rice-beer on the ground. The beer remaining over in the leaf-cup is poured back into the beer-pot and the leaf-cup is thrown away. Then two of the assembled non-*Bhūinhārs* (*gairōs*) similarly offer rice-beer on the ground in the name of their ancestors, and finally bow down on the ground.

A man of the *Pāhān ḳhūṇṭ* now goes up to the pile of rice-filled *sūps* of the *Pāhān ḳhūṇṭ* and takes up successively three handfuls of rice and places them in the *Pāhān's* sacrificial *sūp*, and then bows down before the *Pāhān*. The *Pūjār* all the time goes on relieving the *Pāhān's sūp* of its superfluous rice which he puts into baskets placed beside him. The *Pāhān* takes up some rice with the tips of the fingers of his two hands joined together, and puts the rice into a *sūp* belonging to his own khūṇṭ. This rice is called *Āśīrbādi* (or 'benedictory' or sanctified) rice and is carefully preserved by the members of the *ḳhūṇṭ* till sowing time when the seed-paddy is sanctified by mixing it with this *āśīrbādi* rice and a little cowdung and a bit of copper, in the belief that this will make the seeds multiply abundantly. A man of the *Māhto Khūṇṭ* similarly takes up three handfuls of rice and puts the same into a *sūp* belonging to his *ḳhūṇṭ*, and this rice is carefully preserved by members of the *ḳhūṇṭ* to be mixed at sowing-time with their seed-paddy along with a little cowdung and piece of copper coin. If there be a *Mūṇḍā ḳhūṇṭ* in the village, a man of that *ḳhūṇṭ* will similarly set apart some of

the *āśīrbādi* rice in order that it might be similarly mixed with their seed-paddy by men of the *ḳhūṇṭ*. The non-*Bhūinhārs* are given a portion of this "sanctified" rice by the *Bhūinhār ḳhūṇṭ* to which they are respectively related.

Ceremonial Procession to the Sacred Grove (Chhālānū Gūchā.)

Some men of the village now carry to the *jāher* or *sarnā* (sacred grove) the baskets thus filled with rice together with a new spoon or ladle, a vegetable knife, some *sāl* leaves for making cups, a little unbleached cotton thread, a pot of oil, and a little vermilion on a leaf; and another man carries in a net-bag a number of chickens contributed by the villagers. The *Pāhān*, carrying his *sūp* filled with rice, and the *Pūjār*, carrying his *bāṭāri* filled with water which is let fall in drops as he goes along, lead the procession, and musicians (of the *Ghāsi* or *Gōṛāit* caste) playing on drums and pipes bring up the rear. Arrived at the *sarnā*, the *Pūjār* circumambulates the main *sarnā* tree so as to keep the tree to his left, dropping water from his *bāṭāri* all along his path. He then stands by the side of the *Pāhān* who now sits down upon a stone slab, with his face to the east. The Pūjār stands by his side holding his *bāṭāri* under his arm-pit.

Preliminaries of the Sacrifice.

After a few minutes, the *Pāhān* rises from his seat, leaving his *sūp* on it, and goes to the hearth-stones that were used for cooking the sacrificial meat at the preceding year's *Sārhūl* feast. The *Pāhān* inspects the stones and moves with his hands such of them as he approves of. Some of the party then come forward and prepare new hearths with the old stones thus approved. The *Pāhān* then takes up the un-

bleached thread and winds it round the trunk of the *sarnā* tree in three or five convolutions. The *Pūjār* then scrapes the grass off the earth for a space of about a foot and a half in width and about 18 feet in length, commencing from the eastern side of the foot of the tree and proceeding in a straight line in a northerly direction. This space so cleared forms the *ākhṛā* for sacrifice. At intervals of three or four inches on this line a handful of *āruā* rice is placed for the sacrificial fowls to feed upon. Each of these spots where rice is thus placed is called a sacrificial *kūri* of the *ākhṛā*. At the southernmost end of the line, about four or five feet away from the furthest *kūri* another handful of rice is kept at the *ākhṛā* for a white cock to be sacrificed to *Dharmes* or the Sun-god. All the officiants at the ceremony,—the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār*, etc.—sit down with their faces to the east.

Now the *Pāhān* asks the *Māhto* and others whether any pig has been got ready for the sacrifice. Now-a-days, however, sacrifices of pigs at the *Sārhūl* are, as I have already said, falling into disuse, and additional fowls are offered in their place. The *Pāhān* next asks the men of his *khūṇṭ* if any goat is to be offered in sacrifice. In some villages a goat is sacrificed every alternate year. If no goat is to be offered, one or more additional fowls are offered in its place. If a pig or a goat or both, are to be offered, similar *ākhṛās* are made for their sacrifice by scraping the grass off the earth for a space of about three or four feet in length and one foot in breadth towards the south-west of the *ākhṛā* for fowls already described. To avoid the disturbance caused by the grunts of the pig it is not brought to the *sarnā* grove until the actual time of sacrifice.

The Sacrifice (Pūjā-nānā).

The *Pāhān* now asks the *Pūjār* to bring water. The *Pūjār* comes to him with his *bāṭāri* filled with water, and the *Pāhān* washes his own face, hands and feet with the water and sprinkles some water on his head and other limbs. Then he takes up rice in the joined palms of his hands and nimbly goes on dropping the rice at several spots along the lines of *ḳūris* described above, just as is done by the sower when sowing paddy in the fields. This is repeated a second and a third time.

The *Pūjār* then selects fowls of appropriate colours for the different spirits. He first takes out four or five fowls, namely, a *rānguā* or red and, in some villages, a *mālā* or (black and white) mottled fowl for *Dārhā Deswāli*, a *ḳāsri* or grey fowl for *Chālā Pāchcho* or *Sarnā Būṛhiā*, one or more black fowls for *Chāṇḍi* and a white one for *Dharmes*. The remaining fowls, if any, are sacrificed in the common name of "*gāṛhā-ḍhōṛā Chatūr simān*," signifying all the other spirits haunting streams and rocks and odd nooks and corners of the village and its environs.

He then takes out the sacrificial knife from the sacrificial *sūp* and hands it over to the *Pāhān*. Now he takes up the red or the mottled fowl, as the case may be, dips his hand into water from his *bāṭāri*, and with his hand thus moistened wipes the head, trunk and feet of the fowl, and then hands it over to the *Pāhān* who next makes it eat, from the *ḳūri* at the *āḳhṛā* described above, the *āruā* rice placed there for it to feed up on, and, while it is eating the rice, nimbly cuts off its head, saying, "*O Dārhā Deswāli* village-spirit (*Gāon-deōti*), we are offering this fowl to thee." Similarly in quick

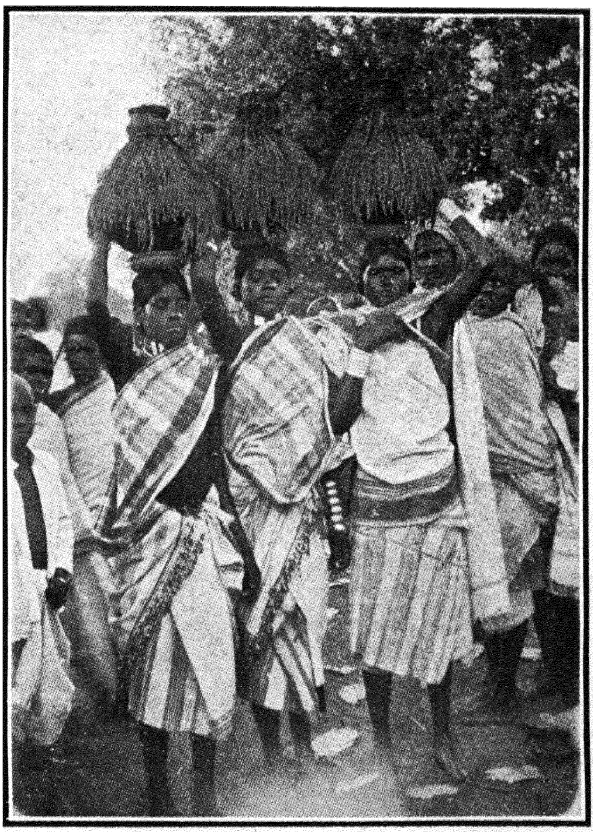

Illustration 20.
Orāon women with the auspicious *Kārsā-bhāṇḍā* on their heads to dance the *Kārsā* dance.

[*See Pages 184-251.*]

succession the grey fowl is sacrified to *Sarṇā-Būṛhiā* and the black fowl to *Chāṇḍi*. Then the rest of the fowls except the white one are offered one after another to the remaining spirits (*ḳhūṇṭ, dāṇṭ*, etc.). The heads of all these fowls are not wholly cut off but partly severed from the neck. While thus sacrificing the fowls, the *Pāhān* says, "O Ghosts and Spirits, *Muās Churils*, stray spirits, wandering spirits, and all the whole host of you, wherever you be,—either east, west, north or south,—in all your *pāṛhās* distribute this meat amongst yourselves and eat your fill. May all the people of our village, men and women, adults and children, enjoy themselves, and dance and play to their hearts' content during *Sarhūl*, and may prosperity attend us."

After these sacrifices, the *Pāhān* washes his knife and his hands and then proceeds to offer the white fowl to *Dharmes*. If no white fowl is available, the egg of a hen is offered. This sacrifice or offering is made at the southernmost end of the line. It is said that the reason for placing the *ḳūri* of *Dharmes* at one end is that *Dharmes* controls the other spirits who are sometimes apt to be mischievous. While sacrificing to *Dharmes*, the *Pāhān* prays: "*Nin Dharmē Bābā heḳdāe. Aḳḳām bālḳām, ādin sāmṛhāḳē. Emhāi ḳhann mālā iri. Nighāi ḳhann iri. Ninhim Bābā heḳdāi, sāmṛhāḳē.*" "Thou, O *Dharmē*, art our Father. Whether we know or don't know (i.e. whether we have inadvertently omitted any rite or sacrifice to any spirit) do thou make up for our omissions. Our eyes don't see [spirits]. Thy eyes see. Thou art our Father; do thou control [and make up with those spirits that we know and those we don't know.]" The *Pūjār* now washes the sacrificial knife and puts it back on the *sūp*. The *Pāhān* then pours a little milk brought by the

village Āhīr or cowherd over the rice-*ḳūris* of the *āḳhṛā*, and then pours a little water over them. He then takes up the five fowls already sacrificed, and holding them together by their legs, nimbly waves (*neōchhānā*) them to and fro over the line of rice *ḳūris*, and then throws away the fowls towards the non-*Bhūinhār* villagers (*gairōs*) saying,—"*Hūdi hāro, jimmā chichḳān; ḳāmā.*" "I make over these to you. Do ye prepare them (for cooking)." Some of the *gairōs* dress the other slain fowls separately from the white fowl. The rest of the fowls are taken up by others who dress them. The first four fowls are boiled with about two pounds of *āruā* rice taken from the *sūp* or from one of the baskets. The meat of the white fowl mixed with a little rice is packed up in a covering of four *sāl* leaves stitched together, and the packet *(pātpūr)* thus made is put into the burning hearth and roasted in the fire.

While all this is going on, the pig or goat, or both, are brought to the *Sarnā*. The pig, with its two fore-legs tied together and its hind-legs also tied together, is taken to the *ḳūri* meant for it . The *Pāhān* throws a handful of rice on the *ḳūri* towards the pig close to its mouth. One or more men now go on hacking at its head with the blunt end of their axes till it dies. While thus sacrificing the pig, no names of any spirits are taken, as this sacrifice is said to be meant probably for the *Bhūlās* or unnamed tramp spirits. The slain pig is then taken to a different part of the *sarnā* grove where it is dressed and cooked by itself. Many Orāons have given up eating pigs, and so the pig is cooked separately. The goat, if any, is next taken to its *ḳūri*, fed on rice and sacrificed by the *Pāhān* himself by plunging a *bāinṭhi* knife or, if available, a sword, at its neck but not so as to sever

the head altogether from its trunk. The goat is also meant for outside spirits, who are therefore not invoked by names. The goat's flesh is also cooked separately from that of the fowls and the pig, either in a separate hearth at the *sarnā* grove or in the houses of two different families.

Crab-frying (Kākrō-shājnā).

The *Pāhān* now resumes his seat, and inquires if milk has been supplied by the village *Āhīr*, fuel and *sāl* leaves by the *Bhāṇḍāri* or *Goṛāit* of the village, salt by the particular *Bhūinhār* who may hold service land (*ḳhāin ḳhet*) for supplying this and pots of rice-beer (*tapoān hāṇṛiā*) by different *Bhūinhār* families. The *Pāhān* inspects the supplies and, in case anything is found wanting, messengers are sent to the persons whose remissness is responsible for the deficiencies And the articles required are duly procured. In the meanwhile a few men continually move from the *sarnā* to the village and back to see and inform if things at the *Pāhān's* house are getting ready. At about evening the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār* and a few elders of the village, accompanied by *Ghāsi* or *Gōṛāit* musicians playing music, go to the *Pāhān's* house to see if meal is ready there for the women of the village assembled there who have been keeping fast all the time. At the sound of the music such Orāon women in each family as have not been fasting put a live crab into the burning hearth and hang up over the hearth a few other live crabs. As the burning crab crackles in the fire and the other crabs get their legs straightened and stiffened by the heat, the women exclaim,—"May *ūrid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*) and other pulses in our fields burst forth [from their pods] as this crab is bursting in the fire; may pods of our *ūrid* and other

pulses grow in clusters and resemble this cluster (*jhūmpā*) of stiffened legs of the crab."

Drenching at the Pāhān's house.

As the *Pāhān* and his party approach the village, the *Pūjār's* wife awaits them at the approach of the *Pāhān's* house with a metal jug (*lōṭā*) filled with water, and the *Pāhān's* wife awaits them there with a lighted lamp and a small earthen cup (*mālia*) containing mustard oil. As soon as the party arrive, the wife of the *Pūjār* rubs the legs of the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* with oil and then washes their feet. The party then enter the house; the *Pāhān* puts down his *sarṇā sūp* on the ground just underneath the spot where the *sūp* is usually hung up when not required; and the *Pūjār* puts down his *bāṭāri* just on the right of the *sūp*; and both squat on the ground side by side. The *Pāhān's* wife brings out the pot of rice-beer (called *tapoān hāṇḍiā*) brewed at the *Pāhān's* house, strains it, and gives one leaf-cup-ful of it to the *Pāhān* and one cupful to the *Pūjār*. The *Pāhān* drops a little liquor on his *sūp* from his cup, and the *Pūjār* drops a little on his *bāṭāri*, by way of libation, and then each drinks off the rest of the liquor in his cup. Then all drink their fill of liquor. The *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* then inspect the rice and curries that are being made ready for the women, and form an estimate of the time by which they will be ready for serving. Then they prepare to go back to the *sarṇā*. Just as they stoop down to take up their *sūp* and *bāṭāri*, the *Pūjār's* wife pours some water from a large jar into the *Pūjār's bāṭāri* and pours the rest of the water over the heads of the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār*. Other women then throw water from jugs and cups on the persons of the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār*

and other men of the party, and also bespatter them with mud. Thus drenched with water and bespattered with mud, the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār*, with the musicians following them, return to the *sarnā*.

The Cheprāi Fowl.

During the absence of the *Pāhān* from the *sārnā*, a man, usually a *bhāyād* of the *Pāhān* or a man of the *Khūṇṭ* which supplied the *tapoān hāṇṛiā*, whom the *Pāhān* left at the *sarnā* as his representative, kills a fowl by pressing it at its neck or otherwise wounding or disfiguring it, but not severing its neck. This fowl is called the *Cheprāi* fowl. The man then skins the fowl and keeps it concealed about his person, under his clothes.

Men's Feast (Ōnā'-mōkhnā).

By the time the *Pāhān* and his party return to the *sarṇā*, *ṭāhari* made by boiling rice together with the flesh of the four fowls sacrificed first, and *pātpur* made by roasting the flesh of the white fowl inside the *sāl*-leaf packet are ready. The *Pāhān* now takes up a little of the *ṭāhari* and the roasted meat, and offers the same by the side of the hearth to four spirits by name, *viz.*, *Dārhā*, *Deswāli*, *Chālā* *Pāchchō* and *Chāṇḍi*.

While the *Pāhān* is engaged in this way, the assembled Orāons wash their hands and faces and sit down in three sections, to be described presently, and the *Pūjār* places a *sāl*-leaf in front of each man. The *Pāhān* now distributes the *ṭāhari* as *prasādi* (sanctified) food on each of these leaves. When every one else has been thus served with the *ṭahari*, the Pāhān and the *Pūjār* distribute the remainder of the *ṭāhari* on four other leaves and then they themselves sit down to eat with two leaf-fuls of *ṭahari* before each of them, one for himself

and the other meant for his wife which he leaves untouched. The *Pāhān* first eats one or two morsels from his leaf, and the *Pūjār* does the same almost simultaneously, and then the *Pāhān* gives permission to the others to eat and they all fall to. The *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* now get up and wash their hands and mouths. The *Pūjār* then places a *sāl*-leaf-plate before each one of the men, and the *Pāhān* serves the *ṭahari* made of the rest of the sacrificed fowls. As referred to above, the seats for the feast are arranged in rows in three sections or compartments (*ḳhāndhās*); one section is accommodated round the spot where the fowls were cooked, and is known as the inner section *(bhitar ḳhāndhā)*, and two other sections are accomodated round the spots where the pig and the goat were respectively cooked. These last two sections are known as the outer sections (*bāhār ḳhāndhā.*)

The trunks of the pig and the goat, it may also be mentioned, are cut up into two halves lengthwise, one half of each being reserved for the Orāon women of the village and not cooked in the *sarnā*. As for the sacrificial fowls, it is important to note, their meat is taboo to women and they get no share of it. Those who sit down to eat in the inner compartment have only fowls' meat and rice boiled in milk *(dūdh-ṭahari)* to eat; whereas those who sit down in the outer compartment where goat's meat was cooked get goat's meat *ṭahari*, and those who prefer to sit where the pig *ṭahari* was cooked, get pig *ṭahari*.

All however, as we have seen, get fowl *ṭahari* to eat, as that forms the essential sacrificial meal. As for men of other castes who may be present and have their part in the celebration, the *Goṛāit* or *Ghāsi* musicians eat separately from

the Orāons and others, and the *Āhīrs* who supply milk and the Kūmhārs who supply the pottery receive provisions (*sidhā*) which they cook and eat apart from the rest.

As we have seen, it is after all the men have been served that the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* sit down before a leaf-plate of fowl *ṭahari* each and take up a morsel each and give others permission to eat. When about half the *ṭahari* has been consumed, the man who secreted the *Cheprāi* fowl inside his clothes suddenly gets up and with his hands and mouth unwashed begins to run in the direction of the village. A number of men get up and chase him to some distance with half-burnt wood taken out of the hearth and with shouts of "Seize him! Seize him! Beat him! Beat him!" The pursuers soon return and sit down to eat again.

Women's Feast.

The Orāon women of the village who have by this time assembled at the *Pāhān's* house, take their seats in front of a huge basket filled with boiled rice and an earthen vessel filled with curry of which cakes *(bari)* of *ūrid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*) forms the main ingredient, when the *Cheprāi* running away from his pursuers, quietly enters the house and sits down beside the basket of boiled rice and silently helps himself to as much of the rice and curry as he pleases. When he has had his fill, he leaves the *Cheprāi*-fowl there, and takes a bath and goes home. The women, including the female inmates of the *Pāhān's* house, all now sit down to a hearty feast.

Dancing and Singing.

By the time the women have finished their dinner (by about 10 o'clock at night), the men, led by the *Pāhān* and

the *Pūjār*, arrive there, carrying the utensils and other things they had taken to the *sarnā*. The rest of the night is spent by men and women, boys and girls, of the village in dancing at the village-*ākhṛā*. Rice-beer is freely drunk and ribald songs are sung. The licentiousness permitted on this occasion is believed to stimulate the fertility of the earth. Next morning they begin a new class of songs, the first song of this class sung being—

Gōbari gāḍḍinū hinūā chi'ḳhā lāgi,
Kāl, pelō menār bārḳoi;
Hinuā chiḳhā lāgi.

"In the cow-dung pit, sings the Hinūā bird;
Go thou, O girl, and hear the Hinūā sing."

Other songs of this class follow.

Deō Chālā or Election of the Bachelors' Pāhān.

In the evening, the *Pāhān's* wife cleanses a spot in the middle of the village-*ākhṛā* with cow-dung and water and places there a *sūp* filled with *āruā* rice. The bachelors come up with a stone pounder (*lōṛhā*) and place it on the cowdunged spot with its two ends pointing east and west. The spirit (*Lūgū*, as some call it) is supposed to reside in this *lōṛhā* or pounding stone. One of the bachelors takes up the rice-filled *sūp* under his left arm-pit, and of the rest of them each takes up in his hands a little rice from the *sūp*. They all stand there arranging themselves in two rows in the shape of two crescents, leaving a pathway between. A young man of nervous or psychic temperament and believed to "possess a light *chhāin* (shade)" is selected as *pāi-chālōwā* to move the *lōṛhā* or rather to be led by the spirit in it to the proper person. The boys all sprinkle rice on the *lōṛhā* (as offerings to the spirit in it), and exclaim,

—"Select the person who will always serve you properly and keep you pleased." The boy (*Pāi-Chālōwā*) with the "light *chhāin*" lightly places his hands on the *lōṛhā*; and the *lōṛhā* moves on, and the boy with it, lightly touching it. The other boys move on with the *lōṛhā*; until it touches the feet of some boy who is thereupon selected as the *Dhāngaṛ Pāhān*. Then one of the bachelors washes the feet of the selected *Dhāngaṛ Pāhān* with water and tells him, "You have been duly elected *Pāhān* of *Mūtri-Chāṇḍi*. Do not go anywhere this day. We are going to catch fowls. Wait till we come back to fetch you." The boy *Pāhān* awaits their return either at his own house or at some other place.

Propitiation (pūjā) of the Mūtri-Chāṇḍi spirit.

The *Dhāngaṛs* then seize a black fowl or one black and one red fowl from the house of some Orāon of the village. Then they go to the newly-elected *Dhāngaṛ Pāhān*, and one of the stalwart young men carries him on his shoulders to the seat of the *Mūtri-Chāṇḍi* spirit which is marked by a stone half-embedded in the ground under a tree. Other *dhāngaṛs* accompany them to the spot, one of them carrying the *sūp* with rice on it, and another carrying a metal jug (*lōṭā*) filled with water. A hole is dug at the foot of the stone. By the side of the *Mūtri-Chāṇḍi* stone some rice is placed in two *ḳūris* or small piles for the two chickens to "graze" upon. As the chickens begin to eat up the rice, they are sacrificed, the *Dhāngāṛ-Pāhān* saying,—"*O Mūtri-Chāṇḍi*, these are being offered to thee for the whole year. May our songs and dances go on merrily during the year. May we flourish." The blood of the sacrificed chickens is sprinkled on the *Mūtri-Chāṇḍi* stone and poured into the hole. The heads of sacrificed fowls and a few *biṇḍiōs* or ear ornaments which have been robbed

for the purpose by the young bachelors from the ears of the maidens of the village are also thrown into the hole by the boys who shout, '*Kūkṛoe Khaddar ghaṭrā-neḳā; ḳūkṛo ḳhaddar bārhnā neḳā.*' "May female children decrease; may male children increase." The young bachelors then micturate into the hole. This is believed to please the spirit. They then fill up the hole with earth and proceed to a little distance. From there they pelt clods of earth at the tree so that the clods may come down and fall just over the filled-up hole. In some villages, the *Dāṇḍā-ḳāṭṭā* or *Bhelwā-phāṛi* ceremony already described is performed by the *Dhāngaṛ-Pāhān* before the sacrifices are offered to the *Mūtri-Chāṇḍi*. Now the boys, carrying the *Dhāngaṛ-Pāhān* on the shoulders of one or more of them, proceed to the house of the village *Pāhān* and leave him inside the latter's kitchen where the former forthwith begins to rummage all the cooking-pots and help himself to whatever remnants of food he may lay his hands on. The women-folk of the *Pāhān's* house come out with water in dishes and cups and seek to drench the boy-*Pāhān* with the water. The other *Dhāngaṛs* in the meanwhile go on pelting clods of earth at the walls of the *Pāhān's* house. They are given a *pailā* (about a pound and a half) of rice by the village *Pāhān* and with this and the meat of the sacrificial fowls they prepare *ṭāhari* or pishpash, and have a hearty meal of it. They then go to the *āḳhṛā* to sing and dance.

Beer for sons-in-law.

At each Orāon house in the village a pot of rice-beer has been brewed for the occasion which the old *dāmāds* or sons-in-law (that is, persons long married to girls of the family) now strain and which the new *dāmāds* (that is, persons recently married to girls of the family) serve to all relatives and

friends which include practically all the Orāons of the village besides other relatives hailing as guests from other villages. This pot of liquor is known as *Ghāns-jhāṛowni hāṇṛiā*. The Orāons of the village and their invited relatives go from house to house drinking this *Ghāns-jhāṛowni hāṇṛiā* at the hands of the *dāmāds* (sons-in-law) of the villagers. These *dāmāds* are anointed with a kind of red-earth powder by such female relatives by marriage as may stand in joking relations (*hāns-nātūā*) with them, such as actual sisters-in-law and grand-mothers-in-law and those standing in such relations in the classificatory sense. These female relations are in their turn similarly anointed with powdered red-earth by the *dāmāds*. Then all make obeisance (*salām*) to one other.

Phūl-Khūsi (Pūnp Khernā).

After the *Ghāns-jhārowni hāṇṛiā* is drunk, another pot of rice-beer known as the *Bāṭāri-bharnā hāṇṛiā* is brought out to the *Pāhān's* courtyard. One of the men strains the liquor. The village *Gōṛāit* now comes there playing upon his drum, and his wife accompanies him, carrying a basket of *sāl* blossoms. The basket is made over to the *Pūjār* who arranges the *sāl* blossoms one by one on an ordinary *sūp*, the *sarnā-sūp* with the sacrificial knife inserted in it having been hung up, as before, inside the *Pāhān's* hut for fear of being desecrated by the touch of the profane. The village *Māhto* (secular headman) and other village elders come up. The *Pūjār* inserts a *sāl* blossom into the ear of each man and into the hair of each woman present there, while some one else goes on serving rice-beer to all present. Then the *Pāhān* holding a *sūp* and the *Pūjār* his *bāṭāri*, with their faces to the east, squat on the floor of the *Pāhān's* house, the latter just to the right of

the former, under the old *sarnā-sūp* suspended from the roof.[38] A cup of rice-beer is now handed over to the *Pūjār* and another cup to the *Pāhān*. Each of them drops on the ground a little of the liquor from his cup. Then the two men sing in chorus,—

Le! Le! Le! Munō jhārā deoman-ghāṭāia jhārā,
Sārē Gōsāin Sārem.
Hāerē Khaḍḍi mānoē, hāerē Phāgu mānoē, Sārem!

"O! O! O! New Rice-beer God!
O! Beer for marriage-relatives!
It is *Sarhūl* God!
O! It is *Sarhūl*! O! It is *Phāgu*!"

The women, led by the *Pāhān's* wife and the *Pūjār's* wife, sing,—

Rāhāri chāḵhnā Gōsāi!
Jhūrūngā chāḵhnā Gōsāi!
Bārōe chāḵhnā Gōsāi!
Khesāri chāḵhnā Gōsāi!
Hāerē Khaḍḍi Mānoē!
Hāerē Phāgu Mānoē!
Hāerē Gōsāi Sarem!

The sauce of *rahar*,[39] O God!
Sauce made of *bōdi*,[39] O God!
Sauce of *barai*, O God!
Sauce made of *ḵhesāri*,[39] O God!
O! It is *Sarhūl*! O! It is *Phāgū*—God!

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38. Unless the turn for a periodical change of *Pāhān* falls on a particular year in which year the *sarnā-sūp* is also changed ordinarily in the month of *Magh*.

39. *Rahar, bōdi, barai, ḵhesāri* are names of different kinds of pulses which are fried and used as sauce or appetiser to add relish to rice-beer.

The Hindi word '*chāḵhnā*' (here translated as 'sauce' for want of a better word) is used of something eaten as an appetiser with liquor.

The *Pūjrāin* now brings a large jarful of water, and after filling her husband's *bāṭāri* with this water pours the rest of the water over the heads of the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār*. Thus drenched, the *Pāhān* takes up the *sūp* containing *sāl* blossoms, and the *Pūjār* takes up his *bāṭāri* filled with water, and they start with the *Gōṛāit* musicians following them, and playing on drums (*dhōl* and *nāgera* and pipes or *sānhāi*), and visit every house in the village. A few elders of the village accompany them. At the door of every house, the *Pūjār* drops water from his *bāṭāri* so as to describe a circle, and then goes to the part of the house where paddy and other wealth of the family is kept and there too describes a circle with water from his *bāṭāri*, and the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* squat down in the middle of the circle, facing east, the *Pāhān* to left of the *Pūjār*. This is believed to bring luck to the family and increase its wealth. The mistress of the house comes there with a brass plate, a small cup (*mālia*) of oil, and a large jar of water and proceeds to rub oil over the *Pāhān's* feet placed over the brass-plate, and pours water over his legs. Then she similarly rubs oil over the *Pūjār's* feet and pours the rest of the water on his legs. The oil remaining over in her cup is rubbed on their chests and dropped over their heads. Then she rubs just a little oil also on the feet of the other elders of the party and washes their feet. She then holds forward the front part (*ānchal*) of her cloth and on this the *Pāhān* puts some *sāl* blossoms three times with the joined palms of his hands, and, each time this is done, the woman makes obeisance (*salām*) to the *Pāhān* by touching her own forehead with the front part of her cloth with the *sāl* blossoms in it. If she can afford it, she puts one or two copper coins into the *Pūjār's bāṭāri* as the perquisite of the *Pāhān* and the

Pūjār. The *Pūjār* inserts one or two *sāl* blossoms over the ear of each man and into the chignon of each woman of the house. Then he takes up with his fingers a little earth moistened with water from his *bāṭāri* and with it marks the forehead of each person by way of blessing him.

As soon as the *Pāhān*, the *Pūjār* and the other men leave each house, the *Pāhānāin* and the *Pūjrāin* with some female companions enter the house and dance on the floor by the side of the *mōrās* (straw bundles) of paddy where the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* had sat down, and bespatter the *mōrās* with mud. They go on dancing till rice-beer is strained; and then they sit down; and liquor is served to them all in leaf-cups. They then sing, "*Rāhāri chāḳhnā, etc.*" and *chāḳhnā* is distributed to all. Then they go from house to house entering each house just when the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* leave it and dance and sing and bespatter the rice *mōrās* in the same way. When by evening all the houses in the village have been visited, the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* return with their following of musicians, etc. to the *Pāhān*'s house. The *Pāhānāin* and the *Pūjrāin*, who have returned before them, await them at the door of the *Pāhān*'s house, each with a jug of water, a cup of oil and a brass dish. On their arrival, the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* each stands on one of the brass dishes, and each of the two women anoint the feet of the two men one after another with oil and wash their feet with water. The *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* each puts down an *anna* (a penny) or so on each of the two oil-cups for the two women. The two men then enter the room in which the *sarnā-sūp* is hung up, and squat on the floor underneath the *sūp* for a short while, the *Pāhān* putting down his *sūp* on the ground and the *Pūjār* putting

down his *bāṭāri* by the side of this *sūp*. It may be noted that if it be a big village and all the houses cannot be finished in one day, the same procedure is followed the next day, and, if necessary, the day following. The room in which the *sarnā-sūp* is hung up is considered sacred and no outsider is admitted into it, and even members of the family cannot touch the *sūp* until after rice-beer offering has been made to the spirit in it. If any infringement of this rule occurs, the spirit, it is believed, takes offence and visits the house and the village with sickness and other troubles.

Bāṭāri-sōpna.

That evening a feast is given at the *Pāhān's* house. After the *Pāhān* and the *Pūjār* have rested a short while on the floor of the *sarnā-sūp* room in the Pāhān's house, the Pūjār's wife fills her husband's *bāṭāri* with water, and hands it back to him and he takes it up under his left arm-pit. In some villages, the Pāhān's wife or some one else takes a *hookḳā* (hubble-bubble) and places over it a *chhilam* with tobacco and burning coal in it and puts the *hookḳā* into the right hand of the *Pūjār*. The *Pūjār* smoking the *hookḳā*, and holding his *bāṭāri* under his arm-pit, is taken up on the shoulders of men and carried to his own house. The *Pāhān* and his wife, and other Orāons, male and female, of the village follow the *Pūjār* to his house in procession, with dancing and singing and music. As soon as the party is in sight, people at the *Pūjār's* house bring out on the *āngan* (courtyard) of the house, a number of earthen jars filled with water; and when the party pour out the water from the jars into the *āngan*, all dance on this wetted *āngan* so as to make it all full of mud. This is believed to bring about seasonable and abundant rain-fall and success in wet cultivation of paddy. They go on

singing and dancing till rice-beer is ready. Then, if the people are still in their senses, the men sit down a little apart from the women. The liquor is distributed to all from the *bāṭāri* into leaf-cups. Then all are treated to a hearty meal of rice and curry made of *ḍūbḳi* (small cakes made of *ūrid* pulse). After the feast all return home.

Installing the Sarnā-Sūp (Sūp-baiṭhānā).

Next morning the *Pūjār* and other elders of the village again go to the *Pāhān's* house. A jar of rice-beer, called the *sūp-bāiṭhānā hāṇḍiā* is taken to the compartment where the *sarnā-sūp* is ordinarily hung up. The *Pāhān* enters the compartment and takes a little rice-beer in a leaf-cup and spills it on the '*sarnā-sūp*, saying,—"From to-day remain seated quietly on this *sūp*, and do not visit us during the year with any troubles and sorrows." It may be noted that the *sarnā-sūp* is hung up supported against a wall of the room so that the wind may not shake it, for such shaking would signify that the spirit has been disturbed and has left the *sūp*. When the *sarnā-sūp* is hung up supported against a wall of the room so that the wind may not shake it, for such shaking would signify that the spirit has been disturbed and has left the *sūp*. When the *sarnā-sūp* has been thus installed, the *jhāṇḍi* or flag put up at the door of the *Pāhān's* house on the evening of the day preceding the *Sarhūl*, is taken down.

It is interesting to note that just as some Orāons preserve dried up bits of meat bagged in the *Jeṭhśiḳār* for mixing the same with seed-paddy with which he sows his fields so also a small quantity of the *āruā* rice sanctified by the village *Pāhān* by placing the same on the sacred *sarnā sūp* during the *Sarhūl* festival is set apart by an Orāon cultivator, and at sowing time this is mixed with paddy-seeds

Illustration 21.
An Orāon Youth.
(Front view).

Illustration 22.
Same Orāon Youth.
(Profile)

about to be sown on his fields, in the expectation of securing a bumper crop.

Taboos.

From the time that the *dhāngaṛs* catch crabs for the *Sarhūl* festival until the *sarnā-sūp* is ceremonially installed back in its place, nobody in the village, not even an alien landlord, is permitted to dig the earth or use the plough or engage in any operation of cultivation or even to gather edible herbs (*sāg*) or climb a tree. It is believed that during this period the *Sarnā* spirit wanders at will and harms anyone climbing a tree or digging earth. Until the *sūp-baiṭhāna* ceremony has been performed in his village, it is taboo for an Orāon to eat *sāl* blossoms or other new flowers and vegetables and fruits of the season.

The only exception to this rule which now occurs, though rather rarely, is that of a village where after the *Phāgū Śikār* (in March), *sāl* blossoms are ceremonially consecrated and taken from house to house by the village *Pāhān* in order to make it permissible for the villagers to eat new edible leaves (*sāgs*) of the season. After the *Puñp-ḳhernā* or *Phūlḳhūsi* ceremony described above has taken place in any village, and the taboo against eating new flowers, vegetables and fruits of the season has been thereby removed, a person of that village is not permitted to touch the well or spring of a village in which that ceremony has not yet been celebrated, nor to touch any food or drink, or accept lime and tobacco from any person of such a village, or even to enter the hut of any Orāons of such a village or to touch a mat spread out to dry paddy or other grains in such a village. Even a woman of such a village who may be married to a village

where the *Phūl-ḳhūsi* ceremony has taken place is not permitted to enter the house of her parents or touch any article appertaining to that house. If she happens to come to her parents' village, she will be accommodated outside the house where food and drink will be provided for her without anybody touching her and she will otherwise be treated as an untouchable, and any utensil or mat or other thing used by her will not be taken into the house until the *Phūl-ḳhūsi* ceremony has taken place in her parents' village. If she or any other person belonging to a village where the *Phūl-ḳhūsi* ceremony has taken place happens to come in contact with a well or spring of the village where the ceremony has not taken place, the water of the well or spring in question will be regarded as polluted and its water will require to be baled out before it can be used by anybody in the village. A person belonging to a village where the *Phūl-ḳhūsi* ceremony has been celebrated may not even be married to a person belonging to a village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has not yet taken place. In fact, persons belonging to a village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has not yet taken place will, except in cases of urgent necessity, avoid visiting a village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has been celebrated; and even if necessity may compel a person to go to or pass through such a village he (or she) will leave such village as soon as practicable. It is believed that any breach of such taboos will entail damage to the crops of the village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has not yet taken place; but contact with a person or thing belonging to a village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has not yet taken place can cause no harm to a village where *Phūl-ḳhūsi* has been celebrated. The reason for this taboo on the one village and exemption

from taboo in the other village, appears to be a belief that contact with persons or things belonging to a village where the taboo against the new vegetables, etc., no longer exists, and of which the inhabitants now freely partake of the things yet tabooed to the other village, amounts to a breach by the latter village of the taboo against such food.

ii. Hunting Festivals.

Although hunting has been long superseded among the Orāons by agriculture as the principal mode of securing food, and the tribe is no longer dependant on the chase for the necessaries of life, the Orāon still takes an intense delight in hunting the wild animals of his native woods and hills. But it is not merely for pleasure's sake that Orāons go out in organised bodies to hunt. There is another and a more serious motive behind the periodical hunting excursions still undertaken and hunting festivals celebrated by the Orāon village communities and Paṛhā-federations of our days. This is the desire to secure a luxuriant rice-crop through the mysterious magical influence of a successful hunt.

The more important periodical hunting excursions and festivals connected therewith are three in number. These are,—(1) the *Phāgū Sendrā* or Spring Hunt undertaken every year in the month of Phāgun or March, (2) the *Biśū Śiḳār* or Summer Hunt undertaken in Baiśākh or April-May, and the *Jeṭh-Śiḳār* or Rainy-season Hunt undertaken in the month of Jeṭh or June.

I have described the procedure at these hunts and the ceremonies connected therewith in a former volume and shall not repeat them here. The *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* ceremony to ward off

the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth' or 'evil tongue' and sacrifices to *Chāṇḍi*, the presiding spirit of hunting, are the princippal religious and magico-religious rites connected with these hunts. Various magical precautions are also adopted to ward off the 'evil eye.'

The spring-hunt is terminated by the *Phāgū* festival described in the previous section.

A most interesting feature of Orāon hunting festivals of the present day is, as I have said, the intimate connection that is now believed to exist between them and the Orāon's agricultural operations. Thus, on the day of the *Dhūreṭ-śiḳār* which forms part of the Spring Hunt or *Phāgū Sendrā*, some member or members of the family of every Orāon cultivator must ceremonially drive the plough once or twice over one of their rice-fields. This is known as 'Dhūreṭ' or 'raising dust' (that is to say, purverīzing the earth). And on the day following the '*Dhūreṭ-śiḳār*,' agricultural operations are taboo to the Orāon.

Again, the Summer Hunt which is celebrated just before the time for sowing paddy-seeds is now believed to be particularly connected with the growth of the paddy crops. The ill success of an Orāon village at this hunt is believed to bode failure of paddy crops and consequent famine and starvation. In the hope of securing a bumper crop, many Orāon families dry in the sun bits of flesh of the deer bagged at the *Biśū Siḳār*, and religiously set them apart, and, at sowing-time, mix these bits of dried-up meat with paddy-seeds that they sow in their fields. In many Orāon families this dried meat is boiled with pulses and eaten as a sacramental meal on the day they first sow paddy in their fields. This Orāon custom

of scattering bits of dried meat on the fields at sowing time and the sacramental meal may either be a substitute for and reminiscent of an older practice of the nature of the *meṛiāh* sacrifices of their congeners the *Khōṇḍs*, or it may perhaps be the attenuated survival of some custom of the hunting stage of the economic history of the tribe adapted to its present agricultural stage. It may be noted that the *Ōṇḍḳā* or human sacrifice to avert epidemic or famine is said to have been extensively practised by the Orāons of old, and is not wholly unknown even at the present day.

After the *Jeṭh-śiḳār*, the Orāon must abstain from killing wild animals for the next two months or until the paddy crop is fully developed, and it is believed that a breach of this taboo will injuriously affect the growing paddy crops.

The Orāon's hunting festivals, like most other festivals of the tribe, are followed by *Jātrās* or dancing festivals. These have been described in a previous volume and will not therefore be repeated here.[40] These *Jātrās* are not merely festivals of rejoicing but are further regarded as having an important magical influence upon the tribe's economic prospects. In some of these inter-*pāṛhā Jātrās*, such as those at Mūṛmā (in *thānā* Māṇḍār) and Bhāskō (in *thānā* Lōhārdāgā), thousands of men and women assemble. A successful *Jeṭh-Jātrā* at which there is a large concourse of male and female dancers and spectators is believed to stimulate magically the growth of the paddy-plants and bring on an abundant harvest. Indeed, the waving of the hand, the swaying of the body, the measured steps of the dancers, and the resounding thuds of

40. *Ibid.* pp. 253-3, 256-7, 313-323.

their feet at intervals, through they may have been primarily spontaneous rhythmic movements executed under the weight of strong emotions, appear to have in time come to serve pantomimic magical or religious purposes. Some of the Orāon dances would appear to be imitative of the movements of particular economic pursuits of the season, and were possibly meant to be magical processes calculated to stimulate the productive forces of nature. 41

Not less important than their magical significance and, indeed, more obvious, is the social significance of the *Jātrās*. The village-flags and Pāṛhā-flags and other village badges and clan-emblems carried in procession to these *Jātrās* serve to affirm and emphasise the social bond that binds together each village, clan, and Pāṛhā-federation. The benedictory or sacred *Kāṛsā-bhāṇḍās* or earthen jars filled with water and wound round with wreaths of paddy-sheaves and covered up at the mouth with an earthen lamp with four lighted wicks in it, that are carried on the heads of some women dancing the sacred marriage-dance at these *Jātrās* appear to be an emphatic and impressive ceremonial affirmation of tribal union.

Religious rites observed on such occasions in connection with the village badges and *Pāṛhā* badges and clan emblems, the ceremonial circumambulation of the *Jātrā* ground by the dancers, and the sacrifices offered to the *Jātrā-ḳhūṇṭā* and to the *Māndar-sālā*,—these and other rites and observances sacralise and sanctify the social bond; and at these *jātrās* the Orāon rejoices in a lively sense of harmonious relations between himself, his clan-fellows and tribe-fellows and his gods and spirits.

41. See *Ibid.* pp. 283-301.

iii. Festival connected with Cattle.

The Orāons are not a pastoral tribe; and although their children look after the grazing of their cattle, almost every Orāon village has a family or two of the Hindu caste of Āhirs to whom the cattle of the village are made over for tending. And the only festival connected with cattle has been adopted by the Orāons from the Hindus. This festival which is known as the *Sōhōrāi* is described below.

The Sōhōrāi Festival.

In the evening of the Āmāwas or New Moon day in the month of Kārtik, a number of newly made earthen lamps (*ḳāchchā-diā*) fed with oil, are lighted in all the rooms, cattle-sheds, manure-pits (*gōbar-gāṛhā*) and kitchen-gardens (*bāri*), upland fields and trees attached to the house of each Orāon family. The lamps are, if possible, kept burning the whole night. Incense (*dhūān*), if available, is also burnt in the cow-shed. In each house, a special meal is prepared for the cattle by boiling together *ūrid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*), *māṛuā* (*elusine corocana*) and *bōdi* (*vigna catiang*).

On the following morning, at about 10 a.m., the cattle are bathed at some tank or pool or stream, and then taken into the family cattle-shed, where some female member of the family sprinkles rice-beer on the hoofs of the cattle. The cattle are then given slices of the spiked tuber called *ōl* (*colocasia antiquorum*) mixed wiith salt to eat, and are then given a hearty feed of the *ūrid*, *māṛuā* and *bōdi* grains boiled overnight. The horns, forehead and hoofs of the cattle are then anointed with vermilion diluted in oil.

In a few families, a fowl is then sacrificed at the cattle-shed to its presiding spirit *Gōṛāiā* or *Gohār Deōtā* or cattle-shed-spirit who is also sometimes called by the name of the Hindu goddess of wealth—*Lachmi*. After the cattle have been thus fed, they are taken by the young bachelors (*jōṇkhār*) of the village to the village pasture-ground or to some *ṭāṇṛ* or upland outside the *basti* or inhabited part of the village. There the village Āhir (*Māhṛās*) or cattle-herd with a cow-bell (*ṭhārki*) in one hand and a staff on the other, meets them.

Some families who own buffaloes sacrifice to *Gōṛāiā*, a black pig in the following manner. They first wash the hoofs of the buffaloes and anoint their horns and forehead with vermilion diluted in oil, then the pig is offered a handful of *āruā* rice to feed upon, and its feet are washed and its forehead anointed with vermilion diluted in oil and with rice-flour moistened in water. The pig is then dragged over the ground and thus taken, struggling and squeaking, to the place where the buffaloes have been let loose. The buffaloes, excited and frightened by the squeaking and grunting of the pigs, gore the pig to death with their horns. Ordinarily, the pig is purchased by subscription from all the villagers who may own buffaloes, and the ceremony is a public one.

On this day and the following day, a few young Orāon boys, dressed from head to foot in straw and decked with flowers, mainly *Sūrgūjā* (*Guizotia Abyssinica*), go from house to house playing on drums and dancing, begging for gifts of rice and other grains and vegetables as also coins, and driving away fleas and mosquitoes. One or two of them dress themselves in paddy-straw like women with make-believe babies on their back. These boys are called *Dūṇḍū*

and their begging and flea-driving is known as "*Dāsā māsā.*"

After the pig has been killed, the village Āhir or cattle-herd goes dancing and playing on drums to the house of the village *Pāhān* (priest). There the *Pāhānāin* (wife of the *Pāhān*) places a brass-plate (*thālā*) filled with water before him, and the Āhir puts his feet on the plate, and the *Pāhānāin* washes his feet by rubbing them with her hands. Then the Āhir is seated on a palm-leaf mat and given a cup (*dūvā*) filled with rice-beer which he drinks. The *Pāhānāin*, in the meanwhile, takes up the Āhir's staff and reverently anoints it with oil and vermilion. Then the Āhir goes home, and taking his wife with him proceeds to visit each family whose cattle he grazes. The village Goṛāit-musicians follow them playing on drums (*nāgerā* and *ḍhōl*). At each house, the same procedure is followed as at the *Pāhān's* house, and at each house the Āhir dances for a few minutes and sings, "*Chhāpārā chhāpārā gāgāloy Ahirā, Chhāpārā gelo tinōḳāl.*"

In the meanwhile the water with which his feet have been washed is thrown away and some rice, *ūrid* or other grain is kept of the ground and over it is placed the brass-plate. A cup of rice-beer is poured into the brass-plate and some copper coin, ordinarily an *annā* (about a penny) for each team of plough-cattle owned by the family, is put down on the plate. Then the Āhir shouts– "*Hih! Lā-Lā-Lā!*" and puts his lips on the liquor in the plate and thus, in the manner of cattle, sucks in the liquor until the plate is drained dry, and finally picks up the coins with his lips. The wife of the Āhir takes up in a basket from the ground the grains placed under the plate.

Āhir Jātrā or Loūṛi milānā.

After the Āhir has visited the houses of all his clients, the Āhirs of a number of neighbouring villages come together at different centres in dance-meetings or *jātrās* after the manner of the Orāons. At this *jātrā*, the Āhirs display their skill in stick-play. That night, lamps of baked clay (*pāḳā diā*) are lighted in the cattle-shed and in every room of the house, and every tree in the compound, and in the manure pits, drains, &c., of each family. On the following day, each village appoints its Āhir or cattle-herd for the ensuing twelve months. Ordinarily the old Āhir is reappointed, but should the villagers have had any serious cause for dissatisfaction with the old Āhir and think fit to dismiss him, a new cattle-herd is appointed. The Āhir, so appointed, gets one or more pots of rice-beer brewed by some Orāons of the village, (as only aboriginals enjoy the privileges of free brewing), and presents these to the villagers as *sālāmi* or tribute for his appointment or reappointment, as the case may be.

The *Sōḫōrāi* festival has been obviously borrowed by the Orāons as by most other tribes of Chōṭā-Nāgpur from the cattle-tending Āhirs. The borrowing of this festival in the case of the Orāons has been obviously facilitated by the fact that the tutelary spirit of the cattle-shed has been incorporated among the Orāon household spirits under the name of *Cõesāli-Nād*. The Orāon conception of this spirit is, however, that of a maleficent one, as is disclosed by the *tūḳḳō ōthōrnā* ceremony already described, which aims at averting the ill-will of the spirit. It is further interesting to note that the Āhirs have in their turn been obviously influenced by their contact with the Orāons in adopting the Orāon custom of

concluding their religious festival with a *Jātrā* or tribal reunion.

iv. Agricultural Festivals.

The principal annual agricultural festival of the Orāons are the *Hariāri* celebrated in the month of Āṣāṛh (June-July) when the paddy-seeds have just germinated and pushed out new shoots; the *Kadlōṭā*, celebrated in the month of Bhādo (August) when rice-grains are forming in the stalks; and the Kharihāni or *Kharrā Pūjā* celebrated in Kārtik or Aghān (October-November) when the paddy crops have been harvested. The *Karam* festival and the *Jitiā* festival, which respectively precede and follow the *Kadlōṭā*, appear to have been borrowed by the Orāons and other tribes of Chōṭā-Nāgpur from the Hindus.

(1) The Hariāri Festival.

The *Hariāri* or the festival of Green (Rice) Plants is celebrated in the month of *Āṣāṛh* after paddy, *gondli*, *maruā* and *ḳāpās* or cotton seeds have been sown in all the fields of the village, and the land is green with verdure. Unless this public Hariāri is celebrated, no one in the village may transplant his fields. Individual Orāons also make private *Hariāri Pūjā* by offering sacrifices of fowls in their own houses to their own ancestor-spirits and *Khūṇṭ* spirits before they begin to transplant paddy-seedlings in their own respective fields. This they do on any day that suits their convenience after the public (*gairahi*) *Hariāri* festival on behalf of the whole village.

The *Panch* or village-elders hold a consultation amongst themselves and appoint a day for the celebration of the *gairahi* or public *Hariāri* festival, and direct the village messenger or

Goṛāit to proclaim the date in the village. On the morning of the appointed day, the village-*Pāhān* and other village-elders direct the Goṛāit to collect fowls for sacrifices. The families whose turn occurs in a particular year to supply fowls are also named, and the Goṛāit seizes fowls from their houses. The *Pāhān* and the village *Māhto* sometimes accompany the Goṛāit and select or point out the fowls. The standard number of fowls for the sacrifice is twelve but sometimes the number of fowls taken is more and sometimes less. When the number of fowls taken is more than the number of the definite village-deities, the superfluous fowls are sacrificed to the nameless deities of "*Gāṛhā-ḍhōṛā Pāhāṛ-Pāṭ chhūṭal bāṛhal*" and to *Khūṇṭ dāṇṭs*. In some villages, a sheep or goat is also purchased for sacrifice by the *Pāhān* with subscriptions collected from the villagers. In this and other periodical public festivals, namely, the *Sarhūl*, the *Kadlōṭa* and the *Kharihāni* festivals, the *Pāhān* has to provide the rice and rice-beer required for the sacrificial ceremonies and also for the feast that follows.

At about 10 A. M. the villagers accompany the *Pāhān* and his assistant or assistants (*Pūjār* or *Pānbhāra*, etc.) to the *ṭāṇṛ* or open upland where the festival is annually held. The site for the sacrifices is cleaned with cowdung and water and the *Pāhān's sūp* with the sacrificial knife on it is placed on the ground, and a quantity of *āruā* rice is placed by its side on a leaf-plate or leaf-cup. As many handfuls or, as in some villages, three times as many handfuls of *āruā* rice are arranged separately by the *Pāhān* or the *Pūjār* in a row as there are fowls and animals to be sacrificed. The handfuls of rice thus placed in the name of a particular spirit are called

the *ḳūri* of that spirit. The *Pūjār* then reverently washes the hoofs of each votive animal, if any, and the feet of the fowls, wipes off with his hands the water from the hoofs and feet, and hands over each animal or fowl, one after another, to the *Pāhān*. If there is a goat or a sheep to be offered, the *Pāhān* or the *Pūjār* also marks its forehead with vermilion. The *Pāhān* now holds each animal or fowl by turns within the palms of his hands and addresses each victim by turns as follows,—"Look! I am doing *Hāriāri* to thee. See that no sickness or other trouble enter the village or visit its houses, affect its people, its children, its cattle and its luck. Thou art the *māliḳ* (owner) of the village; should any disease or calamity seek entrance into the village, do not thou admit them, but do thou make them deviate their course. May all in the village remain in peace and happiness. Do thou bring us sufficient rain; may we have a bumper crop. Look here! Shoulds't thou be a real deity (*āsal deotā*) do thou take up (eat) the rice." It is worth noticing that in this address, the sacrificial animal is identified with the spirit to which it is to be sacrificed. Then each animal or fowl is made to feed on the *ḳūri* of rice meant for it, and handed back by the *Pāhān* to the *Pūjār* or other villagers sitting beside him. When each animal or fowl has been thus fed on *āruā* rice, each of them is again made over one by one to the *Pāhān* for sacrifice. The *Pāhān* holds each animal or fowl and again repeats similar prayers for health and good luck of man and cattle and for good rains and good crops, and cuts off the head of each animal and fowl one after another. As each victim is sacrificed, a little of its blood is dropped on the ground just before the remnant of the *ḳūri* of rice on which it was fed.

Some of the men at once skin the animal and fowls and dress it. The *livers* of the sacrificial animals and fowls are packed up in a *sāl*-leaf covering and boiled in water by the *Pūjār* or *Ṭahalū* or *Pānbhārā*. Bits of the boiled livers are scraped off with the fingers and offered to the spirits by placing them on the ground before the *ḳūris*; libations of rice-beer are at the same time offered before each *ḳūri* and some rice-beer is placed in a leaf-cup on the ground. Then the *Pāhān* bows down before the *ḳūris*. The remainder of the boiled livers are eaten by the *Pāhān* and other village-elders. The rest of the sacrificial meat is either fried or boiled with rice as *ṭahri* and distributed to all present by the *Pūjār* who is, if necessary, assisted by others. And all have a hearty meal and plenty of drink. Then, the earthen cooking-vessels, the stones with which the hearth was improvised, the leaf-plates and leaf-cups from which the men ate are all buried underground. It may be noted that only men and no women may attend this and other public festivals or partake of the sacrificial meat. Only small unmarried girls may partake of the meat, but not at the place of the *Pūjā*, but only if brought home. It may also be noted here that the appropriate colour of the fowl to be sacrificed to *Dharmes* is white, to *Sarnā Būṛhiā* brown (*Kāsri*), to *Dārhā* red (*rāngnā*), to *Deswāli* brown (*Kāsri*) and to *gairahi Khūṇṭ* spirits mottled (*mālā*), and to miscellaneous spirits any colour.

(2) The Kādlōṭā Festival.

The next agricultural festival of the year is the *Kādlōṭā* or *Kādleṭā*. The derivation and meaning of this word are unknown. When in August rice-grains have formed in the rice-plants standing in *dōn* or low lands, and the *Māṛuā*

(*Eleusine ooracana*) and *gōṛā* or upland rice crops are waiting to be harvested, the Orāon apprehends danger to the crops not only from mischievous birds and beasts but also from the 'evil eye' and the envious tongue of man, and the mischief-making propensities of evil spirits. And in order to ward off the evil eye and envious tongue of man and the evil attentions of mischievous spirits, the Orāons of each village celebrate the *Kādlōṭā* festival in which sacrifices are offered to the village-deities for protection. The *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* ceremony is performed on the day following in order to ward off the evil eye and evil tongues. Certain other magical measures are also adopted.

Generally the tenth day of the moon in the month of *Bhādo* (August) is selected for the celebration of the *Kādlōṭā*. As in the *Hariāri* festival, fowls are collected from the houses of some of the villagers and taken to some open *ḍāṃṛ* or upland where the festival is held every year. The sacrifices and libations are offered in the same way as in the *Hariāri*, and a similar prayer is offered, with the only addition, "May the crops ripen and come out well; and may we reap a full harvest and may nothing untoward happen." The livers of the sacrificed fowls are boiled and a portion offered to the spirits in the same manner as in the *Hariāri*, and a similar feast follows; and after the feast the leavings *etc.* are buried in the same way.

On the day of the *Kādlōṭā* festival, young men of the village go to some jungle to cut down saplings and branches of the *semicarpis anacardium* (Hindi, *Bhelwa*; Orāon, *Kirō*), the *Drospyros melanoxylon* (Hindi, *Kend*; Orāon, *telā*), and, failing that, shrubs of the *Vitex Negundo* (Hindi, *Sindūār*; Orāon,

Okṛō). These they bring to the village in bundles. On the following day the *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* ceremony is performed in every Orāon house and pieces of the *bhelwā* and *kend* or *sinduār* branches or twigs are planted in the various fields of each Orāon cultivator. A little of the *āruā* rice used in the *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* ceremony is also tied up in *bhelwā* leaves on these branches or twigs. These are believed to avert the evil eye, and repel evil spirits and other evil influences from the standing crops.

(3) The Karam Festival.

The *Karam* festival, which is celebrated on the day after *Kādlōṭā*, has been borrowed by the Orāons from their Hindu or semi-Hinduised neighbours and, in a manner, incorporated with the *Kādlōṭā* festival of which it now practically forms a part. For days before the festival, Orāon young men utilise their leisure hours in making wooden clappers called *ṭhechkā* which are played upon at this festival, fans (*chāmar*) of wild date-palm leaves and of peacock feathers, if available, and ornaments of various kinds of wild grass for the wrists and necks; on the morning following the *Kādlōṭā* festival, the young bachelors of an Orāon village go out in a body, dancing, singing and playing music, to cut down and bring home three branches of the *Karam* (*Nauclea parvifolia*) tree for the *Karam* festival. Straight branches which have not been damaged in any way by worms or other pests and of which the leaves are all perfect and fresh are selected for the purpose. The branches so selected are not allowed to touch the ground. In some villages the *Pāhān* or *Pūjār* also go to the jungle with a little oil and vermilion for anointing the *Karam* branches. The *Pūjār* also takes with him an axe which he

hands over to the boys to cut the *Karam* branches. The maidens of the village, in the meanwhile, go in a body dancing and singing to collect white *pāṛhnā* flowers. They are privileged to walk unopposed through fields of standing crops. When they have collected a sufficient quantity of *pāṛhnā* flowers, they come back, and again go out with baskets dyed red for the festival, and fill these baskets known as *Karam*-baskets (*Karam-dowri*) with *bōdi* (*Vigna catiang*), *ūrid* (*Phaseolus roxburghii*), *barāi* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and other grains, and wait and remain dancing at some distance from the boys.

In villages where a medicine-man or witch-doctor or spirit-doctor (*Māti*) resides, he conducts his disciples, very early the same morning, to the neighbouring jungles and there points out to them different medicinal plants, herbs and roots and explains their respective characteristics and special properties.

A little after their return from the jungle, while the other young men of the village go to the jungles to cut and bring home *Karam* (*Nauclea parvifolia*) branches for the *Karam* festival, the medicine-man again conducts his disciples to some secluded open space outside the jungle. The principal disciple (*pāṭ-chelā*) carries a straw whip (*Kōṛō*) in his right hand, and the others carry each a cane in his hand. While the other boys are singing and cutting *Karam* branches, and the maidens of the village are waiting at some distance with their baskets filled with grains, the disciples of the *Māti* stand in a line with out-stretched arms, while the *Māti* goes on reciting incantations in a sing-song tone and, now and again, pelting grains of *āruā* rice at his disciples. One after another, some disciples get 'possessed' and shake their heads, and the other boys dance round them with gradually increasing frenzy, and at length

the spirit-possessed young men fall down head forward on the ground, as if bowing down to some spirits. Those of them who are not so easily susceptible to spirit-possession are lashed with his whip by the *Pāṭ-chelā* or by the *Māti* himself until they too are infected with a similar frenzy and fall down similarly obsessed. As soon as any of them gets up from the ground, he runs frantically towards the village and plucks pumpkins, cucumbers, maize-pods, or any other vegetables, fruits, or flowers he may place his hands on; and no one resists them. The *chelā* who can in this way secure a *Keōṛā* flower or *Tiuṛā* flower is believed to have been specially favoured by some spirit.

When the *Karam* branches for the festival have been selected and cut down, three young bachelors, linked hand in hand, carry the branches, one each, to the village. The other young men go on dancing and singing around them. The maidens with their *Karam*-baskets follow at a little distance, singing and dancing. And the *bharnis* or spirit-possessed disciples of the *Māti* run about on all sides and in all directions.

In the meanwhile, the *Dāṇḍā Kāṭṭā* ceremony has been performed in every house, and *bhelwā, ḳend* and *sinduār* branches have been ceremonially planted on their respective fields by the villagers, as I have mentioned in the preceding section.

At the sound of the music and songs of the party returning with their *Karam* branches, the villagers come out to meet them at the village *āḳhṛā* or dancing ground. The *Karam* is essentially a festival of women and particularly of maidens. Even married daughters and sisters of the Orāons of a

village generally come to their parents' or brothers' houses to take part in the *Karam* festivities of their village. When the three *Karam* branches are brought in procession to the village-*ākhṛā*, they are ceremonially planted in the middle of the *ākhṛā* or rather installed as '*Karam Rājā*' or 'King *Karam*,' as he is addressed in songs sung on the occasion. When the *Karam* branches have been thus ceremonially set up, the '*Karam Rājā*,' is left in charge of the *Pāhān* and other village-elders. The *Pāhān* is presented by the villagers with a jar of rice-beer for the occasion, and he and his companions remain drinking to their hearts' content at the *ākhṛā* while the younger people return home. So long as the '*Karam Rājā*' is not ceremonially installed, young men and women must not come too close together. After dusk, the young men and women, after having partaken of bread and other dainties prepared for the occasion at their respective houses, return to the *ākhṛā* and spend the whole night in dancing and singing in accompaniment to music.

Next morning, the '*Karam Rājā*' is festooned with wreaths of flowers, and armlets, bracelets and necklets of wild grass. The maidens put cucumbers in their *Karam* baskets to represent human babies. Flowers are also heaped over various kinds of grains in these *Karam* baskets. These baskets are reverently placed before the *Karam Rājā*. A quantity of barley-shoots sprouting out of seeds sown by the maidens of the village in sand on the floor of their common dormitory, is also taken to the *ākhṛā* by the maidens in baskets. It is interesting to note that the germination of the barley-seeds has been sought to be hastened by the maidens who have been for the preceding nine days carefully sprinkling

water over them and sitting up late at night singing songs to them and watching them germinating. These maidens must abstain from eating flesh, fish and crabs during those days. Young men and women now all sit down in rings round the *Karam Rājā*, and the village *Pāhān* or some other village elder who happens to know the *Karam Kāhini* or folk-tale connected with the *Karam*, recites it. The *Kāhini* runs as follows:—

"Long—long—ago, seven brothers lived with their respective wives as members of a joint family. Once the brothers went abroad with their pack-bullocks laden with grains, for purposes of trade, leaving their wives and children at home. After some months, they set out on their return journey home with their pack-bullocks. On the day of the *Karam* festival, they reached a village only a few miles distant from their own. But the bullocks were dead tired and refused to move a step further. So the brothers were obliged to halt there for the day. As they were very anxious for news of their wives and children, they deputed the youngest brother to go home and return with news. But when the youngest brother reached his village and saw his wife, brothers' wives, and other people of the village merrily dancing and singing before the *Karam Rājā* at the village *ākẖṛā*, he was so elated with joy that he took up a drum (*nāgeṛā*) and began to dance and play music, and forgot all about his errand. When his brothers grew tired of waiting for him, they deputed the youngest amongst themselves to bring them news. He too was similarly transported with joy at the sight of the dances and merriment at the *ākẖṛā* and forgot his errand and joined the dancing and singing. Then the other brothers, one after another, came

for news but remained dancing and singing at the *ākhṛā* like the two brothers who preceded them. When it grew very late and the eldest brother found himself as good as deserted by the other brothers, he grew impatient and ran home to his village, leaving the bullocks to take care of themselves. Arrived at the village *ākhṛā*, his indignation knew no bounds when he saw his brothers and their wives and even his own wife all dancing and singing without any thought of his own sad plight. And in a fit of anger he kicked at the basin of boiling milk meant for offering to the *Karaṃ* spirit and left the place and went away with his pumpkin gourd in his hand as a *Faḳir* or mendicant tired of the world. The milk, thus spilt, scalded the *Karam Rājā* badly. And the *Karam Rājā* got angry and was about to leave the place in a huff when the wife of the youngest of the seven brothers carried the deity reverently back in her arms and reinstated him in his place. And since then instead of hot milk, offerings of *dahi* or curdled milk are made to the *Karam* deity."

After hearing this *Karam* legend duly recited, the young men and women all make offerings of flowers from the *Karam* basket by throwing the petals at *Karam Rājā*, saying "*Pōlṭō, pōlṭō.*" *Dahi* (curds), *āruā* rice and other grains are also offered. In some places, incense is burnt in Hindu fashion. Some of the barley-shoots referred to above are also offered to the *Karam* deity. The rest of the barley-blades are distributed by the maidens to the young men; and young men and women all wear these yellowish barley-blades generally in their hair. It may not appear unreasonable to infer that these barley-shoots that have been ceremonially nurtured by the maidens and, after consecration, presented by them to the

young men, may be intended to stimulate, by a process of sympathetic magic, the fecundity of the young people, or perhaps to stimulate the growth of the standing crops on the fields, or perhaps to serve both ends which are indeed in the Orāon's estimation parts of the same process. After this all present prostrate themselves or bow down to the *Karam Rājā*, the girls and women saying in Hindi, "*Āpan dharam, bhāiyaṛē dharam; Karamṛē gōṛ lāgā.*" "For our own good (*lit.*, religion) and that of our brothers, bow down to *Karam*." The Orāons believe that by observing ceremonial fast at the *Karam* festival and joining in the *Pūjā*, their women and maidens secure the well-being of their brothers in particular. The *Karam* branches are then carried in procession with music, song and dances. Three women carry the three *Karam* branches. They proceed first to the *Pāhān's* house and then to the village *Māhto's* house, and then to the *Pūjār's* house; and, at each house, the mistress of the house anoints the *Karam* branches with oil and vermilion and offers three pieces of bread. Finally the *Karam* branches are drowned in some stream or tank. Young men and women eat bread and drink rice-beer and sing plaintive songs of farewell to the *Karam* deity, the burden of which is,—"*Rōṭi ṛhiāle Karam, Hanṛi piālē aur chhoṛṛē chalā gelē. Hāerē Karam! Hāerē Karam!*" "Thou hast given us bread to eat and rice-beer to drink [and made us merry], O *Karam*, and [now] thou hast left us desolate! Alas! Oh *Karam*! Alas! Oh *Karam*!"

While watching the *Karam Pūjā* and hearing these *Karam* songs, one cannot resist the inference that these festivals adopted from a comparatively higher culture have helped in moderating the original feeling of fear and awe of the spirits

and in introducing or rather including a feeling of reverent love.

It is interesting to note that besides this principal *Karam* festival which is known by the distinctive name of *Rāj Karam*, the *Karam* festival is also celebrated with similar ceremonies in some villages on the full moon day following the Hindu *Dasāi* or *Dasaharā* festival in the month of *Āswin* (September-October) and in a few villages (as in village *Dibidih Kharkha* in *thānā* Gūmlā) in connection with the *Sōhōrai* festival in *Kārtik* (October-November). The former is known as *Dasāi Karam* and the latter as *Sōhōrai Karam*. In some villages again (as in Dhanāmūnji in *thānā Lohārdāgā*), the *Karam* festival is celebrated on the same day as the *Jitiā* festival in August or September, and is known as *Jitiā Karam*. A special *Karam* festival, known as *Būṛhi Karam*, is also celebrated in all villages once in three years, as also in a year of drought, in the month of July. It must also be celebrated when an epidemic visits a village which has omitted to celebrate the *Rāj Karam* properly. This festival of *Būṛhi Kaarm* or the *Karam* of old women, is so named because in this old women take part and go through all the ceremonies of the *Rāj Karam*, except that the *Pāhān* or some other village-elder recites the *Karam Kāhini* or legend of the *Karam*. The epidemic with which a village is visited for its omission to celebrate the *Rāj Karam* properly is known as *Buṛhi Karam Rōg*.

(4) The Jitiā Festival.

This festival is celebrated twelve days after the *Karam* festival. This, too, is a festival borrowed by the Orāons from the Hindus, and not regarded by the Orāons as a *Pūjā*

or Religious Feast proper, of their own. Nor is it observed as a public festival to be celebrated at a public place such as a *Sarnā* grove or open upland or the *ākhṛā*, but is only celebrated in particular houses. Formerly, it appears, the festival used to be celebrated only by individual families who cared to do so. But now-a-days is most villages, the villagers join in the festivals and select every year some individual villager in whose house the festival is to be celebrated for that year. Women of this particular family who have children living as also such women in other families who choose to do so, observe a fast on the day preceding the festival. That evening the women bathe and place upon cucumber leaves at the door of each room in the house one or two pieces of bread, a cucumber (believed to represent a male child) together with some flowers of the *kōhṃṛā* (pumpkin), *jhingi* (*Luffa acutangula*) and *gōngrā* (*Luffa degyptia*) plants as offerings to the spirits of the ancestors of the family. In many villages rice-gruel is also offered in each house to the ancestor-spirits of the family. On the day of the festival, in the evening, one, two or three *Jitiā pipar* branches are planted on the courtyard or open space in front of the house by the *Pāhān*. In some places a *bael* (*Aegle marmelos*) fruit is placed over this. Women of the family who have fasted the whole day burn incense and clarified butter (*ghee*) and molasses in front of this *Jitiā pipar* branch. A Brāhman priest is called to officiate at this part of the ceremony. Each time that the burnt offerings of incense, *ghee* and molasses are thrown into the fire, the Brāhman throws some *āruā* rice into the fire and recites some *mantrams* or prayers, if he knows any. At night a ball of silk thread (*gāṇṛā*) is

suspended from the *Jitiā* branch, and the Brāhman recites the *Jitiā Kāhini* or legend.

The following morning the *Jitiā Pipar* branch or branches together with the *bael* fruit, if any, are taken up by women and thrown away on the road before they have taken any food. Returning home, they cut up the cucumber into small pieces which they distribute to the different Orāon families in the village. Then men and women drink rice-beer. That day the women will make curry of at least twelve kinds of vegetables and serve them on *Jitiā pipar* leaves.

(5) Other Agricultural Feasts and Ceremonies.

An account of other agricultural feasts and ceremonies of the Orāons have been given in my former volume on the tribe and need not be repeated here. These are the *Dhānbuni Pūjā* [42] or Sowing Festival which is a public festival only in a few Orāon villages, the *Bāngāṛi* ceremony [43] or the Marriage of the paddy seedlings at transplantation, and the *Nawā-ḳhāni* [44] festival or Eating the New (upland or early) rice.

(6) Kharrā Pūjā or Kharihāni.

The last agricultural festival of the year is the *Kharrā Pūjā* or the festival of the threshing-floor in *Aghān* (November). No villager may thresh his paddy before the village priest has prepared his own threshing-floor and performed the public *Kharrā Pūjā*. This *Pūjā* is celebrated on some waste *ṭāṇṛ* land or on a flat rocky place (*ṭāngrā*) which is scraped clean for the occasion and washed with water mixed with cowdung.

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42 See *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr*, pp. 141-143.

43. *Ibid*, Appendix I, pp. 439-441.

44. *Ibid*, pp. 146-147.

At about 10 or 11 a.m., on the appointed day, the villagers go there in procession with the *Pāhān* at their head. Fowls brought from the houses of the villagers, as in the *Hariāri* and *Kadlōṭā* festivals, have their feet washed, and the *Pāhān* with his face to the east, makes each fowl (except a white one) eat rice from *ḳūris* arranged on the ground as in other sacrificial festivals, and cuts off its head with his knife. Then he washes the knife clean and proceeds with the white fowl to the *ḳūri* at the southernmost end which is meant for *Dharmes*. Then libation of rice-beer is made before each *ḳūri* except that meant for *Dharmes* to whom libation of pure water is offered. The trunks of the fowls sacrificed to the principal gods and spirits are caught hold of by their legs together and their blood is dropped three times on each *ḳūri*. These fowls are cooked separately from the others, and the flesh of their neck is fried separately and bits of this fried flesh are scraped off with the nails and, by the side of the hearth, offered by the *Pāhān* to the spirits, and the rest of this meat is distributed to all present as sanctified (*prasādi*) meat. The rest of the fowls are boiled with rice as *ṭahari*. Each Orāon family of the village brings a pot of rice-beer. And the proceedings terminate with fasting and drinking.

After this, the *Pāhān* may thresh his paddy-crops. Before other villagers, particularly *Bhūinhārs*, thresh their paddy, they too must perform their own private *Kharihāni Pūjā*. This is ordinarily done not in every family, but in the *Kharihān* or threshing-floor of the head of each *ḳhūṇṭ* or group of agnatic families. There some member from each family of the agnatic group goes with some *āruā* rice and those who can afford to do so bring one or more fowls. On that day some paddy is

threshed; and the head of the *ḳhūṇṭ* sacrifices the fowls in the name of his *ḳhūṇṭ* spirits and ancestor-spirits, and throws the beheaded fowls on the paddy laid out for threshing as also that partly threshed. Feasting and drinking follow.

Such are the various religious and 'magico-religious' rites and ceremonies, feasts and festivals observed by the tribe to ensure security and prosperity to the community at each stage in the annual round of their economic life, and to express their rejoicings at the safe and successful termination of each such stage. Two most interesting ceremonies, in both of which religion proper appears to be combined with magic, stand out as special features of Orāon sociology. There is, first, the *Dāṇḍā ḳāṭṭā* ceremony which forms an essential part of Orāon ceremonies in connection with the birth (*Chaṭṭi*), marriage and death of the individual, as also in connection with some of the different hunting and agricultural feasts and festivals of the community. And secondly, there is the *Kārsā* dance,—symbolic of prosperity, happiness and union, social solidarity and tribal fellowship,—danced at festivals connected with each critical event of an individual's life as also at the transplantation of paddy-seedlings[45] and on the occasion of some of the tribal *jātrās* or dance-meetings held at the termination of important stages in the annual cycle of the economic life of the community.

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45. See *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr*, p. 440.

CHAPTER V.

BLACK MAGIC AND WHITE MAGIC.

ACCORDING to Orāon tradition, as has been already noticed, the earlier belief of the tribe centred round the Spirit of Good, though ordinarily *faineant*, embodied in the conception of Dharmes or the Supreme Being manifest in the Sun, and the spirit of evil manifest more commonly in the 'Evil Eye' (*najar*) and the 'Evil Mouth' (*bāi-bhāk or bhāk nāśan*) of certain individuals. The original mode of approach to the Supreme Being for help against the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth' was through the *Dāṇḍā ḳāṭṭā* or *Bhelwā-phāṛi* ceremony. This, as we have seen, is performed by the Orāon to this day at every important crisis in the life of the individual such as birth, marriage and death, and at every important stage of the annual round of the economic life of the community, such as sowing and threshing rice and eating the first fruits. The rites connected with the *Dāṇḍā-ḳāṭṭā* ceremony, as we have seen, combine religion proper with magic.[46] To divert the 'evil eye' and 'evil mouth' the Orāon also, as we have seen, adopts certain minor magical expedients as, for instance, marking the forehead of a child with soot, and putting on certain charms and amulets, setting up in fields of maize and vegetables and other crops an inverted earthen-ware vessel with its upturned bottom painted white with lime or rice-flour or setting up the skull of a dog in his *bāri* or kitchen garden. An Orāon passing through

46. See *ante*, pp. 126-27.

an epidemic-stricken village secures a prickly shrub and places it on the way leading out of the village and presses down the thorns of the shrub with a stone in order that the disease-spirit or the evil-eye may not pursue him. More rarely an Orāon domesticates a monkey and keeps it in front of his house so that its pranks may attract the evil eye and thus save the owner and his family from *najar gūjar.*

Although the elaborate art of the magician and sorcerer, spirit-finder and spirit-doctor, with their long-winded incantations, mostly in the local Hindi dialect and invocations to Hindu deities as well as to local spirits, would appear to have been originally adopted by the Orāons from the lower classes of their Hindu neighbours, and although most Orāon magicians and sorcerers, witch-finders and spirit-doctors receive their training either under low-caste Hindu *gūrūs* or masters or under aboriginal *gūrūs* who had their training under Hindu masters, the idea at the back of the magic art is not alien to the Orāon mind. As the Orāons adopted most spirits of Mūṇḍā demonology which fitted in with their own original conception of the spirit of evil as manifested in the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth,' and as they have also adopted the Hindu deities *Mahādeo* (lit., the Great God)—the God of procreation, and *Devī Māi* or the Mother-goddess, who respectively concided with the Orāon conception of *Dharmē* or the Creator and *Dharmē's* consort called in the Orāon legend of genesis by the Hindu name of *Pārvatī,* so too they adopted the beliefs and practices relating to beneficent magic and maleficent magic—the 'seership' of the *Bhagat* as also the black art of the *Māti* which easily fitted in with the same Orāon conceptions of the Spirit of Good and the spirit of evil respec-

tively. And thus an elaborate system of magical beliefs and practices came to be naturally assimilated in the Orāon system of supernaturalism. 47

The idea of spirit-possession, which is the foundation of the *Māti's* art, was not, however, introduced for the first time by the Hindu *Māti.* The Mūṇḍās and other Mūṇḍā-speaking neighbours of the Orāons appear to have had their Deōṇṛas from before their contact with the Hindu *Mātis.* And although the Mūṇḍā or Orāon Deōṇṛā is now indistinguishable from the *Māti,* the older methods of the Deōṇṛās to get into spirit-possession were much more direct and simple, as we still find it among the ruder Mūṇḍā-speaking tribes such as the Koṛwās and the Bir-hoṛs. And with the Orāon's adoption of the Mūṇḍā system of spiritism, faith in spirit-possession became part of the Orāon's world-view. Thus spirit-possession or *bharnā* was not foreign to the Orāon's experience when the Hindu *Māti* first appeared.

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47. I have already pointed out in connection with the *Māndarsālā* and the representations of the emblems of materinity in Orāon *Dhūmkūṛiās* that the idea of a Mother-goddess like *Devī māi* and that of a phallic deity like *Mahādeo* are not alien to the Orāon mind. We have also seen that *Dharmē* is identified with the Sun, and the Orāon deity *Chālā-Pāchchō* is identified with *Dhartī-māi* or the Earth-goddess who as the spouse of *Dharmes* or the Sun god is ceremonially married to Him on the occasion of the *Khāddi* or *Sarhūl* festival in honour of *Chālā-Pāchchō.* Thus it may not be unreasonable to infer that *Dharmē* and *Mahādeo* represent the same or similar conception of a Father god, and *Pārvatī, Devī Māī, Dhartī Māī,* and possibly *Chālā-Pāchchō,* on the other hand, all represent the same or similar conception of a Mother-goddess. Similarly the Hindu conception of *Kāli-Māi* would appear to be analogous to some extent to the Orāon conception of the *Chāṇḍi* spirit; and if the Orāons have borrowed the names of *Devī* and *Mahādeo* from the Hindus, the Hindus may not improbably have borrowed the conception, if not also the name, of *Chāṇḍi* from the Orāons or some other pre-Dravidian tribe.

Indeed, spirit-possession or rather the ecstatic state which is believed to prelude it is a not uncommon phenomenon in some of the Orāon dances.[48] In many a nightly dance at the Orāon village *ākhṛā*, as dance and music get more and more energetic, I have witnessed the interesting phenomenon of some young woman or other among the dancers gradually losing self-consciousness and shaking her head from side to side with increasing vehemence and thus getting into what is believed to be incipient spirit-possession. The husband or other near relative loses no time in taking steps to work off the influence of the supposed spirit and bring the woman back to her normal condition, for it is considered undesirable for a young woman to be "possessed" in this way, the chances being that some evil spirit thus entering her body may infect her uterus so as either to prevent conception or to make her bring forth only still-born children. In some of the Karam dances, particularly in the quaint form of it known as the *ḳesari-ḳāppā* or "*Kesar*-gathering" dance, I have seen in the day-time a whole group of girl dancers passing, one after another, as if by contagion, into the ecstatic state preliminary to what is believed to be "spirit-possession," their heads frantically moving from side to side, the hair of their head getting dishevelled, their clothes getting loose at the waist, and their mouths frothing at the corners of the lips. In such cases, too, steps are forthwith taken to bring them round and prevent actual "possession." There can be no suspicion whatsoever of deception or playing at spirit-possession in any of such cases, and the phenomenon, the genuineness of which I can vouch for, is presuambly due to

48. *The Orāons of Chōṭā -Nāgpūr*, pp. 288, 296-97.

the nervous strain and temperamental predisposition of the individual dancer acted upon by the subconscious suggestion of cultural tradition. In some of the Orāon Jātrās or inter-*pāṛhā* dance-meetings, again, one or more young men of psychic temperament, under the influence of great nervous tension, and also perhaps auto-suggestion supplemented in some cases by the hypnotic suggestion of a *Māti* or *Gūrū*, may be seen getting into actual spirit-possession and running about like mad men. Young men too sometimes get possesessed at Karam-dances at the village *ākhṛā* but much less frequently than young women.

The dichotomy of the supernatural world into the Spirit of Good and the forces of evil is, as I have said, reflected in the two classes of magicians that the Orāons recognise,—the White Magicians known as *Bhagats* or *Sōkhās* and the Black Magicians known as *Mātis* or *Deōṇṛās*, as also *Bisāhās* and *Dāins*. The former class derive their beneficent powers from the God *Mahādeo* (lit., Great God) to whom they offer daily prayers and offerings, whereas the latter derive their power from magic spells or *mantrams* and also seek the help of some evil spirit whom they incite with promises of human or other animal blood. Witches (*ḍāins*) and wizards (*bisāhās*) also are Black Magicians who either derive their evil power from some familiar spirit and from magic spells and magic objects or are born with the 'evil eye' and 'evil mouth' which distil magic 'poison' (*biṣ*) and injuriously affect whatever they are directed against.

The *Bhagats* or *Sōkhās* are approached for divining the cause of some calamity to man or cattle or crops and the means of removing it. The *Mātis* or *Deōṇṛās* are professionally

Illustration 25.
Two Orāon Ṭānā Bhagats singing *Ṭ'ānā bhajans* or hymns. (Mark the sacred thread round their necks.)

employed not only to divine the causes of similar calamities and to exorcise spirits set up by other *Mātis* or by *Dāins* and *Bisāhās*, but also to cause similar calamity to a client's enemy. The *Dāins* (witches) and *Bisāhās*, (wizards) who are the human embodiments, so to say, of the 'evil eye' and 'evil mouth' though they cause harm to their enemies by their own 'evil eye' and 'evil mouth' or with the help of some familiar spirit (*Dāin ḳūṛi Bhūt*), cannot counteract similar harm caused by or at the instance of another witch or sorcerer.

All these three classes of magicians *Dāins* and *Biṣāhās*, *Mātis* or *Deōṇrās*, and *Bhagats* or *Sōḳhās*, have to undergo a course of systematic training to acquire or develop their occult powers. I shall begin with the training and methods of work of the witch and wizard and then describe those of the other two classes of magicians who are generally approached to detect and foil or counteract the nefarious designs of the former classes.

1. Witches.

Witches' Training.—Whereas certain persons are born with the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth', witches in general have to acquire their art by a course of training in secret. At dead of night, especially in new moon nights, the witches of several neighbouring villages assemble under some tree at a secluded spot at some distance from human habitation. There, it is said, they strip themselves of their clothes and wear only the fringes of old brooms made of wild grass suspended from a girdle round their waists. Thus arranged, the naked women hold the Witches' Dance with the help of the weird light of lamps burning on tigers' skulls. On these

occasions, a black chicken, a day or two old, is said to be sacrificed. It is at these Witches' Dances that novices learn the spells and incantations and other technique of the magic art. Should any outsider happen to come their way during these dances and sacrifices, the stranger is challenged, and, if found to be a mere wayfarer and not an inquisitive spy, he is warned on pain of death not to speak to any one of what he may have seen or heard. On his promising not to utter a word about it, he is permitted to depart. It is said, however, that for days afterwards the intruder is shadowed to make sure that he keeps to his promise. Should he prove faithless, it is said he is sure to be killed through magic. All traces of foot-steps or other marks of the Witches' Dance are said to be wiped off through magic. It is particularly on the night of the new moon (*āmāwas*) in the month of *Kārtiḳ* when the *Sōhōrāi* festival is celeberated that these Witches' Dances are celebrated with special *eclat.* Large companies of witches, it is said, move about that night, and people are afraid of stirring out of their houses at a late hour that night. On that night, as I said, novices are initiated into the mysteries of witchcraft. The company solemnly interrogates the new initiate,—"*Kōṛi pāsā sahābē ḳi ṭāngā pāsā sahabē?*" "Are you prepared to suffer chastisement with the handle of the axe or of the spade [rather than betray our secrets]?" And the initiate takes the pledge of secrecy and replies, "*Sahab, Gūrū, Sahab—Sahab—Sahab.*" "I shall suffer all, Master (Preceptress), I shall suffer—suffer—suffer." That night it is said that some witch extracts unobserved by her magic spells the heart of some man or other, packs it up in a bundle of *pipar* (*Ficus religiosa*) leaves and secretes it in a *pipar* tree, and names a day for the death of the un-

fortunate victim; and on the appointed day, death, it is said, actually occurs. A powerful witch, it is asserted, can by her spells uproot a tree and in the same night remove it to a distance of twelve *ḳōses* (more than twenty-four miles) and again bring it back to its former position. It is further said that witches enter into communion with the spirits that ordinarily receive no sacrifices such as the spirits of the ancient dead (*Purnā ḳhūṇṭi*) and such spirits as *Hānḳar Bāi* and by tempting them with vows of sacrifices get their nefarious designs on others executed with the aid of these spirits; and such spirits are therefore called *Nāśan-bhūts*.

The Witch's Modus Operandi.—The various methods by which a witch brings on disease or other calamity to an individual, a family or a village, are,—(1) the use of the spirit-bundle or *śāns*, also called *nāśan*, (2) the employment of the magic *bān* or arrow-shot, (3) the magical extraction of the intended victim's heart, and (4) 'overshadowing' or otherwise harming an intended victim in the guise of a black cat or *chōrdewā* or of a manikin. The spirit-bundle or *śāns* or *nāśan* of the witch consists of a small parcel of torn rags, or a small earthen-ware jar, containing various sorts of fried grains and bits of the leg, head, horn or bones of some fowl or animal. These are meant as pledges of sacrifices to the *Nāśan* spirit or spirits. The witch buries such a *nāśan*-bundle unobserved at some spot in the doomed village or in the compound of the doomed family. And calamity is sure to overtake the family or the village, so long as a witch-doctor or spirit-doctor does not with the help of his *sādhaḳ bhūt* discovers the *nāśan*-bundle and brings it out and offers the required sacrifices.

The *Bān* or 'arrow' of the witch appears to be nothing more than the force of the magic spell. This magic 'arrow,' it is said, has a very long range and silently hits the intended victim even from a very long distance, altogether unperceived. When, as a consequence, the victim feels a sharp pain on the face or a shooting pain in one of his limbs or some other sudden physical affliction to which no known cause can be assigned, it is inferred that some witch must have aimed her magic 'arrow' at the patient; and a *Sōkhā* is consulted and a witch-doctor or *Māti* is called in.

As has been already noted, another method by which a witch kills an intended victim is to extract the heart of the victim through magic spells on the *Sōhōrāi āmāwas* night and pack it up in a bundle of *pipar* leaves, and name a day for the death of the victim. And the victim gradually pines away and dies on the day so named. It is believed that a witch can see right through the body of men and animals into their hearts for a taste of which organ in particular they have a great hankering; and so when a man or animal pines away and dies without any apparent sickness, it is believed that the heart has been extracted by a witch.

A fourth method by which the witch effects her neferious designs is to harm people by taking the shape of a *Chōrdewā* at night. She takes the form of a cat, and in this shape, the witch enters people's houses, licks the saliva trickling down the corners of the mouth of some sleeping person or bites off a lock of hair of a sleeping person, and the unfortunate person falls ill or his hairs fall off. Even if the witch in this shape throws her shadow on a sleeping person the latter suffers from a night-mare. In the same shape of a

cat, the witch is also believed to enter people's houses at night and mew in a plaintive strain, and as a result some calamity is sure to overtake the family. If such a cat (*Chōr-dewā*) can be laid hold of and killed or its leg or other limb broken, the witch, too, it is said, will be found dead at his home or maimed in her leg or other limb, as the case may be.

It is further said that sometimes the familiar spirit of a witch gets out of hand, and then it brings sickness and death to the witch's own family. The Orāon very appropriately likens such a familiar spirit to a tamed tiger getting out of hand and devouring its keeper.

2. Wizards or Bisāhās.

The *Biṣāhā* is a person who has acquired a familiar spirit which he sets on to harm other people when its appointed time for receiving sacrifices arrives. The word is said to be derived from Hindi '*biṣ*' meaning 'poison', with reference to the poison of his misanthropic malice or the poison of his evil eye. *Biṣāhās* like *Dāins* are credited with the evil eye as well. The *Biṣāhā* generally undergoes no training and is ordinarily not an adept in the black art like a *māti* or *deoṛā*. He is an enemy to society and when detected by the *māti* or the *sōḳhā* is heavily fined by the community and made to offer the required sacrifices. On his failure to do so he is socially ostracised. Some wizards or *Biṣāhās*, it is said, learn, like witches, the magic art in secret from adepts in the art, and can walk about in the shape of cats and harm people in the same manner as a witch does. I have heard more than one account, with details as to names and places, of such nefarious conduct on the part of some wizard or witch. Thus, of one Orāon wizard I was told, that one night he

sounded and conches, if any, are blown. Next, what are known as *Dān* songs, or songs relating to offerings or sacrifices, are sung. Then follow exorcism songs known as *singār ūtārnā* and *singār saprāna* songs with a view to make the spirit leave the obsessed person. These and other processes of the *Māti's* art will be presently described.

In some of these seances there may be no case of spirit-possession at all. Even when there has been a successful instance of spirit-possession, the spirit in question is generally a *bhūlā* or tramp spirit or some other minor spirit. Rarely, at these seances, some fortunate disciple is favoured by the god *Mahādeo* who manifests Himself in him; and the disciple is led away by the god to some secluded place away from the haunts of men. After an absence of days and sometimes even weeks, during which he is said to have peculiar spiritual experiences and trials ending in a vision of *Mahādeo* Himself and spiritual illumination or the acquisition of the power of second sight (*daraś*), he returns home and settles down as a *Sōḵhā* or *Bhagat* (*lit.*, devotee of God). Thenceforward he leads a life of ceremonial purity in personal habits and diet.

He loses no time in installing a visible symbol of the Deity (generally a roundish stone said to have been mysteriously obtained) on a *pāṭ* or mud-altar constructed in a part of the house. This part of the house is consecrated to *Mahādeo*. Here the *Bhagat* makes daily offerings of rice and sweets and flowers to the Deity. Thenceforward people in trouble come to him for divination which he performs through his own second sight and not, like the *Māti*, with the aid of

some *bhūt* or spirit whom he may induce by his incantations to 'possess' and speak through his mouth or through that of the patient.

More often, however, *Bhagats* acquire their powers, not during a course of training in mediumistic and other occult practices and in technicalities of the magic art under a *Māti*, but as the unsolicited gift of *Mahādeo*. A few may be born with mediumistic powers, and a few others while in training under a *Māti* may obtain the grace of *Mahādeo* in the manner described in the last paragraph, but the majority of the *Bhagats* or *Sōḳhās* are blessed with such powers when a *Mahādeo* stone suddenly rises from under the ground (*Bhūi-phūṭ*) and reveals itself to him in a dream or a vision or when he rises one morning to find braids of matted hair (*jaṭā*) mysteriously formed on his head. Such acquisition of a *Bhūi-phūṭ Mahādeo* stone or braids of matted hair is said to be generally accompanied by an inflatus of spiritual powers through the grace of *Mahādeo*.

Inquiry shows that the persons so favoured by *Mahādeo* are invariably men who already manifested a predisposition towards things occult and who have spent night after night in contemplation of the Deity. The *Bhūiphūṭ Bhagats* as they are called, observe certain rules of ceremonial purity in food, drink, and personal habits, and certain devotional practices in order to keep their new-found powers from failing. These observances and the methods of work of the *Bhagats* will be described in the next section.

The Māti's modus Operandi.—To return to the *Māti* and his methods. Whereas the *Sōḳhā* or *Bhagat* acquires his powers

through Divine grace and exercises them through Divine aid, the *Māti* or *Deoṇṛā* acquires his powers through a course of systematic training, and effects his purposes through the force of his spells and incantations learnt from his *gūrū*. The *Māti*, however, does not neglect to seek supernatural aid. Just as *Mahādeo* is the tutelary Deity of the *Bhagats*, *Kāli Māi* or *Būṛhi Māi* is the tutelary deity of the *Mātis*. She is said to have for her attendant a *Ranth* and a *Dānṛ* who act as bailiffs to seize and produce before their *Mistress* (*Kāli Māi*) any spirit that may be wanted. Besides invocations at his seances to all spirits and deities, indigenous and foreign, whose names he knows, the *Māti* offers regular sacrifices to the Hindu deity *Kāli Māi*. On the day of the Hindu festival of *Rañth-jātrā* in the month of *Āṣāṛh* (June) or within a day or two of it, the *Māti* constructs a *pāṭ* or mud-altar in a compartment of his house, and on it instals three clods of earth and on each of them plants an iron trident as symbol of *Kāli Māi*. Areca-nuts and copper coins are placed on the altar and the symbols of the goddess are anointed with vermilion.

When *Kāli Māi* is thus installed on the *pāṭ*, a red fowl and a black goat are sacrificed and a libation of rice-beer is offered to the deity. And every morning the altar (*pāṭ*) is besmeared with a thin coating of whitish clay diluted in water. The chief *chelā* or disciple of the *Māti* is called the *Pāṭ-chelā* and it is his alloted duty to do this every morning after taking a bath. To another disciple called the *Phūl-chelā* is assigned the duty of gathering and bringing to the altar *gulāichi* flowers every morning, and the *Pāṭ-chelā* offers these flowers to the deity. About five months later, on the night of the *Deōṭhān* day, on the ninth day of the full moon after

Sōhōrai āmāwas in the month of *Kārtik* (November), the *Māti* sacrifices a black goat to *Kāli Māi*, and pours some of its blood on the *Pāṭ* or altar and then the *Māti* or his *Pāṭ-chelā* takes up in a new *sūp* the mud of the altar a new earthenware saucer with incense burning on it, and a leaf-cup with rice-beer in it; and with these the *Māti* accompanied by some disciples go to the boundary of the village where they leave these things. On their return, *ṭahari* is prepared with the sacrificial meat, and the master and his disciples eat the *ṭahari* and drink rice-beer.

The first thing which some *Mātis*, such as are more or less of charlatans, do is to find out the *nāśan* or *śāṅś* which a witch or sorcerer may have secretly buried in some part of the house or village. This he claims to do with the help of his familiar spirit, but the more sceptical or well-informed Orāons now believe that the *Māti* or one of his emissaries somehow manages to secrete the *nāśan* where it is found, although a good deal of fuss is made about discovering it.

The generality of *Mātis*, however, proceed straight to their work of detecting and exorcising the spirit responsible for the trouble. The general procedure followed by *Mātis* in detecting and exorcising the spirit from a sick person is briefly as follows. Either the *verāṇḍā* or a room of the patient's house is cleaned with cowdung diluted in water. There, about a quarter pound of *āruā* rice and a few copper coins are placed on a *sūp*. An earthenware lamp, a little oil in a small cup, and a little fire are also placed by the side of the *Māti*. Then the *Māti* invokes by name all the deities and spirits he can think of. Hindu *Mātis* and also a few Orāon *Mātis* further require a little *ghee* or clarified butter

which they first pour on the fire by way of *Havan* or *Hōm*, while invoking all the gods and spirits to the place. A long string of names of deities and spirits are cited and obeisance made to them; and their help solicited. Obeisance is also made to all mythical adepts or *gūrūs* of old such as *Koūrū Gūrū, Ād Gūrū, Bān Gūrū, Āhō Gūrū, Pāhō Gūrū, Dharam Gūrū, Sūnū Gūrū, Sidh Gūrū*, and to all reputed magicians of modern times, and their aid in his operations is invoked in songs. Whether *Hōm* is made or not, these invocations to the gods and spirits and to the *Gūrūs* must form necessary preliminaries of exorcism. When these preliminaries are over, the *Māti* takes up rice from the *sūp* and places the rice on the ground to form a magic circle almost complete except for leaving an opening at its north-western corner (*bhāṇḍār ḳōnā*). All the while the *Māti* goes on reciting chants appropriate to the operation in hand. 49

Bhūm-bāndhnā.—After this follow *Bhūm-bāndhnā* songs or *mantras* meant to prevent witches (*ḍāins*), etc. or wizards or other *mātis* or sorcerers and the evil eye (*najar*) from causing any hindrance to the ceremony and preventing its success, thus warding off all counteracting influences from the spot (*bhūm*) where the ceremony is performed.

Piṇṛ Bāndhnā.—The *Māti* next chants *Piṇṛ Bāndhnā* songs or *mantras*, which are invocations to different deities to make different parts of the body invulnerable. By reciting these *mantras* the *Māti* is supposed to "bāndhō" (tie up, i.e., make

49. There are slight variations in the invocations and other rites adopted by different *Mātis* and in different localities, but the procedure is substantially the same all over the Orāon country in Chōṭā-Nāgpūr.

invulnerable) his own body so as to be able to resist malicious influences of other *mātis*, witches, etc. that may be lurking unseen in the place.

Diā-Bārnā or Lighting the Magic Lamp.—After reciting certain other incantations or *mantras*, the lamp is lighted. Then the *Māti* dips his middle finger in the oil of the lamp and turns the finger round and round on the ground in a circle around the lamp while chanting appropriate songs intended to induce some spirit to come and 'ride' or 'possess' the flame of the lamp.

The *Ranth* (or other deity, according as the *Māti* chooses) is made to 'ride' or sit on the flame. Now the *Māti* plucks a hair from his *chūndi* (top knot) and burns it in the flame, and then he picks a little earth from the ground and throws it into the flame. The hair is supposed to be given to the *deotā* as food (as a substitute for human flesh, i.e., human sacrifice) and the bit of earth by way of *ḳiriyā* or adjuration so that the *deotā* may make the *bhūt* causing the trouble to crumble to dust (*māṭṭi mē milāye deō*). After this the lamp is placed over some *āruā* rice in the centre of the circle which, too, is formed of *āruā* rice, and the remaining rice in the *sūp* is taken up by the *Māti* and put down on the ground before him. Then the *Māti* seeks out the offending *bhūt* by the following method. He first chants songs of invocation (*sūmirāṇā*) addressed to all the *deōtās* by name.

Then he takes up with two or three fingers a few grains from the handful of rice kept in front of him and says,—

"Eh Mahārāj, āgar falnā (names) *bhūt i piṛ mē hō, tō panchō biṛā eḳ lahasi dē. Jhūṭ bichār ḳarnā nehī chāhiyē. Heṭhē Dharṭī ūprē*

Parmeswar bichmē (Deotānkē) Panch-rūpi hōkarkē bichār karnā chāhiyē. Deotānkē sabhā hāi. Dūdhkē dūdh pānikē pāni bichārnā chāhiyē. Gaukē jaisā āglā dhār taisā pichhlā dhār. Gaukē mās kūttā khāe kūttā khāi-kē mās gau nehi khāe. Ban bharal pāt, deś bharal bhūt, sekan khōji nehi. Khunikā khōji hāi." "O Mahārāj (chief of the assembled spirits); should it be such-and-such spirit which may have possessed this person, let one grain out of five be left over. It is not proper for you to give a wrong decision. The Earth [-goddess] below, and [the Sun-] God above, and in the middle is this assembly of *Deōtās* who ought to decide the question as a [human] *Panch* council does; for yours is a council of gods. You have to separate the milk from water. The milk issuing out of the front pips of a cow's udder is as good as that from the hind pips. A dog eats cow's flesh; but a cow does not eat the refuse of meat eaten by a dog. The jungle is full of leaves, and [even so] the country is full of spirits. It is not all of these spirits that I am looking for. I am looking only for the murderer (i.e., the spirit who has been troubling this patient or this village, as the case may be)." Saying this, the grains of *āruā* rice in his fingers are placed on the ground. Then he counts, by twos, the grains thus placed; if there is any left over, the process is repeated four times more to see if each time there is one grain extra, in which case it is declared that it is the *bhūt* already named which has caused the illness. If the number of grains is even, any of these five times, and there is no extra grain left, the *Māti* pushes back these grains into the handful of rice kept in his front and again takes up a few grains similarly, saying "*Dōhāi Sabhāit-kē, falnā* (names), *bhūt hāi*?" And he again places the rice on the ground, and counts them two by two.

If there is one left over, the *bhūt* named is declared to be the *bhūt* who has caused the illness. If there is no extra grain the process is repeated by naming another *bhūt* till there is one extra grain found on counting. When in the name of any particular *bhūt* one extra grain is found five consecutive times, then that particular *bhūt* is declared to have caused the illness.

Rijhānā.—If the *bhūt* cannot be found out, that is to say, if there is no extra grain left over in any of the several consecutive countings, it is believed that the *bhūt* is playing truant (*bhāg jātā hāi*). In such a case the *Māti* will go on rubbing with his hands *āruā* rice on his *sūp* while singing appropriate chants.

After singing a few such songs, the *Māti* declares that the spirit has been attracted by the songs (*bhūt rasgiyā*) and come again to the place; and the *Māti* again examines the grains by twos (*ḳhariyātē hāi*). And at length the identity of the *bhūt* is ascertained by an extra grain being left over in each of the five consecutive countings. This form of divination is known as *Khariānā.* Another form of divination employed by some *Mātis* is to light a second lamp and hold it near the other lamp placed over *āruā* rice which is giving a steady flame. The *Māti* goes on naming each *bhūt* by turns, and at the same time throwing *āruā* rice on the flame of the lamp placed over *āruā* rice. It is believed that when the offending *bhūt* or spirit is named, the flame of the lamp placed over the rice will slant towards the flame of the lamp in the *Māti's* hands.

Bāhi pāḳaṇā.—When the offending *bhūt* or spirit has been found out, the *Māti* takes up a grain of rice with the tips of two fingers and one or two or more grains of rice which

somehow stick vertically to the grain thus held with one end between the tips of his fingers. The grain or grains so sticking to the grain in the hands of the *Māti* are supposed to represent the *bhūt* taking hold of the arm of the *Māti* by way of swearing that from that time he (the *bhūt*) will leave the sick man. The *Māti* says:—'*Dekh, āj tārikh sē ghar bāri khē chhōṛ dē, khasṭi khē piṇṛ chhōṛ dē, pōsh paran sab chhōṛ dē. Bahūt māir khailē mardān khailē. Khāṭiā sē bhuiā lōṭāulē. Sāng barchhi chāloulē, lōhā jāgowle. Āj tārikh sē purnā piṇṛ chōṛ dē, nawā piṇṛ diuāē dethi. Ūhā nāchbe, dēgbē, khelbē, bōlbē. Bātiā mē chal, tōkhē nawā lūgā, ḍōri, chowri, tarki, jhūṭiā, pahirāekhē ligōāē dethi. Hāsi khūsisē chal. Eh dekh tōkhē khiriyā dethi. Ād Hindu bād Musalmān: Hindu hāi tō gāi khiriyā, Musalmān hāi tō Sūār khiriyā. Kiriyā nehi mānbē tō Narak khūṇḍ dhōb khūṇḍ, Chāmār khūṇḍ mē gir paṛbē. Eh dekh hardi khāṭ dethi. Āj tārikh sē khiriyā mānbē.*" "From to-day, give up this house and compound. Give up the body of the patient. Give up the children, cattle, *etc.* [of this house]. Thou hast afflicted [them] much; thou hast made them come down from their string-bed and roll on the floor. Thou hast hurled thy iron spear at them, made them get an iron (*singi*) prepared. From to-day give up thy old seat (i.e., the patient). I am providing a new seat for thee. There wilt thou dance and jump, play and hop, talk and chat. Come, I am conducting thee out of this house, after dressing thee up in new clothes, hair-strings and tassels, ear-ornaments and toe-rings. Come with pleasure and rejoicing. I adjure thee under the oath of cows shouldst thou be a Hindu spirit, and under the oath of a pig if thou shouldst be a Mahomedan. Shouldst thou disregard thy oath, thou shalt fall into the pit of Hell, the pit into which Dhōbis and Chāmārs are consigned. Look! I am

cutting up this turmeric. From to-day heed this adjuration."

The fact that the *bhūt* (rice) has thus seized the *āruā* rice of the *Māti*, only indicates that the *bhūt* promises to leave the sick man. But there is no trusting in mere promises made by the *bhūt*. So to wheedle (*phūslāo*) it to actually leave the sick man, appropriate songs are sung by the *Māti*. With a piece of turmeric thus cut into two, the *Māti* draws three lines (*ḍiṇ*) on the ground, as a magic line which the spirit may not cross.

Now the *Māti* makes a *singi* with *sāl* or other leaves, and a sort of brush called *mūseli* with tattered cloth, and dips that brush in oil and with it draws on the ground a human figure. Then he takes a pinch of salt and places it on the ground near the lamp; then takes a pinch of vermilion (*sindūr*) and places it near the salt; then he brings out from his bundle (or from one end of his *dhōti*) a thing of magic potency called *bānḳ* which consists of a bit of rag in which there are small bits of mysterious roots and which is supposed to have been saturated with milk from the breasts of a virgin (human or animal), and places it by the side of the *sindūr* and the salt. Then the *Māti* pricks either his own left little finger or left ring-finger with a needle so as to draw a little blood. The grains of rice which were employed in finding out the name of the *bhūt* are tinged with this blood. The brush with which the human figure has been drawn on the ground, is now lighted as a torch. The *Māti* then says, "*Dōhāi Nāṭ Nāṭin; dōhāi Nāṭ Nāṭin ḳē; is piṇ ḳē jō pret hāi ḳāhi bhāgal paṛāil hō chanē chapri luḳāil hō, hājir ḳail chāhi.*" "I charge ye, O! Ye

Nāṭ Nāṭin,[50] if the *bhūt* in the body (*pinṛ*) of this patient has fled or concealed itself, do ye bring it out." The lighted torch (into which it is believed the *bhūt* has now been conducted with the help of *Nāṭ Nāṭin*) is placed on the earthen lamp. Then the *Māti* seizes the right hand of the patient, and names all the *deotās* he can think of, e.g.—*Būṛhi māi, Kāli māi, Jagthārani māi, etc., etc., etc.* Thus having invoked all the *deotās* so that they may help him in confining the *bhūt,* the *Māti* takes out the torch from the lamp and puts a plain wick on the lamp and lights the wick with some other light (not of the torch). Then the *Māti* turns the flame of the torch round and round over the *sindūr,* saying,—"*Naō man sindūr naō man ḳājar sorhō singār battisō lahangar dengē.*" "I shall give thee nine *maunds* of vermilion, nine *maunds* of ornaments and cosmetics, thirty-two kinds of silk tassels, *etc.*"

Then the *Māti* tramples the torch under his left foot and thus puts it out (or, sometimes puts it out by placing the *sūp* over it). Then the torch is again lighted with the flame of the lamp-wick. This lighted torch is now turned round and round over the human figure that has been drawn on the ground with oil; and the *Māti* mutters as follows:—"*Tumḳō pinṛ badal pinṛ detēhāi, āj tāriḳsē tūmḳō telāḳ hāi, āg pāch nehi ḳarnā chāhiyē; āg pāch ḳarēsē pachhūāḳe janmal.*" "I am providing thee with a new seat in exchange for thy [present] seat. From this day I adjure thee [to leave this seat]. Do not

50. It is said that *Nāṭ Nāṭins* are the tutelary deities of the tribe of *Nāṭs* (wandering acrobats) who perform tricks or feats with bamboo poles, e.g., get up on and stand at, and suspend their bodies from the top of three or four bamboo poles fastened one on top of the other. The seat of *Nāṭ Nāṭin* is said to be at *Kounrū* (*Kamrūp* near Gauhati in Assam?) one of the principal seats in India of the goddes *Kāli.*

hesitate. Shouldst thou do so, thou shalt be damned as a bastard."

The torch is again similarly trampled upon and put out. And again the torch is similarly lighted. The *Māti* then spits on the ground, and turns the flame of the torch on the salt saying,—"*Nimak ḳhāḳē nimak hārāmī nehī ḳarnā chāhī.*" "Do not play false after eating my salt." Then he turns the flame on the spittle saying,—"*Thuḳal thūḳ nehī chātnā chāhī*" (i.e., "I have given you 9 maunds *sindūr*, 9 maunds *ḳājar*, 16 kinds of cosmetics and 32 kinds of silk, salt etc., and sent you away; don't come back [as that would be behaving] like a man licking his own spittle)".

Bhūt- bāndhan or confining the bhūt.—The *Māti* now raises one side of his left foot from the ground so as to place the leaf *singhi* under it, and then inserts the *musel* with the flame of the torch into this *singhi* and at once closes the mouth of the *singhi*, saying,—"*Dōhāi Nāgpūrḳē Dārhā, ṭūmḳō bhūt jimmā dēṭē-hē; bhūtḳē jimmā lē-leō. Mās ḳhāïhē hāṛ jogāïhē. Jis rōj hām ḳhōjengē ūs rōj deō-gē. Chhao mahināḳē bisekh* (time) *māngtēhē; tab bhāli bhātisē pūjā dē-ḳar, jāhā ḳē hō tāhā-par baiṭhāē dengē. Āur nehi ḳhōjengē tō māṭṭi misāl ḳar dihē.*"

"I adjure thee, O *Dārhā* spirit of [Chōṭā-] Nāgpūr; I give this spirit in custody to thee. Do thou take charge of this spirit. Eat the flesh but store up the bones. Give them to me when I happen to demand them. I ask for six months' time; after that I shall, with suitable and sumptuous sacrifices, reinstate the spirit at the place from where it came. And should I fail to come for the spirit, let it crumble to dust and disappear." The *Māti* then puts the leaf *singhi* in his own bundle (*māṭri*).

Now the *Māti* breaks up the assembly of *Deōtās*, saying:—

"*Āb purabḳā deō pūrab jāe, pachchim ḳā deō pachchim jāe, uttarḳē deō uttar jāē, dāḳhḳhīn ḳē deō dāḳhḳhīn jāi. Deō-āsthān, bhūt bandi-ḳhān.*" "Now let the gods of the east go to the east, the gods of the west go to the west, the gods of the north go to the north, the gods of the south go to the south. Seats of the gods are the prisons of the *bhūts* or evil spirits."

The *Māti* then gathers together all things used at the ceremony, places the rice at one spot, puts the lamp and lampstand, *sūp*, etc. on one side, and says—

"*Har-Pārvatī ḳē dānā hāi; ḳōi ḳhāi, lāg ḳisipar nehi ḳarnā chāhiyē* (i. e. The rice belongs to *Mahādeo* and *Pārvatī*. Should anyone eat it, no harm should be done to him by you, ye *bhūts*).

The spot is then cleaned with cow-dung diluted in water by people of the house and the leavings are thrown away.

A few days before the expiry of six months, some one of the family goes to enquire of the *Māti* what sacrifices will be required for the *bhūt*. The *Māti* asks him to collect five fowls (*panch dān* for all the *bhūts*), namely, one white cock for *Sūrūj* (*Sūrjāhi*), one red goat for *Ranth* (to expel *Ranth*), one pig for the spirit (*Dārhā* or other spirit) in whose custody the *bhūt* has been given, one red cock for *Dānḳ*, one goat of any colour for the *Māti's* own *sādhaḳ* or *bāhia* (familiar) *bhūt* one chicken (the smallest) for *Dhartī*, one goat or pig for the presiding god of the village, *Gāoā-deoti*, (so that it may stand surety or *jāmni* and prevent the *bhūt* from returning to the village). The patient's people are also required to procure an iron *singhi*, one bundle of silk tassel, one or two *tiḳlis*, some

sindūr, ḳūrthi grains, ānd *chūri* (lac or brass wristlet). When these are ready, the *Māti* is called. He comes on an appointed evening, goes through the same procedure of *Diā baiṭhānā* as on the previous occasion (*Dhartī-jāgānā, Deōā-bolānā, Gūrūāont. Bhūmi-bāndhnā, Piṇr-bāndhna* and *Diābārnā*), and assembles the *deōtās* (*Sabhāit* and *Sūmiran*) and then goes on singing *rijhāon* songs almost the whole night. Early next morning, the *Māti*, the patient and some members of his or her family, and some men of the village, with some utensils, go with the sacrifices, etc. outside the village to some spot where drinking water is available. Then follows the *Kāns bāndhnā* ceremony.

Arriving there, some one fetches water in some brass or other utensil (not earthenware) and places it on a bit of level ground. The *Māti* takes up a *thāriā* (plate) and with this in hand stands facing east, and begins turning the *thāriā* round and round in his hand, chanting appropriate *mantras*. Then the *Māti* presses the plate against his own chest, and takes off his hand from it so that the plate may stick to his chest. This is a sign that the *ḳāns* (brass) has been tied (*bāndhā geyā*).

Then he takes down the *thāri* from his chest and places it by the side of the utensil filled with water. The water of the other utensil is now poured into this *thāriā* (plate). The *Māti* now takes up a few entire grains of *ḳūrthi* on the palm of his left hand and presses them round and round with the palm of his right hand, and calls upon his own *Sādhaḳ bhūt* or familir spirit to come to his aid. Then with a leaf doubled up, he takes up the *ḳūrthi* grains from the palm of his left hand and puts them into the water in the *thāriā*. It is believed that the *Māti* can recognise from the nature

of the shadow of each *ḳūrthi* grain as to what *bhūts* are there. The *Māti* looks intently on the *ḳūrthi* grains floating on the water, and drowns such grains in the water as do not by their shadows indicate the presence of any *bhūt*. He names the *bhūts* that he sees in the floating grains, and declares that only the guilty (*ḳhūni*) *bhūts* of the former occasion, *i.e.*, the *bhūts* he saw on the previous occasion (six months ago) are alone present and that no new *bhūt* has troubled the patient since. The *Māti* now takes the *sindūr*, *ḳājar*, *chūri*, silk-tassel, *etc.* and places them near the *thāriā* in which the *bhūts* (in the *ḳūrthi*) have been seen. A little *sindūr* is now mixed with the water of the *thāriā*. The *Māti* then takes out from his bundle the leaf-*singhi* in which the burnt *musel* or torch with the *bhūt* in it was confined on the previous occasion, and takes a little cinder from the end of the *musel* and puts it into the water of the *thāriā*. Now the smallest of the chickens is grazed on *āruā* rice in the name of *Dharti-māi* and then left at large (without being sacrificed). Then the white cock is made to eat some *āruā* rice and is sacrificed in the name of *Sūruj* or the Sun-God.

Now the *panchdān* or five fowls are fed together on *āruā* rice put down on the ground near the *thāriā* of water. The *bhūt* is then addressed by the *Māti* as follows:—"*Dekh ājkē tārikṣē ḳasṭikē pinṛ chhūṭath hāi. Falnā* (names) *gāonkā aisā jāgāh* (names) *chhuṭath hāi. Tūmko falnā jaga mē* (names) *āsthān detē hāi.*" "Look! From this day, this patient's body is being freed; such and such a spot at such and such a village is being released. Thou art being assigned a seat at such and such a place (names)." Saying this, he sacrifices

the five fowls and puts one or two drops of the blood of each fowl into the water of the *thāriā*.

Now the pig is sacrificed to the spirit or deity in whose custody the *bhūt* was kept during the preceding six months. As the sacrifice is offered, the *Māti* says—"*Dekh, tūmkō sai martabē kām karāongē tō ek martabē pūjā dengē. Dekh, jāhā hāk dāk karab tāhā hājir hōbē.*" "Look! I shall make thee obey me (*lit.*, work for me) a hundred times [but] I shall offer thee sacrifices but once. Look! Whenever I shall summon thee, do thou turn up at once." Then the red cock is fed on *āruā* rice and sacrificed to *Dānk*, saying—"*Dekh, ghari ghari ke chōwki pāhārā par khabargiri karihē. Jō ādmi dhelā chālāoe uskē gharmē pāththal girā deōgē. Aūr jō ādmi pāththal chālāoē uskē gharmē bajjar girā deōgē.*" "Look! Do thou constantly (*lit.*, hour after hour), be on the alert in thy duty as a watchman. Do thou cast stones into the house of the person who may happen to pelt clods of earth, and throw thunderbolt into the house of a person who may happen to cast stones." Then the red goat is grazed on *āruā* rice and sacrificed to *Ranth*, the *Māti* saying—"*Dōhāi Rānth Bābā, tōmārē bharōsē etnā doūrtē hāi. Aūr tōmāre bal sē ētnā kūchh kar rahē hāi. Ismē koi kisikā kharāb honē sē hāmārē nindā nehi hōgā tōmārē hōgā.*" "I adjure thee, [help me] O Father *Rānth*. It is in expectation of thy help, that I have come so far. And it is through thy strength [help] that I have been doing all this. Should there be any mischance [or failure] in this [what I am doing], the blame will be thine, not mine."

Then the *Māti* takes out the *kūrthi* grains floating on the water of the *thāriā* and puts them into the iron *singhi*. The torch which had been enclosed in the old leaf-*singhi* is also

put into the new iron-*singhi*; and the lid of the iron-*singhi* is now fastened on to its mouth by hammering. Two persons now take up the remaining *ḳūrthi* grains, the *sindūr*, silk-tassel, wristlets, etc. and also the *singhi*, and one man leads the pig or goat meant for the *Gāondeoti* with a string, and these three men and the *Māti* and a few more persons leave the place and go to some ant-hill. The rest of the party are left where they were. The wristlets, silk tassel, *sindūr*, *ḳūrthi*, etc. are all put into the cavity of the ant-hill. Then the pig or goat meant for the *Gāondeoti* is made to eat some grains of *āruā* rice, while the *Māti* mutters as follows:—"*Dekh, tūm gāonkā rājā hāi; yāh bhūt tūmkō jimma dētē hāē. Tūm bārō baraṣ terō jūg, āpnē naukar bānā ḳarkē rākhōgē. Belā tumhārā hūkūmkā bhūt ḳasṭikā pinṛ mē nokṣāni denē nehi pāoē. Ulaṭkē dekhē tō ānkh phūṭē, pālaṭkē jāi tō ṭheōnā ṭūṭē.*" "Look Thou art the master of the village. I make over this spirit to thy charge. Do thou keep him as thy slave for twelve years and thirteen ages (i.e. for ever and ever). May the spirit not cause harm to the patient's (afflicted person's) body without thy orders. May its eyes burst if it looks backwards (i.e. wants to attack this patient again), may its legs get broken if it turns back (i.e. wants to return to this patient.)"

The pig is now sacrificed, and its head along with the iron *singhi* is put inside the cavity of the ant-hill. Then a little liquor is poured into the hole. The mouth of the hole is now completely closed up with stones.

The *Māti* and his companions return with the trunk of the pig or goat sacrified to *Gāondeoti* to the place where the rest of the party are awaiting them. Arrived there, the *Māti* sacrifices a goat to his own *sādhak bhūt*, saying,—

"Dekh tūmhārā hām janam bharkē bhār uṭhāiā hāi. Tūmārā balse hām itnā karṭē hāi. Jāhā bolāo-ē tāhā janā chāhi. Aūr ek deōkā nām karē ūhā sahassar deō-ke ānā chahi. Aūr ek dēō kō pūjā dey ūhā sahassar deokō bāt karkē khānā chāhi. Tūmhārā jūṭha khāi hām mith wastē. Hāmārā mūh-kā pāni rākhnā chāhi. Dāhinā hāth kā pūjā, hārām (treachery) *nehi karna chahi."*

"Look! I have undertaken to support thee [with food] for life. It is with thy strength (aid) that I have been accomplishing all this. Thou shouldest appear whithersoever I summon thee. When I should name a single deity or spirit, may thousands appear. And when I offer sacrifices to a single deity, the sacrificial meat should be eaten in the name of a thousand deities. I eat food first tasted by (i.e. offered to) thee to win thy friendship. Thou, too, should'st enable me to secure my livelihood (*lit.*, water for my mouth). Thou should'st not play traitor to me who have been making offerings [to thee] with my right hand."

Now the flesh of the sacrificed animals and fowls are cooked and rice is boiled and a feast follows. No person of the family may partake of any of the meat of animals and fowls thus sacrificed, though meat of the goat sacrified to the *sādhak bhūt* of the *Māti* may be eaten by them. Then they all return home. None of the utensils is taken to the quandam patient's house on that day. Even those of the utensils that belong to the family of the patient are kept in some other house that day and can only be taken to the patient's house on the following day.

The *Māti* follows the same procedure and recites the same *mantras* and sings the same songs as he did on the previous occasion up to the *rijhānā* stage. This is done to see if the *bhūt*

is still confined, or has been released (*ūṭhānā*) by the counter-charms of some other malicious *Māti* or sorcerer.

If there has been any trouble (illness, etc.) during these intervening six months the *Māti* tells the people of the patient to procure a *seer* and a quarter (2½ lbs.) of *dhūnā* (resin) and make a powder of it, and also half a *seer* of *ghee*, and appoints a day when the *Māti* will again visit the house.

On his arrival, the *Māti* repeats the procedure followed before (namely, *Diyā baiṭhānā, Dharti-jāgūānā, Deotā-bōlana, Gūrū-āont, Bhūmi-bāndhnā Piṇṛ-bāndhnā, Dia-bārnā, Sabhāit, Sūmirān* and *Rijhāon*, as before). He then examines grains of rice (*ḳhariyātā hāi*) to see which of the *bhūts* that had been confined (*bāndho*) on the former occasion has got loose from the *bandhan* and is making mischief. Then the *Māti* chants songs to work himself up into a state of spirit-possession or trance.

In such a trance his head begins to shake. Then some one asks him, "Who art thou, Mahārāj?" He says, "I am such-and-such (names) *deotā*." Then the *deotā* (through the *Māti*) says, 'Get the incense (*dhūp*) ready at once.' An earthen bowl is filled with burning charcoal and on it *dhūan* and *ghee* are sprinkled. When flames issue out of the bowl, it is placed on the palm of the *Māti's* left hand. The patient is made to stand face to face before the *Māti*. Some one, broom-stick in hand, stands by the side of the patient. The *Māti* takes a handful of *dhūan* with his right hand and throws it on the fire on his left hand, so that the flame may reach the patient's body. The man with the broom then passes (*jhāṛo*) the broom over the patient's body from head downwards to the

feet several times, and repeats the process from all sides of the body.

Then the patient walks backwards and thus passes out of the house and again walks forward into the house. The *Māti* now puts his own closed fists on the ground, and the patient stands placing his feet one on each closed fist of the *Māti*. The *Māti* lifts up the patient on his closed fists, another person catching hold of the arm of the patient from behind so that he may not fall down. The *Māti* thus raises the patient on his own closed fists up to his own shoulders, and then the patient climbs down the *Māti's* back and gets down on the ground behind him.

After this, *ḳāns-bāndhnā* and sacrifices, etc. are performed as before. Even if shortly after this, the patient again gets sick, *ḍāliā* will again be sent to a *Bhagat*, who as we have seen, belongs to an order superior to the *Māti*.

Kumāri-Baiṭhana.

I now proceed to give a summary account of the method of exorcism followed and the *mantrams* used by the *Māti* or spirit-doctor in treating a married woman who has had the misfortune of either not bearing any child or of losing her children in their infancy. Such a misfortune is invariably attributed by the Orāon to the malice of some mischievous spirit or other who has been put up to it by some witch or sorcerer.

In such a case a *Sōḳhā* or *Bhagat*, is approached for finding out the spirit who is responsible for the trouble, and the proper means of expelling it. The *Sōḳhā* performs what is known as *ḍāli-deḳnā* or examining rice-grains &c., in the following manner.

Dāli-dekhnā.— The husband or some other relative of the woman goes, with a few companions, to the *sōkhā* carrying a handful of *āruā* rice and four pice on two or three *sākhua* leaves made into a bundle with cloth. The woman for whose benefit this *ḍāliā* is being taken is made to touch this rice and pice before it is taken to the *sōkhā*. Arriving at the *sōkhā's* place the *ḍāliā* is handed over to him. Before opening it the *Sōkhā* mutters some *mantras*, examines the rice and also the *sāl* leaf or a *gūlāichi* flower, informs the people that such-and-such a person (either a relative or a villager or a person of another village) is causing the trouble by putting up to it his or her familiar spirit or some other spirit or spirits. The mischief-maker is described by his or her peculiar characteristics, the situation of his or her house and other signs and indications. If this agrees with their suspicions, they go to a *Māti* and seek his help to drive away the *bhūt*. Then the *Māti* asks them to bring the articles required to perform the exorcism, such as rice-flour, coal-dust, lamp, etc., and also the requisite sacrifices supposed to have been "seen" by the *Deoṇṛā* or *Māti* in the flame of a lamp on which some grains of *āruā* rice brought by the client has been sprinkled. If they believe in this then they provide the requisite articles with which the *Māti* performs the *nikṣāri* ceremony.

If they have suspicions, they require the performance of the *Kūmāri-baiṭhānā* rites so that the proper sacrifices may be known through the mouth of the woman [51] herself (in a state of spirit-possession). It often happens that a few more sacrifices are named by the woman which were omitted by

51. Patients of the male sex are not generally "possessed"; but cases have been known in which this has happened and the man affected has been made to sit like a *kūmāri*.

mistake by the *Deoṇrā* or *Māti*. This time there can be no room for scepticism.

On the appointed evening, usually an *āmāwas* or new moon evening, the woman who has been fasting the whole day is brought to the *Deoṇrā* or *Māti* (or the *Māti* is called to the woman's house). Some *gūlāichi* flowers, *bael* leaves, *tūlsi* leaves, a little reddish earth from a hearth, a little rice-flour, a little *lohbān* (iron slag), and a jungle-root called *rāsni* are placed before the *Māti*. The *Māti* strings together the flowers and leaves into a garland and puts it on the neck of the woman and dishevels her hair.

Then he draws a diagram on the ground with the coal-dust, rice-flour and hearth-earth in the shape of three concentric parallelograms with their eastern arms wiped off. The outermost lines are made of the earth from the hearth and are thus reddish in colour, the intermediate lines with rice-flour, and are thus white in colour, and the innermost lines with coal-dust and are thus black. This figure represents three concentric compartments with openings on the east. This diagram is called the pinṛ or altar of the ceremony. On the inner side of the innermost lines, other lines are drawn with coal-dust, and on the outer side of the outermost lines similar lines are drawn with *chulhāmāṭi* (earth from a hearth).

In the innermost compartment three handfuls of rice are placed a little apart from one another; over each handful of rice are placed one *tūlsi* leaf and one bit of *rāsni* root. These are now covered over with a circular plate made of *sāl* leaves joined together. Outside, but close to the diagram, towards

its south-east are placed a potsherd (*ḳhāprā*) with fire on it, a bit of copper (generally pice) and a lighted earthen lamp. A *gūlāichi* flower and a *bael* (*Ægle marmelos*) leaf are placed on each petal-like compartment of the outermost and innermost lines of the diagram.

Now the woman circumabulates the diagram three times, commencing from the lamp and finally returning to it. Then she bows down before the diagram (*pinṛ*) and sits down on the *sāl*-leaf-plate placed over the three handfuls of rice in the innermost compartment of the diagram, with the palms of her hands joined together; and three *gūlāichi* flowers strung on a reed and some *āruā* rice are put inside her folded palms. A quantity of frankincense is from time to time sprinkled on the fire on the potsherd, so that large curls of smoke fill the place. The *Māti* squats on the ground before the lamp in front of the diagram, his *chelās* or disciples sitting by his side. A few disciples invariably accompany their master and assist him in these operations.

Sūmirāṇā.—Now commences what is called **sūmirāṇā** or invocation to the spirits. The disciples of the *Māti* go on singing invocations in chorus the whole night through, and at the same time go on rubbing with their hands some rice placed on two or three winnowing-baskets (*sūp*). Most of these invocations are in local Hindi, and, only in a few, Orāon words are interspersed with the Hindi.

A specimen of these songs of invocation to local and other deities and powers is given below:—

Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj ūtar dakhin ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.

Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj pūrūb pachim ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Gāōñā deoti ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Bārē Dārhā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Khōḳhō Dārhā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Būchā Dārhā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Lōṭō Gāṛhā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Masān Sādhaḳ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Bāghout deotā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Sātō Khaṇḍi ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Hehel Dāṇḍi ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Chūṇḍrū Khāoā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Painā Pāhāṛ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Khijriā Pāhāṛ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Sindriā Pāhāṛ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Koel Mūṇḍā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,

Āj Luṭmā ghāṭ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Gherā Pāhāṛ ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Hūṇḍrū ghāg ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Siār Lātā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Bheṛi Lātā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Bāgh Lātā ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Āj Daldāliā poḳhar ḳē sumirāṇā ḳarū deō,
Sumirāṇā ḳarū gūrū sumirāṇā ḳarū deō.

"Do thou call up, O *Gūrū* (Master)! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day [all the spirits] from the north and the south. Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day [all the spirits] from the east and the west. Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the *Gāon deōti* (village spirits). Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the [*Dārhā* spirit known as] *Bārē Dārhā*: Do thou call up to-day the [*Dārhā* spirit known as] *Khōḳhō Dārhā*. Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the [*Dārhā* spirit known as] *Būchā Dārhā*. Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the *Lōṭō Gāṛhā* (the spirit of the *Lōṭō* river). Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the *Sādhaḳ* spirit of burial grounds. Do thou call up, O *Gūrū*! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the *Bāghout* (Wertiger) spirit. Do thou call up, O

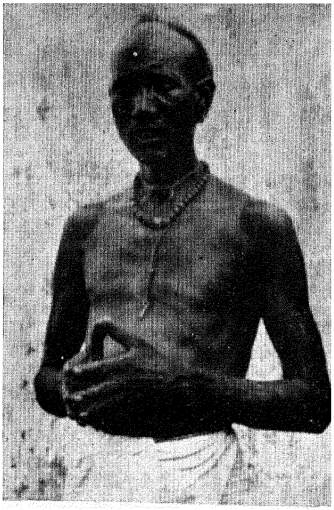

Illustration 26.
Kaila Bhagat, an Orāon Kabirpanthi, "Dewan" or Assistant of an Orāon Kabirpanthi Mahānt (Ramu Das). (Note the *Tulsi* bead and the rosary round his neck). [*See Page 333.*]

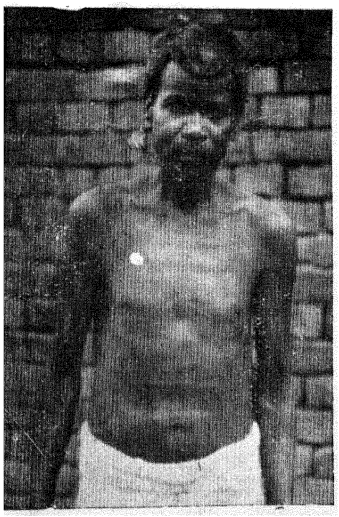

Illustration 27.
An Orāon *Māti* or spirit-Doctor performing the *Dāṇḍā-Kāṭṭā* ceremony in Illustrations 3 and 4.

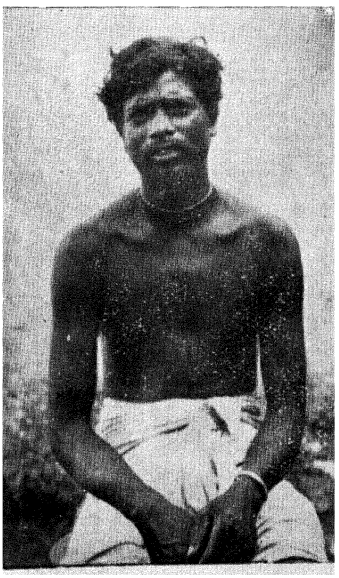

Illustration 28.
An Orāon Nemha Bhagat.

Gūrū! Do thou call up: Do thou call up to-day the *Sāt khaṇḍi* spirits. Do thou, *etc*.....*Hehel Dāṇḍi* spirit. Do thou, *etc*.....*Chūndrū khōā* spirit. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Painā* Hill. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Khijriā* Hill. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Sindriā* Hill. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Kōel Mūṇḍā*. Do thou, *etc*..... the spirit of the *Lūṭmā* Pass. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Gherā* Hill. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Hūndrū* Water-fall. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Siār Lātā* cave. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Bheṛi Lātā* cave. Do thou, *etc*..... spirit of the *Bāgh Lātā* cave. Do thou, *etc*.....spirit of the *Daldaliā* tank."

Besides chanting such *sūmirāṇā* songs, the *Mātis* also mutter long strings of names of spirits and powers of all sorts and denominations including even names of prominent rivers and hills and towns. I reproduce below one such out of many strings of names, with expletives interpersed, that are recited:—"*Khūkrā Chāṇḍi, Sāt-khaṇḍi, Bheloār Chāṇḍi, Koṛā-hāṭ, Chakkal Hāṭ, Jōmgaṛi, Jōm-sāṛā, Ṭhākūr duār, Khāṇḍi Chāṇḍi, Chāpā Chāṇḍi, Jhili-mili, Pāṭnā-Chāṇḍi, Hājipūr, Mātipūr, Sōnpur, Sōn-nadi, Diūr-Chāṇḍi, Diūr-Pāṭ*. [*Hāir karē, gohār lāgē. Bhinsāṇḍē gāi biāyē bil-lāruey, ghaṇṭā bājey.*] *Sudā-rūdā, Birhōṛ-deōnṛā, Pākhaṛ-deōnṛā, Chhōṭ-bichhṛā, Baṛ-bichhṛā, Bichhṛā-Chāṇḍi, Ṭhelā-Pāhāṛ, Tāmbā-Pāhāṛ, Gārūā-Pāhāṛ, Lūpā-Lūpā, Chaōrā-Bhaōnrā, Kūkūr-bhūkhā, Mūng-sāri, Gāe-ghāṭi, Piṇḍā-ghāṭi, Sūgā-kāṭā, Perōā-ghāg, Gāngpūr Gānglāē, Samalpur Sāmlāē, Ārbār, Rāigaṛh, Hingā-lati, Panjar-tōṛā, Guddi-khāiā* (eater of marrow), *Phōksā-khāiā* (eater of lungs), *Bhukūrūṇḍā, Chāul-bāṇḍā, Bukūrāi-dē, Tūkūrāi-dē, Bābū mūhūgōlā, Sikar-tōṛā, Dhartī Chār-kūṇḍ, Chourāsi lākh Mahādān* (eighty-four *lākhs* of *Mahādāniā* spirits), *Bārā-kūṛi Goṛeā* (twelve

scores of Goṛeā spirits), *Chāppān kōṭi Lakhandar-nāth* (fifty-six *crores* of *Lakhandar-nāth* spirits)!—*Deotānke Sūmiraṇhaōthi* (I am invoking Ye all,—O gods)."

Then follows the following *Rasni* song;—

Āj ūtar dakhinkē hānkar hāi,
Sūnū sūnū Viṣnū Barmā;
Āj Gāoā deōti ke hānkar hāi,
Sūnū sūnū Viṣnū Barmā.

"This is the day of invocation of the North and the South Listen O, Listen, *Viṣnū* [and] *Bramhā*! This is the day of the invocation of the Village-Spirits. Listen, O listen, O *Viṣnū* and *Bramhā*!"

And so on *ad infinitum*, they name every local or general spirit by turns as in the "sūmirāṇā" songs.

Sometimes the *Māti* all this time goes on muttering the names of spirits and deities, etc., as follows:—

Eh Bhagwān, Eh Bhagwān, heṭhē Panch, ūprē Parmeswar,
Hē Būṛhā Buṛhi, hē Gāonā Deoti!
Dhantargūrū-Dhantargūrū Dhantargūrū!
Māhdo mantrī, Māhdo mantrī, Māhdo mantrī!
Rām Lachman kē dōe kartā hāi,
Rām Lachman kē dōe kartā hāi,
Rām Lachman kē dōe kartā hāi.
Kalikātā Kālimāi kē dōe kartā hāi,
Lūgū Lūguāin kē dōe kartā hāi,
Baṛ Lūgū kē dōe kartā hāi.
Hē Sātpāhāṛiā-Pokhrā kē dōe kartā hāi,
Hē Basiāṭanṛ Rājā kē dōe kartā hāi,

Hē Perōāghāg ḳē dōe ḳartā hāi,
Hē Chūndrūḳhāoā ḳē dōe ḳartā hāi,
Hē Palḳōṭ Ṭhongālātā Najhar pāni ḳē dōe ḳartā hāi,
Hē Beṛō Mahādāniā ḳē dōe ḳartā hāi.

"O God, Oh God,—the Panch below (on earth) and God above. O, ye Ancestor-spirits! O Village-spirits! O *Dhantargūrū*! O, Mādhō the Minister! I adjure Ye, O, Rām Lachman! O Mother Kālī of Calcutta (Kālighat)! O Lūgū Spirit and the Consort of Lūgū—the Great Lūgū! O Sātpāhāṛiā Pōkhrā (Spirit of the Tank under the seven Hills)! I adjure thee, O (thou spirit of the) Raja of Basiā *ṭanr*! I adjure thee, O spirit of the Perwā water-fall! I adjure thee, O Chūnḍrū-khāōā spirit! I adjure thee, O spirit of the spring-water of Pālkot Tāngālātā! O Mahādāniā spirit of village Beṛō, I adjure thee."

When the *Bhūt* is supposed to have turned up, it is sought to tickle and enrapture the *bhūt* and make it possess the woman (*ḳūjri*).

Rasni.—The next step in the *Kūmāri-Baiṭhānā* and other processes of exorcism is known as the *Rasni* ceremony. This consists of singing a number of songs calculated to tickle the *bhūt* and thus tempt it into self-revelation. The *Māti* and his disciples take, one after another, the name of every spirit they can think of, and address flattering invocations to each.

After this any number of what are known as "Kumāri" songs are sung in chorus by the disciples with a view to induce a sense of good-fellowship with the spirit-world. Each song is repeated several times, and all the time two or three of the disciples continue rubbing rice with their

hands on a winnowing basket. Here are a few samples of these "Kumāri" songs:—

(1) *Āndinā Gangā māi, hālākirē mālāki;*
Ājitō Gangā Māi, bahālāre ḳhidōr,
Dhasnāḳe māṭi, bābā, giripāṛi hō,
Ājitō Gangā Māi, bahālāre ḳhidōr.

"At other times Mother Ganges flows skipping and sparkling; but to-day Mother Ganges is rolling down quite muddy. The earth of her crumbling banks has fallen down. Oh! To-day Mother Ganges is rolling down quite muddy."

(2) *Jhilmili pōḳhar, Bābā, ḳamlā ḳā phūl, hō!*
Tāhāi ḍāḳin ḳarāiā āsnān.
Mār bhāgō ḍāḳin deoā,
Phūl ḳāśi singār, bhāiā.

"In the sparkling waters of the tank waves the lotus flower, O! There the witch doth bathe. Get away, O spirit of (set up by) the witch. Adorn thyself with *ḳāsi* flowers, O Friend!"

(3) *Lūjūr lūjūr nāchē bāṇḍārē hātiā,*
Khōwr bhūlē gēlē bīrā hē Kerājhariā;
Nagar bhūlē gēlē bīrā hō Kerājhariā.

"In the *bhāṇḍār* doth dance the [King's] elephant; the hero is gone for a stroll on the lanes in *Kerājhariā*! The hero is gone for a stroll in the town of *Kerājhariā*!"

(4) *Pahilē tō bāndō hō Gūrū Bābā,*
Mātā pitāḳer pāo;
Tabā lēḳē bandō hō Gūrū Bābā,
Dhartīrē āḳāsh;

Pahilē bāndō hō Gūrū Bābā, Gūrū Gūrāin ḳē pāo;
Tabā lēḳē bandō hō Gūrū Bābā, ḍāin biṣāhi ḳē pāo.

"Make obeisance first, O Gūrū Bābā, to the feet of thy parents; and then do thou make obeisance to the Earth and the Sky. First do thou bow down, O Gūrū Bābā, to the feet of the Gūrū and Gūrū's wife. And then do thy bow down, O Gūrū Bābā, to the feet of the *ḍāin-biṣāhi* (witch-wizard)."

Then the *chelās* go on singing any number of such songs, until the woman begins to shake her head. This shaking of the head is a sure indication that she is "possessed" by the offended spirit. After this the *chelās* go on singing songs purporting to be coaxing inquiries as to the name of the spirit. Every spirit they can think of is addressed and sought to be tempted with promises of sacrifice to reveal its identity.

Finally the *Māti*, or one of his advanced disciples, asks the patient, "Who has done this?" The woman replies, "So-and-so (naming the witch) has afflicted me (*nāślai*) at such and such a place." "What things will be required now?" She names the number and kind of animals or fowls or both that the *bhūt* demands. Then she is asked, "Where does the *singhi* (the iron tube in which the *bhūt* will be enclosed) want to go?" "Where will the *tiḳli* go?" She names either the house of the witch who has instigated the *bhūt*, or some other place, such as a new embankment or similar spot. After this the *Māti* or a disciple places on the ground three copper pice and on each pice a bit of turmeric and a pinch of salt. The woman is made to take up from the ground each pice (along with the turmeric and salt) with her teeth, bite and chew them and then spit on the ground.

Bandhni.—The *Māti* or one of his disciples now ties up the woman's hair in a knot, and takes a handful of dust which he drops little by little on her head, while chanting what are known as *Bandhni* songs. In these songs, each spirit likely to have caused the mischief is named and it is asserted that with the help of his *Gūrū*, the *Māti* is binding down the spirit. And the offending spirit is adjured that unless it obeys the *Māti*, it will fall into "*Narak-kūṇḍ, Chāmār-kūṇḍ Dhūkūr-kūṇḍ,*" "the pit of hell, the pit of *Chāmārs* (dealers in hide), the pit of perdition."

By such *bandhni* (*lit.*, tying-up) songs the woman's soul is believed to be held fast (*bāndhnā*) so that the *rasni* (exhilaration) may be worn off.

Rasni Ūtārnā.—Now the *spirit* is made to get out of (*utārṇā*) the body of the woman by the *Māti* and his disciples. They sing in chorus appropriate songs describing how the *rasni* gets down from the hair of the patient down to the skull, and makes the head heavy,—how it gets down from the head to the forehead and makes the forehead heavy, and so on down to the toes. The song begins as follows:—

"*Keshāchhē lāmbal Rasni muṇḍā bhāri,*
Lāmbhūr lāmbhūr Rasni, rāhi Rasni!.....

and ends,—

Nāā-se lāmbal Rasni dhartī bhāri,
Lāmbhūr lāmbhūr Rasni, rāhi Rasni."

Thus is the spirit conducted from the hair of the patient to the head, from the head to thte forehead, from the forehead to the eyes, from the eyes to the nose, from the nose to the mouth, from the mouth to the teeth, from the teeth to the tongue, from the tongue to the lips, from the lips to the neck,

from the neck to the shoulders, from the shoulders to the chest, from the chest to the waist, from the waist to the thigh, from the thigh to the leg, from the leg to the ankles, from the ankles to the heels, from the heels to the soles of the feet, from the soles to the toes and, finally, from the toes through the toe-nails into the earth. Similarly, as if to make sure that no portion of the spirit-stuff may be left behind in any part of the body, the same process is repeated in another direction, namely, from the head and face to the neck and shoulders, from the shoulders to the armpits, from the armpits along the elbows and wrist down to the palms of the hand, and thence out through the nails into the earth below.

Thus is the *spirit* sent down into the earth underneath which is its proper habitation. So long as the *rasni* has been on her, the woman has not been in her normal state of mind. The woman now gets up from her seat, goes home and breaks her fast. The *Māti* reveals to her people the sacrifices required to propitiate the offended spirit. When the woman's people have been able to procure the proper sacrifices, a day is appointed according to the convenience of the *Māti* for exorcising the *bhūt*. The ceremonies connected with this exorcism are the following:—

On the appointed evening the *ḳumāri baiṭhanā* ceremony is commenced as on the previous occasion by making the woman sit in the same fashion on an exactly similar diagram drawn on the ground. Then the same method of *sumirāṇā* (invocation of all the spirits), and *rasāna* (tickling the particular spirit in question with ticklish songs and thereby inducing the spirit to manifest itself) are gone through and

the same songs are sung in chorus as on the previous occasion. When the signs of possession are apparent, *dān* songs (songs relating to the sacrifices) are sung in chorus. In these songs the various sacrificial fowls and animals promised to the spirits are named.

Singār Ūtārṇā.—The next operation is known as the "*singār utārṇā*" (taking down or discharging the exhilaration). The process consists of two parts: first, the spirit is conducted from the hair, through the different parts of the body, *viz.* face, neck, shoulders, armpit, elbow and wrist down to the hand and thence out from the nails into the earth. The means employed in doing this is the singing in chorus songs descriptive of the process. Thus is the spirit expelled from the upper part of the body out through the nails. Should, however, any portion of the spirit-stuff yet cling to the patient, this is supposed to be removed by the second part of the operations by which the remaining limbs are also similarly treated and the spirit or such portion of the 'spirit-stuff' as may still cling to the patient is expelled through the collar-bone down the chest and the waist out through the thighs, legs, heels, toes, and toe-nails into the earth again and the spirit is adjured to renounce its attraction (*māyā mōh*) for the patient's body.

Singār-Saprāṇā.—Now the *Māti* and his disciples tell the *bhūt* in appropriate songs that it is time it should be off. This part of the business is called "*Singār-Saprāṇā.*"

These songs purport to give a tempting account of the various sacrifices promised, and charge the spirit once more to leave one part after another of the patient's body beginn-

ing from the hair of the head down to the nails of the toes.

Then they sing in chorus songs descriptive of the various animals and fowls to be sacrificed. Songs after songs are sung until it is believed that the spirit has left the patient's body and entered the flame of the earthen lamp by the side of the diagram.

Confining the Spirit.—Now the *Māti* intently examines the flame of the lamp to make sure that the *spirit* is there, and then with a knowing look, as if to say "So, here you are!" touches a wick with this flame, and the wick thus lighted is put into the *singhi* which is at once closed with an iron stopper. It is believed that the *spirit* passes into the flame of the wick and is thus imprisoned inside the *singhi.* Some mud is then plastered over the stopper of the *singhi* to make all escape impossible for the spirit; a disciple of the *Māti* takes up each victim with his hands and touches the feet of the sacrifice with the forehead of the patient. First the pig is taken up and the *Māti* addresses the animal saying, "*Etnā din tō nām ūṭhtē rahīs; chhāonā chhāonā āb āpnēkē pān phūl sab hajir bhelai; purṇā piñṛ chhoṛ dē; hām nawā piñṛ dethi. Āj takḷē chelā pāṭiḳē nām māt ūṭhiyē. Āj takḷē Bhagat dūrā sōḳhidura nām māt ūṭhiyē. Daiṇḳē ḳahnā māt chaliyē, Mātiḳē ḳahnā chal.*"

"So long thou wert the spirit named as having caused the trouble. Now I have brought for thee pigs and other sacrifices and offerings (*lit.* betel-leaves and flowers); do thou [now] give up thy old seat (i.e. the present patient); I am giving thee a new seat. From to-day may not thy name 'rise' (*i.e.*, be detected by *Bhagats* or *Sōḳhās*) *i.e.*, Do not 'possess' people or do them harm."

Then on the ground some *tūlsi* leaves, mango leaves, *āruā* rice, *hardi* (turmeric) and salt are placed together with three copper coins. The victims are fed with the rice, saying "*Bhūkhal sukhē chāul nā khābē*" (out of hunger don't eat dry rice).

Then the *spirit* is again bound down by the *bandhni mantras* or chants. As the *bandhni* chant is being sung, another oiled wick similarly lighted is waved round the head of the pig. Then the victims are taken up one by one and similarly brought in contact with the forehead of the patient and similarly addressed (*Etnā din tō nām uṭhtē rahīs etc.*); and so on with each victim. Now the *Māti* and his disciples go to the boundary of an adjoining village with the victims to be sacrificed, taking with them one *sūp* (winnowing basket) supplied by his *client*, one *sūpli* (small *sūp*), one *mowni* (small bamboo cup) and the *singhi* and all the ornaments (everything, except the wearing cloth) that the woman did not take out before sitting as *kūmāri*. Arrived there, the animals and fowls are sacrificed. Sindūr marks are put on the *sūpli* and *mowni*, and blood is dropped into them and these are all left there. A little of the blood of each sacrificed animal or fowl is dropped on the *singhi*. If the *kūmāri* so directs in her state of spirit-possession, the *singhi* is carried stealthily at dead of night to the house or some field (generally *nawā pinr* or newly reclaimed land) of the person who had instigated the spirit against the present client of the *Māti*, and there buried completely underground; and the *tikli* on the forehead of the client (*kūmāri*) is either inserted into the wings of a pigeon which is taken outside the limits of the village and made to fly away or taken by the *Māti* to a market and stealthily affixed to the clothes of some woman of the same age as the *kūmāri*.

Anyone killing the pigeon, or anyone to whose clothes the *tikli* has been attached, will, it is believed, be possessed by the spirit in the *tikli*. The reason for dropping the blood on the *singhi* was thus explained to me: "It is for this drop of blood that the *bhūt* has been so long causing all sorts of trouble. It gets hungry and so it acts like this. For its food the spirit must trouble the family in whose field or house it is located." One main difference in the treatment of such (*shoāri*) *bhūts* and the *khūnt bhūts* is that in the case of the latter no *singhi* is used but a seat or *āsthān* is given to it in the shape of only a *khūnta* or wooden pole with a thin rod of iron pinned into its top, the upper part of the *khūntā* sticking out above ground. The *singhi* of the *shoāri bhūt* is buried totally underground so that people may not see it and uproot it and thereby let loose the spirit again. The *bhūt* goes away either in the *tikli* 52 or in the *singhi*, or in both, and so no *bhūt* remains in the leavings.

Such are the various stages of the process of exorcism followed by the Chōṭā Nāgpūr spirit-doctor. In the first stage, as we have seen, the help of all spirits supposed to be beneficent, whether they be indigenous or foreign, that the spirit-doctor has known or heard of, is invoked. Among such spirits we hear the names of the spirits of various localities in their own country as well as of foreign lands,

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52. The *tikli* (i.e., the *bhūt* in the *tikli*) is called *thāpal bhūt* or *nāśan bhūt*. If the person on whose wall or land the *singhi* is inserted happens to know of it while being inserted he generally assaults the man so inserting. But when cases come to the courts the plea of self-defence against a thief or some such plea is taken and a case cannot be ordinarily made out against the man.

and the departed spirits of powerful ancient kings and sorcerers of their own country as well as of Hindu epic heroes like Ram and Lachman and the father of Hindu Medicine known as Dhanwantari ("*Dhantar gūrū.*") The far-famed Hindu goddess *Kāli* of *Kālighat* ("*Kaliḳātā Kālimāi*") is not forgotten. In successive stages of the process the spirit who is responsible for the mischief is tickled into self-revelation, successively pursued from one part of the patient's body to another until it is completely expelled, and is then seized and confined in an iron-tube or *singhi*, and finally buried outside the limits of the village or in the house or lands of an enemy.

Medecines.—Some *Mātis* also combine the use of medicinal herbs and other substances with exorcism by spells and incantations to cure diseases. Thus, as a remedy for fever, the roots of the *Bhūsri* plant and *Chāmgar* plant and *Ghōṛbāi* plant, and grass growing over the burial-place of a child, and a little dried flesh of the *Chōchā* bird are pounded together and mixed with a little horse-dung and water, and administered to the patient.

In a case of griping of the stomach, the *Māti* sits down before the patient and takes up between his two fingers a little salt and mutters a long chant in which the words 'salt' (*lūn*) occurs in almost every distich and repeats adjurations to various deities and spirits, and finally blows over the body of the patient three times with his mouth, and then makes the patient eat up the salt and drink a little water.

In a case of *Diarrhoea* or of *Cholera*, the *Māti* sits down before the patient, presses between his hands a stem and a few leaves of the *Sorongting* plant and thus extracts a little juice out of them, puts a pinch of salt into this juice, and drops

a little of the juice into each eye of the patient. This is believed to stop the bowels from moving. He then pounds another vegetable root and makes the patient eat it to stop vomitting. The kernel of the stone of *jujube* plums is given to the patient to stop retchings. A round pepper is also scorched and the patient made to smell its smoke, and thereby retchings are said to be stopped.

To cure opthalmia or sore eyes, the *Māti* puts a garlic into his own mouth, chews it and, while doing so, presses the temples of the patient with his hands and mutters a spell three times and each time commands the eyes to become normal, and blows over the eyes. Both the doctor and the patient must sit with their faces to the east during the operation.

Some incurable diseases are sought to be cured by putting the *Disease-Spirits* to shame in the following way. The patients paint themselves in either white or variegated colours and move about from stall to stall at a *jatrā* fair with a winnowing-basket or a pestle in hand in studied muteness so as to make people laugh. It is believed that this sight makes the Disease-spirit possessing the patient think that people are laughing at it, and to avoid being made a laughing-stock of, it may leave the patient's body.

Although a good deal of charlatanry is practised by the *Māti*, any one who has attended the seances of the *Māti* and his disciples and carefully watched their operations cannot help feeling that the *Māti*, like his clients, sincerely believes in the reality of spirits as certain unseen semi-material conscious entities who can and do take possession of living

human or other animal bodies, afflict them with disease or death, and who can also be induced to enter the body of the human medium and communicate some desired information and signify their wishes through such medium, and, further, who can be expelled like some poisonous substance from the body it may 'possess' and be attached to a metal piece or *tikli*, or confined in a hollow tube (*singhi*) and conducted to some other place or to another human or animal body or otherwise got rid of.

Nāg-Mātis.—Besides the class of *Mātis* who exorcise *bhūts* or spirits and are known as *Dēo-mātis* or spirit-doctors, there is another class of *Mātis* known as *Nāg-mātis* or Snake-Doctors.

As the subtle working of a *bhūt* on a person, family, or village, is detected and stopped by the *Dēo-māti*, so the working of the subtle poison of the serpent kind is stopped and expelled by another class of *Mātis* known as *Nāg-māti*. Although his methods are in some respects different from those of the *Dēo-māti*, he, too, has his "bāndhni" *mantras* by which the subtle poison of a snake is tied down, i.e. rendered stationary and powerless. In fact, the poison of the serpent, the *najar* or "evil-eye" of the witch, the mischievous potency of the *Langhan*, and the subtle working of a spirit or *bhūt* are all conceived of as belonging to the same category.

Every disciple of a *Nāg-māti* goes to the master's hut after evening meal. The *Nāg-māti* sits down with an earthen lamp (in which a wick is fed with *karānj* oil) lighted before him and with a *sūp* and a whip made of the *sābāi* grass (*Ichaemum angustifolian*) in his hands. Every dis-

ciple has his own *sūp*, and while squating on the ground with his legs interlaced he goes on, like his preceptor, slowly turning the palm of his right hand on the *āruā* rice on the *sūp* which is placed on his own knees and singing song after song. Like the *Deō-mātis* the *Nāg-mātis*, too, invoke a number of Hindu gods and local spirits. As singing and turning the rice on the *sūp* go on, someone or other of the disciples generally gets possessed (*bharnā*) and begins to shake his head violently. If he does not naturally recover after a while, the *Nāg-māti* brings him round by his *mantras*.

The *Nāg-māti* and his disciples sacrifice fowls to the goddess *Mansā*, once in the month of *Jeṭh*, once in *Āṣāṛ* and once in *Deoṭhān*. The *Māti* and his disciples all remain fasting the whole day and, in the evening, one fowl is sacrificed on behalf of the *Nāg-māti* and each of his disciples. Songs in honour of *Mansā* are sung in chorus, every one clapping his hands as the songs proceed. At first the poison will be sent upwards by *mantras* in which all known species of snakes are named. Then the poison is sent down (*jhāṛnā*) by appropriate *mantras*.

IV. Bhagats or Sōkhās.

A *Bhagat*, as I have said, is believed to acquire his powers through the special grace of God or *Mahādeo*. But the grace does not come to the undeserving. It generally comes to a person of psychic temperament who for sometime before being favoured with Divine grace has felt a natural hankering after a higher life, and has been leading a life of abstemiousness and spending much of his time in thinking of things divine, and attending *Pūjās* of *Mahādeo*, or himself offering *pūjās* to the Deity. In some cases, a man whose grandfather

or some more remote ancestor had been a *Bhagat* and devotee of *Mahādeo*, but since whose death such devotion had disappeared from the family, comes to feel an inner urge to lead a life of purity and devotion (*bhaḳti*), and adopts such a course. After a time, with the increase of his earnestness or rather yearning and devotion, he begins to pass sleepless nights in contemplation of the Deity and at times acts and talks like a maniac. Either in such a state of mind or in a dream, he has, or thinks he has, a vision of the Deity issuing out of the ground in the shape of a *Mahādeo* stone. And sure enough, it is said, a *Mahādeo* stone is found next morning to have emerged from under the earth either on the floor of his hut or on the *āngan* or courtyard of his house. Such a *Mahādeo* stone is known as a *Bhūiphūṭ Mahādeo* and the man becomes what is called a *Bhūiphūṭ Bhagat*. All such *Bhagats* as I have met have assured me that night after night, particularly during the earlier period of the 'conversion,' as they sat rapt in contemplation of the Deity, *mantras* or songs would come to their mind of themselves through Divine inspiration, and they would go on chanting them and their devotion would increase. In some cases even women may have such a vision and inspiration and thus become a *Bhagat* or *Sōḳhā*.

In the cases of *Bhagats* or *Sōḳhās* other than a *Bhūi-phūṭ Bhagat*, the person, under the urge of his religious fervour, suddenly leaves his home like a mad man and repairs to some solitary place and, after an absence of days, returns home with new-found occult powers. In such a case, it is believed that the man was led forth to some solitude by the Deity Himself and instructed there. On his return he instals a

Mahādeo stone in his house, and the compartment or the shed in which the Deity is installed is called the *Deō-ḳūṛi* or God's hut. The *Bhūi-phūṭ Bhagat* erects a shed or *Deō-ḳūṛi* over the 'self-sprung' (*Bhūi-phūṭ*) *Mahādeo*.

Thenceforth the new *Bhagat*, whether *Bhūi-phūṭ* or otherwise, may see with his inner vision the form or image, reflected on a leaf or on flower, of any spirit that may have been causing harm to any village or family or individual on whose behalf *ḍālia* is brought to him. Some *Bhagats* acquire such a wide reputation in the country side, that almost every day a number of people, Orāons as well as non-Orāons, from far and near, approach him with *ḍāliās* for divination. And the *Bhagat* attends to each case in turn, precedence being strictly determined by the priority of a client's arrival to the *Bhagat's* place, and not by the wealth of a client or any special relations with or regard for him.

To maintain his second sight unimpaired and to augment his occult powers, the *Bhagat* has to lead a life of active devotion to his Deity. He has to make daily offerings of flowers, *āruā* rice and molasses, and, if available, a little *ghee* or clarified butter to *Mahādeo*, represented by the stone which has issued out of the ground (*Bhūi-phūṭ*) or otherwise found. The part of the house where the stone issued out of itself or has been brought and kept is marked off as the tabernacle of the Deity or, if the stone emerged from the ground on a part of the courtyard, a separate hut is erected over the spot where the stone issued out of the ground and is dedicated to the Deity. This tabernacle or temple of the Deity is, as I have said, called *Deō-ḳūṛi* or *Deo-ḳūṛiā*. The *Deo-ḳuṛi* is cleaned every morning with cowdung diluted in water.

The *Bhagat* also makes offerings to *Dharti-Māi* or the Earth-goddess who is regarded as the consort of *Mahādeo*.

From the day that the Deity reveals Himself to him, the *Bhagat* or *Sōkhā* must also strictly observe certain rules of ceremonial purity. He must give up eating meat. He may, however, take the meat of goats but not of she-goats nor of carcases of dead goats. Nor must he sit down to dinner in the same row with people addicted to drinking (*madūā*). At feasts and festivals, he may take his share of rice and other eatables home and cook it there for himself; but he must not eat with the others. He must bathe every morning before proceeding to his daily devotions and making offerings to his tutelary deity, and must not eat anything before he has finished his daily *pūjā* in the morning. He may continue to offer libations of rice-beer and offerings of food to his ancestor-spirits and clan spirits, and pay his subscriptions towards the expenses of the periodical *pūjās* of *Chālā-Pāchchō* and other village-deities and spirits, but he must not partake of the sacrificial feasts. The attitude of the *Bhagat* to the Supreme Deity *Mahādeo* necessarily leads to the degradation of the old spirits to a lower plane, and the cult of *Bhakti* tends more towards monotheism than polytheism.

As regards social relations, the *Bhagat* may take home as a wife either for himself or his son a maiden of a *maduā* (liquor-drinking) Orāon family, but from after the marriage the girl must not eat food cooked by her parents or other *maduā* Orāons, and when she goes on a visit to her parents' place, she will have to cook her own meals. A *Bhagat* may marry his daughter or sister to a *Maduā* Orāon, but from after the marriage, the girl may not cook for her people nor serve cooked food to

any of them nor even touch the cooking pots of her parents' place. The members of the *Bhagat's* family have also to observe rules of ceremonial purity in eating and drinking.

Although a *Bhagat* does not ordinarily exorcise spirits but only 'sees' them as revealed in his inner eye by fixing his gaze on a flower or a leaf and reveals their names, his services are sometimes also secured for neutralising the spells (*bān*) of witches. This he does by some such method as the following. He sits down in front of the victim of the witch's spells who may be either lying down or sitting up. A few pieces of turmeric, a small quantity of each of twelve varieties of grains, a little powdered charcoal, and some red earth from a hearth are placed before the *Bhagat.* He mixes these up, and takes up a handful of the mixture three times successively, and waves the mixture each time round and round the patient's body so as just to touch it lightly in passing, and then either throws the mixture away or casts it into a fire beside him. While waving this mixture round the patient, the *Bhagat* goes on muttering prayers to *Mahādeo, Dharti-Māi* and other beneficent deities to expel the evil spirit set on by the witch, and finally with his mouth he blows over the patient's body and adjures the spirit to leave the patient, and claps his hands. He commands the evil spirit in a tone of authority,—"Do thou take these (turmeric and other ingredients) and get thee back to the place from where thou didst come. Shouldst thou look back [towards this patient], thy legs shall be broken and thy eyes shall burst." And the spirit, it is believed, cannot but obey this man of power. It is believed that the spirit disappears with the smoke of

the fire into which the grains etc. are thrown, and leaves the patient free.

A *Bhagat*, as I have said, lives a life of ceremonial purity, abstemiousness and religious devotion, according to his own lights. It is in the cult of the *Bhagats* that, apart from the practice of beneficent magic, Orāon religion rises from the stage of fear and conciliation of a host of generally malignant spirits to a higher stage in which the dominant feature is reverent adoration and loving service of a beneficent God in particular and of one or two associated deities equally beneficent.

In the orthodox Orāon system, all religious acts are the acts of the family, clan or class or village community, and all worship consists in sacrifices or offerings of food and drink to the deities or spirits. The blood of the sacrifices is in some cases sprinkled on the stone or other visible symbol of the deity and pieces of sacrificial meat are either placed before the symbol or, as in the case of the *ḳhūṇṭ bhūts*, pinned on the peg (*ḳhūṇṭā*) representing the *bhūt*. From what were thus in the beginning mere bribes to keep the spirits quiet, sacrifices came in time probably to symbolise a bond between the spirit or deity on the one side and the Orāon family, clan, class or community on the other; and worshippers and worshipped came to share in a common meal.

In the newer *Bhagat* cult, the old motive of fear and placation has given place to something of reverent love and adoration; and the *Bhagat* in the solitude of his *Deō-ḳūṛi* or tabernacle sacred to the Deity daily offers flowers and sweets and burns incense or butter

(*ghee*) as tokens of his own *bhakti* or devotion. Religion to him is in essence not a public cult, but a peculiar attitude of the individual mind and an intimate personal relation with the Deity realised in the heart. True, the spirits and ghosts are not altogether discarded or ignored. But, with the exception of the ancestor-spirits, the other spirits are regarded by the *Bhagat* as spirits of evil to be shunned, kept off and, when necessary, driven away. In fact, the existence of malignant spirits is as firmly believed in by the *Bhagat* or *Sōkhā* as by the *Māti*. But the psychological response to them is different in the case of the two classes. Whereas the *Māti* regards them as possible allies and seeks to hold intercourse with them, submits to their demands of periodical propitiation through sacrifices and carries on his operations, more often anti-social than otherwise, with their aid, the *Bhagat* regards them as 'thieves' and 'ruffians' to be shunned, contemned or controlled, and relies for his powers on the aid of the Supreme Deity Mahādeo Himself and employs his beneficent powers, according to his own lights, for the good of suffering humanity.

The family of such a *Bhagat*, as we have seen, generally give up the use of liquor and meat (except goat's flesh) and observe certain rules of ceremonial purity and begin to lead a better life than the average liquor-drinking and spirit-worshipping Orāon's. They too generally come to adopt the faith of their *Mahādeo*-inspired relative (father or uncle, husband or brother) in the beneficent Deity—*Mahādeo* or *Dharmes* with His female counterpart (*Sakti* or energy as the Hindu would say), *Pārvati* or *Devi-Māi* and *Dharti-Māi* as the only true Divinity and source of all good.

When the *Mahādeo*-inspired *Bhagat* dies, his real or imagined occult powers die with him. But the zeal for a better life of external cleanliness and internal purity, temperance, piety and devotion to the Deity, with which he has inspired his family and the respect for a higher life which he has kindled among his neighbours and fellow-tribesmen, live after him, and to some extent help forward the moral and religious evolution of the tribe. Thus in the cult of the *Bhagat* we see, among the Orāons, a higher religion, at least in the making.

These descendants of *Bhūi-phūṭ Bhagats* as also some who have been nominally initiated by *Brāmhans* or *Gōsāiñs*, generally observe the same rules of ceremonial purity in diet and habits and are known as *Nemhā Bhagats*. They abstain from eating beef and pork and the meat of fowls, but may take fish and the meat of other birds and animals, particularly goats. They offer a black or grey he-goat to *Mahādeo* and a black she-goat or sheep to *Devī-Māi* in the month of *Āṣāṛh*. Those of them who abstain from all liquor offer to their ancestor-spirits either pure water or water in which molasses have been mixed. A very few *Bhagats* who have accepted *Vaiśnav Gōsāins* as their *Gūrūs* abstain from all kinds of flesh and fish and offer to their tutelary deity *Viṣnū* or *Rām* only flowers and sweets and no animal sacrifices.

Although even among the *Bhagats* or *Sōkhās* may be found a few charlatans of the stamp of the generality of the *Mātis*, the *Bhūi-phūṭ Bhagat* is generally a sincere devotee of *Mahādeo* (*lit.*, the Great God) and a man of genuine piety, according to his own lights. Although in a few instances, his descendants, though still bearing the name of *Bhagats* and observing

some of the outward rules of purity in food and habits practised by him, and even going to the length of adopting certain *Brāmhanical* usages including initiation from mercenary *Hindu Gōsāiñs* have degenerated into low-class humdrum *Hindus* and come to imbibe some or most of the vices of that class, the influence of the *Mahādeo*-inspired *Bhagat* on the religion and habits of his people is not altogether effaced from the community.

The dim and flickering torch of *Bhaḳti* or a Religion of Love that the first sincere *Bhagat* among the Orāons clumsily lighted, a few generations ago, has since been intermittently carried forward by others who have from time to time come after him. It is among these *Bhagats* that for the first time religion ceases to be altogether an affair of the community alone, and becomes also the most important private concern of the individual in his solitude,—an affair not merely of public utility for the community but of inner necessity for the individual.

CHAPTER VI.

REVIVAL MOVEMENTS AND MODERN TENDENCIES IN ORĀON RELIGION.

MORE than once in the preceding pages I have noticed the tradition tenaciously preserved in the tribal memory to the effect that the principal feature of the earlier religion of the Orāons was a belief in the existence of the Spirit of Good embodied in *Dharmes*, the Sun-God and Creator, on the one hand, and of the forces of evil manifested in the 'Evil Eye' (*Najar-gujar*) and the 'Evil Mouth' (*Bāi-bhāṛ*), on the other. The ancient Orāons, it is asserted, knew no other deities or spirits except *Dharmes* and no other source of evil except the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth.' A further tradition would, however, appear to indicate that the conception of at least one deity, namely *Chālā Pāchchō* or the Spirit of Vegetation or Earth-goddess who is annually married to the Sun-God at the *Khaddi* or *Sarhūl* festival, was already evolved by the tribal mind probably from a malignant spirit to a beneficent deity, without perhaps the direct influence of culture-contact and borrowing to which the majority of other Orāon deities and spirits may be traced.

This second tradition asserts that before the Orāons migrated to what is now Chōṭā-Nāgpūr, the tribe had been living in comparative affluence and ease under a king of their own on the Rōhṭās plateau further to the north-west, but that, in an evil hour, on the day of the annual *Khaddi* or *Sarhūl* festival in honour of *Chālā Pāchchō*, when all their adult male population lay almost senseless with drink, some hardier

tribe styled in the tradition as the *Mlechchhas* [53] surprised them in their revels, dislodged them from the Rōhṭās plateau and chased them beyond the river Sōn into what is now Chōṭā-Nāgpūr. The Orāons of those days, it is asserted, knew no *bhūts* or spirits nor ate beef or other unclean food, but were more cleanly in their habits and even wore the *janeu* or the sacred thread. In order to elude the pursuit of the enemy, the Orāons, it is said, took shelter in the houses of the Mūṇḍās whom they found in occupation of the country, and concealed their own identity by discarding their sacred threads and taking to the unclean food and habits of the Mūṇḍās and adopting as their own the deities and spirits of the Mūṇḍā pantheon.

Though this traditional account of the wholesale and deliberate adoption of the Mūṇḍā pantheon by the Orāons may be somewhat fanciful, we can very well understand that when the Orāons came to live in intimate contact with the Mūṇḍās who were then dominant in the land and given to the propitiation of a host of malignant spirits, the new-comers would gradually assimilate in their own system some of those spirits of the land. The existence of such spirits fitted in with their own tribal conception of the forces of evil as manifested in the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth.' These spirits might naturally come to be regarded as the personification or concrete expression of their own conception of the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth,' or rather as suitable ministers and agents of the 'evil eye' and the 'evil mouth.' When the tribe further came in close

53. In *The Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr* (pp. 25-29) I have discussed the probable identity of those *Mlechchhas*.

contact with the Hindus and the Hindu conception of *Mahādeō* (*lit.*, the great God) representing the Creative Principle and His female counterpart or consort ('Energy' or '*Saḳti*,' as the Hindu would say) known as *Pārvatī* or *Devī Māi*, it is no wonder that they easily assimilated this conception of the Spirit of Good as embodied in *Dharmes* and His Spouse, the Earth-goddess (Hindu *Dharti-māi*), who gradually came to be identified with *Chālā-Pāchchō*. Thus the Orāon's original conception of the dichotomy of the supernatural world into the Spirit of Good, on the one hand, and the forces making for evil, on the other, favoured the evolution of a system of spirit-propitiation which in time came to be more or less organised. It is interesting in this connection to note that in the Orāon language the word for a spirit, namely, '*nādas*' or '*nād*,' is also employed to indicate a rogue or rascal, whereas the name for God, namely '*Dharmē*,' is sometimes used in addressing a respected friend.

In course of time with the progress of ideas through contact with higher cultures and otherwise, a few of the spirits (*nāds* or *bhūts*), such as the ancestor-spirits and the clan-spirits or *Khūṇṭ-bhūts*, came to be shorn of much of their maleficence and to be regarded as ordinarily beneficent though prone to maleficent activity when slighted or otherwise offended. In this way the original Orāon conception of the Spirit of Good developed into a small pantheon of *deōtis* or deities and the original conception of the forces of evil developed into the propitiation of a number of *bhūts* or malignant spirits.

With the gradual growth of Orāon society from a congeries of clans to an organised society of graded classes,

this supernatural world of Orāon deities and spirits, too, as we have seen, came to be arranged and organised by the tribe in a corresponding scheme of supernatural powers of different grades, from *Dharmes* at the top down to the *Bhūlās* or tramp spirits and still further down to vague and elusive impersonal forces residing in various objects of nature or of human manufacture. And, in addition to the original Orāon mode of approach to the Divine Spirit of Good through the *Dāṇḍā ḳāṭṭā* ceremony for protection against the forces of evil, Orāon society evolved elaborate rites and ceremonies, actions and observances calculated to please the different grades of supernatural powers, to propitiate them, appease them, and, so far as possible, enter into communion with them, and, in some cases, to circumvent or wheedle them, and thereby avoid bad luck and secure good luck.

The idea of entering into communion with the Spirits through what is known as 'Spirit-possession' has, as we have seen, been long familiar to the Orāons and has been the basis of the Orāon *Deōṇṛā's* or *Māti's* art. Under suitable conditions, the Orāon worship of spirits, as I said, might develop in time into a full-blown system of polytheism, unless other influences operated to counteract such a tendency.

Fortunately, such counteracting influences from more than one direction have come into active operation in Orāon society within the last few generations.

1. Nemhā Bhagats.

In the last chapter I have spoken of the *Bhūiphūṭ Bhagats* and *Nemhā Bhagats*, among the Orāons. So far as I have been able to trace the origin of this *Bhaḳti* cult among the Orāons,

it appears to go back to at least seven or eight generations from the present. One of the oldest and best known families of Orāon *Bhagats* is that of the *Bhagats* of village Tūmbā Pūriō in the Ranchi *thānā*. Bhairō *Bhagat* of this family is said to have been the first *Bhagat* and his son Kishūn *Bhagat* acquired a wide reputation in the country as a powerful *Sokhā*. He is said to have saved Rājā Deo Nath Sāhi, the then Rājā of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr, and particularly his wife from the repeated afflictions with which they were visited by a spirit called Dulhā Deo. Many are the stories recounted to this day regarding the wonderful occult powers of Kishūn *Bhagat*. And Rājā Deo Nath Sāhi and his successors made extensive grants of lands to the family. The present head of the family (a man of about 60 years of age with children and grandchildren) is the fifth in descent from Kishūn *Bhagat* and sixth from Bhairō *Bhagat*. There is no *Sokhā* in the family now, but they have a *Mahādeō-kūṛi* where some member of the family regularly burns incense and makes offerings to the Deity represented by stones, every morning and evening; and, like other *Nemhā Bhagat* families, the descendants of Bhairō *Bhagat* observe the rules of ceremonial purity that a *Bhagat* is required to observe, do not join in sacrifices to the *Bhūts* or spirits, and take no part in the propitiation even of the village deities though they contribute their own quota of subscriptions towards the cost of such propitiation. Rājā Deo Nath Sāhi, the patron and contemporary of Kishūn *Bhagat* died in the year 1806 A. D., and if Kishūn's father Bhairō *Bhagat* be taken to have been among the earliest of Orāon *Bhagats*, the *Bhagat* cult among the Orāons may be taken to have originated in the latter half of the eighteenth century of the Christian era, if not earlier.

Some other old Orāon *Bhagat* families, too, whose family history I have investigated point each to some ancestor, at least five, six or seven generations back, as having been the first to become a *Bhagat* and acquire reputation as a diviner (*sōḳhā*). In most cases the descendants of such a *Bhagat* have since, more or less, maintained the ceremonial purity in food and other habits. They have kept up the faith introduced by their first *Bhagat* ancestor, and have remained as what are known as *Nemhā Bhagat* (or *Bhagats* by reason of following strict *rules* in diet and habits) or *Sādā* (white or simple) *Bhagats*.

II. Hinduised or Bāchhi-dān Bhagats.

In some cases, particularly in well-to-do families, the descendants of the original *Bhagat* have nominally accepted as their *gūrūs* or spiritual guides *Gōsāiñs* who are either degraded Brāmhans or in some cases *Vaiṣnav-Vairāgis* belonging to lower Hindu castes, who periodically visit the Rānchi district from Gayā or Shāhābād districts and elsewhere in search of a livelihood; but their ministrations do not go beyond whispering into the ears of their clients the name of a tutelary deity which the client is required to remember reverently every day. These mercenary *gūrūs* or *Gosāins* have not only taken in some descendants of the indigenous Orāon *Bhagats* but also a number of other Orāons who have been attracted to the *Bhaḳti* cult by the purer modes of living of the *Nemhā Bhagats* and the respect they command in society. Such *Bhagats* as have since accepted the nominal ministrations of itinerant Hindu *gūrūs* or *Gōsāiñs* or *Brāmhans* are popularly known as *Bāchhidān* (*lit.*, calf-giving) *Bhagats* because they are required to make a gift of a calf (*bāchhi*) to their *Gōsāiñ* or *Gūrū* by way

of expiation for their past sins and ceremonial impurity. The appellation of *Gūrū-mukh* or *kān-phūṭ* or *kān-phūkā Bhagat* is also applied to them because the *Gūrū* whispers (*phūkō*) into their ears (*kān*) the name of the tutelary deity who is to be the object of the *Bhagat's* special adoration (*bhakti*). It may be mentioned that some of these semi-Hinduised *Bhagats* who take *Vaiśnav Gosāins* as their *Gūrūs*, call themselves *Viṣhnū Bhagats* as they adopt *Viṣhnū* or *Sri Krishna* as their tutelary deity and abstain from fish and flesh of all kinds including goat's flesh. The generality of *Bhagats*, as I have said, worship *Mahādeō* and His female consort or Energy (*Sakti*) *Devī Māi* to whom they sacrifice goats and may take goat's flesh as well as fish.

All *Bhagats*, both ordinary *Nemhā* or *Sādā Bhagats*, as well as *Viṣnū Bhagats* and other *Bāchhi-dān Bhagats*, are required to maintain the rules of ceremonial purity in food, drink and other habits that the *Bhūiphūṭ Bhagats* introduced; and all retain most of the social customs and observances of the tribe which do not militate against the *Bhagat's* ideas of ceremonial purity. It may be noted to the credit of some of these *Gōsāiñs* that in the case of an Orāon who has not been a *Bhagat* before but agrees to become a *Bāchhi-dān Bhagat*, the *Gōsāiñ* or *Gūrū*, in most cases, requires of him a year's probation before giving him *kān-phūki* or initiation. During this year of probation the disciple is required to observe rules of ceremonial purity in food and drink and other habits to prove his fitness to become a *Bhagat*. Some *Bhagat* families have, however, become lax in their observance of the strict rules of ceremonial purity and abstention from the use of unclean food and liquor. Among a few of these *Kān-phūkā* or *Bāchhi-dān Bhagats* worse

evils imitated from low-class Hindus of means appear to have crept in. But this is opposed to indigenous *Bhagat* tenets and is held in abhorrence by the genuine Orāon *Bhagat*.

It is unfortunate that no previous writer on Chōṭā-Nāgpūr and its tribes has inquired into this interesting movement among the Orāons; and so it is difficult at this date to ascertain exactly how or when it originated. Successive Census Reports have taken little or no account of the Orāon *Bhagats*. The only account hitherto published is a misleading and confused account given by Risely in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. This account runs as follows:—

"*Bhaḳat, Bhagat*.—This term properly denotes a worshipper, and particularly *Vaiśhnavas* of the middle and lower castes, who from religious motives abstain from meat, fish, and spirituous liquors. It is used as a title of *Vaiśhnavas* generally, of the Jaiswar and Biyahut sub-castes of Kalwars, and of Tambulis in Behar, of Kasarwani Baniyas, and of those members of the Kasodhan sub-caste of Baniyas who refrain from eating fish. In Mānbhum and Hazaribagh *Bhaḳats* are very numerous, and have in their hands most of the business of the *chattis* or halting places along the Grand Trunk Road.

"*Bhaḳat-Orāon*.—The word *Bhaḳat* also denotes a sub-tribe of the Orāons, which has been formed on the same basis of religious asceticism as the Kharwar or Safa-hor division of the Santals. These *Bhaḳats* acknowledge themselves to be Orāons, and admit disciples from the tribe, which indeed forms their only source of recruits, but they will not intermarry with their unconverted brethren, nor take cooked food or water from their hands. They abstain from all flesh except that of goats, which have been sacrificed to one of the

Hindu gods, nor do they drink spirits. Fish, however, is not prohibited, and sweetmeats may be eaten with Orāons, Mūṇḍās, and Telis. Tobacco they will only smoke among themselves or out of the *hukka* of their own *gūrū* or spiritual guide.

"*Religion.*—The favourite deities of the *Bhakat*-Orāons, as of most recently Hinduised aborigines, are *Mahadeva* and *Kali*, to whom goats, *ghi*, sweetmeats, etc., are offered on Wednesdays and Sundays, the offerings being eaten by the worshippers and their families. They employ Brahmans as *gūrūs*, but these Brahmans do not officiate as their priests, and the sacrificial victims are slain by any influential person among themselves who happens to be acquainted with the ritual. In marriages again, while the attempt is to imitate the Hindu ceremony, the *purohit* who officiates is not a *Brāhman*, but a *Bhakat*, and the binding portion of the ceremony is the payment of the bride-price, which consists of a pair of bullocks, or Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 in cash.

"*Marriage.*—Along with their striving after conformity with the externals of Hinduism, we find the *Bhakats* retaining in their entirety the totemistic exogamous sections characteristic of the Orāons, and observing the same prohibited degrees. They show at present no signs of carrying their asceticism into the domain of marriage. Like the Orāons, they marry their girls as adults, usually between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Unrestricted courtship is permitted before marriage, and sexual intercourse is tolerated, it being understood that if a girl becomes pregnant she will name the father of her child, and the two will get married. Polygamy is permitted, but is not usually resorted to unless the first

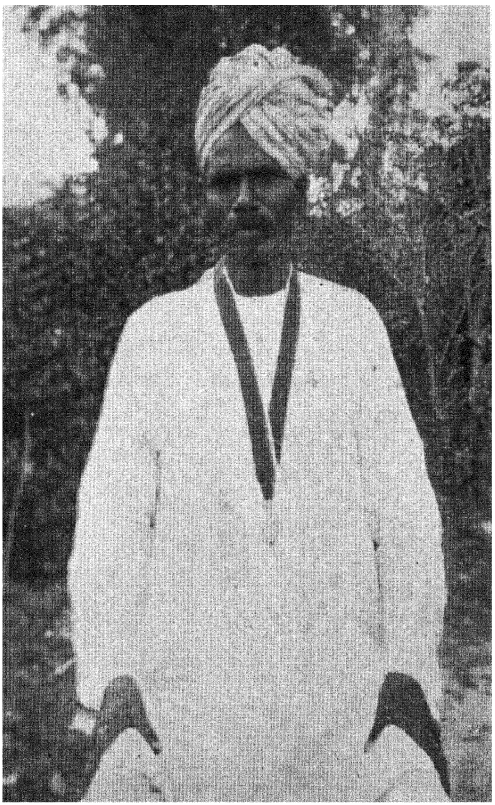

Illustration 29.
A leading non-Christian Orāon social Reformer (Rai Saheb Bandi Ram).

wife is barren. Widows are allowed to marry again, but no ceremony is performed on such occasion, and the transaction is deemed to be complete when a few maunds of grain have been paid to the relatives of the woman. Divorce is easy and very common; a woman runs away from her husband with any man who suits her fancy, a man turns out his wife and takes up with another woman. In either case the parties may marry again and thus render the divorce final, but this may also be effected without re-marriage by refunding to the husband the bride-price which he paid in the first instance for his wife.

Disposal of the Dead.—"In the disposal of the dead the usages of the *Bhaḳats* do not differ materially from those of the Orāons. The rule is to burn the body, preserving some of the ashes and bones for burial, at the time of the *haddiphor* festival, in the *bhuinhari* village of the deceased, that is to say in the village from the first founders of which he believes himself to be descended. At this festival pigs and great quantities of rice are offered for the benefit of departed ancestors, who are also held in continual remembrance by fragments of rice or *dal* cast on the ground at every meal, and by a pinch of tobacco sprinkled whenever a man prepares his pipe. The bodies of women who die within fifteen days after child-birth are buried, and fowls offered over the grave. People who die during the rainy season are also buried, but the remains are exhumed and burned when the dry season sets in." [54]

54. *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I, *Calcutta*, (1891) pp. 91-92.

The reader of the preceding pages of this book will notice that Risley has here confounded the *Mātis* who offer sacrifices to the dread goddess *Kāli* with the *Bhagats* whose tutelary deity is generally *Mahādeo* (with his benign consort *Pārvati* or *Devī Māi*); he is again in error in thinking that all *Bhagats* employ Brāhmans as *Gūrūs* whereas, in point of fact, only certain well-to-do families of *Bhagats*, ambitious of rising in the social scale, have accepted their ministrations,—and that only in name. Risley is again mistaken in supposing that "they will not intermarry with their unconverted brethren," whereas, as a matter of fact, such marriages are not only permissible but are of frequent occurrence. And Risley's characterization of the *Bhagats* as a 'sub-tribe' of the Orāons is quite inexplicable and incorrect, at least from an ethnical standpoint. Risley has again erred in his statement that the *Bhagats* offer pigs at funeral festivals and fowls over the graves of women dying shortly after childbirth. As a matter of fact, fowls and pigs, like oxen, are taboo to the Orāon *Bhagat*, and he may sacrifice only goats to his deities,—a male goat to *Mahādeo* and a female goat to *Devī-Māi*.

Inaccurate and even erroneous statements like the above are unfortunately not rare in Risley's accounts of different tribes, and indeed are inevitable in a writer whose information was in most cases not collected first-hand but was made up of varying information supplied by subordinate officers of Government and other correspondents most of whom had little interest in the enquiries, had no clear idea of what was wanted and lacked the equipment and discernment needed to discriminate between things bearing the same or similar names but differing in essentials. And thus in Risley's

account, the *Mātis*, the *Sōḳhās* and *Bhūi-phūṭ Bhagat*, the *Nemha Bhagats* and the *Hinduised Bāchhidān Bhagats* have all been confused in an inaccurate and partly incorrect account.

True, in parts of Bihār the names '*Sōḳhā*' and '*Bhagat*' are applied generally to magicians and sorcerers, and the term *Bhagtāi* to the spells and enchantments of the sorcerer. But among the Orāons of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr the name *Bhagat* has come to be applied as the distinctive name of a section of the tribe which subscribes to the cult of *Bhaḳti* or loving trust in and adoration of the Deity and observes certain rules of ceremonial purity.

That Hindu influence has been at work in developing and to some extent perhaps in giving shape to the *Bhagat* cult cannot be denied; but such influence would appear to have been less direct than Risley supposes. Ancient tribal tradition and certain tribal customs would appear to indicate that the germ of the *Bhaḳti* cult had been long present in the tribal soul. Contact with Hindu ideas, beliefs and practices in time stimulated and fructified the Orāon's original barren belief in *Dharmes* as the Supreme Spirit of Good; and from the belief thus vivified there sprouted in time the blossom of *Bhaḳti* or reverent faith in and loving adoration of a personal Deity.

The tribal belief in an All-Good Creator and the Orāon's indigenous mode of acquiring a tutelary spirit in the shape of a *Chāṇḍi* stone from under the ground by some fortunate young initiates of the Orāon Bachelors' fraternity, the belief in 'spirit-possession' which has long been a familiar phenomenon in Orāon dances and *jātrās* and the basis of the Orāon *Deōṇṛā's* supposed powers,—these combined with subcons-

cios auto-suggestion to help the earnest Orāon aspirant after a higher spiritual life in acquiring the occult experience of the *daraś* or vision of an All-Good Deity and in the acquisition of a *Bhūi-phūṭ Mahādeō* as his tutelary. The natural reaction of such a dream or vision,—or, as the sceptic would call it hallucination,—was the emotional attitude and religious thrill which came to be known by the Hindu name of *Bhaḳti*. And slowly the *Bhaḳti* cult spread among the tribe, particularly in the western and southern parts of the Rānchi district; and at the present day, Orāon adherents to the cult are estimated to number a few thousands. Were it not for the absence of active proselytism and of any leaders of outstanding personality among the Orāon Bhagats, the movement might probably by this time have spread far more widely in the district. The restrictions against the use of spirituous liquors as drink or libation, and of fowls, pigs and oxen (including cows and calves) as food or sacrifice, may also partly account for the slow dissemination of the *Bhaḳti* cult. In any case, as it is only a very limited number of persons who can in any generation be the favoured recipients of the vision or '*daraś*' and thus become inspired *Bhagats* and, as ordinarily only near relatives and descendants of such a *Bhagat* follow the strict rules of ceremonial purity, adopt the faith and thus become *Nemhā Bhagats*, the restricted following of the cult can be easily understood.

The nominally Hinduised *Bāchhi-dān Bhagats* to whom I have already referred have been of late increasing slightly in number, owing to the blandishments of itinerant mercenary *Gosāiñs* and the natural desire of some of the more ambitious and enlightened members of the tribe to rise in the social

scale or rather in the estimation of their more powerful Hindu neighbours. There are, however, indications from which it may not be unreasonable to anticipate that with the progress of education and enlightenment amongst the tribe an indigenous and purer *Bhakti* movement, as the natural evolution of the innate religious tendencies of the tribe, may bring within its fold all the different classes of *Bhagats* and many more besides.

III. The Kabirpanthi Bhagat Movement.

The increasing dissatisfaction of the better minds among the Orāons with their old ways of living and their old cult of spirits, and a growing aspiration for a cleanlier life and a higher spiritual ideal would appear to have further attracted in the last century a number of Orāons to a new and purer form of the *Bhakti* cult. This was the religion promulgated in the later years of the fifteenth and the earlier years of the sixteenth century by the great North Indian saint Kabir.

Kabir condemned the worship of idols and the use of other visible symbols of divinity and preached that God is one by whatever name called or adored, and that real happiness can be attained not by sacrifices and rituals but by *Bhakti* or a passionate adoration of the Deity. Though Kabir himself preferred to call the Deity by the name of Rām, he called himself "the child of Āllāh and Rām." He preached the abolition of all caste differences and sectarian barriers, but in ordinary matters he did not object to his disciples conforming to usage so as not to give offence to their fellows. Upright and just conduct, regard for truth, kindness to all living beings, and earnest meditation on the Deity were laid down as the cardinal duties of a *Kabirpanthi Bhagat*.

Uprightness and regard for truth are natural to the simple unsophisticated Orāon though contact with law courts and with his wily neighbours of a more 'advanced' culture sometimes contaminates him. Alms-giving to the needy and hospitality to guests which the *Kabirpanthi* religion demands are tribal virtues of the Orāon. Though the unconverted Orāon is fond of animal food, he is kind to his cattle and dogs and other animals. Abstention from the use of all animal food and intoxicating spirits enjoined by the *Kabirpanthi* religion, was not a new doctrine to the Orāons as their own indigenous *Bhagats* enjoined upon and observed the same restrictions to some extent and were held in esteem by their tribe-fellows for such abstinence. The *Kabirpanthi* conception of the Deity as consisting of light fitted in with the Orāon conception of the Sun as the symbol of Dharmes or God. As for meditation upon God, all that his *gūrū* demands of an Orāon convert to the *Kabirpanthi* faith is that he should reverently utter the words '*Sat Saheb*' or '*Sat Kabir*' in the morning and at any other time that he can. A *Kabirpanthi* wears the *chūndi* or scalp-lock which the Orāons have worn from time immemorial; and in addition to that he is required to wear a rosary or at least a bead of the sacred Basil which his *gūrū* ties round his neck at the time of initiation. Women as well as men may wear the bead or rosary (*Kaṇṭhi*); but in the case of women they may do so only after their marriage.

The Orāon convert to the *Kabirpanthi* religion is permitted to preserve such of his social customs as do not militate against the cardinal tenets of the new faith. In addition to the innocuous tribal customs and observances at birth, marriage, and death, the peculiar *Kabirpanthi* religious service known as

the *Chauḳā* is required to be held on such occasions or as soon afterwards as the *Gūrū* can be called in to officiate. Thus the new religion fitted in to some extent with accustomed or familiar ideas and beliefs, and, in the beginning, attracted a fairly large number of Orāon converts. But the backward mind of the Orāon naturally requires the aid of sense imagery in respect of the unseen world of spiritual reality to satisfy his emotional needs. And in this respect perhaps this new faith did not quite come up to the expectations that the Orāon converts had formed of it in the beginning.

From such inquiries as I have been able to make as to the time and manner of the introduction and dissemination of the *Kabirpanthi* religion among the Orāons, it appears that it was brought to the Orāon country from the Rāipur and Bilāspur districts of the Central Provinces by way of the Sambalpur district and the Gāngpur State on the south-western boundary of the Rānchi district, in the second quarter of the last century. There are *Kabirpanthi* converts in the Sambalpur District as well as a large number of Orāon *Kabirpanthis* in the Gāngpur State, adjoining the Simdega sub-division of the Rānchi district. One of the earliest Orāon converts to the new faith in the Rānchi district was *Dhōla Bhagat* of village Jōṛeā in the Sisāi *thānā*. From information supplied by his great-grandson, a respectable and intelligent *Kabirpanthi Bhagat* of over fifty years of age, it appears that *Dhōla Bhagat* accepted the *Kabirpanthi* religion shortly after the suppression of the 'Kōl insurrection' of 1832-33. The members of this family named Dayārām and Ugranām, the Mahants of Kāwardhā Maṭh in the Bilāspur District of the Central Provinces, as their *Gūrūs*, although it appears that neither of these Mahants

visited the Rānchi district in person and the actual initiation was made by some deputy or subordinate Mahant. Dholā Bhagat is said to have been actually initiated by one Mahant Birju Dās.

Dayārām, who died a few years ago, was the twelfth, and Ugranām, who died a few months ago, was the thirteenth in descent from Dharam Dās, a Kasaundhani Bania who became a favourite disciple of Kabir himself and gave away all his wealth, amounting to eighteen *lākhs* (18,00,000) of rupees in charity and became a *Kabirpanthi Sādhu* or mendicant. His descendants have since been the hereditary Mahants of the Kawardhā monastery[55] (*Maṭh*). Although Kawardhā in the Bilāspur district is the official seat, Ugranām lived at Dhāmākheṛā in the Rāipur District in consequence of a dispute about succession to the Mahantship which was decided against him. But the decision of the courts was not accepted by the people, and the *Kabirpanthi* Orāons of the Rānchi district name 'Tāmbākheṛā Kudarmāl' as the seat of their superior Mahant or *Sāheb*. Tāmbākhera is obviously a corruption of 'Dhāmākheṛā' which was the seat of the Mahant Ugranām Saheb, in the Rāipur District, where a new *Math* was erected. Kudarmāl is a place in the Bilāspur District where the remains of two former Mahants lie buried and where a big *Kabirpanthi* fair is periodically held, and where Dayaram's mother known as Dādi Saheb continued to exercise authority,

55. The head Mahant of this southern section of the *Kabirpanthis* marries and lives with his wife till a son is born, after which the wife becomes a *Bairâgi* or mendicant. Each Mahant holds office for a period of 25 years and 20 days after which he is succeeded by his son on the Gadi. Dayārām died after holding office for three years only.

as it was she who had proposed the appointment of one Juglanand, a disciple of Dayārām, as Mahant for the remainder of Dayārām's prescribed term of office. Juglanand with a number of discontented followers retired to Bombay.

The superior Mahant or 'Saheb' of the Dhāmākherā Maṭh issues *pānjās* or letters of authority and jurisdiction to lesser Mahants or *gūrūs*. A few such *gūrūs* have since settled in the Orāon country where they have each his own disciples or clients. Such *gūrūs* are Sohāg Dās at Ōkeā, Muṭru Dās at Phūlwārtōli and Lālu Dās at Bānāgūṭū in the Basiā *thānā*, and Mahant Prosad Das at Birindā in the Gumla *thānā*, of the Rānchi district. These *Kabirpanthi gūrūs* belong to Hindu castes. But in the Gāngpur State there are two or three Orāon *Kabirpanthi gūrūs*, one of whom now named Rāmu Dās recently initiated an Orāon of village Maharājgunj in the Basiā *thānā*. This Orāon *gūrū* has an Assistant or *Dewan* named Kaila Bhagat who is a resident of village Kiriya in the Biru *parganā* of the Rānchi district.

In the year 1845 A.D., when the first Christian Mission called the Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission came to the Rānchi district, the German missionaries of that Mission found a Teli of the name of Ichchhā Gūrū actively preaching the tenets of the *Kabirpanthi* faith. Most of the Orāon converts to this faith are found in the Gūmlā subdivision[56] in the west and south-west of the Rānchi district, and in the Sim-

56. As, *e.g.*, in villages Ādar, Ājiātū Pātrātōli, Dewāki, Gāmhāriā, Ghūṭhi, Happāmūni, Kūhipāṭ, and Pōṛhā in Ghāgrā *thānā*; in villages Ārāngi, Dāri, Dōisānagar, Ghāgrā, Jōreā, Karanj, Mūrgū, and Telarbira in the Sisāi *thānā*; in villages Birindā, Ghāṭṭā and Karamṭōli in Gūmlā *thānā*, in village Tingria in Pālkōṭ *thānā*, and in villages Chitrāmin, Gārā, Mahārājgunj and Rāikerā in the Basia *thānā*.

degā subdivision 57 in the south-east of the district. In the Sadar or central and north-eastern sub-division of the district only a few Orāon families in the Lāpung *thānā* (as in villages Lālgunj and Darnutoli) are adherents of the faith. The few Khāngār Mūṇḍā families on the southern borders of the *sadar* subdivison and northern borders of the Khūṇṭī subdivision (as in villages Ṭākrā and Hātūdāmi) are only recent converts initiated by a *gūrū* named Kristo Das hailing from somewhere in the east. Conversion to the *Kabirpanthi* cult has long practically ceased among the Orāons. At distant and rather rare intervals a liquor-drinking (*madūā*) and spirit-worshipping Orāon family with which some *Kabirpanthi* Orāon family has entered into marital relations, may feel attracted to the purer faith and cleanlier habits of their *Kabirpanthi* relatives and agree to be initiated by the latter's *gūrū*.

As I have said, the Orāoṇ *Kabirpanthi Bhagats* have preserved such of the old tribal customs relating to birth, marriage and death as do not conflict with the cardinal religious doctrines promulgated by *Kabir*. A *Kabirpanthi* Orāon seeks matrimonial alliances not only within his own tribe but with due regard to the totemistic rule of exogamy sanctioned by tribal custom. It is not deemed necessary, though it may be deemed desirable, that a *Kabirpanthi* Orāon should marry his son or daughter only to a *Kabirpanthi* bride or bridegroom. He may, and often does, enter into marital relations with unconverted Orāon families. In such a case, the girl who is married to a *madūā* Orāon family will no longer be allowed to cook or

57. As, *e.g.*, in villages Aurā Bāhār and Kiriya in Ṭhiṭhāi Ṭāngar *thānā*, village Rengarpāni &c. in Simdegā *thānā*, in villages Pāhāṛsārā, Mārāroā, &c., in Kurdeg *thānā*, and village Berenbasā in Bōlbā *thānā*.

serve rice and pulses for her parents and their people or sit down to eat in the same line with them. At a birth, marriage or death in his family a *Kabirpanthi* Orāon may, as I have said, observe tribal customs not inconsistent with the cardinal doctrines of his new faith, and has in addition to arrange for the peculiar *Kabirpanthi* religious service known as *Chōwkā*.

All animal sacrifices are, of course, forbidden to the *Kabirpanthi* and so are cremation of the dead and offerings or libations to the spirits of the dead. But lighted earthen lamps are placed over graves on the new moon night in the month of *Kārtik* (November) every year. As we shall presently see, the flesh of the cocoanut ceremonially broken by the Mahant at a *Chōwkā* service and distributed to the congregation along with consecrated betel-leaves serve the purpose of the sacrificial flesh and sacramental meal.

The characteristic *Kabirpanthi* religious service known as the *Chōwkā* [58] is held at initiation, or at marriage, if the initiation ceremony of the bridegroom has not already taken place, and in all cases at death (generally on the twenty-first day after death) and on any other occasion when a family or congregation can afford to arrange for it. The appropriate date for the service is the fourteenth day of the moon. On the arrival of the *Mahant* or *gūrū*, his feet are washed with cold water which is then wiped off with a clean cloth. The head of the family presents him with a cocoanut and some

58. *Chōwkā* is the term ordinarily applied to a space specially prepared in the kitchen, where food is cooked and served. It appears to be applied to the *Kabirpanthi* religious service as it takes the form of a sacramental meal.

coins which are laid at his feet. A space measuring five or seven yards square is cleaned and in the centre of this square a small space, two and a half yards square is marked out with lines of wheat flour diluted in water, so as to form four squares. The sides of each square are formed of double lines and all along these lines on both sides of them decorations in the form of petals of flowers are drawn with wheat flour. An awning (*chāndoā*) of cloth is put up over the ground where the *Chōwṛā* service is held. Wreaths of flowers are suspended from each of the four corners of the awning and also from the middle of each of the four sides of the awning. These eight wreaths reach down to the ground. The colour of the awning and of the flowers should be white, even in the case of a funeral *Chōwṛā* of which the awning among the *Kabirpanthis* of the Central Provinces must be of a red colour.

On the western side of the inner square and beyond it, is placed a stone slab which is believed to be the seat of *Sateji Gūrū* or *Sāt Kabir.* Just to the west of this slab, facing the centre of the square, the *Mahant* sits on a seat of white cloth. On his right is kept a plate containing one hundred and twenty-five betel-leaves, besides almonds, raisins, *sohārās*, etc In front of him in the centre of the square at the junction of the four divisions of the square is supposed to be the throne of *Pūrūsha* or God. At this point two pounds and a half of molasses is kept on a plate and is covered over with a white cloth. In a line with this point, on the eastern side of the square, is placed an earthenware jar or a brass water-pot (*lōṭā*) filled with water, and over this is placed an earthenware or brass plate containing some rice, and on this burns a lamp with five lighted wicks jutting out of it at five points

and fed with *ghee*. This is supposed to be the seat of Bankerji *Gūrū*, a disciple of *Kabir*. Some betel-leaves, raisins, *sohārā* dates etc., are also kept at this spot. A number of lamps fed with oil are lighted all around. At the centre of the southern side of the square, in a line with the 'throne of *Pūrūsha* or God,' is the seat (*āsan* or *ākhaṛā*) of Chatūrbhūj *Gūrū* (another disciple of *Kabir*). Some betel-leaves, *sohārā*, etc., are also kept at this point on a plate. Here also is kept a brass-jug (*lōṭā*) containing what is known as *Jalprasād*. This is made by diluting molasses or sugar in water and mixing with it a little camphor, some pepper and other spices, raisins, etc., and sanctifying the mixture with water supposed to have been used in washing the feet (*charaṇāmrita*) of the superior *Mahant*; generally small pills said to have been made with earth diluted in such water are used for the purpose. At the centre of the northern side of the square just in a line with the seat of *Pūrūsha* and Chatūrbhūj *Gūrū* is the seat (*ākhaṛā*) of Dharam Das *Gūrū*, another disciple of *Kabir* and the ancestor of the superior Mahant *Dayārām*. At this point is also placed on a plate some wheat-dough formed in the pattern of a lotus-flower in the cup or hollow of which is placed a torch fed with *ghee* or butter. This is used in making *ārati* or ceremonial waving of light. At different points on the sides of the square are placed a few cocoanuts. Kaila Bhagat, the Orāon assistant (*Dewān*) of the Orāon *Mahant* Rāmu Dās explained to me that these cocoanuts represent the head of *Yama* (the god of death) and are offered to the Formless God (*Nirākār Niranjan*) in place of animal sacrifice.

Outside the inner square sit the congregation all around. The *Gūrū* sings *bhajans* or hymns. One or two disciples may

sing in *chorus* with him, and the rest of the congregation repeat the name of *Kabir* (or *Sat Kabir*) either muttering or aloud. Then the *Mahant* lights the *ārti* torch in the dough-lamp. The *Gūrū* makes *ārti* in the Hindu fashion by waving the plate with the *ārti* torch on it, round and round.

Then a cocoanut is ceremonially washed with water and broken on a stone. Some say that the shell of the cocoanut represents the spirit of evil who seeks to keep from men the blessing contained in the milk and flesh of the fruit. The flesh of the cocoanut is cut up and distributed with molasses or sugar-cakes (*bātāsā*) and, if available, with dried fruits, on a betel-leaf to each member of the congregation who reverently receives it on his knees and takes particular care that no portion of it falls on the ground. Then the *Gūrū* mutters some prayers, and sometimes gives a short address. All present bow down to the *Gūrū* or *Mahant*. After about an hour or so, the *Jōt Prakās* ceremony is performed. The dough in which the *ghee* and pieces of the kernel of cocoanut are mixed up is kneaded and formed into small wafers (*pūri*). The betel-leaves which the *Mahant* brings with him are said to have been blessed or consecrated by the head *Mahant* of Dhāmā-kheṛā, and are known as *parwānās* or messages. These *Pān-parwānās* are cut up into small pieces and each piece along with a wafer (*pūri*) of the dough and a little *jal prasad* is distributed to each member of the congregation who reverently receives it on the palm of his right hand placed over the palm of the left hand. A feast follows the service.

The eating of the *pan-parwānā* is obviously a sacramental meal meant to serve as a spiritual bond of union between the *Bhakat* and the founder of the religion.

With the exception of the *Chōwkā* service and the communal meal that follows, there is not much in the *Kabirpanthi* cult, as the Orāon understands it, to appeal to his craving for institutional religion and for personal devotion to the Deity. *Kabir* or *Sāt Sāheb* is to the Orāon convert more or less of an abstract name which does not appear to evoke the same intensity of religious emotion that *Mahādeo* or *Bhagwān* does in the minds of the ordinary Orāon *Bhagat*. Although personal devotion to his own *gūrū* is required of all members of the *Panth*, the *gūrūs* whom the Orāons know are not of a type calculated to inspire reverence, much less devotion in the minds of their disciples. In fact, some respectable Orāon *Kabirpanthis* of whom I enquired why they did not seek to become *Mahants* told me that it was not a respectable profession and that "it jarred on their own sense of self-respect to earn money, as the *Mahants* do, by making people worship at their feet" (*pāoṛi pūjāeṛe paisā lenā bahūt dōṣ hāi*). Some well-to-do Orāon *Kabirpanthi Bhagats*, like well-to-do Orāon *Nemhā Bhagats*, have now begun to employ *Brāhmans* at their weddings. The Orāon *Kabirpanthi Bhagat*, as much as the *Nemhā Bhagat*, believes in *bhūts* or malignant spirits and regards them as devils to be shunned or repelled. The means which the *Kabirpanthi* Orāon adopts to drive away the *bhūts* is to sing particular *bhajans* or hymns. Dholā Bhagat's grand-son Phāgū Ohdār, as Phāgū's son informed me, had actually brought from the *Mahant* at *Dhāmāṛheṛā* a book of special *bhajans* to drive away *bhūts*. The *Kabirpanthi Bhagat* is now hardly distinguishable from the average Hinduised *Nemhā Bhagat* except by his omission of certain old tribal observances. And the *Kabirpanthi* movement has long ceased to make any perceptible progress among the Orāons.

IV. The Christian Movement.

Towards the middle of the last century, foreign missionaries of a new religion came into the country and began to preach with the utmost zeal the futility of sacrificing to the old tribal spirits and deities, and descanted on the beauty and satisfying nature of a new gospel. During the first few years of the advent of the Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission, from the year 1845 A. D. to the middle of 1850, the efforts of the zealous German missionaries appeared to bear no fruit. But in June 1850, they succeeded in securing as their first converts, four Orāons, namely, Keso and Bandhu of village Chitakoni, Nabin Poṛe of village Hesakoṭā and Ghuran of village Karand. The Mission report asserts that they came to the Christian Missionaries as the Kabirpanthi *gūrū* known as Ichchha Guru, to whom I have referred in the last section, could not satisfy them that the Kabirpanthi religion was superior to the Christian religion. Whatever considerations might have led these earliest converts to accept the new religion, most available outside reports, official as well as non-official, would appear to indicate that this and the later Christian Missions in Chōṭā-Nāgpūr owe much of the wonderful progress they have since made among the Orāons and some other aboriginal tribes in less than a century, to the moral support and in many cases pecuniary and other assistance which the generous European missionaries naturally extended to their converts in their manifold miseries. They helped them as much as they could in their struggles against the oppressions of exacting, and, in not a few cases, tyrannical landlords and usurious money-lenders as also against persecution at the hands of their own tribe-fellows in the cases of

suspected witches and their families. It is significant that such landless tribes as the *Birhōṛs*, the *Kōṛwās* and the *Asūrs*, who know no landlords or money-lenders, have generally stood aloof from the Christian missions.

Thanks to the *Bhaḳti* cults, the old tribal deities and spirits had already lost much of their hold on the tribe. Now the Orāons saw that whereas their old gods and spirits could afford no relief or protection against their manifold economic miseries nor could the *Bhaḳti* cults (whether *Mahādeo Bhaḳti*, or *Viṣnu Bhaḳti* or *Kabir Bhaḳti*) be of much help to them in their worldly struggles, here were the converts to the foreign faith and the proteges of the foreign missionaries who secured more or less protection from future molestation, though not always relief from existing troubles. They further found that the children of their Christian converts considerably improved their economic condition and prospects through the secular education imparted in the Mission Schools and the powerful patronage of influential missionaries. All this naturally induced the Orāons to flock in increasing numbers to the Christian fold. At times of acute economic distress or agrarian discontent there were phenomenal mass conversions to Christianity among the Orāons. A number of the converts, however, relapsed to their old ways, some after their temporal interests were more or less served, and others when they found that the high expectations they had formed of improving their own economic condition and securing relief from their agrarian grievances with the aid of the missionaries could not be realised. The descendants of such of the converts as clung to the new religion have, however, in most

cases, proved themselves genuine Christians in faith, if not always in practice.

The Christian's idea of faith and trust in God would indeed appear to approach the Hindu idea of *Bhakti* with which the tribe had been to some extent already familiar. Christianity further appeared to the enlightened Orāon convert to satisfy the spiritual need of personal relationship with a beneficent Deity which the better minds among the tribe had come to feel and which had before then led some of their people to adopt one or other of the *Bhakti* cults. Christianity recognizes, as the Orāon *Bhakti* cults do, that the Deity may and does enter into or inspire human beings and reveal His will through them. Besides appearing to satisfy their emotional need of communion with a personal Deity, the Christian dualistic doctrine of the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil —God and the good Angels, on the one hand, and the Devil and his evil hosts on the other,—fitted in with the Orāon conception of Dharmes, the Spirit of Good, on the one hand, and the malignant spirits and the 'evil eye' and 'evil mouth' on the other.

The Christian missionaries wisely permitted their Orāon converts to retain some of their tribal customs, such as exogamy based on totemistic lineage and certain other cherished folk customs and observances such as the ceremonial eating of first fruits, certain rites at harvest and sowing of paddy, and certain observances at birth and marriage, which did not conflict with the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith. For their old tribal dances and songs, substitutes were found in religious processions, feasts and festivals, and congregational hymn-singing. Some young Orāon Christians in the

villages may also be seen joining the old dance meetings, perhaps on the sly. No restrictions in matters of food were imposed; nor was the use of liquor tabooed though temperance was inculcated. In this way the new faith has come to be adjusted, so far as possible, to their old conceptions and habits.

The educational and other philanthropic activities of the Christian missionaries for the moral, intellectual and social uplift of their converts has undoubtedly been of immense benefit to their converts and have indirectly benefitted the unconverted as well.[59]

V. The Ṭānā Bhagat Movement.

We have seen that the better minds among the Orāons have for a long time felt the need for a comparatively higher ideal of spiritual life and moral conduct than that provided by the old tribal faith. The germs of the idea of *Bhakṭi* or loving adoration of a personal Deity have been for over a century floating in the social atmosphere of the tribe and here and there lighted on congenial soil in individual souls and turned some into *Bhūiphūṭ Bhagats*, some into *Nemhā Bhagats*, some into *Viṣnu Bhagats* and some into *Kabirpanthi Bhagats*. In fact, the idea of *Bhakṭi* would appear to have an inherent attraction for the tribal soul. It is significant that whereas *Bhagats* of different denominations are now counted by the thousands among the Orāons, there are practically none among their neighbours the Mūṇḍās, the Hōs, and other

59. For an account of the work of the Christian Missions see S. C. Roy's "*The Mūṇḍās of Chōṭā-Nāgpūr*," pp. 226-231, 238-269, 290-325.

aboriginal tribes of the Chōṭā-Nāgpur plateau except that only about twenty families of Khāngār Mūṇḍās living within twenty miles to the south of Rānchi have, within the last twenty years, embraced the *Kabirpanthi* faith and a few families of Mūṇḍās in the Bengali-speaking eastern parts of the Rānchi district subscribe to a corrupt form of *Vaiṣnavism*.

At length the Orāon's craving for personal relations with a loving Deity expressed itself in a new religious movement of the old *Bhagat* pattern but of a more distinctively Orāon cultural type. The originators and followers of this new *Bhakti* cult called it the "*Kūṛūkh Dharam*" or the (real or original) religion of the *Kūṛūkhs* or Orāons. What constituted the initial strength of the new faith and contributed to its phenomenal success in the beginning, before long proved to be its weakness and led to its partial failure in the end. This unfortunate circumstance was the combination of a strong desire for delivery from the bondage of capricious and blood-thirsty tribal spirits with perhaps a still stronger desire for delivery from the burden of what they regarded as an oppressive and iniquitable land-system and land-laws. Indeed, what appears to have appealed most strongly to the generality of the followers of the new faith was the promise held out by the originators of the movement that through *Bhakti* to *Bhagwān* they would be able to raise the present degraded social position of their community to the higher level occupied by the Hindūs and Christian converts amongst their tribe-fellows and obtain relief from their long-standing agrarain grievances and the present wretchedness of their economic condition. Thus the social and economic aspects

of this movement unfortunately came to be bound up with its religious aspect, to the prejudice of both.

The leaders of the new movement began by suspecting that the old spirits to whom they so long looked for help were powerless to help them in their economic distress and their agrarian troubles, and ended by persuading themselves that it was indeed those very spirits that were wholly responsible for their present miserable social and economic condition and must be not only abandoned but expelled from the Orāon country. The belief in these spirits, they declared, was no part of their ancient tribal faith but was a later importation from the Mūṇḍā religious system. Accordingly they named their new reformed faith—the "*Kūṛūkh Dharam*" or the real religion of the *Kūṛūkhs* or Orāons. They also call their religion the '*Bhakat*' or '*Bhakti*' religion (literally, religion of love or devotion). From the frequent use of the word "*ṭāno*" and "*ṭānā*" ("pull" and "pulling") in their hymns, they came to be called "*Ṭānās*" or "*Ṭānā Bhagats*" by their neighbours.

The individual who is known to have first formulated in words the ideas that had been long fermenting in the minds of a large section of the people was one Jātrā Orāon, a youth of about twenty-five years of age, residing in village Chepri Nawāṭōli in the Bishunpur Police Station of the Gūmla Subdivision of the Rānchi District. In April, 1914, this sensitive Orāon youth proclaimed to his fellow tribesmen that in a dream *Dharmes* (the Supreme God) told him to give up *Mātiāō* (ghost-finding and exorcism) and the belief in *bhūts* or spirits, to abjure all animal sacrifice, animal food and liquor, and to give up ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows

and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty, and no more to work as coolies or labourers under men of other castes and tribes. He further proclaimed that he had been ordered by *Dharmes* to gather together as many disciples as he could, teach them *Mantras* or songs and incantations (which came to him through divine inspiration) and thereby to cure fever, sore eyes and other diseases. He soon collected a following of from one to two thousand. It is said that, like Birsā Bhagwān [60] among the Mūṇḍās, he gave out that he was to lead his people to the desired goal in matters temporal and spiritual and that those who did not join his movement would be struck dumb. This, however, appears on enquiry to be a misrepresentation or at any rate an exaggerated report. The new faith soon began to spread like wild fire. On his refusal to allow his followers to take up work as coolies for the construction of a school in village Dōkōṭōli adjacent to his own village, the local Police, however, sent up Jātrā Bhagat, as he was called, for trial along with seven of his followers to the court of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Gūmla and they were bound down to keep the peace. And thus ended the first manifestation of the new spirit.

After this Jātrā Bhagat fell into the background, but the movement went on spreading, and local leaders of the new cult appeared in different parts of the Orāon country. In fact, the social atmosphere was at the time surcharged with the ideas and sentiments that produced the new move-

60. See S. C. Roy's *The Mūṇḍās and their Country* (1912), pp. 325-343. Jātrā subsequently lost his eye-sight and died about two years ago.

ment, and more than one sensitive soul grasped the idea with greater vividness and felt the sentiments with greater intensity than their tribe-fellows, and gave thrilling expression to the new idea and sentiments that had so long been struggling ineffectually to take shape in a definite tribal cult. Thus at about the same time as Jātrā Bhagat was preaching the new religion, an Orāon woman of village Bāṭkūri in the Ghāgrā *thānā* of the Rānchi District who had gone to bathe in a tank stayed away from home for hours, and her anxious husband on going to the tank to look for her found her seated on the bank in a semi-conscious state of spiritual exaltation and repeatedly uttering the words "*Bōm—Bōm—Bōm*"—the orthodox salutation to *Māhādeo*. She was believed to have had a vision of the Deity, and was taken home. Then she began to preach the new faith of *Bhaḳti* that had been revealed to her by *Mahādeo*, and which was substantially the same as that preached by Jātrā Bhagat. In her own and neighbouring villages, this woman too is reputed as a prophet of the Ṭānā religion. All such local prophets more or less expressed the group-mind and thereby impressed their tribe-fellows and were hailed as *gūrūs* or teachers of the new faith.

The next and more enduring manifestation of the new ideas occurred in the latter part of the year 1915. The movement which now came to be definitely known as the "*Ṭānā Bhagat*" movement spread from the south-western parts of the Rānchi district through the western and central *thānās* to the northern *thānās* of Beṛō and Kūṛū, and thence to the jurisdiction of the Māṇḍār *thānā* which adjoins the Rānchi *thānā* on the west and even affected the western parts

of the Rānchi *thānā*. From Kūṛū, the movement also spread to the north and west and temporarily affected a section of the Orāons of the Palāmau district on the north-west and the Hazaribāgh district on the north. Although the movement, before long, more or less subsided in the south-western and extreme western parts of the Rānchi district, it appears to have come to stay in the Lohārdāgā, Sisāi, Lapūng, Beṛō, Kūṛū and Māṇḍār *thānās*, particularly in the last three police areas on the central plateau of the Rānchi district.

The movement has since passed through two definite stages. The first stage was that of destruction consisting of the expulsion of the old *bhūts* or evil spirits from the land and the abandonment of old habits and usages, and the second that of construction and consolidation consisting in the promulgation of regulations and rules of conduct for the followers of the new religion, and definite formulation of doctrines and beliefs.

The first stage of the new movement, consisting as it did in a somewhat extensive campaign of a ghost-hunting at night-time, caused great panic among the local Zamindars or landed proprietors and Police officers who neither understood the vociferous songs and incantations which accompanied the ghost-hunting nor indeed were allowed to approach and witness the proceedings; and, as a matter of fact, a few cases of actual violence against suspected witches were reported and proved and the culprits punished. A number of *Ṭānās* also stopped payment of rents to their landlords and gave up ploughing their lands.

Alarmist accounts received by Police officers from panic-stricken local Zamindars and usurious money-lenders who

apprehended a rising of the Orāons against themselves and from local liquor-sellers who were dismayed by the vow of total abstinence from drinking adopted by these *Ṭānās*, were readily believed. Their meetings were regarded with suspicion and exaggerated into disloyal and illegal meetings. In fact, in some villages, it is said, the *Ṭānās* while invoking what they regard as the beneficent powers added the name '*German Bābā*' to '*Chandra Bābā*' (Moon God), '*Surāj Bābā* (Sun God) and similar other *Bābās* or good Powers. This was no doubt due to ignorance rather than sedition, for in those days the earlier victories of the Germans in the European War were everywhere talked about and these ignorant religious enthusiasts took '*German Bābā*' or the 'German God' as one more unknown mighty power. The authorities accordingly prohibited nightly gatherings, and several batches of followers of the new religion were sent up to the courts as likely to commit breaches of the peace, and on their failure to furnish sufficient security were sent to prison.

These measures adopted by the authorities had the effect of inducing a large number of timid and vacillating followers of the new doctrine to revert to their old religion and old ways of living.

With a view to retard the growth of the movement, the authorities not only prohibited nightly secret gatherings, but also prohibited large gatherings during the day-time except where they were strictly orderly. One such gathering that was arranged for at Sisāi was, however, permitted to be held and the Sub-Inspector of Police of Sisāi was deputed to attend. The resolutions—over twenty in number—passed at this meeting were found all to relate to

social, moral and religious affairs, and indeed one of those resolutions warned the *Ṭānā* Orāons to be very careful not to have any quarrels with non-aboriginals who were spreading false rumours against them. This showed that these people had no intention of rising against the non-aboriginals and much less against Government, but rather were solely bent upon purging out of their villages the old ghosts and spirits by the recitation of certain powerful *mantras* or spells, and raising their own social position by the abandonment of what they considered to be degrading practices such as the keeping and eating of pigs and fowls and the use of intoxicants. Nor were they really disaffected against the British Government. In fact, there is no sedition in the Orāon constitution. Even the sedulous blandishments of certain emissaries of the so-called 'Non-co-operation' movement in India have long failed to inveigle them into its fold, although unfortunately a few have since nominally joined the movement under the delusion that they would thereby be enabled to recover their lost privileges and rights in land.

A reversion of the popular feeling against the *Ṭānās* followed. And while the authorities did not slacken their vigilance so that the extreme section of the *Ṭānā Bhagats* might not commit any disturbance, the mind of the public was generally taken off the movement. And the leaders of the movement now turned their attention to building up a body of rules to regulate their religious and social practices.

I shall now proceed to give an account, first, of the procedure by which they sought to drive out the *bhūts* from the land and, then, of the doctrines, usages and practices of the new religion. The *modus operandi* adopted by the *Ṭānā*

Bhagats to expel the *bhūts* or spirits from the country was not a new one but an adaptation of the old process of exorcism employed by the Orāon *Māti* or spirit-doctor in cases of supposed spirit-possession.

The method adopted by the leaders of the movement in propagating their doctrines, practices and incantations (*mantras*) was to collect, on some open space outside an Orāon village, a number of youths of surrounding villages and instruct them and send them out to their respective villages, and these in their turn were to collect other young men of their own and neighbouring villages and convert and instruct them. And thus the new faith spread from village to village till it extended almost all over the Orāon country at one time.

The procedure followed in expelling the old spirits or *bhūts* was as follows. During the first few nights the young men assembled, after their evening-meals, at the boundary-line of the village from which the *bhūts* had to be expelled. When all were assembled, some one would exclaim, "Seek out the spot." They would begin by singing or rather reciting their invocations in a sing-song tone in local Hindi—as follows :—"*Chandra Bābā, Sūrāj Bābā, Dharti Bābā, Tārāgan Bābā,—nāchan ḳē jāegā ḳōn hāi?—ḳōn hāi?—K—K—K* ?" ("O Father Moon, O Father Sun, O Father Earth, O Father Starry Host,—where is the spot for dancing? Where is it?—wh—? wh—? wh—?)" They would proceed in this way, until one of them showed supposed sings of spirit-possession and ran to a spot close by where he would stop, and to that spot the whole company would proceed and arrange themselves in a circle leaving an opening on the north. And with their hands

folded as in prayer, they would go on singing in a monotonous tone the following *mantras* on which they rang many changes, changing the names of the Superior Powers (Sun, Moon, *etc.*) by substituting those of other good Powers they could conceive of, such as Birsā Bābā (Birsā Bhagwān) :—

Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, Kōnā Kūchi Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, Lūṅkal Chhāpāl Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā Gāṛhā dhipā Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, Pesal Pāsal Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ṭānā, Bābā ṭānā Dāini Bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Chandra Bābā, Suraj Bābā,
Dharṭī Bābā, Tārēgan Bābā,
Nāmsē ārji māngte hāi—
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Dāiniṅkē Nāsan Thāpal bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā.
Bāpāṅkē mānal deoā bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Ājā par-ājā mānal deoā bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā.
Mūrgi-ṅkhāiā bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā;
Kāṛā-ṅkhāiā bhūtāniṅkē ṭānā,

Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā,
Bheṛā-ḳhāiā bhūtāniḳē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā,
Ādmi-ḳhāiā bhūtāniḳē ṭānā,
Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ṭān ṭōn ṭānā.

These incantations may be roughly translated as follows:—

"Pull, Father, Pull, Pull down the *bhūts*;
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhūts* [hiding] in corners and turnings.
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhūts* that live in hiding.
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhūts* of ditches and mounds;
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhūts* of persons slain;
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the *bhūts* (familiar spirits) of the witches.
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
O Father Moon, O Father Sun!
O Father Earth! O Father Starry Host!
In the names of ye all, we pray,—
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* that are by witches egged on.
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* to whom vows were by our fathers made,
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* to whom vows were by our grandfathers and great-grand-fathers made,

Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* that on fowls do feed [as sacrifices].
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* that on buffaloes do feed [as sacrifices].
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* which on sheep do feed [as sacrifices]
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.
Pull the *bhūts* which men (human sacrifices) do eat
Pull, Father, Pull,—Pull—Pull—Pull.

If the 'German Bābā' was supposed to be a good power on account of its victories in those days, such powerful machines as the steam-boat, the railway engine, the motor car and the bicycle were to the animistic *Ṭānā* so many evil powers, and he accordingly called upon the Good Powers to pull or expel them from the land. And in their invocations they sometimes sang:

"*Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā, Agni-boat ḳē ṭānā; Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā, Rel gāṛi ḳē ṭānā, Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā, Bicycle ḳē ṭānā, Ṭānā Bābā Ṭānā.*

Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the steam-boat; Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the railway train. Pull, Father, Pull, Pull the bicycle. Pull, Father, Pull.

In this way they would invoke what they regarded as the superior powers to pull or drive out the bad powers or evil spirits whom they so long fruitlessly sought to please and placate. While singing these invocations, they would keep time by clapping their hands and lifting up each leg alternately; but no musical instruments would be used. Sometimes they would walk round in a circle, sometimes kneel down and shake their heads while chanting these invocations.

A song would be sung and re-sung several times, and at intervals all would maintain a strict silence, and again take up the song. When singing was in full swing, some one would begin to shout "Father!—Father!—Father!" and get 'possessed' and begin to run, and all would run about shouting to the spirits "*Haṭō—haṭō,*' '*Bhāgō bhūt*'—'*bhāgō bhūt—bhāgō*" (Away—away—Fly ye *bhūts,* fly); and thus would the *bhūts* be driven out. Then they would similarly arrange themselves at another spot and repeat the same incantations in the same way. And thus the devil-driving would continue till cock-crow. Every following night the *Ṭānā* exorcists would advance with their operations nearer to the *basti* or inhabited portion of the village. On the night when they reached the outskirts of the *basti* or cluster of homesteads, a white goat would be brought out, given some dust to lick (instead of rice to eat as is done in sacrificing an animal to the *bhūts*), and instead of being sacrificed it would be let loose in the name of *Dharmes* or *Bhagwān,* and the headman would pray for forgiveness for the past sins of the villagers committed in ignorance of the *True Religion.*

After this they would enter the *basti* and for a few nights repeat the same operations of devil-driving as before, singing invocations and throwing dust all round the *āngan* or yard to drive away the *bhūts.* On the last two or three days, they would enter the huts of individual Orāon villagers in the daytime to expel all the *bhūts* that may be in hiding there. And they would go about it in the following manner. A number of *Ṭānās* would surround a hut by way of keeping guard over it and go on drawling repeatedly——

"Bābā—Bābā—Chandra Bābā—Chandra Bābā;
Kāhā hāi, Sūrūj Bābā,—Kāhā hāi?"
"Father—Father—Father Moon—Father Moon!
Where is it? Father Sun! Where is it?"

A few other *Ṭānās* would reply in the same sing-song tone—

"Ihā hāi, Ihā hāi." (Here it is! Here it is!")

Then they would enter the hut and search every creek and corner of it, and at length would come out with some such article as a stick or a plait of straw as an emblem of the *bhūt* which they either pretended or believed to have captured. Sometimes a part of the floor would be dug up to bring out a supposed *bhūt*. Then the *bhūt* or its emblem would be either burnt in some open space outside the *basti*, or if believed to be a particularly powerful *bhūt* it would be taken to the river-side and burnt there. In this way in two or three days all the *bhūts* would be purged out of the village. After the *bhūts* were expelled from a house, fruits and sweets would be offered to Dharmes inside the house. During the days that these spirit-hunting operations went on, those engaged in it would abstain from bathing. After the spirits were expelled they would take a purificatory bath.

The same incantations would be employed to expel the familiar spirit of a supposed witch and thus rid her of its influence. And in cases of headache, stomach-ache and pain in the abdomen, similar incantations were, as they still are, employed to cure the ailment.

Since this stage of the movement was passed, we have no longer heard of these extensive spirit-driving operations.

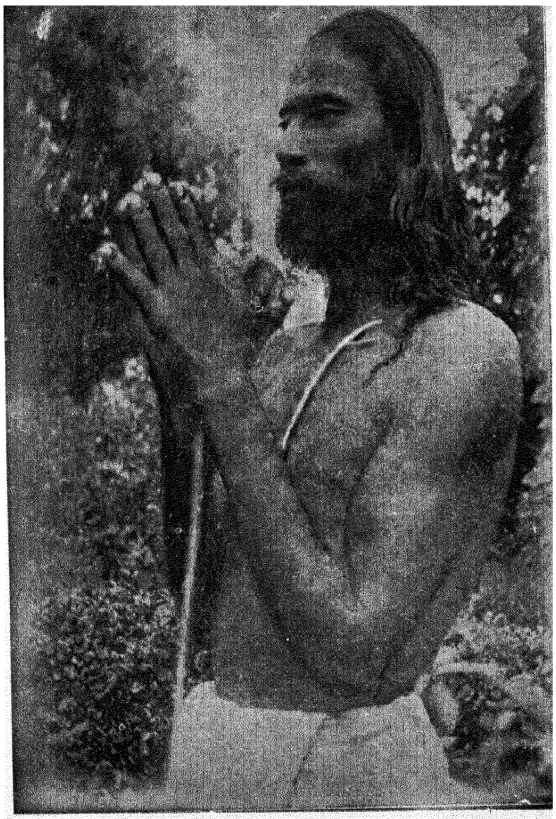

Illustration 30.
Antu Bhagat (an Orāon *gūrū* or leader of the Ṭānā Bhagats) of Doisanagar in thana Sisāi.

When after the first excitement of the new movement subsided, and a large number of its earlier followers relapsed to their old religion and their old ways of living, the leaders among those who clung to the new faith turned their attention, as I said, to building up a body of rules to regulate their religious and social practices. These rules were embodied in the form of catechisms and songs in their own Orāon tongue; and any number of Orāon hymns or *bhajans* have also been composed. The *Ṭānā Bhagats* profess that all these songs and hymns come to them through divine inspiration and have not been thought out and deliberately composed.

I now proceed to give some specimens of such catechisms, hymns and songs. The narrative portion of these compositions which a leading *Ṭānā Bhagat* put down in writing at my request gives an account of the origin and history of the movement in rhythmical language, somewhat in the manner of the Christian Gospels.

Mūnd nāmē Ṭānā urkhā,
nāmē Ṭānā barchā ki Ṭānā
paṛhnā bārā lāgi, pachhimenti
barchā paddā.

At first the name Ṭānā came into existence and then Ṭānāism came and is proceeding to the villages from the West.

Ārisyā tō nānnā paddāntā
ālar menj menjar darā salāh
mānjar ki innā hārō ōṇṭā nāmoai
Kūrūkhār gāhi Ṭānā paṛhnā
bāra lāgi.

When it reached a certain village, the people of other villages, hearing it, consulted together, saying, "Brethren, to-day the Ṭānāism of us Orāons is coming.

Sē Ṭānā mantra nāmē phalnā
paddā ārisyā sē innā ā paddā

"Now the *Ṭānā mantra* has reached such and such a vill-

ḳālot Ṭānā paṛa' tab i paddāntā ālar gē salāh manjā.

age; therefore we shall go to that village to learn Ṭānāism." Then the people of this village agreed together.

Tab barchḳā paddāntā ālar gūsān ḳerrār darā menjar ḳi innā ekṣān Ṭānā paṛhā' ḳālōr, tab menjar tab hōrmār gē salāh mānjā ḳi tab innā i paddā gāhi uttar ḳōnrā tinsimāni nū ḳhūrti ōṇḍḳā ḳhōḳhā nūm ā tinsimāni nū jummā mānḳē.

Then they went to the people of the village, where it came and asked, "Where will you go to-day to learn *Ṭānāism*?" When they heard this they all agreed together and said, "Then, gather together at the meeting-place of the three boundaries after supper, in the northern extremity of this village."

Tab āberā mānjā tab ā berā nū hōrmār ālar jumrār. Tab ā padda i paddā ū paddā, hū paddā tā ālar enṛ mūndh paddāntā ālar jūmṛār.

When that moment came, then all the men gathered together. Then the men of that village, of this village, of yonder village and of two or three villages met together.

Tab ābḳām ḳūdhā ālar jūmūr mānjar tab hōrmār eḳ ōṇṭā bāt nanjar tab āsānūm hōrmār gāhi salhā mānja. Tab ōṇṭā paṛhāchḳā ālas mūḳhiyā gūrū mānjas

Then forming a vast crowd they became of one mind and there they all decided (came to a decision). Then, one enlightened man

tab antilē āsim hōrmārin edā' helras.

became the head teacher and he it was who showed the way to all men saying—

"Ki hōrmār ākḳū saprā'rā ākḳū berā mānā lāggi sē ākḳū āchchhā ḳichṛī gūṭhin āchchhā sē ui'yā darā hōrmār ākḳū ōnd pānti nū pānti yā' pūrūb chhāmhē.

"Now, all be ready, the time is at hand; so now keeping carefully your good clothes on, stand ye, all of you, in a line with your faces eastward.

Āur hōrmār hānth jōṛ Dharmē Bābāsin, Sūrūj Bābāsin, āur Chandar Bābāsin āur Sitā Āyōn, Hindu Bābāsin,

And all of you with folded hands pray to Dharmē Bābā, Sūrūj Bābā, and Chandar Bābā and Sitā Āyō (Mother), Hindu Bābā,

āur Tārigan Bābāsin āur Ganga Bābāsin āur Lachhman Bābāsin āur hōrmār Bābāsin ennem nāmē nānā nānā hōrmār menā ārā ārji 'Ē Bhagwān Bābā bārā Bhagwān Bābā chālin erā, Bābā bārā Bābā bālin erā, bārā Bābā,

and Tārigan Bābā and Gangā Bābā, and Lachhman Bābā and all other Bābās, calling each of them by name, thus—'O Bhagwān Bābā (God our Father)! come Bābā, Bhagwān Bābā, come to see our yard, Bābā; come to see our doors, Bābā.

'hānth joṛ ārji bāñhi jōṛ binti, nandan, dinem ratim, dheyān nandan sānjhe bihān dheyān nandan, ākḳil geyān chiyā Bābā.

We pray to Thee with folded hands and crossed arms day and night; we meditate on Thee, in the morning and evening, O Father, give us knowledge and wisdom;

'Būdhi geyān chiyā Bābā, Bābā, Būdhi bachnān nānān chiā, Bābā, gūnbānān chiā, Bābā, sūkhan sanchan chiā, Bābā,

'O Father, give us knowledge and understanding, Bābā, give us the gift of wise speech, Bābā, give us virtues, Bābā, give us happiness.

'Chālinūm bārā, Bābā, bālinūm bārā, Bābā, chālinūm bārā, Bābā, erpānūm bārā, Bābā, pallinūm bārā, Bābā, khōñrhō nūm bārā Bābā,

'Come, Father visit our doors; Bābā, visit our yards; Bābā, visit our houses; Bābā, visit our families; Bābā, visit us in our gatherings.

'Sabhānūm bārā, Bābā, khōñrhā nūm bārā, Bābā, Jalsā nūm bārā, Bābā, jiyānūm bārā Bābā, khāyānūm bārā, Bābā,

'Bābā, visit our meetings; Bābā, visit our assemblies, Bābā, come to our fairs, Bābā, come into our hearts, Bābā, come into our bodies.

'Hridaynūm bārā Bābā, hāñth jōṛ ārji nandan, Bāhi jōṛ bintī nandan, jai Iswar Bābā kā dayā.'

'Bābā, come into our hearts, we pray Thee with folded hands and crossed arms. Hail, Mercy of God our Father.'

Pāhilē sūrū nāmē bārchā ki Ṭānā paṛhnā Lakshmī gāhi bihi bārchā ka Kūnṛkhar Mūṇḍār gāhi Ṭānā paṛhnā bārā lāgi;

In the beginning came the Gospel of Lakshmi (i. e. Ṭānāism) and Ṭānāism spread abroad for the Orāons and the Mūṇḍās;

āchchhē man ti nām Kūnṛkhāt Mūṇḍāt ōṇṭā bāt sābha panchāit nānā.

So with a good heart the Orāons and the Mūṇḍās should hold *sabhā* (meetings) and *panchāyat.*"

Tab hōrmār gāhi manjūri mānjā ki 'lagē hārō paṛhā gē sūrū nānā;'

Then all agreed to begin to learn Ṭānāism; then first of

tab hōrmār gāhi pahilē ōṇṭā ālas bhāis Sabhāpati sikṣhā gūrū mānjās.

all one brother became President and teacher.

Pahilē hōrmā ālar ijār darā hōrmār Bhagwān Bābās gāhi nāmē nānā nānā Dharmē Bābāsin ārji bintī nānjkām.

In the beginning all men, thus standing, offered prayers and supplications to God the Father calling Bhagwān Bābā by name.

Tab antlē hē Bhagwān Bābā, hē Sūraj Bābā, hē Chandra Bābā, hē Tārigan Bābā, hē Dhartī āyō,

Then [they prayed],—"O, Bhagwān Bābā, O Sūraj Bābā, O Chandra Bābā, O Tārigan Bābā, O Dhartī Āyō (Mother),

Hē Prithvī Bābā, hē Hindu Bābā, hē Lakhan Bābā, hē Lakṣman Bābā, hē Gūṇibāṇi Bābā

"O Prithvi Father, O Hindu Father, O Lakhan Father, O Lakshman Father. O Gūnibāni (Magic-working) Father."

Bach bach ārji bintī nānjkām. Tab Dharmē Bābās ārjin chichās tab ālar gē ārji mānjā;

We made prayers and supplications so;—then the *Dharmēs* Father granted the prayer; then there was prayer for men;

Tab ārji mānā helerkām, tab Dharmē Bābās namhāiñ jiā nūm kathā nūm bārchas, tab hūrmid kōṛe gaṇḍā bāt kathā sirjārā helerā;

Then he began to hear the prayer; then Dharmes Father came into our hearts and in our speech, then all good and evil words began to be outpoured;

Tab Dharmē Bābāsin bhālā sūkh

Then we began to hear the happy Gospel of Dharmē

ḳathiṭhhān menā helerḳhām tab ārji tengā helrā.—

Bābā. Then the prayer began to be answered [as follows:—]

Dōṣ, jiā piṭnā dōṣ rāi, nād meḳhnē dōṣ rāi ārḳhi jharā ōnnā ḳhārāb rāi,

"To kill life is sin, to worship ghosts is sin, liquor-beer-drinking is sin;

āur nāmhāin āḳhṛā jhāḳhṛā nū bechnā nāladna mānā rāi, āur nāmhāi pahilentā benjernā chūn-jūrnā ritī bhāñti ḳhārāb rāi;

and our dancing in *āḳhṛās* or in dancing-places is forbidden, and our former marriage customs are evil;

āur nāmhāi benjā gāhi ritī niyam ḳhārāb rāi, pāchbālargāhi nāmē tūrū amm tirnā mānā rāi;

and the law and customs of our marriage ceremonies are evil; we are forbidden to sprinkle water in the name of the dead;

ḳher ḳiss piṭnā, ārḳhi jhārā ōnnā, ityādi būrā ḳām mānā rai;

sacrificing hens and pigs, drinking liquor and beer and other evil practices are not allowed.

Nād mānnā Muā mālech gāhi nāmē tūrū pūjā pāṭ nānnā mānā rai, yānē pahilentā jitnā chalan byāwahār ḳām mānā rai.

We may not believe in ghosts, nor make offerings in the names of spirits such as *Muā*, and *Malech*; all the former evil practices are forbidden.

Some of these restrictions imposed upon the followers of the new religion are laid down in the form of questions to the Supreme God and His answers, as follows:—

Bārā-Iswar Bārā ed edā jiyā

Come Thou, O God our Father, show (tell) us whe-

piṭnā māno ḳā mālā;—tō mālā.

ther to destroy life or not?—No.

'Āhrā injō ḳāḳrō mōḳhnā mānō ḳā mālā;—tō mālā.

Whether to eat meat, fish, crab, or not?—No.

Oṛā māḳ ḳher ḳis erā ḳhāsi ahṛā mōḳhnā mānō ḳā mālā, Bābā;—tō mālā.

Whether to eat the flesh of birds, hens, pigs, she-goats and he-goats or not, O Father?—No.

Tab ekdam jiyā piṭnā mānā rai jānḳar jiyā piṭnā mānā rai.

Then, it is forbidden altogether to take a life, it is forbidden to take a life knowingly.

Nād pāḳid rāo ḳā mālā, Bābā, tō mālā;—māl rāo, chōchā ḳerā.

O Father, say whether the old spirits and ghosts should continue to exist or not.—No they will not continue, they have run away.

Dāin Biṣāhi rāo ḳā mālā, Bābā;—tō mālā, māl rāo bōngā ḳerā

O Father, say whether the wizard and the witch should continue to exist or not.—No they should not; they have fled away.

Māti ōjhā deoṇṛā rāo ḳā mālā Bābā;—tō mālā, māl raō, bōngā ḳerā.

O Father, say whether sorcery should remain or not.—No, it should not remain; it has vanished.

Jhārā ārḳhin ōnōr ḳā mālā, Bābā;

Whether men should drink beer and liquor or not?—No,

tō mālā, narak ḳūṇḍ ḳālōr.

if they drink they will go to hell.

Ākhṛā jhāḳṛā rāo ḳā mālā, Bābā; —tō mālā, māl rāo chōchā ḳerā.

Whether the dancing-place and the sacred grove should remain or not?—No, they will not remain, they have been done away with.

Kōi indrim parab rāo ḳā mālā Bābā;—tō mālā; māl rāo, bōngā ḳerā.

O Father, say, whether any kind of festival should remain or not.—No,—they will not remain, they have been done away with.

Jātrā sendrā sāil śiḳār āo ḳā mālā, Bābā; Mālā,—māl āo chōchā ḳerā.

Say, whether dancing and hunting excursions should remain or not.—No, they should not remain, they have been done away with.

Karam, Jitiā, Dasāiñ, Sōhrāi, Deoṭhān, Jadrā, Sarhūl, Phāggu, Khaddi bechnā, nāldnā nālnā,

The Karam, Jitiā, Dashhārā, Sohrāi, Deōṭhān, Jadurā, Phāguā and Khaddi festivals and dances of all sorts,

Khel, Damūā, jhānjh, chāuñr, ṭōṭā tūrrā, biṇḍō pāgā, bānnā tōloñg, paṭḳā, chaṇḍwā, pūn, hāñsli, bālā painṛā, sōynḳō, ghūghri,

and playing on musical instruments, such as, *māndar, nāgerā, jhānjh,* and the use of *chāunr, ṭōṭā, ṭūrrā,* and flat head-dress, coloured *lāngōṭi,* waist-girdles and jewellery such as *chāndwā,* glass beads, *hānsli,* bangles, *soinḳō, ghūghri,*

Āur jōnkh pellō erpā āur jōnkh pellō mānnā, dharār nakharnā jōṛōṛ nakharnā, dhūkkū dhākkā mānkhnā ḍhūkkū kōrnā,

and the customs of *dhūmkūṛiā* (dormitories) for young men and young women and the unrestrained companionship of young men and women and their seizing one another, joining hands with one another, improper unions,

Pāṛ bannā, jawā bannā, bāi bālā, kasauti bālā, mūddi, jhūṭ'ā dhōpā geṭhiyā,

the use of *pāṛ* embroidery, *jāwā* embroidery, arm bangle, *kasuṭi* bangle, rings for the fingers and toes, ear-rings,

Kheḍ khōdā bannā, khebdā chākharnā, binṛiō āṭṭnā, nākbesar āṭṭnā, biṭlā ḍāṇḍā āṭṭnā,

tatooing, perforating the ears, wearing big ear-rings and ornaments for the nose, and wearing sticks through the ear-holes,

Āur jhikā chilpi mūdri āṭṭnā āur sangi gūiyā mānnā, pahilentā Kalau chalanta benjā riti, jhara lādnā, pachbālār gāhi nāmē tūrū amm tirnā,

and using such ornaments as *jhikā chilpi, mūdri* and making friendship of the *sāngi* and *gūiyā* forms and the former customs of marriage of *Kāli Yūg*, brewing beer and dropping water in the names of the dead,

Āur benjā sabhā nū kher kiss piṭnā, jharā ōnnā, kis āhṛā kāmnā, jharā chhitnā, amm khāṭnā,

and killing fowls and pigs at marriage-feasts, drinking beer, preparing the meat of pig, straining beer, distributing beer,

Samdhī samdhō chōnhā mānnā, samdhi samdhō ghōṛō mānnā, samdhi samdhō ārbar nakharnā, māyā mōkhnā,

mutual kissing of the *samdhi samdho* (parents of bride and bridegroom), riding on one another of *samdhō* and *samdhī*, and the embracing of one another by *samdhō* and *samdhī*, eating the *māyā* (dregs) of beer,

Kiss arhā khaṭarnā mōkhnā, Tūrisin beddnā, benjā ḍāṇḍi parnā, āur benjā chikhnā, sindri tūrā nakharnā,

distributing and eating bacon, employing a Turi (drum-beater), singing marriage songs and weeping at a marriage, applying vermilion,

Dāṇḍā khāṭnā ēnnē būrā khām mānā rai, ī baggē khām nalak būrā nalak mānā rai khā mālā Bābā;—mānā rai.

performing the *Dāṇḍā-khāṭṭā* ceremony,—all such evil customs are forbidden. Say, O Father, whether all these bad things are forbidden or not.—Yes, they are forbidden.

Pūrkhārgāhi ākhṛā jākhṛā bechnā nāladnā nālnā, Karam, Jitia, Dasāin, Sōhrai,

Say, whether our ancestral usages of the *Ākhṛā* (dancing ground) and *Jhākṛā* (sacred groves) should continue or be given up, and whether we should abjure dancing at Karam, Jitiā, Dasarā and Sōhrāi festivals,

Benjā pahilentā āur Jadūrā, Sarhūl, Phāggu, Khāṛiā bechnā

and whether marriage dances of former times and whether Jadūra, Sarhūl, Phāguā, and

mānō ḳā mālā; tō mālā.

Khāṛiā dances should continue or be given up.—No, these are forbidden.

Karam bechnā mānō ḳā mālā; tō mālā; ākhṛā āragnā mānō ḳā mālā; tō mālā.

Whether there should be Karam dancing or not?—No. Whether going to the *ākhṛā* is allowed or not?—No, it is not.

Jātrā ārāgnā mānō ḳā mālā; tō mālā; ḍhūkḳū mānkhnā ḍhūkū ḳōrnā mānō ḳā mālā; tō mālā,

Whether one may go to dances at *Jātrās* or not?—No, you may not. Whether there should continue the custom of unlawful unions or not:—No, it shall not.

Jōnkh pellō mānōr ḳā mālā; tō mālā; mūkḳā āmbōr ḳā mālā; tō mālā.

Whether young bachelors and maidens should mix with each other without restraint or not?—No, this is forbidden, Whether wives should be divorced or not?—No, they should not be.

Khel assōr ḳā mālā; tō mālā; ḍāmwā ḍhānk assōr ḳā mālā; tō mālā.

Whether there should be playing [music] on the *māndal, nāgerā* and *ḍhānk* drums or not?—No.

Aghān Push gāhi ūllā nū gūbari pesnā āur injō ḳākṛō dharnā ōṛā pitnā ōsgā chōṭṭo ārākhnā,

To collect cowdung, to catch fish and crabs, to catch birds and to dig out mice and rats, [as is now done] in the

months of Aghan and Poush, are forbidden,

āur ōsgā, chōṭṭo, ōṛā, injō ḳūrnā mōḳhnā mānā rai, āur ḳōi ālas ganē jhagṛā jhāṭi mānnā mānā rai.

and to roast and eat mice, rats, birds and fish, is forbidden and also to quarrel with any one is forbidden.

Aghān, Push, Māgh, Phāgūn gāhi ūllā nū gūbari pesnā āur tiḳhil bhūnjā bharrā hōār darā ṭōnḳā ṭōnḳ nāl nāl āri hēdē hēdē nū ḳāpṛār darā chūṭā naḳharnā mānā rai;

[For young men and women] to lie down with one another crouching under the balks in uplands and lowlands [as they generally do] in the months of Aghān, Pūs, Māgh and Phāgūn, when they go to collect cowdung taking parched rice with them [to eat] is forbidden;

Kūḳḳū ḳhadar āur ḳūḳōi ḳhadat Sabhapati nād mānnā, nād bhūt gāhi nāmē tūrū pūjā pāṭh nānna;

for boys and girls to offer sacrifices to *Sabhāpati* (chief) ghost and other ghosts [is forbidden];

Pāchbālār gāhi nāmē tūrū āmen tirnā āur antlē amm ōthōrnā, bhūt, deō, Mūā Mālechh, Dārhā, Deswāli gāhi nāmē tūrū pūjā pāṭh nānnā,

To drop water in the names of the dead and then to bring out water, and to make offerings to the ghosts and spirits such as *Mūā, Mālech, Dārhā, Deswāli* [is forbidden];

ḳher erebnā, ḳānṭō chāḳnā, mān-

To sacrifice fowls, to whet a knife (for sacrificing fowls), to sacrifice a buffalo, to kill a

ḳhā ḳhōsnā, baṇḍā pāsnā, ballu chāḳnā, bheṛā ḳhōsnā, āḍḍō piṭna, eṛā ḳhōsnā,

male pig, to whet an axe (for sacrificing animals), to sacrifice a ram, to sacrifice an ox by beating it to death,—to sacrifice a goat, to kill pigs,

ḳiss piṭnā, pāchbālār gāhi nāmē nānnā āur ārḳhi jharā ōnnā, jharā lādnā, bichchi ḳāmnā,

and to take the name of the spirits of the dead, to drink liquor and to prepare beer, to make *bichchi*, (the essential ingredient for the manufacture of beer),

bichchi ḳhendnā āur jharā lādnā ārḳhi churuḳhnā āur bhāṭhi eṛpā ḳānā āur ārḳhi ōnnā, jhārā ōnnā,

to buy *bichchi* and to distil liquor, to go to the liquor shops and drink beer, drink liquor,

ḳōi ālas ganē ḳalhā taḳṛār nānnā mānā rai, āur ḳōi ālas gāhi chij nū man taḳan ernā mānā rai.

to quarrel with any man, and to covet other men's goods,—these are forbidden.

Pahilentā chāl chalan Orāon sabhā, Pūs parab, Māgh parab, Phāgu parab, Chait parab, Jādrā bechnā, Māgh pūrnimā,

The former customs of Orāon society, such as the Poūsh festival, Māgh festival, Phāgu festival, Chait festival, Jadūrā dance and the full-moon festival in Māgh,

jōnḳh Chāṇḍī, pāi chālābānā, Jhāḳhṛā Pāchcho gāhi nāmē tūrū

setting in motion the grinding stone in the young men's *Chāṇḍī Pūjā* ceremony (in the full moon of Māgh for purposes of election of headmen),

pāi chālābānā, Māhtō bāi uinā, Nāeg dharam tikhil uinā,

moving the grinding stone in the name of the Old Lady of the sacred grove or Jhākhṛā for the election of the Māhtō and the Nāega (priest) and setting apart the ceremonial rice,

kher charābanā mānā rai, jōnkh Chāṇḍi mānnā, pāchgō Chāṇḍi mānnā mānā rai, āur sāel śikāri gūnjā pāṭ nānnā,

and ceremonially feeding fowls (for sacrifice) are all forbidden; observing *jonkh Chāṇḍi* and *pāchgi Chāṇḍi* is forbidden; hunting and such-like customs and ceremonies are forbidden;

ḍaṇḍā kāṭnā, sindri tūrnā, amm kharnā, āur jōnkh jōṛi mānnā, kher erebnā, bakrā khōṭnā ūri nānnā,

performing the *ḍaṇḍā-kāṭṭā* ceremony, applying vermilion, the *amm kharnā* ceremony [in the name-giving of a child] and the knitting together of young people in ceremonial friendship, sacrificing fowls and goats and preparing sacrificial *sūri* (rice boiled with meat)

hūṇḍā nānnā,—gūṭṭhi kām mānā rai, ākhṛā kāmnā āur jōnkh pellō bechnā nālnā mānā rai, āur ākhṛā singār nānnā mānā rai.

and distributing it, and such other practices are forbidden; preparing the dancing-place and the dancing of young men and women together and decorating the dancing-place are forbidden.

Similar prohibitions are also couched in the form of songs as follows:—

Manūkhār gāhi jiyā, Bābā, manūkhār gāhi; Bhāins gāhi jiyā, bābā, bhains gāhi; Manūkhār gāhi jiyā kā manūkhār gāhi jiyā.	The life of buffaloes is as human life—as human life.
Kaḍrū gāhi jiyā, Bābā kaḍrū gāhi jiyā; Kā manūkhār gāhi jiyā, kā manūkhār gāhi jiyā.	The life of buffaloe-calves is as human life—as human life.
Gāi gāhi jiyā, Bābā, gāi gāhi jiyā; Manūkhār gāhi jiyā kā manūkhār gāhi jiyā.	The life of cows is as the life of men—the life of men.
Bāchhrū gāhi jiyā, Bābā, bāchhrū gāhi jiyā. Manūkhār gāhi jiyā kā manūkhār gāhi jiyā.	The life of a calf is as the life of men—the life of men.
Āḍḍō gāhi jiyā Bābā āḍḍō gāhi jiyā kā mānūkhār gāhi jiyā kā mānūkhār gāhi jiyā.	The life of an ox is as the life of men—the life of men.
Jiyā piṭnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān, Bābā, mālādim mānō Bābā.	No life, O Brethren, should be taken, no life.
Āhrā mōkhnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālādim mānō Bābā.	Eating flesh, O Brethren, should cease, should cease.
Jharā ōnnā, Bhairō mālādim ān Bābā, mālādim mānō, Bābā.	Drinking beer, O Brethren, should cease, should cease.
Ārkhi jhārā ōnnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān, Bābā, mālādim mānō, Bābā.	Drinking liquor or beer, O Brethren, should cease, should cease.

Khalab nānnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālādim mānō Bābā.	Committing theft, O Brethren, should cease, should cease.
Chhināri nānnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālādim mānō Bābā.	Adultery, O Brethren, is forbidden,—forbidden.
Nād mānnā, Bharió, mālādim an Bābā, mālḍim mānō, Bābā.	Worshipping ghosts, O Brethren, is forbidden—forbidden.
Ākhṛā Jākhṛā ṭānā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālādim mānō, Bābā.	Going to dancing-places, O Brethren, should cease, should cease,
Pāp nānnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālḍim mānō, Bābā.	Committing sin, O Brethren, is forbidden—forbidden.
Baimān mānnā, Bhairō, mālādim ān Bābā, mālḍim mānō, Bābā.	To be dishonest, O Brethren, is forbidden—forbidden.

Disease-Driving Spells.

We have seen how during the first stage of the *Ṭānā* movement, the spirits were expelled from the land. But still the Orāons are not immune from attacks of diseases of various kinds. And in such attacks, the disease-spirit has yet to be expelled by the old method of exorcising it successively from one part of the body to the other so that it may pass from the head downwards till it reaches the toe-nails and is driven thence into the ground and finally passes into the rivers.

A specimen of this class of *mantras* or spells is given below:—

Sargentā hāoā byāthān	The pain, like a wind, from the heavens it came;
Sargentem ḳhitṭkām, Bābā!	From the heavens we have blown it down.

Sargentem ḳhittḳām ḳhanē,	Blown down from the heavens,
Chuttinūm ittiā, Bābā!	On the scalp-lock it came;
Chuttintē ḳhittḳān ḳhānē	Driven down from the scalp-lock
Kuḳḳunūm ittiā, Bābā!	Into the head it went;
Kuḳḳūntē ḳhittḳān ḳhanē	Driven down from the head,
Khebdānūm ittiā, Bābā!	Into the ears it entered;
Khebdāntē ḳhittḳān ḳhānē,	Driven down from the ears
Khānn- nūmittiā, Bābā!	Into the eyes it went;
Khannānentem ḳhittḳān ḳhanē	Driven down from the eyes
Muinū ittiā, Bābā.	Into the nose it went.
&c., &c.	&c., &c.

In this way, the *Mantra* goes on representing the pain or other ailment as being successively driven from the nose to the mouth (*bāi*) from the mouth to the tongue (*tāthhḳhā*), from the tongue to the glottis (*lāoṭhhō*), from the glottis to the neck (*ḳheser*), from the neck to the armpit (*ḳhānḳh*), from the armpit to the chest (*chhāti*), from the chest to the heart (*ḳārjā*), from the heart to the lungs (*phōḳsā*), from the lungs to the stomach (*lād*), from the stomach to the abdomen (*ḳūl*), from the abdomen to the intestines (*lād-potta*) from the intestines out to the navel (*ḳūḍḍa*), from the navel down to the waist (*ḳaṛma*), from the waist to the thigh (*hōsgā*), from the thigh to the knee-joint (*ṭheonā*) and from the knee-joint to the leg (*nārhoṛ,*) from the leg to the heel (*guñṛkhi*). from the heel

to the sole (*dābbi*) of the foot, from the sole to the interstices between the toes (*gāsā*), from these to the toes (*āngli*), from the toes to the toe-nails (*ōrōkh*), from the toe-nails to the Earth (*Dhārtī*), from the earth away into the rivers.

In addition to, and sometimes as a substitute for, this old method of exorcism, the *Ṭānā Bhagat* who feels within himself the spiritual strength born of his devotion to the Deity chants *mantras* commanding the disease-spirit to leave the patient and it is believed to obey him. One specimen of such a *mantra* is given below.

Gūniās gāhi chichkā nāṛi sargē nūm rahachki, chūṭki ti lāon mūṭki ti ūṛhiāroe, bandūk ti lāon nāṛi sandūk ti ūṛhiārō;

O, thou Fever, having been produced by the wizard thou wert in the abyss. I shall drive thee away with a fillip and thou shalt fly away in haste; I shall assail thee with a gun and thou shalt fly away in a moment;

Gūli ti lāon nāri tōp ti ūṛhiārō chiāri ti lāon nāṛi dhanū ti ūṛhiārō;

I shall strike thee with a bullet and thou shalt vanish like a cannon shot; I shall shoot at thee, O Fever, with an arrow, and thou shalt fly away in an instant;

Kālōe nāṛi kālōe sirē sir kālōe pore por kālōē, kālōē nāṛi kālōē Gangā samūndar kālōe.

Thou shalt go away, O Fever, thou shalt flee away, from every nerve and vein [of thy victim] thou shalt take flight; thou shalt fly away, O Fever,

to the Ganges and to the seas, shalt thou fly away.

ṬĀNĀ HYMNS AND SONGS.

Finally I give below a few specimens of Ṭānā Songs and hymns with free translations. Their simplicity, earnestness and genuine religious fervour need no comment.

(1) *Bārā bārā Bābā Iswar Bābā chālinūm bārā Bābā bālinūm bārā,*	(1) Come God our Father, come into our yard and to our door,
'Bābā' 'Bābā' bādar hārō Bhairō, Bābās nāmhāi jiyā nūm rādas hārō, Bhairō, Bābās nāmhāi ḳāyā nūm rādas.	O Brethren, 'Father,' 'Father,' —you call, [but] our Father is within our heart and within our body.
Nikkim ganē ḳālhā takrār āmbkē nānā ḳūddā hārō, Bhairō; Bābās nāmhāi jiyā nūm rādas,	O Brethren, quarrel not with any one; our Father, O Brethren, is within our heart.
'Bābā' 'Bābā' bādar hārō Dharmē Bābās jiyā nūm rādas.	O Brethren, you [lift up your voice and] cry 'Father,' [but] God our Father is [indeed] within our souls.
Khūri bāṭinu āmbkē ḳebā ḳūddā,	In streets and lanes, do not call [each other] names;
Bābās nāmhāi jiānū rādas, Bhairō;	[For our] Father, O Brethern, is within our hearts;
Bābās nāmhāi ḳāyānū rādas,	[Our] Father within our bodies dwells,
Khūri bāṭinū āmbkē ḳebā ḳūddā.	O, do not call [each other] names, in streets and lanes.

Bābās leḳē dūlārō, nāyo leḳē bālārō,	Beloved of thy father, beloved of thy mother,
Sūpli mauni dharōy ḳi milirōy, Bābā;	Thou shalt join [others in fellowship] with little baskets in hand.
Kāḳa leḳē dūlārō, ḳāḳi leḳē bālārō,	Beloved of thy uncle, beloved of thy aunt,
Sūpli mauni dharōy ḳi ḳālōy.	Shalt thou join [others in fellowship] with little baskets in hand.
(2) *Sant lēlē bārā Bābā, āḳil lēlē Bārā Bābā, Būddhi lēlē bārā Bābā, bāl lēlē bārā Bābā, Sōnā gāhi ḍhāl lēlē bārā Bābā,*	(2) Do thou come, O Father bringing peace, come Father, bringing understanding, come, Father bringing intelligence; Come Father bringing strength; Come, O Father, bringing Thy golden shield.
sōnā ghāi tilaḳ lēlē bārā Bābā, sōnā ghāi mūḳūṭ lēlē bārā Bābā, Sāt yūg lēlē bārā Bābā,	Come bringing [Thy] golden symbols, Come, Father, bringing Thy golden crown; Come, Father, bringing Sat Yūg (the Golden Age);
Dharam chenp lēlē bārā Bābā, Dharam rūp lēlē bārā Bābā, sōnā rāji lēlē bārā Bābā, sōnā gāhi manḍab lēlē bārā Bābā,	Come, Father, bringing holy rain, Come, Father, taking the shape of Dharam, Come, Father, bringing [Thy] golden kingdom and golden altar.
sōnā gāhi bench lēlē bārā Bābā,	Come, Father, bringing [Thy] golden bench and golden

sōnā gāhi ḳūrsi lēlē bārā Bāba, sōrhō ānā singār lēlē bārā Bābā,	chair, O Father, come with [Thy] accoutrements complete,
sōnā gāhi ḳānchan gāhi gaṛh lēlē bārā Bābā, jinigim bārā Bābā janamōn bārā Bābā,	Father, come bringing [Thy] golden castle, come, Father, for eternity,
hānth jōṛ ārji namdam, bāhi jōṛ binti nandam, dinem rātim dhyān nandam,	We entreat Thee with folded hands and pray to Thee with crossed arms; We meditate on Thee day and night,
sānjhē bihānē gyān nandam, pūrūb pachchim ārji nandam, pūrūb pachchim amm chidām ḳhōḳhā chhāmhē amman chidām,	We think of Thee morning and evening; We pray to Thee in the east and the west; We drop water in Thy name in the east and the west; We sprinkle water before and behind.
ārā ninghāi nāmē dhyān nāndam, nāmē nāmē ārji nandam nāmē binti nandam,	And we meditate on [Thy] name; We invoke Thee by all [Thy] names, We pray to Thee by all Thy names,
Dharmē Bābā ārji nandam, Bhāgwān Bābā nāmē bintī nandam, Dharam Dharam Dharam; jai jai jai,	O Dharmē Father, we call upon Thee; O Bhagwān Father, we pray in Thy name, —Dharam, Dharam, Dharam; blessed, blessed, blessed art Thou.
Dharam Bhagwān.	O Dharam God.
(3) *Chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā, bongā darā ḳerā, Dārhā nādad*	(3) It ran away, O Father, it fled away, the *Dārhā* ghost—it

chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā nād pāḳi chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā, nād pāḳi bongā darā ḳerā.

ran away, O Father, all the ghosts fled away, all the ghosts ran away.

Chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā bōngā darā ḳerā Bābā, ḳāl yūgād chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā, pāp yūgād bōngā darā ḳerā.

O Father, the Kali Yūg is finished; it is used up, O Father, the age of sin is at an end.

Chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā, bōngā darā ḳerā Bābā, Badi mūdai chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā, pāp dūniyā chōchā darā ḳerā.

No more, O Father, no more, the obstinate enemies [of man] are no more—O Father, the world (age) of sin is ended.

Chōchā darā ḳerā Bābā bōngā darā ḳerā, āḍḍō piṭnā chōchā darā ḳerā, Bābā, mānḳhā piṭnā chōchā darā ḳerā. Bābā, ḳiss piṭnā chōchā darā ḳerā.

No more, O Father, no more; no more of killing the ox, O Father, no more of killing the buffalo, no more. O Father, no more shall there be killing of the pig.

Hūḳūm dim māllā Bābā, hūḳūm dim māllā Bābā, jiyā piṭna hūḳūm dim māllā Bābā, Dharmes tartī jiyā piṭnā hūḳūm dim māllā.

It is forbidden, O Father, it is forbidden to take a life, it is forbidden by God our Father, it is forbidden to take a life.

Bābā āhrā mōḳhnā hūḳūm dim māllā, hūḳūm dim māllā, Bābā, hūḳūm dim māllā, ārḳhi jharā ōnnā hūḳūm dim māllā, Bābā, Kūṇṛuḳhār gē nād mānnā hūḳūm dim māllā.

O Father, it is forbidden—forbidden—to eat meat, O Father, it is forbidden to drink liquor or beer; O Father, it is forbidden for the Orāons to worship ghosts.

(4) *Ṭānā Bābā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā, Tinsimānintā Ulāṭgūṛiā nādan Ṭānā Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.*	(4) O Ṭānā Father, drive out the Ulaṭgūṛiā ghost who dwells where three boundaries meet, O Father, drive it out.
I dhartintā Ulāṭgūṛia nādan Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Ṭānā Father, drive out the Ulaṭgūṛiā ghost of this earth.
I rājintā Ulāṭgūṛiā nādan Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Ṭānā Father, drive out the Ulāṭgūṛiā ghost of this country.
Ī rājintā palintā mānḳhā mūḳhū nādan Ṭānā Bābā tānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Ṭānā Father, drive out the buffalo-eating ghosts of this country.
Ī palintā bheṛā mūḳhū nādan Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭan ṭūn nānā	O Ṭānā Father, drive out the ram-eating ghosts of this world.
Ī nāmhai pūrḳhar gāhi hāḳāl dāḳal nādan[61] *Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.*	O Ṭānā Father, drive out these hungry ghosts of our ancestors.
Ī nāmhai jātiār gāhi pātiar gāhi ḳhūṭā dāṭā nādan Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Ṭānā Father, drive out these *ḳhūnṭ dāñṭ* ghosts of our tribe and race.
Ī nāmhain aḳhṛāntā jhāḳhṛānta pāp nādan Ṭānā Bābā ṭānā ḳi ṭā ṭūn nānā.	O Ṭānā Father, drive out these wicked ghosts of our dancing-places and sacred groves.

61. The grammatically correct plural form should have been "*nād-guṭhin.*"

(5) *Bārā Bābā Dharmē chālinum bārā Bābā, chālinum bārā Bābā, ākil geyān chiā Bābā būdhi geyān chiā.*

(5) Come thou, O God, our Father, come into our yards, come inside our doors, give us wisdom and give us knowledge and discernment.

Hānth jōṛ binti nāndan, bāhi jōṛ ārji nāndan, ninghāi nim dhyān nandan Bābā, dinem rātim nandan.

I pray to Thee with folded hands and make supplication with crossed arms, and meditate on Thee day and night, O Father!

Bābā, sānjhe bihān dhyān nandan, Bābā, mānal dānal nādan bābā pōṣal nāśal nādan Bābā, ḳhūṭa dāṭā nādan,

O, Father, I think of Thee morn and eve; do Thou drive away and expel the ghosts which we so long cherished and worshipped—the ghosts of the household and of *ḳhūñṭs* and *dāñṭs*, O Father,

Muā Mālech nādan Bābā ḍāin bisāhi nādan, Bābā, ojhā māti nādan Bābā, hāṭaye nana Bābā bāṭaye nana.

and the *Muā Mālechh* ghosts and the familiars of witches and wizards and the familiars of sorcerers,—

Haṭāro ḳālō Bābā bāhārō ḳālō Bābā, Gangā ḳināre Bābā sōnā gāhi sikṛi Bābā rupā gāhi sikṛi Bābā, badhan ḳālō Bābā chhandhan ḳālō Bābā;

They will be driven away to the banks of the Ganges; they will be tied up in golden and silver chains;

Gangā ḳinārē Bābā, Jamūnā ḳinārē Bābā, sōnā gāhi dhilwā Bābā,

On the banks of the Ganges and the Jamuna they will swing in golden swings;

Rūpā gāhi dhilwā Bābā, jhūkṛūrū ḳālō Bābā, jhūkṛūrū ḳālō dhasrō ḳālō Bābā bōhārō ḳālō Bābā.

They will swing in silver swings, they will be utterly ruined, they will be cast down and swept away.

Chhipāro ḳālō Bābā, chhāparō ḳālō, jiyā machhar āhar mānō pūṭni machhar āhar mānō Bābā gisu machhar āhar.

They will vanish away, they will eat *jiyā* fish and *pūṭhi* fish and *gisu* fish.

Bābā jinō machhar āhar Bābā ghūnghi sewānṛ āhar Bābā chiuṭi pipri āhar Bābā bar pipar āhar Bābā pipar dumbu āhar.

They will eat *budu* fish and shells and mosses, *pipal* figs, ants and flies, and baniyan fruits.

Bābā ālā pāhāṛē Bābā nāla pāhāṛē Bābā ghirni nūm ḳōrō Bābā phaṭaḳ nūm ḳōrō Bābā pinjrā nūm ḳōrō Bābā.

Beyond the hills and mountains they will be entrapped in snares and they will enter into gates and cages.

Jingi yūgā Bābā janmō yūgā Bābā hinṛḳi rāo Bābā muchirḳi rāo Bābā.

For ever and ever, O Father, they will be tied up, they will be shut up.

(6) *Bārā Bābā Bhagwān Bābā chāli nerā Bābā bāli nerā, bārā Bābā hāth jōṛ binti nandam,*

(6) Come Father, O Bhagwān Father, come to see our yard and door, we pray Thee with folded hands,

Dinem rātim dhyān nandam, dinem rātim dhyān nāndam, sānjhē bihānē gyān nandam.

We meditate on Thee day and night, we think of Thee morn and eve.

Bārāe Āyō, Sītā Āyō, chāli nerā bārāe Āyō,bārāe Āyō, bāli nerā

Come Mother, O Sītā Mother, come to see our yards,

erpā nerā bārāe Āyō, bāli nerā bārāe Āyō.	Mother, come to see our houses.
Sabhā nerā bārāe Āyō, ḳhōnḍhā nerā bārāe Āyō, sabhā nerā bārāe Āyō, jalsā nerā bārāe Āyō, ḳhōnḍhā nerā bārāe Āyō.	O Mother, come to see our gathering, come to see our congregation, come to see our assembly, come to see our festivals and meetings.
Bārā Bābā Sūraj Bābā, chālinūm bārā Bābā bālinūm bārā, bāli nūm bārā, Bābā, ēṛpānūm bārā Bābā;	O Sūraj Father, come and visit our yards, come Father, visit our doors, O Father, visit our houses.
Bārā Bābā ḳāchhāiri nūm bārā Bābā, thānā nūm bārā Bābā, phāñṛi nūm bārā Bābā, ḍahare nūm bārā Bābā.	Come, Father, to the Kāchhāri (Courts) and to the Police Station, come Father to the cattle-pound; come Father (be with us) in our journeys.
Bārā Bābā bāṭē nūm bārā Bābā, ijḳā āḍḍā nūm bārā Bābā, ūḳḳā āḍḍā nūm bārā Bābā, ijḳā āḍḍā nūm bārā Bābā;	Come to me on the road, come where I am standing, come Father where I am sitting, come Father where I am standing.
Jiyā nūm bārā Bābā ḳāyā nūm bārā Bābā hirdai nūm bārā Bābā ḳanṭhē nūm bārā Bābā,	O Father, come into our hearts and bodies, come into our hearts and bowels,
Kuṭṭhi nūm bārā Bābā bhāṇḍāi nūm bārā Bābā, Bhagwān Bābā hō ninim, dhanya Bābā.	Come, Father, to our godowns, come to our storehouses. O Father, Bhagwān Thou alone art blessed.

Sergentim bārā Bābā pātālentim bārā Bābā, bhūiñ phūṭ nūrkhā Bābā, dhartī phūṭ nerā Bābā, sūkh lēlē bārā Bābā.	Father, come from heaven, come from the netherworld, come out of the clefts of the earth, come to see the cracking of the earth, come Father bringing happiness.

In this last song, it will be seen that Sitā is invoked as a deity. Indeed, in the Orāon pantheon, Sitā is identified with Pārvatī (the consort of Siva) and described as the wife of Dharmes or the Sun-god—the Supreme Deity. But, besides Sītā, other Hindu deities such as Indra, Ganesh, Jagarnath, etc., are, it will be seen, also invoked by the Ṭānā Bhagat. In fact, in the earlier years of the movement, every being known or heard of as the possessor of superhuman or supernatural power was invoked by the Ṭānās as by other animists. A specimen of such an invocation is the following:—

(7) *Sītā āyō kē Chelā āroji ān chelā bintī nānā, Chelā dhyānim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.*	(7) O Disciple, pray to mother Sītā and make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of her].
Chandra Bābāsin āroji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā Chelā dhānim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Moon and make supplication, O Disciple, pray, meditate and think [of him].
Tārigan Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Tarigan (Starry Host) and make supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Lakṣhman Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā dhyānim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Lakshman, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Bharat Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, dhāynim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Bharat, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Satrūghan Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, dhāynim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Satrughan, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Hindu Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhāynim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Hindu Father, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Ganesh Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhāynim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Ganesh, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Bramhā Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Bramhā, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].
Indraji Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.	O Disciple, pray to Father Indra, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Mahādeo Bābāsin ārōji Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father Mahādeo, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Lakḥan Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father Lakshman, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Jagarnath Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father Jagarnath, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Jōdhāji Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father Jōdhāji, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Gūnibāni Bābāsin ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelā bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father Gūnibāni, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of him].

Bābā Āyōn ārōji ān Chelā, bintī nānā, Chelā, ārōji ān Chelī, bintī nānā, Chelā, dhyānim ān Chelā, gyānim nānā.

O Disciple, pray to Father and Mother, make your supplication, O Disciple, meditate and think [of them].

(8) *Hindūs Bābās Bhairō ūpdesh ān Bābā, ūpdesh nānjas Bābā, ūpdesh nānjas.*

(8) O Brethren, the Hindu Father instructed us, Brethren, he instructed us [in the true religion].

Dharmē Bābās, Bhairō, ūpdesh ān Bābā, ūpdesh nānjas Bābā,

O Brethren, God the Father instructed us, brethren, He

ūpdesh nānjas.	instructed us in the true religion.
Sitā Āyō, Bhairō, ūpdesh ān Bābā, ūpdesh nānjā Bābā, ūpdesh nānjā.	O Brethren, Mother Sītā instructed us, brethren, she instructed us in the true religion.
Hindū Bābāsin ārōji ān Bābā, bintī nānā.	O Brother, offer supplication and prayer to the Hindu Father.
Hindū Bābāsin dyānim ān Bābā, gyānim nānā.	O Brother, do thou meditate upon the Hindu Father.
Hindū Bābās gē ōnd tippà ammnim chiā, Bābā, āmmnim.	O Brother, do thou offer a drop of water to the Hindu Father, a drop of water.
Sitā Āyō gāhi nāmē, Bābā, ōnd tippā ammnim chiā, Bābā, āmmnim.	O Brother, do thou offer a drop of water in the name of Mother Sitā.
Sitā Āyō gāhi nāmē nānā, Bābā, ārjian, Bābā, bintī nānā.	In the name of Mother Sitā, do thou offer supplication and prayer.
Āyō Bābār ganē, Bābā, sabhā nānā.	O Brother, do thou join in prayers with thy parents.
Āyō Bābār ganē, Bābā, pānti ōkẖkōt Bābā, sabhā ōkẖkōt.	O Brother, we shall sit side by side with our parents, side by side shall we sit with them in the congregation.
Sabhā ōkẖkōt darā Bābā, ásānim	Brother, we shall sit in the congregation and there learn

paṛhōt Bābā, likhōt Bābā, sawālim nanōt.	[the true religion]; Brother, [there] we shall ask questions.
Āsānim Bābā, Gangā emōt Bābā, Jamnā emōt; bārā hārō, Bābā.	There we shall purify ourselves as by bathing in the Ganges and in the Jamuna; therefore, come ye my brethren.
Bābā bārā, Bābā, Hindū Bābār ekesān rādar Bābā, beddā gē bardan.	Come, O Hindu brethren, come,—where are you?—I come to seek you.
Nekim Hindūr rādar hōlē ōnd ṭippā ammnim Bābā ōnd ṭippā ammnim chiā.	If there are any Hindu *Bhagats* here, let them give one drop of water.
(9) *Dharmē Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā Chelā, bhajan bhajā.*	(9) Through the grace of God the Father, do thou sing hymns to God by His different names, O Disciple.
Sitā Āyō gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā, bhajan bhajā.	Through the grace of Mother Sitā, do thou sing hymns to Her, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns.
Suraj Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā, Chelā, bhajan bhajā.	Through the grace of Father Sun, do thou sing hymns, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns to Him.
Chandra Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē namē bhajan bhajā, Chelā, bhajan bhajā.	Through the grace of Father Moon, do thou sing hymns in His praise, O Disciple.

Tārigan Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū namē nāmē bhajan bhajā, bhajan bhajā.

Through the grace of Father Star, do thou sing hymns, O Disciple, sing hymns.

Rām Lachman Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā Chelā, bhajan bhajā.

Through the grace of Rām Lachman, do thou sing hymns in their names, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns.

Bharat Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā, Chelā bhajan bhajā.

Through the grace of Father Bharat do thou sing hymns in his name, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns.

Satrughan Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā, Chelā bhajan bhajā.

Through the grace of Father Satrughan, do thou sing hymns in his name, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns.

Hindu Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū nāmē nāmē bhajan bhajā, Chelā, bhajan bhajā.

Through the grace of Hindu Father, do thou sing hymns in his name, O Disciple, do thou sing hymns.

(10) *Kal Yūgā Bhairō chōchā dārā ḳerā ān Bābā, bōngā darā ḳerā, chōchā darā ḳerā.*
Pāp Yūgā Bhairō chōchā darā ḳerā, ān Bābā, bōngā darā ḳerā, Bābā, chōchā darā ḳerā.

(10) No more, Brethren, no more, the Kal Yūga (Age) is no more,—it is past and gone. No more, brethren, no more, the Age of sin is no more,—it is fled for aye.

Jiā piṭūr Bhairō jārichhay ān Bābā, jārichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The destroyers of life, O Brethren, the destroyers of life shall be totally destroyed —destroyed.

Illustration 31.
Rev. Father Nicholas Kujur, S. J., an Orāon Jesuit Missionary (now in Europe).

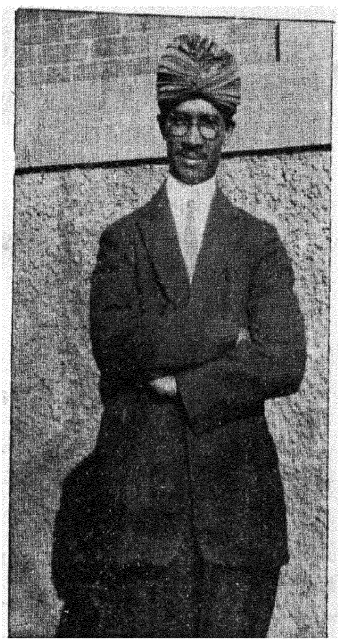

Illustration 32.
Rev. Yuel Lakra, M.A., B.D., (Chicago), a Lutheran Orāon Missionary and social worker.

Pāpi ālar Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	Sinful people, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.
Āhrā mūkhūr Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	Meat-eaters, O Brethren, shall be utterly ruined—shall be ruined.
Baimān ālar Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	O Brethren, the ungrateful shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.
Nād ālar Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	The wicked, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.
Khāḍū ālar Bhairō, jāicrhhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	Thieves, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.
Nād pākid Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	All ghosts and spirits, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed,—destroyed.
Dāin biśāhi, Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	All the witches and wizards shall be utterly destroyed.
Muā Mālech Bhairō jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	*Muā Mālech* spirits, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed.
Chūril Chhināil ān Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.	The Chūril spirits, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Āḍḍō mūkhū nād, Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

Ox-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Mānkhā mūkhū nād, Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

Buffalo-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Bheṛā, mūkhū nād Bhairō jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The sheep-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Kiss mūkhū nād Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā mūñṛichhay mānōr, Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The pig-eating ghosts, O brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Eṛā mōkhnā nād Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā mūñṛichhay mānōr, Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The goat-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Chhewnā mōkhnā nād Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The sacrifice-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Pāñṭhiyā mōkhnā nād, Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The kid-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Kher mōkhnā nād, Bhairō, jārichhay ān Bābā, mūñṛichhay mānōr Bābā, jārichhay mānōr.

The fowl-eating ghosts, O Brethren, shall be utterly destroyed—destroyed.

Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ki ṭān ṭūn ṭānā, i nāmhāiñ pūrkhār gāhi mānkhā mūkhū nādan, ṭānā Bābā, ṭānā ki ṭān ṭūn ṭānā.

O, Ṭānā Father, drive out, drive out these buffalo-eating ghosts of our ancestors,—Aye, drive them out.

I nāmhāiñ pūrkhār gāhi bheṛā mūkhū chhāōnā pāñṭhiā mōkhnā kiss mōkhnā, kher mōkhnā, jiā piṭnā nādan, ṭānā Bābā, ṭānā ki ṭān ṭūn ṭānā.

O, Ṭānā Father, drive out the sheep-eating, pig-eating, goat-eating, fowl-eating and life-destroying ghosts of our ancestors,—drive them, aye, drive them out.

(11) *Chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, bōngā darā kerā, Dārhā nādād chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, nād pāki chōchā darā kerā Bābā. nād pāki bōngā darā kerā.*

(11) It ran away, O Father, it fled away, the *Dārhā* ghost, it ran away, O Father, all the ghosts fled away, all the ghosts ran away.

Chōchā darā kerā Bābā, bōngā darā kerā Bābā, kāl Yūgōd chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, pāp Yūgād bōngā darā kerā.

O Father, the Kali Yug is finished; it is used up, O Father, the age of sin is at an end.

Chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, bōngā darā kerā, Bābā, Badi mūdai chōchā darā kerā Bābā, pāp dūniyā chōchā darā kerā.

No more, O Father, no more, the obstinate enemies [of man] are no more—O Father, the world (age) of sin is ended.

Chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, bōngā darā kerā, āḍḍō piṭnā chōchā darā kerā, Bābā, mānkhā piṭnā chōchā darā kerā.

No more, O Father, no more of killing the ox, O Father, no more of killing the buffalo, no more.

Bābā, kiss piṭnā chōchā darā kerā.

O Father, no more shall there be killing of the pig.

Ṭānā, Bābā, ki ṭān ṭūn ṭānā, Tinsimānintā Ulaṭgūṛiā nādan,

O Father, drive out the Ulaṭ-gūṛiā ghost who abides where

Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	three boundaries meet, O Father, drive it out.
Ī dharṭinṭā Ulaṭgūṛiā nādan ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā, ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out the Ulaṭgūṛiā ghost of this earth.
Ī rājintā Ulaṭgūṛiā nādan ṭāna, Bābā, ṭānā, ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out the Ulaṭgūṛiā ghost of this country.
Ī rājintā palintā mānḳhā mūḳhū nādan ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out the buffalo-eating ghost of this country.
Ī palintā bheṛā mūḳhū nādan ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out the rain-eating ghost of this world.
Ī nāmhāi pūrḳhār gāhi hāñḳal ḍāḳāl nādan ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out these hungry ghosts of our ancestors.
Ī nāmhāi jātiār gāhi pātiār gāhi ḳhūñṭā dāñṭā nādan ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out these *ḳhūṇṭ ḍānṭ* ghosts of our race and tribe.
Ī nāmhāi āḳhṛāntā jhāḳhṛāntā pāp nādan, ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā ḳi ṭān ṭūn nānā.	O Father, drive out these wicked ghosts of our dancing-places and spirit-groves.
(12) *Dharmi Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū amm dim dūdhi, Bābā, dhūlidim dhūp, Bābā, dhūlidim.*	(12) Through the grace of God our Father, even water is milk and dust is incense.
Sītā Āyō gāhi dayā tūrū dhūli dim dhūp, Bābā, ḍheḳa dim	Through the grace of mother Sītā, even dust is incense,

chichch, Bābā, ḍhekha dim.	Father, and a clod of earth is fire.
Surjan Bābās gāhi dayā tūrū ḍhekhādim chichch, Bābā, ḍhekhādim chichch.	Through the grace of Father Sun, even a clod of earth is fire.
Dharmē Bābā nāmē nāmē dhyānim nāndan, Bābā, gyānim nāndan.	O God, my Father, I meditate on Thee calling Thee by all Thy names.
Sītā Āyō nāmē nāmē dhyānim nandan, Bābā, gyānim nandan.	O Mother Sītā, I meditate on Thee, calling Thee by all Thy names.
Chandar Bābā hōy nāmē nāmē dhyānim nandan, Bābā, gyānim nandan.	O Father Moon, I meditate on Thee, calling Thee by all Thy names.
Āṛkhā chekhel mōkhā mōkhā dhyānim nandan, Bābā, gyānim nandan.	O Father, living on vegetables I meditate, I meditate on Thee,
Ledrā chithrā kurā banchrā dhyānim nandan, Bābā, gyānim nandan.	Clothed in rags, I meditate, I meditate on Thee.
Pāpi mūdāi nandan, Bābā, hāṭāiyō nānā, Bābā, bāṭāiyō nānā.	O Father, do Thou drive off and scatter abroad the wicked ghost.
Ī rājintā dūkh piṛān, Bābā, hāṭāiyō nānā, Bābā, bāṭāiyō nānā.	O Father, do Thou drive off and scatter abroad the miseries of this country.
Ī dhartīnta rōg bālāyn, Bābā, hāṭāiyō nānā, Bābā, bāṭāiyō nānā.	O Father, do thou drive off the diseases of this world.

I prithwintā dūṣṭ pāpi rin Bābā hāṭāiyō nānā, Bābā, bāṭāiyō nānā.	O Father, do thou destroy and cast out the wicked men of this world.
Ī dūnivāntā dūṣman pāpi rin haṭāiyō nānā Bābā bāṭāiyō nān.ī.	O Father, destroy and cast out the sinful enemies of this world.
Ī gōṭṭā mūlkhāntā śātrū mūdai rin Bābā haṭāiyō nānā Bābā bāṭāiyō nānā.	O Father, do Thou cast out and destroy the wicked enemies of this world.
Dharam dharam gunān Bābā ·ǝuıʌ ɹɐpuo ǝuıʌ ɹɐpuo ɟɐɔɐ ǝuıʌ ɹɐpuo ǝuıʌ.	O Father, do Thou vouchsafe to us all the virtues, adorn us with all good qualities.
Dharam dharam rājin Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, do Thou bring and establish Thy Holy kingdom.
Dharam būddhin Bābā ōndrār chiyā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, do Thou awaken in us religious conciousness.
Dharam dharam śūkhan Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, vouchsafe to us the happiness that religion brings.
Dharam dharam dhanan Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, do Thou vouchsafe to us all spiritual treasures, give us all things that enrich the soul.
Dharam dharam jiyān Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, do Thou enable us to lead a pious life.
Dharam bāl-bāchchān Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, may we have pious children, give us virtuous offspring.

Dharam sōchān bāchān Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndṛār chiā.	O Father, do Thou inspire in us pure thoughts and speech.
Dharam dharam barkhā pānin Bābā ōndṛār chiā Bābā ōndṛār chiā.	O Father, do Thou vouchsafe to us beneficent rains.
Dharam dharam jiyā kāyān Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndṛār chiā.	O Father, do Thou vouchsafe to us pure lives and bodies.
Dharam dharam rāsi bārākat Bābā ōndrār chiā Bābā ōndrār chiā.	O Father, do Thou shower on us Thy best blessings.
Āna Dharmē Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam Bābā chikhām lāgdam.	O God, our Father, weeping and crying we invoke Thee by all Thy names.
Bhagwān Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam Bābā ōlkhām lāgdam.	O Bhagwān Father, weeping and crying we invoke Thee by all Thy names.
Suraj Chandra Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam Bābā ōlkhām lāgdam.	O Sun, O Moon, Fathers, weeping and crying we invoke you by name.
Hē Dharti pirthī Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam Bābā ōlkhām lāgdam.	O Earth Father, weeping and crying we invoke Thee by name.
Eh Hindu Siw Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam Bābā ōlkhām lāgdam.	O Hindu Siva Father, weeping and crying we invoke Thee by name.
Eh Gangā Jamunā Bābā hōy, nāmē nāmē chikhām lāgdam, Bābā ōlkhām lāgdam.	O Fathers Ganges and Jamuna, weeping and crying we invoke you by name.

Eh Āyō Bābā nāmē nāmē chiḵhdām lāgdam, Bābā, ōlḵhām lāgdam. O Mother and Father, weeping and crying we invoke you by name.

In this last song we hear the distressed and bewildered tribal soul crying aloud for the Grace of God to purify and ennoble their own lives and to set things right for them. In the song that follows we hear the inspiring note of faith, hope and joy issuing out of the depths of the *Bhagat's* intensely religious and patriotic soul.

(13) *Chalerā lāgi Bābā, Chalerā lāgi, Sat Yūg Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Sat Yūg!* (13) O Father, the Sat Yūga (the Golden Age) is flourishing,—O Father, flourishing.

Chalerā lāgi Bābā, Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Ṭānā paṛhnā Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Ṭānā. O Father, Ṭānāism is marching on, O Father,—marching on.

Chalerā lāgi Bābā chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Rām Bhagti chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharam. O Father, Devotion to Rām is flourishing, O Father,—flourishing.

Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi, Dharam paṛhnā chalerā lāgi Bābā Dharam. O Father, Religious instruction is being given, O Father, —being given.

Chalerā lāgi, Bābā chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi dayā chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes. O Father, God's grace is spreading, O Father,—spreading.

Chalerā lāgi Bābā chalerā lāgi, Bābā, nīti Bhaḵti chalerā lāgi, Bābā, nīti. O Father, religious rites and devotions are being practised, O Father,—being practised.

Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi hūkūm chalerā lāgi Bābā.	O Father, God's commandments are being obeyed, Father,—being obeyed.
Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi nāmē chalerā lāgi, Bābā.	O Father, the name of God is spreading,—O Father, spreading.
Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi Kānūn chalerā lāgi Bābā,	O Father, the law of God is being accepted,—O Father,—accepted,
Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi nisāph chalerā lāgi, Bābā.	O Father, God's justice is beginning to reign,— Father, beginning to reign.
Chalerā lāgi, Bābā chalerā lāgi, Bābā, Dharmes gāhi bachan chalerā lāgi, Bābā. Chalerā lāgi, Bābā, chalerā lāgi.	O Father, the word of God is being spread abroad, O Father, spread abroad.

In songs like the above we listen to the genuine outpouring of a people's soul in which faith and hope appear to have induced a vision of Divine Grace and transformed the tribal outlook on life. With his new and higher conception of the Deity as the Spirit of Love, Goodness and Purity, whose dwelling-place is the whole universe in general and the individual human soul in particular, the *Ṭānā Bhagat's* ideal of moral conduct for the human individual and the community has necessarily undergone a corresponding improvement in conformity with this new conception. Love and good-will towards his fellow-men, kindness to all living beings and purity in food and habits are the cardinal virtues which the *Bhakti* cult or *Kūṛūkh Dharam* enjoins upon all *Ṭānā Bhagats*.

Ṭānā Rules of Pure conduct.—As we have seen, the followers of this new faith are required to give up all intoxicants and animal food, as well as their old habits of dancing at the *ākhṛās*, holding *jātrās*, and engaging in hunting expeditions. Bedecking their persons with jewellery or decorating their bodies with tatoo marks or wearing clothes with coloured borders are generally interdicted. One section of the Ṭānās, however, does not appear to have given up jewellery or fine clothes. As for the old Orāon practices of witch-craft and propitiation of *bhūts*, the new religion, as we have seen, actually had its origin in a revolt against them. "*Niti Dharmi ālarghi nadēhū mālā, Bābā, bhutehū mālā*": "For the men (followers) of the good and true (Ṭānā) religion there are no spirits of *bhūts*," is declared to be the cardinal principle of the religion, and the *Ṭānā Bhagat* prays,—"*Eṛpāntā pallintā mānal dānal nādān, Ṭānā, Bābā, ṭānā*," "All the spirits of the house and of the door that so long we sought to appease,—do pull them all [down]" Lying and theft are strictly forbidden to the *Ṭānās*, and ceremonial cleanliness strictly enjoined. Earthenware cooking pots and drinking vessels have to be thrown away as polluted when touched by unclean animals such as pigs, fowls, or dogs. Cooking-pots are also considered polluted by the occurrence of a birth or a death in a family. Even red *sāg* (edible herbs) are not eaten because red is the colour of blood.

Mutual assistance among the *Ṭānās* is laid down as a duty and their disputes and differences are required to be settled by the *Maṇḍalī* or congregation. And a *Ṭānā* not abiding by the decision of the *Maṇḍalī* may be excommunicated. Indeed they are enjoined not to abuse anyone—not even a stranger. In one of their songs they sing, "*Khūri-bātinū āmkē*

ḳebā ḳūddā," "Do not abuse others [even] while you are walking [on the roads]." Thursday is the Sabbath of the Ṭānās, this being the day considered sacred to *Lachhmi* (Goddess of Wealth) by the Hindus, and all cattle (which is the Lachmī of agriculturists) must have rest that day. The term 'Lachhmī', it may be noted, is also popularly applied to the cow by the Hindus. A Ṭānā must address all fellow-men, old and young, as 'Bābā' (Father)—the same term that they apply to the gods. Men and other animals, according to the Ṭānā, have one and the same life (*ōṇṭā jiā*), so that no harm should be done to anything living. And God or the Divine spirit is believed to exist within every human being. And so the Ṭānā sings—

"Bābā bābā bādar, Bhairō,
Bābās nāmhāi jiānūm rādas."

"O Brothers, you call [upon God, crying] 'Father, Father,'
But the Father is really all the time time within you."

On Thursdays, the Ṭānās must assemble and sing their hymns in chorus in local congregations. *Hōma* or offering of oblations of clarified butter (*ghee*) into fire in the name of God (*Dharmes*) is performed in all Ṭānā families on Thursdays, and it is only after this *hōma* that the members of the family bathe and cook food. In the evening, after the day's work, the Ṭānās must sing sacred hymns. Thus they sing—

"Biri pūttā nālaḳhnāndam, Bābā, nālaḳhnāndam;
Ningān Dharmē Bābā mōdhōrdām, Bābā, mōdhōrdām,"
and so on—

"Till sun-set we work, O Father,
[But how often] Thee, Oh God, we forget!"

Ṭānā socio-religious customs.—In consonance with their new ideas as to the need for ceremonial purity, the necessity of abstinence from drinking and flesh-eating, music and dancing, the leaders of the Ṭānā movement have considerably modified and simplified the old Orāon customs connected with birth, death, and marriage.

Birth customs.—For five days after parturition, the parturient female has to remain secluded in a part of the hut and is not allowed to touch cooking vessels or drinking-water to be used by others. On the sixth day, near relatives are invited to the house, and the members of the family as well as kinsmen have their nails pared. The floor of the hut and the *āngan* or open space in front of the hut are swept clean and besmeared with a coating of cowdung diluted in water. Water sanctified by dipping into it a few leaves of the *Tūlsi* plant or the sacred *Basil* and a bit of copper or, if available, a bit of gold, is sprinkled on all members of the family including the baby and its mother and on all relatives and guests by way of purification; members of the family also drink a few drops of this purificatory water. Well-to-do relatives bring presents of rice, pulses, and molasses in place of rice-beer which they used to bring before. And in place of liquor with which formerly guests were entertained, a *sherbet* (syrup) prepared by diluting molasses in water is supplied to them. No meat or liquor, but, if possible, cow's milk or buffalo milk is included in the *menu* of the feast that brings the day's proceedings to a close. The old Orāon customs and ceremonies with regard to name-giving, ear-piercing and eating the first rice have been given up by the Ṭānās.

Marriage customs.—The Orāon practice of *Dhūkū* or 'Intrusion' marriage (that is to say, the so-called marriage of a male with a female who enters the house of the former with a view to living as his wife against the will of his people and manages to stay on until acknowledged as wife) is not permitted by the *Ṭānās*, although widow-marriage is not interdicted. The old practice of sending a go-between (*āgiā*) to negotiate marriage is discountenanced. A Ṭānā wishing to marry his boy or girl signifies his desire to the *Ṭānā* congregation to which he belongs. At one of its Thursday meetings some one proposes the match and if the guardians of the proposed boy and girl are agreeable the match is settled. Although, as is the custom amongst the unconverted Orāons, two or three ceremonial visits are exchanged between the bridegroom's relatives and the bride's relatives, the old customary practice of omen-reading is forbidden to the *Ṭānās*, and no drinking is, of course, permitted. The old practice of demanding and paying bride-price has not been given up; but the old custom which required the bridegroom to supply one cloth to the bride's mother and another to the bride's brother has been made optional, and it is further laid down that these latter presents must not, in any case, be made on the day of the wedding as in that case poor people who have not means enough to buy such presents may feel humiliated. But the latter condition is no longer generally heeded. No musical instrument made of animal-hide may be used. Only such instruments as metal bells (*ghanṭā*), bugles (*narsinghā*), blow-pipes (*bher*) and conches (*sankh*) may be used. Before the wedding, the bride and bridegroom as well as their parents have to bathe. The bride and bridegroom are then seated on *sāl-*

leaves stitched together. A lamp fed with clarified butter (*ghee*) is lighted and a new earthen jug filled with water with three sheaves of paddy sticking out of its mouth, is placed before the pair to serve as '*Kārsā-bhāṇḍā.*' Bride and bridegroom anoint each other's forehead with sandal-wood paste, if available, or with earth instead of vermilion, because the latter is used in the propitiation of the *bhūts* which the *Ṭānās* have given up. The couple finally offer oblations of water to Bhagwān or God.

Death customs.—The *Ṭānās* have given up the Orāon custom of burning the dead body, because they consider that smelling the fumes of cremation would be tantamount to tasting or eating human flesh. The corpse is accordingly buried after sprinkling on it water into which a bit of gold or, failing that, copper and *tūlsi*-leaves have been dipped. On the tenth day after a death, similar sanctifying water is sprinkled all over the house to remove the death-pollution, and near relatives taste each a drop of such water for ceremonial purification. Those who can afford to do so, also burn *ghee* by way of purification and some offer milk or more generally a libation of pure water in the name of *Bhagwān.* Finally, a feast to fellow-*Ṭānās*, particularly relatives, is provided. Liquor or meat, it need hardly be said, forms no part of the *menu.*

Initiation Ceremony.—A candidate for admission into the *Kūṛūkh Dharam* or the *Ṭānā* faith, has to undergo a ceremonial purification by taking the same sanctifying draught consisting of water in which a bit of gold or a bit of copper or both and a few *Tulsi* leaves have been dipped. He is then taken on as a probationer for a period of either three or six or some-

times twelve months, according to the kind of life he has lived till then. During this period of probation or novitiate the strictness of his observance of the injunctions and prohibitions of the new faith is closely watched, and if, at the end of the term, he is declared fit for full membership, he has to provide a feast to his friends and relatives belonging to the *Kūṛūkh Dharam* and is then admitted to such full membership by these *Ṭānā* friends and relatives eating with him. If, however, he is not declared to be yet fit for membership, the period of apprenticeship may be extended up to a maximum of three years.

As a mark of purification (*śūdh*), the Ṭānā Bhagat, male as well as female, wears the *janeu* or sacred thread. There is no special ceremony of investiture of the sacred thread except that the name of *Bhagwān* is taken while putting it on. The Ṭānās say that the *janeu* or sacred thread is the distinctive mark of the [Ṭānā] Bhagat as the white flag which most *Ṭānās* set up in front of their houses is the distinctive mark of a [*Ṭānā*] Bhagat's house.

Inter-dining and Inter-marriage.—The *Ṭānā* Bhagats do not take cooked food at the hands of any one except a person of their own faith, and, in some cases, of their own section of *Ṭānās*, nor enter into marital relations with non-*Ṭānās*, if they can avoid it. When however a *Ṭānā* partner in life cannot be secured, a boy or girl may be married in a *Maduā* Orāon family on the same conditions as in an union between a Nemhā Bhagat or a Kabirpanthi Bhagat with a *madua* Orāon family. The extreme section of the Ṭānās are said to have given up widow-marriage.

The customs and practices I have given above are generally in vogue amongst the main body of the Ṭānās. But

it was not long after the movement started that differences as to the proper observances to be followed arose between the followers of the movement, and the *Ṭānās* gradually split up into several sections. It is only in certain details that there exist differences in the practices of these different sections of Ṭānās, though the main customs, tenets and principles have remained common.

The customs described above are those followed by the main body of Ṭānās who may be called the Moderate and Puritan Ṭānās but who sometimes call themselves *Sādā Bhaḳats*. Another section of the Ṭānās have now become more or less Hinduised and are sometimes included among the *Bāchhidān Bhagats* as they are said to have taken vows of the *Bhaḳti* Dharam by touching the cow's tail and, in some cases, have even made gifts of cows or calves (*Bāchchi*) to Brāhmaṇs. These Ṭānās have not eschewed the use of jewellery and bordered clothes, and even make offerings to such Hindu deities as *Devī* and *Dūrgā*. The more extreme section of the Ṭānā Bhagats or Bhakats have given up the cultivation of land partly on the ground of cruelty to cattle or *Lachmī*. Agrarian grievances appear to have supplied the original impulse towards this abstention from cultivation and refusal to pay rents and taxes in a spirit of misguided and suicidal non-co-operation with the landlords. The moderate section consider their duty to cattle sufficiently discharged by giving them rest on Thursdays and also allowing them respite from work when they appear tired or over-worked. Some members of the extreme section went to the length of letting loose all their cattle and throwing away the store of rice and paddy that they had in their houses. Members of this party are

known as Sibu's party from the name of their chief leader. But a reaction appears to have set in; and this section appears to have since executed a *volte face* and taken to eating food cooked by anybody and relapsed into their old habits of drinking and flesh-eating. This is how it occurred. In the autumn of 1920, led by their leader Sibu Bhagat, this section of the Ṭānās let loose their cattle, and, taking with them only such cash as they had, started for the Sāt Pāhāṛi Hill in the neighbouring district of Hāzāribāgh where they expected the advent of a Saviour or deity who would bring back the good old days of prosperity to the Orāons. But when after long waiting in vain for the appearance of the promised Saviour or the Deity, they found they had nothing left in their purses to buy food with they applied to their leader for directions, and Sibu solemnly declared that *Dharmes* desired that they were no longer to observe such restrictions in food, drink, and conduct as they had so long observed, and that they might thenceforth freely enjoy *sōrhō singār batisō āhār*—i. e., "all the sixteen kinds of carnal pleasures and all the thirty-two kinds of food." Sibu is reported to have said that as the Europeans, who are so powerful and free, take all kinds of flesh and liquor, so they too may acquire power and wealth by imitating them in this respect. Sibu further declared, "You need no longer cultivate your fields, for we fed our landlords for the last thirty-two generations and supported them by our labours; it is now their turn to feed us and support us for the next thirty-two generations."

Whereas Sibū Bhagat's party appear to have lost their mental balance and swung back from one extreme to the other, other sections, now considerably reduced in number,

have more or less gained a stable equilibrium, although some still suffer from considerable agitation of mind over the question of their long-lost agrarian rights and privileges.

Among the *gūrūs* or religious leaders of the *Ṭānā Bhagats* besides Sibū Bhagat may be mentioned Karmā Bhagat of Birinda (in Gūmlā *thānā*), Lōdrō Bhagat of Belāgarā (in Ghāgrā *thānā*), Bhūkā Bhagat of Kārkāṭṭā (in Māṇḍār *thānā*), Nawā Bhagat of Mūrmā (in Māṇḍār *thānā*), Nārāin Bhagat of Dārṇḍā (in Lāpūng *thānā*), Āntū Bhagat of Dōisā-nagar (in Sisāi *thānā*), and Nāthua Bhagat of Jaira (in Sisāi *thānā*). These and other present leaders have each only a very limited following. There is no central authority to guide, direct, co-ordinate or control them. The movement, though not absolutely extinct, has now spent its force.

The reason why it has now almost died away as a popular movement is that the religious motive was only one of the multiple causes that excited it. The tribe had been for over a century sullenly brooding over its manifold agrarian and other economic grievances; the rise in prices consequent upon the war in Europe had further caused a widespread feeling of resentment; and the crop of rumours that spread abroad in connexion with the war helped to produce an atmosphere favourable to popular uprisings. Although no one who has watched, as I have done, the Ṭānā Bhagats at their hymn-singing sometimes protracted for hours, can doubt the genuineness and intensity of their religious fervour, the movement was in origin largely economic. When the excitement died down and the people became more or less reconciled to the new cost of living, and further found that the new faith failed to secure the longed-for restoration of their lost rights in land but, on

the contrary, stiffened the backs of the authorities who suppressed the misguided actions of some of them with a strong hand, the religious motive by itself was not sufficient to keep it alive as a popular movement.

IV. Hindu Movements.

Within the last few years, efforts appear to have been made by more than one Hindu organization to bring the Orāons into the official Hindu fold by giving them '*śūddhi*' or ceremonial purification. Some propaganda work also appears to have been carried on by the *Ārya Samāj* to convert the Orāons. But neither the propagandists of official Hinduism nor the preachers of the *Ārya Samāj* appear so far to have made any impression on the minds of the simple Orāons. This may be partly due to the absence of genuine religious enthusiasm and missionary zeal among such propagandists, if not also to the Orāon's suspicion of political or other motives at the back of such propaganda. Nor are these propagandists even in a position to hold out before the Orāons the lure of the purse or of prestige,—of financial and other assistance in the Orāon's economic distress or of his advancement in social prestige. On the other hand, enlightened leaders among the Orāons naturally fight shy of such propagandists under the reasonable apprehension that orthodox official Hinduism with the religious and social exclusiveness of the twice-born castes, would relegate aboriginal converts to a very low, if not the lowest, stratum in the hierarchy of Hindu castes.

As for the *Ārya Samāj*, although in theory it ignores all distinctions of caste and although its preachers hailing from the Punjab or the United Provinces may have no hesitation in

eating cooked food or drinking water at the hands of the Orāons, practice in this respect would appear to lag behind precept among most local *Ārya Samājists*. But however that may be, the *Ārya Samāj*, inspite of its theoretical recognition of equal spiritual and social rights of all men, has so far failed to attract the Orāon. This failure of the *Samāj* is perhaps to be attributed mainly to its somewhat abstract conception of the Deity which, if not altogether beyond the comprehension of the simple Orāon, fails, at any rate, to satisfy his emotional needs.

If the Orāons have not blindly accepted the gift of *śūddhi* and official Hinduism which Hindu preachers and propagandists have of late proferred to them, Hinduism has achieved success in another and a more natural way. Certain ideas and practices of their Hindu neighbours have for centuries been silently and unobtrusively exerting a steady influence on the life and thought of the tribe, particularly of the more enlightened amongst them. This diffusion of ideas and consequent borrowing of cultural elements through racial contact is indeed a most natural process by which civilisation advances all the world over. The germs of a higher birth lie dormant in the tribal soul and only require the vivifying contact with a higher culture to stimulate them into life.

Hindu ideas of the need for purity in habit and character and for communion with a benign Deity through *Bhakti* or passionate love and devotion would appear to have struck a responsive note in the tribal soul. And to this, as we have seen, the Orāons owe the various *Bhakti* movements described above.

How deeply this yearning for a higher faith and purer life has affected the tribal soul can only be appreciated by those who have lived long amongst the Orāons and intimately mixed with them in their village-homes. I shall only mention two or three illustrations out of many that I might cite from personal knowledge.

Several times I have travelled in the Orāon country in company with one of the prominent leaders 62 of the Orāons of the Rānchi District. His relatives still pay nominal homage to the tribal deities and spirits and he too pays his subscriptions towards their propitiation, although he himself now takes no part in sacrifices and sacrificial feasts. The attraction of his soul, as I found, is towards the ideal Hindu epic hero Rāma who is regarded by him, as by many Hindus, as an incarnation of the Deity. The first time that I was travelling with him, a few years ago, I offered to him in the morning some refreshments which he declined on the ground that he had not yet performed his morning ablutions nor read some verses of the *Rāmāyana* as was his wont, and he could not take any food nor drink a drop of water until he had done so. Every morning during the tour I found him reverently reading a page or two of the *Rāmāyana* after an early bath. Neither he nor any member of his family touches fish or flesh or liquor, although they do not belong to any of the *Bhagat* sects. And he and his family are not solitary exceptions. I learnt from him that some mercenary Hindu preachers and *Kabirpanthi* relatives of his,

62. His name is Bandi Rām Orāon who has been honoured by Government with the title of 'Rāi Sāheb' in recognition of his public services.

and mercenary Brāhman *Gūrūs* and *Vaiṣnab Gōsāiñs* had sought to convert him to their respective faiths but he could not find it in his heart to adopt any of them. He appears to have an inspiring vision of his own tribal religion in time evolving under suitable guidance into the highest form of faith suited to tribal needs.

A second instance that I shall mention is that of a number of Orāon boys who were residing in a private Hostel for aboriginal students in the town of Rānchi a few years ago. All the boys belonged to families who still adhered to the old animistic faith and the boys when at home attended the *Sarhūl* and other tribal religious festivals. As I have been interested in the education of Orāon youths, I now and then visited the boys in their Hostel and they too used to come to me now and then for assistance or advice in their difficulties. But I never had any conversation with them about their religious beliefs and practices until on a *Janmāṣṭami* day which is the anniversary of the birth of *Srī Krishna,* the great Incarnation of God according to the Hindus, when some of them came to my house for permission to take away a couple of plantain trees and some fruits from my garden. On my asking them what they proposed to do with the plantain trees, they said that they wanted to celebrate the birth anniversary of 'Lord Sri Krishna' by fasting that day and eating fruits in the evening, and in the manner of the Hindus, planting plantain trees in front of their Hostel in token of their joy. On further questioning, I found that they felt a natural attraction for the ideal of divine love and perfect manhood represented by the Srī Krishna of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* (as distinguished from the Srī Krishna of popular folklore).

I shall cite one more instance of this kind. About a month ago I heard a batch of Orāon young men of from fourteen to eighteen years of age singing a well-known Orāon song which I had heard, several times before then, sung as a *Sarhūl* song by ordinary (*maduā*) spirit-worshipping Orāons, and which I always understood to be an ordinary love-song.

The song runs as follows:—

Jiā ōlā lāggi!	My heart doth burn!
Bhitar bhitari Jiā ōlā lāggi!	O, inly inly my heart doth burn!
Partā ōl-nān rājiār er-nār,	The hill on fire is seen by the country around,
Jiā-gāhi ōl-nān	But, alas! The burning of the heart,
Nehū mālā eri!	That, O, none may behold!

When I asked the singers to explain the song, I was agreeably surprised to hear them explain the expression 'burning of the heart' to refer to the 'consuming ardour of the devotee's love to his God', and the whole song as an expression of that love or *Bhakti*. The singers, as I found, belonged to families adhering to their old animistic faith, and were pupils of a non-denominational Government school in the interior of the Rānchi district who came under the influence of one or two religious-minded Hindu teachers.

From such instances we see how contact with Hindu religious ideas has served to stimulate the tribal mind to develop and modify its own religious ideal. The vitalising influence exerted on their mind and their ideals, on their out-

look and manner of life, by intercommunication with their Hindu neighbours would indeed appear to have been considerable.

The Orāons, as we have seen, have selected and assimilated with suitable adaptations and modifications only such elements of Hindu religion and culture as answered their needs and fitted in with their own religious traditions and ideas and rejected others that were incompatible. The determiner of reception or rejection, assimilation or modification, has been the tribal soul. From a psychological point of view we may regard Orāon movements towards higher forms of religion and purer habits of life as cultural achievements of the tribe itself.

I have now passed in hurried review the various religious movements of recent times amongst the Orāons. These movements, as we have seen, have been prompted as much by a yearning for a purer faith and a higher ideal of life, as by a general feeling of dissatisfaction with their present economic condition and social status. The line of development that these new movements have followed has, as we have seen, been determined, more or less by the Orāon's traditional ways of thought and belief. Such exotic ideas as were too high for the ideals of the animistic Orāon have, in the process of borrowing, been, as we have seen, transformed almost beyond recognition.

It may not be unreasonable to hope that with the general advancement of the tribe in education and culture the idea of God will become still richer in meaning and more satisfying in content, and the torch of *Bhaḳti* or love for the Great Divine Ideal of Good first faintly lighted by some Orāon *Bhagat* more

than a century ago and trimmed successively by *Kabirpanthi Bhagats*, Christian missionaries, *Mahādeo Bhagats* and *Vaiṣnav Gōsāiñs*, will gradually shine forth with an increasingly bright, steady and pure light, ever spreading wider and wider, till it finally illumines the whole tribe. It cannot be predicted whether the *Bhaḳti* cult among the Orāons will take the outward form of Christianity or *Āryā Dharam*, *Kabirpanth* or *Vaiṣnavism*, *Sanātan Dharma* or *Kūṛūḳh-Dharam*, or whether these will all come to constitute different sections of one great Indian[63] Religion of *Bhaḳti*. But Orāon society, it may be reasonably expected, will in the end come by its own and realise the ideal of individual and tribal life (hitherto dimly shadowed forth in the tribal *Dāṇḍā-ḳāṭṭā* ceremony) in which the effulgent Spirit of Good will rule triumphant over the dark forces of Evil, and the tribe will ultimately rejoice in an abiding union (shadowed forth in the tribal *Kārsā* dance, symbolic of happy union) between the tribal soul and the Eternal Spirit of Good in reverent love or *Bhaḳti*. Then at length the tribe will rejoice in a higher *Kūṛūḳh Dharam*, a true Orāon religion suited to their own distinctive culture. Such a religion, we may hope, far from interfering with their tribal life, their traditional morality, the prestige of their tribal elders, their pleasures and hopes, their enjoyment and zest in life, will ennoble life by giving it a fuller meaning and richer content.

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63. The word 'Hindu' literally means 'Indian.' The term 'Hindu' is, as every scholar knows, a phonetic transformation of the word 'Sindhu' or the 'Indus from which Bhāratbarsha, this land of the *Bhāratas*, came to be known as *India* and its people as the *Hindus*.

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