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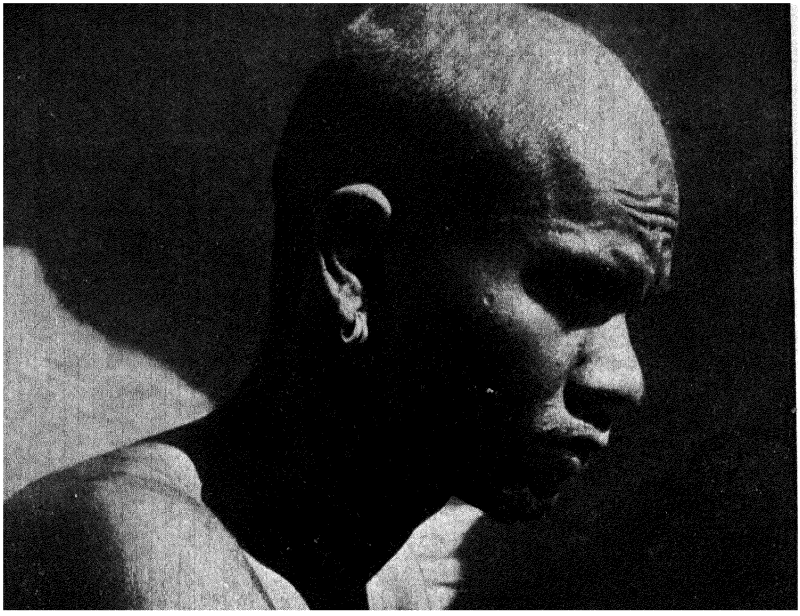
THE FORTUNES OF PRIMITIVE TRIBES



The Frowns of Tribal Fortune.

THE FORTUNES OF PRIMITIVE TRIBES

By

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INTRODUCTION

The three categories into which the people of India are ethnographically classified for census purposes and also in popular parlance, are 'race', 'caste' and 'tribe' though these are not mutually exclusive. Anthropologists working among tribal and backward peoples in India are greatly handicapped by an absence of an exact terminology. A caste or a tribe is distributed over great areas, from province to province, the same caste in different areas do not intermarry and anthropometry often fails to affiliate them racially. The census classification at one time has brought the Kaikadi, Korwa, Korcha and Yerkala together as one people, at another, the Bhatra, the Parja and the Muria have been divorced from the Gonds probably for reasons of nomenclature. There has been a transition from tribe to caste, and examples of such social mobility are numerous. The same people have once been classed as a tribe, at another time they have formed a caste. Caste claims during the census operations pour in legions and the census authorities find it delicate to diagnose them. Absence of competent first-hand knowledge of the investigators and the strength and influence of caste organisations are often the determining factors in establishing caste claims, and thus new castes and sub-castes have received the sanction of the census which has transformed many an interbreeding community to inbred ones.

Race is a 'biological' concept. The ideal definition of race would be, "a biological group or stock possessing in common an undetermined number of associated genetical characteristics by which it can be distinguished from other groups and by which its descendants will be distinguished under conditions of continuous isolation" (Man: 1936: 107). As Penniman remarks, (*Ibid*) 'the proviso that descendants will be distinguished under conditions of continuous isolation, however, might demand rigorous experiment in a human zoo or the happy circumstance of pockets of undiluted types." If statistical methods could be developed to define 'isolation' and 'purity of stocks' which would enable a comparative study of racial traits or ethnic types, the definition would be significant. With our present knowledge of human genetics, and with the handicaps natural to the study of man, we may, however, define 'race' as a group of

people who can be distinguished from other groups by the possession of a large number of common physical traits. A race, therefore, is a homogeneous group of people who possess a large number of similar physical characteristics so much so that their identity becomes definitely marked. The various traits which are racially significant or are believed to be so, are not the monopoly of any group of people to-day, however homogeneous it may appear to be, and thus practical difficulty is experienced in classifying mankind.

Dr. J. H. Hutton in reply to a criticism by K. De B. Codrington of the India census (Man: 1934, 153) wrote, as follows, "Personally, I found it possible to go into a big classroom in the college at Ernakulam in Cochin state containing Nayars, Izuvas and non-Nambudri Brahmans and to pick out the Brahmans (Deshast and Tamil) solely by the shape of their faces and heads; though I do not pretend that it would have been possible to segregate the Izuvas or Nambudris had there been any, from the Nayars." It is indeed a big claim for physical anthropology but it shows that racial differences do exist and races can be classified if we possessed efficient techniques, biological or statistical which could translate our impressions into mathematical units. In recent years anthropometric evidence is being reinforced by physiological and biochemical data. For example, blood groups' evidence is being increasingly employed to supplement anthropometric data, though as yet it is too early to say how far such evidence will be of material significance in the classification of mankind into ethnic types.

Risley's classification of Indian peoples into seven types *viz.*, Indo-Aryan, Turko-Iranian, Scytho-Dravidian, Dravidian, Mongolo-Dravidian, Aryo-Dravidian and Mongolian is no longer tenable but his anthropometric data, on the various castes and tribes will afford comparative material in all future investigations into the raciology of the country. His view that the shape of the nose can be taken as an index of social distance in the country offers significant clue to the classification of peoples, though the technique he adopted in the measurement of the nose has been rightly questioned by others.

Dr. Hutton recognizes six distinct racial elements in India. Firstly, "the earliest race still represented in India was probably the

Negrito, which survives in the Andamanese and in a much hybridized form in some south Indian jungle tribes," secondly, there was a race of "probably Australoid affinities, perhaps to be associated with the remains recently discovered in Palestine and in Java." This "may be labelled proto-Australoid and is wide-spread throughout India, and may be detected in all castes, though but rarely in the higher ones." Thirdly,'an immigration of Austro-Asiatic-speaking peoples has left traces from the Punjab Hills to the Bay of Bengal and beyond.' Fourthly, there was an immigration from Mesopotamia of Dravidian-speaking Mediterranean and Armenoid peoples who were responsible for the civilisation of Mohenjo-Daru. Fifthly, the disappearance of this civilisation is associated with a migration from the Pamirs southward of a brachycephalic race of Euroasiatic Alpine type, which spread southward as far as Coorg on the one hand, and Bengal on the other. Sixthly, this brachy-cephaly corresponds fairly well with the "outer band" of Indo-Aryan languages as found to-day. (Man: 1934, 153) Indian racial history has been so much confused by an undue emphasis on language in all racial investigations that however one may try, one can hardly separate the two issues and Dr. Hutton evidently conscious of this pitfall could not, however, escape being involved in it.

According to Dr. B. S. Guha, the aboriginal population of India discloses four types (Census Report of India Vol. I, Part. III, A, pp. LXII-LXIII) (1) A short, long and moderately high headed strain with often strongly marked brow ridges, broad short face, the mouth slightly inclined forwards and small flat nose with the alæ extended (2) A dark pigmy strain having spirally curved hair remnants of which are still found among the Kadars and the Pulayans of the Perambicullan hills (3) A brachycephalic Mongolian type constituting to-day, the main component of Assam and North Burma. (4) A second Mongoloid strain characterized by medium stature, high head and medium nose but exhibiting like (3) the typical Mongoloid characteristics of the face and the eye. This element constitutes the major strain in the population of the hills and not inconsiderably of that of the Brahmaputra Valley. The first of these types according to Dr. Guha is predominant among the aboriginal population of

central and southern India and also have penetrated into the lower strata of the Indian caste groups. Dr. Guha has commented on the hair forms of certain south Indian peoples as Negrito but craniological or anthropometrical evidence that have already been published does not make a strong case for the Negrito in India. Dr. J. H. Hutton on the strength of the hair form and certain skeletal remains of prehistoric antiquity found in India and claimed to show negroid affinities has held that 'in any case the Negrito seems to have been the first inhabitant of south eastern Asia'.) As already indicated, traces of this stock are still to be seen in some of the forest tribes of the higher hills of the extreme south of India and similar traces, he argues, exists in the inaccessible areas between Assam, Burma, and elsewhere.' (Man in India, Vol. VII, 257-62). In a recent tour of Gujarat and Kathiawar we discovered submerged colonies of Abyssinian immigrants who have freely mixed with the local inhabitants. Some of these pockets are traced to 1000 or 1100 A.D. or even earlier. How far the Negrito features in the tribal population can be accounted to such foreign elements in the population has to be carefully investigated. The fact that many anthropologists do not find any biological meaning of the race-concept (We Europeans: Huxley and Haddon, p. 144), as applied to man, is due probably to the extent of racial miscegenation evidenced all over the world, for nowhere perhaps we get to-day any isolation of types which is necessary for racial differentiation. Yet through the maze of intermixture and crossings competent eyes can weave the thread of racial affiliation both purity and hybridisation being comparative values we a sign to human aggregates.

Generally speaking the raciology of India may be stated as below. We have in the outlying parts of India the Mongoloid tribes who have entered into the composition of the population of eastern Bengal and the cis-Himalayan region, and judging from the physical features of the Rajvansis of northern Bengal and the tribal people in Tarai and Bhabar their contribution to the raciology of India should not be taken as inconsiderable. The various tribal groups, littoral and inland, who are found in the Chota Nagpur plateau, in the C.P., and the Deccan, whose number has been

estimated to be about 20 millions belong mostly to the 'Pre-Dravidian' strain. These have mixed in varying proportion with the later immigrants of Mediterranean, Alpine, or Indo-Nordic stocks and have greatly moulded the physical features of the latter. The central belt of India is composed of the Indo-Alpines, with broad head, medium stature, fair complexion, who have on the one hand mixed with the long-headed Indo-Nordic peoples in the north and the long-headed darker immigrants of Mediterranean racial affinity, so that both in the north and the south, the broad or round-headed elements are represented in effective strength in the population. The original speakers of the Dravidian family of languages probably could be traced to an early branch of the Meditterranean race, just as the Indo-Alpines have been traced to an unrecorded prehistoric migration from the west. Thus India contains all the racial types we meet in the world to-day, and innumerable sub-types formed by free and regulated systems of intermarriages approved or otherwise, while the dovetailing of these groups in the peculiar economic structure of the country has produced a complex social life with a rigid code of ceremonial conduct, hypergamy, taboo and social incompetence.

The most outstanding feature of the Indian population structure is a system of social gradation or a hierarchy with the primitive and aboriginal tribes at the bottom of the ladder, and a few higher castes at the top, the intermediate rungs being composed of a number of clean and unclean castes at various levels of purity and pollution. Although birth determines the social status of a person, the various groups constituting the intermediate rungs of the social ladder claim a higher status than that to which they belong, supporting such claims by conformity to the traditional and customary patterns of behaviour, beliefs and practices of the culturally superior groups. These claims have been conceded in some cases, reducing thereby the social distance between them and those whose status they covet, though such social transition may have taken decades or even centuries. Such population structure has remained largely unaltered by conversion into religions that claim to be casteless.

The aboriginal elements in the population are organised on the

basis of tribes which are composed of a large number of clans or septs, totemistic, eponymous or territorial which are generally exogamous. though the tribes are originally but not necessarily endogamous.

A clan may take the name of an animal, plant or material object as among the Munda-speaking tribes of the Chota Nagpur plateau or may be named after a village or a territorial unit, as for example the Khond *gochis* or Naga *khels*. Each clan prohibits inter-marriage within the group, but confines its marriage within the tribe, however small it may be. A tribe may be patriarchal as for example, the Korwas and Kharwars of the United Provinces, it may also be matriarchal, as in the case of the Khasis of Assam and the Garos of Bengal, or it may retain survivals of matriarchal culture. In the former case *i.e.*, patriarchal tribe, property passes from father to son and the family designation of the father descends on the children, in the latter, the mother lives in her own house, the husband comes from outside and the children receive the designation of the mother's family and also inherit property in the uterine line.

The tribal groups differ from the caste structure in their territorial affiliation, and in their freedom from economic interdependence though such distinction is not absolute. Many tribes are known to have wandered from place to place, the same tribe has taken different names in different areas, their languages have changed and many tribes have taken to particular occupation as for example the Khairahi are those who distil *Catechu*, the Kurukhs are Gonds who live by fishing, the Panikas are watchmen, rain-makers and diviners. There are innumerable cases of vertical mobility of the tribes to caste status, so that the distinction between tribe and caste is more academic than real. This perhaps led Risley to describe at least seven types of castes, though like his seven racial types these admit of regrouping. So far as the higher castes are concerned, rigid endogamy and strict rules regarding commensality have maintained their cultural identity. But the same cannot be said of the lower rungs of the caste structure. The Sahariyas are probably the same people as the Savara of the Ganjam agency tracts, the Rawat of Bastar were originally Gond, the agricultural Bhumij of Bihar were originally of Munda stock, the Bhoksa of Pilibhit and Naini Tal belonged to the Tharu tribe. Again,

the criminal tribes are recruited from various castes usually from the Rajputs which itself is a generic name for a constellation of types. Thus, we find that the tribal stage in many parts of the country has been superseded by caste structure and the latter has been built up on an aboriginal foundation with a superimposed racial dressing on an otherwise cultural matrix. That perhaps lends support to the pre-Aryan theory of the origin of caste ably put forward by Dr. J. H. Hutton (Census Report of India, Vol. I, Pt. I, 1931).

To return to the tribal distribution, the main centres of tribal concentration in northern India are the Chota Nagpur plateau, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand while in the Himalayas and submontane tracts we have a number of Indo-Aryan tribes who have maintained their isolation and even purity of stock to an appreciable extent. To the east in Assam and on the hills to the eastern border of India we have another area of tribal culture providing an archaic pattern of life and living with head hunting and beliefs in the fertilising power of the 'soul matter,' with a well developed code of magical practices and avenging taboos, both determining the extent of social incompetence such as untouchability and pollution, and the rigidity of occupational groupings. The Dravidian-speaking tribes of the south have been widely scattered all over the Deccan and their incursion into the north have brought them in daily contact with the various castes of the C.P., eastern agency states, and as far as Gujarat and Bombay. In recent times the Mundas and the Santhals are spreading far and wide in response to the needs of their growing numbers while the possibility of a higher standard of comforts, attraction for better wages, and freedom from tribal control have pushed them permanently out of their present domicile. In the Tata industries in Jamshedpur they are now "men of the steel."

The United Provinces do not contain large tribal population. The tribal map of the U.P. will show how thinly the tribes are distributed for the numerical strength of these bears small and often insignificant proportion to the crowding of the map by tribal names. The main concentration of tribal population is in the Mirzapur district which is adjacent to the Chota Nagpur pleateau, and bounded in the south and south-west by a number of feudatory states which

harbour quite a significant number of tribal groups. The policy of *Laissez faire* followed by the state authorities with respect to the tribal population, has maintained the solidarity, also the isolation of the tribes and the conditions found there offer a striking contrast to those existing in other parts, particularly in British India where contacts with civilisation have affected the life and living of the crudely equipped aboriginals or even their more advanced colleagues. There is a second tribal concentration in the submontane districts Pilibhit, Gonda, Bareilly, Bahraich and Gorakhpur, also parts of the Kheri district. The Mirzapur tribes are affiliated to the Munda Group of tribes now inhabiting Chota Nagpur in Bihar, and they maintain a cultural similarity with others of cognate stock. The Tarai tribes like the Tharus, and Bhoksas have probably entered the province from the north-east, and are of Mongoloid extraction as evident from their physical features.

The tribal line which starts in Mirzapur winds in a parabolic trend with its vertex to the east of the Province, stretching its other arm in a north-westerly direction to include the Indo-Aryan tribes like the Khasas and those derived from them. In between the arms of the tribal parabola, large number of wandering and criminal tribes have poured in from outside and although their total strength is not more than two millions they are very widely distributed and every district in the province has received their infiltration and have suffered from contacts with them. These tribes are of heterogeneous composition. At one end they represent a fair, dolichocephalic, leptorrhine element like the Sansiyas and Bhatus, at the other end they are represented by the Pasis and Doms, the latter are a dark-skinned, short statured, flat-nosed people who 'scourge the eastern districts of the province'. The Banjaras and Kanjars are distributed all over India and their occupation as dancers and acrobats in one province, their trade in cattle and salt in another has provided different tribal names so that they are Lambadis and Sugalis in the Madras Presidency and Banjaras in the U.P.

There are thus four important tribal groups in these provinces, (1) The Australoid or Pre-Dravidian tribes in the Mirzapur district, (2) the Mongoloid Tharus and Bhoksas of the submontane districts,

(3) the Indo-Aryan Khasas and derived castes of the cis-Himalayan region and (4) the wandering, vagrant and criminal tribes. The first and the last can be sub-divided into (*a*) nomadic and (*b*) settled; the Ahirs and Gujars for example ply useful trade of tending cattle and supplying milk and *ghee* to markets and peoples they live with, though seasonal nomadism still is practised by them. In the Himalayan region, in the Siwaliks, the winter finds the Gujars on the plains which they reach by following the downward course of the big rivers like the Jumna and the Tons, while as soon as the snow begins to melt they follow the receding snow line up the hills where new pastures and bracing climate naturally tempt them. The primitive tribes of Mirzapur are not all settled or live by agriculture. There are tribes like the Biyars who move from place to place in search of fruits and berries and for propagation and collection of lac. There are tribes like the Majhwar and the Kharwar who have abandoned their wild habits and have learnt the rudiments of agriculture, crude in methods and inefficient in production, from their neighbours—the Koiries, for example, who have been requisitioned to teach the tribal people the art of farming and the methods of controlling their food supply.

In presenting this introductory volume to the public, it is appropriate to state briefly the origin and plans of the series projected and in progress. The present inquiry was undertaken at the instance of Mr. Bhagwan Sahay, M.A., I.C.S., Superintendent of census operations for the U.P., 1941, whose interest in anthropological investigation brought me to his notice in 1940. In consultation with Mr. Sahay, I planned an ethnographic survey of the Province and Mr. Sahay succeeded in securing some financial help for me by pursuading the Provincial Government and the Lucknow University to contribute part of the expenses while the rest was met voluntarily by me. A grant-in-aid also was placed at my disposal for the publication of the results and a substantial grant was made available to the Statistical Laboratory, Calcutta, by the Central Government for the statistical analysis of the somatological data obtained during the survey. About 4,000 people were measured and more than 5,000 blood groups data were obtained from the various districts of the Province. If we

add the blood groups data reported by Malone and Lahiri for the Hindus of the Province (2,357), the total number tested come to more than 7,000 samples. The United Provinces thus lead other parts of India in blood group investigations for scientific purposes, and would afford comparative material for testing the conclusions already arrived at on the strength of earlier data. The results of the anthropometric investigation will form the subject of a joint report by Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis and myself.

In the pages below I have discussed the fortunes of certain primitive tribes in these Provinces, detailing the joys and sorrows of a few representative ones only. In two more volumes I propose to describe the tribal cultures of these Provinces while a fourth will deal with the criminal tribes, their life and interests, in other words, the various aspects of 'crime culture'. The war and its repercussions on the life of the country have provided hurdles and handicaps which could not be surmounted as I wanted to. I had therfore selected those tribes among whom I have already worked and others where facilities could be obtained. Mr. Sahay, I must record here, did not stop merely by securing financial assistance for the scheme, it was largely his efforts that made it possible for me to obtain the necessary facilities in field work in the areas I visited. My debt to him, is therefore, immense.

I am deeply indebted to our Vice-Chancellor Lt.-Col. Raja Bisheshwar Dayal Seth who has evinced great interest in the work and has granted me leave on duty whenever I required it, also to Prof. N. K. Sidhanta, Dean, Faculty of Arts, whose activè support has sustained me in my work. I desire also to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to Mr. P. R. Roy, the celebrated artist who has acted as my photographer and companion in my long wanderings, to Dr. V. S. Manglik for helping me in my serological work, to my friend Dr. P. Basu for reading through the manuscript at an earlier stage of preparation and much valuable suggestions. Prof. N. N. Sen Gupta, my friend and colleague, has helped me with his mature judgment, informative discussions and clear exposition of psychological methods and pitfalls. To a large number of officials, district officers and subordinate staff, police officers and officers of the Forest Department,

managers of Criminal Tribes' settlements, I owe a great deal. Special acknowledgment however, is due to Mr. Y. D. Gundevia, I.C.S., Mr. Hefazat Hussain, I.C.S., Mr. N. K. Sen, Divisional Forest Officer, Haldwani, Dr. K. C. Sen, officer in charge of Animal Nutrition Institute, Izatnagar. It would, however, be premature to give a complete list of persons whose help I have already taken or would like to avail of, as my work is a long term undertaking and my debts yet to mount up. I am thankful to the Universal Publishers Ltd., Lucknow, for undertaking the publication and distribution of the Volume. My wife Mrs. Madhuri Devi, B.A., has prepared the index of the Volume and has given me generous assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. I have to thank also the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for permission to reproduce extracts from my articles in the Journals of the Society, also for allowing me to reproduce some blocks of photographs already published therein.

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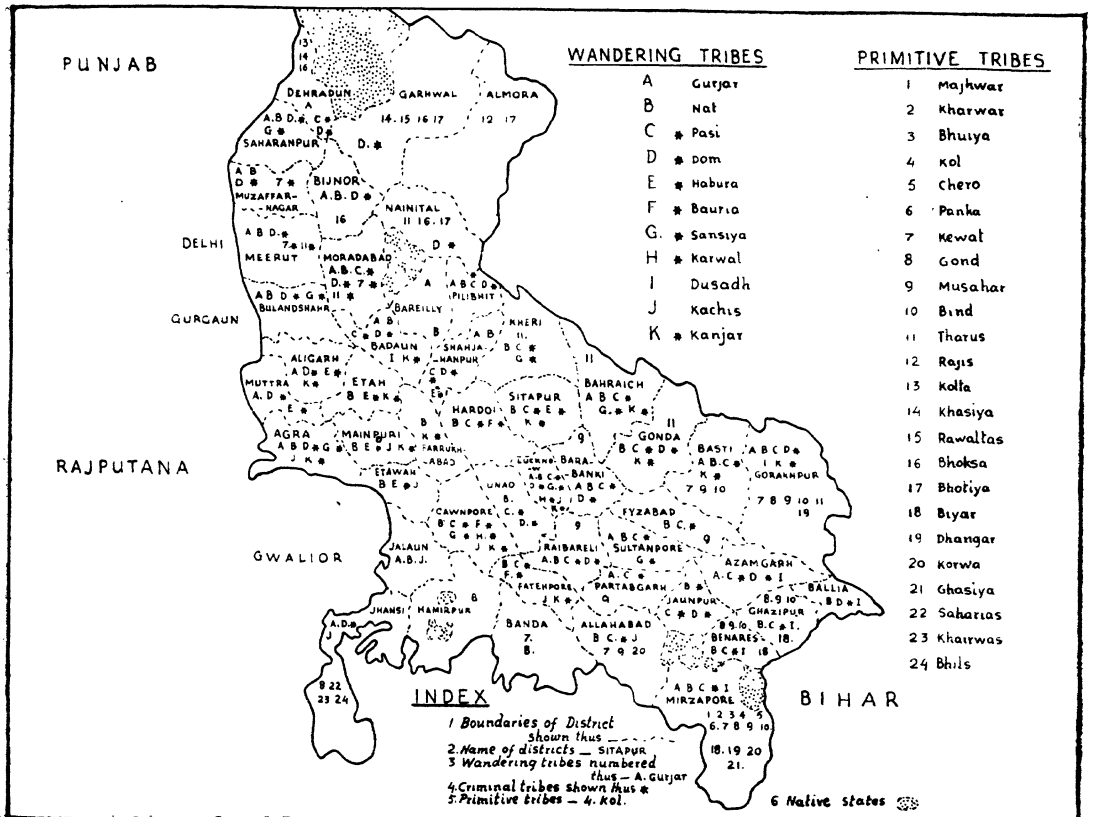
D. N. MAJUMDAR.

TRIBAL MAP OF THE UNITED PROVINCES.



THE KORWAS

"TO FIND survivals of prehistoric custom in the greatest abundance," wrote Sir William Crooke nearly half a century ago, "we must go to the pure Dravidian fringe of jungle dwellers who live along the central hills. They are found only in the Mirzapur district and in parts of Bundelkhand, their main habitat being in the present Central Provinces and Berar, where they form the connecting link between the Bhils in Rajputana to the west and the Sonthals and other cognate races of the Bengal hills." The Kols, the Bhuiyas, the Korwas, the Majhwars, the Cheros, the Aghariyas and the Kharwars are some of the primitive tribes living in the Mirzapur district. The Hindu castes immigrant and domiciled in the district include a few families of Brahmins, Thakurs, Kunbis, Koiries and certain artisan castes such as Chamars, Kumhars, Telis, Nais and Dhobis. The Chamar is a fairly numerous caste in Dudhi though many of them do not follow their traditional occupation. The Brahmins are getting well established as priests of the advanced sections of the tribal population though their influence is felt more among the Kharwars and the Majhis; the latter owe their finer features to a mixture with the caste people in the locality. The Thakur, the Muslim and certain Hindu castes live on usury, their rates of interest being excessive and ruinous to the tribal population. The influence of Hinduism on the tribal cultures has certainly been great and many of the tribes like the Korwas could preserve their cultural heritage only at the expense of their tribal vitality, and to-day, like many other primitive tribes, they are faced with extinction.

Col. Dalton described the Korwas as follows: "Short of stature and dark brown in complexion, strongly built and active with good muscular development but, as appeared to me, disproportionately short legged." In physical features the Korwas are easily distinguished from the neighbouring tribes such as the Majhwars, the Kharwars, the Bhuiyas, the Cheros and the Oraons. Most of the latter tribal groups are of a less robust constitution, a shade lighter in complexion and possess finer traits.

When I met the Korwas for the first time in Dudhi in 1931, I could not find any negroid racial traits among them. The Korwas of Dudhi and of Palamau do not show any connection with the Negritoes as such, but a few Korwa families of Sarguja were found to possess characteristics suggesting negroid affiliation. The Korwas have a very dark complexion; some are even soot black. They have a well-developed chest and their figure gives an impression of great physical strength. Their eyes are small and the lids are swollen, though there is no mongoloid fold or obliqueness. The nose is heavy, flat and depressed at the root. The lips are thick but not inverted. The jaws are heavy and prognathism is not uncommon. The hair is coarse, thick and very dark. It is either kept long, in which case it hangs unkempt over the shoulders, or, as the majority of the Korwas do to-day, the whole head is shaved clean with a tuft kept at the back which serves as a quiver for arrows! Woolly hair is not found among them. Genuine Korwas have a well-developed physique but look undernourished, even famished. They are scantily clad and sometimes go even nude particularly in the interior of the forests. There is apparently a lack of proportion between the upper and lower parts of their body, that is, they appear to be short-legged with the trunk fairly long for their stature.

The anthropometric data collected from Dudhi is given below. The mean stature of the Korwas is $158{\cdot}17 \pm {\cdot}505$, and the sitting height is $81{\cdot}51 \pm {\cdot}424$. The average cephalic index based on 101 individual measurements is 71·85. The cephalic index of the Munda is 74·5, of the Kharia 74·5 and of the Korwas 74·4 according to Sir Herbert Risley's data. Surgeon Captain Drake-Brockman who measured 25 Korwas of the U.P. found the average cephalic index to be 72·0 and the nasal index to be 75·0. I have found the nasal index of the Korwas to be 85·1 showing a material difference with that of Drake-Brockman. Different techniques may be responsible for such wide divergence. My previous calculation on the basis of the data from 50 Korwas of Dudhi already published (*Man in India,* Vol. IX, 1929) was cephalic index 72·9, and nasal index 83·7. A comparison of the means and standard deviations of the two samples do not reveal any significant differences. The majority of the Korwas are therefore

dolichocephalic and platyrrhine. As we proceed from the plains to the mountainous parts, the head tends to become longer and the nose flatter showing the comparative purity of the hill Korwas.

In April 1941 I succeeded in obtaining blood groups of the Korwas of Dudhi, Sarguja and Palamau. In a fortnight's tour through the Korwa country posing as an itinerant medical practitioner dispens'ng homœopathic medicines (a method which has stood me in good stead on so many occasions) I could collect 147 samples of blood from old people, women and children. It is difficult to get at the able bodied adult during daytime. In the summer holidays of 1941, I toured the Korwa country in Sarguja state and collected further anthropometric data from the Korwas there. In April 1942, I secured a good deal of data on the physical appearance and interrelations of the tribal groups in Dudhi in Mirzapur district. The complete analysis of the data will be presented later on in a suitable form.

The blood groups of the Korwas and their gene frequencies are recorded below :—

TABLE

	O	A	B	AB	p	q	r
Korwas (n. 147)	31·7	35·6	20·4	12·3	·257	·151	·563
Korwas (Female) (n. 89). ..	29·1	34·5	26·1	10·3	·258	·204	·539

Blood group data from a large number of tribes of pre-Dravidian affiliation have been published recently by Macfarlane and myself. A comparative study of the data so far available shows that the Korwas have the highest A and the lowest B value of all the tribes and castes of these Provinces. The criminal tribes and the Tharus all show high B incidence. Even the higher caste groups display the same characteristic. Malone and Lahiri found 37·2 p.c. B among 2,357 Hindus, an apparently heterogeneous lot. No other tribe in the U.P. has shown such high A percentage as the Korwas. The Paniyans, Chenchus, and Angami and Konyak Nagas and Lushei, all show a high A percentage. This means that A is considerably high among those tribes which are more or less isolated or which have

not been disturbed much by contacts. The Korwas of the U.P. are the most primitive element in the population of the Province and the hill Korwas still live in a wild state in Sarguja forests and in Udaypur and Jashpur. The Konyaks, the Lusheis, the Nagas, the Panyans and the Chenchus all represent more or less inbred and comparatively isolated groups. The Mundas of Chota-Nagpur although they inhabit a compact area and appear to have maintained their racial type to a large extent, have absorbed alien blood and therefore the A percentage is not very high among them (30 p.c.) though comparatively higher than is found in many mixed tribal groups.

From somatological as well as from the biochemical evidence, the Korwas appear to be a primitive, isolated and purer tribal group. Culturally, they have maintained their integrity and distinctiveness though, as mentioned before, at the expense of their vitality. As we proceed from the plains to the hills and forests there is a progressive increase in the percentage of A blood group.

Culturally the Korwas of Mirzapur and adjacent tracts are the most interesting and from the ethnologist's point of view, the most important tribe to-day. They inhabit the low scrub jungle of Dudhi, in south Mirzapur. They are found south of the river Son and along the frontier of Sarguja. Bands of Korwas are met with in the wildest parts of Sarguja and Jashpur where they seem to have retained a most elementary social stage, using bow and arrows and content with a simple material economy. The free life in the forests they have been used to, the nature of their habitat, their intolerance and suspicion of neighbours, all these have protected them from cultural invasion and even to-day the 'true Korwa neither sows nor reaps'. He lives a wild life and 'with his sharp spud digs up edible roots which with the fruit of jungle trees, constitute his food'. The Korwas are also found in Palamau. Their total number in Bihar may not exceed 10,000 souls. They appear to be numerous in the Banka Thana (Police Station) on the border of Sarguja. In Untary also, there are a few Korwa settlements. There is little physical difference between the Korwas of Palamau and those of Sarguja and Jashpur. In Mirzapur, the Korwas do not seem to have fared well due, I think, to being surrounded on all sides by alien tribes many of which are

skilful cultivators and artisans. They are believed to possess a knowledge of witchcraft which they employ against the Korwas, the original clearers of jungles and earliest settlers of this area. The wildest of the Korwas are found in the adjacent Sarguja state who have not been greatly disturbed by contacts. The Mirzapur Korwas appear to have been derived from Sarguja, but their migration was not continuous and the tail was suddenly intercepted by the closing up by other tribes, so that to-day the Korwas of Mirzapur are an isolated section of the tribe, surrounded by other tribes from whom they keep generally aloof thus maintaining a cultural distance.

The Korwas in the United Provinces are confined to Perganah Dudhi in Mirzapur district. The 1931 U.P. Census traced the Korwas in other districts as well, but the Census Superintendent himself had doubts about the authenticity of the figures collected and he, too, thinks that the genuine Korwas are to be found only in the Mirzapur district. The total number of Korwas recorded in the district is only 193 which appears to be an underestimate for the Korwas being the wildest of the tribes in these Provinces live scattered in the jungles and a correct estimate is difficult to make. From a first-hand investigation in the Dudhi Tehsil, it transpired that there are more than 150 families, so that the total strength of the tribe could not be less than 400 souls.

Dudhi lies south of the Kaimur range of hills and is between the parallels of 23° 52″, and 24° 54″ north latitude and 82° 32″ and 83° 33″ east longitude. It is bounded on the north by Perganah Agori, on the east by Palan and Sarguja, on the south by Sarguja and on the west by Perganah Singrauli. Dudhi physically forms an adjunct to the tableland of Chota-Nagpur and is dotted with small ranges of hills and here and there with isolated peaks. The river Kanhar flows by the east of the Perganah. Dudhi is a Tehsil for administrative purposes and is divided into four tappas; Pulwa, Gonda, Bajia and Adhaura. Dudhi has an area of 607·2 square miles or 398, 983 acres.

The greater part of Dudhi was formerly covered with dense forest and the little cultivation that the primitive inhabitants did was by burning the forests and sowing the seeds in the ash-covered soil. When the soil was believed to be exhausted, a fresh plot was selected,

and the same process of burning and sowing repeated. Villages were founded by burning and felling trees and the names of some villages to-day bear testimony to the different species of plants and trees which were cut and burnt. In the centre of the village, a group of trees were kept which showed the composition of the forest flora and where the sylvan deities were believed to dwell. Under the trees were placed boulders of varying sizes which were called *Dheevars* by the people and offerings and sacrifices are made even to-day to these stones in order to ensure the immunity of the villagers in times of famines or from epidemics. The village *Baiga* or the medicineman offers sugar, *ghee* and grains and sacrifices fowls or goats at the close of the agricultural season. Tradition has it that the first village to be founded was Banskata (i.e. after felling bamboo plants); the second Khairahi (catechu trees); the third Praspani and so on. The hills of Dudhi are composed of igneous and metamorphic rocks with occasional clay, slate or schistone formations. In the north, there are irregular ranges of hills of 'gneiss seamed with dolomite limestone, quartz, serpentine and other minerals'.

The population of Dudhi has not increased in the same ratio as in other parts. From 1881 to 1931, there has been an increase from 40,670 to 59,187. Much of the increase is accounted for by the flow of immigrants into the tehsil, so that the tribal people have not increased appreciably as, say, in Chota-Nagpur.

Another factor of tribal demography, true of other parts as well, is the differential rates of increase in the various sections of the tribal people. Some tribes which have adapted themselves to the changed economic environment and possess efficient tribal organisation, have really added to their strength from decade to decade, while those who live scattered and have failed to adapt themselves have either declined in numerical strength or are showing such a tendency. The tragic fact about many of these tribal groups is that they have been degraded to the status of agricultural serfs by the moneylenders who own the land, or the produce, while the original clearers of the forests—those who felled the forests and made the fields—have been deprived of their rights and have to serve the new zemindars for remuneration or in lieu of interests they owe them.

Although agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Dudhi, the fertility of the soil varies from tappa to tappa. In Dudhi proper the land is no doubt fertile but in other tappas it is inhospitable. 'More of sandy clay is found in Adhaura and Gonda Bajia' which is least suitable for agriculture. The river banks are fertile and black loam is found in abundance. Away from the rivers the clay is more and more mixed with sand till we get near the hills less of clay and more of stones, so that even ploughing is difficult. Water is scarce even for drinking purposes, for the rivers Kanhar, Rehand, Bicchi, Lahura and the many rivulets that get their supply of water from them do not carry water throughout the year. Sinking of wells is a hazardous process and an expensive affair. The average depth at which water is found is considerable and before it is reached often 'granite rocks appear' and boring operations become difficult in the extreme. A noticeable feature of the Dudhi forests is the comparative absence of bird life which is due to the dry climate and general scarcity of water. The rains are not evenly distributed throughout the year, and the nature of the soil makes it difficult for the moisture to be absorbed by it. The red soil is the least suitable for agriculture and yields little without manuring. The absence of irrigation facilities and the nature of the soil combine to make farming a risky adventure and the material condition of the people causes constant anxiety to the local authorities.

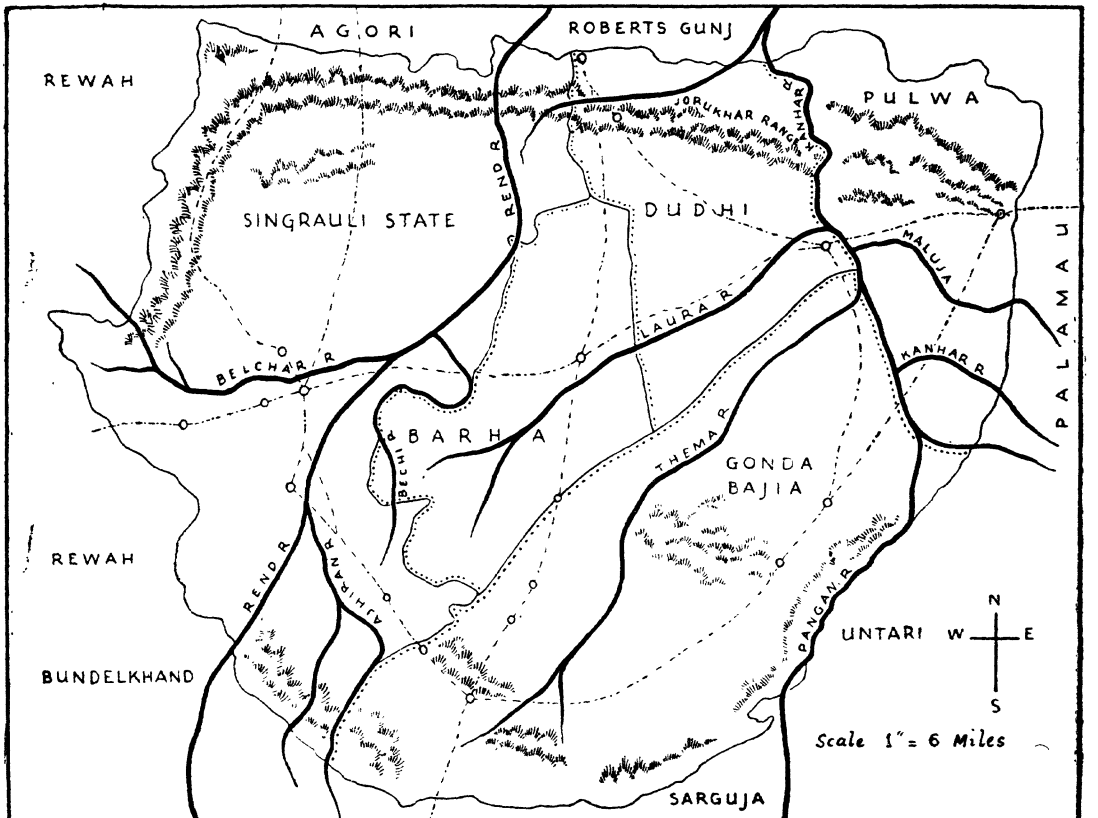
Fruits and roots from the forests (there are various processes by which the Korwas and other backward tribes cure even poisonous and non-edible berries and roots) supplement their meagre produce from the fields and somehow these children of the soil eke out their subsistence from the inhospitable environment. Their constant pre-occupation in their 'food quest' has circumscribed their activities in other directions, and they to this day possess a simple and crude culture compared to many of their neighbours who have progressed considerably in their material and social life. The hilly regions they inhabit, the forests where they 'forage for food', the rocky land they have to till and cultivate, have all contributed towards the backwardness of their culture. The tribes of Dudhi are no longer allowed to practise the wasteful *Jhum* cultivation; the forests have

been denied them to safeguard against denudation. The rocky land makes it difficult for deep ploughing, so that they are obliged to use miniature ploughs which scratch the fields in which they sow all kinds of seeds together, some of which take root, others evidently do not, and when they get a bumper crop they praise their gods. But when the crops fail, they blame themselves as well as their gods for acts of omission or commission.

The climate of Dudhi on the whole is not very bad, considering that many of the tribes of these Provinces live in very unhealthy and malarial climates. The Tharus for example live in a country infested with malaria, so much so that the officers who are posted to these outposts consider themselves penalised. The winter temperature in Dudhi is quite low, but the summer is extremely hot. Had the nights not been pleasant the hilly parts would have become difficult to live in. The rainy season extends over more than a quarter of the year and the rainfall averages about 95". There has been considerable reduction in the rainfall during the last few decades, possibly due to the wanton destruction of forests consequent on a rapid increase of the tribal population. Ordinarily the temperature here varies from 109° in June to 28° in December showing extreme climatic conditions. During the rains, the streams become swelling rivers and the Korwas and other primitive tribes inhabiting Dudhi believe that the river in spate indicates the festival of river-dwelling spirits and their dances to celebrate it.

A typical story supporting the above belief was related to me by a Majhwar some years ago. A Majhwar youth who had gone to sell grains in a market on the other side of the Kanhar, on his return found the river swollen and in spate due to the showers of the day. He had to cross the river in order to get back home. The ferryman had left his post for the night was dark and the current strong. The fear of lightning, the dread of wild beasts and the thought of his wife and children who were anxiously awaiting his arrival made him jump into the rushing stream. He was caught by the current and did not know where he was going. He fought with the waves till he was too tired to struggle any more. Finally he lost all consciousness. He could not recollect how long he had remained in

MAP OF DUDHI, MIRZAPUR DISTRICT, U.P.



water, but when he regained consciousness, he found himself in an enchanted land surrounded by a dozen young maidens bedecked with flowers, each maiden carrying a plate containing delicious sweets and all entreating him to partake of those delicacies. He was very hungry and began to eat and went on till all the plates were cleaned. On a signal from another girl, he was taken to a big palace in the great hall of which he was garlanded and then led to a *dais*. There he found, seated on golden seats, a group of 'handsome girls and fair', their feet resting on coils of serpents. He had heard of the Naga Rajas and he thought it to be the abode of the Nagas. He looked at himself and then at his reflection on the golden floor and found a change in him. This made him feel uneasy and he wanted to come away, but the wily girls started persuading him to stay. They promised him the lordship of the palace with all that he saw, but he kept on imploring the chief girl to conduct him out of the water back to his home, to his beloved wife and children. Soon he began to feel sleepy and eventually fell asleep. When he awoke, he found himself on the home side of the Kanhar. He reached home and narrated his experience to all the villagers, and ever since the swelling of the tide in the Kanhar or any of the neighbouring streams is taken by the Majhwars and other tribes to have been caused by the dances and celebrations of the spirits which live under the river and inside the caves of distant hills.

During the rainy months communication with the outside world is abruptly interrupted and the few roads that are found in Dudhi become useless for any vehicular traffic. Even when the roads are normal and declared serviceable by the Public Works Department, parts of them are found to be mere forests with gravel land so that little uniformity in width is maintained in the interior. It must be said to the credit of lorry drivers in these parts that they can safely negotiate these forest tracks for very strong nerves are sometimes required to keep the lorry under control. Cart traffic is singularly unpopular for want of good roads and the entire traffic of Dudhi is carried on pack animals. Day and night, the music of metal bells round the neck of the load carrying animals is heard. At regular intervals on the roads to the markets are found places for the mer-

chants to halt and rest their animals, cook food and even pass the night if necessary. Well-to-do merchants now avail of the transport facilities provided by the motor lorries, but as these are seasonal and their rates excessive, major part of the trade in grains of this area is still carried by animals and will continue to be so carried till the area is intersected by a network of main and feeder roads. There is very little prospect of railways entering the Dudhi Tehsil and the local people take pride in the fact that much of the produce of the area remain within the country for absence of transport facilities. Yet adulteration of food has become a menace and even the locally produced *ghee* is adulterated by the merchants and sold as genuine to an unsuspecting purchaser.

The wanton destruction of the forests by the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, which has necessitated stringent measures to protect the trees from their hungry axe has had its effects on the animal life of the tehsil. Though tigers, leopards, hyæna, jackals and foxes are still met with in plenty, they have apparently become shy and less numerous than before. Dudhi is considered to be good place for *shikar* and lovers of the sport frequent it during certain seasons. Hunting has been considerably restricted by the forest authorities and even the aboriginal people cannot enter the *rakhat* or reserved tracts without permit. Besides the animals named above, the forests also contain panthers, sambhars, cheetals, monkeys, wolves, wild dogs and wild boars. The rivers are full of fish, but the inefficiency of the aboriginal fishermen and their improvised nets and receptacles, account for the low yield from fishing. Crocodiles are not plentiful though big rivers like the Kanhar contain few.

The forests of Dudhi provide rich timber and edible or exportable material like catechu, bamboo, cotton, *mahua, baghai,* etc. There are also trees yielding useful fluids. There are hundreds of edible roots which the aboriginal people know and make use of in times of scarcity. Some of these roots are not safe for eating without being cured and the Korwas and other tribes know the process of curing them. The usual process is to extract flour from the roots by rubbing them on a stony floor and the powdery stuff thus got is made into a kind of *halwa* which is taken with salt or *gur,* both being luxury in

the interior of Dudhi. The following plants are found in Dudhi forests: asan, jethkhair, salai, abnus, persidh, shishum, rohina, bijaisal, sanam, auola, sidhi, karasan, kabu, gurri, galgal, paras, karam, bair, bahra, jugna, mapulan, kusum, kuriya, etc.

A variety of grains are produced in Dudhi though the aboriginal population restrict their cultivation to only two or three of them. The Koiries and the Kunbis are the two most important agricultural castes in this area and it is through them that the process of cultivation, manuring, irrigation, etc., have been introduced among the backward tribes and castes. The aboriginal cultivator in his natural environment knows little about the importance of the different crops, their rotation, or the advantages of mixed sowing. He does what his *mahajan* (creditor capitalists) directs him to do, for he is after all an agricultural serf on his own land. Whatever crops he raises he makes it over to the *mahajan* who grants him a share which seldom provides him enough for his needs. He is obliged, therefore, to incur more and more debts to feed himself and his family till his future and that of his progeny are irrevocably mortgaged to the *mahajan*. The aboriginal cultivator is thus permanently disabled in spite of his inalienable right to land. In effect he has become a hired labourer to the *mahajan* though he is a direct tenant of Government. Sandwiched between two masters his interest in land has disappeared and he exists to-day only to keep his masters alive, by paying rent to the one and interest to the other.

In the course of informal talks with the officers of the tehsil office I gathered the extent of tribal indebtedness in the perganah. Any estimate, however, must be much below the actual as many cases are not reported to the tehsil office and debts incurred by the great-grandfather or the father of a person remains to be paid and the *mahajan* expects and receives interests for large sums which the debtor has only heard of as being due. A few years ago, I collected some data in this respect from a number of tribal villages in Dudhi and I interrogated individual families and recorded their obligations. In one case the father of a man borrowed Rs. 25 from a particular *mahajan*, and for 25 years he had been repaying a portion of the debt at the annual harvest time. In addition, he served the moneylender

as a labourer in lieu of the interest which after every 6 months was added to the capital and further interest charged on it. The father died and the son continued to serve the creditor for the debt of his father which after 25 years amounted, as alleged by the creditor, to Rs. 500. When the son wanted to leave his village and migrate to some labour centre, the *mahajan* filed a suit for the amount with costs. Similar cases come to the tehsil court frequently and in spite of the efforts of the administrative staff and the threats of well-meaning officers, the *mahajan* has his way. He may not be granted a decree for the total amount claimed by him; he may not win his case, but the aboriginal debtor refuses to be lulled into security against him by the decision of a distant court, for his relations with the *mahajan* are more immediate than with those to whom he may appeal for redress. He approaches his *mahajan* when he is in difficulty and the latter provides the necessary help only to rope him in more tightly, when the court has decreed that the strings round him should be finally loosened.

It must be said to the credit of the *mahajan* that even if he obtains a decree against his debtor, he does not enforce it, for his chances of securing the money are not any the brighter for it. But the legal sanction is enough to frighten the debtor to submission, to acknowledge the obligation and make him work for his creditor—for nominal consideration. A few decisions by the tehsil court against the *mahajans* has reduced the incidence of such civil suits, but the hardships of the aboriginal tenants continue as before and nothing much, it appears, could be done to meet the situation. The greatest obstacle in the way of their economic emancipation are the aboriginese themselves for when they face their creditors they dare not deny the loan for fear of supernatural punishment, while the onus of proof about the repayment of the loan or interest thereon lies on them. If ever religion has had any practical implication in their life, it has been in rendering them helpless against the *mahajan,* for who does not know the fate that awaits him if he denies the creditor's claim or refuses payment on the ground of inability? The popular belief about the cause of eclipses, *viz.,* the pursuit of the moon or the sun by their creditors, helps to standardise the aboriginese' attitude to

creditors. Even literacy or propaganda by social workers and the introduction of co-operative credit leave them untouched.

The poverty and indebtedness of the aboriginal population in areas with a large alien population as in Dudhi make it necessary for the tribes to supplement their meagre produce from the fields with fruits, roots and tubers. A list of roots and herbs known to the aboriginal people as food, medicine and restoratives is given below. This is, however, not an exhaustive list though fairly comprehensive. The botanical names are not all known, for the words which are used for them are not all Hindi; some are tribal and it is necessary that accurate description of the roots should be available before their genera or species is definitely fixed. They are: Sanwat kanda (famine food); pantujani (fever specific); kurya kanda (fever specific); rudol kanda (tonic and famine food); poligan kanda (famine food); kapuni (fever specific); satawan (used to increase the supply of milk in the breasts of nursing mothers); pitha kanda (famine food); hansua danbhar (famine food); tejraj (tonic); patal knontiana (tonic); siman ka masala (tonic); bilani kanda (famine food); kundru kanda (tonic); chaniya kanda (tonic); bhojraj (tonic); seno kanda (tonic and famine food); fruit of dhamba (purgative); segat lamia dudhia kanda (famine food); khesa kanda (used on fasting days); gona kanda (medicine for constipation); med kanda (medicine for gout); pithan kanda (famine food); dhuna kanda (famine food); biskanda (medicine for relief of bis or pain); mekwas kanda (famine food); chit ka kanda (famine food); banaini kanda (famine food); tikhun kanda (famine food); mal kanda (famine food); kapseth (famine food); white musti (tonic); black musti (tonic); gai lakhan (medicine for pain and gout); bharis lakhan (medicine for rheumatism and gout); ram raj (tonic); inder raj (medicine to kill worms in the stomach); ajapen kanda (famine food). Most of these have special methods of preparation which the women learn from their mothers or grandmothers. The men hunt the roots from the forests which they hand over to the womenfolk. The latter work these roots and dry them in the sun. After they are completely dried, they are pulverised and the powder thus derived is used to prepare cakes. Medicine and folklore are closely interrelated among tribal populations. An investigation into the indi-

genous drugs and narcotics known among the tribal population in Dudhi is proceeding and is expected to yield informative material.

In spite of their inventiveness and efficiency, the Korwas are on evil days. Their struggle for existence has become very acute while their strength to cope with it is failing. Gone are the days when the Korwa used to roam in the forests in the lordly fashion of the jungle dweller, claimed the woodland as his home and when he married his daughter, he offered a mountainside as dowry on which her husband had the monopoly of 'foraging for food'. The constant addition to their number by such recruits by marriage from other areas more than compensated for the loss in their numerical strength by death, for hunting and the risks involved in it claimed a large toll from their fold. To-day the Korwas confine their marriages within the local group. The dowry consists of a few rupees or a goat or two, which fail to attract young men from outside. The result has been an inbreeding the extent of which has already told on their vitality and effectiveness.

A change from their free and unfettered life in the jungles has been forced upon the Korwas and in its place they now live what to others appear as an 'ordered existence' but which is nothing but a life of degraded serfs. A number of factors, physical and social, are responsible for this change in their economic environment. Due to the rapid deforestation of their country by the aboriginal cultivators already described, stringent forest laws were enforced to save the forests. This naturally led to a diminution of the supply of game and forest products necessary for their existence. Formerly the Korwas organised hunting groups and made inroads into the densest part of the forests, fought with the wild denizens, bagged sufficient prize, game, fruits and roots, which supplemented the products of their crude efforts at cultivation. So the forests were reserved as well as protected. In the reserved forests everything is an offence unless especially permitted; in the protected forests nothing is an offence unless prohibited. With the gradual denudation of the forests, much of the protected areas, too, became reserved, and thus the Korwas' free sources of food supply were denied them.

The early use of the bow makes the Korwas powerful thickset

men with deep chests and broad shoulders and exceedingly agile and active. The bow and other weapons of offence and defence were gradually rendered useless as they were denied incursion into the thick forests where game abounded. Both chasing and killing animals in the interior were prohibited to them. Wild fruits and roots usually are plentiful in the interior of forests, but the Korwas dared not seek them for fear of wild animals whom they were forbidden to kill, and also of the forest guards who would not allow them to cross the fire-line demarcated by them. The forest authorities foresaw this possibility, for in the report of the Forest Administration (*Imperial Gazetteer IV*) we find recorded, "The advance of civilisation must mean either extinction or absorption into a population possessing stronger vitality." "It is evident," continues the report, "that with the restriction of the larger areas of forest over which these tribes are wont to roam and the resulting diminution in the supply of food that the forests can afford, the formation of village communities possessing permanent cultivation must gradually ensue, and though in the first instance such villages are self-sufficient even to the smallest detail of domestic requirements, yet in time many savage customs and arts no longer necessary in a settled life will entirely disappear."

It is not the passing of mere customs that is important; it is the exit of tribal groups that once possessed a strong vitality and were powerful and resourceful, that makes a sad commentary on the forest administration of the country.

There have been instances in which an aboriginal tribe has been absorbed by other social groups. In such cases the former has not left any great impress on the stronger group. In other cases where there has been no such absorption, the aboriginal tribes with lesser vitality have faced the environment unaided, have preferred isolation and have become either extinct or are carrying on a miserable existence. A sort of rigid endogamy has developed among them leading in some cases to an intensive inbreeding in no way favourable to a healthy increase of population. Usually we find that endogamous tribes find it difficult to assimilate tribes with lesser vitality. Even those tribes which recognise genetic relationship among themselves will seldom permit intermarriage between members belonging to

cognate branches of the same tribal group. The hybrid is always looked down upon and his status is always inferior, a status which is not envied by any social group, however crudely equipped it might be in the struggle for existence. Hybridisation may be conducive to vigour; it is so in the animal and plant kingdoms where the social environment is no obstacle to their intercourse. But in the human society, we have to recognise social tradition, stratification and a code of behaviour socially approved. This is why, in spite of adverse economic conditions, tribes do not merge and unite into larger groups. This is also why, I suppose, the larger tribe splits up into smaller groups which isolate themselves and adjust their social life in response to their economic situation. In other words, instead of any such absorption, there is an incessant tendency to fission into endogamous sub-divisions with all its consequences involved.

When a race or a tribe does not merge itself into another race or tribe possessing greater vitality, yet prepares for an exit, like the Korwas, it may be taken for granted that there is something wrong in their process of adaptation. Culture is a dynamic process, and invention is the cause of progress. With every invention greater control over the physical world becomes possible and knowledge paves the way for adjustment and adaptability. Social groups are constantly adapting themselves to new situations, for failure to adopt may mean gradual elimination as it has been with many primitive races. When a tribe faces a changed environment, the thinkers of the tribe, 'the dreamers' or the originators of patterns as they may be called, produce solutions to meet the situation. The chances of these solutions becoming approved behaviour patterns depend on many factors, the most important being the status or personality of the inventor. When personality is lacking or is suppressed, as it may be among a people surrounded by more vital and vigorous social groups who try to exploit them for their own ends, the chances of new inventions taking root are not too many. Such has been the case with the Korwas who live in constant dread of their neighbours and have withdrawn themselves into their shells as it were. Evidently the forces of environment are exercising a limiting influence on their activities and maladaptation has already set in.

The process of adaptability includes positive as well as negative factors. A year of plentiful harvest to a starving tribe may be taken as a positive factor of adaptability, while a scanty yield or failure of crops in the case of an agricultural tribe means starvation and, therefore, leads to negative results. This is seen practically in the growing or diminishing interest of a tribe in their tribal dances. Dancing is the favourite pastime of aboriginal tribes. When the members of a tribe have some leisure after the ordinary economic pursuits, they usually take to nightly dances in their *akharas* or dancing arena and animated dances become a regular feature of tribal life. But when game becomes scarce or the pasture lands fail to supply forage for the cattle or crops fail, naturally enough the tribal security is jeopardised and loss of vitality in tribal life results which is reflected in their loss of interest in dancing and similar activities.

When the negative factors of adaptability outweigh the advantages from the positive factors the effect is felt in the reduction of fertility in tribal society just as, contrariwise, high birth rate is known to follow a trade boom or agricultural prosperity. When negative factors preponderate the birth rate suffers a check, death rate exceeds the birth rate, and in the event of the latter happening, the tribe may ultimately disappear. On the other hand, when positive factors preponderate the prosperity of the social group is manifested in the excess of births over deaths and a healthy and cheerful outlook is developed which equips the people better for the battle of life and helps them to adjust themselves to new situations which may arise in the future. There are direct and indirect factors of adaptability, some immediate others remote. The direct ones may be of immediate concern to the people; the indirect ones, though apparently not on the surface, yet help to hasten the operation of the direct factors. Physical agony, starvation or disease are direct factors; exploitation by the *mahajan,* exaction of landlords or their revenue agents, introduction of social and sexual vices are indirect, but nevertheless important for they affect the well-being of the group.

The true Korwa who neither sowed nor reaped was forced to take to crude agriculture. He learnt to rear a scanty crop of maize or beans by burning a patch of jungle, scratching the soil and sowing

on the ashes. The stoppage of this wasteful method of farming has done them little good. While in other parts settled agriculture and animal husbandry have replaced primitive form of agriculture, the Korwas do not show much prospect of becoming efficient agriculturists, and it is indeed doubtful if ever they will take to permanent cultivation seriously enough for they hold their lives on slender terms, particularly in these provinces.

The Sarguja Korwas are said to be notorious for their lawlessness. They are fond of fighting, resort to their bow and arrows on the slightest provocation and do not tolerate strangers. Maintenance of law and order among the Korwas, we have been told by state officials, is a matter of constant attention and very often disturbances are reported which strain the relations between the police and the wild people. Yet, theft, robbery, cattle lifting or abduction are alien to the Korwas, but they would certainly protest against any exploitation to which they are not willing parties. While it is possible to get *begar* from other tribes, the Korwas would resent such practice and when they are forced to it, would grumble and take the earliest opportunity to avenge their discomfiture. The shooting and murder of officials by the Korwas, frequently reported in the states of Sarguja and Jashpur, can thus be accounted for. The isolation of the Korwas in these states and the *laissez faire* policy of the state with respect to the primitive tribes there have preserved the pattern of Korwa culture but have made them intolerable of strangers or of interference by state officials. But the same cannot be said of their colleagues in Dudhi. The forests of Sarguja are not denied to the Korwas, but the Dudhi forests are. While the Sarguja Korwas are yet lords of the jungle, those of Dudhi are not. Again, while the Sarguja Korwas consider themselves masters of the country, those of Dudhi have already been reduced to abject misery and serfdom. While the former are conscious of their rights and influence, the latter have lost all ambition in life and are a desperate lot. The same pattern of life and living exists in both, but the reactions to the environments had to be different. While there is yet no indication that the Korwas of Sarguja are dwindling in numerical strength, the Mirzapur Korwas have already suffered depopulation and may become extinct in the decades to come.

The Mirzapur Korwas now have to remain content with the rocky land from which they are trying hard to eke out a livelihood. The poor breed of cattle they possess are unable to drag heavy ploughs, so that miniature ploughs are used which can only scratch the soil and there is no intensive furrowing. The rivers and rivulets which divide and diversify the rocky plateau where they live do not even supply them with enough drinking water and irrigation is naturally impossible. The average depth at which water can be found is very great and before it can be reached, granite rocks have to be pierced. The District Gazetteer says that large sums of money have been spent by Government on sinking wells and constructing tanks and embankments mostly in the vicinity of the headquarters of Dudhi Tehsil, but these do not improve the water supply for they fail in the dry season owing to the porousness of the soil. As pasture land cannot be had in the vicinity of the hamlets, the cattle are taken to the forest for grazing. The forest rules do not recognise the right of grazing cattle in every forest, so the cattle have to be taken miles away and are not brought back home every evening. The excreta also for this reason cannot be used to manure the soil. As is only natural in the circumstances, they scratch the gound, sow the seeds and offer prayers and sacrifices to the rain god on whose bounties their existence depends. They plough their lands for two to three years at the most and then keep them fallow for a couple of years or so.

The scarcity of water, the want of manure, the inhospitable nature of the soil, and the crude farming cannot yield a plentiful harvest, so the Korwas are never self-sufficient in their supply of food. Years of continued disappointment due to scanty production or failure of crops, the exploitation of the *mahajan* or the moneylender, the merciless exactions of the landlords or their revenue agents, the cunning excise shopkeepers of the interior have all combined gradually to deprive the people of every ambition in life. By degrees the lands of old tenure belonging to Korwas and other tribes are passing into the hands of *sahukars* who exploit them mercilessly. The Korwas were the purveyors of forest produce when they came in contact with the caste people whose needs had to be supplied by the local aborigines. The introduction of a system of afforestation and reservation of forests

have circumscribed their activities and they have to fall back on their crude attempts at cultivation. The propagation and collection of lac and the supply of *sawai* grass to agents of paper mills have become less remunerative due to low prices and an organised market which has produced a set of middlemen intercepting their profits. All these have lowered their prospects and increased their despair, so much so that the Korwa to-day lives in an atmosphere of mortality. Like the Fijian, he is not tenacious of life and 'his dread of death is a mere physical fear'. If he becomes ill of any save the most ordinary malady, he does not make any struggle for life. This indifference is one of the symptoms of a 'sluggish apathy' to life and all that it connotes.

I was once discussing some problems of rural welfare with certain members of the Korwa tribe. Inquiries about their social and economic conditions seldom elicited answers and none of them had any suggestion or even a complaint to make. I was explaining the importance of co-operative efforts to reduce the incidence of mortality from infectious diseases. While the listeners were dispersing, a messenger from the village not far off came with the news of death of the only son of Biram, an elderly Korwa, who was in the discussion group. I had already put some questions to him to which he had replied, but I had not noticed any trace of anxiety or solicitude in his manner. I inquired about the cause of his son's death and was told that the boy was suffering from fever and acute dysentery and his condition was very serious since the morning which Biram knew before he had left his house. The news of the boy's death did not produce any disquieting change in the attitude of Biram nor did he leave in haste to see the last of the deceased. With the other members of the Korwa community, I immediately proceeded to Biram's cottage and found the members of the house had already collected the necessary requisites for cremation and were waiting for Biram. There were no loud lamentations, no tearing of hair in grief as is usually found among other tribes, nor any elaborate efforts to summon friends and relations from far and near as is customary among the Mundas, the Hos and other tribes in the neighbourhood. The whole arrangement was conceived and executed coolly and without

any display of emotion characteristic of mortuary rites. This apathy which is the outcome of a maladaptation is growing in magnitude and is reflected in the neglect of children and also in an otherwise inexplicable attitude of supreme unconcern displayed by the people.

There are other effects, too, of this 'tranquil despair' among the Korwas. As already pointed out they have withdrawn themselves from contacts and seldom take part in activities in which other castes must co-operate. For example, when rains fail or the rivers overflow the banks or epidemics take a heavy toll of lives, village solidarity demands ungrudging co-operation of all in protective and preventive measures. But the Korwas usually appear to be disinterested spectators, and even if they are anxious to save their families and clansmen, they decide independently and follow their age-old methods, supremely reticent about the happenings around. Nowhere is this attitude more in evidence than in their tribal code regarding marriage, for their isolation which is purely of their own making, has encouraged a sort of inbreeding not noticed elsewhere.

The Korwas do not allow any inter-tribal intercourse. No inter-tribal marriage is possible and they seldom observe prohibited degrees in marriage. Father-daughter and brother-sister marriages are not allowed, but they can marry all other relations and they do so with the full knowledge and approval of the tribal society. How far this inbreeding has been responsible for their low fertility is difficult to estimate, but first hand data collected by me in Dudhi reveal a large percentage of sterile marriages and a low average fertility. About 60 families were examined and it showed 29 p.c. of marriages to be sterile, about 31 p.c. have provided a single issue while the maximum number of children to a family was found to be 5. The sex ratio was approximately 5 :3. Still births, deformity and psychopathic cases were also noticed.

The figures collected from Sarguja tell a different tale. In 71 families examined there were 3 sterile marriages, the average number of children was 3.4 and one woman was found to be the mother of 11 children while many counted 6 to 8 children born to them.

The factors that are of great significance in hastening the exit of races and tribes are imported diseases, high sex ratio, abortion,

loss of ambition in life, inbreeding and apathy to tribal traditions and established usages. Although the relative effect of each of these factors cannot be ascertained, the fact that all these are functioning among the Korwas explains their miserable plight. Economic problems, family conflict, even sexual antagonism, are protected by taboo and protective myths. When a tribe develops apathy to its customs and traditions, the safeguards are automatically removed and disorganisation reaches its last stages. The Korwas have their tribal society. Instead of constituting the *panch* with only the elders, as is common among all tribal societies, the Korwa elders share their powers with the rest of the tribe and even women and children are found to take part in the deliberations of the Korwa council. Nor are there any initiation rites or ceremonies preliminary to membership of the council. Whenever any matter comes up for decision, the titular leader of the council summons all the members of the village along with those interested. The matter is then freely discussed and only when unanimity is reached is the verdict pronounced. Everyone is heard and the members present take sides though no bad blood is created.

On one occasion I attended one such sitting of the council at Kundpan in the interior of Dudhi. Some 20 people, all adult, met to decide a case in which Magnoo, a Korwa, was charged with having deliberately refused to part with a hen which was alleged to have strayed from some neighbouring village. Cholera and small-pox both were raging in an epidemic form in the neighbouring village and it was the duty of every villager to see that stray domesticated birds did not enter the village boundary. The custom prevalent in the Korwa country is to approach the *Baiga* in times of such crisis, who arranges for a sacrifice of hen or goat to appease the spirits like *Kodmamata, Burimata* or *Sitlamata* who are believed to cause such epidemics. The hen or goat sacrificed by the *Baiga* on such occasions is not killed, but a piece of rag or some pieces of red thread are tied round the leg of the bird or the neck of the goat which is chased out of the village till it enters the boundary of the next village. The method of expulsion is to pelt the hen with stones while the goat is carried by someone in his arms and placed within the boundary of the adjacent village. Special care is taken to see that it does not

return to the village where it has been offered to the spirits. Whenever such a hen or goat is found to enter any village, its members become terror-stricken and in turn chase it out of their village in the same way. Magnoo who awaited his trial by the village council should have joined the others in driving the hen out of his village boundary, but not only had he paid no heed to the remonstrances of his fellow-villagers, what was worse, he refused to part with the bird which he claimed was his spoil. During the discussion that took place in the course of the trial, the position of the offender was cleared. It was held that since the hen had no thread or rag tied round its leg, Magnoo had been justified in thinking it was harmless and therefore anxious to appropriate it for his meal. He acknowledged that he had been wrong and was exonerated of the charge and the bird was driven out of the village. This was obviously a fair trial. But what followed is of significance. Sukai who was the chief spokesman for the prosecution got up and made an eloquent appeal to the villagers to see that their action did not in any way bring disaster to the village. Already the villagers were terror-stricken, for the epidemic in the adjacent village had assumed grave proportions, and 'unless the villagers co-operated in protecting their hearth and home, they could not fight against such calamities'. But whispers went round, 'What is the good of protection? We know it is useless. We should welcome death. There is no hope for us,' and many others which I could not catch. This incident convinced me that I was facing disorganisation in progress.

As is natural for a dying tribe, the Korwa lives in an atmosphere of mortality. Death is not only due to natural causes, it may come any time from any source. The Korwa's fortune may rise and fall with the hissing of the snake, the howl of the jackals, the wailing of a dog in the courtyard, or that of a cat inside the house. Dreams are not real, but when they are associated with the evil spirits, demons or ghosts, the Korwa anticipates danger and the *Ojha* or the *Baiga* must be approached to propitiate the offended spirits. Often the Korwa will narrate his dream to the *Ojha* who gives some familiar explanation and suggests the remedy which takes the form either of the demand for the sacrifice of a fowl or goat from the 'person concerned', or the

promise to make such sacrifice if no calamity befell him and his family within a specified period. It is only when the village god is seen in dreams that the Korwa can safely predict epidemics or famines or both. A black hen, a black elephant or a buffalo seen in a dream is a certain indication of impending calamities, and often the dreamer is afraid of revealing the contents of his dream. Then, the days of the week, too, have their magical significance for the fortunes of an individual or of a particular family. Friday is a lucky day for all important functions. In marriage Friday brings good luck; a wedding on Saturday is taken to be productive of quarrels and bitterness between relations. If a child is born on a Saturday there is consternation among the members of the family and the *Baiga* must offer *ghee* and *gur* to the village deity so that the 'evil eye' and the 'evil tongue' with which the child is thought to be born may lose their stings.

Tattoo marks on the body are not meant for decoration alone; they assure the person carrying them of rebirth as a Korwa or of a place in their heaven. They also serve as charms against fatal accidents, epilepsy and insanity. An old Korwa complained to me about the remissness of the younger generation, who go without tattoo marks, particularly the women. He thought much of their misfortune could be accounted for by the fact that genuine and healthy customs were not observed and people showed little courtesy to age-old practices. When he looked at my naked arms he realised what I might be thinking and said, "It really does not matter for those whose ways of life are different from us, but our ancestors being illiterate they could only identify their kith and kin by the tattoo marks and these must be carried if we want help from our dead ancestors." The Korwa who explained this to me was a clever person and had had some education in the village school. A woman told me that those of her sex who failed to get tattooed would not be allowed to enter the gates of heaven, and they would be reborn as Christians or Moslems—a life which none among the Korwa covets.

While the Korwas place great reliance on black magic, they are also keen observers. Rains can be had by imitative magic, but they must know whether rain would come by itself. The rainbow is a sure sign of heavy downpour. The hissing of the snake, the

swarming of bees, the cries of the peacock, the burning of leaves in the forest are all portents of approaching showers. When the urine of cattle dries up before it settles on the ground, rain is sure to follow. But when the bees leave their hive, the wasps do not bite, the snakes do not hiss, the cuckoo is silent, rain must fail and famine would eventually overcome them. Then the Korwas meet together, ask the *Baiga* for help in the impending crisis. The old men get together and refresh their memory and cite traditional spells and prayers. Boys and girls roll on the highways crying for rain; the young men roll down stones from the hills; the *Baiga* sacrifices a cock and sprinkles the blood like drops of rain on the crowd. If all these do not bring them the desired result, the village deities are worshipped by the priest day and night while the elders of the village sit together and pray for rain. If even this does not avail, pilgrimages are arranged to reputed shrines and the villagers co-operate in providing the necessary requisites, offerings, etc., which are taken by their chosen representatives and delivered to the temples.

Often we hear an old man lamenting that 'times have changed', 'the powers that their tribal priests or the *Baigas* possessed in the old days have weakened', 'the gods have become apathetic', 'the youth has lost all respect for the old', and that 'the ways of his people were so different from those of to-day'. 'The women,' said an octogenarian, 'have become more irreligious than men, that is why abortion and still births have become so common these days'. Another spoke about the 'golden days that he had seen in his early life', and how those had disappeared before his very eyes. Who was to be blamed for this? The young men, of course; those 'that were licked to shape by them'. How could it happen? How could the cup of milk and honey disappear? Gods are not mischievous, but disrespect and want of attention annoy them, and the people's miseries are but the logical consequences of this irresponsibility of the present generation. A young man who was working as my interpreter pointed out the changes that had occurred in recent years and how they had circumscribed their activities in the economic field, but age would not bow to reason. There is obviously something to be said for both the points of view.

As misfortune, it is said, does not come alone, remedies, too, are meant to be a panacea for all ills. If asked, 'Why do you pray to this god or that god?' the Korwa answers, 'Not merely for prosperity in agriculture; the daughter is ill, the buffalo has strayed out of the village, the wife has measles, the brother has a date with the *mahajan*. If the god is pleased, he will, in turn, please the Korwa by granting all that he prays for.' Worries have increased and he does not get redress for all at the same time, so to him his gods appear to fail him. He thinks, why should he offer his best hen if he does not get what he wants? He wants definite assurances from the *Baiga* before he agrees to part with his hen. Some, however, do not part with it at all and irreligion spreads from village to village. This is the problem of the Korwas: they want to drink their life in, but how to do it? From it has disappeared both milk and honey; at any rate, honey certainly has, and for milk alone they do not care. It is like the Hawaiian's loss of land. "We had shut our eyes to stay and when we opened it, the land had fled through the window," or again, "We had parted with our land for a bottle of gin and now the gin is being taken away from us too" (referring to the prohibition in those days).

The Korwas have not lost their land but their interest in it certainly. The various tribes that live with them encircle them, like the circle of stones they raise to hedge in the spirits of their deceased relatives. The spells and charms are strong enough to circumscribe the activities of the disembodied spirit. Just as their spells and incantations are powerful enough to tie down the spirit within the radius of the stone circle, the other tribes and castes, their powerful neighbours, do not allow them free movement and they must either live together, marry among themselves and share their misfortunes or become extinct. They are doing both, the one leading to the other.

The Korwas are usually not afraid of animals; they are strong enough still to live with them. They can kill a tiger single-handed. In olden days they used to hunt them down and kill them with their native weapons, the bow and arrows or the axe. But to-day they have begun to dread the tiger. Sukai of Kundpan proudly narrated his exploits; he had the distinction of killing several tigers in his young

days. Once he saved his wife from a tiger by singly challenging the beast with a pick-axe. His wife still bears an ugly scar on her face. But now? His voice sank when he said how the tigers had become a menace to the Korwa villages. 'The other day,' said he (though the incident happened in 1926 or '27), 'a number of Korwas were engaged in road construction and at night they were asked to keep watch on the tents of the supervising staff. They lit a fire and sat round it. It was a cold December night. The tiger wanted a prey. Suddenly there was a yell and a confused noise followed. The tiger had got its victim. It jumped into the crowd and out of it. A murmur ran through the crowd, and the news passed from mouth to mouth—"the uncle got his pound of flesh". The engineer got up, enquired what had happened. 'Nothing,' said the elders in the crowd. 'It was the uncle who pounced on them'. It took some time for the people in the tents to realise who the 'uncle' was. This attitude of indifference characterises Korwa culture of to-day which is certainly a pathological trait.

Unfortunately for the Korwas, the Cheros are the traditional *Baigas* of the area and most of the tribes engage the latter to redress their distress and grievances. The Cheros have used this privilege to their benefit and have also succeeded in maintaining their clientele. While the Cheros supply the witch doctors, diviners and exorcists, the other tribes have provided the witches, sorcerers and blackmailers, and between them they control the life and activities of the tribal population in Dudhi. This is why the Korwas are suspicious of the other tribes and are constantly in dread of sorcery and witchcraft for which they have no remedy but to propitiate and appease a number of malevolent spirits. The Korwas are ignorant of the nature of these spirits, and whenever they suspect any maleficence, they approach the Chero *Baiga* for information and remedy. The latter makes an elaborate preparation for divining the cause of the trouble which only increases the Korwas' helplessness and encourages restlessness.

I observed the nature and subject of divination in one of my ethnographic tours into Dudhi. In Mouza Rajhkhar, there was a *deogharia* or a house of spirits owned by a Chero *Bhagat* or diviner. The *deogharia* was famous all over Dudhi and people from all parts

used to come and consult the oracle at Rajhkhar. The secrets of the *deogharia* were carefully protected and publicity was believed to be ominous to the informant. It was with great difficulty that I could prevail upon the people of the village to show us the process of divination practised there. I was told that every morning a crowd collected at the *deogharia* where it was difficult to get access. However, we managed to reach the *deogharia* one morning before dawn and noticed a large crowd already assembled there from the night before. We were shown the hut, a small low one made of mud and covered with thatch without anything prepossessing in its appearance to attract the attention of inquisitive tourists. Our appearance there sent a murmur through the crowd and comments about our mission reached our ears. Some were merely anxious to know what made us townfolks visit the place while others suspected our motives. A Majhwar schoolmaster, himself a substantial cultivator of the village, interpreted our wish to the crowd and a smile flashed from face to face. The *Bhagat* was not in the hut but soon his steps were heard and the songs heralded his presence. Our friend the schoolmaster immediately approached the *Bhagat* who was persuaded to agree to our presence at his seance. Every morning he enters the *deoghar* to answer the *sawals* or questions of distressed persons who come miles to know the nature of spirit possession and the prospects of a compromise with the offended spirit. The three of us (my student, the school teacher and myself) were given permission to enter the hut and we were asked to take off our shoes and wash our limbs which we did to their satisfaction.

Within the hut there was a raised platform built with earth which nearly occupied half of the room. On this *dais* were kept a number of weapons, a metal sword, a big *lathi,* a small iron trident, a pair of tongs, and a few musical instruments, such as brass cymbals, *mandol* (drum) and *nagera* (kettle-drums), etc. The sword appeared to be very much used and had a blunt edge which minimised the risks of experiments as we noticed later. On one side of the raised structure was kept a crudely fashioned wooden model of a Hindu temple with spiked domes at the top while the centre of the room was covered by a leopard's skin presented to the Bhagat by a disciple.

On the inner walls of the mud hut marks of vermilion had been stamped, mostly consisting of impressions of a human palm imperfectly made but imparting a mysterious look to the whole place. In the ceiling were stuck a pair of broomsticks, a small hand *punkha* made of peacock feathers, two winnowing baskets and one metallic shield.

The *Bhagat* was a young man of about 30 years, a Chero by tribe, his hair hanging in curls all round his head. His appearance showed him to be a nervous and irritable person accustomed to an austere life but his sharp eyes revealed his intelligence and also his shrewd regard for us. When we were comfortably seated inside the room he felt at peace, and soon after began his customary weird proceedings. Our original estimate of his nervousness was soon belied by his consummate skill and his very practised rites. A young boy aged 10 or 12, or a little more, who was his disciple and trainee was sitting by his side busy preparing tobacco which, when ready, was respectfully handed over to him. The *Bhagat* began to smoke and went on till the smoke darkened the whole room. When we were nearly suffocated he relinquished his *chillum*, took the cymbals, and began to play on them. The boy then started to play on the drum and between them an uncanny tune was produced which sent a shiver through the crowd. Soon the music had its influence on the *Bhagat*, his head began to rock to and fro, at first slowly but gradually faster till a terrific commotion was made with his curls, dancing in a circle round his head. This, however, did not last long, it could not. Soon after he became violent, his eyes reddened, his hands became restless and clutched the sword by his side which he began to brandish violently making us withdraw from his range. The sword then started its work, it was first at his throat and gradually driven deep into it, then it was meant to pierce the stomach. His cries of agony were heard even by the crowd outside. He was now in a trance, just for a twinkle as it were, and he fixed his eyes on his very shadow. Soon after he showed signs of exhaustion. He lost his hold on the sword, his head dropped on one side, the tongue came out, the eyes became calm and fixed, rivetted as it were, and all indications pointed to death, verily a metamorphosis. Then the head gradually gained its erect position and he drew the tongue in. His hair was carefully shifted

to the natural position and he looked at himself in the water which his disciple had already put before him in an earthen pot. He now became normal, a different man altogether from the one whom we had known a few minutes ago. He was again handed a *chillum* by his assistant. He began to smoke again, a smile lit the corners of his austere face, a smile evidently of success. The smoke again filled the air, and his assistant informed the crowd that the *Baba* (now the *Bhagat*) was ready to answer *sawals.*

One after another in quick succession the questions were put to him. He looked into the water every time and answered them to the satisfaction of the questioners. All ills, disappointments, miseries, diseases, even domestic quarrels, were traced to the *Bhawanis,* who were many in Dudhi, and remedies were suggested which were carefully noted by the people concerned. The usual remedy consisted in appeasing the offended *Bhawani* by offering *gur, ghee* and even fowls and goats or promising to do so. For hours this went on till one by one his clients left satisfied. There was no payment of any kind to the *Bhagat,* nothing was prescribed for the *Devasthan,* and no transaction of any suspicious nature was discovered. It was the right of every tribesman to consult the oracle, and it was the duty of the latter to serve them.

But the *Bhagat* did not go unrewarded. Whenever the people succeeded in tiding over crises, they would remember the help given by the *Bhagat* by sending him presents in the shape of the produce of their garden, grains from their fields, clothes woven by them, utensils or labour for constructing huts. The *Bhagat* also undertakes to propitiate the spirits believed to be offended and the prescriptions provide him with a surplus enough to meet his personal requirements.

The Korwas know that many animals are friendly but men they have to deal with in their daily life fail them for no obvious reasons. An old Korwa gave me the following story: 'In the beginning,' he said, 'God made all into brothers and sisters. He wanted all to help one another. The forests were full of animals, the rivers well stocked with fish, fruits and roots were abundant. God wanted men to compete with nature and obtain the necessary subsistence. But men decided to compete with one another, fight and quarrel, rob them of their

women and deprive them of their belongings. Since then, man does not trust his neighbour and all the worries of life have begun in consequence.' 'But why,' I asked my friend, 'did man turn against his fellow man?' The old man showed some uneasiness, his face wrinkled and he muttered in agony. 'Well, Sir, I tell you, there is something in the blood. In some it runs pretty fast, in others it is still like the waters of a tank. Some people flare up, you know not why, others submit without grumbling. It is the blood that brought all the trouble on mankind'. It was not the discourse of a serologist that I was listening to, but it was of a skilled observer and an experienced man. Somewhere someone has not done the wrong as many tribal traditions claim; it was the nature of man that was at fault, and the Korwas of to-day blame their creator no less than they blame themselves for all the evils.

The Korwas trace all their diseases to the malign influence of spirits and sorcerers who probe into human failings, and chastise men for real or imaginary offences against the spirits, the sorcerers or their patrons. Diseases are of two kinds, those that grow from within the body and those that are due to external physical causes. The latter include all external sores, bruises, cuts, burns, fracture of bones, etc., while the former include fever, measles, small-pox, cold, consumption, cholera, dysentery, nausea, etc., in other words, those whose causes they are ignorant of, are taken as internal. These diseases are believed to be caused by the witches or sorcerers acting nefariously in collusion with their patron spirits, and the only way by which they can be cured is by propitiating the latter through the witch-finder or exorcist or through the tribal priest, if the latter is well versed in the spirit lore of the land.

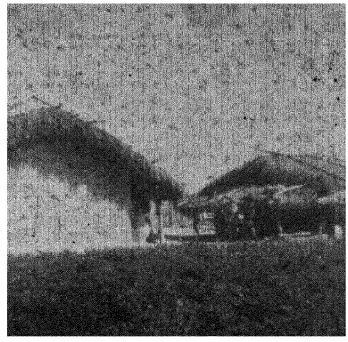
Death from infectious diseases such as small-pox, cholera, or plague is seldom followed by cremation. The Korwas throw the bodies into the caves of distant hills or into big rivers with strong currents. Unmarried persons of both sexes are also buried by the Korwas. Women dying from puerperal fever or from eclampsia are believed to be transformed into mischievous spirits, and they are supposed to cause trouble to pregnant women or those in pain. The spirits of children dying young are known as *Bal Sadhok* and they

cause still-births, deformity and rickets. Consumption is caused by holes in the lungs made by *Rakti Bhowani*, a female spirit who feeds on blood. Fever is also caused by *Bhowani* and a promise of some sacrifice or offerings to her effects radical cure. Small-pox is caused by *Maharani* or *Sitlamata* and it is only regular worship and propitiation that can ensure the safety of the Korwas. Dysentery and spitting blood can both be remedied by offering a red fowl or the blood of goats sacrificed to *Rakti Bhowani* or *Sakti Bhowani* who, with their sister *Kachni Bhowani*, are the most dreaded malevolent spirits of Dudhi. Gout, lumbago and rheumatism, too, are attributed to the *Bhowanis*. As amongst the Munda tribes, the malignant spirits have no fixed abode, but they hover round the village and move from place to place and from person to person. The fact that the spirits are not permanently settled anywhere makes it easy for the *Ojha* or *Baiga* to displace them through their effective spells and incantations. The Chero *Baiga* very often possesses a crude knowledge of the efficacy of certain herbs and roots, but he also dispenses filthy decoctions.)

(In spite of the disorganisation in progress, the Korwas have faith in their indigenous pharmacopœia. They have more faith in the medicineman and his nostrums than in qualified physicians and their prescriptions.) As with all tribal people when they take any drug, they cannot separate it from the charm believed to be associated with it. The herb or the root or any indigenous prescription derives its efficacy by virtue of the spells and incantations uttered by the *Baiga* in the course of its administration. As the *Baiga* alone knows the roots and creepers out of which his nostrum is prepared, the composition of the latter is not known to the people. So anything that the *Baiga* applies is a charm even if it is only an indigenous drug. This helps to maintain the position of the *Baiga*.

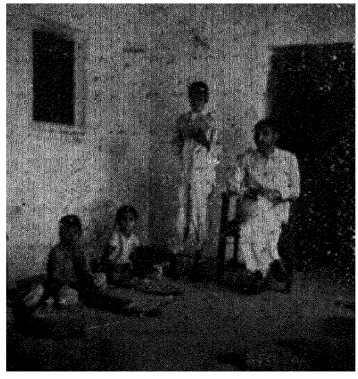
(The Chero *Baiga* makes daily offerings to village godlings and *Sitlamata*, lives an austere life, grows long curls and flourishes on a vegetarian diet. In the pure Korwa village he makes a burnt offering of sugar and curd daily and whenever his prescription fails, as it must on occasions, he invokes his pet spirits who are known to reside in the Banka hill. He would even requisition the services of alien gods

A Majhwar woman in the weekly market at Dudhi.



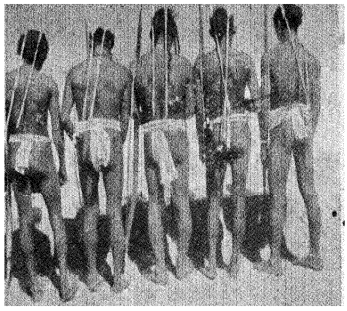
A Majhwar house in Dudhi, Mirzapur.

To the weekly market

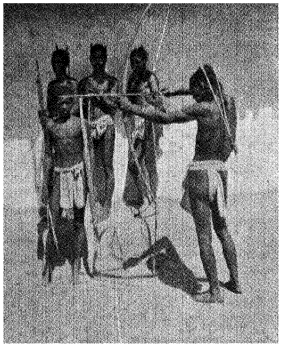


Teaching the Aboriginal children

A Korwa woman of Sarguja with her child.

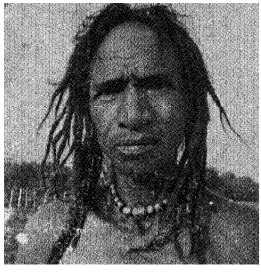


Korwa archers with their arrows fixed on the tufts of hair



Showing his skill in archery

An elderly Korwa



Sorcerer and Diviner

if his known spirits do not respond to his appeals. The Chero *Baiga* has, therefore, a heterogeneous pantheon to cater from and can pick and choose to suit the demands of his clientele. While on the one hand his elasticity of methods has enabled him to retain a hold on the people round him, his prescriptions have become indefinite and vague, which has caused a defection in his fold. The Korwas, for example, have grown callous and they do not always insist on his mediation. While the effects of contacts with civilisation are being felt all over Dudhi, there are some tribes who have escaped detribalisation by withdrawing themselves from such contacts.

The Mirzapur Korwas admit three sections among themselves, *viz.*, the Dib Korwas, the Dand Korwas, the Parhiya Korwas. Originally these were not endogamous but they now usually confine their marriages within the section. The exogamous sects are the Oram, Saiam, Tekaun, Markan and Poya, but as the Korwas are an inbred group their traditional and customary rules regarding marriage are not observed by them. Disintegration in cultural life is bound to happpen when the impact of a dominant alien culture is continuous and strong. This leads to a growth of personality and individuality in the society, and communal worship or propitiation to remedy grievances and sufferings give place to individual activities.

But it is also found that contacts with alien tribes and castes suppress individuality, create an atmosphere of despair and produce an intense feeling of comradeship. Such has been the case with the Korwas and they are struggling hard to survive. Whenever any epidemic breaks out and takes a toll of their number, they approach the *Baiga* and receive instruction regarding the manner of propitiating their pet spirits. When death occurs in a particular hut, the members of the family concerned are distributed in different houses, their needs are properly looked after, and on the advice of the *Baiga*, the whole tribe or section of the tribe would assemble at the village shrine and offer sacrifices of red fowls, goats, buffaloes and also burnt offerings of *gur* and *ghee*. The *Baiga* gets possessed once to find out the cause of the trouble, and once again after the offerings are respectfully provided by the people. The spirits are believed to enter the person of the *Baiga* and are known to address the people concerned, advising

them how to behave and what offerings they would appreciate from their victims

Among the Korwas there is a highly developed sense of solidarity and comradeship. The family is the unit of social organisation, yet it is completely overshadowed by the closed territorial group. The individual has no place except as a member of the family which again loses its entity in the community. Social solidarity is so perfect that an individual regards himself as a part and parcel of the village community and in all matters his action is guided and controlled by the standard of good or evil that is likely to result to his community. He obeys the customs, traditions and observances of the community without reserve and implicitly conforms to the unwritten laws of his society because he is afraid that by his violation of them he would bring disaster to the community. His endogamy is partly the result of a conscious adjustment to the code of tribal conduct which bans marriage with strangers and aliens because such alliance might bring in calamities to the entire group.

His activities have also been circumscribed by his dread of witchcraft and sorcery which other tribes take delight in practising on them. "It is much better," said Samru Korwa, who can speak for his tribe, "not to seek unfamiliar alliances, for who knows what witchcraft she might wield in the tribe to confound more the confusion already we are in." In Assam, even occupations are tabooed for the self-same reason. Hodson refers the case of an expert girl-spinner who had distinguished herself for fine spinning and embroidery in her own village and was forbidden to continue her useful work in the village of her husband, as the latter did not want to import the magic of the girl's village along with her art. So great is the dread of the Korwas of unfamiliar alliances that we seldom find a case of inter-tribal marriage or sexual intimacy with persons of alien tribes or castes.

In the Chota-Nagpur plateau, inter-tribal marriages are discouraged but not forbidden and many hybrid groups to-day owe their origin to such alliances. As the Korwas share the culture pattern of the Munda tribes we should have expected them to be similarly inclined, but the psychological response to their present economic plight is perhaps responsible for the rigid endogamy practised by

them. The sympathy born of disappointment that is almost manifest among the Korwas, the vague fear of the unknown, of the dire consequences to which they have been driven by the reaction of the inhospitable environment, all have produced a closer bond between them which they all recognise as the cause of their exclusiveness or even isolation, both affecting their slender lease of life.

To an outsider a purely Korwa village represents as it were an extended family, where every villager recks one of another and identify with the pleasure and pain of his compatriot. To the revenue agents or to the village *patwari* one Korwa is seen to plead for another in a manner which leaves no room for doubt as to their interest in each other. Nowhere have I seen such willingness, in fact eagerness, for co-operation among the people as among the Korwas. When one villager is asked to do some specific duty, say carrying a load or a message or some customary labour demanded of him for administrative purposes, his fellow tribesmen, at least those that happen to be on the spot, would immediately realise their responsibility to the man's family, his cattle and his crops and these are safe during his absence. On many occasions I have seen the Korwas at home attending to the ordinary routine duties of their tribesmen when the latter are summoned to the headquarters of the Dudhi estate or when they are to attend to any officer on duty, some of their co-villagers will certainly take their cattle out in the morning for grazing along with their own, and offer their families a share of whatever eatables they may collect in the forest and see to it that everything is done for the families which would have been done had their heads been present.

What the individual cannot do the *Bhayari* or the tribal brethren must do. The *Bhayari* or the *Kutumayat* is the clan *panchayat*, equivalent to the *Biradari* of the artisan castes, which has lost much of its primitive prestige and influence among the Korwas. The reasons we have already suggested before. (Yet the *Bhayari* is the only organisation which controls the action of individuals and families, imposes taboo, introduces new behaviour patterns and looks to the material and spiritual welfare of the people.) In Kolhan among the Hos we have seen the decisions of the tribal elders challenged by malcon-

tents and those who have developed some individuality of their own. We have also seen the anxiety of the tribal elders to retain their hold on their people by deliberate disregard of tribal interests and catering more and more to the requirements of an alien system of administration. Any system to-day appears to be better equipped than their old half-baked political organisation which is the *parha* system. This divorce from tribal interests has not raised the status or influence of the elders among the Hos and cognate tribes, and the cry which is both loud and vociferous to-day in the Kolhan is to make the tribal officers responsible to the people as well as to the administration.

Among the Korwas the tribal officers have lost their influence, but it is no fault of theirs that they cannot grow 'two blades of corn' where they only grew one, that what they grow they have no right to enjoy, that the forests have been denied them or that mortality from the diseases has assumed terrible proportions. Their prestige has sunk because of the fact that they possess no remedies to cure their ills, and also because they have not been able to forge any tool or weapon to help them in their hour of crises. This is why the Korwa *panch* is not a group of select men or accredited leaders of the tribe, but every man and woman and even children are members of the *Bhayari*—a tribal council which could not be more representative of all shades of opinion. Once I casually suggested to a Korwa that the Korwa *panch* has failed to protect the interests of the Korwas by sheer incompetence and inefficiency. To this I received a violent protest from Buddhu, my interpreter, who said, 'Our incompetence is negligible compared to that displayed by the local administration, for have not they in most cases decided against truth? In cases of theft, criminal assaults, immorality, desertion, abduction and rape, when they were left to the *panch*, the parties were sure of a fair trial. To-day the tehsil court decides on oaths, and has an elaborate process of dealing with such cases, yet they give A's property to B and B's to C in the name of a square deal and fair'. I think this statement does not only apply to the Dudhi court but to all palaces of justice in spite of the best efforts of the administration and the well-meaning people who represent it.

Although the Korwa *panch* is constituted of the entire Korwa population in the village, it is not the privilege of every member to participate in the deliberations affecting the village or particular members thereof. The *Pradhan* is the village head among the Korwas. He represents a hereditary line and is assisted by substantial and well-to-do Korwas who may represent any age group but are usually adults. There are certain permanent members of the *panch*. But the most important element in the tribal council is composed of elderly people who are intelligent and prone to talk and to find fault, to protest against decisions by the permanent members, and who have travelled outside and seen life. They always bring out the other side of a case and can always manage to get people to see their point of view. Though such people are not many, yet in every village one does meet them and must not ignore them.

This goes about the clan *panch* or when a village contains one clan, the local *panch*. But apart from the *Bhayari*, there is a greater organisation, perhaps a relic of earlier days, which one meets with but rarely and yet is the highest tribal court of the Korwas. This body is composed of the village headman, the elders of a clan, and persons nominated by the *Pradhans*.

The Agharias, the Majhwars, the Kharwars and others allow a mixed *panchayat* and members of other castes or tribes possessing influence may be allowed to take part in disputes affecting their tribal society, but the Korwas will not tolerate other people to share their secrets or have a share in the decisions. Not only do they not tolerate members of other tribes in their council, but they insist that the witnesses cited by the parties to a dispute should belong to the tribe. Even in cases where the evidence of other people would be of material assistance to the *panchayats* they refuse to admit it. Ordinarily the Korwa *panchayat* has little to do. Very little friction within the tribe is reported and when an offence has been committed, the offender usually admits his fault and begs to be pardoned. It is only when a serious infringement of the tribal code has been detected that the tribal council intervenes and takes any action that it may decide on.

Inter-tribal intrigues and sexual intimacy are major offences punishable by excommunication, but such offences must be substantiated

beyond doubt and the benefit of the doubt always goes to the accused. In 90 per cent. of the cases the offence is connected with inter-tribal social or sexual intercourse. A few of the cases that we came across were connected with eating forbidden food, particularly flesh of dead animals or of pigs, monkey and snakes. Domestic quarrels do not figure much in the Korwa tribal court and divorce is infrequent. Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded as major offences for which the offenders invariably forfeit tribal protection. Adultery is an offence, but it must be reported by the wronged husband. All cases of adultery do not come before the tribal council for various reasons. While even other major offences are sometimes excused or are not taken notice of, no infringement of any custom that is meant to protect the tribal society is allowed to go unpunished and even minor offences of this class excite a great deal of passion. For example, if a Korwa does not participate or refuses to do so when asked by the elders of the tribe in the co-operative endeavour to protect the village from the spread of epidemics or in driving out of the village boundary stray birds or goats which carry epidemic from village to village, a serious view is taken of it by the elders, and no sympathy is wasted on the offender even by the women.

The material economy of the Korwas is very simple. They live in small leafy booths in the interior of jungles. Those of them who have settled in the villages build more substantial houses made of bamboo thatched with straw or grass. Wooden doors, tiles and mud walls are more in evidence among the Majhwars and Kharwars to-day than among comparatively more primitive tribes like the Bhuiyas and the Korwas. In the case of tribal elders or village headmen particularly among the latter, substantial houses constructed of better material are no doubt found, but even those houses do not give evidence of much skill in construction and leave much to be desired.

The walls of the houses are made of reeds plastered with earth with which cow dung is mixed in quantity to make it a sticky paste. The roofs are thatched with grass, occasionally with crude tiles made by the village potter if available. The northern part of Dudhi has taken to tiles and even poor cultivators are seen to use tiles to cover at least a part of the roof if it is found too expensive to tile the whole.

The houses are constructed facing north or east to avoid the prevailing wind currents, though a Hindu does not erect his house with its front to the south for religious scruples. Many houses are multiroomed, one house serving for a whole family. The central room of the house is meant for the members of the family, an adjoining room on one side is used for store, and one on the other as a shed for cattle, the latter opening into the *angan* (courtyard), the front and behind ending in verandahs which are fenced at night. Where the cattleshed does not form a part of the main house, it is situated at one end of the courtyard, but inside a bamboo enclosure which fences the house and the *angan*—a necessary precaution in these parts to avoid depredations by wild animals. The ancestors of the family are duly sheltered in a *chauri* which is often a raised structure with a small thatched roof resting on four bamboo posts.

The *Baiga* may be asked to select a site for a house which he often does. In doing this he offers *gur, ghee* and bread to the spirits of the forest, to the ancestral shades and gods of whom he knows by the hundred, and gets possessed in the process. He announces the wish of the gods and spirits, goes round the place fixed for the site, dances by himself to the accompaniment of music by his assistants, takes a handful of dust and in his wild enthusiasm scatters the contents of his hand and where the dusts strike the ground first is considered to be the proper site. It is the hand of god that moves and the *Baiga* is believed to indicate Divine direction. Once the site is thus fixed, the atmosphere created by the *Baiga* is taken advantage of by the householder who assumes the role of a dictator. He orders the breaking of the earth and piling the mounds. He sends the labourers to collect the required materials for the house, and the whole village interests itself in its construction as if it were a co-operative undertaking for the common good. The sanction for this unusual conduct of the man building the house is derived from the village and the clan gods who are invoked by the *Baiga*. The gods' direction in selecting the site is interpreted by the village as a sign of their pleasure. The feverish attitude of the villagers to assist in the construction of the house is thus explained and their co-operation is assumed among the Korwas and other primitive tribes in the locality. In recent years the Korwas

have lost all interest in life and this is why the *Baiga* does not always determine the sites of new houses.

Unlike the tribes of the Chota-Nagpur plateau, the Korwas do not build dormitories for the young men and women of the tribe, nor do they send their boys and girls to sleep in houses owned by their neighbours as is done to-day by the Hos and the Mundas. The Korwa boys and girls sleep in their own houses and there is no organisation which is run by them independent of the village polity. But as is customary among the Mundas and other tribes of the Chota-Nagpur plateau, the Korwas may requisition the services of the tribal young men for domestic purposes, for work in the fields, or for construction of shelter, in marriage and other social ceremonies. Contributions voluntarily made by the families for such assistance are spent in feasts and festivities by the youth of the village. The tribal solidarity of the Korwas is phenomenal and whenever any opportunity for joint effort and enterprise presents itself, the tribal society is sure to make the best of it summoning workers to satisfy individual needs. A goat is the usual price for such assistance by the village and after the work is completed, the goat is killed and a feast given. The prospect of an entertainment like this acts as incentive to co-operative effort, and even where detribalisation has shown itself, the example of the Korwas is often emulated for the joy of feasting and the abandonment which follows it.

The situation of the village is primarily determined by two considerations, *viz.*, the availability of water and the security provided. The latter is to be conceived in its widest sense so that the Korwa villages to-day are not of any uniform model or design. The security of a village may be due to its seclusion, so that some villages are found in the dense jungle or surrounded by forests. It may be due to the highest level from which the people may watch strangers approaching their settlements. It may be in the heart of the plains, so that depredations by wild animals may be the least. The stage of cultural life determines the nature of the settlements and village sites are selected for convenience. The denial of the forests to the Korwas and other aboriginal tribes of Dudhi has thrown many of the families into the arms of alien traders, merchants and farmers, so that many fami-

lies prefer to build their houses in close proximity to their sources of livelihood. Geographical situation no doubt controls settlements in the earlier stages, but with the complexity of life deepening the old moorings become inconvenient and thus ambitious families are seen to migrate to new surroundings where their efforts to eke out a livelihood are expected to succeed.

The houses in a village are usually scattered, the compactness of the village not being essential for security. The belief in witchcraft is very strong among the tribal people of Dudhi and diseases and death and fire are believed to be caused by spirits and offended gods. The anxiety to secure the houses from being gutted by fire and to protect the inmates from infection from diseases, though the manner or source of infection is but imperfectly known to them (all infection, according to them, being due to the intervention of witches and sorcerers), has led to the houses being scattered and the Korwas are often seen building their shelters at distances from their own people. There is another cause of dispersal of the houses. The Korwas like other jungle dwellers claim the woodland as their own and when they marry their daughters they make over in dowry a mountainside 'where the newly wedded couple have the monopoly of foraging for food'. Thus the forests are partitioned between the families making up the group and a compact village does not grow so long the chief source of livelihood is derived from the forests.

With the transition from hunting to settled agricultural life, with its requirements of constant attention, watch and seasonal distribution of labour, the families that hitherto lived scattered in the forests come down to the plains where facilities of co-operation can best be utilised to effect a permanent control over the food supply. Thus an inter-relation between habitat, economy and society develops in tribal areas as it is found among the Korwas and other primitive groups of Dudhi.

'Unlike some of the Gond tribes of the Central Provinces who still prefer to live without the encumbrance of clothing, the tribes of Dudhi do put on garments to cover both upper and lower parts of their body, and even the poorest of the Korwa women are found to don a torn jumper or a halfsewn blouse or cover the body from waist

upwards by wrapping round them the ends of a long *sari*. Children up to 5 or 6 or even 10 years old are seen to go about naked or with just a piece of cloth tied round the loins and are not ashamed to meet strangers in such scanty attire. While the boys move about freely without being sufficiently clad, the girls after 4 or 5 years must put on something to cover the loins and when they grow older a second sheet must cover the upper part of the body. Men usually do not put on any upper garment while inside the house or while working in the fields, but they must put on a *charas* before proceeding on a social call on his neighbours either in their own or in adjacent villages. The winter clothes consist of an upper cover, called *dohar*, and a blanket if available. The night finds them in a circle round a fire with the ends of the *dhoti* or *sari* covering the body, or inside the hut on a bed of straw thickly laid on the floor. The body also may be kept under straw or *payal* which imparts sufficient warmth. Though jumpers, *jhula* or *kurti* have not become very popular, due to the difficulty of providing them, the youth of both sexes are seen to cover their person. The aged and the old are not fond of too much encumbrance of dress and they don old, torn clothes or even rags round their loins.

The average Korwa women do not put on many ornaments—a pair of bangles, a *kardhan* (chain) worn round the waist, a pair of *anguthis* (rings) on the toes are all that she is seen to favour. Necklaces of beads are quite popular among the Korwas as these are available cheap in the local markets. The bigger beads in the necklace have assumed some religious sanctity, due to Vaishnava influence, and some Korwa women are reluctant to part with them as they consider these charmed and efficacious in warding off the evil eye. Men do not usually wear any ornament, but young men are seen to put on brass earrings which hang freely from the lobes' ends.

Tattooing is practised and every woman must tattoo her arms which are kept exposed. These are considered permanent embellishments and are believed to accompany the souls of men. There is not much choice in the selection of tattoo marks—no totemic or clan significance is attached to these—the designs are picked at random by those who want them to be tattooed from the available samples. On investigation, however, it could be found that certain designs

were popular with certain families and one elderly woman explained to me why she insisted on her daughter having the same design as she had on her person. The tattoo mark on her person was that of a circle enclosed in a rectangle at each angle of which leaves of tamarind were nicely drawn. She was one of 7 children of her parents, 6 of whom had died young. An old woman of her village, who was intimately acquainted with her family, one day brought a tattooer and asked her to get tattooed and the design was put on her arm in spite of her strong protests. The woman's influence with the family was great and the parents had to agree to her demand. Since then she had had no illness, a brother was born to her and her parents are having luck. She thinks the design powerful enough to avoid ill-luck and insisted on her children being tattooed with the same design.

The tattoo designs are mostly geometrical figures, rarely animals and plants, and no totemic beliefs were connected with the marks. Birds are sometimes among these designs but there is no special attraction for any particular species. In one or two cases the moon and the stars were tattooed. Only in two cases I could find necklaces tattooed round the necks of women and in one case a cross sign inscribed in a circle tattooed on the forehead, but the woman did not belong to the Christian community.

While the indigenous ornaments of the people are not many or varied, close association with neighbouring tribes and castes has taught them the use of new ones. The popularity of the latter is also due to the display of these ornaments in the local markets which the women frequent and when they see these exhibits they cast longing eyes at them and eagerly wait for their sweethearts to make gifts of them. Once a village market was surprised to learn that we wanted to make gifts of some new varieties of ornaments to the Korwa women. At first the latter would not approach us for these gifts, neither were they anxious to leave the market. They stood at a distance from the shop, whispered into each other and giggled, and sometimes the peals of their laughter rose above the noise of the market. But they would not move towards us in spite of the loud assurances of the village watchman. The Maria women of Bastar on a similar

occasion, filed before us one by one and actively participated in the selection of the ornaments mostly bead necklaces, ribbons and rings. As the mountain did not come to Mahomet, we had to approach the women and put the basket of ornaments before them. There was no restlessness in the crowd, the women did not move their fingers, the whispering ceased and they looked at one another as if they wanted to read one another's mind. An elderly woman now came forward, took the basket and started distributing the ornaments. Within a few minutes there was a brisk movement in the crowd each trying the ornament on her person. A few agreed to change the gifts and the whispers gave place to eloquence and a smile settled on the faces of the women.

The following list of ornaments which are locally used though not exhaustive will give an idea of the range of the choice available. *Guria,* used by all tribes round the neck; *margundhar,* used by all tribes for tying hair; *phundra,* worn on the arms, *pahunely,* worn on the arms; *shupet bandhan,* used mostly by Kharwar women to tie the *sari*; *kardhan,* used by all tribes round the waist; *tikuli,* used by all tribes except the Kharwars on the forehead; *tanki,* used by Majhwar widows and others for the ear; *chooris,* worn on the wrist by all except the Kharwars who use a different kind known as *churikharwanin*; *churla,* another kind of *choori* used by all tribes, *chutki,* used by the Majawarins on their toes; *pairi,* a kind of anklet worn by the Majhwar women; *batidi,* worn on the wrist by all tribes; *ragri,* worn by the Kharwar women on their wrists; *banwaria* used by the Majhwar women; *khitha,* a kind of armlet worn by the Majhwar and the Kharwar women. *Bahamkas* (armlets) and *kara,* (anklets) are mostly used by the Kharwar women while *kamarkas* are chains round the waist popularly worn by male dancers during the tribal festival of *Karma.* Over and above the varieties of ornaments detailed above, flowers are in great demand and girls are tastefully decorated with bunches of coloured flowers which wildly grow over the countryside. The hair which grows in matted tails for want of special care is massed in a chignon sticking out from behind the head in which are arranged in beautiful shades a huge quantity of flowers which with the heavy load of ornaments add to their charm as well as their ugliness.

A hunting tribe that runs the risks of life every day must welcome any addition to their strength. The Korwas do not show much concern at such increase of strength to their community, though in earlier decades such tidings were greeted with satisfaction and the family concerned received the approbation of the group. Substantial families among them, though their number is very small indeed, do observe even now certain rites and organise feasts and festivities. Ordinarily as soon as a child is born, the family sends information to the *Pradhan* or the headman of the Korwa village and the parents begin to receive visits from the neighbours. If it is the first child of the family, feasts are organised to which all the villagers are invited and for days together the whole village behaves as one family and is served from the same kitchen. The popular *Karma* dance is held day and night and the young people drink, dance and abandon themselves to mirth and frivolous jollities. Dances are rarely practised these days as constant privation and starvation have dried the wells of their life and even when they are afforded the scope by offers of drink and food which the anthropologist is tempted to make, they fail to respond. It is tragic indeed that a tribe so powerful and active as the Korwas should face disorganisation and not much can be done to remedy the crisis. On the eighth day after childbirth, presents are offered to the family by the villagers in the shape of rice, lentils, fowls or goats which go towards entertaining the guests of the family.

Unlike many of the Munda tribes, the Korwas observe few pregnancy rites, but before any case of pregnancy is discovered in the family, some deceased ancestor of the family makes its appearance in dream to some member of the family, generally the women and discloses the indentity of the child in the womb. The dream experience is revealed to the members of the family early in the morning following and from then the pregnant woman receives attention from the villagers, in accordance with the importance of the ancestor due to be reborn. The latter information was given to me by the Korwa headman of Kundpan. When the woman concerned arrives at an advanced stage of pregnancy she has to observe certain tabooes as a matter of course, which are meant to protect her from physical dangers as well as those which are likely to be caused by evil spirits. Anecdotes connected

with the status, influence and achievements of the ancestor believed to be about to grace the family in the person of the coming child, are often narrated by elderly women of the family and the expectant mother assumes an air of importance and relishes the unfolding of the secrets of her conception. Sometimes, the members of the family may resort to divination to find out whether any ancestor was at all coming back to the family.

It is not only the deceased ancestors of the family or of the clan that are reborn, but even spirits of dead animals may enter the family. But in such cases, as I was told by my interpreter Biram, the animals are those that are known to possess some desirable attributes like strength, intelligence, even cunning. This, however, can only be known by divination. The husband of the woman, or in his absence the woman herself, may approach the *Baiga* to ascertain the identity of the child she is carrying, but very often she gets the information in her dreams or those by her relations usually women. The *Baiga* selects an auspicious day when he promises to consult his favourite spirit who reveals the necessary identity of the child. His method, as we noticed, is to offer a cup of *gur* and a pot of wine to his pet spirit and to rouse the latter to activity by vociferous incantations. In this way the identity is disclosed rather in an indirect way as the *Baiga* interprets the spirit's message and he is implicitly believed. The *Baiga* may also get possessed and while in that state describes the various marks on the person of the child, either a black spot on the right side of the chest, a mole on the cheek, a scar on the thigh, a white speck on the forehead or some such physical characteristic or even deformity which immediately identifies the child with a particular ancestor they know of.

Abortion and still-birth are frequent occurrences among the Korwa women. Before a woman feels her happy state, she is relieved of her 'hope' and this necessarily makes her take great pains to avoid all places associated with evil spirits. For instance, she does not keep out after dusk, she would not go near a river or pass under the *peepul* (ficus religiosa) tree, nor follow the cattle to the forest. She would not look at a rainbow or even clouds, she does not tread on red paper or red rag or cross a string or rope to which cows or buffaloes are

tied. She does not lift any weight or draw water from a well. If she has to stir out of her house after dusk she is careful to go in company of other women and if she goes out alone, she covers her face in a manner as not to arouse suspicion but always taking care that she is not seen or identified. She is enjoined by the elderly women of the family or clan not to carry an empty pitcher, nor is she allowed to take certain kinds of fish or destroy vermin or insects. Left to herself she would not care to comply with many of these restrictions, for as one woman told me frankly, 'It does not protect me or anybody else' but public opinion, even if it does not condemn it, would not approve of a woman who by her wilful acts brings some calamity on herself or her family. When some mishap does occur gossip traces her misfortune to such non-compliance with established usages, and old women shake their heads in scorn against the young. But public memory is proverbially short and so it is among the Korwas and such lessons have not proved to be corrective.

Besides the hundred and odd tabooes which are protective as well as ameliorative, a pregnant woman has often to offer food and sacrifices to a host of ancestral spirits who are sheltered in a corner of the hut she sleeps in during night. She has also to invite the *Baiga* or *Bhagat* on an auspicious day to her house, where he is engaged in propitiating all the spirits that freely move on the earth and in the air and who may harm the unborn child. The husband does not have to observe many tabooes, but he has to humour his wife so that she may not feel that she has been slighted or has not been taken proper care of. Even a spontaneous conformity to these observances does not do away with the possibility of an abortion or still-birth, for it seems probable, if not certain, that the herbs and roots which the Korwa women use as famine food or to avoid the effects of premarital license, may adversely affect the mother and injure the reproductive system which makes recurrence of such mishaps possible. The elderly women or *Chamarins*, who act as midwives, are responsible for this to a large extent, for whenever a particular girl gets into trouble, they act as their advisers and cure them if required. The knowledge the girls thus acquire is communicated to others in need and thus an indigenous pharmacopæia has become known among the Korwas,

the negative character of which has affected the fertility of the women to a considerable extent.

In cases of difficult labour, Korwa women resort to a number of magical practices. These are known to every woman and no special instruction is required to popularise them. Before recourse is had to these, the Korwa women usually exhaust all the indigenous medicines they know or are advised to administer by the elderly women of the village. Leaves of *mohwa* decomposed in plain water is believed to effect a painless labour. Certain roots and barks of certain trees are effective in helping delivery and every Korwa family keeps a store of such ingredients. When all known prescriptions fail, charms, amulets, and water to which the *Baiga* has imparted his magic, are applied. Even these failing, the female relatives bring a *thali* or metal plate and in the presence of the woman one of them begins to draw a human figure on it while others sing congratulatory songs, *sohar* as they call them. This prescription is identical with that obtained among the Tharus, mention of which has already been made in another context. As soon as the figure is completely drawn, it is believed to be followed by delivery. One woman said that this method was so effective that instantaneous delivery often follows, an eventuality sometimes fraught with dangerous consequences. It should only be resorted to when the pains continue unabated for hours and all other devices have failed. On further enquiry I was told that not all women can do it, for it requires a knowledge of the spirits whose influence causes such acute pain and trouble to the expectant mother.

Often the Korwa husband has to approach the village *Baiga* who sacrifices a hen to *churail* or *balsadhok* and the blood of the sacrificed hen is offered in a leaf cup. The husband then brings a few drops of the blood in a leaf cup and puts a mark of blood on the forehead and chest of the woman and this is believed to assuage pain. When the wife is in an advanced stage of pregnancy, a small piece of *biskanda*, a popular remedy for relief of pain, is tied round her waist for the purpose of effecting safe and easy delivery. In some cases it may be necessary to wave the sacrificed hen over the body of the woman and then throw it into the neighbouring stream.

A week or two before the expected delivery the members of the house sit together inside a hut with an earthen pot full of water in the centre and the oldest male member of the house, or in his absence the oldest female member (the husband is not allowed to take part in this case) takes some *urid* grains in her palm and asks the youngest member present whether the grains are odd or even in number. If odd, a male child will be born; if even, it will be a female child. After this is ascertained the same person again throws two grains in the water; if they meet, which they usually do for the water has already been stirred before the grains are dropped, it is believed that labour would be easy and painless. If they do not meet the first time, the experiment is made twice more, and in case they do not meet at all the *Baiga* has to be called in and sacrifices and offerings are made to the spirits concerned and only when regular propitiation has been made does confidence return and the woman bears her pain without complaint.

The various tribes in Dudhi engage a midwife, usually a *Chamarin*, to assist in the delivery, but the Korwas confine their choice within the tribe. In one case, when Samru's wife was in labour we were present. As soon as her pain became acute she went inside a hut where her mother followed her. A knife was placed under the woman's pillow which served a double purpose. It was employed both as a charm against evil spirits and to cut the umbilical cord after delivery. The woman caught hold of a horizontal bar which connected the two sides of the low roof meeting at an apex at the top and freely hung from the bar. Her mother took a piece of clean cloth in her hand and as soon as the child glided out, she caught it in her arms by means of the cloth, smartly cutting the umbilical cord. Samru's wife then left the bar and laid herself down in the bed below. The Korwas unlike other castes use cots inside the hut. The new born child was immediately bathed in tepid water, cleaned and taken on the lap of the attending woman. We were told that when a woman has had acute pain for long hours before delivery, she delivers squatting on the ground, but she should never sit facing the south.

The new mother must abstain from solid food for a couple of days or more and has to live on a kind of lentil soup specially prepared for

the occasion. A cleansing draught prepared from molasses, ginger and turmeric is given to the husband for no obvious reason—perhaps a relic of the couvade—but the mother must be treated to a preparation of *satawan* which is meant to increase the supply of milk in her breasts. A couple of hours after the delivery the child is softly rubbed with oil and its head is manipulated in such a way as to press it in the anterio-posterior direction. On the third day after the child's birth the mother is given rice, lentil soup and cakes made of pulses and pumpkin. Pollution extends to 6 days but even after that period the mother and child have to keep aloof for another 6 days. On the 12th day a ceremonial purification takes place. For 8 days, morning and evening, regular prayers are offered to the village godlings and ancestral spirits to protect the child from the influence of malignant spirits and sacrifices are promised in the event of the child surviving. Placenta and the umbilical cord are placed in a leaf cup and buried in the courtyard, care being taken that these may not be dug out by animals or acted upon by witches or sorcerers, either of which is considered fatal. For 5 or 6 days the family keeps watch over the place, as it is believed that after the 6th day the chances of injury to the child become remote. In some families the mother is allowed to eat a preparation of dry fruits, *gur* and *ghee*, but ordinarily she has to live upon liquid diet for at least 3 days.

For 8 days the family is regarded as polluted and the members of the family are not allowed to mix freely with the villagers, but no restriction is observed as to food quest or fetching water from the river or tank, the only one enforced, and willingly obeyed, is that the woman or any member of the polluted family does not fetch water from the same *ghat* from where others get their water. The father does not shave or cut his hair or pare his nails, nor does the family offer any libations or sacrifices to the ancestral spirits or village godlings. If some festival falls within the days of pollution, the family sends its offerings and the birds to be sacrificed to a neighbouring family which acts for the polluted family. If any death occurs in the village it affects the polluted family, too, as every villager is more or less related to every other villager and the period of pollution is extended by another week or so and the family prefers to remain segregated for the

extended period. The attitude of the newly disincarnated spirit is always misunderstood by the villagers and it is believed to do some harm to the new child. Yet no specific instance could be cited by the oldest members of the Korwa tribe to show that actual harm has been done by the dead.

There is no elaborate and spectacular ceremony connected with the birth of children in Korwa villages. It is only when the child happens to be the first issue and his parents sufficiently well off that *Karma* dances and feasts are held to welcome it. Otherwise birth is taken as a matter of course and the Korwas take little notice of the happening. On the 8th day after the child is born there is purificatory ceremony, but no Brahmin or Pathari is called in and there is hardly any tribal feast given as is generally the custom with the Munda tribes. The mother and the child are bathed and anointed with a solution of oil and turmeric, and the father may put a vermillion mark on the forehead of the mother though many of the families I saw did not corroborate this. The lying-in-room is thoroughly cleaned, the walls and floor are washed with cow-dung solution and the scanty appointments in the room are either washed or thrown away. Things made of leaf or bark are generally discarded while metal utensils are cleaned and washed before they are put to use again. Earthen vessels are either thrown away or kept to make pigeon roosts. The father and all other adult male members of the house shave their beard, pare their nails while the father may also shave his head clean. No barber is engaged and the work is done without the help of any member from an alien tribe or caste. Women are required to bathe in the neighbouring stream or river and after they return home, rice and pulses are cooked in the courtyard which are served in leaf plates to the members of the family. The principal menu of the hour consists of pots of ale or country liquor, often toddy, and this refreshes the family after a hard day's toil.

The Korwas do not have any fixed day when name is to be given to the child and hardly any anxiety in the matter is displayed by the members of the family or the elders. Names are mere repetition of the names of ancestors and the third or fourth generation bears the names of the first one. The ancestor is believed to return to the family, so the

child being the reincarnated self of the ancestor will do nothing that was not done by the latter in life.

While most primitive tribes do have some indigenous system of education to shape youth to manhood, the Korwa children grow without any control from the society or even from the family to which they belong. As soon as children reach 8 or 10 years of age they freely mix with the adults and accompany them to the forests, smoke with their elders and are treated by them as friends. When he is 15 or 16, he sits in the tribal council, takes sides in disputes and expresses opinions without the least restraint or fear of interference or punishment. He thus grows to his natural height unschooled and untaught, yet utilising his native talent for socialised existence. There is no dormitory in the Korwa villages, no institution which teaches all the processes connected with sex relationship as among the Oraons, no sacred influence of hearth and home and no apprenticeship for learning the secrets of the tribe or the tribal lore itself. When the villagers dance the *Karma,* the children of the village gather together and join the adults, imitate the steps, play the drums, sound the horn or the gong and thus learn the art without any active effort by the elders to train them. When the dancers sing in tune, the children also do the same among themselves and before long learn the music. While other tribes insist on the correct singing of songs and exact renderings, the Korwas are seldom found to take any notice of mistakes.

It is only in learning the methods of food quest that the Korwa children receive help from the elders. When they go out hunting they take the boys with them. The boys at first follow the beaters but gradually they are taught how to shoot with bow and arrows or throw missiles, and such is their aptitude that they very soon become skilful archers and adepts in throwing stones and other projectiles. In the selection of roots and fruits the boys get their lessons from the adults who take them into the densest parts of the forest and show them what to select, the varieties which they can use for food or for medicine or for tanning hides, also the poisonous breeds which they should avoid.

Some Korwas have taken to farming but have proved poor farmers. The agricultural life they have adopted has not been a gradual and unconscious adjustment to the environment, nor has

this stage been achieved by a slow process of evolution from the hunting or nomadic life. They are agriculturists by compulsion, so that the methods they employ are far from satisfactory. Still the hunting and predatory instincts which they possessed have given place to settled ways of life which have been reflected to a certain extent in their social and economic life. Marriage by capture is a thing of the past. Instead they have now a method of selection which means less effort and which engenders little or no bitterness. The field of selection has of course been greatly circumscribed, but there is still scope for mutual choice. As a rule, all marriages are arranged by the parties concerned and the elders seldom interfere in the choice of the young people. Where the parents take an active part in arranging marriages, the final choice remains with the young people concerned and any refusal on the part of the bride or the bridegroom leads to the dissolution of the proposed union. There has been of late a tendency to child marriage which the Korwas have learnt from their Hinduised neighbours, but the number of cases of child marriage are few and there is no indication that it is likely to gain in popularity. In those cases of child marriage which I observed, the contracting parties happened to be of affluent circumstances and could afford the luxury.

The average Korwa is poor, often a destitute and withal improvident. He would seldom decide to marry before he is sure of being able to maintain a family, so that he always marries late in life. Women are free to work and have an income and it is this fact which makes a Korwa young man select his partner older than himself. Even widows are married by young people if there is some possibility of an additional income to the family through them. The sex ratio in the Korwa tribe is 5 :3 approximately, but it has not led to polygamy. This fact negatives the suggestion that a disturbed balance of the sexes leads to polygamy. The stress of economic forces may often resist or override the stress of biological forces. Crooke has mentioned of the dowry the Korwa father used to settle on her daughter and it consisted of 'a mountainside on which she has the monopoly of foraging for food". In a matriarchal society it is customary for a woman to inherit her family property, but the fact that the Korwa father provides land for her daughter may not represent a survival of a matriarchal

stage of culture. We have said that the Korwas used to recruit their clansmen from neighbouring areas where they were in strength to settle in villages with a sparse Korwa population and the usual practice was to share out the land or part of the forest to the recruit to make it attractive for him to do so.

The brideprice has remained customary from very early times and to-day it varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 9. In addition to this pecuniary consideration, the bridegroom has to offer ornaments the cost of which varies from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20. A widow is more expensive than a maiden and the brideprice is settled by the widow herself. The cost of feeding the whole community comes to about Rs. 20 to Rs. 30, so the average expense for a marriage may be estimated at about Rs. 50 including 2 maunds of rice and clothes. The custom of brideprice and the amount required for it have great influence on the social life of a community for even the marriage age is determined to a large extent by these considerations. An extreme case is afforded by the Hos, where the excessive brideprice has been responsible for raising the age of marriage which is compensated by irregularity of sex relationship as well as premarital intimacy between the sexes which is not taken seriously by the elders of the society.

The average marriage age for the boys is seldom below 20 while girls are not married before 15. Puberty sets in about the 13th year and marriage and cohabitation go together. A whispering statistics compiled by me from the Korwa women put the average age at the menarche as 13·6 and about 56 p.c. of the cases (n. 43) were between the age period 13-14, about 14 p.c. was between 14 and 15 and seldom one case was reported after 17. In one case, a girl of 10 was pointed out by an elderly woman as having had her first menstruation, but such cases are rare. The age compilation among primitive people is extremely difficult and figures based on such evidence should be regarded with caution. It is not always that the swelling of the breasts, or as the Gonds call it (as reported by Verrier Elwin) 'little mushrooms pushing their way up', is an evidence of the appearance of the menses. There is always a time interval between the signal and the act.

The Korwa women, unlike the Gonds, cover their body from the waist upwards, and girls put on a rag to cover their breasts even before

they begin to show. There is no ceremony, public or private, at the menarche, but the mother must explain the unusual phenomenon to the novice though the latter gets her first reaction interpreted by her playmates. The elderly women who frankly answered my queries regarding menstruation, did not think that the moment when a girl gets her first flow is awaited by her, and that she feels any great excitement or delight. It is so sudden that she feels deeply embarrassed and her first reaction is one of fear as well as of helplessness. She pauses for a moment perhaps, but she must run home to tell her mother what had happened. The periods among the Korwas continue for more than 3 days, and the girls and elderly women whom I questioned were not unanimous as to the length of the periods. Three, four and even five days is said to be the normal time, and when it is very short or very long they suspect evil and must take to charms and amulets. These the *Chamarin* or the wife of the *Baiga* knows and prescribes. I could discover no magical practice connected with menstruation and it was only a chance sentence carelessly uttered by a woman which encouraged me to press for further enlightenment. 'In our days,' said the woman (she was careful to look round and watch the reaction on the face of her companions), 'we put the first day's blood or a part of it in a small earthen pot and buried it at night under a stone slab somewhere near the house and while doing so we were asked to pray to the village deities to see that nothing unusual happened to us. On the third or fourth day when the flow dried up, we returned to the same place and dug out the pot which was also dry by this time, and we carefully covered the pot on the way to the river when we bathed for purification.' 'But', she added, 'no girl does it now and even near relations do not know when a girl gets her periods.'

Puberty which is synonymous with the menarche, does not immediately raise the status of the Korwa girls nor are there any organised age grades in the Korwa society. The boys do not have any initiation ceremony either and there is no restriction in the mixing of the sexes.

Unmarried boys and girls freely mix together but no premarital license is noticed among them. The boys do not show any discourtesy to the girls and there is no common dormitory where both the sexes

can live or pass long hours of the night as among the Gonds and many other tribes. Intrigues before marriage are not many and elopements are very rare. A woman is usually chaste but immorality is not unknown particularly among women between 30 and 40. But such immorality is not regarded too seriously by the tribal society. Divorce is allowed, as is also widow remarriage. There is no intrusion marriage among the Korwas nor are there many cases of disappointed love. As the Korwas are an inbred group, and there being no prohibited degrees in marriage except with the mother and the sister, one can marry any female relation. Conversely, with the exception of the father and his brother or brothers, also of one's own brother, every young man is an eligible bridegroom for a girl, and any intimacy that may grow between two young persons may end in marriage. Yet in practice marriages between close relations are not very frequent.

Although marriage between close relations is not barred by the tribal code, still every Korwa does not or cannot marry. He has to find the brideprice, provide means to maintain his family, neither being too easy for him. The land he possesses does not afford him subsistence throughout the year. The little he earns by labour in the village does not suffice for his daily needs, besides he has to pay the interests of the debt which he has inherited from his father or has himself incurred. So he often has to live celebate all his life. But wherever widow remarriage is allowed concubinage must be prevalent and the Korwas take it as a matter of course. So those that do not marry, keep women as concubines though their social status is not above reproach. Illegitimacy is not encouraged and as soon as an unmarried woman feels she is with child, the couple concerned are obliged to go through a form of marriage which removes the stigma of illegitimacy from the offspring.

Cross-cousin marriage, levirate, sorrorate, marriage with mother's sister, father's sister, granddaughter and all kinds of nieces are possible among the Korwas. There is no such thing as obligatory marriage as among some sections of the tribal populations in the Deccan where a man must marry his maternal uncle's daughter. Certain customs point to the popularity of cross-cousin marriage. Traces of *avunculate* are discernible. The mother's brother not only takes an active

interest in the marriage of his nephew, he receives some presents from his nephew at the time of the marriage. This is regarded as obligatory and no marriage is possible without this exchange of formalities. The mother's brother has also to offer some presents to the nephew which must be received before the nephew sets out to marry. At present the custom is only a formal one and actual exchange of presents is not much insisted upon. Yet the mother's brother takes an active part in the ceremony.

There is another custom observed by the Korwas which strengthens the position of the mother's brother. The bride and the bridegroom after marriage must not enter the latter's house unless they have spent a night in the maternal uncle's house. If the maternal uncle's residence is in the same village as that of the nephew, the night's stay is not necessary.

There are two forms of marriage among the Korwas. One is the ordinary and usual form called *biwah*, the other is called *sagai* or widow marriage. As the Korwa widower prefers to marry a widow, the number of *sagai* is pretty high. The brideprice is generally higher in the case of *sagai*, for both the widow and her relations have to be satisfied. The parents of the widow do not receive any money, but her husband's people do and the amount is settled between the widow and her prospective husband. The widow, of course, receives ornaments, clothes and coins and out of her share she spends something for the propitiation of the village godlings and ancestral spirits. In the *biwah* form, the maternal uncle undertakes to negotiate on behalf of the nephew and he may take the assistance of friends of the bridegroom. The latter direct the uncle in such a way that he is led to choose the girl his nephew would like to marry and sometimes it is so cleverly done that the uncle does not know that he does so.

It is not true, as one young man told me, that the maternal uncle must intervene in the affairs of his nephew, but it has proved to be most effective, for the maternal uncle is always more indulgent to the nephew than the latter's parents. As soon as the brideprice is fixed and the parties agree to the match, invitation is sent on the bridegroom's part to the bride's people who may come to see the bridegroom. If the 'groom is already known to the bride's people,

no such formality is needed and an auspicious day is selected when the ceremony is fixed to take place. On the appointed day the bridegroom's party start for the bride's village or *tola*, and on their way they carefully note the omens which they interpret before they reach their destination. Once the procession starts no withdrawal from the contract is allowed, but in order to counteract the influence of bad omens elaborate arrangements are made to propitiate the village godlings to whom sacrifices are made by the village *Baiga*. In the course of the sacrifices, *Karmas* are danced to placate the spirits. In the midst of the dance, someone gets possessed and while in that state he gives out the name of the spirit who needs to be propitiated and what offerings and sacrifices would please the offended spirit. The dance is performed in twilight as it is believed that the spirits can be addressed most effectively at dusk or dawn.

The marriage ceremony proper is a simple affair. The bride sits on the lap of her maternal uncle or maternal grandfather who ceremonially makes a present of her to the 'groom seated on the lap of his maternal uncle. The bridegroom takes some red lead and rubs it on the forehead of the bride and the elderly members of the village bless the couple exhorting them to lead a happy and contented life and live together as faithful partners. The girl is advised to behave properly in her new house, to show respect to superiors, and actively to assist the husband and other members of the family by subscribing her patience and efforts to solve the various problems of their family life even by hard work if necessary. The Korwa elders mark the occasion by citing instances of unfaithfulness and the danger to the society in consequence, of many handicaps they suffer from, and the hostility of their neighbours who employ everything in their power to malign and exploit them. The necessity of a united front against the aggressiveness of their neighbours is solemnly inculcated in the young couple's minds on such occasions and the withdrawal from the foci of contacts become complete.

The binding part of the ceremony being over, the relations of the bride scatter fried rice over the couple and the latter walk round the marriage post thrice after which the couple are conducted to a lonely hut at one extremity of the village. Here the youthful company

treat the newly wedded couple to dance and music and leave them alone at night to each other's company. In earlier days, the couple were taken to a forest and left there to shift for themselves and if they succeeded in doing so, they were welcomed back in the village. In the bride's house the guests are treated to sumptuous feasts and dances with tests of skill and endurance arranged to entertain the guests. Next morning the couple take part in the dances and display their skill and technique to an admiring crowd. The bridegroom's party leaves the village after breakfast.

The sanctity of conjugal life amongst the Korwas should not be assessed by the simplicity of the marriage rites alone. The Korwa wife is generally faithful to her spouse and she is not known very often to entangle herself in intrigues within or outside the clan. Of course divorce is allowed and undue hardship to a wife or husband is redressed to the satisfaction of both man and wife. Sterility or impotence is no ground for divorce though the option to separate may be exercised by either party. A large number of women in Dudhi were found to be sterile, but they lived with their husbands fairly happily. A husband also is not usually tempted to take a second wife if his first proves barren. Barrenness is a punishment, said one woman victim, her husband replying, 'If so, let it be lived through,' and they do live through such loneliness. Adultery is not encouraged if it is confined within the tribe. There may be some who escape, but if it is confined within the tribe, the Korwa *panch* and the elders of the tribe vehemently denounce the offender and demand abject surrender of the person concerned. If the offender is a woman, she is even beaten by the elders, if man a heavy fine with ostracism are prescribed. The woman is not allowed to go with her lover; she must stay in the tribe and suffer for her sins. She should not be allowed to increase the number of their exploiters, said an old Korwa. His tone and the implication of his gesture convinced me of the hate that smoulders in the Korwa heart against those of their neighbours who they believe are causing them miseries.

A dissolving social structure does not hold on to traditional ways of life and living, nor does it regard religious beliefs sacred and sacrosanct. The tribal population of Dudhi represents various

levels of thought and action, beliefs and rites, while various degrees of liberty characterise their spiritual code. Three trends are generally noticeable. Tribes like the Agharias who own clan gods to whom they periodically offer prayers and sacrifices, but have begun to rename them, borrowing terms from their more advanced compatriots. They worship their clan goddess in the garb of *Lohasur Devi,* some time miscalled *Durga,* but their tribal practices as to sacrifice still remain. A she-goat is sacrificed, along with burnt offerings of *gur, ghee* and curd or its preparation. Tribes like the Korwas who are on evil days still claim allegiance to their great clan god *Raja Chandol,* but their interest is more concentrated on propitiating the evil spirits they know by the legion, or those whom their shrewd neighbours force on them in order to exploit them with their help. Thus when the days warm up and hot winds begin to blow and outdoor work becomes difficult and hazardous, the Cheros picture the fire-eating goddess, *Angar Mata,* as riding a chariot which is wheeled round and round the sky, to spread fire which settles as excessive heat below. It is the Cheros who can negotiate with the destructive agent and the Korwas and other tribes must approach the Chero *Baiga* with *gur, ghee* and goat if necessary.

Again, there are tribes like the Majhwar, the Kharwar and the Cheros who own their tribal gods along with a large number of beneficent and evil spirits and godlings, and whose efforts to placate and worship an artificial and heterogeneous pantheon has its positive and negative values as they have assisted them in their efforts at adaptation. The Kharwars have their tribal deity, *Jalamukhi,* and every Kharwar village in Dudhi has an improvised shed in the midst of fields where they propitiate the goddess, who is known to be extremely susceptible to neglect or remissness. *Raja Lakshman* is another of their tribal heroes who now claims a cult. The older generation of Kharwars identified *Lakshman* with the brother of *Ramchandra,* the exiled prince of Ayodhya, but the younger Kharwars recognise in him their Rajput progenitor who is believed to be the son of *Jaichandra,* King of Kanauj, round whom many historical myths had grown.

The Korwas have lost the traditional beliefs in their indigenous pantheon, but their helplessness has encouraged adoption of many

alien gods and spirits, whose one avowed object the Korwas believe is to chastise them with affliction, both physical and mental. Even beneficent gods are required to be propitiated for real or imaginary troubles and the Cheros have a monopoly of such religious lore as the Korwas themselves acknowledge. 'One good man', said an elderly Korwa of Kundpan to me, 'cannot do anything against a host of evil-doers and that is why *Raja Chandol* has become powerless.' 'Nobody wishes us well,' eloquently interjected a second Korwa, 'and the Chero *Baiga* has raised the spirits of dead ancestors and mischievous persons to set them against our person and property, even our cattle and sheep.' 'We ask them why these spirits inflict disease and sufferings on us, what offence have we committed against them or our neighbours to deserve such attention, but the answer we get is a prescription to placate this or the other spirit, and if we fail to follow the advice tendered by the *Baiga,* we go to our doom. We don't want our children to die before us, to starve in our presence, so we cater to the caprices of an unseen world, yet fail to maintain a cordial relationship with them.' These are typical comments by the Korwas.

The tribal and clan gods and spirits are worshipped by the head of the family or by the tribal elders and these have little to do with the *Baigas* who are usually Chero by tribe. The Korwas do not offer any animal sacrifices to their clan gods and spirits, but they would most certainly offer them to alien gods and spirits at the direction of the Chero *Baiga.* The clan gods are usually beneficent and the Korwas are not much afraid of them but alien spirits and gods must be propitiated by the choicest offerings and animal blood is the best that can be offered to them.

In any tribal society where the gods and spirits have been multiplied enormously it is a problem to make them accountable for the various ills people suffer from, yet the jurisdiction of each spirit or nature power has to be cleverly demarcated in order that people may be persuaded to appeal to them as occasion arises. In Dudhi, the Cheros have carried this business of creating godheads and spiritual beings too far with the result that even the forests have been divided among several of these spirits. One is in charge of a hill pass or an entrance to the forest, another has its abode on a particular tree, a

third has his jurisdiction clearly outlined by trees, a fourth moves from corner to corner of the forest, one is responsible for fires within the forest, one sits on the head of cattle and goads them to the forest where they are devoured by the tiger spirit or are drowned in water.

Every disease has its presiding spirit, one resides in the Banka hill, another in the village mortuary, a third afflicts people with pox, a fourth is the twin sister of the spirit presiding over village grove, both of whom need be propitiated during the epidemic season or when a disease begins to take its toll in the village. The *Mata* or the goddess known to preside over epidemics and pox in the Hindu village has various counterparts among the tribal people. In Dudhi the various aspects of destruction are represented by *Kodma Mata, Angar Mata, Jalni Mata, Budi Mata, Rakti Bhowani, Sakti Bhowani, Kachni Bhowani, Atbhuja Devi, Phulmati* and others. When the Chero *Baiga* fails to redress immediate grievances he may invent new agencies of infliction, and often the name of the spirit and its role are pure fabrications to suit the demands of an exacting and anxious clientele. All these touch the fringe of Korwa life to-day, as they have ceased to think about them and merely follow prescriptions without expecting any spectacular result. It has therefore devolved on the Chero *Baiga* to develop a complicated pattern of worship and propitiation, elaborate in conception and minute in details, to convince the Korwas and other tribal people in Dudhi of its usefulness, so that their prescriptions may have some psychological effect on the minds of the afflicted. A Korwa woman, an elderly duenna who was sitting by my side while I was interrogating the Chero *Baiga*, interjected in good humour, 'the *Baiga* knows so much about the spirit world that he fails to spot the real source of trouble'. Turning to me with a suggestive gesture she said, 'They really do not know anything.' The *Baiga*, however, believes in parallelogram of forces and thus succeeds in restoring confidence when it is deeply shaken.

The tranquil despair of the Korwas has already produced a parabolic change in their attitude to religious beliefs and practices. Like other cognate tribes of the Munda ethnic group, the Korwas believed in an impersonal mysterious force, a *Bonga* or *Mana* which is a power, a source of all power patent as well as latent in persons and

things. This gave in to a pantheon of gods and spirits conceived as a sort of indefinite hierarchy with *Raja Chandol* as the supreme authority, the court of appeal for the Korwas. This pantheon has been enormously enlarged in proportion to their disappointment and failure to adapt themselves to changed economic situation, till it has again tended to become nebulous, slowly thinning out to become a vague power, uncertain in its attitude and uncanny in its relations with them.

The ancestors are regarded with great consideration by the Korwas. Their loss of faith in tribal and clan gods and in those who have been freely imported into their pantheon has not shaken their trust and obligation to the shades of the departed, and every Korwa family shelters its ancestors in the house and offers them libations and sacrifices at regular intervals. The ancestors are believed to protect them from calamities, save them from ferocious animals, warn them of impending crisis, cement family and clan solidarity.

Some of their ancestors are conceived as beneficent gods while there are others who are mischievous, depending on the nature of death they had succumbed to, for example, the *Bagahut* and the *Balsodhok*; one is the spirit of people killed by tigers, the other the spirit of children still-born or prematurely cut off from life. These are greatly dreaded by the Korwas, for they believe that as their death has been unnatural their relations with the survivors must necessarily be anti-social. In other tribal areas the tiger spirit has a cult addressed to it, but not so among the Korwas. Yet, the Korwas believe that the evil spirits often overpower the good ones and use them for nefarious ends, and to avoid them the Korwas protect themselves by placing thorns on the route through which the bier is carried and stones in circle round the spot where the body is cremated or buried. The bodies of people who die of snake-bite, of pox, of plague are not cremated or buried according to tribal rites, but are thrown into caves or gorges in distant hills or into flowing streams. Like the Hos and cognate tribes the Korwas sit down to divine the cause of death as also to find out what shape or form the disengaged soul may have taken, but their interest in these matters is very much on the wane and I did not hear of any seance during my visit to the Korwa settlements.

There are a host of festivals observed by the tribal population in Dudhi. The chief festival is the *Karma* which is held in the month of Bhadon. A branch of the *Karma* tree (anthocephalus cadamba) is ceremonially cut by the young men of the village in the presence of the *Baiga* who offers *arua rice* and a cock, the blood of which is dropped on the rice and the whole dedicated to the clan gods, ancestor spirits and all others who constitute the tribal pantheon. The *Karma* branch is then brought in procession to the courtyard of a village elder where it is fixed to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, and under the *Karma* tree, men and women dance night and day, sing *Karma* songs and regale themselves by liberal doses of liquor available cheap in the village.

The other festival is that of serpent worship which the Chero *Baiga* performs on behalf of the tribal people. The Gaurahi Puja in which the cattle are ceremonially worshipped by every householder also has its votaries, but the Korwas usually do not interest themselves in any festival other than the *Karma*. The Hinduised tribes like the Majhwars and Kharwars observe a number of feasts, the most important being the harvesting ceremony, when the new crop is prepared for cooking and ceremonially dedicated to the ancestral spirits and clan gods.

Thus the cycle of life among the Korwas as among other tribal groups is characterised by a system of social observances which include all the ceremonies and rites connected with pregnancy, birth, name giving, cutting hair for the first time, boring the ear, tattooing, mutilations and cicatrices, puberty, marriage and betrothal ceremonies which require the smooth and efficient co-operation of the different units of the society. These have undergone considerable changes with greater complexity and higher expectation of life along with the change in the material environment. Among the Korwas, a lack of interest in life and all that it connotes has engendered a social solidarity and a passivity which are both ill adapted to the present day conditions and it is no wonder that they have developed a sense of despair and frustration.

THE THARUS

WHILE the Korwas represent the most primitive element in the population of the United Provinces and a culture that is facing disorganisation and disintegration, the Tharus on the other hand represent the most interesting of the tribes and exhibit a vitality that has helped them to tide over various crises and to adapt themselves to changed and a changing economic environment. The Korwas have withdrawn themselves from contacts; the Tharus have thrown their lot deliberately with the people that surround them. The fear of strangers, the horror of the magic of their neighbours have transformed the Korwas into an inbreeding endogamous group; the knowledge of magic, sorcery and witchcraft have made the Tharus dreadful people, yet they have constantly revitalised their blood by exogamous marriages, which to-day, as it was in earlier days, is the most popular means of securing wives among them.

Descriptive accounts of the Tharus have been given by J. N. Nesfield, Rev. S. Knowles, E. T. Atkinson, H. R. Nevill and Sir William Crooke. Recently A. C. Turner has summarised the changes that have taken place in the Tharu culture as a result of their contacts mainly with their Hindu neighbours (1931 *Census Report, U. P.*). While in other parts contacts with advanced cultures have disintegrated tribal cultures, among the Tharus a careful process of selective adoption of traits and customs from neighbouring cultures has secured for them a stability, while they have emphasised the useful element of the indigenous cultural pattern. The Tharus represent to-day a culture that has been built up in response to their material needs but largely influenced by the attitude of their neighbours to their culture pattern. Much that has already been written, therefore, needs a reassessment in the light of the new values, attitudes and aspirations which are already manifest in the propaganda literature that the reformist Tharus themselves are putting forward.

The total Tharu population as recorded in the 1931 census is 77,021 of which 40,288 are males and 36,733 females (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 523). The distribution of the Tharus

province-wise is as follows: Bengal 482, Bihar and Orissa 37,338 and U.P. 31,578. In the Naini Tal district alone there are about 30,000 Tharus and 6,000 Bhoksas, a cognate tribe most probably an earlier offshoot of the main body of the Tharus found in this area. The Naini Tal Tharus are found in Bilhari, Nanakmata, Kilpuri and Tanakpur. The majority, however, are found in the Khatima Tehsil which includes the whole of Bilhari Perganah, and part of old Nanakmata, part of Kilpuri and Tanakpur. In Kheri district in the U.P., the Tharus inhabit the northern areas bordering Nepal from Bilraian to Bankati and even beyond. They are found on either side of the river Sarda, in British India and Nepal. The 1941 census put the strength of the Tharus in the U.P. as 22,381 and in Bihar 38,982. The defection could probably be traced to Hinduisation.

The Bhoksas are the nearest kins of the Tharus. There is little doubt that they belong to the same ethnic stock and it is perhaps true that both of these groups had come to the Tarai at the same time. The little difference in their culture should be attributed to the process of tribal transformation which must have taken place in their present habitat. It is also possible that the Bhoksas abandoned their tribal religion and joined the ranks of Hinduism, while the Tharus still keep to their age-long traditions and ancient beliefs and cults. The myths and stories about their origin, the traditions the people still remember do not give any clue to their affiliation or difference. The Bhoksas say that they came from Dakshin or the south; some among them believe that they have come from Delhi; still others that they were Panwar Rajputs and under Udayjit came to live at Bonbasa on the Sarda. Udayjit rendered valuable services to the Raja of Kumaon who gave him shelter. We shall discuss this aspect of their prehistory in another connection.

Culturally the Bhoksas are not more advanced than the Tharus though they engage Brahmins to officiate in their marriages and put on the sacred thread like caste people. The adoption of the worship of *Satyanarayan* by the Bhoksas and employment of Hindu priests to officiate for them has raised their social status and the Brahmins to-day do not refuse water from their hands. The Tharus allow

divorce and remarriage of widows, the Bhoksas look down upon such practices. The Tharus are a devil-ridden people, have oaths and ordeals in plenty, and much of their disputes are settled through them, but the Bhoksas have apparently lost faith in such expedients. Witchcraft is a special proficiency of the Tharus and so great is the belief in their magical powers that others who come to trade with them dare not come too near their villages. The Bhoksas do believe in magic and witchcraft, but they do not practise these arts. They leave them to the Tharus who are consulted in times of crisis. In some areas the Bhoksas are known to intermarry with Tharus. The Kilpuri Bhoksas, for example, freely marry Tharu girls and the distinction between the two tribes in this area is neither clear nor insisted on by the tribes concerned.

The traditions about their origin which the Tharus remember and recite are not uniform. Most of these refer to the connection the Tharus had with the Rajputs of Northern India who have been the reputed progenitors of most of the Hinduised sections of the primitive substratum of population in India. Risley has described the various processes of tribal transformation and has shown how in all these processes the historical element has been supplied by the Rajput clans of Northern India who were believed to wander about and take shelter in inaccessible and even inhospitable regions to escape the lot of serfs and slaves in their native land, as the Muslims began to reduce one after another the independent Rajput principalities of Central and Northern India. A few traditions and explanations given by the Tharus about their origin may be briefly mentioned.

The name 'Tharu' is said to be derived from their residence in the Tarai. 'Thar' in the tribal dialect means 'a jungle', so a Tharu is one who resides in forests, 'a forestman'. The name Tharu is derived by some from 'Thar', desert in Rajputana, from where they trace their ancestors. The tremendous influence of sorcery and witchcraft wielded by the Tharus is derived from their knowledge of a large stock of formulæ and incantations believed to be found in the *Atharva Veda* which made the Tharus popularly known as 'Atharu', corrupted to 'Tharu', their present designation. Others trace the name Tharu from 'Tharua' meaning to paddle about in the hills,

(a paddler) the reference being to the nomadic life of the Tharus and their custom of marriage by capture.

There is a volume of opinion regarding the Maharashtra origin of the Tharus. The Tharu reform *sabha* traces this affiliation on the basis of the presence in their country of a large number of Maharashtra castes. The Rajput origin is believed to be from the Sisodiya clan (1303 A.D.) and Jaimal, Fatesingh and Tarran Singh are believed to be the ancestors of the Tharus. Sherring (*Hindu Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I) refers to the influence of the Tharus in earlier days. Buchanon (*Eastern India*, Vol. II) refers to the expulsion of the Gurkhas from Magadha by the Tharus who 'are said to have descended from the hills and extended themselves over every part north of the Ghagra at least'. The Tharus themselves deny their Nepali origin. Even if the Tharus have not come from Nepal, their intermixture with the Nepalese cannot be denied. In the winter months, Nepalese and hillmen come down from the hills to live in the Bhabar and certain areas in the Tarai. They come either alone or with their families and cattle, build improvised huts in the forest, clear the trees and live as lumbermen or by serving the Tharu families. Some husk rice for the latter and are popularly known as 'Dhan Kuttas'; others live by cattle raising or by trading in salt, hides and potatoes.

That the Tharus are a mixed people of this there is not the slightest doubt. The Tharus themselves claim Rajput parentage on their mother's side. The dominance of women in the Tharu country is explained by the tradition that the Tharus are offsprings of mixed marriages between Rajput women and their servants, *Saises* and *Chamars*, with whom they fled into the jungles to escape the invading Muslim armies who killed the king and his men, their husbands and relations. This tradition is supported by them on the ground that women have better physical features than men. They are fairer, more graceful and they are so conscious of this fact that they have consistently upheld the ban on the liberties of their menfolk in spite of contacts with outsiders and the gradual progress they have made in their cultural life. The economic independence of the women among the Tharus is advanced as further argument for their mixed descent. It may be a cause as well as a consequence, but the position

of women is certainly an important fact which needs to be explained.

The Tharu women have a dominant position in their society. They form 90 per cent. of the crowd in the markets and fairs. They move about freely, even smoke and drink, in the bazaar. Fishing is a feminine occupation and outdoor activity such as marketing produce, buying and selling, business negotiations are also done by women. The Tharu women do not allow their husbands to touch food or even enter the *chouka* (kitchen). They do not allow the men to touch the pots in which water for drinking is stored. They are expert painters and decorators; they paint pictures and scenes depicting fights and warriors on horseback. They fish and hunt, the men carry the traps and receptacles. In the census report of the U.P. (1931) further peculiarities of the Tharu women are recorded. While caste women proceed to the fields very early in the morning and have a meal at midday and work till the evening, the Tharu women go to their fields after a good meal corresponding to the English breakfast. At midday they eat some grains and then return home in turn to prepare the evening meal for their menfolk. They thus work two to three hours less than the women of other tribes and castes. Again, Tharu women unlike other women do not carry paddy seedlings to the fields which is done by the men. Other women carry them on their head thus saving the expense of a labourer or two. Local landlords did their utmost to change these conditions, but rather than change their mode of life the Tharus chose to leave the fields altogether. The result was an emigration of the Tharus to Nepal and the adjacent parts where they live by agriculture or by engaging themselves as labourers.

The Tharu tribal code definitely lays down the share of each sex in the property and belongings of the tribe. Women are the sole proprietors of domestic pets, poultry, cattle and the produce of the kitchen garden. They can dispose of these in any way they like and can use the income for their own personal needs. On one occasion a Tharu was tempted to sell a cock to my peon who was collecting provisions for me in the Tanakpur area. The Tharu brought the bird covered all the way to deliver it personally to my cook and

realised the price for it. It was not the usual price he charged, he most certainly included in it consideration for his labour and the mental worry involved in appropriating someone else's property as I came to know later on. In the evening all the villagers were invited by me to my tent for a demonstration of Tharu dance and music. The wife who owned the cock was also an expected visitor. When the villagers started for my camp, the man who had sold the cock ran up to my camp before the others arrived and demanded the bird back. My cook did not realise the implications of this demand, and began to howl at the man threatening him with dire consequences should he persist in his efforts to recover the bird. Fortunately the cock was not meant for dinner that night, and this lease of life saved the Tharu from an abject exposure before the villagers. I was attracted by the parleys and enquired from the Tharu what his grievance was. He narrated the story of his discomfiture, how he had sinned against his wife and how he wanted to make amends for it. I ordered the release of the bird and the return of the 'prodigal ward' at once made his frightened face beam and a glow was seen in his small covered eyes. What would have been a very delicate situation was avoided and a domestic quarrel which might have broken the ties of their marital life was averted.

While the women have their belongings, the men have their bird-traps, ploughs, oil presses, the rewards of their manual labour and the produce of their fields. Even if they own these they are not free to dispose of them as they please for they dare not ignore the women's advice. Ill-treatment of husbands by wives is frequent in the Tharu country and very often the aggrieved husband has to approach the *Bharara* (tribal priest) and through him offer prayers and sacrifices to their gods and goddesses for redress of his sufferings. The women are often seen as hard task masters and their direction of the activities of their menfolk is not always above reproach. But men have accustomed themselves to the ways of their women, and have adapted themselves to the conditions of life, yet the jealousies and suspicions their women excite in them find expression in their belief in magic and witchcraft and in the various protective devices, charms and amulets which aim at securing for them a decent

livelihood and domestic bliss—a rare privilege of Tharu family life.

Writing about the physiognomy of the Tharu, Nesfield wrote that the tribe had acquired a slightly Mongolian cast which shows itself chiefly, but not to a striking degree, in slanting eyes and high cheek bones. This he traced to intermarriages which have taken place within the last two or three centuries. But the description he gives of the average Tharu does not seem to be correct. He writes, "They (the Tharus) have long wavy hair, a dark, almost a black complexion and as much hair on their face and body as is usual with other natives of India. In stature, build, and gait they are distinctly Indian and not Mongolian; nor have they any traditions which connect their origin with Nepal." Risley recorded evidence of Mongoloid traits among the Tharus, and Knowles found the Mongolian style of feature predominant among them. According to Crooke "the most probable explanation based on the available evidence seems to be that the Tharus are originally a Dravidian race who by alliance with Nepalese and other hill races have acquired some degree of Mongolian physiognomy". That the Tharus have Mongoloid features of this there is hardly any doubt. Their eyes are more or less oblique, their complexion mostly brown or yellow-brown, the hair on the body and face very scanty and straight, their nose thin and of medium size while other features affiliate them more with the Nepalese than with Australoid or Pre-Dravidian tribes or castes. The Tharus therefore appear to be a Mongoloid people who have succeeded in assimilating non-Mongoloid features.

To the north of the Tharu country and to the north-west over the whole of the cis-Himalayan region we find the Khasas and the non-Mongoloid features found among the Tharus, and which are traced by them to the Rajputs, may originally be due to the Khasas.

Although the Tharu women possess a number of privileges which are usually denied to women of other tribes and castes and they are handsomer than men, the suggestion of a Rajput strain through the females is not easy to prove, unless we take the term 'Rajput' as a generic name for all those people who belong to the 'martial races' or who have distinguished themselves as warriors or

fighters. Many women among them resemble Khasa women of the Dehra Dun district and beyond, though the latter possess a slightly higher stature and the former a Mongolian twist in the eyes. While the Khasas have mixed with the Mongolians but have largely maintained their blood against infusion of Dom or aboriginal blood, the Tharus seem to have shared both the Khasa and the Dom infiltration. Besides, the cultural life of the Tharu do not suggest any superimposition of a higher culture on their indigenous pattern of life and living and those that appear alien are the result of contacts with foreign elements in the local population. Further, in cases of mixture between a higher and an inferior race, a sort of hypergamy is practised and endogamy develops after a *jus connubii* is effected. For a time only hypergamous marriages are allowed till the barriers become rigid enough to bar any further intermixture. That may have been the cause of the origin of a large number of endogamous groups in India, it is also the case in other countries where such mixture has taken place. The frequent marital raids of the Tharus to Nepal from where they secure their supply of women do not support the contention of the comparative purity of race among the Tharus nor do the women of the tribe prefer marriages with caste people among whom they live.

The other plausible explanation of the dominance of women among the Tharus may be the natural aversion of men to do any work as is found generally among some Mongoloid stock. The Mongolian is often found to be sluggish, weak, irresponsible and unwilling worker and in many areas they live on the labours of their wives. This may have pushed the Tharu men into the background while the women have assumed greater and greater responsibility in domestic life, till to-day they wield considerable influence over their menfolk. But this explanation does not seem to be enough, for responsibility in domestic life may not result in undue importance of the womenfolk. The Tharus unlike many other Mongoloid tribes are a strong people. They are excellent cultivators and will till 'about four times as much land as a plainsman' in the same neighbourhood. The dominance of women, their rights to property, their maltreatment of their husbands, their active rôle in fishing, the chase and in business negotia-

tions, their liberty in choosing their partners and annulling marriages, all these reproduce conditions of a matriarchal society. The Khasas with whom the Tharus have mixed also show vestiges of a matriarchal matrix. So it is possible that in the Tarai and the Himalayan region, among the aboriginal Tharus or among the isolated Indo-Aryans, the Khasas and the Kumaonese, a matriarchal society existed which has profoundly influenced the culture patterns of the Khasa as well as of the Tharu.

Anthropometrical investigations with blood group tests may throw some light on the raciology of the Tharus. They may indicate the degree of racial miscegenation if nothing else. With this end in view, I measured nearly 300 Tharus and tested an equal number of blood samples from the various Tharu localities of the province. Besides the racial significance of these investigations, blood groups may tell us something about the genetic equilibrium of the tribe and their influence on disease, pathology and crime.

The Tharus and the Bhoksas living as they do in a malarious and unhealthy country have been popularly known as immune from malarial infection. As early as 1904, Mr. H. R. Nevill mentioned this fact in the District Gazetteer of Naini Tal. 'From habituation,' he writes, 'and from a long course of natural selection, the Tharus have become almost immune from the deadly malarial fever of the Tarai. It is not true as is usually asserted that they never suffer from fever, but it is an undoubted fact that they are able to live and flourish in a climate which is generally fatal to emigrants from other districts.'

The Tharus suffer from an eye disease called trachoma, which is found in an endemic form. Boys and girls, otherwise handsome and healthy, have their eyes mostly affected with trachoma and often the pupil is seen dilated and even bulging out adding to the volume of the eyefolds. The Tharus were also the subject of a report by Stott and Mukerjee about 30 years ago (1910) and their immunity more or less was recognised by the Public Health Department of the U.P.

How far malaria is selective would be an interesting inquiry. Some correlation between malaria and blood groups has been

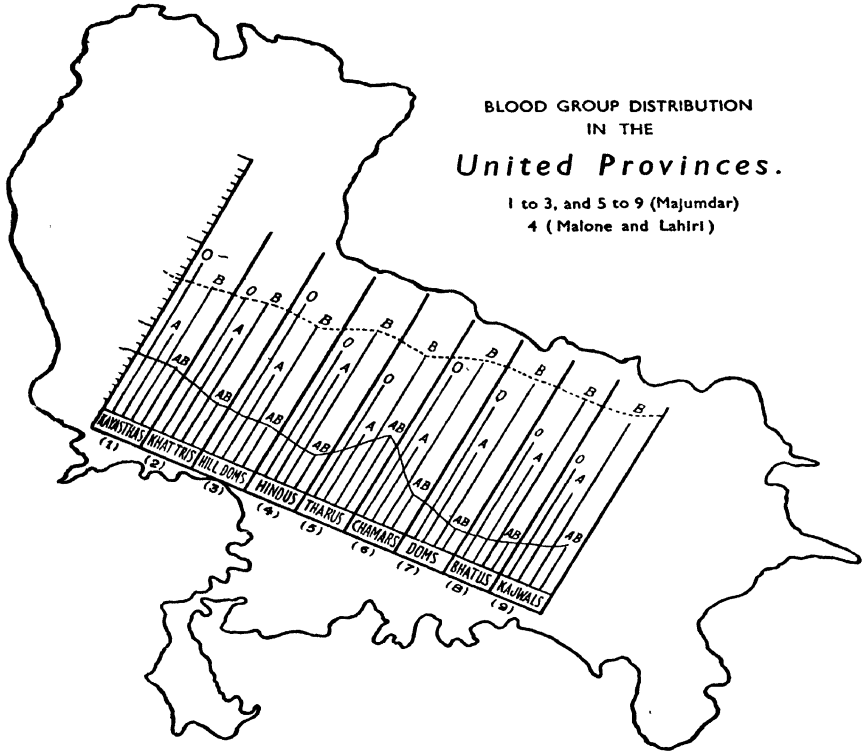
observed by Russian scientists*. The Tarai as we have already mentioned above is notorious for the incidence of malaria and yet there are people who live and thrive in the unhealthy and inhospitable climate of the Tarai. People who are not habituated to the climate suffer from malaria and in some parts like Chandanchowki, Dudhwa, Bonbasa and Tanakpur, the incidence of malaria is very high. In Bonbasa where the headworks of the Sarda Canal lie, the incidence of malaria among the labour population is so high that the authorities had to devise methods to protect the labourers from malarial infection. Not only a regular dose of quinine was systematically given to the people, a big living shed with wire gauze fencing was constructed and as soon as the labourers finished their daily routine duties, they were made to enter the house and remain there till next morning when they would again be harnessed to their work. Those that chafed at this preventive measure were forcibly put into the shed and locked inside, an arrangement, however cruel it might look, necessary in the interest of the work and also of the workers.

Malaria is one big single cause of depopulation in many parts of the country and of loss of vitality in the population, but in the Tarai among the Tharus the ravages of the disease have been insignificant compared to those in other parts of India. Onions and garlic in large quantities in their diet are considered to be the cause of immunity from malaria by some, while others claim their immunity from their habitual cleanliness and the full meal they always get. It is difficult either to accept or reject these explanations, but even if they are true, similar immunity must develop elsewhere among people who suffer from malaria.

In fact, the Tharus have not developed an absolute immunity from malaria. The Tharu children suffer from the disease as much as other children. I should think that 90 per cent. of these Tharu children show their spleens in no uncertain manner. But as they grow the spleen gradually subsides and finally become normal and by the age of 12 to 15 the Tharu children develop an immunity. This experience of mine has been corroborated by medical officers of health who have worked among the Tharus as well as by the local people

*Wiener. Blood Groups and Blood Transfusion (1939), pp. 245

BLOOD GROUP MAP OF THE U.P.



who know them so well. The blood group percentages are given below:

	O	A	B	AB	B+AB
Tharus Male and female (241) ..	27.1	17.0	37.5	18.4	55.9
Tharu females (82)	25.6	13.4	42.7	18.3	61.0

Evidently the Tharus show a very high incidence of AB which I should think is larger than that obtained for any Indian caste or tribe except the Tibetans who live in the north-east of India. Even the Tibetans do not show as high a percentage of (B+AB) as the Tharus. Should we, therefore, conclude that this high AB (also B) among the Tharus may have given them an immunity from malaria? While measuring the Tharus I found a number of them suffering from fever. I noted their number in the register and discovered later that most of those belonged to group A while 78 p.c. of the (B+AB) group on enquiry said that they were not habitual victims of malarial infection. This, however, may be a mere coincidence but it may also indicate some correlation that may exist between blood groups and malaria. (*Nature*: 1943, *September*).

The high incidence of B+AB may mean that O and A are disappearing by the selective action of the environment leaving B+AB to multiply. This is not surprising when we remember how the Negroes of the south (in America) who were used to a warmer climate when driven to the north succumbed to pulmonary diseases and that this is one big single cause of depopulation of the native population in America.

As already mentioned, the Tharus derive themselves from a mixture of Rajputs and Nepalese, some say from Rajput women and their menials, *Saises* and *Chamars*. The *Chamars* do not possess a Mongolian cast of face and Rajputs do not have epicanthric folds in their eyes, but the Tharus have both. Besides, the Rajputs of Northern India have a high A value and less B, and it is very difficult to explain the very low incidence of A among the Tharus unless we suppose that the B+AB group has succeeded in acclimatising themselves while A has not. The large incidence of B+AB may both be

the cause and effect of a process of inbreeding and as people with B+AB appear to have developed an immunity from malaria, the Tharus as a group now are more immune than other groups in the neighbourhood. This, however, needs to be corroborated by blood groups data from other malarial districts in different parts of India. Wiener reported the results obtained by certain Russian investigators which indicate that the individuals of group O are less likely to contract malaria than individuals of group AB or group B. It must be mentioned here that the two groups B & AB are infrequently met with in Russia and the percentage of O is greater there than B and AB. But the Tharu data show a high B+AB value and also that persons with the B & AB group suffer less from malaria than O or A.

I do not think that such divergent results are necessarily inconsistent, for the climatic conditions in one part may afford immunity to those of a particular group, while another set of climatic conditions may favour a different blood group in its struggle for adaptation. As a fact, all reported correlations between blood groups and diseases could not be corroborated by further investigations.* I should think that hasty interpretation of results based on small samples is perhaps responsible for this and I would plead for an extensive blood group investigation before we admit negative results. The large percentage of B among the Tharus can be compared with similar percentage among the artisan castes in the cis-Himalayan region, who have received much Khasa blood. A high incidence of B has been found to be a characteristic of all mixed peoples or hybrid groups.

Anthropometric data were collected from both the sexes, from 191 men and 182 women, and the results have been statistically reduced. The cephalic index of the Tharu male is 72.4, and 72.6 for the Tharu female. The nasal index is 75.9 for males and 77.4 for females, all constants calculated from the mean values. The Tharus, therefore, are a dolichocephalic and mesorhine people. The Mongolians have been characterised by brachycephaly and many writers have explained brachycephaly in Bengal from Mongolian

* Wiener, Blood Groups and Blood Transfusions (1939) pp. 246.

infusion and in Bombay from Scythian intermixture, the latter being known as an offshoot of the Mongolian stock. The Tharus are Mongoloid but dolichocephalic, and the low values obtained for their cephalic measurements show the insignificant role of brachycephals among the Tharus. The women have a flatter nose than men and the alleged Rajput descent from the side of their womenfolk appears to be a myth. The average stature of the Tharu males is 163.33±.377 while that of woman is 151.13±.431.

From the standard deviations of the various physical measurements it does not appear that the Tharus represent a greatly mixed type, though from their indefinite physical traits a certain amount of mixture cannot be denied. The S.D. for head length is 5.78±.296, head breadth 4.38±.230, nasal length 3·57±.180, nasal breadth 2.39±.122, stature 5.22±.267. It is therefore probable that the various elements that have entered into the constitution of the Tharu physical type were not widely dissimilar.

The anthropometric data obtained from the Tharus are extremely significant as they do not uphold the popular beliefs about their racial composition. Anthropologists have assumed that all Mongolians are brachycephals, but a sample survey of pockets of Mongolian or Mongoloid stocks would show that a large proportion of them are dolichocephals, even highly so. Another fact that emerges from the anthropometric data is the absence of any scientific evidence of Rajput origin of the Tharu females. The predominant position held by Tharu women cannot be due to their superior extraction as is claimed by them. Overwhelming emphasis must now be given to the matriarchal matrix of Tharu culture which appears to be amply borne out by similar social status enjoyed by the women in the cis-Himalayan region.

The Tharus live by agriculture aided by fishing and occasional hunting in the forests; cultivation is the main occupation. Of the 13,000 earners, male and female, in the Naini Tal district, no less than 10,000 returned themselves as agriculturists. Though agriculture is the most important method of securing subsistence and has become the pivot of their economic life, yet the whole of their life is not woven round this important economic pursuit. Hunting and particularly

fishing are regarded as important links between the gaps provided by agriculture from sowing to harvesting and to the next sowing season. The beliefs and rites connected with hunting and fishing receive adequate recognition and are followed with considerable unanimity by the people and success as a hunter or as an expert fisher makes a Tharu justifiably proud just as a successful agricultural season makes him eager to display his produce. The satisfaction of the economic needs does not exhaust the desire for food production among the Tharus, for there are certain customs which are primarily social and do not appear to be dictated by the economic need of reciprocity or mutuality of obligations.

Hospitality as a social trait is a feature of the culture of many savage groups, though its utility from the economic point of view may be questioned. The savage who produces plenty and who needs no supply from his clansman also desires that he should be invited by his villager or clansman to a sumptuous dinner and he himself would like to treat his own kinsmen or his village mate in the same way. The Tharus, those of them who are substantial, love to entertain their friends and pride themselves as hosts. In case the financial prospects are gloomy due to loss of crops or the failure of the rains, they like many other primitive groups in India pray for the coming harvesting season so that they may think of their friends and kinsmen. While the Tharu women return from their daily fishing round, several of them often pool their catch and decide to cook a common meal and the men are sent for to join in the pot luck.

The Tharus do more hunting than the Bhoksas, but usually it takes the form of periodical excursions into the forest at a time when they are free from their work in the fields. There is no magical beliefs among them connecting success in hunting with agricultural prosperity as is found among the Oraons of Chota Nagpur, and therefore little organised or ceremonial hunting is done. Occasionally they may be seen to stalk deer or shoot birds or other game and they may be seen with a big net (*khaber*) going to the heart of the forest and laying it on the tracks of big animals who when entangled in it can seldom escape. They may also be seen with the *kurkia* or the *khandia* which they use for catching birds. Sometimes two or more

villages spontaneously join and form hunting bands which at times are very successful.

When they come home with a big catch of pig, deer, rabbit and fowls in plenty, they distribute them to all the village people irrespective of caste or complexion. I have often seen the Tharu hunters go without their own share. Often they discuss their achievements with the crowd that gather round them while someone from the crowd, self-appointed, distributes the fish among the clansmen. The admiration the hunter receives from the display of his skill and dexterity in hunting is enough impetus for his assiduous application to such pursuits. The hunting party often includes women and very often the latter lead in the chase though the brunt of the labour falls on the men. The pleasure, and I should think the pride, of women leading men to activities which should ordinarily be done by the latter sustain this practice and women take it as a diversion, the men being careful to see that no harm occurs to their womenfolk.

Fishing among the Tharus is an important subsidiary occupation and is more popular than hunting. It is in fishing that men, women and children of a village come out in batches fully equipped with nets and traps and run headlong into the stream and enjoy the excitement of the game. Men and women in big rivers may be seen fishing in separate groups and there is hardly any fixed set of rules for fishing. The fishers usually carry the fishing tackle and also carry the catch. Children often help the latter. Deep water fishing is done by men generally, and women find it more convenient to use the *pakhaiya* which is most effective in slow running water. Men use different kinds of nets such as *patia* or *jal* which are not usually used by women, but both sexes use *dhimri* which is placed at the orifice or exit of water in a dam, so that water is allowed to pass out the fish remaining in the *dhimri*. The damming of water by bamboos and logs of wood and poisoning the water with poisonous wild berries and roots for catching fish in the Sarda river are being slowly given up. This method of fishing is, however, common among all the members of the Austric race and the ingredients used for the purpose differ according to the variation in the vegetation of the locality. The daily routine of Tharu women in Bankati, Chandanchowki, Sonarpur

and the adjacent areas includes a fishing trip to the stagnant pools and tanks and shallow depressions in their fields where they collect their daily requirements of fish. Men do not accompany them, neither do they carry the nets and receptacles for fish. It is only when large-scale fishing is organised in big rivers that the women are found to lead their menfolk into the enterprise.

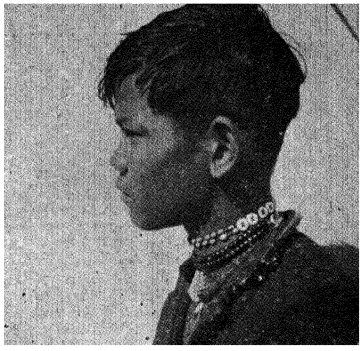
Agriculture like hunting and fishing is a mixed occupation among the Tharus and is done with meticulous care and considerable hardship. Methods of farming depend on soil, climate and the character of the people. In their efforts to eke out the maximum from the land the Tharus have shown a higher form of adaptability, ability and husbandry than the Korwas, though their neighbours the Bhoksas have even excelled them. By application and experience they have learnt the risks and dangers of farming and herding and they know which of these are controllable and which are not. They know the troubles of keeping watch on distant lands and prefer to live near the plots. They know that certain crops like rice require constant irrigation and a plentiful supply of water and they utilise their practical experience in preserving water from distant streams or other natural or artifical sources. The important features connected with agriculture are 1. division of labour between the sexes; 2. the seasonal calendar; 3. daily routine; 4. land tenure; and 5. magical and religious practices connected with agriculture.

Though women among the Tharus wield a dominant position in the domestic economy, yet a conventional division of labour between the sexes exists, though there is hardly any taboo limiting the activities of either. In agriculture, the principle of division has assumed a traditional importance and appears to be based on the understanding of the suitability or otherwise of the work for the different units of the society. Women do the weeding, harvesting, winnowing and husking, children help men in repairing ridges or dams, in tending cattle, driving bullocks over the threshing floor, while ploughing, levelling and sowing are occupations for men. Some of the occupations are jointly done such as harvesting, but sowing is pre-eminently a man's occupation. I could not get any reasonable explanation or defence of this custom from the Tharus, though among the Hos and cognate

Monotony of age and experience.

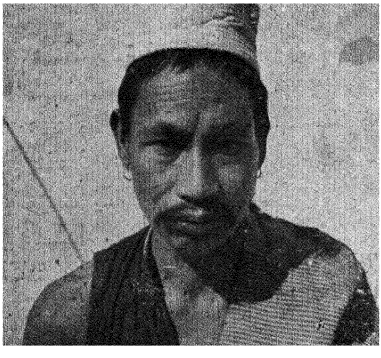
'The Tharu women of Bonbasa'—They say they are immune from malaria.

Keen subjects for blood group tests, 'I am alright' says she.

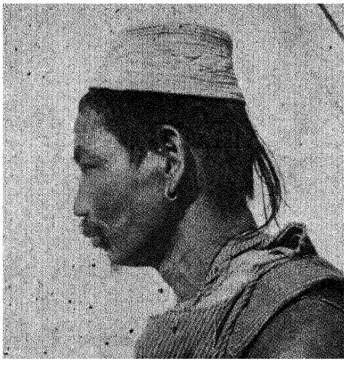


'Charms do not help'—A habitual victim of Malaria.

Young Tharu wives



"I have seen life"



A profile

tribes every farmer would be able to give an explanation or smile at our ignorance. Weeding is an occupation for women which requires very careful watching and picking for which women have to stoop bending over the crops for hours for days together. The work becomes mechanical after some time, but the weeders have to develop a precision and maintain it till all the weeds are cleared to allow a healthy growth of the plants. This patience is more a virtue of women than of man. Winnowing and husking also requires similar patience as any carelessness would mean a loss of the anticipated yield. Watching of crops which involves keeping awake during the major part of the night and sleeping out in the fields in improvised leafy huts is generally done by men.

Although the Tharus are notorious for sorcery and witchcraft, they are not themselves immune from the evil eye and the evil tongue. In spite of their best efforts and their knowledge of the unseen world, their crops suffer from pests and diseases, their granary is invaded by rats, their plants die, and the yield becomes inexplicably poor sometimes. Birds and animals damage the crops, and the Tharus put up scarecrows and other devices. They offer periodical sacrifices to their gods and propitiate the evil spirits whenever they suspect mischief from those quarters. All these, however, do not exhaust the precautions needed to ensure a bumper crop or a care-free routine life. 'There are some people,' said an elderly Tharu, a village school teacher of Khatima, 'who are born with the evil eye and the evil mouth. If they look at a field it deteriorates in its fertility. The crops do not flourish; if there is any crop at all it is poor. If they praise the growth of the plants that would mean the end of further growth; if they admire the sheaves of corn, they would not develop. If they praise a cow giving milk, either the calf will die or the animal will cease to give milk.' There is something wrong in the constitution of these persons which makes them anti-social from their childhood. Precautions must be taken against them and are taken.

The other kind of evil influence is exerted by witches and sorcerors of whose exact *modus operandi* they are not very certain. Nevertheless these are greatly dreaded by the cultivators and must be counteracted by spells and incantations effectively rendered, and

by sacrifices and propitiation of their pet spirits at every critical stage in the progress of the crop. The *Bhararas* can only divine the cause, but the sources of witchcraft, the spirits or persons directly responsible for such action are difficult to trace. That is why their prescriptions are not always effective. A *Bharara* himself told me, 'Ours is a process of trial and error, and omnibus prescription to appease each and every spirit known to us unless, of course, it is an identified spirit or witch as for example when the cattle die from some epidemic or disease we approach *Nangartai* or *Darchandi,* the reputed protector of cattle in the Tarai.'

The Bhoksas have for some time past been engaging Pahari Brahmins to officiate in their ceremonies and worship-festivals; the Tharus approach them only when their *Bhararas* fail. It appears that the Pahari Brahmins have two prescriptions, one for their clients the Bhoksa, the other for the Tharu, and I was told in confidence by one such Brahmin that the Tharu would not care to accept his advice 'if the god he (the Brahmin) names is not familiar or known to the Tharu.' It is therefore not in their known gods and spirits that the Tharus have lost confidence, it is in the manner of propitiating them or the prescriptions of the *Bharara* that their confidence seems to have been shaken. The reputation of the Pahari Brahmins, their appearance no less than their supposed austere life, I should think, the ignorance of the primitive Tharus of the real social and ceremonial life of these Brahmins and also the respect that their own *Bhararas* show to them, have contributed to the status of these Brahmins. The Tharu *Bhararas* are now seen to adopt the prescriptions and manner of worship of alien gods to supplement their indigenous system. As it is, already the Pahari Brahmins have considerably influenced the cultural life of the Tharus though the latter unlike the Bhoksas have not publicly introduced the Brahmins to minister to their gods and those of others who are believed to cause disappointment to them.

Still the *Bharara* among the Tharus and the Pahari Brahmin among the Bhoksa determine an auspicious day for the first ploughing of the field. He determines the method of propitiation, the sacrifices and the spirits or gods to whom they should be addressed. Among the Bhoksas, the Pahari Brahmin performs a *homa* in the field and

also ceremonially sows a handful of seeds in some part of the field where a mark is made by him either by planting a stick or the branch of a tree. Occasionally an earthen pot with water and leaves of the *tulsi* plant is buried at a fixed spot and this is known only to the officiating priest and the cultivator concerned. As this ceremony is performed after midnight the secrecy is not difficult to maintain. What was originally a fertility cult has now been replaced by a thanksgiving service to the god supposed to preside over agriculture.

This practice of midnight worship in the fields and the mysterious sowing of seeds by the Pahari Brahmin explain how alien traits can be incorporated into the pattern of a tribal culture. This is possible if the traits in question are conceived in the spirit of the culture concerned without which assimilation is difficult. The *Bharara* also determines the day for harvesting and it should always fall on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday. When all these precautions have been taken, the Tharus and Bhoksas believe that the evil eye and the witches and sorcerors cannot do much harm though their anxiety is not relieved till the year turns out successful.

The important supplementary occupations of the Tharus are not many. Briefly they are construction and repair of houses, making furniture, household utensils, basketry, musical instruments, weapons, rope and mats, pottery and a little carpentry. Weaving, spinning and needlework form interesting diversions for the women but not regular routine work. There are local weavers who supply the needs of the Tharu and that is why the latter have begun to look down upon weaving as an occupation. This leads us to an important question about the attitude of these people to the occupations and professions and how far this attitude is or is not economically beneficial.

So long as a tribe in India does not completely merge into the ranks of Hinduism, it retains more or less its self-sufficiency so far as its economic needs are concerned, and the Tharus though they are in the process of transformation do engage themselves in most of the occupations which are performed by different artisan castes in the Hindu social system. The incorporation of artisan castes in the indigenous economic organisation of the Tharus has increased and is certainly increasing thereby introducing new patterns and diverse

textures into their otherwise simple economic life. This will necessarily lead to an interdependence of economic activities and perhaps a greater specialisation, but the result of this economic experiment will depend on the manner in which the subsidiary occupations are selected and carried on.

Agriculture among the tribal people has not been specialised to any appreciable extent and there is little chance of any such specialisation in the immediate future among the Tharus. If they give up the subsidiary occupations and industries which have proved extremely useful to them simply because specialised workers can undertake them with greater advantage, the result is not likely to be beneficial for them. The introduction of artisan elements and the greater dependence on these in the near future will be suicidal to the Tharus unless they develop some specialised industry themselves or effect considerable improvement in the indigenous system of cultivation and develop marketing organisation which does not exist to any considerable extent among them.

To take one example, pottery used to be manufactured by the Tharus themselves. Tharu women make a number of articles which are useful to them. Previously they used to make earthen toys such as horse, camel, warriors on horseback, agricultural implements, utensils, etc., but these have been given up mostly as the Hindu potters are available who are making these with greater skill and perfection. The importation of cheap toys of Japanese or German manufacture has had much to do with the gradual displacement of this industry and even the potters themselves do not think it profitable to continue their calling. It is at the time of religious and semi-religious fairs and festivals that the potters make them and their novelty and attractiveness, sometimes even their uncouthness, appeal to the children or their parents.

The Tharus and Bhoksas even today make *matora* or *bakhari* for storing grain, *barosi* to keep fire, and earthen vessels for keeping fodder for the cattle. These are usually big things and do not require much skill to make, but they involve a lot of labour in their manufacture which, if paid in cash, is beyond the means of the average Tharu. The practice of paying in grain for articles of every day use, which is

customary among most primitive tribes and backward castes in India, makes it an inconvenient transaction, for the grain demanded in exchange for the big earthenwares would amount much in excess of the usual cash value. The potters insist on the customary procedure which the Tharus grudge to follow. So the making of these kinds of earthen vessels is still an occupation among the tribes in this area. The potter manufactures articles for domestic use, such as *galla, latia, bhulra, manua* and even *nad, i.e.*, different kinds of receptacles for water or for keeping spices, pulses, straw and fodder. In some interior villages, Bankati for example, most of the pottery is done by the Tharus themselves, elsewhere it is done by the potter caste, while in most villages it is shared between the two.

The Tharus have skilfully utilised the natural resources and their group organisation for maintaining themselves in their material economy. The requisites for building houses are available in the village and in the forests that surround them, so that they are self-sufficient so far as their needs for shelter are concerned. The principal materials in the construction of shelter are wooden posts, rafters and beams which are procured from the jungles, and the grass, wattle, straw and mud are also locally available. It only requires human skill and labour to build the houses. There is little architectural skill in the construction of these huts, though their shape and form are made as attractive as possible. The houses are usually rectangular and the roof conical in shape. The roofing is seldom done with tiles, grass being most commonly used which projects on all sides sloping downwards. The ordinary mud walls of the plains is replaced by those of wattle coated with mud, so that they do not become very damp during rainy weather. The labour demanded for the construction of houses is easily obtained from the village itself, so that the cost of hired labour is insignificant. There is a season when building and repairing of houses should be undertaken. For if a cultivator wants a house to be built during the harvesting season he cannot count on this voluntary service. It is only when the cultivators are free from outside economic pursuits that voluntary labour is available.

If we look to the seasonal calendar of the Tharus we shall find that there are two periods when provision for building and repairing

of houses and other miscellaneous work exist. They are May and June when there is little work in the fields, and November and December when the men are usually free as most of the work falls to the women, those that are done by men being usually light. So in May and June and November and December the Tharus build their houses or repair them—in other words, once before the commencement of the monsoon and once before the winter rains set in. The main house is built facing east and a second hut faces south so that between them they shut out the winds from the west and north, both of which the Tharus claim are bad for health. The main house is usually a large one divided into apartments for sleeping, dining and keeping lumber, while the small hut may be used as a granary and to accommodate guests of the family. The fact that the granary and the guest room are combined in the same building shows perhaps the same solicitude of the people to display their wealth which has already been referred to above.

The houses are well lighted and well ventilated with doors and windows and there is provision for a large space in the courtyard into which they open. Every family possesses a kitchen garden where is always growing some vegetables, gourds, pumpkins, etc. Every morning the women sweep the courtyard and put a coating of cowdung solution on the mud-finished walls making the house look very neat and pretty. Reference has already been made to voluntary labour which is available for the construction and repair of houses. It is not that a cultivator requisitions all the villagers for this purpose; the whole arrangement is privately made without any fuss whatsoever. There are some people in the village who are adept in this kind of work and when they are approached by those who need their services they come and help them. They receive no remuneration for their labour either in cash or in kind, but the family which receives their help is anxious to reciprocate by gifts or similar service.

This ungrudging source of free labour is only possible in a community where the sense of duties and obligations has developed to such an extent that the receiver understands the value of the assistance rendered and the giver realises the need, so that reciprocity and mu-

tuality of obligations become binding elements in their normal life. An illustration of this feeling would be found in the case of the marriage of Tulli's daughter in Kilpuri. Tulli's clansmen contributed substantially to the expenses without which he would have to accept money from his daughter's fiancé, which is extremely humiliating and has recently been banned by the Tharu *panchayat* as a measure of social reform. Tulli is an expert builder and he helped many families in the village sometime or other and, therefore, the expenses of Tulli's daughter's wedding were shared by his co-villagers. 'When you find a miserable looking hovel,' said my informant, 'you may take it that the family lives aloof from the clan. Some members of the family must have acted against the tribal code for which it has been excommunicated, or the family is so quarrelsome that it has offended both its friends and enemies.' It could not be taken as a standard test of temperamental maladjustment or of the poverty of the family concerned, but there was much in what my informant said.

After the building of the house comes its furnishing as an indispensable requirement of a family. The usual furniture that we meet with in an average house consists of a number of beds, made either of wood or of strings, rarely of *newar*, a couple of crudely made chairs if the family is substantial, a few wooden stools, mats and wooden cases or trunks made from galvanised sheetings used as safes as well as wardrobe. These being the general paraphernalia of an average house, we cannot expect much furniture in Tharu houses generally. We find, however, some wooden charpoys or stringed bedsteads, stools made of strings with wooden framework, mats and baskets. In some houses we get wooden or stringed chairs, all made by the people themselves. Each house owns a set of tools for ordinary carpentry work. Fishing nets and traps are also made by them.

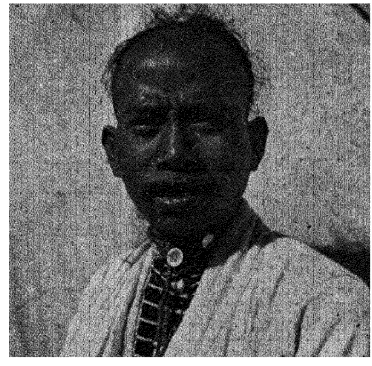
Basketry and manufacture of mat are done by the women but men have to prepare the materials, even collect them. Many are the shapes and designs worked out by the women on the baskets and mats. The size and design vary according to the use to which they are put and the same kind of baskets may not be found in all houses. Hundreds of baskets are sold in the weekly markets and fairs and some have on them patterns of animals and men, elephants, horses, men

with bows and arrows, and sometimes even hunting scenes are skilfully woven. Girls sit by their mothers and learn the technique of basket weaving and when they marry out of their village, they carry with them their native art. Certain patterns are commonly manufactured by the Tharus and Bhoksas so that these are easily identified. There is no patent right recognised by the Tharus so far as basketry is concerned and there is no prohibition regarding the introduction of new patterns or techinques by women who come from other villages by marriage. On one occasion I asked a Tharu young man who was eligible and was thinking of marrying soon: "What would you expect in a woman you want to marry?" He named five desirable qualifications, and skill in basket making was one of them. I was told by the *Pradhan* of Chandanchowki that weaving of baskets is considered by the Tharus as an indispensable qualification for an eligible bride and a desirable bride is she who can display her skill in basketry by nice patterns and novel designs. The materials required for weaving baskets are bamboo and reed. Before they can be used, they are soaked in water and are split into small chips. The chips are split and polished by men, and women use them according to their needs. The direction for particular kind of reeds or bamboo splits is often given by women according to the pattern they propose to weave.

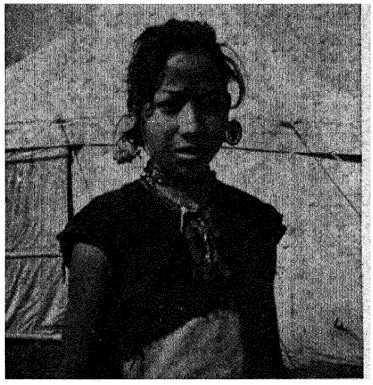
The Tharus are divided into a large number of sub-tribes or sections. Crooke mentions as many as 73 sections among them. These sections may be only exogamous groups for each Tharu locality behaves as one unit or clan and marriage is prohibited within the local group. In the Naini Tal district the Tharus are subdivided into 12 groups belonging to two moieties, one hypergamous to the other. The hypergamous group usually confines all marriages within the group, but may take wives from the other. The former group consists of the following clans; Batta, Birtia, Dahait, Badvait or Barwaik, Rawat and Motak. Some of these, especially the last three, are not independent groups, their social status also being similar though they are considered inferior to the first three sub-groups. The other group which is socially inferior to the above sub-groups consists of Buxa, Dangwriya, Khunka, Sansa, Rajia and Jugia. These claim descent

" We are Rajputs, our husbands' not"

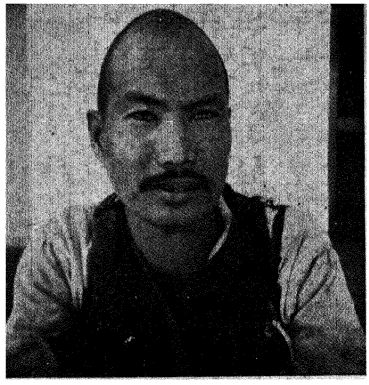
Fishing in shallow depressions and muddy water holes require special outfit.



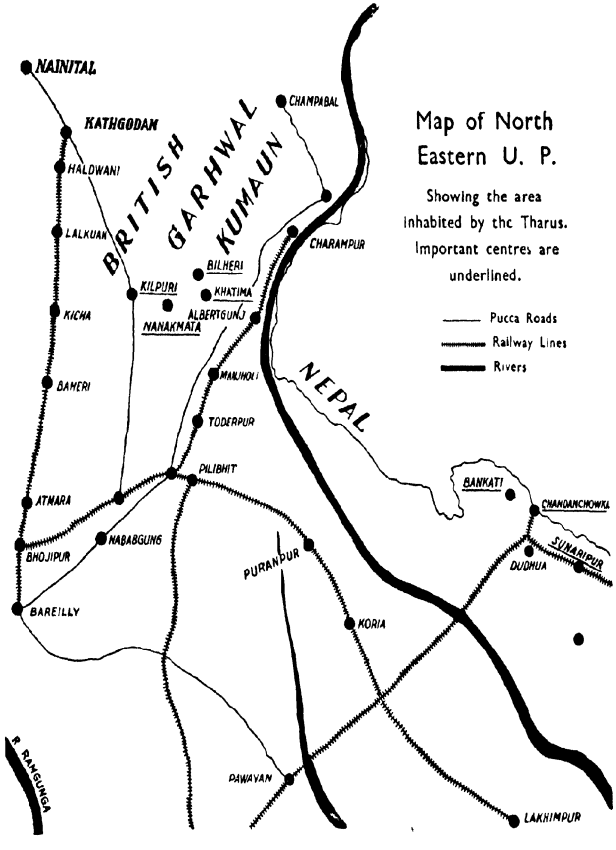
A much travelled Tharu



Lively and Vivacious.



A Tharu Pradhan



from some mythical ancestor or ancestors. The Jugia (descended from Jugia or hermit) is the lowest sub-group among the Tharus while the Batta and Birtia claim the highest social status. The latter would not give their *huqqa pani* to the former and should anybody suggest relationship between them, the suggestion would be most decidedly resented. There are other sub-groups like Daker, Kathariya, Pradhan, Umra, Purilya, Khusiya and Datwar, which appear to be related to similar clans in Nepal. There are still others like Kachila, Pachwalas, Musha and Ranker who are found in Pilibhit and Kheri districts. The influence of the Arya Samaj is spreading among the Tharus and group differences are becoming less rigid resulting in intermarriages between clans which refused to recognise equality in social status. The reformist section of the Tharus is loud in denouncing the fission of the tribe into small sections and a general levelling down of social status is what they devoutly wish for. The existence of hypergamy has disturbed the balance of sexes and marriage by capture still continues among groups with lower social status whose women, however, can find husbands in all groups high or low.

The Tharus have a strong *panchayat* organisation and every local group has to conform to the code of social behaviour approved by the *panchayat*. There are two distinct spheres of social conduct, of life and living, one connected with the tribal pattern, the other with the routine life inside the village. While men sit in judgment and arbitrate in disputes affecting two or more sections of the tribe, women have considerable influence in the affairs of the family and are little dictators in that sphere. So long as their menfolk listen to them and do not dispute their rights and privileges within the family, the women do not interfere with the affairs of the tribe, and a division of functions is tacitly recognised in the Tharu country.

I asked one of my informants that if women are so powerful in the village, why does the *panchayat* not include women as members? The man understood the logic of my question and said, 'We would welcome them if they come, but they need not', for no proposal or suggestion for reform is discussed by the *panchayat* which has not already been examined by the women at least informally, for it is they who are ultimately concerned. The personality and independence

of women are recognised by the Tharus and men submit to them without grumbling and henpecked husbands are not rare among them. Yet the *panchayat* is a powerful tribunal and its recent activities prove that it has a hold on the masses. The cases that come under the jurisdiction of the *panchayat* are many and varied. Marriage with a non-Tharu must be answered by the person responsible to the tribal *panchayat*. Recently the Tharu *panchayat* has banned all inter-marriages between Tharu and non-Tharu. A girl whom we know in Bankati in Kheri district had an affair with a Tharu man. She belonged to the Kewat caste. The Tharu was asked to give her up and pay a fine to the *panchayat*. The fine was paid and a feast formally readmitted him to the community. The man, however, was very fond of the girl and decided to live with her this time openly. It was only after a week of the communal feast that he renewed his interest in the girl. The *Pradhan* was informed of this but he could not come to any decision. There were two opinions in the village. The women held that wrong was being done and the couple should be allowed to live as man and wife. The men however said that it was gross infringement of the tribal code. 'How could we hold up our heads before other castes? To-day we bring a Kewat girl, tomorrow a Muslim; and where would the Tharu girls find their husbands?' Yet no action was taken against the man. My informant commented that the men who could take action did not dare as they did not receive encouragement from the women.

In another case a Tharu girl had her eyes on a Muslim shop-keeper of the locality. The tribal *panchayat* frowned at it and threatened her with dire consequences. The women too loudly proclaimed their disapproval and jeered at her whenever they met her. The *Pradhan's* wife became furious; such unholy alliance could not be condoned. The shopkeeper knew the volume of the protest. The *Pradhan* was one of his debtors, he sold his *ghee* to the shop-keeper and the latter repaid him in salt, spices and grain. The *Pradhan* was reluctant to move in the matter, but as his wife was determined he had to act. The girl brought the drama to a climax by transferring herself permanently to the shopkeeper's house. Her brother paid a fine of Rs. 10 and the incident was closed. The *Pradhan* told me that

he knew the girl was bad and it was a relief to him that she had gone over to the shopkeeper. His relations with the shopkeeper are now as cordial as ever.

The *panchayat* may have failed here and there occasionally, but it does make itself felt in many ways. It was the custom among the Tharu women to smoke at shops, to chew betel in markets or rub oil on their body in the presence of others at shops. No women would buy oil from a shop unless some 'extra' was granted by the shopkeeper, which would be applied to their body before paying the price. This practice is prohibited now and should any indulgence in it be noticed by the elders, the offender is fined Rs. 25.

In Nainital district and also in Pilibhit the Tharu *panch* has banned the custom of brideprice and the bridegroom's parents are forbidden to pay any money to the bride's people. I was not given any sensible argument for this by the elders, but the motive behind it is a general desire of the Tharu reformers to conform more and more to caste practices. The lower the cultural status of a group, the greater the freedom allowed to women and the bride must be paid for. Among the higher castes it is the bridegroom who receives some consideration from the bride's parents, and if the Tharus claim Rajput origin, as they do now the desire to conform to the social practices of their progenitors is understandable.

The Tharus worship their gods with offerings of water with live fish swimming in it. The *panchayat* now bans fish, again a tribute to higher caste practice. The *panchayat* does not permit the Tharus to sell their cattle to the local butchers and those who do so are heavily fined or ostracised by the *panchayat*. Other reforms introduced by the Tharu *panchayat* include elimination of waste in feasts, reduction of the cost of entertainments at marriage and other social ceremonies, stricter control over morals of the youth and the stoppage of obligatory gifts to the *Pradhan* and his wife at marriage by the parties to it. Some *Pradhans* still insist on 'token gifts' and others protest against the verdict of the tribal *panchayat*. One *Pradhan* did not hide his feelings when he was asked about it. Later on he explained to me how he and his colleagues in other villages had assisted deserving families by voluntarily contributing to the expense of their marriages

and how the gift of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 which they used to get were spent in return gifts to the family concerned. In many villages the *Pradhani* (headman's wife) still insists on her share of Re. 1-4 as. and she gets it too.

The *panchayat* also sees to the fulfilment of obligations voluntarily entered into by the Tharus. For example, if the parents refuse to marry their daughter to the bridegroom after the *Apna Paraya* (betrothal) ceremony, they are fined Rs. 25. Elopements are not allowed and a wife who elopes with another man is traced out by the *panchayat* and restored to her husband. If the wife refuses to come back, the second husband has to pay a substantial compensation to the first husband ranging grom Rs.200 to Rs. 500 according to the financial position of the person. Widow marriage is customary among the Tharus but should a widow decide to marry anybody other than her husband's brother, the second husband must compensate the first husband's family to the extent of one-half of the expenses incurred in the marriage. The *panchayat*, however, has every right to fix any reasonable compensation.

A *Chutkata* or the second husband of a widow married by the latter in accordance with the customary practice of cutting the *chut* or tuft of hair on the head, is entitled to a share of the property of his wife if the latter disowned him or rejected him. Recently the tribal *panchayat* has decreed that the *Chutkata* could claim only Rs. 125 in cash but no share in the widow's property. This decree, if generally conformed to, would discourage *Chutkata* marriage and the *panchayat* makes no secret of its intentions. As it is the woman's prerogative, the decree is not bold enough altogether to prohibit the *Chutkata* system.

That the influence of women in the Tharu society has not waned in the least will be evident from the fact that divorce is still freely allowed and if a wife wants to separate from her husband, she has only to ask the *panchayat* to fix the compensation. The *panchayat* has tried to improve matters by persuading the wife to reconsider her decision, and today the wife is seen to produce evidence of desertion, neglect, incapacity, cruelty and adultery in support of her claim. I met a young husband in disgrace in Chandanchowki who approached

me for some medicine for impotency. The wife, he said, had given him notice that unless he could get himself cured, he would be divorced for incompetence. The *panchayat*, he told me, knew about it. He was genuinely anxious to treat himself as the alternative was a public scandal, a lonely life spent in grim struggle for existence and a drift into the unknown wide world. The *panchayat* in such cases allows Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 to the husband as compensation. The amount is realised from the second husband of the woman.

The Tharu conception of marriage is similar to that obtained among the Hindus with a little modification. For example, a sonless father is a disgrace to the society and has no place in heaven after death. The Hindus also believe that a sonless father is thrown into the worst hell imaginable. Not only the father suffers from the sin, it also attaches to the seven generations before him. The birth of a daughter, however, does not raise the status of a Hindu father, but it certainly does so among the Tharus for he earns the blessings of his kith and kin and the virtue of *kanyadan*. Thus the female children receive as much attention among the Tharus as do the male ones. The attitude to children is determined by the position of the sexes in a society and the dominance of women among the Tharus naturally eliminates any act of neglect of female children or chances of female infanticide. The matriarchal society, it will be noticed, is immune from female infanticide.

The status of women in a society determines to a large extent the customs and practices connected with maternity and motherhood. While most tribes observe some pollution during child birth and taboo women during their periods, the Tharus take both as a matter of course and little or no restrictions are imposed on the women and their activities. There is no dread associated with menstruation and the Tharu women are allowed to go on with their routine engagements as if nothing has happened. The Tharu *panchayat* to-day insists on women in their periods, not to enter the kitchen or touch any food or drink and has fixed a penalty of Rs. 25 for those violating this rule. But the rule is observed more in its breach and the Tharu women do not seem to be anxious to yield to threats. As Moonga, an elderly Tharu of Khatima, told me, 'The *panchayat* has failed in all cases

where women were concerned, for the latter still hold to their rights and privileges traditionally conceded to them.'

Some Tharu women told a barber woman I had employed to question them on the subject that they did not consider menstruation as anything dreadful or unnatural. It was the cessation of menstruation that was significantly alarming, for they did not know why it ceased. Children are born by divine pleasure. The cause of procreation is not unknown to them, but cessation of periods may or may not be connected with pregnancy and experience tells them that it does not always lead to conception. The woman who does not get her monthly flow informs other women about it and the *Bharara* is approached to divine the cause of the trouble. The interview is private and questions are indirect. The answers, of course, are always in the third person. A careful watch is kept on the woman for some time till the symptoms become definite. If the symptoms do not appear as expected, the *Bharara* is asked to find out the root of the trouble and he comes out with a prescription of propitiation of the offended spirits and medicines to help clear 'the obstruction' as he says. It is not true that the diagnosis is always correct, the calculations may go wrong but the *bona fide* of the *Bharara* is seldom disputed by the women.

There are not many pregnancy rites among the Tharus. The *Bharara* may give some amulet or charms to be tied on the arm of the woman concerned, or if the latter has had a previous miscarriage or has given birth to a still-born child, she may be asked to proceed to some temple where her devoted prayers and promise of sacrifice may secure the desired boon. The various tabooes connected with pregnancy detailed for other tribes are not observed by the Tharu women. The notoriety that the Tharus have earned for magic and sorcery has not much to do with this aspect of their life. It is the skill of the Tharu women as midwives that saves the women at delivery and during the post-natal period. This is how we can explain the low mortality of women in the reproductive age among the Tharus as also the lower incidence of infant mortality.

The belief that the Tharu women control witches and spirits and that they know strong spells and counter-spells is widely prevalent

in the Tarai, and the Tharu women are dreaded and shunned by all caste people for this fact. The way the menfolk are treated by the Tharu women is loudly discussed in non-Tharu homes and even the loyalty of Tharu husbands is traced to the magic of their wives. The local people say that every Tharu man or woman has the power to cause disease to others. The victims are carefully chosen so that the spells and incantations may be effective. Usually a stranger does not enter a Tharu village without being escorted by a trusted Tharu. Two sides of a triangle are preferred to the third in reaching one's destination if the latter route follows the bend of a Tharu village. I was told by a Kewat who knows a little magic himself that the Tharus employ their magic very cautiously and seldom fail to effect their nefarious designs on their victims. Their spells may not always be effective as counter-spells by their own tribesmen render them innocuous sometimes. That is why the Tharus avoid certain days in the week and select the full or the new moon for sorcery and magic. The non-Tharu, therefore, do not consider these days auspicious for new occupations, construction and repair of their houses, marriage and other social ceremonies, and if they have to undertake long journeys or begin ploughing the fields or sowing seeds on those days, they must first render the spells backwards. This they say are effective in neutralising the evil influence and securing the victims from harm.

There are not very valid grounds for believing that the Tharus have proved treacherous or faithless in their customary dealings with aliens and strangers. Neither have they proved to be dangerous. The notoriety which they have earned for their alleged black magic and sorcery has subjected them to an uncanny suspicion which prevents free social intercourse with others and much of the dread the latter have for the Tharu rests on misunderstanding. Had not the position of women among the Tharus been so dominating and had not the other castes exaggerated the role of the Tharu priests or *Bhararas*, the Tharus would not have received so much attention as they do from their neighbours. The Tharus themselves candidly disclaim any knowledge of black magic though the women are believed to know names of many evil spirits for each of which they put on some charm or other to neutralise their power of mischief. It is, therefore, in

negative and protective magic that the Tharu women are well equipped, and thus they appear incapable of causing harm or disease to others. Yet the local people assert that every Tharu woman possesses magical powers to cause disease. When cholera or dysentery spreads in the villages, they trace it to the Tharu women.

There are various beliefs about the *modus operandi* of these little magicians. They are supposed to create an atmosphere of intolerance and indifference to supernatural powers in the village which offends the evil ones, the latter seeking revenge by inflicting diseases and even epidemics. A Muslim *mahout*, an employee of the Forest Department, North Kheri Division, who had been living near the Tharu villages for more than 20 years told me how the Tharu women effect charms against other people. He said that they contaminated water and milk, poisoned sheep, goats and fowls, spreaded poison on grass and fodder and whenever, by inadvertence, others took food or bought provisions from them, they caught infection, spit blood or suffered from dysentery, all ending fatally. He added that it was the Tharu women alone who could undo their own acts, they alone knew the spells and incantations to cure such afflictions, they could restore to life people who had suffered death from them. Many were the versions we received in the Tarai about the transformation of women into animals, cats, vultures and their power to change men into sheep and parrots.

Stories corroborating these beliefs are so numerous in the Tarai that the Tharu women have earned a notoriety which has prevented men of other tribes and castes from seeking familiarity with them. While the Korwas have isolated themselves from contacts due to the magic of other castes, notably of the Chero, the Tharus have maintained their culture pattern undisturbed from contacts with progressive social groups due to the latter's fear of them. In the case of the Korwa this isolation has become so complete that even in their privation and squalor they have refused co-operation with other tribal groups. A loss of interest in life and a disintegration of culture are manifest in consequence. The case is different with the Tharus. The Tharu women can attract men of other castes, can transform them into pet animals and birds, and if they do not do so, they can

force their will on men making them obedient and subservient to them. The unrestricted social intercourse of Tharu women with other tribes and castes and their power to control their menfolk have lessons for their neighbours, and caste women jealously guard their husbands and children from the attentions of Tharu women. In spite of so much precaution men have strayed into Tharu villages and husbands have been tempted by wily Tharu girls to the despair of their wives. Though the Tharu culture does not seem to have received much infiltration of alien traits, the field of marriage of Tharu girls was never confined within the tribe and naturally the Tharus are found to possess mixed racial traits.

Where women are so dominant, chastity may not be a virtue and the Tharu men do not worry much on that account. Marital jealousy is not absent among them, but their quarrels are ineffectual as the women have the last word. Against the faithlessness of their women, the Tharus use charms and amulets and often engage *Bhararas* who propitiate the spirits to effect a change of heart in their womenfolk When the mediation of the *Bhararas* is proved useless the Tharu husband approaches the *panchayat* whose decisions in many cases are one-sided due, as the Tharus themselves will tell you, to the recognition of the fact that they cannot afford to incur the displeasure of their womenfolk. Divorce is allowed, but it is not easy for a man to separate from his wife. But a woman can and does separate at will. A man is no doubt entitled to compensation from his wife, but the financial settlement necessary is not prohibitive and can be met from the independent income secured to her.

The Tharus practise adult marriage. No Tharu ordinarily marries before he is out of his teens and a Tharu girl seldom marries before she is 16. The *Majpatia* or intermediary settles the marriage and his share in the choice of partners is not inconsiderable. The *Majpatia* has a responsibility in seeing that the marriages arranged through him are durable, he is also anxious to see that they are suitable. The villagers congratulate the *Majpatia* for the peaceful termination of marriage negotiations and successful performance of the ceremony. The parents remain more or less passive and have in most cases full faith in the *Majpatia*. He serves a number of villages, his jurisdic-

tion is secure to him, he is confided to by all the families, is often asked to give advice in domestic quarrels, help the distressed, bring about a compromise between warring individuals. He attends the tribal *panchayat,* usually as a member otherwise as a mentor to the council of elders. One *Majpatia* was telling me his wide experience. He was very proud of the fact that out of every ten marriages he had arranged, eight had proved successful, a record which, he said, could not be equalled by any of his colleagues in the Tarai. Indeed it is no mean achievement if it is a fact, for divorce is frequent and easy for women. 'The secret of my success,' said the man, 'is the confidence the young people have in me. I always go to the young people concerned and when they give some idea of their intentions, I work it up.' He added, 'Marriage by mutual selection is as bad if not worse than marriage arranged by the parents. While in the latter case the chances of separation are less, in the former disillusionment shows itself very soon after marriage. What I do is to ascertain from the young man or woman about his or her personal likings. The girls are straightforward and often commission me to plan and bring about their designed match. The young men move in circles and are often puzzling. But if the choice is from the girl's side, in nine cases out of ten the marriage becomes a *fait accompli* and divorce is rarely taken recourse to unless the woman wills it. But if the marriage is of the boy's choice it depends on compatibility and other considerations.

The *Majpatia* knows every girl and boy in his locality, sometimes he undertakes journeys to find out suitable brides and bridegrooms. He is by nature a social and sociable person, his visits are welcome. 'He brings welcome news. His path is strewn with *jeelabi,*' said one elderly Tharu referring to the custom of distributing sweets to the villagers on the completion of negotiations. The *Majpatia* is something of a physiognomist, a reader of minds, a 'searcher of hearts'. He cannot be duped, he is very helpful. Personal equation influences cultural undertakings and the personality and nature of the *Majpatia* have much to do with his popularity and his efficiency. In some villages there are more than one *Majpatia* and then there is competition between them. An unscrupulous *Majpatia* has often created

family dissensions and disintegration by his colourful presentation of 'information'.

The growing popularity of child marriage among the Tharus has transferred responsibility from the *Majpatia* to the parents concerned, for mutual choice is being gradually replaced by arranged marriages where the personal friendship between families is translated into permanent relationship by the marriage of children. Parents are known to settle marriages of their children at the age of 9 and 10, even earlier, and mothers cast their dice in favour of alliance between them before the children are even born. But even though the marriage is settled in childhood, the actual ceremony does not take place before the boy and girl reach 9 or 10 years of age. Where the position of woman is so dominant as among the Tharus it is the bride's people who naturally have the last word.

The first ceremony in connection with marriage is the *dikhnauri*, when the *Majpatia* proceeds on an auspicious day with the bride's people to the bridegroom's village to introduce the latter and show his status, financial and otherwise. The representatives from the bride's side are treated to a hearty meal with wine, meat and sweets (*jeelabi*). Questions are put by the elders of the *dikhnauri* party to the bridegroom and members of his family the villagers helping the latter by voluntary and often interested information trying to convince the bride's people of the suitability of the match. The free flow of liquor through the parched throats raises the spirits high and an atmosphere of cordiality and familiarity soon develops which melts stubborn hearts and levels hurdles. The approval of the *dikhnauri* party is signified by performing *tika*, the boy receiving from 4 as. to a rupee, and the people assembled receive *jeelabi* from the bridegroom's people by the *dikhnauri* party and the latter leave for the village to prepare for the *apna-paraya* or betrothal ceremony.

Three to five days after *dikhnauri*, the bridegroom's father with some elders of the village, commonly known as the social *panch*, and the *Majpatia* proceed to the bride's village. They take with them what they call 'the milk price' for the bride, that is, consideration for the girl's mother for her milk, and this consists of fish, *gur* and *jeelabi*. At the ceremony all the villagers are invited and the village announcer

is sent round to proclaim the ceremony of *apna-paraya*. The bride is brought before the guests and questions may be put by the elders in the bridegroom's party to the bride which she answers sometimes with commendable skill. There are certain set questions characteristic of Tharu culture. The bride's skill in hunting and fishing, her knowledge of weaving baskets and mats, of manufacturing earthenwares and her skill in needlework are special items of inquiry and the members of the family are often anxious to exhibit the bride's handiwork to dispel any doubt about her accomplishments. The father of the bridegroom has to express his approval on the spot and immediately it is announced, it is followed by the distribution of *gur* and sweets to those present who reciprocate by gifts to the bride at the time of her marriage. The bridegroom's people, if they can afford it, present liquor, fish and meat to the village.

The contract between the parties is sealed by *medha larai* or the amount paid to the *biradari* (tribesmen) for a feast. Here also a minor rite is performed which shows the importance of the bride's parents. The bridegroom's father takes a metal plate, puts a silver coin or two on it and salutes the bride's father. The latter returns the compliment by doubling the gift and if the two parties are well off, there is a competition between them to outdo each other. This rite is followed by a further gift of a few rupees to the *panchayat* of the bride's people for a tribal feast. A dance is arranged and both men and women take part in it. The reform campaign in the Tharu country has ruled dance out of order and the *panchayat* has been instructed to fine Rs. 25 those who take part in mixed dances. A liberal gift of wine even now tempts Tharu women to dance in public and even at Chandanchowki, which is not so much in the back of beyond, such a treat could be easily arranged.

On return from the bride's village the bridegroom's father announces through the village *harkara* that the negotiations for the marriage are complete and they must prepare for the coming ceremony. There is little possibility of the marriage being cancelled as any party refusing to marry after the performance of *apna-paraya* is severely taken to task by the *panchayat* of both the villages and a fine of Rs. 25 is imposed on the party backing out. Months, sometimes years, may

pass between the *apna-paraya* and the next ceremony, *i.e.*, *badkohi* or *pichonchha*, but the parties must not forget each other. Presents and gifts, food, clothes and cash are exchanged between them and the bride's father visits the bridegroom's family, the latter responding by sending representatives to do the same. During the interval the bride may engage herself in making useful things, weaving baskets, mats or other requirements of a family, and the *dali* from the bride's family may include handicrafts. One characteristic feature of this exchange of formalities is that the gifts from the bride's people are always substantial, dignified and double or treble the quantity sent by the bridegroom's people. In no circumstances can the bride lower herself in the estimation of the bridegroom's village. The bridegroom's people must offer such gifts first and the bride's people will only return the compliments.

When the date of the marriage ceremony is to be fixed, the bridegroom's people proceed to the bride's village with presents of fish, *gur* and sweets. The ceremony, *i.e.*, *badkahi* or *pichonchha*, must be performed on Sunday or Thursday, usually in the lighter half of the month of *Pus* (November-December). The marriage ceremony can take place on Sunday or Thursday if the *badkahi* takes place on Thursday or Sunday, respectively. The actual marriage among the Tharus takes place ordinarily in the month of *Magh* (December-January). When the date is fixed, all the women from the bride's village filter in the courtyard of the bride's house and one by one they salute the bridegroom's father. The latter, custom-bound, pays a silver coin to each. The money is collected and presented to the bride as it is considered her share.

The rôle of women in the wedding is the most interesting feature of the ceremony. The bridegroom is completely under the control of his sisters and others who stand to him as such. For three days before the ceremony takes place, they would daily anoint him with oil and turmeric paste. The married sister of the bridegroom and her husband serve the bridegroom as his personal valet and all attention is paid by the couple to his comfort. One day before the marriage procession starts from the bridegroom's village, a number of customary rites are observed. A part of the courtyard (*chauk*)

is cleaned and decorated by artistic designs drawn with rice-flour and two plates, one containing a small earthen pot and full of oil and some *hardi* (turmeric), are placed near the bridegroom who is seated on the *chauk*. The villagers and guests now pour into the courtyard and hand over their presents to the bridegroom's forehead. He touches the clothes, coins and other gifts with his sword, and transfers them to his sister who sits by him. The latter may offer them to her mother who keeps custody of these gifts.

The bridegroom is now ready for his bath in which the guests and relatives, mostly women, assist him. He also puts on his sacred thread then. In Nanakmata and Khatima the sacred thread ceremony takes place under a peepal tree by placing a jar full of water and a plate of *gur*, the latter being distributed to five young boys who keep company of the bridegroom till the ceremony is over. After the groom's return, the guests are treated to a sumptuous feast, food being served to the guests at least four times in the day, so that "there may be plenty of fuel" for the people to dance and sing throughout the day and night before the *barat* starts for the bride's village next morning.

The *barat* must start under auspicious circumstances. The co-operation of all the leaders of the tribe, political, social and spiritual, must be sought to avoid untoward incidents. The *Pradhan* and his wife must permit the procession to start. The sisters of the bridegroom in company of other female members of the village proceed to the *Pradhan's* house, singing and dancing to the tune of drums and cymbals. The *Pradhan* and his wife receive some presents, coins, *gur*, and *jeelabi* from the bridegroom's people. They reciprocate generously by presenting the family with bags of rice, pulses or paying double the number of coins they receive. This formal exchange signifies the permission of the *Pradhan* and his wife after which the *barat* can proceed towards the bride's village. The *Bharara* brings some charmed water which is offered to the sisters of the bridegroom so that all along the way no mischief or accident may occur till the *barat* reaches its destination.

Substantial Tharus engage palanquins and lead the procession. Usually the procession reaches the outskirts of the bride's village before sunset. I was told of the mock-fights that used to be fought by the two

parties at the boundary of the village, but this seems to have become less popular. On one occasion I attended a marriage ceremony when only the small boys of the bride's village threw a few brick-bats at the procession approaching the village and even these were thrown in the air. Some interval elapses between the arrival of the procession and the formal entry of the party to the village, and during this period, mutual exchanges of greetings between the elders of the two parties create an atmosphere of cordiality which is punctuated with free distribution of *gur* and wine. When the bride's people are ready a signal is given by the women of the village and the *barat* is divided into two groups, one following the bridegroom's palanquin, the other that of his *bahnoi* (brother-in-law). The bridegroom is taken by a separate route into the courtyard of the bride's house where he is received by the bride's father. He is led to a special house constructed of leaves and bamboos for his temporary residence. His *bahnoi* is taken by a second route to the bride's house where he has to perform certain ceremonies as instructed by the women. On completion of these preliminaries the brother-in-law comes to the groom and carries him in his lap to present him formally to the bride's mother as a gift. Welcoming ceremonies are held at this stage and the bridegroom's people have to offer coins to a number of people serving them in particular capacities.

The binding part of the ceremony consists of circumambulation which is secretly performed in the presence of women, all male relations on either side being excluded from the function. A basket containing five articles, clothes, fish, curd, a jar full of water and a lighted *diwa* is placed in the centre of the courtyard round which the couple move slowly seven times. This is followed by another rite which places the right palm of the bridegroom on the right palm of the bride, the latter holding it pretty tight showing the nature of the grip she will have on her spouse. Loose and obscene talks characterise the coversation indulged in by the women on both sides and the bride is helped by the women to put on her *choories* and *bichuas*. So long as they remain as man and wife, the bride is not allowed to take off her *choories* and *bichuas*. Even if she does sometimes take off the *bichua*, never so the *choories*. The wedding thus complete, the bridegroom's

people are then treated to a hearty meal while the bridegroom is served his food inside the house. Amidst a gay and romantic crowd, the bridegroom manages to take his meal, punctuating his endeavour to eat by answering streams of questions from the women. His discomfiture often excites peals of laughter, but he takes the jokes in good humour, as he must, and the sympathy and help he receives from particular women is adequately rewarded by him by payment of gifts or coins.

An elaborate send-off is given to the party on their way back. Villagers come with presents and gifts for the couple. The bride is prepared for the journey and her mother and sisters accompany her in the palanquin up to the village boundary. The bridegroom's people have to reward a large number of relatives; the bride's brother asks his reward for assisting his sister's departure, the sister-in-law of the bride receives money for her share of the worries. Even the father of the bride comes forward to demand money to remunerate those who have helped him in the matter of arranging and looking after the comforts of the *barat*. All these and much more must be paid on the spot and it often becomes a stiff ordeal for the bridegroom and his people. The bride is accompanied by five to seven women of the village and the latter stay with the bride till they are sure of her comforts and good treatment in her new home.

On arrival at the bridegroom's village, the *Bharara* intercepts the procession and begins his weird rites to placate the spirits which are known to cause trouble. He may offer water charmed by spells and incantations which is sprinkled on the crowd before it is allowed to enter the village, or he may take to more elaborate processes of propitiating the spirits by *gur, ghee* and balls of kneaded flour and lead the procession through a zig-zag route till it reaches the main gate of the bridegroom's house. The bridegroom's parents now prepare for *bahij* or feast to the villagers in honour of the bride, while the sisters of the bridegroom keep busy conducting the couple from room to room, making them touch the earthen pots containing grains, and treating them to rice and curd specially prepared for them. After the *bahij* the bride with her companions leaves for her parents' village and stay there till the *chala* ceremony.

The *chala* ceremony is held in the month of *Baisakh*, 2 to 3 months after the marraige. In some cases there may be a second *chala* which completes the marriage, as it is after the *chala* that the wife permanently settles in the house of her husband. The bridegroom with his younger brother and other male relatives proceeds to the bride's village in the brighter half of *Chait-Baisakh*, and are received by the bride's parents with great cheer. They stay for a day or two and then return to their own village with the bride. The latter may now remain permanently in her new home or she may go back after seven days. If she does so, she is again fetched by the bridegroom in the month of July-August when she finally settles down in her husband's house.

An interesting feature of the marriage code of the Tharus is the ban on the parents and other relations of the bride to visit the latter in her new home. It is considered shameful for the Tharus to do so, and if it becomes absolutely necessary, the parents of the bride or other near relatives have to offer a *thali* and a *lota* and in presence of the villagers must wash clean the feet of the bridegroom and the bride. This is done by placing the feet on the *thali*. Unless this formality is gone through, the bride's people cannot even take water or *huqqua* from the bridegroom's village.

Besides the regular form of marriage, there are some irregular forms, as for example the *kaj* in which a widower keeps a widow or a divorcée as his wife and is not required to go through the elaborate ceremony of marriage proper. The *Pradhan* and his wife are informed of the intention of the person desiring to take such a wife and the *Pradhani* puts on *choories* and *bichua* on the woman. A feast is the only public function connected with *kaj*. Should a woman prefer to live in her house and keep a man as her spouse, she does it by the *chutkata* ceremony. The wife in this case cuts a lock of hair from the new husband's head and either wears it on her person or buries it underground at the threshold of her house. The *chutkata* has the right of an adopted son so long he remains with his wife.

The "cycle of life" which begins at birth winds through marriage and ends in death. Death among the Tharus is not all due to witchcraft or through the malign influence of spirits and ill-disposed gods.

They told me, as they have told many others, that their climate is bad, unhealthy, damp and malarious. There are wild animals in their forests which claim an annual toll from them. There are accidents which do happen in spite of everything and deaths are due to natural as well as supernatural causes. They know that medicines cure them when they fall ill; their *Bhararas* also know charms which keep down the incidence of disease and epidemics. Also they believe in the capacity of their women to ward off the evil eye and the evil breath. Further they have confidence in the store of their tribal lore regarding many of the diseases they are heir to. We have found among the Korwa a sort of 'tranquil' despair which has resulted in an apathy and a fatalistic submission to diseases and epidemics, which they think are due to the magic of other people who surround them on all sides. But nothing like this is noticed among the Tharus whom we found anxious to report their illness and seek remedies. They have learnt from experience the power of allopathic medicines, *e.g.*, quinine for malaria and boric lotion for inflamed eyes. They also believe that the local doctor and the vaccinator are useful in more ways than one, but at the same time they believe that the *Bharara* does possess charms and spells which can make his prescriptions effective and his medicines powerful. That explains how in every village we visited there was anxious inquiry for the medical officer appointed by the District Board and complaints against the inadequacy of medical aid.

My blood group work among the Tharus became easy because of their belief that a medical examination of their blood would provide some diagnosis of their common ailments, a promise that some of my informants mischievously held out to the people to create enthusiasm among them. The extent to which they responded (*vide* Tharus and Their Blood Groups, J.R.A.S.B. 1942) is a proof, if proof is required of their interest in my investigations. If they believe in the *Bharara* and his prescriptions, how can they rely on the medical officer of health? Magic and Science are contradictory prescriptions, as one flourishes in ignorance, the other is based on experience and knowledge. But much is common between magic and science and in the same society, we usually find both functioning side by side.

Science has not superseded magic in the Tharu society, it has

not done so anywhere, and both exist side by side as do religion and magic even in the most advanced society. The *Bharara* has his clientele, so also has the doctor. But the fact is that the latter in the interior districts is most ill-equipped, and as his sole purpose is to reduce the incidence of malaria among the population in order that labour may be available for the Forest Department and for other administrative purposes, the medical officer soon loses his interest in his pharmacology and by sheer disuse he allows his knowledge to rust till he becomes equally ineffective as the *Bharara*. One would prescribe quinine for all kinds of illness, the other would prescribe a course of propitiation of the offended spirits. Yet between them they have been able to keep up the spirit of the tribal people, and the Tharus show no sign of exhaustion or weakness and I should think they are flourishing like other people more favourably situated.

The dead among the Tharus is either cremated or buried. The Naini Tal Tharus prefer burial to cremation. People dying of cholera, small-pox and other epidemics are cremated, but those who die of snake bites are exposed on mounds outside the village. They believe that people killed by snake bite do not die and for three days they may keep the body exposed after which it is buried or burnt. The Tharus use cots inside their houses and when death occurs the body is not removed from the cot. They cover the body with a cloth and send information to friends, relations and other villagers to join the last rites of the dead. The relatives soon join the family in distress, and each Tharu family in the village sends a representative to attend the funeral.

In some areas custom provides for the carrying to the place of burial or cremation by the relatives of a number of agricultural implements, sickle, spade and axe which are not required for the burial or cremation. But as these implements usually belong to the family in which death has occurred, it may be a survival of an earlier custom of burying with the corpse all the dead man's material possessions. The cot is carried to the cremation ground by four persons where it is maimed by breaking one of its legs, a practice which is meant to indicate the use to which it was put to. If the corpse is buried, care is taken to lower the body with its face downwards if man, or upwards

if woman. Arrangements must be made for lavishing comforts to the soul of the deceased by placing a pot of water on the spot, and making a crude effigy of the deceased with grass and sometimes returning next morning with cooked food. The Tharus of Gonda call a Brahmin at death but the other Tharus do not. The Bhoksas do not bury their dead, they simply cremate and only when a person dies from small-pox or cholera do they bury him. In that case they feed the Brahmins to become *sudh* or clean. Persons of influence are buried with appropriate honours and the family of the deceased builds a small temple to commemorate the dead.

Although pollution is extended to three days, the family concerned may be cleaned after 24 hours by providing a feast in which the persons partaking in the funeral rites as well as others are treated to a sumptuous meal. The soul of the deceased is not forgotten on the occasion and before the meal is served to the guests from the kitchen a special plate with food is kept separate and which at night is taken to the place of burial or cremation along with water, *huqqua* and earthen utensils as well as winnowing basket. When the food is placed before the soul, the relations and friends who bring it are not allowed to look back but all disappear under cover of darkness, no one speaking or making any noise on the way. They will keep together, take deep breath and walk as fast as they can. Running is considered bad manners and insult to the departed, while fear of the spirits makes them run, double quick, of course unconsciously; but as they all hold together their steps are automatically regulated.

Besides the funeral rites we have described there is also a joint mourning of all deaths in the village on the occasion of Dewali which among the Tharus is known as the festival of the dead.

The Tharu ideas about an after life, of heaven and hell, of reward and punishment are all vague. The unusual predominance of women in their society has stifled the personality in their menfolk and the Tharu men do not seem to have learnt to think independently. They have great reliance on their womenfolk and their activities are circumscribed by the whims and prescriptions of their women. Other castes in the Tarai compare the Tharu men with sheep or parrots who reproduce their master's voice, the master being their women.

Above their women, there are spirits and gods whom their wives propitiate and worship, but the men do not bother about them. Now they have learnt about them from the Bhoksas or from the Arya Samajists, but they have not accepted them to any appreciable extent. They salute each other saying *Ram, Ram.* They trace all their happiness to *Kalka* or the goddess of life and death, and to *Bhairava* or *Mahadeva* her devoted spouse.

Their cattle is protected by *Nagarhai* or *Darchandi* who is worshipped by the village in the house of the *Pradhan.* Each Tharu family has a mound in the centre of the courtyard or in front of the house with a wooden peg fixed to represent this goddess and other gods as well. The Tharus believe that Bhumsen is their patron deity, the one presiding over the village, while Raksha is taken by the Tharus as their patron saint. It is worshipped in the month of *Kartik* and throughout the month the Tharus refrain from going to the fields or driving cattle and goats there. Bhumsen is fond of goat's meat, fish and *gur* and so is also *Kalka,* while flower and *jeelabi* are demanded by *Mahadeva.*

The principal festival of the Tharu is *Holi* which is observed for more than a week and during the festival a sort of *saturnalia* is indulged in by the women. Members of different villages meet on the occasion and runaway marriages are planned and effected. This is the spring festival of the Tharus and partakes of the same pattern as the *Maghe* festival of the Hos in Singhbhum or the *Karma* of the Korwas. The women take the leading part in the festival and the *panchayat* goes to sleep for a couple of months after. There is not much to be done at Dashera. The Tharus, however, sacrifice cocks and pigs to propitiate the *Devi* who is often confused with *Mata.* Brahmins have introduced the worship of *Satyanarayan* and the *katha* has become already very popular in some villages. There are also days when the Tharus have to fast and other prescriptions will soon be adopted as the intensity of their contacts with Hindu castes increases.

THE KHASAS

The Khasas or the Khasiyas who constitute the high caste people of the cis-Himalayan region are either Rajput or Brahmin, though intermarriage between them has not been barred by the rules of caste endogamy. The various artisan castes that inhabit this area are recruited from the Doms whom the Khasas brought with them or subjugated. The Khasas are usually tall, handsome, fair complexioned (rosy or sallow), possess a long head, vertical forehead, fine or leptorhine nose, hazel eyes with a sprinkling of blue, curly hair and other features well-cut and proportioned. The women are also comparatively tall, slender and graceful, of a very attractive appearance and of extremely gay disposition.

There is ample evidence of the racial similarity of the Khasas with the inhabitants of Kashmir and remarkable similarity exists between the family law among the Khasas and the Punjab customary law notably that obtained in the Kangra hills. The Khasas have been referred to in the *Brihat Samhita* along with the Kulutas (residents of Kulu), the Tanganas and the Kashmiras, and their occupation of Madhyadesa mentioned in *Vishnu Purana, Hari Vamsa* and in the *Mahabharata,* indicates their traditional antiquity. They most probably occupied various parts of Northern India in prehistoric times, and there is some truth in the statement that "they occupied large areas from Kashmir to Nepal". In the *Drona Parva* of the *Mahabharata* the Khasas are described as having arrived from diverse realms. Manu, the great Hindu law-giver, has referred to the Yavanas several times in his Code of Laws along with the Sakas, Kambojas and other rude tribes on the borders of India. In one place (Book X, 43 and 44) he writes as follows :—

> "....The following races of Kshatriyas by their omission of holy rites and by seeing no Brahmins, have sunk among men to the lowest of the four classes, *viz.*, Paundrakas, Odras, Dravidas, Kambojas, Yavanas and Sakas; Paradas, Pahlavas, Chinas, Kiratas, Daradas and

Khasas." These are all described as Dasyus or wild people who were descendants of the four original castes, mixing promiscuously with one another and neglecting their religious observances (Book XV. V 12 to 24).

Our information about the racial elements in the population of the Himalayan region is extremely meagre. The relationships between the various racial groups in the cis-Himalayan region and those of Central Asia are also little known. So far as Central Asia is concerned, we have primarily to depend upon the data collected by Sir Aurel Stein between 1900 and 1928. These have been analysed by T. A. Joyce and lately by Dr. G. M. Morant. In a recent paper the latter has compared three new series, *viz.*, the Pathans, the Dardic speaking Torwals of Upper Swat, and the population of the Hunza valley, and has pointed out the similarities between the first two groups while both these differed markedly from the third. The data analysed by him indicate considerable intermixture between the original Dardi and invading Pathan peoples in the Upper Swat valley on the one hand and between the original Hunza and immigrating people from the Pamir on the other.

Little is known about the physical anthropology of the Hindukush and Karakoram mountains though a number of investigations have been carried out during the last 60 years or so. Ujfalvy's measurements of a number of tribes in 1881 provide "the earliest systematic records of physical anthropometry of the North-Western Himalayan region". He was followed by Sir Aurel Stein who measured a large number of tribes including Red Kaffirs, Khos and Hunza Burushos. Dixon measured a large number of Burushos and de Fillipi made a detailed study of the somatology of six major racial groups of the Upper Indus valley. As a member of the scientific expedition of the Government of India which collaborated with Morgenstierne's linguistic survey of the Hindukush region, Dr. B. S. Guha carried out an anthropometric survey of the races living there and his conclusions were recorded in a paper entitled *The Racial Composition of the Hindukush Tribes.* He finds three distinct strains in the racial composition of the Hindukush tribes, namely, a dark oriental type forming the basic, a short-headed intermediate, and a

tall, long-headed, fair race constituting the apex of the population with a certain amount of Mongoloid admixture especially in the eastern section. He also indicated how the proportions of the three vary in different parts, those of the last two being stronger in the western valleys whereas the basic oriental and the Mongoloid are more conspicuous in the eastern territories drained by the Upper Indus.

A comparison of the indefinite somatic characteristics of the various groups living in the Himalayan region indicates three important racial strains. The highest altitudes are inhabited by the Tibetans and other Mongoloid people; the central belt is composed of a tall, fair-faced people represented by the Rajputs and Brahmins; and a dark aboriginal type represented by the Dom, a generic name used to include all artisan castes who have generally a Dom extraction. These have mixed in varying proportions to produce the many types and groups that one meets with in these parts. The artisan castes supply the menial order in the hills. They are not allowed to hold any land on their own and they live by serving the high caste people. The Kolis of Sirmoor and the Simla hills, the Koltas of Jaunsar-Bawar, the Chamars, the Oadhs, the Bajgirs and other artisan castes belong mostly to the Dom ethnic type or are hybrids resulting from intermixture between the high caste people and the aboriginal elements in this region or between the invading people and those conquered and subjugated.

How far the tribes in the North-Western Himalayan region, usually classified on linguistic basis as Dardic and Burushaski and Kaffiri as an intermediate group between Iranian and Indian, are related to the tribes of Jaunsar-Bawar would be a fruitful inquiry. A comparison of the racial characters of the tribal groups living in Jaunsar-Bawar is also important as it may provide evidence about the racial elements in the population of the Himalayas, as Jaunsar-Bawar forms a pocket as it were of Indo-Aryan penetration in this region.

Anthropometic data were collected from Jaunsar-Bawar in 1941, the results of which are given below. I could measure three important social groups, *viz.*, the Khas Brahmins, the Khas Rajputs and a third composed of the artisan castes. In all 320 subjects were

measured. Blood group tests were also taken along with somatological measurements. It was not possible, however, to take serological tests of those who submitted to physical tests as the people were extremely suspicious of our motive and superstitious beliefs about the importance of blood to sorcerers and witches frightened many young people from submitting to the needle. In all, 231 typings were taken on this occasion which was increased to 346 in the following summer.

My purpose in the present analysis of somatic traits is not to trace any existing evidence regarding the complicated ancestry of the people of Jaunsar-Bawar, nor to study the extent of correlations, if any, between the diverse geographical regions and the population which can very well be discussed later on. My purpose is merely to indicate the relationships of the higher cultural groups represented by the Rajputs and Brahmins with the artisan castes.

Culturally, there does not exist much difference between the higher and the lower groups. All castes in this region are polyandrous and partake more or less of the same culture pattern. But the artisan elements in the population suffer from a number of social disabilities which are difficult to explain unless we assume that there exists a racial difference between the high castes and the artisan castes and that the former have conquered and subjugated the latter. For example, the artisan castes are allowed to till the soil and to enjoy the produce of the land they cultivate, but they do not own it and when they die without any direct heir the land reverts to the proprietary body known as the *zemindars* who are invariably Brahmins and Rajputs. The women belonging to the artisan castes are not allowed to put on certain kinds of ornaments which are exclusively meant for the upper classes; for similar reasons they are not allowed to use gold for their ornaments.

At the lowest rung of the social ladder lie the domestic drudge, the Kolta, the traditional "hewer of wood and drawer of water". He lives by serving the higher castes and is bought and sold for agricultural labour. The Koltas, the Kolis and other agricultural serfs in the Himalayan region owe their origin perhaps to conquest by the higher castes in this area. The heavy weight of debts the Koltas have to repay and their indolent improvidence have perpetuated their

serfdom and the labour of a Kolta can be secured by paying off the accumulated debt he owes to his master and transferring his debt obligations to the man who compensates the former creditor.

Emphasis, therefore, has been placed on the intra-group relations between the important cultural groups and for this reason, the artisan castes have not been treated separately but lumped together. If the Koltas are treated separately, which I hope may be possible at a later date, they will most probably show marked divergence of type from the high caste groups as well as those artisan castes who are considered of higher social rank, *e.g.*, the Bajgirs or the Oadhs. But the extent of intermixture is not the same in every strata, and even in Jaunsar-Bawar different conditions are noticed. It is found that the Koltas have received much of high caste infusion in Bawar, though in Jaunsar the same degree of infusion of foreign blood is not apparent from the physical features.

Sixteen different characters of each individual were measured the details of which are given in the tables to follow. The technique will be described in the report of the anthropological survey of the U.P., now under preparation. The mean ages of the groups are high for all being above 30. They are for Brahmins 33.2, for Rajputs 35.9, and for artisan castes 31.8. The standard deviations show that the groups measured were not selected as they are pretty high for age distribution. The number of subjects measured in each group was a little more than 100, but by eliminating doubtful cases and also those for which all the characters were not available. I have taken 100 from each group which may be taken as a representative sample considering that conclusions have been drawn from much fewer specimens.

The means and standard deviations of the three series measured in Jaunsar-Bawar are given in Tables I and II. In comparing the constants (Table III) a difference greater than 3.5 times its probable error will be considered significant, but values above 3 are given. In our measurement of the auricular height, a few readings were suspected to be erroneous and no use has therefore been made of the data with regard to this character. Between

the two series A and B, comparison of the means of 15 absolute measurements show a significant difference only in the case of sitting height (3.6). The two groups represented by the samples A and B are known to intermarry and are the high caste people in this region. From traditional evidence as well as from a comparison of indefinite somatic traits, the two samples may be taken to belong to the same population and the results of analysis of statistical data do not tell a different story.

It is only in the standard deviation that we find a difference as the standard deviations of most of the characters of series B are greater than those recorded for A. The reason is not difficult to find. The Brahmin has maintained his purity more than the Rajputs as those among the former who marry women belonging to the inferior castes lose their social status and even caste affiliation. In course of time many of these families have been assimilated into the Rajput castes which perhaps accounts for the heterogeneity of the latter. A kind of social tug-o'-war has been going on in these parts from times immemorial and the result of the pull has sometimes favoured the artisan castes and sometimes the high castes. In some cases the rank of the Rajputs has gained by such marriages while in others the lower castes have received the infusion to their advantage.

The effect of mixed marriages, however, has not left the Brahmins untouched as they often intermarry with the Rajputs and whatever characters may result from admixture are introduced. But it is rare to find high caste girls marrying members of the artisan class. When such marriages take place the husband lives separate from the caste to which he belongs, but in course of two to three generations the descendants may, if they aspire to it, receive the designation and rank of Rajputs or become pseudo-Rajputs. This is why the artisan elements, as will appear from the standard deviations of series C, show greater homogeneity than that obtained among the other two series though comparison of the means shows some divergence of types.

The Koltas and other artisan castes who have been grouped together for comparison with the Brahmins and the Rajputs show

marked divergence from the latter as will appear from the significance ratio. Out of 15 characters compared, the artisan series significantly differ from the higher groups (Series A and B) in 7 characters. The artisan group differ from the Brahmin in nasal length (5), in nasal breadth (7), nasal height (6), total facial length (7), upper facial length (5), orbito-nasal arc (4.7) and in stature (3.3). The artisan castes differ significantly from the Rajputs in nasal length (4.6), in nasal breadth (6), nasal height (8), total facial length (5), upper facial length (5) and orbito-nasal arc (3.9). Thus the difference between the artisan castes and the Rajput is less marked than that between the Brahmins and the artisan castes.

Recently, however, it has been abundantly illustrated that the C.R.L. (co-efficient of racial likeness) method has certain significant limitations and it should not be regarded as a valid measure of racial difference. Prof. Fisher has shown that the C.R.L. is defective in that it takes no account of the correlation and co-variation of different measurements but treats them as though they are statistically independent. The effect of this is to cause very high or very low values of the co-efficient to occur more frequently by chance than they should. Recognising the limitations of the method as such, I have applied it to my material and the results obtained, as will be evident below, have not been very different to those we expected from the analysis of the Khasa data as given above.

According to the C.R.L. values, the Brahmins and the Rajputs do not show any divergence, but the Koltas and other artisan castes cannot be taken to be racially of the same stock as that represented by the Brahmins and the Rajputs. The C.R.L. between the Brahmins and the artisan castes is $7.113 \pm .246$ and that between Rajputs and the artisan caste is $7.021 \pm .246$, but between the Rajputs and Brahmins the C.R.L. is $.525 \pm .246$ which indicates very close association and that the two groups should be taken as samples of the same population. The difference between the artisan castes and the higher castes represented by the Brahmins and the Rajputs, and between the Rajputs and Brahmins shows

that they are not extreme types as is evident from the C.R.L. values. There is association between all the three samples which is perhaps due to the extent of intermixture that has occurred during centuries of contact, cultural and otherwise.

I shall confine myself to the serology of the three cultural groups only so far as it is relevant to the subject. The work is not yet complete, but from what I have found from an investigation of 346 subjects, it appears that there is some corroboration of the evidence of physical measurements discussed above. The 346 typings give the following percentage distribution :—

Name of castes	O	A	B	AB
Khas Brahmins (102) ..	29.8	32.9	31.0	6.3
Khas Rajputs (118) ..	33.8	31.7	26.2	8.3
Artisan castes (126) ..	28.1	22.4	40.1	9.4

The percentage of A increases as we proceed from the lower to higher cultural groups while that of B increases from higher to lower groups. The artisans have 28.1 O, the Rajputs 33.8 O, and Brahmins 29.8 O. The Brahmins have 31.0 B, the Rajputs 26.2 B and artisans 40.1 B. It appears that the highest percentage of O is found among the Rajputs (33.9) which agrees with Dr. Macfarlane's data for Bengal castes, but unlike the Bengal data the percentage of A and B among the three groups does not increase from the higher to the lower castes. Thus the Brahmins have 32.9 A, the Rajputs 31.7 A, and the artisans 22.4 A, but the percentage of B increases from high castes to the artisans. I shall not discuss further the results of blood group investigations, but it appears from what I have already said that the biochemical evidence supports that of anthropometry and there is little doubt that here in this cultural zone we are dealing with at least two groups, one representing the higher castes and the other the artisan castes. Racial intermixture in this area has, it appears, succeeded in producing a blended ethnic type which corresponds to the blending of cultures. The cephalic indices for the groups are, Brahmins

71.3, Rajputs 71.6, artisan castes 73.0. The nasal indices are, Brahmins 66.0, Rajputs 67.3 and artisan castes 74.5. Thus there is a progressive shortening of the head from the higher to lower caste groups and a broadening of the nose, but the difference is not such as to constitute them into distinct ethnic types. Besides, the Dom element may be an early Mediterranean stock, and not the Australoid type found in the jungles and hill fastnesses. From individual measurements it appears that there is also a brachycephalic element in the population of the cis-Himalayan region which Hutton claims to be Armenoid or of Eurasiatic stock. That Mongolian infusion appears well marked in some parts of this cultural region no one who knows the Khasas will deny, but the brachycephaly may not be due to Mongolian source, as the Mongolians are not necessarily brachycephalic and we have already seen among the Tharus that a Mongoloid people, which they evidently are, can also be dolichocephalic.

The district of Dehra Dun which occupies the northernmost part of the Meerut Division in the United Provinces lies between 77° 35″ and 78° 20″ east longitude and 29° 57″ and 31° 2″ north latitude and has an area of 1,193 square miles. Geographically the district is divided into two regions, the Dun proper which is an open valley enclosed by the Siwalik hills and the outer scrapes of the Himalayas, and the hill pergannah of Jaunsar-Bawar which is the hill appanage of the Dun. The latter is roughly an oval tract of hilly country with its major axis lying north and south. The boundaries of these two tracts, *viz.*, Dun proper and Jaunsar-Bawar are sufficiently clear and well-marked. The Dun valley is enclosed within the Himalayan range, the Siwaliks and the rivers Ganges and Jamuna. The river Tons sweeps round Jaunsar-Bawar from the north and finally with a "course trending the main south joins the Jamuna near Kalsi".

To the north and east of Jaunsar-Bawar lie the states of Tehri, Jubal and Sirmoor, and to the south lies the Dun valley. For administrative purposes, Jaunsar-Bawar is included in the Chakrata subdivision of the Dehra Dun district. The whole of this tract is rugged and full of precipitous mountains with little flat ground. There are

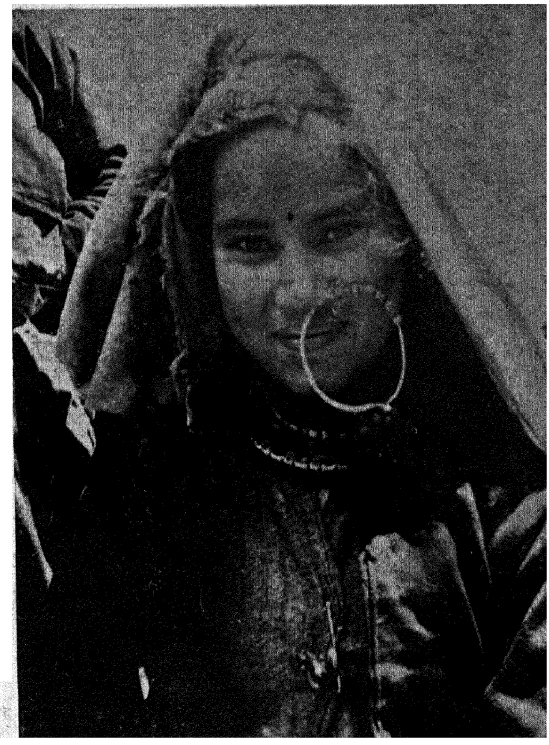
many tall peaks varying in height from 5,000 to 12,000 ft. and some of these give off into ridges which suddenly "descend to dark chasms". The rocks are mostly of limestone which account for the irregular and massive formations. There are many ravines, some bare others wooded, while the valleys are covered with fine grass enabling herds of buffaloes to live and multiply and provide milk for the *ghee* industry.

Jaunsar-Bawar contains large tracts of forest areas and numberless hills densely covered with tall trees and thick vegetation. Few villages are found in these hills as land for agriculture is not available, the declivity of the slopes being too steep for cultivation. The chief species of trees are the *deodar* (*cedrus deodara*), the *chir* (*pinus longifolia*) and the *kail* (*pinus excelsa*). The last is a variety of *chir*. *Deodar* and *chir* are both of great commercial importance and are used in the construction of houses and manufacture of railway sleepers. *Chir* though not so durable or valuable as the *deodar* is still of considerable commercial value. Besides supplying timber, turpentine and rosin are extracted from its resin. There are also other species like the *ban* (*quercus incana*), *moru* (*quercus dilatata*), *akhrot* (*juglans regia*), *darbi* (*cedrela serrata*) and *thuner* (*taxus baccrata*). All agricultural implements made of wood and the wooden parts of others are made from *moru* which is also used for making walking sticks. *Akhrot* gives fruits (walnuts) rich in fat while the wood is specially used for making butts for guns and the bark of the *thuner* serves as a substitute for tea. A number of species of fruit trees are found in the hills, such as *amla* (*phyllanthus emblica*), *hinsar* (*rubus species*), *kingar* (*berberis species*) and *mol* (*pyrus pashia*).

There are a number of rivers and rivulets in Jaunsar-Bawar though few of them are perennial streams. In the summer months they dry up and water is only available in deep water holes and gorges sheltered from the heat of the sun. But during the rains, these streams become roaring torrents, full and swift. The economic value of these rivers lies in the cheap carriage they provide to timber felled in the forests. The difficulty of transport is great in the hills and is minimized in the case of sleepers by the small *gads* (rivulets) which are used for transporting them. As there is hardly any market

for timber in the hills, it is carried down to the plains and the rivers and the streams help in facilitating such transport. Where there are no *gads* the sleepers made on tops of hills are carried down by the dry-sliding method or by human labour. The latter is a painful process particularly where the descent is steep. After the sleepers are brought near the *gads* there is a further difficulty to overcome, for there is seldom enough water in the *gads* to carry the sleepers down with the current. An artificial channel is made by damming the water at a distance and the sides of the streams are carefully planted with sleepers in such a way that water may not escape through the gaps in arrangement. These are stopped by covering the escapes with leaves and grass. When an artificial channel about two furlongs or so is thus made, the sleepers are put in the water and pushed towards the dam. In this way all the sleepers are made to accumulate at the end of the artificial channel which is broken from the mouth and then they float down. A new channel is then made, and the process continues till the sleepers reach big rivers like the Jamuna or the Ganges which contain enough water to transport them further down. Although the Forest Department spends huge sums of money every year, the indigenous inhabitants seldom take advantage of employment in these forests. The bulk of labour, skilled as well as unskilled, are procured from the neighbouring states and Garhwal.

Jaunsar-Bawar forests are rich in natural fauna, *e.g.*, *kastura* (musk deer), *bara singhan* (stag), *bhalu* (beer), *sahi* (porcupine), *bagh* (panther), *ead* (flying squirrel) and many other species of animals are found. The Khasas eat the flesh of *kastura, ther, barad, bara singha, ghold* and *khakar*. The skins of these animals are used for various purposes. There are plenty of birds, *e.g.*, *unal, titar, chakor, phakabons, battak, murgi,* whose flesh the people eat, but they do not eat crows or pigeons. The forests are grouped into different classes, some reserved, some protected, while others are free or village forests. In the free forests hunting is allowed and the people take advantage of it. Hunting is usually a co-operative undertaking in Jaunsar-Bawar, a number of men joining together and taking part in regular expeditions. The simplest way is to fence a plot of forest and men and women throw stones inside the fencing so that the frightened animals may come



Newly Married
aunsar Belle.

The Repository of Tribal 'lore

Sacrifice of a goat to Mahasu

Water is Precious. Each must stand his or her turn.

A Gujar Camp in Bawar.

out attempting to escape. Stones are hurled from all directions and after some time the animals get exhausted and succumb to the injuries sustained during the onslaught.

The other method is known as *jibalu* and is ordinarily meant for the capture of panthers. These are greatly feared by the people. A cage-like device is made with stones and wooden planks and a goat is tied inside. There is a small opening which automatically closes when the panther enters the cage for the goat, and the animal is captured alive. Most interesting accounts of methods of killing bears are given by the Khasas which also figure prominently in the folklores of the hill people. Curious beliefs about the nature and habits of the bear are found in Jaunsar-Bawar. A bear when it attacks people in the forests usually scratches its victim's face and this, according to the Jaunsari, is due to its proverbial jealousy of the beauty of the human face. Though it is a dangerous animal, the hill people are by no means afraid of it.

Stories are current about many indigenous methods of capturing bears. The bear, as a rule, attacks men from behind jumping on his back. One interesting method may thus be described though it appears highly improbable: two persons go out into the forest with sticks and two long baskets called *ghildis*. Should the bear jump on one, the latter so adjusts his *ghildi* that the bear drops into it. The other man then belabours the animal with his stick. In its rage the bear jumps on the other man who in turn places his *ghildi* in such a position that the animal is immediately trapped. The first man now strikes on the bear's head with his stick and between the two they kill the animal. This method of hunting bears, if it is practicable, shows that the hill people are careful observers and they know how to take advantage of the nature and habits of the animals with whom they share the forests.

Jaunsar-Bawar is a cold country, although in the valleys of the Jamuna, the Tons and their feeders it is quite hot from March to October. On the higher altitudes, the thermometer sometimes records over 20 degrees of frost. The winter months are spent in feasts and festivities by the people as no agriculture is possible on the hills. This is the time when the hill people kill their goats and feed

their neighbours, and for a month or more feasts continue and mutton and beer are all that they live for.

The Jaunsaris are very fond of building substantial houses. These are made of timber in beautiful surroundings with the small terraced fields below, and are picturesque in silhouette against the hillsides. The villages are usually situated in the valleys or on the slopes of hills, but never on the top. Winter is very severe on the hilltops and continual snowfalls and severe cold blasts make living on the higher altitudes difficult and dangerous in the extreme. The need for warmth in such a climate makes the people extremely fond of the sun and they build their houses in such a way that they get the maximum period of sunlight. Besides sunlight water is precious on the hills, and the villages are built by the side of hill springs or on the banks of rivulets, so that water may be brought to the village by channelling from higher levels.

A group of villages co-operate in distributing water to the villagers and definite schemes for apportioning water are carefully drawn and executed. These make it obligatory for a village to keep the channel within its boundary in good condition, to insist on the use of the water by the village and also to co-operate with neighbouring villages in contributing labour for constructing or reconditioning the springs, reservoirs and channels on which the supply of water to the entire group of village depends. The small terraces available for cultivation are intensively treated as farming demands skilful manuring and irrigation in these regions. Water for irrigation is brought to the terraces sometimes from rivers and rivulets through small *kuls* or channels skilfully cut in the rocks. The usual method is to make a dam across a *gad* or river at a suitable place and from there the water is brought through a canal one to three feet wide and one to two feet deep to a point at the highest level of the field. If a continuous channel cannot be made on account of surface conditions, a *patnalu* connects the ends of a *khalu* or gap which is otherwise unbridgeable.

A *patnalu* is made from the trunks of trees hollowed lengthwise so that they may serve as channels for water. The construction and maintenance of *kuls* are often the concern of a group of villagers so

that they are either made by collective labour or by someone known to be expert in making them. In the latter case the villagers have to contribute their respective shares towards the stipulated amount to be paid to the artisan or contractor. The contribution of individual families is proportionate to their share in the village land and is decided by the *sayana* or headman of the village or of a group of villages which are served by the *kul*. The maintenance of a *kul* during the months of July and August, when there is heavy rainfall in these parts, is a difficult job and the entire village or a group of villages has to take the work in hand. Though usually there is no quarrel among the villagers on these matters, for the authority of these headmen is still regarded as sacred, dissensions regarding the distribution of water are frequent. The headman with the assistance of the elders of the village has then to intervene and settle the disputes.

Another use made of the *kul* in these parts is the running of *ghats* or grinding mills worked by water-power. A *ghat* may be owned by a single family or a group of families. If it is owned by a single family its use by others is ungrudgingly allowed and custom demands that a small portion of the ground stuff be given to the owner of the *ghat* as his rightful share. There is nobody to receive it and it is usually kept in a basket or a leather bag provided by the owner. The Khasas possess an extraordinary sense of right and wrong, of honesty and justice, and they seldom abuse this privilege.

The *ghat* is enclosed either within a small rectangular thatched house or one made of timber and slates. The mechanical device is simple. As the mill is worked by water-power, water must be brought down from a higher level with sufficient force so that it sets the mill going. Water is brought from *gads* and is carried through a wooden channel known as *pandal* which is dug out of tree trunks. The *ghat* is made of two round flat stones, one placed over the other. The lower one is called the *tali* and the upper one the *pat*. The *tali* is fixed on the floor with an iron nail running vertically through the centre of the *tali* over which the *pat* is placed. This pair of circular stones is connected with a wooden block called the *verum* with a number of projecting flat sticks called *panwals*. They are so arranged that as the running water rushes against the *panwal*, the *verum* starts

moving, which by means of certain device makes the *pat* move on its axis, the iron nail. A wooden container wide at the mouth and narrow at the lower end is connected by means of a tube-like arrangement with the *pat*, so that with the rotation of the latter, grain put in the container pours through the narrow end of the tube into the mill which grinds the corn and releases the flour.

Jaunsaris build substantial houses. These are usually built of timber, mud and slates. For timber they use *deodar* and it is only the poor people who use inferior stuff. Iron is not commonly used in these parts. The houses are rectangular in shape and consist of two or more storeys. Each storey has a single room and the height is just enough to allow a man to stand erect. As the average family possesses one house, if it is two storeyed (which it usually is) the ground floor is used to house the cattle so that all the members of the family have to share the only other room in the house. Several brothers with their common wife or wives sleep in this room so that the total output of animal heat may serve the purpose of comfortable bed. Here also they cook their food, keep their belongings and lounge during the day. Some families possess a *kuthar* or small storehouse built separately in the yard, but as the levels of the two houses are not the same they are connected by an improvised staircase. There is not much scope for ventilation in the house except through the big door made of a single solid plank or two or more planks joined together so as to form one piece which can be fastened from inside as well as from outside by means of iron rings and hinges. Besides the big door at the entrance, there may be one or two small windows in every room, which are like small holes and are usually kept shut from inside.

On the first floor there is a *khadru* (wall almirah) three feet by one to two feet, which is used for keeping odd things and the small belongings of the family. The oven is inside the room. A big flat stone (*pathal*) is placed on the floor, and another at right angles to it, leaning against one of the walls. The stone is thickly plastered with mud so that there is no chance of the fire over-heating the stone and setting the wooden floor ablaze. The fire in the oven is kept smouldering day and night and is replenished with leaves and twigs from time to time so that the inmates of the house can get fire for tobacco and

sit round it to keep the severe cold at bay. The oven has two to three openings so that two or more pots may be simultaneously placed over it. A small hole in the roof covered by an adjustible piece of slate provides an escape for the smoke and also allows light to enter.

There is a balcony around the upper storey known as *chajja,* made by projecting the wooden beams of the house on all sides and planking them over. There is a wooden railing round the balcony for the protection of children. In the yard of the house, a small area is paved with flat stones which is used for drying grain and massaging and sun bathing which are popular recreations in these parts. As the people do not take frequent baths due to scarcity of water in the summer and intensity of cold in the winter, daily massage and application of oil on the body are regarded as essential for personal hygiene and it is the wife's duty to oil and massage her husband or husbands. So used are the Khasas to this form of comfort that they expect this service from the wife as a matter of course.

The Khasas decorate their houses with carvings on the wooden walls and beams. These are very neatly executed and show unusual skill. The ends of the beams which project out of the roof are artistically carved to resemble the faces of men and animals such as panthers or monkeys. Where two or more ends of beams meet the carving shows superb technique in depicting the faces of animals. On the walls of the houses, particularly the front wall of the main house, and the balcony of the *kuthar,* the carvings of flowers, animals, etc., are carefully made. Scenes depicting hunting and other activities of the people are also drawn on the sides of houses.

The front wall of the house is painted brown or light red, and the artistic mural decorations are made in suitable colours so that the houses in Jaunsar-Bawar appear attractively designed and substantially built. Old houses which have stood on the hillsides for a century or more were all built of *deodar,* but as the *deodar* forests have been closed down by the administration, it is with great difficulty that the rich among them can secure this wood for building purposes. The poor people now use *chir.*

The construction of the houses is not usually the work of each individual family. There are certain families known as *Oadhs* who

are skilled in this work and they are usually employed by well-to-do families. The *Oadh* is paid in kind while he is engaged in the work and his family is fed by the employer. After the work is done, he receives some further reward in coin or kind or both. Every family which needs the services of an *Oadh* has to pay some annual contribution (*dadwar*) to him after the harvests reach the threshing floor. When the house is ready for occupation the owner has to sacrifice a goat in the yard and the blood of the sacrificed animal is ceremoniously sprinkled round the house to propitiate the evil spirits so that the occupants may have nothing to fear from their wrath.

The Jaunsaris use clothes of indigenous make. In the winter they wear a *choli* or woollen *achkan* which reaches down to the knees and a *suntan* or *pyjama* to cover the legs. In the warm weather the *pyjama* is replaced by a piece of rag round the loins and the *choli* over it completes their dress. The people of Jaunsar-Bawar are occasionally described as "naked Aryans", because their legs and thighs are completely bare during the summer. For a belt they use a long piece of cloth which is wound round the waist many times. The usual head-dress is provided by a turned cap with edges rolled up while their shoes have leather soles and woollen tops. Recent contacts with Chakrata have effected certain significant changes in their dress, in pattern as well as in material, and men are found to wear coats and vests which they buy second-hand from dealers in Chakrata. The style and cut of the *choli* made locally have also undergone some modifications.

The women have not changed their dress much, though there are Jaunsar belles who don jumpers and silk *sarees* made into skirts which they buy at fairs or in town. The women use a type of *choli* known as *ghundia* which is longer and its lower half decorated with pleats and flaps. The upper part of the *ghundia* resembles a jumper with or without sleeves. It has now become fashionable to wear cotton clothes instead of woollen in summer. Women prefer to put on cotton and silk if they can afford them. As they do not spin cotton, most of the cotton clothes are imported from outside, but well-to-do families have planted cotton trees and the spinning of cotton is becoming popular in Jaunsar.

Dress and ornaments have so great a fascination for the women that frequent quarrels with their husbands occur if the latter do not provide them with fancy articles of dress or ornaments. While in Rawain and adjacent Simla states polyandry is being gradually replaced by marriage between single pairs, Jaunsar-Bawar retains the older custom and here even a group of husbands often find it difficult to maintain a wife whose demands for clothes and finery are on the increase. Frequent quarrels arise when the wives complain against their husbands for incompetency to provide them with heavy ornaments, and divorce or *chut* often arises from these complaints.

The usual ornaments worn by Jaunsar-Bawar belles are many and varied and the shape and size of these are different from those one finds on the persons of women in the plains. The majority of the ornaments worn in Jaunsar are meant for the ear, nose and neck. Various kinds of necklaces are worn of which *chharu, jantar* and *khagwali* are the most popular. The *khagwali* is a thick flat necklet of one piece with the ends thinned out and tightly set round the neck. The *chharu* is a bead necklace while the *jantar* is made of flat pieces of silver square or oblong in shape and of various sizes. The most coveted ornaments are those for the ear called *murkhula* and the combined weight of these has the effect of dilating the lobes and elongating the ears. A number of these is usually worn by a woman and the whole ear is perforated to provide a base for these earrings. One often finds a woman displaying earrings hanging from a string tied round the head as there is no place left in the ears for them.

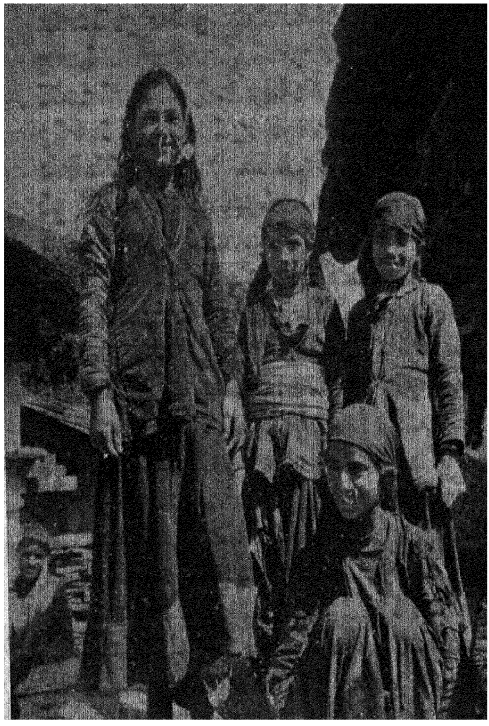
All the ornaments described so far are made of silver while the *natholi* or the nose ring is usually made of gold. This is a large ring thick at one end and inset with small silver or *munga* beads. The thicker or heavier side is kept on top and is tied with a cord to the hair in such a way that it passes over the left cheek-bone under the left eye. Besides these ornaments the women also put on bangles usually known as *dhagula* which are heavy and are worn on the wrists. Men do not as a rule wear any ornaments, but small earrings are often found on the persons of young men.

Tattooing is popular to-day in Jaunsar-Bawar and women

usually tattoo their arms, hand and feet. These are locally done by pricking the skin with a needle and injecting into the scratches a kind of vegetable dye.

There are not many musical instruments among the Khasas, and many of the once popular kinds are not seen now. The Indian *tablah* finds its substitute in a number of indigenous timbrels. The *dholki* is a small drum very much in use, but other kinds of drums in this area are the *ghara* or an earthen pitcher used as a drum; a *thali* or *salver*; *donroo*, a small drum shaped in the fashion of an hour-glass which is held in one hand and played with the fingers. *Damamoom* or *nasartoo* is a small kettle-drum played mostly during marriage or festive occasions and also in temples; the *dholki* is made of wood and is played with both palms. *Sinai* is a kind of flute made of wood. There are five holes along its length, the mouth is fitted with a thin tube which is the mouth-piece.

In cold climates dances form the most important form of recreation and in the Transgiri tract in Garhwal, Rawain and Chakrata, various kinds of dances are practised. In some dances either the men or the women alone take part, but there are many in which both the sexes participate. The names of the dances differ from area to area but certain common elements in these dances affiliate them to a common family. Where both the sexes take part in a dance it is always the girls of the village, whether married or unmarried and locally known as *dhyanties*, who can join in. The popular form of dance in Sirmoor and neighbouring Simla states is the *gee* dance which is danced by both men and women. In this dance there is scope for individual display of rhythmic movements though very often it is danced in pair. Married women in their husband's village should not and will not take part in these dances though they can join the admiring crowd. Exhibition dances often take the form of mimetic displays or dramatic representations of scenes and ideas and humorous sketches of known personalities, District officers, Europeans and others exciting laughter and innocent mirth. The mimic sketches and impersonations require skill and thus some training is required. This is why in the *karala* dance we find small groups of people working as partners who trade on this art. The other popular dances are



No age restriction—no reticence—equality all round enjoying a joke.

On the eve of her departure for her husbands' village A ployandrous family of Lakhmandal.

A Gujar girl at Mundali

It is hardly possible for a husband to cater to all the needs of a wife, ornaments particularly.

tandi, jhumka, dangri, chhopati and the highly specialised dances of *badinis,* professional dancing girls.

The *jhumka* is a popular dance among the Khasas in which only women figure. A group of women numbering four or more arrange themselves in columns and now and again spread out in a line, each holding the other by her hands placed on either side. They dance round and round so as to form circles, sing appropriate songs and move their bodies in time with the music. After a while, the dancers release their holds, abandon themselves as it were, and bending their hands in front so as to make a ring, start jumping, the steps being regulated by a characteristic sound of *chhup* which acts as a palliative concomitant. In the *chhopati* dance, two women dance crossing their hands and standing opposite each other, and in rhythmic rotary movement they display their skill and mastery of technique. The climax is seen when the two dancers press each his feet against the other's and swing round, arms clasped and the bodies obtusely inclined out till they lose their balance and drop dazed to the ground.

The counterpart of the *chhopati* is the *dangri* dance where two men dance together using a *dangri* (an iron instrument with a wooden shaft). There is scope for movement of the bodies and both singing and dancing are simultaneously practised so that there is melody as well as rhythmic steps.

Nearly 85 p.c. of the Khasas depend on agriculture. The tiny terraces have to be carefully prepared and richly manured with cattle excreta and water is skilfully brought to the terraces from distant springs, rivers or reservoirs. The work animals are also put to great difficulties on account of the altitude and the nature of the soil. The land in Jaunsar-Bawar is varying in quality and even the same village has lands of varying fertility. The nature of the hills is responsible for the variation for some hills are made of rock, others are of soft earth. Again, land is divided into those irrigated and others not irrigated, the latter depending entirely on the rains and the moisture that can be preserved on the soil by preventing water from precipitation running out of the field.

The land-tax is quite high. In the Simla states it is assessed at the rate of Re. 1-4-0 per *bigha* for six months. A *bigha* in these

states is capable of being sown with 5 *seers* of grain especially wheat. (A *bigha* is 2½ *pattas,* each *patta* can be sown with 2 *seers* of grain). The inferior quality of land is assessed at the rate of 4 annas per *bigha.* In Rawain, land is measured on the basis of *nali* (and *muthi*). A piece of land requiring one *nali* (one *seer*) of seeds will measure 240 sq. yards in area. One *muthi* or one *chatak* (1/16th of a *seer*) is required for 15 sq. yards. Thus a piece of land requiring 200 *nali* and 10 *muthi* would measure $200 \times 240 + 10 \times 15 = 48,150$ sq. yards. The *kheel ijrar* and *katir* are inferior lands, unirrigated and not regularly cultivated. The best lands are *sera* or the irrigated ones. They are also known as *abi* or *kalahu salana.* The unirrigated ones are also known as *ukhar.*

There are not many valleys which are convenient for farming. Land is generally sloping, and much labour is required to prepare the fields for cultivation. The rough and rocky surface has to be levelled by digging the land towards the mountain side and raising a wall of stones to keep down the moisture from precipitation. Sometimes even five to six feet high walls are made to make a level field. Thus are made the terraced fields which garland the hills all over the Himalayan region. Even after a field is cut out and levelled the labours do not cease, for constant repairs are needed to maintain it. In the rainy season, on account of heavy downpours the walls often give in and rapid repairs have to be made to keep the moisture down.

Irrigation is a complicated job in the hills as water can only be brought to the fields with considerable difficulty and much labour and expenses are required in the initial stages as well for the maintenance of the supply. Although *sera* land is irrigated and are the best for cultivation, there is a slight temptation for the peasants for *ukhar* cultivation. If the rains are regular, the *ukhar* land produces as much as the *sera,* while the expenses involved in *sera* cultivation are often prohibitive for persons of ordinary means. At the same time the revenue demand for *ukhar* is negligible. The unirrigated lands near forests do not fail, as copious rains during the two monsoons help the land to absorb moisture sufficient for certain crops. This probably accounts for the small percentage of irrigated land in these parts, though possibilities exist of channelling water through the rocks from

the numerous springs, rivulets and natural reservoirs of water in the hills.

The difficulties of securing manure on the hills are also great. For example, manure has to be made of vegetable products or of cattle excreta. The people here mix both kinds of manure believing in the richness of such blended material. The vegetable manure is provided by the forests, generally from the dry needles of *chir* or litter from leaves of *ban, burases* and other trees with broad leaves. The collection of this vegetable matter is a continuous job for two to three months, usually from January to March. These are collected in *gildhis* from neighbouring forests, village or reserved, and are lumped together in a heap in a corner of the courtyard. Often the dry needles and the forest litter are spread in the cattle shed (*chhan*), so that they may absorb the urine and excreta of the cattle which are discovered to possess fertilising properties. Every morning the cattle shed is swept clean and the litter and dry needles of *chir* which have been saturated with the cattle excreta and discharge are collected and deposited in heaps serviceable for use later on. The decomposed vegetable matter provides the necessary manure.

A number of subsidiary occupations are followed in Jaunsar-Bawar. The cold climate of the hills makes it impossible for people to undertake any outdoor work during certain months of the year and during this period they necessarily follow occupations which can be pursued without much moving about.

Of the subsidiary occupations the most important and most popular is spinning of wool for domestic consumption. Every family has to spin wool for its own use and it is done by all the members, even the small children. A small basket is carried about containing a small spindle and carded wool. Whenever their hands are free, they start spinning with their deft fingers. The wool is collected from the sheep and goats which every family in the hills keeps. They graze on the uplands during the summer and in the winter they are brought back to the village. Twice in the year, once in the month of August and once in February, the sheep are sheared. The average annual yield per sheep is about 4 lb. of wool. This raw wool is washed in hot water and kept under water for a couple of days. It is then beaten

on stones to rid it of dirt and grease and then finally washed. The wool is now dried in the sun and when completely dry it has to go through a process of cleaning and carding with a bow-like implement called *chitkani*.

Unlike spinning, weaving is not a general occupation. It is done by low caste people who are professional weavers. They are usually paid in kind or in coin, whichever the people can afford.

Another subsidiary occupation is provided by the *ringal* industry which supplies the hill people with baskets and other containers for storing agricultural produce. These are locally made by the people from *ringals* (*arundinaria species*), a light species of bamboo grown in some parts of the hills. Villages which do not possess *ringal* in the neighbourhood procure them from those where it is grown and a regular system of barter prevails betweeen two or more villages. *Ringal* is usually brought in exchange of grain. The people who sell *ringal* get it free from the forests and charge only for their labour from the buyers.

From the list of occupations we have described above, it will appear that the people have not much scope to supplement their income from agriculture. The hill economy is of the self-sufficing type and the standard of living in the hills is low. The few subsidiary occupations the hill people follow do not engage them throughout the year and much of their time is spent on feasts and festivities or in travels undertaken partly from necessity and partly in connection with important festivals and pilgrimages. The little surplus they have of the agricultural produce, they either sell to the shopkeepers in return for some of their pressing necessities, such as *gur*, salt, clothes and implements of agriculture. When the shopkeepers refuse to pay the price demanded, the hill men have to walk long distances with their grain carried in leather bags to be exchanged for necessaries or for cash. Thus the cash they get by the sale of grain is not much, for it is limited by the quantity of grain they can conveniently carry. When they return home with the money, they keep it for future emergencies or for paying *malguzari*. Thus money does not circulate much in Jaunsar-Bawar. The presence of shopkeepers at different centres in Jaunsar-Bawar, who are mostly immigrants from Dehra Dun, Saharan-

pur and other far off places, has made it possible for the villagers to exchange their wares without having to undertake long journeys, but the price they get in return is not remunerative. The shopkeepers who receive the produce from the villagers do not always send them to the town. There is a local demand for such commodities as local labourers, *thikadars* or contractors and travellers require them and find it convenient to buy from the shopkeepers.

The Jaunsaris are voracious eaters. They ordinarily take food three or four times a day, and on festive occasions they are incredible gluttons. When they are full themselves, they are magnanimous to others as well and every householder entertains his neighbours and feeds them on sheep which they keep in a room and which they fatten on oak leaves. Wine and meat are the most popular items of their diet and all castes including the Brahmin take meat. Fish is not always available, but where it is, it is in great demand. Jaunsaris take pride in giving feasts and try to excel one another in providing rich and delicious menus. Ordinarily their breakfast consists of a heavy meal of *dalpuri* or fried *puris* stuffed with *dal*. The mid-day meal consists of cakes prepared from the flour of *marsha* or *cholai*; the third meal is of wheat bread taken before dusk and is usually light. Some families may take the third meal before going to bed. Rice, *dal* and game form the menu of this meal. The poorer families do not get so much to eat and the quality of their food is inferior. The coarser millet, leaves of *amaranth* and wild vegetables form their simple food, while rice and *urad* are considered luxuries which they can ill afford. Pigs and fowls are freely eaten by the lower castes, but even the higher castes have overcome their scruples against eating poultry which they often rear themselves.

The Khasas are extremely fond of drink; they brew their own liquor and drink to excess. On the occasion of marriage and festivals, they booze day and night. Two kinds of indigenous drinks are locally made. One is called *daru* or *sur* which is a distilled liquor, the other is *pakin* or undistilled. A special kind of bread is required to prepare *daru*. Four to five species of roots (*pissar, athu, pepper,* etc.) are powdered in an *ukhli* and the powder is mixed with flour. The mixture is kneaded with water and made into wet bread. The rolls

of breads are arranged in layers with *bhang* leaves placed above and below each piece and are kept in a dry place for two weeks or more. Later on these rolls are put in the sun for further drying after which they are stored in the house for future use. This bread is known as *kim*.

The ordinary bread prepared from coarser millets which is the common food of the poorer class is broken into pieces and put in a big spherical earthen vat with water enough to cover them. The contents of this vat are daily stirred by the women till the bread is completely dissolved. The *kim* bread prepared by the process described above is put in this solution and the liquid is kept aside for a week or so and stirred every day as usual. When the liquid turns sour, which it does after a week or ten days, it is distilled through an indigenous apparatus. The distilled liquor is called *daru* and is used on ceremonial occasions, feasts and on festival days.

The other kind of drink is prepared out of the flour of *jhangora* (a kind of inferior millet) which is mixed with water and allowed to stand over for three months or more. After this period *kim* bread is added to the mixture and the contents stand for about another fortnight. It is then strained and used for the daily needs of the family. The precipitate is made into cakes and eaten.

Elaborate methods of preparing food are found in Jaunsar-Bawar. Not only do the people take a large quantity of food, they also know how to cater to the palate. There are more than a dozen varieties of bread made and each festival has its own kind. From the list of festivals in Jaunsar-Bawar it appears that many of these are associated with particular processes of preparing food and its distribution to friends and relations forms the main function of many festivals.

Besides the ordinary kinds of breads described above, the Jaunsaries prepare a kind of bread known as *sira*. This is made in the month of *Pus* on the *Sira* or *Siriya* festival day. *Urad* and *masur* are soaked in water, the husks drop off and the soaked pulses are powdered and made into paste with water. This paste forms the stuffing of the bread and the baked rolls are extremely delicious. Another delicacy is prepared by roasting lumps of kneaded flour. These are wrapped in leaves, put in the oven and when all the leaves are

nearly burnt, the roasted mass inside is ready for eating. Various kinds of *halwa* are also made. Barley meal or flour of millets and wheat is mixed with water and cooled with milk, *ghee* and *gur* or sugar. This preparation can be kept for a number of days as it becomes hard enough not to turn bad. *Puris* are usually prepared during festivals and they are sent as *samun* or presents to relations and friends. *Puris* are made in the way known all over India, but a special kind is also prepared by the Jaunsaris keeping the kneaded mass of flour in water for 24 hours or more. This variety has a peculiar flavour due to fermentation.

Though the ordinary diet of the Jaunsari is simple and does not display any great originality in preparation, the various dishes they make during festivals and ceremonies are rich in flavour and in *ghee* and they take unusual care to see that their guests, friends and relations get the best entertainment possible. Every family keeps one or more sheep shut up in the goat pen hidden from public gaze and fattened on oak leaves. For months the sheep remains inside the room so that even the nearest neighbour does not know what is in store for him during the annual feast to which he is likely to be invited. Superstitious beliefs are also current among the hill people about the influence of the evil spirits, the evil eye and the evil mouth, and this practice is said to guarantee the safety and growth of the animals.

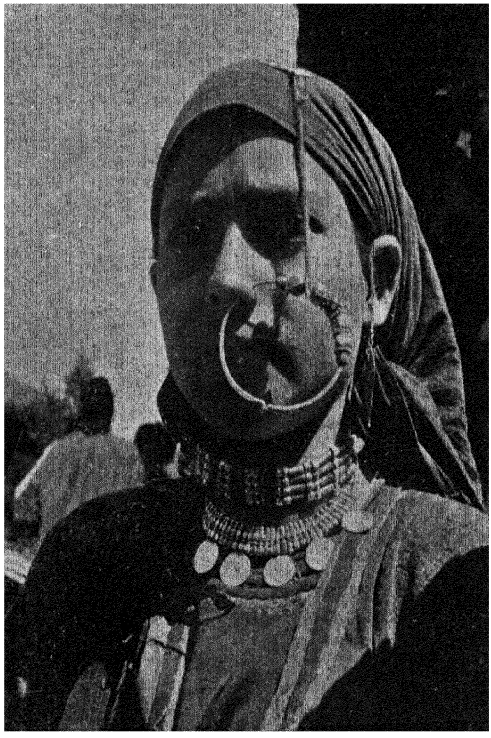
I have described at some length the economic activities of the people, the methods by which they eke out their subsistence, the hardships attending their occupations, the rigour of the climate and the attempts of the people to get used to them. I have also indicated the means of exchange and distribution, the co-operative efforts willingly undertaken by the people for the common good of the village or a group of villages, the skilful devices with which they face nature and her niggardliness. I have also described incidentally their attitude to life, to their friends and relations, to the environment in which they have grown up. The descriptive account given above may give an impression that life in the cis-Himalayan region is not so full of hardships, but as we shall presently see the account already given does not imply that the average Khasa family is well off economically.

As money does not circulate much in the hills, and the volume of exchange done by money is insignificant compared even to that obtainable in the rural parts in the plains, the standard of comforts enjoyed by people is not very high. The average family is inured to a hand-to-mouth existence and the expense on food and feasting is the only accountable use they make of their yield from the fields and of any supplementary income they may secure. The construction of shelters for the family and the decoration of their persons exhaust all the reserves they possess. As their resources are meagre, life is pretty hard for them in these cold regions. The gods they own are not always sympathetically disposed towards them, for reward is not proportional to efforts. By tradition, their gods are known to be restless, like the palanquin in which they are ceremonially carried every year, rolling and swinging this way and that. One year the Jaunsaris get a bumper yield from the fields, in another year they have nothing at all. Nature in these cold heights often conspires with the gods of their own make and shows her tooth and claw in the niggardliness of her favours. Yet the small terraces are carefully worked, water is brought from higher levels and a perfect husbandry of manure, water and rotation of crops is effected.

People have to keep cattle and sheep. The grazing of cattle and sheep on the slopes of the hills and on the higher altitudes keeps the men busy during the major part of the day. Carrying dung and other manures from the grazing areas to the terraced fields is exacting labour, the shearing of wool, spinning and weaving have to be done by themselves, the marketing of produce and barter and exchange require co-operative effort while ceremonial undertakings and festivals require joint effort and voluntary subscriptions to the common pool. Thus life in Jaunsar-Bawar is full of hardships and had it not been for their joint family institutions, the fate of the Jaunsaris would have been very much different as they themselves would tell you.

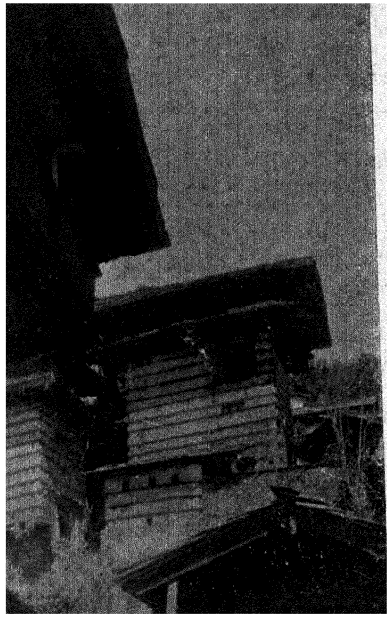
The social structure in Jaunsar-Bawar is characterised by a dual organization of economic classes, *viz.*, the zemindars and the artisans. The latter, however, should not be confused with similar groups in the plains, for they are recruited mostly from the aboriginal

Not for Pilgrimage but for maketing grains, brothers-in-arms.



A wife in one village is a daughter in another.

A way side shop on the route to Lakhmandal, Jaunsar Bawar.



Sky scrapers on the hills

Indigenous apparatus for Brewing liquor

substratum and mostly belong to a group known by the generic name of Dom. Whereas in the plains the artisan classes own land, and when they do not, they have the right of its use, in Jaunsar-Bawar the local code forbids a Dom from holding land either as tenant or as *zemindar*. On the lowest rung of the economic ladder, is the domestic Kolta who is the hereditary hewer of wood and drawer of water. He does not own any land, lives attached to his master, the *zemindar*, and is given food and drink by him. He lives in a house provided by his master who also bears his other expenses, if any. Anything other than food and clothing, if provided by the family retaining him, is converted into a cash advance which he has to pay back should he wish to change his master or seek some other employment. The expenses of his marriage, of death in his family, of any ornaments he wants to make for his wife and all that he spends at festivals or for propitiating the evil spirits and gods who meddle with his life and happiness, are borne by this master and the debts he owes on these accounts mount up till his future and that of his progeny are mortgaged indefinitely without any prospect of redemption. When he works in the village, he is given some bread in the morning, and when he returns from the field in the afternoon, he gets either cooked rice or a measure of *cholai* or *marsha* out of which he prepares cakes. When he takes out the cattle to graze on the hill slopes, he has often to remain there for days and his supply consists of the coarser millets such as *jhangora* or leaves of the *amaranth*, which are boiled with lentils or a little rice. His house is within a reasonable distance from that of his master so that he may be available whenever required. If he is married, his wife has certain duties allotted to her and often has to drudge to earn her food.

All over the cis-Himalayan region, the Simla states, the Doon valley, Kulu and Kangara valleys there exists a hierarchy of social status, though the rigidity of the caste system as in the plains does not exist. The upper class consists of the Bhat, Dethi, Deva and Kanet; the lower strata is composed of innumerable social groups who form the artisan elements in the population of these parts. The Lohar, the Bajgir, the Turi, the Dumra, the Badi, the Koli and the Koltas are a few of the groups serving the upper classes mentioned above.

These suffer from a number of disabilities and are treated as serfs or dependants and thus provide a dual organisation of economic classes in the hills. The feudal type of land settlement provides for the possession of land by the upper classes only and has received some sort of religious sanction. Even temples are denied to the artisan castes. The latter serve the higher castes of the locality in a number of ways and accept the limitations of their movements designed and imposed on them by their landlords who are Bhats, Kanets, Devas or Dethis.

The Bhats and Kanets, who are Brahmins and Rajputs, respectively, profess and perform the duties and obligations peculiar to the Brahmins of the plains but they practise at the same time many of the rites and customs which are shunned by the Brahmins of the plains. The Kanets claim certain privileges which the Brahmins of the plains enjoy and intermarriage between the Brahmins and Rajputs is not barred by rules of caste endogamy. In an interesting account of the marital relations in the trans-Giri tract, Mr. Y. S. Parmer has described the dynamics of caste in the Sirmoor state in the Simla hills.* In Giri-Par a Kanet Rajput is not allowed to officiate as priest in any temple, but the Bhats and the Devas are. The Devas get their name from their occupation as temple priest. But in Mail Kanets can become Devas. In Charna Bhuaee also, Kanets can become priests of Shirigul.

When a Kanet is appointed to officiate in a temple he earns the title of Negi and thereafter marries among the Negies and would not marry a Kanetni. Both the Kanets and Bhats in the cis-Giri tract would refuse drinking water from the hands of a Koli. In trans-Giri tract, however, the Bhats and Kanets do take water from the hands of the Kolis, but it must be served in a metal pot or a glass. In the cis-Himalayan region descendants of Rajputs by artisan women are given an inferior status in the hill society. The Brahmins of these parts are not orthodox, as has already been pointed out; they take meat as all the hill people do and they marry their widows, a practice which their colleagues in the plains will certainly not countenance.

*Y. S. Parmer, 'Marital Relations in the trans-Giri tract'; thesis submitted for the Doctorate Degree at Lucknow University—to be published soon.

The Rajputs of the hills are lower in status to those of the plains, but they enjoy privileges seldom allowed by custom to the latter.

The inter-marriage of Rajputs and Bhats has been a recognised practice here and though the children of a Kanet woman by a Bhat receive affiliation to the mother's caste, in course of time such children have been raised to the status of Brahmins and have been allowed to officiate as priests in temples. The paucity of women in these parts, coupled with the practice of female infanticide among the Bhats, which may be the cause or effect or both of the unsettled conditions of life in the hills, has no doubt encouraged intermarriage with the Kanets, who were more practical in their attitude towards their children. The word Kanet is derived from *kunia het* or love for daughters, which obviously refers to the non-practising of female infanticide. Widow remarriage is practised by the Rajputs and Bhats of the hills and even divorce is a recognised practice and the custom of *reet* marriage among them has definitely lowered their caste status.

From the point of view of social life, the whole of the cis-Himalayan region behaves as a culture area, as there is a homogeneous social code to which both the higher and lower groups subscribe. The disabilities that obtain in these parts among the lower castes in the matter of dress, food and drink, in the restrictions to marriage and inter-dining, are mostly superficial, and they have not affected the social relationships to any appreciable extent. But the hill culture differs from that of the plains and all the cultures that surround them, and it would be worthwhile acquainting ourselves with their customs and mode of living in order to be able to appraise the configuration of their culture.

The cultural life of these people has been deeply impressed by their contacts with the lower strains, particularly the Doms, a generic name which includes the artisan elements in the population of the hills. Yet they do possess traits of culture which appear to be indigenous and which still claim popular approval. The Khasas are Hindus; their customary rites in temples, the manner and mode of offering sacrifices, daily religious performances, periodical festivals which are inter-locked by their calendar, the dim lighting, burning of incense, mysterious incantations and their 'memorizing of an amount of word-

perfect ritual' and sing-song monologues, all indicate their Hindu origin, tradition in ritual and temple worship. They worship their gods in their temples. There are 33 crores of Hindu divinities and the gods of the Khasas also find a place in the Hindu pantheon.

The ceremonial aspect of worship in the temples has been much exaggerated and not a day passes without some sort of communal offering to their gods. The priest officiates in the temple, morning and evening, prayers are offered to their gods, and the village drummers must play on their drums eight times during the day and night. There are temple dancers, *Badinis,* professional dancers who dance daily before the gods, and sacrifice of goat or buffaloes is made to them to ward off dangers to the village or to individual families. The meat as *prasad* is distributed to the families in the village and there are traditional ways of distributing meat which smack of feudal days.

The Khasas have their masked dances—they put on the masks of the Pandava brothers and parade up and down the village in procession, promising protection and help to those needing them. The soothsayer and diviner foretell the events of their lives and prayers and offerings are made to their gods in temples to propitiate the offended ones and to worship those who are expected to bestow favours. Calenderic observances, pilgrimage to Hanol, the abode of Mahasu, the god of their gods, and frequent feasts and festivals with appropriate music characterise their ceremonial life.

The priest has to memorize the rituals; the hymns and formulas have to be perfectly uttered and interpreted to the admiring crowd and the various movements of the body in response to the requirements of the rituals have to be carefully regulated so that he may not fail the expectations of the devotees. There is a perfect understanding among the people of the purpose and functions of dovetailed ceremonies, the rôle of priesthood, the rhythmic movements of the priestly figure in presence of the gods, the importance of the drummers who beat the accustomed time, of the endless formalities in their daily ministrations to the gods. The dancers have their duties traditionally prescribed and the women of the village who want favours of their gods or who require to offer their prayers in grateful recognition of immediate

blessings, have their own time of approaching their gods with offerings which they reach the priests with appropriate formalities.

Every morning or evening women of certain families are seen dancing in front of the temples in grateful recognition of divine blessings they have received and the temples in big villages keep the doors wide open to receive their homage. When gods do not speak their voice, the priests do, and the villagers learn with fear or cheer the thunderings of their gods or the blessings that may come to them. Some masked dancers are skilful impersonators, and by their adept rhythmic displays of movements, instill confidence in their votaries and they are heard with rapt attention by the latter. Such is their acquaintance with the details of their ceremonial life that no slip or mistake in the rendering of the hymns or the processes of the ritual or the order of the ceremonies goes unnoticed and the officiating priest, his assistants, and those who order the rituals have to remedy their acts of omission and commission by a repetition of the formula or rendering of the dovetailed rituals. Omissions are ominous to the village and purposeful cutting short of elaborate rituals is not tolerated. If this happens, the news spreads by whispers and the whole village gets upset over such incompetence.

The territorial unit in Jaunsar-Bawar is the village. Each village has a headman or *sayana,* but he is not the elected chief. Originally he was nominated by the *sadar sayana* but his office today has become hereditary and he is subordinate to the *sadar sayana.* Remnants of a feudal system are still discernible in the tenures of Jaunsar-Bawar. The *sadar sayana* who was in earlier days known as *thokdar* is the overlord and is responsible for the management of the *khat* or *patti.* He represents his *khat* in all its relations with the local administration. The Khasas are believed to be immigrants in Jaunsar-Bawar. They appear to have come in nomadic hordes each under a *thokdar.* The families which constituted the nomadic group settled down in different villages but acknowledge the authority of the *thokdar.* His importance as leader of an immigrant horde was recognised by the villages and he received many services and contributions from his party men in the shape of gifts and customary dues payable to him on important occasions and festivals. Each family

had to give 12 days' free labour in a year to the *thokdar*. When a child was born in a family, the *thokdar* received a gift; when a girl was married he received something; when a new house was built he was offered a present by the family concerned; when a sheep was killed by a family a leg was sent to him. In return for these considerations or tributes, the *thokdar* looked after the interest of the villagers in his *khat* and organized defence against raiders, settled disputes as arbitrator and undertook to defend the rights and privileges of the families owning him allegiance. To-day the *sadar sayana* or *thokdar* does not wield much influence and the village *sayana* has asserted himself and has secured greater rights and privileges than were enjoyed by his predecessors.

The village community consists of a group of proprietary cultivators known as *zemindars*. They are also called *mauroosi* cultivators as opposed to *gair-mauroosi* or under-cultivators. The latter cannot alienate the land and are to all intents and purposes tenants. When they give up the land, it reverts to the proprietary body. When the *zemindars* give up their own lands, the co-owners exercise the right of preemption. The *zemindars* are Khasas who cultivate their holdings themselves with the help of a number of agricultural serfs called Koltas whom they maintain and who can demand to be maintained by them.

The political importance of the *thokdar* was immense in earlier days and the control he exercised on the people of his *khat* was a matter of great concern to the administration. In the native states where the system was more developed, political expediency necessitated divesting the *thokdar* of some of his rights and privileges. Tactless handling of the situation led to trouble in some states, but with the gradual tightening of central authority, the *thokdar* lost much of his pristine status and today he is not a force even in his own *khat*. Bereft of his political authority, he is still an important link between the village headman and the administration and has been used to the advantages of the latter. With the weakening of the hold of the *thokdar* or *sadar sayana*, the *khat panchayat* consisting of the *sayanas* of all the villages in the *khat* over which he presides has lost its jurisdiction and influence and disputes between two villages are not usually

referred to the *khat panchayat* but are settled by the *panchayat* of the two villages concerned.

The village *panchayat* is a body of three to five persons presided over by the *sayana* who is the *sir panch.* The elders who constitute the *panchayat* are drawn from elderly men selected for their tact and experience. Knowledge of men and matters, sojourn in foreign lands and experience as functionaries of the Government in some capacity or other are some of the necessary qualifications for membership of the *panchayat.* This organisation is more or less permanent without any recognised constitution or procedure. Its proceedings are informal and it meets whenever there is an occasion to do so. The *panchayat* acts as an arbitrator in disputes and its machinery is successfully utilized to organize periodical festivals, fix dates of ceremonies, collect subscriptions for such purposes, look to the supply of water for the village and for irrigation, to supervise the morals of the villagers and to assist the village headman in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities.

In one case which was decided in our presence a girl was betrothed to a young man by her father and the latter received a *tando* or earnest money of Re. 1. A few weeks later there was an altercation between the bride's father and the uncle of the bridegroom-to-be, and the former called off the match and married his daughter to a third party. The *panchayat* of the *khat* was informed and the father of the girl was fined Rs. 60 and was asked to give a feast to the aggrieved party and the *panchayat.* If a Kolta, Chamar or a member of an artisan caste is found to elope with the wife of a Rajput or a Brahmin, exemplary punishment is meted out to the man and anybody who harbours the couple or aids them is severely punished. A heavy fine or *har* is imposed by the *panchayat* varying from Rs. 125 to Rs. 300 or more, and this amount when realised from the offender is divided equally between the aggrieved husband and the members of the village. If the offender does not pay up, the couple must leave the country. If, however, the man who elopes with another man's wife can prove his previous intimacy with the girl, the amount of fine is reduced considerably.

When a person belonging to the higher castes seduces a woman

of similar social status, he has to pay a fine of Rs. 60 only. A low caste man who commits such an offence can be kept by a *khatdar* on payment of a *wergeld.* Offences against property, such as the theft of sheep, goats, etc., are usually dealt with by the *panchayat* and if the culprit is traced he is asked to make good the theft and pay a fine. In a case of theft in the village of Jadi, the thief who stole a goat was asked to pay back five goats of which two were given to the owner and the remaining three to the *panchayat* and the village, who celebrated the occasion with a grand feast. Whenever any partition of property is made by the *panchayat,* the *sayana* receives as his share one sheep, one goat, one metal utensil, one piece of weapon and Rs. 5 in cash. The *panchayat* receives Rs. 5 and the villagers Rs. 2, but in the case of poor families, these fees are considerably reduced and sometimes no payment at all is made.

The Khasas are a patrilocal people with patrilineal inheritance and patronymic designation. Each village stands as a social unit and is usually exogamous. The joint family system prevails. A group of brothers live together with one, two or more wives under the same roof, the brothers sharing the wives in common, without exclusive rights of cohabitation with any one wife. The eldest of a group of brothers wields a dominating influence in the domestic affairs of the family of which he is the social as well as the ceremonial head. It is to him that the other brothers have to turn for advice and guidance. He determines the duties of the brothers, and provides the necessities of the family while the rest of the brothers have to obey him and hand over to him their individual earnings. If a brother wants to marry any particular girl of his choice, the eldest brother goes through the ceremony of marriage with the girl and he may assign the bride to the particular brother.

If there is a dispute between two brothers, which may occur on account of rivalry and jealousy between them the eldest brother arbitrates and his decision is final. If he asks the common wife not to bestow her favours on any of the brothers, the aggrieved brother normally has no appeal to any higher body in the village. Society upholds the dignity of the eldest brother. The alternative is chaos which the society dares not encourage. The children of the joint

family of a group of brothers are maintained by the family and paternity is decided by a useful convention. The eldest born child is attributed to the eldest brother, and the next child to the second, and so on. In case of a dispute between brothers, which may arise when one of the fathers wants to live apart and start a new establishment, the joint wife may be asked to name the fathers of her children; alternatively the husbands of the joint wife may draw lots to determine the paternity of children born to the family.

If four brothers have one wife between them and four or five children are born, and one of the younger brothers marries again, the children usually remain with the woman who is not allowed to go to the younger brother. She must live with the other brothers, but the children are entitled to equal shares of property from all brothers including the one who marries again. If the other brothers wish to separate, the eldest brother has to bear the expenses of their marriage as well.

Although in a polyandrous society which swings between polygamy and monandry, partition of property and succession to it must be of great practical difficulty, yet in practice there are few occasions for dispute and cases of succession and inheritance are not frequent. So long as the prevailing pattern of the society is based on polyandry—and there is not any stigma on such forms of marital life—the family remains undivided and partition of family property becomes unnecessary; the group of fathers jointly own a wife and her sons, nor are the latter ashamed to confess their allegiance to a group of fathers. It has been noticed that a son who claims his parentage to a group of fathers is given a special status and he proudly asserts this in presence of others. Children have been found to discuss their parents freely, their mother's attachments to a particular father and even the sexual indulgence the fathers receive from their joint wife. Words to the effect of 'my mother will sleep with my father to-night;' 'she does not care for this or that person', can be frequently heard from children and questions regarding their family are answered with a naughty wink which shows absence of any restraint or training of children. The father of a young man approached me to let his son go home (he was working as my interpreter) as his

young wife was to sleep with his son that night and she was waiting for him !

The status as well as the strength of the family is derived from the group of fathers who own the child, so that the larger the group of fathers, the greater the prestige of the child, for greater must be the protection assured him. The same appears to be the case with women. A woman considers herself extremely lucky if she can lay her claims to maintenance by a number of husbands. They sympathise with one who has to live with one or two husbands only. The idea of security perhaps is also at the root of the choice, for one man cannot cater to the comforts of a wife unless he is assisted by a number of domestic servants. Considering the expenses of keeping a family of Kolta, a man of ordinary circumstances has to go without servants and thus he has to depend on the labours of his wife who may not cherish such prospects. 'How can a young wife sleep alone ?' asked a smart girl; "I would not care to live in the house of my husbands if I have to do so." In 90 cases out of 100, I was told by the elderly men of the villages I had visited, the wife leaves for her father's village till her husband or husbands return and reassume their obligations. Many young wives openly sympathised with our wives and disapproved of our conduct, some suggesting that we would find our houses empty when we went back—certainly not a bright prospect for a field anthropologist.

Succession and inheritance in a polyandrous family pass collaterally so long as any of the brothers who own the joint establishment is alive. It is only after the death of the brothers that the joint property descends to the sons as heirs. In cases where the group of brothers marrying more than one wife have no male issue, the heirs are allowed to have a joint interest in the property, and after their death the property passes on to the nearest collaterals. To-day cases of partition of property are cropping up on account of the knowledge of law courts, disseminated by touts and litigants, and the frequent visits the people make to Chakrata, Mussoorie and other neighbouring urban centres, as well as on account of a nascent individualism finding expression in their growing conventions and comforts. But the disputes are usually settled outside the law courts and the village *panchayats*

still possess sufficient prestige and influence to make their decisions binding on the people.

When brothers want to separate, the property is equally divided among them though in practice the shares of the eldest and youngest of the brothers are usually greater than that of the rest. It is in the matter of wives that partition becomes difficult. For example if 4 brothers possess 2 wives between them, partition would not be possible, and it usually happens that the elder brothers keep the two wives to themselves but allow compensation to other brothers to enable them to marry and set up independent households. In a number of cases the wives preferred to live with the younger brothers, the eldest ones have had to go in for new wives. It is not for sexual considerations that elderly wives prefer to live with younger brothers, the helplessness of the latter and the affection with which they were held by their wives some of whom are old enough to be their mother, decide in their favour. Therefore partition affects the elder brothers who become very accommodating and allow sufficient liberty in sex matters—which otherwise become inexplicable.

Where a group of brothers marrying two to three wives in succession can raise no issue, the property after their death may be inherited by the wife or wives, provided that they do not remarry, though no objection is usually taken if they secure some partners to live with them and share their earnings. Such cases are common in most parts of the Himalayas (*Kangra District Gazetteer,* quoted in Lindell's *Weekly,* Simla, May 30, 1925). After the death of the wife, the property reverts to the collaterals as the latter are not bound by any transaction entered into by the wife who has only a life interest in the property.

In the trans-Giri tract custom allows a widow to make a will, provided, during her lifetime when she required help from her husband's brothers or collaterals, help was not given to her, which fact has to be proved to the satisfaction of the *panchayat*; the matter when dragged to the court must be proved to the latter's satisfaction. Within one year of her making such a will if the interested parties contest the will, the court may direct the parties to disprove the allegation of the woman. Should they fail, the will is declared valid. A woman can have an illegitimate child during the

lifetime of the husband, and even if the child is born a year or more after the husband's death, the child is posthumously fathered upon by the deceased husband, and he becomes the rightful heir to his property. Such cases are rare no doubt, but considering the importance of male children among the Khasas and the general paucity of children, illegitimate ones are welcomed as saviours of family prestige, the effect being the increase of sexual excesses and license.

On account of polyandry and in spite of a shortage of adult women, there is still a surplus of women in this area which is disposed of in marriage to people from the plains. The bride price charged is proportionate to the physical beauty of the bride and fluctuates with the economic prosperity or otherwise of the prospective candidates.

In determining the shares of the brothers at the time of partition of property, some consideration is shown to the eldest and youngest of the brothers who receive an extra share each on account of the customary practice of *jithong* and *kanchong*. Under these rules, the eldest brother gets from one to three *kachcha bighas* of land more than the share each of the other brothers gets by partition. The eldest brother is also allowed to select the best *bigha* or two out of the ancestral property. Where *kanchong* is in vogue, the youngest brother gets the ancestral house or a part of the dwelling and also an extra share in the farming land.

"There are traces of this custom which still lingers among us under the name of Borough English, in the more settled communities of the hills," writes T. C. Hodson (*Primitive Culture of India* p. 23), "and one large Naga group, the Semas, contrary to the usual Naga order has hereditary chiefs, the elder sons becoming chiefs in their own villages during the father's lifetime, provided the sons are able to found separate villages, and one of the younger sons probably succeeding in his father's village." (Hutton *The Angami Nagas* p. 358). Among the Lushei Kuki clans, (*The Lushei Kuki Clans* p. 43), the youngest son usually succeeds to the chieftainship as during the life time of the father the other brothers are assisted by the father to establish separate villages and rule there, though recognizing an obligation to assist the chief, their father, in any quarrel with neigh-

bouring chiefs. How far *kanchong* is modelled on the Naga pattern is difficult to determine, but the basic fact is supplied, probably in the similar tribal organisation in both the areas, for among the Khasas as also among the Nagas the tribal society is composed of a number of wandering hordes, with a *thokdar* or *sayana* or a clan chief at its head and similar arrangements were necessitated by the Khasas and the Naga and Kuki clans to help establish the sons of chiefs or *thokdars*. The Toda and Badaga custom is similar, though a different explanation for this has been given by Lowie (*Primitive Society* p. 239). The elder sons marry and set up separate household in different villages, but the youngest one has to remain with the father till the latter grows old and require his services. In recognition of this, the father's property is passed on to the youngest son, who is the natural heir of the family. Where landed property is not recognised or is of minor importance, as for example among pastoral tribes like the Todas, the youngest son receives an extra buffalo on partition, which compensates for the start the elder brother has received during the lifetime of their common father.

In many matriarchal societies, notably among the Khasis and the Garos, the youngest daughter is the heir to the family property. The Garo would marry the youngest daughter to his sister's son who comes to live with the matriarchal family. Economic considerations often engender social habits and these may be taken as examples illustrating such rules. We are told by Col. Hodson that "the decrease in the size of the village had led to an important modification of the custom under which the youngest son inherits his father's village and property among the Nagas, for the villages are limited in number while the chief's family does not show any tendency to decrease, and enough villages are not available for all the sons to go round." "Indeed," observed the 1911 *Census Report* (Vol. III, page 138), "in some cases none of the sons have been able to start a separate village, and it is obvious that under these circumstances inheritance should pass to the eldest son and its change has been readily accepted by the people."

The culture of the Khasas of Jaunsar-Bawar has been deeply impressed by their contacts with the Doms or the aboriginal element

in the population. The Doms belong mostly to an early racial strain, and their cultural life greatly resembles that of the various tribes of pre-Dravidian or early Mediterranean origin. While the Khasas claim to be Hindus—and recently they have been fast adopting Hindu surnames and trying to establish connection with the Rajputs and Brahmins of the plains (their contacts with the outsiders have taught them the importance of their claims)—their social life as well as their beliefs and practices connected with their religion do not identify them with the Hindus of the plains. They re-marry their widows, practise levirate, sorrorate and polyandry, recognize divorce as legal, while intermarriage between the various Khasa groups is not tabooed and children born of such marriages do not suffer any social stigma. While they worship Hindu gods and goddesses, they have a partiality for ancestor spirits, queer and fantastic demons and gods and for the worship of stones, weapons, dyed rags and symbols. The sun, the moon and the constellations are their gods. The sun is male and moon is female. The moon's pride on account of her great beauty and her insulting behaviour towards the sun on that score, it is believed, provoked the latter's wrath and his curse had the effect of disfiguring the moon's face resulting in spots which are said to be the marks of leprosy to which the Khasas of today are often victims.

The Hindu belief that the earth rests on the head of a snake, *Sheshnag,* finds its counterpart in Jaunsar-Bawar and earthquakes are believed to be caused by the periodical movements of the giant snake. The Mundas believe that the eclipses of the sun or moon occur when their creditors surround the sun or moon for the debts of the Mundas and this represents the typical belief about eclipse among all the Austric speaking tribes in India. Among the Khasas the sun and moon are said to have borrowed money from a Dom, but the interest swelled to such amount that it could not be paid and the debt was repudiated. The Dom on that account worries them often by throwing a skin on their face.

Though the average Khasa is always in debt, the stigma attaching to persons of higher castes who borrow from the Dom is great in Jaunsar-Bawar and elders belonging to the higher castes do not tolerate such practices in the village. The customary raising of

menhirs and other stone memorials among the Khasas appears to be a relic of a megalithic cult which is an important phase of primitive culture in India. The Khasas appear to have in all probability borrowed this custom from the aboriginal element in these parts. It is customary to construct a terraced platform near a public thorough-fare on which they place a single upright stone to commemorate the dead.

The belief in transmigration of souls and in the doctrine of metempsychosis is an important feature of their religious life. They believe that the soul has to pass through as many as 840,000 forms including those of animals and insects and the activities of man on earth are carefully recorded by Yama whose messengers have to present the souls before him. As Dharmraj, Yama determines the form which a particular soul would pass into, in accordance with its activities on earth.

The religion of the Khasas is a curious blend of Hindu and tribal beliefs and practices and a functional analysis of these is sure to provide interesting material. Nowhere perhaps are magic and religion so closely interlaced and interwoven as in Jaunsar-Bawar. Magic plays an important rôle in the life of the hill people by giving them confidence in times of danger and crisis and by providing the incentive to organised undertakings. Not only in the main occupations of the people like agriculture and lumbering, in ordinary day-to-day life too, magic is potent and effective. The importance of the evil eye and the evil tongue is recognised by the hill people and oaths and ordeals have a significance hardly paralleled in savage society. It is possible to effect injury to person or to cattle or both by magical practices, to cause death in a family by mere swearing as they believe, and to cause houses to be burnt by magic.

The courts of justice recognise the importance of oaths and ordeals and when the necessary evidence in a civil case is not forthcoming the parties are allowed to decide the issue by means of oaths and ordeals. In some cases the defendant in a money suit will keep the sum of money before the image of the goddess Kali or in any temple dedicated to *Mahasu,* their great god, and the plaintiff is asked to take the money. Should the defendant want to prove that the money he owes has been paid by him, he drinks the water in which the feet of

the *devata* are dipped and this is taken as evidence to the effect that the money has been paid by the defendant. In other cases, the plaintiff will light a lamp in a temple and the amount alleged to be due to him will be put before it which would be claimed from the debtor concerned. If a villager bears a grudge against his neighbour and he wants to harm him or his effects, he takes a clod of earth from his field and lays it on the altar of *Mahasu* and prays for an immediate judgment. Should this neighbour meet with an accident or domestic trouble, he would leave his field as otherwise the god invoked by his enemy may cause a greater calamity to fall on him. The consequence of dishonesty and false statement on oath is terrible as the person is sure to be affected with insanity or leprosy, or some great calamity may occur in his family, or he may die an unnatural death within a short period from the commission of the offence.

People who are notorious for their wickedness are supposed to possess some power either inherent in them or derivatively acquired. They are known to abuse people and swear against them on the slightest or no pretext and the belief is that such persons can do harm as their *ghat* or swearing is usually very effective. There are certain gods whom wicked and anti-social people usually invoke to effect their nefarious designs on others. One such evil is *narsin* who is extremely mischievous and is readily invoked to harm or destroy cattle and crops and to afflict people with diseases. The *baki* or diviner has to get in touch with this spirit and propitiate it whenever it is suspected of doing a mischief. Though it is a criminal offence in Jaunsar-Bawar to call any person a 'witch', it is common knowledge in these parts that witches exist, and whenever any person meets with any misfortune or contracts any serious illness, the members of his family may suspect any woman, young or old, to be responsible for it and she is dubbed a witch. From then she becomes an object of close attention in the villages and her family is branded as anti-social and consequently segregated from other families.

The incidence of infant mortality is quite high in Jaunsar-Bawar and it is traced to the influence of certain evil spirits. These are always after children and women with child and their attention is followed by disease and death to their victims. There are people

especially versed in spirit lore who utter magic words and blow ashes over the child or woman believed to be affected by these spirits and this is considered potent enough to cure the affliction. When a pregnant woman falls ill, it is believed to be due to the mischief caused by certain evil spirits and the woman has to undergo a course of treatment prescribed by the *baki* or *ghadıala* (witch-doctor)). With her hair dishevelled and forehead painted lavishly with vermillion, she is made to sit near the witch-doctor. The latter takes a bellmetal plate in his hand and starts beating it to time, uttering simultaneously a number of incantations in a peculiar sing-song tune. After half an hour or so the woman feels heavy, and starts shivering, indicating thereby that the spirit has entered her person. The woman shows signs of great animation and moves her limbs to and fro, attempting to rise on her toes and eventually starts dancing to the tune of the bellmetal music. Soon she forgets herself, her husbands and relations, and is metamorphosed as it were into the spirit which has taken possession of her.

The *ghadıala* addresses the spirit in the woman and the latter answers on behalf of the spirit. The source of the attack, the name of the spirit, the necessary offerings and sacrifices that would please it and any particular direction as to the manner and mode of disposal of the offerings, are mentioned by the possessed woman and it is believed that as soon as these are offered as directed the woman gets rid of the spirit possessing her. The spirit, however, leaves the victim in a spectacular manner. The woman shrieks or strikes herself with a stick or makes violent attempts at escape and is often forcibly brought to rest by the people present. This and similar practices show the extent of the influence of tribal beliefs and practices on the cultural life of the Khasas.

When epidemics invade a village, the resources of the village are freely requisitioned by the headman and custom prescribes an *ashtabalı* or sacrifice of eight lives to appease the godling of disease. Five different approaches of the village are selected for the purpose and at each approach an improvized gate of bamboos is made. At the centre of each gate is fixed the wooden effigy of a monkey and a vertical slab of stone or *menhir* is firmly fixed in the earth. The *menhir* is

crowned with a large round stone and two pieces of wood with flattened ends are tied on either side of an upright slab, the whole resembling a human figure from a distance. Five different sacrifices are offered at these approaches. At one, a goat is killed and buried near the *menhir*; at the second place a sheep is similarly sacrificed and buried. A hen, and a pig are sacrificed at the third and fourth approaches, respectively, while at the fifth they cut a pumpkin into two and bury it similarly. After the sacrifices at the selected places, the villagers all assemble in the yard of the temple where a sheep and a vegetable (*gindoro*) are offered as sacrifice. The *gindoro* is cut into pieces and the sheep is killed and given to the Doms. A goat is sacrificed in the name of the village and the meat is distributed among the villagers. The elaborate rites of *ashtabali* are performed only when a major calamity is feared and the efficacy of this prescription is seldom questioned by the villagers. The village priest is in charge of this sacrifice and he cites hymns and prayers as well as magical incantations to invoke the aid of the gods.

The Khasas do not appear to be much concerned with rewards and punishments in the world to come, but they observe a code of conduct which, if followed, is believed to pave the way to a prosperous life in this world and uninterrupted bliss in the next. These refer to their food, sleep and sacrifice. They must not drink pure milk and they should abstain, if possible, from butter as it may better be burnt in the temple of the gods. It is on ceremonial occasions and festivals that they may eat butter after it has been dedicated to the gods. They should offer the best sheep or goat to their gods as sacrifices and they should not sleep on beds with four legs, the usual practice in Jaunsar-Bawar is to sleep on the wooden floor.

The principal occupations of the Khasas are safeguarded against interference by the forces of evil which people their imagination by a system of protective and productive magic. It is true that the efficacy of these magical rites is being minimized by the people, but this has not caused any serious challenge to the traditional code of conduct so far as it relates to the observance of rites of protective magic. Magic embraces practically all spheres of Khasa activity. When they build a new house, they have to protect it from destruction

by fire, or from calamities that may fall on the inmates, and the usual practice is to sacrifice a goat or sheep to the evil spirits, the blood being sprinkled round the house. When the bridegroom comes home with the bride, before the couple is allowed to enter the house some relative, usually the maternal uncle, throws down from the roof of the house a live sheep in front of the couple below. The relatives and friends of the couple tear pieces of flesh and bone from the animal and there is a scramble among them for the heart and liver which, when eaten raw, ensures good luck to the eater. The bride and the bridegroom are then allowed to get inside.

When the harvests are brought home or the first sowing takes place, the evil spirits are propitiated by individual families while a common sacrifice is also made by the village. Human sacrifice is non-existent, but the efficacy of it in theory is not denied by the Khasas. The custom of rope dancing which formed an important annual festival in these parts has become obsolete as it has been forbidden by the administration on account of the risk to life involved in the process, but in times of agricultural calamities occasioned by the vagaries of rainfall or by insect pests and diseases to crops and cattle, they remember the olden days when the annual *bedwart* (rope dancing) provided the necessary safeguards against such supernatural visitations. Even today in Rawain, a neighbouring state, *bedwart* is allowed to be practised under police surveillance as the people have made repeated representations to the state authorities not to interfere with the age-old magico-religious practice. The failure of rains and harvest are traced to the non-observance of such practices and the state had to yield to their persistent demands.

The *bedwart* as was practised in earlier days was a cruel custom as it subjected the *beda* or dancer to physical violence. Originally a stout and long piece of rope was tied to two peaks of unequal height and the rope was greased for days and weeks to allow the *beda* to slide smoothly from the higher to the lower end of the rope. The *beda* after a ceremonial bath, was seated at the highest end of the rope and was given a push and the greasy rope did the rest. The *beda* glided down the rope at a terrific speed, clinging to it somehow, and the crowd which gathered to watch the ceremony broke into loud cheers

as the *beda* approached the end of the rope. If the *beda* accidentally misses his hold, it is fatal for him for he would certainly dash against the ravines hundreds of feet below and be shattered into fragments. If he succeeds as he usually does because it is undertaken after long preparation and practice, he loosens his hold of the rope immediately before he reaches the other end and drops down into the arms of a receptive crowd who carry him head high and move with him through the crowd. The piece of cloth or rag he puts on is torn to shreds by the crowd and each man keeps a thread or two as protection against natural calamities and as a sign of good luck and prosperity. In the scuffle that ensures to secure this luck, the *beda* loses not only his cloth but even tufts of hair from his head and may even receive serious injuries.

Other magico-religious rites include naked dances before sowing, during the growth of the crops and after harvests. Playing with red hot iron rods, swallowing burning charcoal and such other ordeals are some of the other precautions designed to safeguard their material prosperity and domestic bliss.

The festivals of the Khasas indicate a blending of Hindu and tribal rights and rituals; they often represent merely social activities, especially arranged to break the monotony of an inactive life in winter months. Festivals are held in honour of their ancestors, the Pandavas of Mahabharat fame, as for example when they celebrate *pando-ku-sradh.* They offer *pindas* (oblations) at a fixed place known to the villagers as *pandavu-ki-chori.* The village priest officiates in the *puja* and the village drummer and his wife play the music and dance the dance of the gods, respectively, and the villagers assemble on the spot to share the thrills of the function by witnessing the possession by the Pandavas or their spirits of persons suffering from abnormal or hyper-normal mental conditions. The music of the *beda* acts on the nerves of these people who start responding to it by shaking their limbs, particularly the head, and the speed of the movements increases with the speed of the drum beats, so that they soon lose control of their movements, foam at the mouth and start irrelevant talks.

The villagers detect in these abnormal manifestations a change of personality and approach the possessed persons with reverence

to renew their faith in age-long rites and rituals and learn from them the course of their lives, for they are believed to be blessed with second sight. They are often supposed to be sheltering spirits of the Pandavas, and as the latter are recognised as gods of the Khasas, words that fall from the lips of the possessed persons are taken to represent the voice of the gods and often they order their lives in accordance with the promptings of the spirits. A kind of superhuman strength is gained by these possessed persons; they do things which an ordinary man would not dare do, and in various other ways their activities strike terror into the hearts of the people as well as cause surprise and evoke admiration. Many of these possessed persons strip themselves naked before the crowd, make scars on their body by striking themselves with red hot iron rods, sometimes even touching them with their bare tongues.

Other demonstrations of their superhuman strength and capacity include mutilation of the face by sharp knives, consumption of huge quantity of wine and liquor, and gluttony. As long as their spirits are up they indulge in these orgies though at great personal risk to themselves, and when their energy is on the ebb, they gradually fade away till they faint and drop down unconscious. Elaborate precautions are taken by the crowd to restore the consciousness of the affected persons, to dress their wounds and make normal men of them. But these people on recovery have all avowed that they feel no sensations when they strike red hot iron on their person while possessed. On such occasions the villagers, one and all, offer *pindas* to the Pandavas, and they believe that from then on their life in the village and their work in the fields would proceed smoothly, and that the gods thus invoked and propitiated would bless them with plenty. The evening is spent in feasts and general rejoicing and sex taboo is strictly enforced for the night, as its violation is believed to cause sure destruction of the crops and calamities to families.

It is not very usual in the hills to observe sex taboos during the festivals, for the latter are noted for wantonness and debauchery, but on occasions described above, the gods are believed to be offended by sexual excesses and in order that there may not be such possibilites, the sex act is tabooed for the night. The *sayana* of Chajjar explained

to me the taboo as arising from the fact that on account of the invocations of the spirits, the latter become restless and at the slightest disrespect shown to them, they get offended so that people concentrate on their propitiation and nothing is allowed to be done which would detract them from such attention to the spirits.

The typical Khasa family, consisting of a group of brothers as husbands with one, two or more wives and children, represents a social and not a biological group. The father is not the psychological father but functional in the sense that children address him by his functional name as for example, father-who-looks-after-the-house, father-who-tends-the-sheep, father-who-grazes-cattle, and so on. The close tie between the child and mother that we get in a stable monogamic family cannot develop in a polyandrous society of the type we get in Jaunsar-Bawar. The frequency of the practice of *chhut* or divorce makes the wife a loose unit in the family and she changes her affiliation pretty freely. The care and maintenance of the children, therefore, devolves on the group of fathers, particularly on the head of the family, and it is the duty of the latter to see that the children get proper attention and necessary instruction in their formative years. The mother has to perform her duties and comply with the obligations of motherhood so long as she remains a member of the family and conforms to the rules of residence customary with patrilocal groups. But as she migrates periodically to her parents' village at harvest time and during the festivals, the children do not get her company throughout the year. The normal socio-psychological association between mother and child cannot develop on account of frequent interruptions by these voluntary migrations. The novel situation arising out of customary participation of the people in fairs and festivals, the variety of interests they stimulate there and the scope they provide for satisfying the genuine curiosities of children lose much of their significance in shaping the mother-child relationship.

The importance of these casual migrations of young married women to their parents' village will be realized when it is known that in the villages we investigated most of the married women between the ages of 15 and 35 were absent and women of the same age group belonging to the village but married to other villages replaced them

as domestic help and farm hands during the harvesting season. Women of about 35—those whose psycho-sexual life has lost its intensity of exuberance—and those that are sick or diseased do not move from the village and they with the girls of the family manage the household and care for the children.

The seasonal interchange of women between villages has a number of advantages for a polyandrous community. Firstly, it allows a release of tension in sexual life, for with the return of the girl to her parents' house and the absence of the wife or wives from the village, opportunities for extra-marital relationship increase and intrigues within the village are possible without any disturbance of normal wedded life. Secondly, the periodical return of the girls of the family reduces the instability of the family relationship in the event of wives leaving the family permanently, and ensures a continuity of economic existence of the family. Thirdly, the seasonal residence of the wife in the husband's house and periodical migration to her parents, the knowledge of the two standards of morality enjoyed by women in Jaunsar-Bawar, and the possibilities of easy *chhut* while reducing the sanctity of marital obligations also temper marital jealousy.

In a polyandrous society, in order that social life may run smoothly, marital jealousy must be absent, and we are told by competent authorities that it is so in fact. It is true that when several brothers share one wife the brothers must not quarrel over her, and custom and tradition determine the attitude of the brothers to one another and to the wife. The importance of the eldest brother or *jeth* among the Khasas generally and in Jaunsar-Bawar in particular has greatly minimized marital jealousy as it is not usually possible for the other brothers to possess the wife sexually so long as the eldest brother resides in the house. In practice, however, the eldest brother does not exercise this sexual monopoly and his frequent absence from the house provides the necessary transference of sexual rights to the next of the brothers. Besides, the disparity in the age of the brothers makes it possible for the elder brothers to secure to themselves the right of cohabitation till the younger brothers come of age and in 90 cases out of 100 a second wife is taken in the interest of the younger brothers.

Jealousy between brothers for the affection of a common wife is not rare and manifests itself in the demand by the husband concerned for better attention to his needs and comforts. In such cases, the wife, if she is clever, manages her obligation to the satisfaction of the husbands concerned. If she does not, quarrels do take place and the eldest brother may order a dissolution of the marriage. While quarrels between brothers are obviated by customary rules of conduct as described above, those between co-wives are of frequent occurence. Unless the second wife happens to be the sister of the first as is very often the case or some one in whose selection the first wife had a voice, no second wife can be taken while the first remains in the house. She must be divorced before another wife can be brought home. Thus the wife's sister is normally preferred to others as a second wife.

When a second wife is had, precautions are taken to see that quarrels between co-wives may not occur too often and magical rites have been introduced to remove the shadow of misunderstanding. When a second wife, other than the sister of the first one, is taken, an interesting ceremony is gone through. The second wife is made to sit in one corner of the room the first wife sitting opposite her, while an elderly woman with a lighted dip in her hand stands by each of them. Another woman stands in the centre of the room and joins their hands and each gives the other a silver coin. The dip is held in such a way that the shadow of the one does not fall on the other.

Marriage in Jaunsar-Bawar takes place early. Most girls are married between the ages of 2 and 10, though this does not mean that cohabitation follows earlier than in the plains. From the cases we have noticed of girls proceeding to their husband's village for residence for the first time, it does not appear that the girls have to do so before they are 17 or 18 and this is a fair arrangement as puberty sets in later in a cold climate. Occasionally, however, a girl of 8 or 10 may come to live with her mother-in-law for a couple of months or so and assist her in her domestic obligations, but such residence has not been abused by the husband or group of husbands. Besides, in the case of a first marriage the bridegroom also is of tender age and the possibility of an earlier consummation of marriage is remote.

When a son is to be married, the father approaches the girl's parents and asks for the girl. If the father or guardian of the girl is satisfied on the suitability of the marriage he may demand the nominal bride price which is usually Re. 1. The *pahari* Brahmin then decides the date of the wedding. On the appointed day 2 to 8 people from the bridegroom's village come to the bride's house where they receive a cordial reception. The party is entertained to a sumptuous feast and the villagers arrange a dance in which the party from the bridegroom's village take part. Next morning 100 to 200 people proceed with the bride to the bridegroom's house singing and dancing all the way till they reach the outskirts of the groom's village. All the villagers—men, women and children—assemble there to receive the guests and lead them to the bridegroom's house where the guests are taken care of. A heavy menu at dinner with a large quantity of liquor served before and after the meal, a gala dance in which people from both sides take part, continuous singing by the women, the beating of drums, and sometimes a hunting excursion to the forest nearby, all go to make the ceremony a memorable event. Poor people cannot entertain their guests on such a lavish scale and the people who participate in the function from the village of the bride as well as those from their own village provide the necessary assistance for the family concerned in the shape of gifts which consist of rice, flour, *ghee*, *gur* and sheep or goats.

The poor families, however, cannot afford to invite every villager to the feast. So one person from each family is invited to join the festivities and to give the ceremony a representative character. Even then the whole village acts as host and all the necessary arrangements are made by the villagers whether they are invited to the feast or not.

The ceremony of marriage is extremely simple. The *pahari* Brahmin puts a *tilak* of *pithain* or vermillion on the forehead of the bride in the bridegroom's house and on the bridegroom's forehead in the house of the bride. He also cites some *mantrams* in the presence of the couple while he may, if he is asked, sacrifice a goat in honour of the great god *Mahasu*, to whom he prays for prosperity and happiness for the couple. Before the food is sent to the guests, a plate of it

is offered by the priest to the village god. This is obligatory on all occasions of feasts and festivals.

Besides the ceremonial gift of a rupee, the bridegroom's people may and very often do pay a small sum to cover the expenses of the bride's parents. Where the financial and social status of the parties differ, as for example when the bridegroom is not so well-to-do and the bride's parents are, or when both the parties are well off, the bridegroom has to pay some money as bride price. But only half of this amount is payable before marriage and the other half only after the woman has proved her fertility. Barrenness is a frequent complaint in these parts and a husband who has paid a big sum as *jeodhan* and has spent more on entertaining his friends and relations must be given some relief. Should the woman prove barren, the bride's parents have to refund the other half if need be. A reasonable period after cohabitation starts is allowed to the wife to prove her fertility and if she fails to do so she is returned to her parents and *chhut* or divorce is obtained.

Besides the question of fertility, there is another practical implication of this custom, namely, paying half the bride price and retaining the other half to be paid when the girl becomes a mother. The girl is married at the age of 3 or 4. When she grows up she becomes an economic asset. The father is reluctant to send the daughter away to her husband's village. He does not mind her licence in sexual matters so long as this is confined within the village. Intrigues with persons belonging to the same clan are not encouraged, but there is not much restriction as regards those belonging to other clans. When the husband finds that she does not want to come to live with him, he demands repayment of the bride price he has paid; of course, he takes this final step only after he has tried his best to persuade the wife's people, for even if he has made a small cash payment he has spent a lot in kind and in entertainment. The girl's father does not worry himself much about this demand, for if the girl is handsome she is sure to be demanded by some other party which will pay the dowry back to the first husband and some thing to him as well. Whether he keeps the girl at his house or marries her a second time, he is a gainer in either case and these considerations have something

to do with the many cases of *chhut* and of strained relations between different villages. Where the girl is not handsome or does not receive proper care and indulgence in the parents' house, the parents do not prevent her from going to her husband's house, for in that case they do not get willing assistance from her and lose the part of the dowry payable by the husband. When there is no difference in status between the parties to a marriage, the girl is not withheld from the bridegroom's people, for unless she resides at her husband's place she is not expected to fulfil the rôle of mother which alone entitles the bride's parents to receive the other half of the bride price.

As has already been said, girls even after marriage come back to the villages of their parents to assist them in field work during the harvest season, and the sex licence that obtains in Jaunsar-Bawar during the festivals when married girls do not hesitate to misbehave is understandable on this account. In the village of her husband, adultery is a crime of the gravest magnitude, and a wife found guilty of such offence pays the penalty in no uncertain way. If she still remains in her husband's house, she is ill-treated by the family and is denied any sympathy by the village. This raises the question of morality in Jaunsar-Bawar. A woman has two standards of morality to conform to, one in her parents' house, the other in her husband's. In her parents' house she is allowed every kind of liberty and licence and nothing is an offence unless specifically prohibited. In case any child is born of extra-marital relationship, her husbands have to own it and this they do without much heart-searching on account of the small number of children among the Khasas. Usually the child is fathered on the eldest of the husbands of the woman.

It was customary in earlier days, and even today it is so in the interior, for girls (conforming to the social etiquette of the family) to offer themselves as bedmates to guests of the family who may have no scruples in this matter. The rules of hospitality allow that grown-up daughters of the family, married or unmarried, should cater to the comforts of visitors in every way. But a married girl in her husband's house, called *dhyanti*, must observe strictly the rules of morality, must behave properly, must be faithful and loyal to the group of husbands and strict vigilance is kept on her movements by the family group

as well as the village. Everything she does is considered an offence unless specifically permitted. But a wife in one village is a daughter or *ranti* in another, and custom allows the wife to go to her parents' village where she may take advantage of this double standard of morality.

The usual explanation offered by the Khasas is found in popular sayings and proverbs which compare a girl after marriage to the carcase of an animal, so that the parents can have no interest in her after her marriage. She lives, they say, for the family of her husbands where her economic contribution is indispensable and thus her morals are no concern of her parents. How far this attitude is born of an original disgust at the transference of allegiance of the girls of a matriarchal society to a patriarchal one is an interesting theme for discussion. I shall deal with this aspect later on.

Girls in Jaunsar-Bawar, as I have already pointed above, are married very early. But if the family suffers from some social stigma or is known to have some hereditary disease, if the gods are known to have been displeased with the family or if the girls of the family are known to have broken faith by not going to live with their husband or husbands, it may happen that suitable proposals for marriage will not be forthcoming and the parents or brothers of the girl have to wait indefinitely for her marriage. A few such cases came to our knowledge during our investigations.

Some examples of polyandry in practice will be of interest in this connection. Hariram, *sadar sayana* of village Jadi, has four brothers, the youngest of whom, Nain Singh, is about 35 years of age. He with his brothers owns 9 acres 3 rods and 5 poles of land, 14 heads of cattle and 88 sheep and pays Rs. 8 as *malgoozari*. He is, therefore, quite a man of substance and the richest farmer in the village. Hariram married Gonga and paid Rs. 60 as bride price. She proved barren and after 4 years, she was divorced and Hariram got back Rs. 20 from her next husband. He then married Jimuti, a divorced woman for whom he had to pay Rs. 20 as bride price. Jimuti was found to be suffering from venereal disease and was divorced without any demand of part of the dowry. He then married Ashadi and paid Rs. 50. She too was a divorced woman but after a couple

of years she died without any issue. The fourth marriage was with Pirudi for whom he paid only Rs. 12. Pirudi is living with the family and has three children. Bipu is his fifth wife and has one son. Last year Hariram married Pusuli for whom he had to pay Rs. 120 as dowry. She was divorced thrice before she was married by Hariram and has not any issue yet. Thus Hariram has married six wives one after another and between 4 brothers they have four sons.

Narain, son of Hariram (for he is the eldest of the sons and thus was fathered upon Hariram), lives with his brothers and has married 3 wives. For the first wife Nagu he paid Rs. 12, but Nagu died without issue. His second wife was Baradai who also was paid Rs. 12 as bride price. She gave birth to two daughters but was later divorced. The third wife, Chakeri, was paid a dowry of Rs. 120 as she was married after her second divorce. She has two sons living. Narain's eldest daughter Pusu was first married to Jowar Singh who paid Re. 1 as bride price, but Pusu was divorced and the second husband had to pay Rs. 240 to Jowar Singh as compensation.

Madan Singh has two brothers, Narain and Ajmeru. He and his brothers possess 4 acres 1 rod and 30 poles of land, 8 cows and 44 sheep and pays a *malgoozari* of Rs. 5-14. Madan paid Rs. 2 as bride price and married Bardai and has 4 children by her. For the next wife he paid Rs. 12, but after 2 years he divorced her and realised Rs. 60 from the husband she married later. The third wife, Asuji had to be paid Rs. 12, but she too was divorced after a year and fetched Rs. 100. The fourth wife of Madan, Jamni, for whom he paid Rs. 12 has no issue yet. Thus in this family 3 brothers have married 4 wives and have 4 children between them.

Amar Singh with his 4 brothers has married three wives. For the first wife, he paid Rs. 50 as she was a divorced woman. After a year she was again divorced by Amar Singh and the latter received back only Rs. 8. Next he married Jhani and paid Rs. 10 as dowry. She also was divorced after a couple of years and he realized Rs. 8 from her next husband. He then married Rutu who is living with the brothers and for whom he paid Rs. 50. They have a son by the present wife. Amar Singh with his brothers owns 2 acres 1 rod and 26 poles of land,

10 heads of cattle and 36 sheep and pays a fairly high *malgoozari* too. Thus in this family 3 brothers have one son.

Instance like these can be multiplied to show the rate of bride price, the frequency of *reet* which combines in one transaction divorce as well as second marriage, and the number of wives and children per family. It appears from our investigation in Jaunsar-Bawar that usually the number of marriages is no indication of the plurality of wives for seldom has a family more than two wives simultaneously living together with the group of brothers as husbands. The marriages are usually in succession after the death of a wife or after a *chhut*. A *chhut* is usually followed by another marriage. Further, the number of children in a polyandrous society is very low, for 4 to 5 brothers between them possess 3 to 4 children and sometimes less. Another fact which is extremely significant is the number of barren women. A husband waits 2 to 3 years to see if the wife provides any issue. If she fails, she feels that she is not much wanted in the family and thus she seeks a new home. If she is not wanted in the house, if she is lazy or suffers from some sexual disease which is fairly common, or if she is guilty of some grave misdemeanour, such as her unwillingness to cohabit with the eldest husband so long as he remains in the house, she is divorced and the next husband of the woman has not to pay any big sum as dowry for her. But if she wants to leave her husband herself and if she does not suffer from any disease or has already proved her fertility, the husband usually demands an exorbitant price from her fiancé and this amount must be paid by the latter if he wishes to marry her. In such a case the larger the number of *chhuts* a woman goes through, the higher the bride price she fetches, for the bride price must provide for compensation to all the previous husbands and their families.

It is easy to marry a girl of 10 to 12 years and one need pay only a nominal bride price. But a woman who has been divorced thrice or four times fetches a handsome dowry. A woman of 45 in Bangar village with 4 *chhuts* to her credit was married by her fifth husband on payment of Rs. 285 which may sound ridiculous when a girl of 15 or 20 can be married on payment of Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 only. Investigations showed that this woman had given one or two issues to

every family she was affiliated to by marriage and as children are very much desired by the people a woman who has proved her fertility is at a premium. Considering the number of barren women, a woman who gives evidence of her fertility in one family is desired by others so that she chooses to change her husbands whenever opportunities present themselves. Besides, with four to five husbands to cater to, her affections may not be fixed on any, thus her change of family does not produce any great psychological reaction which one would normally expect in a monogamous family. The licence permitted to the girls while they live with their parents, the indulgence they receive from the society, the annual sojourn of married girls to their parents' village during harvesting season and also during festivals uphold this laxity in morals.

In one of our village surveys in Nada, we were met with many requests for medicine to cure barrenness and we made a house-to-house inquiry to determine the extent of this disability. The figures we collected were indeed staggering and I should think that along with any scheme of economic uplift, a health survey should be immediately undertaken to examine the causes of sterility in the women of the area. Some primitive tribes in India allow premarital licence and women are known to take recourse to indigenous medicines to avoid the consequences of irregular unions and the effects of such nostrums have been manifest in the increased incidence of sterility among them. How far such practices are responsible for barrenness among the hill people affords a subject for inquiry. Besides, in the hills, particularly those in the neighbourhood of cantonments, incidence of sexual disease is greater than anywhere in the plains and a medical inquiry in the villages of this region will be of great help in determining the extent of sexual disease.

We have said that polyandry is the common form of marriage among the people of the Himalayan region. It is a fact that all the cultural groups in this region practise it. But it is also a fact that other forms of marriage, too, are practised along with polyandry. In one house there may be three brothers with one wife. In the next house there may be an only son with three wives to himself; in the next three brothers with four wives so that monogamy, polygyny, and

polyandry and even 'group' marriage are all practised side by side.

Economic considerations have been suggested as the cause of polyandrous marriage. Thus whether one man should have one wife or a group of brothers one wife between them is said to be a matter of means and land. Economic conditions engender social habits no doubt, and polyandry may be due to the difficulties of setting up independent establishments particularly in the region under investigation. The Garhwalis do not observe polyandry but the Jaunsaris do. Once I had a talk with a number of Jaunsaris on this subject. I wanted to know why they still practised polyandry while their next door neighbour the Garhwalis did not. The answer was extremely significant. I was told that they did not envy the Garhwalis. "They left their homes due to the disintegration of joint families. At first, land in Garhwal was measured by acres, then by rods, then by poles, then by yards and feet till they all left their village and are today distributed all over the country as domestic servants." The Jaunsaris love their home and do not want to repeat the experience of their neighbours.

That economic conditions shape the forms of marital relationship we may not doubt, but should a society become polyandrous if polyandry is not the customary form of marriage among the people? The custom of hypergamy which makes it obligatory for a family to confine the marriage of girls within certain limits is widespread in India and elsewhere where two or more races of unequal racial or cultural status have mixed together. It leads to the custom of marrying up as opposed to hypogamy or marrying below. It forbids a woman of a particular group to marry a man of a group lower than her own in social standing and compels her to marry in it or above it, while a man can marry in the group or below it. If for example we take a society with three social classes, A, B and C, all hypergamous, we shall find that a man belonging to A can marry in A, B and C. Men of the B class can marry in B as well as C. Men of the C class must confine their marriages to their own class. Girls belonging to B can marry in B as well as in A, while girls of A must marry with A. If the sexes are numerically equal in all the three classes, as

they usually are, the girls belonging to A will have difficulty in getting married while boys in C will have a restricted choice and, therefore, will find difficulty in securing wives. In the A group polygyny may develop due to excess of females; in the C group polyandry is a possible consequence due to scarcity of women. But we find that in practice such a situation has not developed. Instead, in the A class the bridegrooms are at a premium and in the C class brides are at a premium. While in the A class bridegrooms are bought, in the C class purchase of brides is the rule. In one case excess of females may be done away with by female infanticide, in the other, late marriage, widow remarriage and celebacy help to stabilise social life. Thus polyandry may not be a necessary consequence of disparity in the distribution of the sexes.

All of us know how difficult it is for the lower classes and primitive tribes to secure wives as it involves heavy financial commitment for the willing bridegroom, but such castes and tribes have not taken to polyandry. In some tribes if the bride price is not secured, it is customary for the bridegroom to serve the family of the bride for a stipulated period so that he may liquidate the bride price by service and become eligible for marriage. Marriage by capture, concubinage, levirate and homosexual practices may be found along with polyandry so that economic conditions or the custom of hypergamy cannot alone explain the incidence of polyandry as we find in the Himalayan region.

Attempts have also been made to correlate polyandry to a disturbed balance of the sexes. Westermarck could not find any absolute correlation between them. In the cis-Himalayan region as well as in those areas where polyandry is practised there is an excess of males over females, though from the amazonian look of many villages both in the trans-Himalayan and cis-Himalayan regions such disparity cannot be safely predicted. Briffault quotes Sir A Cunningham who observed that in Ladhak females outnumber the males, and A. H. Diack who wrote in *The Gazetteer of the Kangra District* that in Lahul where polyandry is extensively practised, "both the census of 1881 and that of 1891 show that the women outnumber the men in the large proportion of 108 to 100." The fact that hill

girls are imported to the plains for marriage or for prostitution does not mean that there is an excess of females there. At any time during busy agricultural season or after it, men move out of their villages, and a large proportion of women in the village may suggest disparity which may not be real. But as census figures are our only guide in the matter, the hill demography as evidenced from such records does not bear out such statement.

Disparity in Sex Distribution in Jaunsar-Bawar from 1881-1931.

	M	F	Total
1881	25,400	19,717	45,117
1891	28,435	22,262	50,697
1901	28,349	22,752	51,101
1911	30,518	24,294	54,812
1921	31,567	24,056	55,623
1931	31,922	24,853	56,775

India is a land of males, for according to the latest available figures (1941) regarding the distribution of population by sex, India has approximately 201 million males compared with 188 million females. In many European countries the women are in a majority. According to the census of 1901, there were 102,826 males and 75,369 females in the Dehra Dun district and there were 39,611 married women and 56,254 married men during the same period. Figures from other parts of this cultural region too will show a sex disparity. This unequal proportion of the sexes may have some effect on the form of marital relationship in these parts, but then there is an obvious difficulty in accepting this position. An intensive survey of four villages

in Jaunsar-Bawar undertaken by me has given the following data:

Village.	No. of families.	No. of male children.	No. of female children.	Total No. of children.
No. 1	21	37	31	68
No. 2	26	48	21	69
No. 3	15	24	13	37
No. 4	17	34	30	64
Total ..	79	143	95	238

Thus in 79 families investigated there were 143 male and 95 female children, the proportion being 3:2; in another group of villages investigated by my student, Mr. H. Meithal, there were 139 male and 83 famale children, the ratio of male to female children approximately being 7:4.

We have no evidence to prove that female infanticide was freely practised or is practised now in these parts. The demand for labour is so high that it is not possible to believe that female children were put to death. Today in Jaunsar-Bawar we find that many girls after marriage do not proceed to their husband's village because their labour is greatly needed in the household of their parents. How far polyandry is responsible for the excess of male children is a profitable inquiry no doubt, but even if we admit the physiological law which produces an excess of female offsprings in polygamous animals the reverse process may not be true. Granting it to be true in animals, it does not follow that such result is a necessary consequence of polyandrous matings in human beings, for man differs from animals in many particulars. How far dietary conditions are responsible for difference in fecundity and fertility and in the determination of sex of children born is a problem which has received little attention. How far viability of sperm in polyandrous unions affects reproduction has not been found. From local knowledge as well as from the testimony of

the people themselves it appears that the extent of sexual diseases must have some selective effects on reproduction so that female children are more vulnerable than male, and the incidence of male births is necessarily high in this area. In any case it is legitimate to suggest that polyandry may not be the consequence of a disturbed balance of the sexes as it may itself produce a disparity in sex proportion as we have already indicated.

Even if biological and economic factors do not explain the origin of the institution of polyandry, they certainly have maintained the institution. The origin of an institution may be due to a variety of causes, just as in the evolution of the races we do not think monogenesis can explain the diversity of types and races. Monogenic theory fails to explain the origin of complex cultural institutions. The status of the first born in the family is an important factor in the life of most of the people living in the Himalayan region. The system of patriarchal family is consecrated by religion in Tibet and also in cis-Himalayan tracts. The property of the father remains the exclusive property of the first born; he is, however, under the obligation of lodging, clothing and feeding his brothers. When the eldest son of a man marries, the father abdicates his trust and makes it over to the eldest son. Just as the property of the family is owned by the first born but is enjoyed by the other brothers and dependants, the various partners in the joint establishment have a share in the wife of the eldest brother. Such is the principle of Tibetan jurisprudence that even a father or uncle may live with his son's or nephew's wife and share marital rights over her. The marriage of a younger brother with another woman is considered bigamy as it is incompatible with the principles of Tibetan marriage. I have already referred to the status of the first born in Jaunsar-Bawar and similar evidence has been provided by others who have written on the people living in other parts of the Himalayan region.

Marriage has always been a group contract. Where the sanctity of a marriage is not established it is taken as a means of uniting two families or even two clans. If marriage is a group contract, as it essentially is, the marriage of a woman with a group of brothers is not a unique phenomenon. That the various branches of the Aryan race

had practised some such form of marriage can now be readily understood. Briffault in his *Mothers* has provided evidence regarding the wide distribution of polyandry among pre-literate and literate people in 'pre-control' and 'control' days, that is, in both savage and civilized societies. But polyandry has existed side by side with other forms of marriage and thus the existence of polyandry in the society does not represent a survival as the historical anthropologists suggested, or even as a stage in the evolution of marriage.

The marital life of Jaunsar-Bawar, as also of the entire Himalayan region, is characterized by the inordinate freedom of women. It may be that the economic importance of women has determined the attitude of the people to the marital code. Yet the laxity of morals, the double standard of morality recognized by the community, and the freedom with which marriage ties are entered into and annulled, are difficult to explain from a merely economic standpoint. The frequency of divorce and dissolution of marriage commonly known as *reet* has introduced problems extremely tragic in themselves, and an understanding of the implications of the marital life in these parts is necessary before any steps may be taken to remedy the situation. I have already discussed the various possible causes of polyandry in this cultural region and it has been found how difficult it is to pin oneself down to any of the interpretations given above. It appears, however, that the entire Himalayan region, particularly the cis-Himalayan tract, has its own story to tell about the characteristic social life one meets there. For such problems as are found there may be due to contacts between two distinct matrices that still survive in various traits otherwise inexplicable.

Without accepting the theory of unilinear progress of human society it may be said that many of the aboriginal tribes, austroloid or pre-Dravidian, have passed through a matriarchal stage of culture survivals of which are found today in couvade, laxity of morals among women and an economic independence difficult to interpret otherwise. The settlement of a purely patriarchal people like the Indo-Aryans, among a predominantly matriarchal people like the Doms, have certainly led to cultural fusion and acculturation. It is on this assumption that we can explain some of the important

traits-complex in the cis-Himalayan region, as for example, the double standard of morality practised by women. Matriarchal social life is incompatible with rigid rules and taboos fettering the free movement of the women, but patriarchal society cannot function unless the woman is loyal to the family of the husband and thus a conflict arises between duties and rights resulting in a compromise in behaviour patterns as we meet in Jaunsar-Bawar and other parts of the Himalayan region.

The latitude granted to a woman in her parents' house is reminiscent of the matriarchal life, while the circumscribed freedom of the wife in her husband's village indicates the ascendancy of the patriarchal code over the matriarchal. Even today a woman returns periodically to her parents' village and passes her time in the company of her friends and relations on her parents' side. This custom produces an interesting grouping of the village units and is responsible for much of the laxity in morals and peculiar behaviour patterns which characterize the hill community.

The exogamous rule does not allow girls of the same village to marry within the village, though extra-marital sex-relationships are possible and are not noted as serious offence by the local group. The girls of a family or village who may belong to two to three generations (as for example, grandfather's sisters, father's sisters and own sisters) are all known by the classificatory term *dhyanti* and include the prohibited degrees of relationship. The diagramatic arrangement given below will illustrate the nature of social stratification and grouping commonly met with in Jaunsar-Bawar. As the village is usually inhabited by members of the same *got* or clan, marriage must be arranged outside the village. But even if the village contained more than one clan, marriage within the village group may not be desired on account of the latitude in sex life obtained in the village.

$$X \left\{ \begin{matrix} A_1\ A_2\ A_3\ A_4\ ..\ .. \\ b_1\ b_2\ b_3\ b_4\ ..\ .. \end{matrix} \right\} \left\{ \begin{matrix} B_1\ B_2\ B_3\ B_4\ ..\ .. \\ a_1\ a_2\ a_3\ a_4\ ..\ .. \end{matrix} \right\}$$

$$Y \left\{ \begin{matrix} A_1\ A_2\ A_3\ A_4\ ..\ .. \\ a_1\ a_2\ a_3\ a_4\ ..\ .. \end{matrix} \right\} \left\{ \begin{matrix} B_1\ B_2\ B_3\ B_4\ ..\ .. \\ b_1\ b_2\ b_3\ b_4\ ..\ .. \end{matrix} \right\}$$

If we take two villages between which marriages are usually arranged and if we denote the males of one village as A_1 A_2 A_3.... and the females as a_1, a_2, a_3.. and the corresponding units in the other village as B_1 B_2 B_3...., and b_1, b_2, b_3 X would give the normal arrangement of units for an exogamous village, but the second situation, *viz.*, Y, arises on account of the periodical migration of *dhyantis* from their husband's village to that of their parents. This periodical exodus of women in these parts is a compromise trait that owes its inception to the impact of cultures and not to the economic necessity of assisting parents as would be superficially evident.

There are other traits which point to a fusion of cultures already indicated. For example, when a matriarchal society comes in contact with a patriarchal one and a miscegenation takes place between the people of these diverse cultures, property consideration makes it necessary for the children to be affiliated to the parent who owns the property. Thus metronymic designation is found with matrilocal residence and matrilineal inheritance, as otherwise the children would not be cared for by the patriarchal group to which the father may belong. So the children of a woman who leaves her matriarchal moorings and comes to live with a man of the patriarchal society must receive patronymic designation or in default some arrangement must be made by the community to allow them to inherit some part of the property of their father or mother. But a compromise trait may develop, as it has developed in Jaunsar-Bawar and neighbouring hill states, which makes it possible for a Bhat (or Brahmin) or a Rajput, for example, to remain a Bhat or a Rajput even when he marries a Kanet girl. Their children, however, are called Sarteras, though it is possible for the latter to regain the status of the Bhat or Rajput after two to three generations. A Bhat or a Rajput is not allowed to marry a Koli girl or any girl belonging to the artisan castes who are recruited from the Dom element. Should a Bhat or a Rajput girl marry a Kolta or Dom, the children must be affiliated to the caste and receive patronymic designation. Although sex relations are allowed yet strict rules are in force prohibiting any social intercourse. A Brahmin or a Rajput may even be allowed to keep a Kolta woman as his mistress, but he should not be seen smoking or drinking with

her. When a Bhat girl marries a Kanet in the Sirmoor state, she becomes a Kanet; but if a Kanet girl marries a Bhat she may remain a Kanet or become a Bhat.

In the matter of inheritance also we find that the hill code differs materially from that of the orthodox Hindu as it allows a woman to inherit her father's property in the absence of any male issue by the same father. So long she remains unmarried or even after marriage should she reside with her husband in her father's village, she can own and use the property in any way she likes. If she leaves her house and proceeds to live with her husbands, she forfeits her claims to the property which passes on to the collaterals. A widow in Kulu and other areas can inherit the property of her deceased husband, and even keep a partner to live with her in her husband's house though she cannot formally marry any one and also retain her life interest in the property at the same time. Not only in the economic sphere but in the matter of sex the woman is given an inordinate amount of latitude incompatible with the patriarchal code. In Sirmoor and other Punjab hill states where polyandry is the prevailing form of marital relationship, the joint wife sleeps with all the brothers in the same common house or dormitory and complete freedom is allowed to the wife to choose her mate for the night. She naturally makes her choice earlier in the day in consultation with her husbands, but she does not usually bestow her favour in such a way as to arouse suspicion about her intimacy with any particular husband. The joint wife by tradition and upbringing knows her responsibility and meets the wishes of her spouses as best as she can.

Inquiries on this subject have elicited frank answers from the wives and it may be mentioned as a general rule that a wife may sleep with a particular husband every night but must also meet the demands of the other husbands by turns. A number of girls admitted that they were fond of one of the husbands but they did not object to having sex relations with the other husbands if and when they wanted them. When asked why they did not live with the husband they were fond of instead of living as the spouse of the other husbands as well, they did not think it was necessary as the other husbands did not grudge her freedom in this respect. When economic conditions

improve and the head of the family can spend some money over the purchase of another wife she does not object to a second wife and some wives have confessed to us that for years they have been living under monandrous conditions.

The importance of the maternal uncle in a patriarchal society where cross-cousin marriage is not popular furnishes another argument for a matriarchal matrix in these parts. The mother's brother has an important rôle to play in the marriage of his nephew or niece. It is he who finds mates for his sister's children. He arranges the ceremony, manages the function and receives presents from friends and relations. As child marriage is very popular in the hills, the child bride is carried on his shoulder by the maternal uncle and when the couple return to the house, it is usually the maternal uncle who supervises the propitiation of spirits and the worship of benevolent gods and goddesses.

Thus we find that the superimposition of a patriarchal culture on the matriarchal matrix has been responsible for many of the traits characteristic of this cultural region. The feudal system which still survives in this part largely accounts for an elaborate territorial organisation based on a confederacy of *thokdars* or *sayanas,* and also the consequent desire to concentrate power in the senior male member of the family. These have given rise to a rigid code of joint living and co-partnership and may have sanctioned the prevailing type of marital life in these parts.

The kinship terms of the Khasas are more or less descriptive and do not differ much from those in use among the neighbouring Hindu castes. The father is called *bao* or *baba,* mother is *aman* or *man,* father's mother is *nani,* father's father is *nana,* mother's father is *dada,* mother's mother is *dadee.* In other parts the father's father is *dada,* but the Khasas use this term for mother's father. Mother's sister's husband is *mausa* and she is *mausi,* though a man is eligible to marry his *mausi.* The word *mama* refers to maternal uncle as well as the husband's father, showing perhaps the effect of cross-cousin marriage. The maternal aunt is *mami,* which is also the term used to denote husband's mother. The father's sister is *phoophee,* her husband is *phoopha.* Although polyandry should develop some classificatory

terminology, for example, father should mean all the brothers who are joint husbands of the mother, they use *kaka* for father's younger brother and *kaki* for his wife. It was found on inquiry that the brothers who marry one wife between them are addressed as *baba* by the children, but a conventional code exists which qualifies the term by prefixing the occupation habitually performed by the particular father, as already mentioned. The father who looks after the sheep is called *bhedi-baba,* and so on. Brother's wife is *bhabhi,* his son is *bhatija.* Daughter is *betee,* son *beta,* son's son *pota,* his daughter *potee,* daughter's son is *dohta,* her daughter *dohtee.* Although husband's father and husband's mother have the same kinship term as that of the maternal uncle and his wife, the wife's mother is *sasao* and her father is *sauhra.* This may be due to the fact that it is not obligatory for a man to marry his maternal uncle's daughter, as he may marry any girl of his choice, the distinction is necessary and recognised. The daughter's husband is *jawanee.*

In our description of the physical features of the Khasas we had emphasised the fact that the hill people do not represent an undiluted stock and the Doms have received Khasa infiltration. The physical features of the artisan castes, such as the Bajgirs, the Koltas, the Oadhs and others, provide ample proof of this fact. But the hypergamous practice of the Khasas have prevented the Khasa girls from marrying the Doms while the Dom girls married to Khasas did not receive Khasa affiliation. Nor did the Khasa girls marrying Doms or members of the artisan castes retain their castes. So that the intermixture of the two people on the one hand prevented much dilution of the Khasa blood and on the other hand contributed towards a great admixture among the Doms. It is not improbable, however, that polyandry would be hailed as a welcome means of keeping the Khasa blood free from wholesale contamination though Khasa infusion must have contributed to a large scale admixture among the inferior groups. The peculiar economic conditions of the hills and the biological factor of sex disparity where it exists have no doubt largely determined the form and functions of the traits-complex, but had it not been for the matriarchal matrix the polyandry of the cis-Himalayan region would not have assumed the importance it possesses.

A reference to the export of women from the hills to the plains particularly from the Simla states which of late has assumed serious proportions will not be out of place here. Selling beautiful brides at fairly high price in markets, which has occasionally been referred to by earlier observers (Thornton's *Gazetteer of India* 1884 Vol. II, Jubbal State) continues but a regular traffic in women exists in these parts. In a letter to the Superintendent, Simla Hill states, and the D.C., Simla district, Thakur Surat Singh, June 12, 1924, referred to the practice in vogue in this area. He pointed out how rich and unscrupulous people from the plains and elsewhere find these tracts a specially fertile field for enticing girls into wrong paths and having first made them the victims of their own lust later treat them even worse than female slaves. Some traffickers in these girls pass them on like current coin from one hand to another and often through several hands at one and the same time. "Even married women are tempted to leave their husbands and family and as the society usually insists on compensation to the aggrieved husband or his group, money is secured from the new lover to effect a dissolution of marriage."

In one case which came to our notice in the vicinity of Chakrata, a *baniya* advanced some money to a Kolta for marrying a handsome girl with whom the latter was familiar but whom he could not marry for want of the requisite bride price. The Kolta was paid a couple of hundreds for his marriage on the understanding that he would transfer his bride to the *baniya* for further consideration. When the money was paid, the *baniya* was asked by the Kolta to wait at a particular place to receive the woman, his new bride. At midnight the *baniya* was surprised by a sudden assault from behind by the Kolta who stabbed him to death and thus freed himself from the *baniya*'s debt and saved his sweetheart. The case against the Kolta could not be substantiated as public opinion was overwhelmingly in his favour. A crop of similar cases has improved the situation in the Chakrata tehsil, though conditions remain the same in many of the Simla states. The frequent divorce that obtain in these parts, the profit derived by various states from a tax on *reet* which indirectly encourages divorce and official silence against unscrupulous persons, have helped to increase immorality and vice and domestic sanctity has no appeal

to the people today. How profitable the tax on *reet* is to the states will be evident from the fact that in one state, this tax fetched Rs. 3,000 in 1899, about Rs. 40,000 in 1926 and I understand that the income from this source has further increased since then.

Adoption is valid if the child adopted belongs to the caste of the person adopting it. Although there is some social pressure towards adoption of children from one's own family or from the collateral group, in practice little regard is shown to its requirement and no definite rule exists binding the family desiring adoption. But definite social laws exist to validate adoption. When a man adopts a child, he has to give notice to his kinsmen who expect to be treated to a feast and this public feast is needed to legalise the adoption. A propertied man does not remain content with this procedure; he also registers the fact in the tehsil office or with the *patwari* of the area. Adoption may not be ceremonially made and may not be declared before the tribal or village gathering. In some cases, boys are reared in the family who represent the latter to the village in farming, in fairs and social gatherings and are known to the village as such. When the man dies, the village headman and the elders of the family scrutinise the claims of the adopted son and if they are satisfied they recognise him as the legal heir to the property. It is only when a family possesses substantial property that disputes regarding inheritance crop up, otherwise the elders of the village settle the question of inheritance and customary rules decide the issues involved.

In winter, cold is extremely servere on the hill tops and all communications are interrupted on account of snowfalls. For days, weeks and even months, the villages remain cut off from the outside world and all provisions must be secured before winter sets in, so that they may not starve during the period they have to remain within doors. It is during the winter, that feasts and festivals are in abundance, and substantial villagers, *sayanas* and headmen of important families invite the poor people, their tenants and dependents and entertain them on bread, wine and meat, so that they may tide over the period of stress and strain due to their incapacity or indigence.

Nightly dance and music within closed doors, masked entertainments and mimetic dances, dramatic representations of famous incidents from the epics, soothsaying and divination cut short the long nights and light heart and sweet temper make for cordiality which manifest in gaiety and licence, in heart breakings and separation and in unions of hearts.

Anthropometric Data.

TABLE I.

Comparative means for Series of Jaunsar Khasas (Rajputs and Brahmins) and the Koltas and other artisan castes with *Probable Errors*.

Characters	Brahmins (100)	Rajputs (100)	Koltas and others (100)
1. Head Length ..	192·9±·61	193·7±·63	191·6±·40
2. Head Breadth ..	137·6±·35	138·7±·52	139·9±·34
3. Bizygomatic Breadth ..	131·1±·31	132·2±·49	130 6±·30
4. Bigonial distance ..	99·7±·38	99·6±·67	98·3±·35
5. Nasal Length ..	53·4±·28	53·0±·31	51·0±·31
6. Nasal Breadth ..	35·4±·21	35·7±·27	38·0±·31
7. Nasal Height ..	24·2±·12	24·9±·17	22·8±·81
8. Nasion to Crinion ..	55·6±·41	54·8±·53	55·3±·44
9. Total facial length ..	117·7±·44	118·1±·67	113·2±·44
10. Upper facial length ..	64·2±·29	64·4±·41	62·0±·24
11. Orbito Nasal Breadth ..	101·0±·25	102·5± 42	101·5±·27
12. Orbito Nasal Arc ..	116·3±·28	116·8±·54	114·4±·30
13. Stature (Cms.) ..	163·3±·50	162·4±·57	161·1±·43
14. Sitting Height (Cms.) ..	80·0±·31	81·8±·38	80·5±·23
15. Span (Cms.) ..	167·7±·44	168·9±·80	166·4±·34

TABLE II.

Comparative Standard Deviations for Series of Jaunsar Khasas (Rajputs and Brahmins) and the Koltas and other artisan castes with *Probable Errors.*

Characters	Brahmins (100)	Rajputs (100)	Koltas and others (100)
1. Head Length ..	6·4±·43	6·6±·45	4·2±·28
2. Head Breadth ..	3·7±·25	5·4±·37	3·6±·24
3. Bizygomatic Breadth ..	3·2±·22	5·6±·35	3·1±·21
4. Bigonial Distance ..	4·0±·27	7·0±·47	3·7±·25
5. Nasal Length ..	2·9±·20	3·2±·22	3·3±·22
6. Nasal Breadth ..	2·2±·15	2·8±·19	2·4±·16
7. Nasal Height ..	1·3±·08	1 8±·12	1·9±·12
8. Nasion to Crinion ..	4·3±·29	5·6±·37	4·6±·31
9. Total Facial Length ..	4·6±·31	7·0±·47	4·6±·31
10. Upper Facial Length ..	3·0±·20	4·3±·29	2·5±·17
11. Orbito Nasal Length ..	2·6±·17	4·4±·30	2·8±·19
12. Orbito Nasal Arc ..	2·9±·20	5·7±·38	3·1±·21
13. Stature ..	5·2±·35	6·0±·40	4·5±·30
14. Sitting Height ..	3·3±·22	4·0± 27	2·4±·16
15. Span ..	4·6±·31	8·4±·57	3·6±·24

TABLE III.

Significance Ratios for Series of Jaunsar Khasas (Rajputs and Brahmins) and the Koltas and other artisans castes. Comparison of *Means* and the *Probable Errors* (only values above 3 are given).

	Brahmins (A) and Rajputs (B)	Brahmins (A) and Koltas (C)	Rajputs (B) and Koltas (C)
Head Length ..			
Head Breadth ..			
Head Height ..		10	7
Bizygomatic Breadth ..			
Bigonial Breadth ..			
Nasal Length ..		5	4·6
Nasal Breadth ..		7	6
Nasal Height ..	3·3	6	8
Nasion to Crinion ..			
Total Facial Length ..		7	5
Upper Facial Length ..	3·1	5	5
Orbito Nasal Breadth ..			
Orbito Nasal Arc ..		4·7	3·9
Stature ..		3·3	
Sitting Height ..	3·6		
Span ..			

TABLE IV.

Mean Age and Standard Deviation for Groups of Jaunsar Males representing higher and lower castes.

Name of the social group.	Mean Age.	Standard Deviation.
Brahmins	33·2	5·5
Rajputs	35·9	7·5
Koltas and other artisan castes	31·8	5·9

'THAT crime is hereditary no one would seriously believe, but that men are born to crime is known to all. There are over 1,400,000 men, women and children in the United Provinces alone who are tied to crime from birth and by profession. These belong to all religions, particularly Hindus and Muslims.' 'Other provinces and states also provide such criminal population: 'Chhaparbands are Deccanese Muslims' who are manufacturers of counterfeit coins; 'the Baid Mussalmans come from the Rajputana states'; and the 'Mecca Moallems of Dacca district in Bengal are a swindling fraternity professing Islam'. 'The Hindu castes contribute the major proportion of the criminal tribes in northern India. There are no less than 50 tribes who live a life of crime and are under police surveillance as required by the Criminal Tribes Act. These are scattered all over the land and though large sections of these tribes have settled down in permanent homes and have taken to ostensible means of livelihood, there are still others who wander in groups of families in search of livelihood, and where they fail to make by honest means, they take to petty theft and pilfering and even to serious forms of crime with or without violence.'

'The Moghias, Beriyas, Baurias, Sonaris, Haburas, Kanjars, Bhatus, Dosads, Banfars, Bagdis, Mochis, Doms and Pasis and many similar groups wander about with their women, children and chattels from place to place, some earning their livelihood by deceit and theft, others organising gangs which commit more serious crimes like dacoity and robbery, but most pretending to follow occupations which do not encourage suspicion in the minds of their clientele. In recent years, large sections of these tribes have taken to a settled life, both in the provinces and the states, and where they have done so, they are practically indistinguishable from the many agricultural castes in their neighbourhood, such as the Dhakars, Kurmis, the Koiris and the Lodhas. Those of them that lived by serving settled villagers as artisans, musicians, dancers, acrobats, bards or geneologists find it extremely difficult to get on, and willingly or not some of these

have been drawn into the ranks of criminal tribes. The increasing menace of these vagrant tribes to the peaceful villagers, sometimes even to urban centres, have led the authorities to take various steps to settle them on land or to provide some stable occupation for them. Police vigilance has no doubt put much restraint on the criminal tendencies of these tribes, but they have also developed efficient gang organisation to evade the police or fight them whenever necessary, so that very often the vigilance of the police is rendered ineffective or insufficient to cope with their increasing activities.

A former Inspector-General of Prisons, U.P., gave the following estimate of the extent of damage to life and property done by these tribes: in one year (1938), "property worth 30 lakhs was stolen by them in the U.P. There were no less than 34,000 cases of burglary and 3,400 cases of cattle lifting in that year alone committed by members of these tribes." They have also the largest representation in the prison population of the province. 40,000 members of these tribes are Registered Criminals in the U.P.; 11,000 in the Punjab and 13,000 in Bombay. 21 p.c. of the inmates of the Benares State Jail are reported to have come from the criminal tribes in 1938.

The wandering or vagrant tribes are not a homogeneous lot; ethnically they are mixed groups. They possess physical traits characteristic of the important racial stocks in varied proportions. At one end of the racial scale they resemble the australoid Sonthals and Mundas, as for example the eastern Doms of the United Provinces some of whom settled in the Gorakhpur area; while at the other end they are found to possess tall stature, fair complexion, long head, fine or acquiline nose even grey or hazel eyes are noticeable. The Nats represent a variety of types, their women are usually more handsome than men, and this has encouraged them to use them for immoral purposes and many live on the unchastity of their girls. Baheliyas are a brave lot and usually supply the beat *shikaris* who track down game and arrange shooting parties. The unanimous testimony of hunters, European and Indian, stamps the Baheliya as a fine athletic, bold, plucky and sociable tribe.

From anthropometric measurements it appears that the various criminal tribes do not belong to the same race but certain

tribes can be affiliated to one racial type, others to a second, and inter-group differences are often large. The Doms of the eastern districts possess the highest average stature, *viz.*, 166.53 cms., the Haburas come next with 164.91 and the Bhatus 163.13. All the criminal tribes are long-headed; the mean cephalic index of the Habura is 73.71, Dom 73.79 and the Bhatu 74.83. There is a progressive broadening of the head from the eastern to the western districts of the U.P. among the vagrant and criminal sections of the tribal population showing perhaps assimilation of a brachycephalic element. The australoid admixture of the Doms, often so apparent to field investigators, is seen in the shape and form of the nose. The mean nasal index of the Bhatu is 68.47, that of the Habura 71.21, while that of the Dom is 75.70. Individuals with flat nose, very dark complexion and short stature are frequently met with among the Doms, but their general features have undergone great change due perhaps to free mixing they have had through centuries of contacts with higher racial groups. While fine or even aquiline nose is found in plenty among the Bhatus and the Sansiyas, the Doms do not show such incidence; on the other hand the general feature of the Doms affiliate them more to the Munda, Sonthal and cognate tribes of Chota-Nagpur and adjacent areas than to the Kanjars, Karwals, Sansiyas and Bhatus. The latter tribes are more or less of the same ethnic type but have mixed in varying proportions with others. Crooke was right when he wrote, "There can be little doubt that the Kanjars are a branch of the great nomadic race which includes the Sansiya, Habura, Beriya, Bhatu and more distant kindred such as the Nat, Banjara, Baheliya, etc." But his suggestion of Dravidian origin of the aggregate of vagrant tribes is based on insufficient evidence. The Bhatus and the Sansiyas, the Karwals and the Haburas, even the Bijori Kanjars, now distributed in Gwalior, Tonk, Bundi and Kotah States, do not show Dravidian features if we use the word in the sense Risley has done.

In blood groups, however, the various criminal tribes or sections of them do not show much significant differences. There is a preponderance of B and AB among the criminal tribes which may be due to hybridisation or to a high rate of B mutation. Similar

high B incidence is found among the Muslims of Bengal. The Bhatus show 27.4 p.c. O; 24.7 A; 39.8 B; and 7.8 p.c. AB. The Karwals have 25.8 p.c. O; 22.6 p.c. A; 40.6 p.c. B; and 10.9 p.c. AB; the Doms have 32.8 p.c. O; 22.8 p.c. A; 39.4 p.c. B; and 5.0 AB. A high B incidence is noticeable among large sections of people in India and this has encouraged some workers to trace the source of B mutation in India. We have pointed out elsewhere that most of the tribes and castes in India who possess a high B incidence are known to be mixed groups and we may therefore provisionally conclude that the criminal tribes are highly heterogeneous and possess non-aboriginal blood groups. The criminal Doms, however, have a high O percentage and small A.

All vagrant tribes are not disreputable, for there are many like the Bansphor or Basor who work on bamboo, make baskets, mats, and similar articles and act as scavengers. They live honestly and are not regarded with suspicion by the people whom they serve. The Chirimar or fowler, the nearest kin of the Baheliya, is a welcome visitor in the village market or in towns, who catches birds by trapping or shooting and sells the game to people. The Nats wander about with their bag and baggage from village to village, carrying them on the backs of oxen or donkeys. Where they camp, they go out in batches either as acrobats or dancers, as indigenous dentists or suppliers of rare nostrums for chronic maladies or for restoring the lost manhood of the village folk. Their wares consist of roots and herbs which they display in the fashion of expert window dressers and they engage touts to explain to the villagers the efficacy of their pharmacopœia. They also sell talisman for luck and some of them are expert in extracting worms from carious teeth which they do by touching the affected gums with some kind of dried root. Magic and witchcraft come handy with some, and protective charms against evil spirits are distributed generously to the people which helps to establish confidence in them. Live snakes are also kept by them and the venom from them is skilfully extracted in the presence of admiring crowds by administering soft touches with the magic wand or root possessed by them. They afford plenty of amusement to the village or town where they stop, but when they leave the village not

a few of the families curse them for what their stay has meant to them.

The Kanjars are an interesting vagrant tribe and their encampments are found all over northern India. In earlier days they practised *jajmani,* as they say, and for entertaining the villages they passed through they used to receive voluntary annual but liberal contributions for their services. The Kanjars had their jurisdiction distributed among their families, and each family had a few villages on which they levied periodical charge. They were so popular as dancers and musicians that the villagers used to make gifts of cattle and money. They also served the Gujars, the Minas and other castes as bards or genealogists and memorised the pedigrees of the families and their achievements which they annually recited before them to deserve the voluntary gifts. Today these occupations do not pay, for the people have lost their interest in their pedigrees or they are more interested in their material possessions so that the Kanjars have to eke out their subsistence in other ways. There is some similarity between the Kanjars and Gujars for the latter's dress is worn by the Kanjars. Women among other castes put on *lehanga* (skirt), but like the Kanjar women, the Muslim women in these parts, put on *kurta* and a pair of trousers. This, however, gives them a distinction. The Kanjars have an extremely varied dietary. Their usual food consists of millets, fruits and roots which they glean from the forests and birds which they skilfully bag. But they are known to eat the flesh of all animals and even toads, reptiles and carrion do not come amiss to them. They know how to cure the meat of snakes, lizards and vultures and even if they do not eat them, they extract the fat or oil from these which they sell to people or use themselves. Ordinarily they do not admit that they take meat usually tabooed to the Hindus, but they seldom will let slip any such prospect. They are fond of drinks and would not complete any feast without emptying a bottle if they can afford it.

The occupations of the Kanjars which do not bring them against the provisions of the Indian Penal Code are not many. They are traditional beggars and even if begging is not required, a Kanjar woman will take her bowl and visit the families in the

neighbourhood of their temporary encampment! This gives her chance of exchanging a few words with the housewives so that she may induce them to part with their money by giving medicines to cure barrenness or any malady in the family. All this is cleverly managed and before the news reaches the ears of the head of the family, the encampment disappears and nothing is heard of them for months or more. Music and dancing are the ostensible means of livelihood for the Kanjars. Their songs are mostly of amorous nature with a passionate appeal.

The Kanjars confine their marriages within the tribe. There are a number of clans among them with exogamous subsepts. The names of the clans are derived from totems or from trades or from famous forbears. Besides the rule of clan exogamy, they also recognise the usual prohibited degrees. These restrictions, however, are not absolute for when they want they can and do marry within the same exogamous clan or sept. Marriage is performed always after puberty and girls seldom marry before they are 18 or 20. There is considerable laxity in morals among the Kanjars but chastity after marriage is prescribed and observed and the tribal *panchayat* views with alarm any case of lapse in this respect.

The bride price is usually high among the Kanjars and is paid in two instalments, once before marriage and once after the woman has given proof of her fertility. Betrothal is usually followed by marriage and if it is for any reason postponed, the father of the bridegroom has to make occasional presents to the bride's family so that his interest in the settlement may not be questioned by the members of the bride's clan. Although arranged marriages are customary, marriage by elopement is not rare, and when the couple return after some time, the tribal or clan *panchayat* insist on a formal feast which admits the couple to the clan of the husband.

Marriage is a communal undertaking among the Kanjars. The *Patel* or headman of the group puts on the *tilak* on the forehead of the bridegroom after which the latter is taken to the mother-in-law who receives him with presents. He is then seated on a horse and taken from house to house and every family has to pay a certain present, either a silver coin or a piece of cloth, and each family is

represented by at least one person in the procession. The amount thus collected is spent on feasts in which meat and wine figure prominently. There are various methods by which a wife may be admitted into the clan of the husband. Today the entry of the bride into the clan of the bridegroom is not sealed by human blood, but the blood of the sacrificed animal replaces human blood and the common partaking of liquor mixed with this blood effects the ceremonial union of the couple. Among the Kanjars, identification of the bride with the clan of the bridegroom is also made by eating a piece of roasted meat, usually a goat's heart or liver. The bridegroom bites a slice off his piece and asks the bride to do the same to the other half. The latter may not do so vouluntarily and the bridegroom puts the slice between his teeth and tries to put the other end into the bride's mouth. This leads to a trial of strength and provides plenty of fun and entertainment to the crowd who watch them do it.

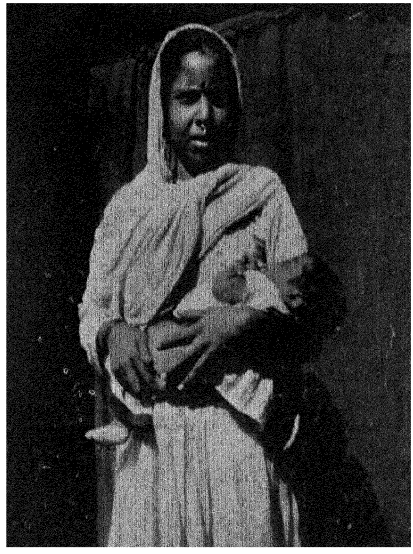
The *phera* or the binding part of the marriage ceremony is completed after the couple have circumambulated the marriage pole seven times. This has to be done with caution as the bride according to custom, may also give a sudden push or pull to the bridegroom so that the latter may lose his foothold and slip down to the amusement of the crowd.[1] If she succeeds, it is believed that the wife would get the better of the husband and it is a fact that the Kanjar husband has a reputation of being extremely docile and even henpecked. Remarriage of a widow is allowed, and if the widow does not marry the younger brother of the deceased husband he or his family receives a heavy compensation from the next husband of the widow. The settled Kanjars do not allow frequent divorce as the wife is expected to be faithful to the husband and loyal to his family. A Kanjar woman does not ordinarily offend against the marital code of the tribe. But adultery is regarded as a serious social lapse and the woman as well as her partner in the misdemeanour have to answer to the *panchayat* who may award heavy compensation to the aggrieved husband. Failure to comply with the decision of the *panchayat* entitles the husband to lay hand on any movable property of the other man and even his son or daughter by usage may be transferred to the aggrieved husband as compensation.

There is a strong *panchayat* among the Kanjars and its powers are unlimited. Any offence against the tribe or the nomadic group is severely punished and there are interesting methods of ascertaining guilt. An unchaste woman has to prove her innocence by putting a piece of hot iron on her palm covered with seven leaves and with this she has to move seven steps forward. If she burns her palm, she is declared guilty. Side by side with the Hindu deities, they worship the village godling and mother earth. These are known as *Almundi* and *Asapala* and they offer sacrifices of goat, pig and fowls whenever they think that their distress is due to the wrath of these godlings.

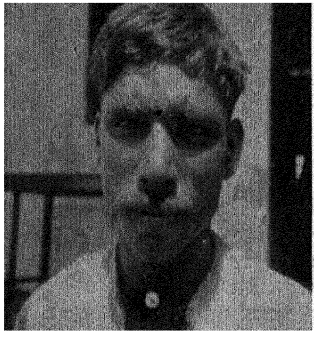
The Doms are scattered all over India. The U.P. Doms are divided into two branches, one settled the other vagrant. Those who live in the cities or in their vicinity belong to the former section, while the nomadic Doms infest the eastern districts of the U.P. and Bihar. "The Nomadic Dom", writes Sir William Crooke (*Tribes and Castes of the N.W. Provinces*), "is a shameless vagrant, an eater of the leaving and carrion, a beggar, a thief". The nomadic Dom has not shown his skill in any work. He roams in the jungle but has not learnt the ways of the fowler or the bird catcher. He is an indifferent fisherman, and an ill-equipped hunter. He, therefore, has accustomed himself to a diet which does not require much effort to secure—carrion, vermin, leavings of other tribes—and not improperly is he compared to a washerman's donkey for which he has naturally developed an aversion. In recent years some of the nomadic Doms have settled down as scavengers or as workers in bamboo or *chik* and when they have been brought in contact with civilisation they have adopted occupations to which they have never been used to. The Gorakhpur settlement where they have been confined for purposes of reclamation find them even good cultivators but like most of the criminal tribes they believe in little work and quick return, so that agriculture as a permanent means of livelihood has little appeal for them. All criminal tribes share in this attitude and they would rather work for less and get the reward immediately than wait a week or a month and receive more. The sugar crop must not remain for long in the field, and if they are not allowed to harvest it before the crop is fully mature they would

Habura women from Cawnpore

A Karwal youngman from the Aryanagar criminal Tribes' settlement, Lucknow.



A Bhatu couple with children. The youngman is a technician in the Cawnpore Woollen Mills and his wife also works there. They are residents of the Cawnpore C. T. settlement.



A group of Dom woman from the C. T. settlement Gorakhpur. Their complexion is fair and features handsome.

stealthily cut the canes and sell them for cash, so that by the time the harvesting of the crops starts their fields no longer contain anything of value.

In India the raising of social status is a means to an end and every social group, tribe or caste has a mythical descent and a traditional past. Each tribe or caste memorises its pedigree and even the totemic tribes claim fictitious parentage. Totems are transformed into eponyms to mark social ascent and the tortoise totem finds its ancestor in the mythical saint Kashyap (though it is a variant of *kacchap* or tortoise) and the snake clan claims descent from Nagaraj, the king of snakes. The Doms, however despised and detested they may be and even if they are the lowest of all the social groups as Crooke calls them ("the true survival of the loathsome Chandala)," many have an ancestry which their tradition has carefully preserved and which today forms the basis of their claim to a higher social status. The Punjab tradition claims for them a Brahmin parentage while another popular tradition traces them from Raja Ben or Vena and one of their sub-clans is still known as Ben Bansi.

Regarding their racial origins, opinions are far from unanimous. Sir H. M. Elliot considers the Doms to be "one of the original tribes of India." Risley traces them to the aboriginal stock. Dr. Caldwell (*Grammar of the Dravidian Languages,* 546, quoted by Risley in *Tribes and Castes of Bengal,* 240) thinks that they are the surviving representatives of an older, ruder, and blacker race who preceded the Dravidians in India. Some describe the Doms as "a small and dark people with long tresses of unkempt hair and the peculiar glassy eye of the non-Aryan autochthon" (*Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces* Vol. I, 401). Sherring describes the Doms as dark complexioned, low of stature, somewhat repulsive in appearance, and readily distinguished from all the better castes of Hindus. Risley, however, recognises the appreciable varieties of the Dom physical type and traces them to their being widely diffused all over. Dr. Wise could not find much similarity between the eastern Doms and the Munda-speaking tribes of Chota-Nagpur plateau, but he could neither affiliate them to the Aryan stock. "The fact", writes Risley, "that for

centuries they have been condemned to the most menial duties and have served as the helots of the entire village community, would of itself be sufficient to break down whatever tribal spirit they may once have possessed and to obliterate all structural traces of their true origin." The nature of the Dom's work either as scavenger or as a 'provider' of light for the funeral pyres at the burning ghat brings them in daily contact with people of other castes, and the lure of immediate rewards has appealed to the women of the tribe, so that immorality as a profession of the women has had significant influence in shaping the physical features of their descendants. Thus the Dom today is a hybrid group. The hill Doms have mixed with the Khasas and other Indo-Aryan tribes which still live in the recesses of the hills and forests of the Himalayan region, while the Doms of the plains have assimilated features which belong to many of the strains that have contributed to the raciology of the plains.

I do not think there exists any blood group data for the Doms, either from criminal tribes in settlements or from outside. Of the many groups tested by Malone and Lahiri, the Doms were not mentioned as one. The results are expected to throw some light on the racial affiliation of the tribe, of course compared along with other anthropometric characters. The table below shows the percentage of blood groups in the samples examined :

		O	A	B	AB
Doms of Gorakhpur (no. 180)	.. ..	59	41	71	9
	Percentages ..	32·8	22·8	39·4	5·0
Hill Doms, Dehra Dun	,, ..				
Kalsi and Jaunsar Bawar (no. 125).	,, ..	36·0	20·0	33·8	10·2

A comparison of the hill Dom data with those of the criminal Doms of Gorakhpur shows some apparently significant difference. The hill Doms possess higher O than the criminal Doms, though the women among the latter show a slightly higher O concentration, 37 p.c. against 36 p.c. of the former. Both the criminal Doms male

and female groups show a high percentage of B, the males 38.3 p.c., females, 40.7 p.c., but the corresponding B among the hill Doms is only 33.8 p.c. This high B among the criminal tribes may indicate 'inbreeding condition' or a rapid rate or frequency of B mutation or mixture with a people of high B concentration. As with the Bhatus and the Karwals, two other crminal tribes we have examined, the criminal Doms show a high B concentration, which distinguishes them particularly from the hill Doms and also from the normal population in the neighbourhood.

Another wandering tribe is the Satia who claims Rajput descent and is organised into clans which are commonly found among the Rajputs. They are Hindus and live by keeping and selling bullocks and oxen. The women put on *saris* similar to those worn by the low agricultural castes and tribes and are therefore not much different from the latter. They move about from place to place with their cart houses, pack animals and cattle. They buy young oxen, castrate them and when they grow up, they sell them at a high price. Their occupation has been responsible for their social degradation and they are considered by orthodox Hindus as little better than the Bhangis although they themselves would claim the Marwaris as their kinsmen.

The Satias are extremely fond of wine and meat and they are often prepared to risk their property and mortgage their wives and daughters to obtain these amenities. When a husband contracts a debt from a clansman and if the debt is not repaid within a certain stipulated period, the Satia will offer his wife to the creditor who would sexually possess her so long as the debt remains unpaid. If a child is born during the usufructuary period, it is not claimed by the actual husband and is left with the man who substituted the husband and sexually possessed the woman. Cases occur when all the young female relations of a Satia have one after another been similarly pawned or mortgaged, but when he can free himself from the obligations the women return to him and there is no social stigma attaching to their temporary transfer. The Satia, says the proverb, thinks twice before he dies. It is customary for him to spend lavishly on funeral ceremonies and when he loses his grandmother

by death, he loses his wife in the bargain, for that is the usual way to raise money he has to spend on the ceremony.

Meat and liquor are equally popular with them. Excessive liquor has destroyed many a Satia home and has increased their miseries, yet the lessons of temperance are as far as ever from their minds. They simply booze themselves on any intoxicating stuff they may secure, and when ceremonies and festivals are far away, they get up saturnalias or even celebrate the incompetence of their colleagues by making them pay for their failure to respond to the demands of their trade, namely, theft and brigandage. Such importunity is often manifest in the absurd extent to which the Satia would go to enforce a contract he may have forced on others by guile or false presentation. He does not stop at peaceful methods and would even take the law into his own hand and demand his 'pound of flesh'. Once a Satia had bargained with a Koiri for the purchase of the latters's bullock, but the Koiri ultimately refused to honour the contract and sought the aid of his caste fellows who saved him from his importunate customer. The Satia did not forget this insult though apparently he seemed to bow to this misfortune. Two years later the Koiri met the Satia who embraced him and pleaded friendship. Both were going the same way and met accidentally in the evening; both decided to rest for the night at a place and the Koiri was asked to prepare food for both, the Satia serving him in the capacity of a servant. When the food was served, the Satia refused to take it before the former had finished his meal as a mark of respect he had for his friend. While the Koiri was taking his food he smelled filth, and looked into the pot containing the *dal* and immediately started disgorging what he had taken. When he could look round he found his friend had already left him. The Satia had taken his revenge, though not in good taste.

Once a Satia was telling me of the curse that rests on their tribe from the very early times. Originally they were not a nomadic tribe; they lived in settlements and built even substantial houses. An ancestor of the tribe offended the tribal god *Data Sahib* by polluting the offering meant for him and the latter threw the curse on the entire tribe, saying that they would henceforward never live

under permanent structures and if they did the house was sure to be destroyed by divine wrath, by fire or storm. The dread of superstition has narrowed their outlook on life and where individuality raises its head, the rigid *panchayat* system puts it down with a strong hand.

The *Patel* who presides over the *panchayat* is a strong man whose word is law and whose control extends to all aspects of the tribal life. Fines are the usual method of retribution and feasts the tribal sanction among the Satias. Women have an unusually low status and they are often subject to great hardship, often to their masters' brutality. They are sold like cattle and transferred like chattels, yet such is their adaptability that a married woman may change hands several times during her life but when restored to the husband at the expiry of the period of mortgage, she seldom fails in her obligations to her permanent partner. She appeals while in distress to the *peepul* tree which is prayed to and propitiated, and in all oaths and promises the *peepul* tree must be referred to either as witness or as a divine retributor and also as tribal mentor for those who know the unspoken language of the tree, the clash of its branches and the rustling of the leaves. Libations of liquor are offered to the *peepul* tree in times of distress and mounds of earth and small stones are put under it as votive offerings.

Various sections of the Bauria tribe are scattered all over northern India. They are found in Rajputana, the jungles of Firozpur and Sirsa in the Punjab, in Delhi, in the western districts of the U.P., and they may be traced as far as Bengal. Originally they claim to have been descended from the Rajputs, from Chanda and Jora, and remember the good old days when they were in the service of the Rajas of Chitor as musketeers. Their features no doubt bear them out as Rajputs though they appear to have seen evil days and have mixed with some 'foul feeding' tribes which has stamped them as an amalgam of races.

The Baurias allow great liberty to their women and permit even strangers to their embrace. Widows are remarried and divorce is freely permitted. They recruit women by kidnapping small girls whom they lure by food and cheap presents. Occasionally they would visit distant villages, get familiar with low caste people, interest

themselves in their social life and would advise them in their misfortune. Some would dress as *Sadhu* or paint themselves as devoted *Vaishnava gossain,* and even establish themselves as *guru* or spiritual preceptors of the low caste people ultimately tempting them to join them as tribesmen. The Baurias in western U.P. are often seen to spend money in educating their children and a working knowledge of Sanskrit is greatly appreciated by them in their children. Women of other caste who are maltreated by their husbands and are divorced find ready welcome to their families and add to the strength of the tribe. The free life their women are allowed to live, the sexual liberty they possess and above all the authority they wield in domestic life, all go to make the new entrants to the tribe, faithful to the tribal code. Often they make efficient decoys and informers and help the tribe in its criminal activities. Women among the Baurias are deliberately prostituted for income or for information equipping them with knowledge about the material status of their prospective victims.

The Bauria men wander about in the garb of *Sadhus* ostensibly for religious mendicancy, but in fact with criminal intent and are responsible for big dacoities with or without violence. The Baurias have an efficient criminal organisation. They communicate with each other by signs and symbols and there is perfect understanding between men and women about the methods of committing crime, disposal of stolen property, arrangement for litigation, etc. They usually rob substantial people as they detest depriving poor peoples and those who make an honest living by manual labour of their hard earned income. Their *panchavat* organisation is highly efficient and controls the affairs of the tribe with commendable skill. They arrange with villagers by promising shares of the booty before they move into the village. They sometimes pose as members of high castes and arrange to marry their daughters to well-to-do people whom afterwards they plunder in collusion with them. They have a curious logic about crime. If they want to enter a house for theft they would throw three stones one after another to see if the inmates are awake. They argue that if the householder has earned money by honest efforts and hard labour, he must keep awake, but if he has

inherited the money or earned it by dishonest means, he will not do so and will not wake up on hearing the sound of the stones thrown at his house. It is the latter class of people the Baurias are anxious to rob, for that helps in the proper distribution of wealth, as they say.[1]

'Political and social divisions have often coalesced to produce endogamous sections among the nomadic and vagrant tribes. Sometimes a number of gangs have fused into one big tribe or a section of it or the same gang has formed various endogamous groups by a process of fission.' The Bhatus claim the Geedhias, Kanjars, Kahrkut, Karwals and Kanphattas as sections of their own tribe, who now form endogamous groups in different provinces. The Sansiyas name their sections after gang leaders who are of both sexes. The nomadic tribes moved in hordes from place to place each under a powerful leader who ruled his camp with iron discipline and also gave the name to the group or horde. In course of time each horde developed into an endogamous group. When several leaders moved out with their followers in different directions, the endogamy of the original gang was difficult to maintain, so that sections of the original gang became exogamous to one another maintaining a sort of tribal endogamy, though not of the closed type.

'The power behind the solidarity of the criminal gangs is the efficient *panchayat* system which often is a central organisation for the whole tribe and which controls the social as well as the political activities of the members of the tribe. It is not only an organisation for maintaining discipline and watch over recalcitrant members, but it has positive functions to fulfil such as organising crime, recruiting members, apportioning duties and maintaining individual families and groups whose members suffer injuries in action or are killed in such enterprise.'

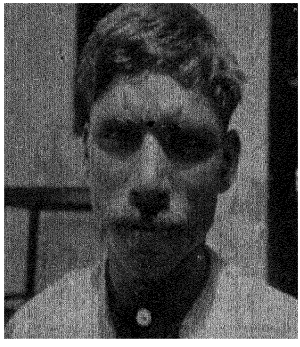
'The *panchayat* system is not peculiar to any racial type, neither is it the monopoly of the Indo-Aryan races. The growth of this system can be traced to primitive conditions where a tribal society contented itself by conforming to established ways the violation of which was believed to bring down its vengeance on the offender. Where taboos have not lost their significance and their inner strength

is recognised, there is an automatic response to customary observances for the consciousness of the power of the taboo proves a sufficiently strong corrective.' When the tribal code, its positive and negative controls, lose their supernatural sanctions, as they must with the development of personality and individuality in the people, it is left to the society to uphold the cause of the violated taboo by social prescriptions and a code of conduct deliberately designed.

The Indo-Aryan villages in the U.P., Bihar and Bengal are broken up into main and minor sub-divisions. Each of these sub-divisions often represents a distinctive craft or occupation. In the *panchayat* of the village as a whole each of the diverse functional interest is represented and the grouping "no longer remains on the tribal basis of kinship, clan and adoption, but becomes a distinctive polity based on community of social and economic interests." In villages inhabited by a number of social groups or castes there is generally one representative for each caste, occupation or guild. In villages where the clean and unclean castes live together, there are usually two distinct *panchayats,* one for the clean castes and one for the unclean castes. The composition of the latter is usually different from that of the former. In the latter case very often all the elderly members of the caste sit in judgment and there is no election or selection of representatives to the *panchayat.* It must be recognised that the duties of the *panchayat* are not everywhere the same, the nature and variety of offences have a relation to the economic status of the social group concerned. But usually everything of common interest is settled by the *panchayat* and discussions, formal and informal, shape public opinion, if any.

'The *panchayat* of each caste or tribe has its own problems to deal with, for example the offences that the Kahar *panchayat* of the Kheri district have to decide are theft in the master's house, adultery, keeping a concubine of another caste, enticing away a married woman, eating, drinking or smoking with member of a 'forbidden caste', refusing to marry after the betrothal ceremony has been gone through, refusing to support a wife or to go through the *gauna* after marriage. The Chamars have a highly efficient *panchayat* organisation. Extra-marital intimacy, concubinage, adultery,

A Dom woman with child, from Gorakhpur.



A Karwal criminal now in the criminal Tribes' settlement, Lucknow.

A scene inside a criminal Tribes' settlement.

An Old Bhatu with his family consisting of four generations now living in Cawnpore settlement.

adoption of new occupations, removal of carcass or carrrion, of horse dung, are some of the important "dont's" that it has to settle and arbitrate.

The importance of the *panchayat* and the sanction of its decisions is derived from the fact that the illiterate masses for which the system ordinarily caters believe that gods reside in the *panchayat* and the parties to a dispute are seen to address the *panchayat* as 'God' or representatives of God on earth. Punishments imposed by the *panchayat* also differ from caste to caste. But wherever the castes or tribes have come into intimate social contacts with higher castes, the forms of punishments have undergone change. Feeding of the caste people has been replaced by feeding of Brahmins and oaths of indigenous character have been replaced or supplemented by those current among the higher castes. Priests have prescribed religious atonement in some cases, and serious offences have been condoned by the *panchayat* on complying with such prescription.

Adultery among the Nats is met by a fine of Rs. 50 or more. Among the Pasis, the woman concerned is tied to a tree and her parents fined Rs. 100 or more. A Bhangi abducted a married woman and was found guilty by the *panchayat*. His face was painted black and he was paraded on the streets. A man is often taken to task for the misbehaviour of his wife or when he cannot control his wife. A Kanjar had illicit relations with a married woman of another caste. The *panchayat* of the village fined the Kanjar and ordered the husband of the woman to feed five Brahmins. A Bhatu in spite of his repeated warning to his wife could not check her clandestine relations with the village *Chowkidar*. So he called a *panchayat* and explained his difficulties. The *panchayat* excommunicated his wife and found the Bhatu technically guilty for not informing the *panchayat* earlier, at least not until some members of the village had come to know the scandalous affairs of the family. This was considered as lowering the reputation of the caste, so the man was fined but not heavily. A Bauri killed a cow; he was asked by the *panchayat* to go on a pilgrimage and beg alms enough to feed ten Brahmins.

The *panchayat* usually deals with cases of breach of the marital code, violation of the commensal rules and also disputes between

members about property, land or miscellaneous rights and obligations. Eating, drinking or smoking with members of forbidden caste, keeping a woman of another caste as a concubine, adultery with a married woman, fornication within or outside the caste, breach of promise involving breaking off settled marriages, refusal to send a daughter to her husband's house or to maintain a wife, killing tabooed animals, *e.g.*, cow, cat and monkey, these are some of the cases that the *panchayat* has to decide. In some cases, it is also necessary to retry cases decided by courts of justice, of course at the request of the parties to the dispute. Violation of commensal rules is punished by ostracism if it is consciously done, otherwise by a fine which is fixed in accordance with the financial status of the offender; poor people get over their social lapses by offering a coconut to the tribal deities. A man is not allowed to keep a concubine belonging to an inferior caste, but if she happens to belong to the same caste or to a higher one, the man does not suffer great indignity. He is no doubt outcasted, but is reinstated as soon as he can provide for a tribal feast. A poor man has to appear before the *panchayat* with his shoes on his head as among the Baurias, but he has also to provide for a feast, which may be subscribed by his sympathisers.

Adultery is always met with fine; when it is within the caste, the offender is outcasted and the woman refused social protection. In some tribes, as among the Kanjars, an adulterer is seldom admitted to the clan. The usual fine ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150, sometimes even more, as among the Bhatus of Moradabad. Cases of fornication within the tribe must be reported to the *panchayat* and the girl is not allowed to marry by the usual code. Either she has to live with the man with whom she had intercourse as his concubine or she has to pay a penalty to the *panchayat* who will secure a husband for her. Fine and ostracism are the two weapons with which the *panchayat* is equipped and a judicious handling of both has secured prestige to this indigenous system. Public opinion is reflected in the attitude of the *panchayat* and the latter also helps to create public opinion by persuasion and propaganda.

There are various methods of preventing crime. One is the policy of retribution which is not recognised in modern society; "an

eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" would involve the society into chaos. The idea of restitution meets our social needs in this respect, and the *panchayat* sometimes take recourse to it. A third policy is that of reform in which penalties depend not on the nature of crime, but on the nature of the criminal. In the functioning of the *panchayat* system, both the policies, *viz.*, of reform and deterrence, find adequate recognition and the effective supervision of the *panchayat* has considerably reduced the incidence of crime. Although no institutional care is provided for certain types of criminals who need it, environmental influences have succeeded in transforming criminals into good citizens. Public opinion is ever the fundamental force that shapes individual idiosyncrasies and a strong *panchayat* can deal with local crime more effectively than distant law courts.[1]

The main purpose of the *panchayat* system as among tribes, so also in villages, is to regulate activities of members who are considered to bring about social chaos and disregard of the interests of the group concerned. The *panchayat* remains a corrective oganisation so long as individuality or personality of members remain at a low level. Disintegration therefore is bound to occur with advancing time due to the growth of personality among the people, but even today *panchayats* have an important rôle to fulfil which may grow in importance along with the increased political consciousness of the masses. The *panchayat* will remain an organisation to bring order and uniformity of conduct so long as it is not used for political purposes by the administration, for it has been seen in tribal areas that wherever political and administrative power is given to the tribal councils and the latter made responsible to the administration concerned, the weakness of the councils as an instrument of social welfare has become patent.

The criminal tribes possess a kind of central organisation known locally as the *panchayat* whose functions as we have already pointed out, are more inclusive than those of its sister organisations in Indian villages. The *Sirpanch*, the *Mukhia* or the *Patel* has a distinct status in the criminal tribes because he is not only the spokesman and leader of the *panchayat* organisation, but he is also the leader of gangs. While public opinion is the main support of the village

panchayat, the leader of the *panchayat* in criminal tribes has his gang to support him and his influence is sometimes greatly exaggerated by his followers. The activities of the *panchayat* include supervision of the main occupation of the tribe which is theft and dacoity, dissemination of useful information to the members engaged in crime, receiving stolen property through women generally who are trained for the purpose thus providing compensation to families deprived of earning members who are killed in action or arrested and imprisoned for crime, and training of men and women, particularly young girls in crime and criminality.

The Bhatu *panchayat* keeps a record of the members of the tribe and deputes active ones on particular missions to rob and steal, to commit dacoities, and when accidents happen it makes consequential arrangements according to the needs and requirements of the families rendered destitute. My informant, Kallant of Moradabad, himself a frequent inmate of jails, admitted that his family was properly looked after during his absence and that his was not a special case. The disposal of the booty is also the concern of the *panchayat* which distributes the sale proceeds according to plan; the commissions are fixed and are appropriated by the parties without any heart burning, as they say. It is not always that all thefts and robberies are commissioned by the *panchayat*; the latter would keep a record of those which they finance and the obligations of the *panchayat* are clearly understood by those who engage in crime. Even when a man is arrested for crime and cannot see to the disposal of the booty cleared by his comrades, the *panchayat* apportions his rightful share and gives it to his wife or dependants. All expenses of litigations are shared by the members of gangs who contribute to a permanent fund worked by the *panchayat* and if the fund cannot stand the drain on it, as happens very often, the gang has to fill its coffers by fresh expeditions in crime.

The *panchayat* has its "Gestapo", a very efficient espionage system manned usually by women. Wives often are seen to keep watch over their husbands and have to suffer indignities. When their husbands confess to crimes or turn approvers, information is supplied to the men engaged in crime through their wives, who

wander about in the garb of poor women beggars who are not suspected by the police.

Training of boys and girls in crime is carefully planned and imparted through concrete channels. The boys and girls are taken by their mothers to shops and markets and are asked to watch them steel and pilfer. When the boys begin their experiments, the mother is always present in the neighbourhood and immediately any of them is caught in the act, the mother rushes to the scene and begins to beat the boy mercilessly which excites the sympathy of the crowd and softens the heart of the person, the victim of theft. The boy is taken home and is instructed in the art by more experienced hands. When a leader of a gang is in danger of being arrested or the whole gang is traced by the police, the usual subterfuge for the tribe is to make a few people turn approvers who implicate young persons or juveniles, so that even if they are found guilty and sentenced by the court, the punishment would be less severe in consideration of their tender age. Should any of the members of a gang turn approver on his own account, the gang would arrange for the maximum punishment and members are commissioned even to kill him if necessary.

Ordinarily a young man is not welcome as a bridegroom unless he has proved his skill in the profession of thieving and crime, and a certificate of proficiency, though always verbal, must be secured by the young man desirous of marriage in the tribe. Two reasons are said to have prompted this customary behaviour; the reluctance of parents to part with their daughters who may not live with them and the weakening of tribal strength by transference of daughters others who would not care to live their life. There is usually at shortage of women in criminal tribes and this is perhaps a solid excuse for such practice.

In our investigations among the Doms and Kanjars we found a few families extremely destitute and living on charity. Such poverty was incompatible with the physical resources of the family as there were able bodied men and women who could ceainly earn their living by labour or by following their traditional profession. But on inquiry we learnt how the families have been branded for

treachery and incompetence and some of the families have been stigmatised for the sins of their great-grand-father or ancestors of seventh remove even.

Well-to-do householder is insured against burglary and theft, but the burglars and thieves also need to insure themselves against emergency. Risks to their life and families are greater than those involved even in modern warfare, and as such it is the duty of the 'criminal' *panchayat* to provide for such emergency. Every tribe has its scheme of crime insurance, and the provisions are carefully applied to secure families against incapacity and destitution.

The Sansiyas provide for injury or death in action, *i.e.*, in the act of robbery or theft, as follows: If the person who meets with death is the only earning member of his family, the wife and children would receive Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month till the eldest son is able to take to his father's profession. If the man injures his skull, so that he cannot carry on his normal routine life, the *panchayat* has to pay him Rs. 200. If the ear is damaged or cut off, Rs. 30 must be paid to the man; for an eye the compensation provided is Rs. 60 ; for the incisor Rs. 10 each; for a leg Rs. 100 to Rs. 150; a finger would bring in Rs. 5 or less according to the importance of the finger, *e.g.*, a thumb is considered more important and as such fetches Rs. 5. If the nose is chopped off the man gets Rs. 50; impotency due to damage to testicles or the paring of the male organ entitles the man to receive Rs. 250 to Rs. 300. If a member of the gang is responsible for such offence, he has to pay the above amount as fine to the *panchayat* who compensate the injured person. If all the chest ribs are broken in action Rs. 450 are paid to the person concerned, but as it is likely that the man would die from the injury another Rs. 50 is paid to his heir over and above the amount already provided for. A child left by a woman undergoing a term of imprisonment is cared for by the gang. If it dies the mother on her return is entitled to Rs. 60. A pregnant woman, if hurt in action and the child in the womb succumbs to the injury, is compensated according to a schedule the amount of compensation increasing with the age of the foetus so that it is proportional to the danger to life of the woman carrying it.

The Bhatus pay Rs. 60 to the mother if she loses her child in action at 9 months or later, Rs. 40 if she loses it in the 5th month; miscarriage in earlier stages entitles her to Rs. 10 to Rs. 30. The Karwals provide heavier compensation for the loss of children, if they happen to succumb to injury after surviving an attack of small-pox.

From the schedule of provision given above, which varies in details and amount from tribe to tribe, even from gang to gang, it appears that the compensation fund at the disposal of the gang or its leader must be sufficiently large. There is no doubt a fund to meet the costs of this insurance scheme, but it is usually met from the booty captured by the gang from time to time to which individuals eligible to receive compensation have contributed. A certain percentage of the booty is reserved as quota to its fund, and when money is required, the gang undertakes fresh adventures.

Old hands among the criminal tribes, who are not actively participating in the tribal profession now, have stated on oath how they distributed the booty gained in their professional enterprises. Before the gang sets out for any expedition, the tribal deities are propitiated and at least 5 p.c. of the amount they bring in is earmarked for *puja*.' The Brahmin who officiates in this *puja* receives 1 to 2 p.c.; the lower castes, such as Doms, Dosadh, the Dhobi and the scavenger receive about 2 p.c.; the police gets about 5 p.c.—how they do not disclose—and the village *zemindar* I was told is paid in cash and kind for assistance if rendered to them as mediators between them and the police or as sleeping partners to such enterprises. About 10 p.c. is kept by the *panchayat* for incidental expenses and as contributions to the tribal fund. The remaining amount is shared by the members of the gang who actively participate in the act. Even dogs are not forgotten. The dogs owned by gangs, their donkeys and mules, even fowls and pigeons, are 'functional' in the sense that they fulfil important rôles in crime politics. Dogs are particularly trained to sense the police or intelligence staff in civil dress and sometimes they are known to carry information from gang to gang.

A careful account of the various criminal tribes, their methods of training and recruitment, their solidarity and skill, their strength and weakness, their tribal *panchayat* and how it controls their activities will be welcome not only to the criminologist but also to the layman and a monograph detailing all this information is under compilation by the author.[1]

TRIBAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL VIGILANCE

TRIBAL social economy depends on a number of factors. A tribe must adapt itself to the area it inhabits. It must develop a relation of interdependence with the fauna and flora of the habitat. Its success depends on its ability to live enjoying robust health, acquiring strength, in evolving an adjustment to the forces of environment so that its leisure born of security may provide scope for progress. Such is the result of regional adaptation. A tribe must be able to develop an organisation of its entire group mind and group behaviour through which efforts of individuals may be properly channelled and their maximum success assured. The pattern of organisation whether it should be hierarchical or democratic is not very important. It is the efficiency with which it regulates individual behaviour, that determines the quality of tribal economy, and survival of the tribe.

Urgent needs of adjustment may compel a tribe to choose a wrong plan of conduct which proves deleterious in the long run. The Korwas have hit on a famine code. It is largely built on their selection of roots and berries some of which neither contain sufficient nutritive value nor provide the necessary amount of calories for a vigorous life in its wild setting. The poisonous roots and herbs which they cure for food may have an adverse effect on their reproductive system. They may account for their chronic illness, diarrhœa and stomatities and other nutritional maladjustments. The Gonds of the Central Provinces, the Oraons of Chota-Nagpur have the institution of youth-house which regulates sex life of the village and keeps an efficient control over the morals of the village youth. The Muria youth-house called *Gotul* even restricts the movement of girls within the village and effectively taboo inter-tribal intrigues thus ensuring tribal endogamy. Lessons in tribal etiquette and discipline, are inculcated through the *Gotul.* Its traditional organisation with a hierarchy of officers and an obligatory code of conduct have preserved tribal integrity when disorganisation consequent upon contacts have threatened the life and morals of the tribe.

The annual festivals and ceremonial rituals in most of the tribes depend on the spontaneous response of the people to what tradition prescribes. For, even when they know today that they can violate the established usages and customary rites with impunity, the requirements of tribal solidarity and ordered existence demand their willing compliance with approved patterns of behaviour. The head-hunting of the Nagas and the elaborate rites of ministration to the souls of the deceased chiefs among the Kukis do not merely add thrill to the occasions but also have great survival value. For much of their economic success is believed to depend on the efficacy of these rites and the manner and mode of rendition of spells and prayers connected with them. The *Yatra* of the Oraons in Chota-Nagpur which brings together the various totemic clans of the tribe for common participation in ceremonial worship and thanksgiving to the host of spirits and nature powers where each totem clan intoxicated with the spirit of tribal manhood runs with ornamented standards to represent the group in the comity of the tribe, is a wonderful example of group organization and tribal competence. The dances and feats of skill that distinguish particular clans on such occasion while they raise the prestige and add to the vanity of the group also provide examples to others who are encouraged to emulate their colleagues, thus developing a 'race for race building', a struggle to forge ahead of others in tribal esteem and effectiveness.

Every tribe has its marital code and its conception of quality, competence or incompetence. An effective group organisation upholds the values of tribal life, propagates ideas about the sanctity of marital life and obligations, secures the status of children born within or outside wedlock and even prescribes the limits of marital freedom and sexual morality. Occasionally a disparity in the proportion of the sexes, or economic distress may cause tribal disorganisation. New forms of selection of mate may be adopted in conformity with the changed situation. But so long as the group organisation remains strong and effective, sex and marriage are regulated in the traditional and socially approved manner. Tribal life is also regulated by a system of taboos and code of conduct

whose sanctity may be derived from the inherent strength of the tabooed object or person, or from gods and spirits whose responses are expressed in frowns and favours.

When the equipments of man for the struggle of life were meagre, inefficient and rudely designed his success depended on the co-operation and sympathy of his fellowmen, and naturally the group exercised tremendous influence on his life and activities. His taboos were those which protected the group, aided it in times of crisis and prevented him from activities likely to disturb group adjustments. As his horizon widened and social needs multiplied no longer the taboos were sufficient to protect his interests and violation of taboos was only a necessary sequel to his successful adaptation. The taboos which were automatically observed in primitive societies had to be reinforced by social prescriptions upheld by the fiat of the tribal authority vested in the *panchayat*. Social progress, therefore, produces a complicated system of morality and conduct whose sanction is derived first from the taboos, then from the gods who are invoked to enforce obedience to traditional code of conduct, customs and prohibitions, and lastly from the tribal group who directs individual behaviour in the interests of tribal solidarity and concord. Among most of the tribes today, taboos have lost their inherent power for good or evil; even the fear of divine retribution is not enough to prompt compliance. It now rests with the tribal elders to enforce traditional obligations. While public life may not be regulated by taboos, gods and group mores but by the authority of the tribal society, private life still moves round group sentiments and collective living linking personal and social morality.

A general routine of life has therefore been forced on the tribal society by the various factors outlined above. All these constitute one single life pattern. An acquaintance with tribal life, its comforts and discomforts, customs and practices makes it difficult to view it piecemeal, for these are sure to lose their meaning and significance dissociated from their social contexts. For example, to interfere with any of the important features of tribal culture is to compel the tribe, individually and collectively to begin

anew, to create another culture scheme in the setting of men and things that may be entirely strange and apparently chaotic. Unless the tribal society readjusts itself, adapts itself to changed conditions in one or more of the several ways: (1) by gradual substitution, as for example, by religious conversion in the case of the Sonthal and the Munda of Chota-Nagpur, who were faced with wholesale exploitation and expropriation of their rights to land by the alien landlords, (2) by a process of acculturation, by slowly absorbing culture traits from their neighours, (3) by injecting into their culture customs and institutions, new dress and newer luxuries or new mode of life, the new situation brought about by contacts with civilisation, for example, is likely to interpose into the general scheme of primitive life and routine producing a slow but sure deterioration. Again a tribe may develop a sort of cultural 'nomadism' which disintegrates traditional beliefs and practices and substitutes opportunism for stability, expediency for social values.

In some tribes, particularly in parts of Chota-Nagpur female labour is abundant and men often remain at home and send their womenfolk to work for the family, and are not ashamed of living on the income of their wives. The free and unfettered life of the women has encouraged the latter to seek employment of various kinds and girls that have some schooling in Mission schools are being recruited for clerical jobs, while the majority of the available women work for wages in the town or in military construction and supply. In one district, for example, which is today the headquarters of the Eastern Command large number of troops of the allied armies are now kept for training and movements. Arid treeless plains and deep forest thicknesses with meandering streams which harboured countless tribes, today are being littered with tents and encampments which are humming with life. The primitive tribes who nestled in comfort in these parts have now come in contact with men and machines and are being forced to come out of their seclusion. Villages in the neighbourhood of army encampments are supplying labour to the latter and the economic transition in the tribal area cannot be measured merely in terms of the amount of money daily distributed among the tribal labour.

The village dormitory (youth-house) so long provided a centre of tribal schooling; the captain of the dormitory was an influential person who looked after the morals of the boys and the elderly duenna incharge of the maidens' hut superintended the girls. The compulsory affiliation of all the tribal girls and boys to the village dormitory indirectly put a stop to clandestine intrigues with people of alien castes and creed and tribal endogamy was considered a sacred obligation by the tribal youth.

The need for labour under new conditions has disintegrated many of the indigenous institutions in tribal culture and the dormitory and the tribal elders no longer prove effective to control the movements of the tribal youth. "Woe to the army" declared an old patriarch of a village, "our girls are gone, they do not return home at night and boys pine for them without hope." "What do you need father", said a young maiden in my presence "I shall fetch you cloth and sweets, but please do not be peevish". Mothers wait for their daughters' return, but days and nights pass, no news of them is heard. One day, the lorry stops, a giggle is heard, they get down assisted by their employers or their men and they enter home with presents, sweets, money and trinkets which silence criticism.

The Korwas, I have described above, have been cut off from their natural sources of food supply and recreation. They are surrounded on all sides by a stratified society whose influence has permeated every aspect of tribal life and culture. If they are to survive, they need a specific adjustment to each stratum of the hierarchy. The old taboos are meaningless to them; they fail to protect their life and property, 'their songs and laughter'; they fail to prevent their exploitation by others. At the same time they have no power to augment their produce, increase their progeny, aid them in their struggle for existence. Even dances have fallen into disuse; they are no longer required to aid the hunter and cause multiplication of game in the forests. As they come in contact with more and more of the groups their adjustment narrows down, opportunities diminish and new taboos are introduced to hedge them from all sides. They lose their faith in tried and traditional

customs and practices. They fail to adopt those of their new neighbours. They are divorced from their old ways of life; they struggle with new adjustments which they fail to secure, and thus they find themselves alien to both, the old and the new setting of life. Loss of ambition has therefore set in indicating a social neurosis; there is a loss of fertility as well reflected in high incidence of sterility and dysgenic reproduction. Anxiety symptoms are manifest resulting in a new accent on forces of evil, in witchcraft and sorcery, in maleficent spirits and avenging godheads.

In contrast to the Korwas, the Tharus afford an adaptive culture. The dominant position of woman has done much to effect an adjustment with the changed environment in which the Tharus find themselves. This dominance may be a survival of a matriarchal matrix of culture, or it may have resulted from a superiority complex which the Tharu traditions uphold, probably the former, as we have found no scientific basis for Rajput origin of Tharu women. Whatever be the cause of the peculiar status of women in Tharu society, the inferior role of men, their subservience to women, the ownership of property by women, all have contributed to suppress the scope of male initiative. While the anxiety of the women to maintain their hold on society, the rights which they have been enjoying and freedom they have learnt to value have encouraged women to design and practise witchcraft, an art which is believed to have reached sufficient status in skill and technique.

The Tharu women are dreaded for their magic and the neighbouring castes and communities avoid them as far as they possibly can. Their hold on their own menfolk which has become proverbial in the Tharu country has produced a sort of uneasiness among women of other castes and jealously the latter guard their husbands from contacts with the Tharu women. The magic of the Tharu women has, therefore, shielded them from their neighbours, while their menfolk have become domesticated and subservient both aiding the adjustment of the Tharus to their habitat. Alien traits have no doubt permeated the Tharu society through contacts but the shyness of the alien people in their dealings with the Tharus has effectively reduced the intensity of their impact

on Tharu culture, and changes that have slowly and gradually infiltrated into Tharu culture, have been consciously adopted through the initiative of women. While the Korwas have been forced by contacts into isolation, the Tharus have forced isolation on others. The magic of the Cheros and other tribes has produced a mortal dread among the Korwas, the magic of the Tharus has raised horror in the minds of their neighbours who shun their contacts though economic obligations and need for reciprocity bring them very much together.

The Khasas are a conservative people who have developed an elaborate social organisation on a feudal basis with the *thokdar* or the *sadar sayana* as the chief of a number of villages each of which is presided over by a lesser chief usually called the *sayana*. The Khasas are immigrants into their present domicile and appear to have superimposed their culture on a tribal matrix and as among the Oraons of the Chota-Nagpur plateau, who are immigrants into the Munda country in comparatively recent times and have therefore left the duty of propitiating the village spirits and clan deities to the Mundas, in every Khasa village there is a tribal functionary belonging to a low caste who assists the village headman and assumes the rôle of leader in the absence of the latter. He is known as *pari* and is recognised by the administration though the latter has no voice in his appointment. His remuneration consists of *dadwar* voluntarily contributed by the villagers. Whatever antecedents the Khasas may claim today their occupation of the cis-Himalayan region was not effected without violence, plunder and loot. The *thokdars*, for example, were leaders of hordes, who wielded great influence over the people and the ease and suddenness with which they could combine, proved to be a menace to the administration and various concessions had to be agreed from time to time by the latter to keep them peaceful and law-abiding. In Rawain, the confederacy of *thokdars* once decided to leave the state as a protest against the state's interference with their rights, and persuasion and concession were necessary to keep them back from wholesale migration into the neighbouring British district.

While the *thokdars* ruled over their people, they had to

organise defence against barbarous hordes consisting of Sikhs, Pathans and others who invaded their security from time to time and their anxiety to protect their property and possessions is manifest even in their indegenous domestic architecture. For example, every house has one big entrance, a door made of a single plank curved out of the trunk of a big pine or Deodar tree, with an iron chain to which is fastened a big lock providing security to the inmates. The houses are constructed in two or more storeys, like vertical columns with no projections or balcony except in the top-most storey where the balcony was perhaps used for spying from a distance. The whole house was secured by a single entrance which once shut from within was difficult to break open, the balcony providing storage for stones and sticks which could be thrown at the invaders without much risk to the inmates.

The necessity of organised defence, maintained the social hierarchy among the Khasas and in course of time the *thokdars* secured to themselves, a number of privileges which were by custom conceded by the people. Every family that owed allegiance to the *thokdar* was represented by the seniormost male member whose influence was greatly exaggerated though his power was derivatively acquired. Even the partition of property was uneconomic; the eldest brother who is necessarily the head of the joint family, was by custom allowed a lion's share in the ancestral property. The younger members were placed under complete control of the head of the family and as they owed no independent source of income they were even debarred from marrying on their own account. The custom of fraternal polyandry obviated such need as the elder brother's wife was also the joint wife of all the brothers. Even today when a younger brother wants to marry and settle down independently of the joint family, the eldest brother goes through the ceremony of marriage and the younger brother merely catches the little finger of the former when he circumambulates the marriage pole. While economic conditions force joint living in these parts, the excessive cold climate of the hills encourages lavish use of liquor and feasts, festivities, drum and drink develop cordiality and maintain the solidarity of Khasa life.

The feudal structure of the Khasa society, the hardship of life experienced in the inhospitable mountains or in the ravinous valleys, the scarcity of women and the instability of domestic life engendered by the laxity of the marital code, all have produced a fatalistic trend of mind among the Khasas so that superstitious beliefs about life and the environment they live in, find ready reception among them. While the magic of the Tharu women have contributed to the adaptation of the Tharus, the magic of other tribes have forced the Korwas into seclusion, the superstitious beliefs and traditional rites and rituals have protected the Khasas from disintegration and thus in spite of cultural changes in the neighbourhood the Khasas have clung to their polyandry and to their marital code and have maintained their feudal rights and obligations.

The Khasa culture has not been greatly influenced by contacts. Inaccessibility and remoteness of their country have controlled immigration. The demand for joint labour within the village and the marital code of the Khasas have effectively stiffled the desire for adventure and emigration. A Khasa woman must be looked after by a group of brothers who own her as their common wife While there is no exclusive marital right of any brother over the common wife, the latter owns the rights to demand that her sexual needs should be catered to as long as she remains in her husband's house. It is inconceivable for a Khasa wife to live apart from her husband in the latter's village and any suggestion to do so meets with loud protest. Travellers in the Khasa country will vouchsafe how the women sympathise with their wives left behind. Once we put the question to them, what were they going to do, if they need be left behind. The answer was equally straight, they would certainly sleep with men of their choice. 'Marriage among the Khasas has its obligations', interpolated an elderly wife in the Sajjar village in Jaunsar Bawar, 'and food, clothing, shelter and ornaments do not exhaust them'. The husbands must fulfil their obligation of mating which requires, as they will tell you, their constant presence in the house. This is why a polyandrous family of three or four brothers find it possible to move out by arrangement. Another fact that strikes a visitor to the Khasa country is the freedom

with which sex is discussed in public; father, brothers and sons freely take part in amorous gossip in presence of others. Mothers intervene in sex disputes between their son and his wife and the father is often heard to give tips to son in matters which could never form the subject matter of discussion between them in our society. There appears to be complete lack of sex repression and men and women find opportunity to release their tension in sex life as often as it is necessary. Although customary marital code prescribes the limits of sexual practice within the fraternal tie, the eldest brother enjoying some sort of monopoly over the wife so long as he is in the house, the other brothers do get their share of sexual experience conveniently scheduled by the obliging wife or wives, while extra marital licence corrects any maladjustment in sex life.

There is hardly any family in Jaunsar Bawar that maintains any privacy in sex matters. Children, as soon as they learn to see things and understand them, can tell you all that happens between their parents, a situation perhaps unique in the marital code of any cultured people. This lack of repression perhaps accounts for their proverbial gay disposition and even the frowns of nature or her niggardliness have not been able to 'rob them of their laughter'. But clouds do arise, they precipitate or are blown away, the Khasas live in dread of mysterious forces of the evil, have developed an elaborate code of rites and rituals, of prayers and propitiation and a legion of superstitions all meant to secure their precarious food supply, their hard life of toil, and their joint family. Such is the pattern of Khasa life as we see today, and as we may see in decades to come, for new customs, and practices do not take easy root, nor are they anxious to learn and emulate others, however significant their traits of culture may appear to them.

The patterns of tribal culture we have described above reveal the interlacing of beliefs and customs in tribal society. The contents of culture can be grouped into spheres of social life. The dominance of one sphere, may determine the attitude of a group to its life and its mores, though the various spheres together constitute the scheme of life and a harmony and balance between them are particularly essential for survival. The ethos of a culture may

be overweighed by religion, of another by overemphasis on the economic life, of a third by a fatalistic trend of thought and consequent apathy and indifference to life. Mere economic opportunities and their exploitation have not secured the stability of a culture. The Munda speaking tribes of the Ranchi district and the Oraons are financially much better off today; the cheap money they are earning in consequence of war economics has enabled them to spend more and to add to their comforts. Yet the disintegration of their culture has reached alarming proportions; even the family solidarity is in jeopardy. The entire cultural outlook has been passing through a transition, their values are changing and new problems are being created which will help or hinder their race for survival. Under ordinary circumstances even where there are contacts between two or more cultures, the configuration of each does not change much. It is more or less abiding or stable. But when the impacts are violent between a dominant culture and a decadent one the latter may be largely reactivated by new needs and emotional appeals. The decadent culture can hardly stem the advance of ideas, and can only secure survival by surrendering their values and even identifying completely with the dominant culture. Such identification, however, is taking place in some areas in India and the effect on their patterns of life and living requires to be assessed before a final verdict is pronounced.

Beliefs and customs constitute the major elements of a culture. These may be grouped as cortical and subcortical. The difference between one set of beliefs and another from the tribal point of view, rests on the quality of vividness or the degree of illumination received by them from the society possessing those beliefs and customs. Some beliefs are dominant, they are manifest in live customs and rites, others are not seriously regarded so they languish and the customs which spring from such beliefs also lose in intensity and in vividness. It is possible to describe these as cortical and subcortical beliefs and customs on the evidence of dominance or decadence of such beliefs and customary behaviour. The cortical beliefs are associated with cortical or conscious customs, the subcortical ones lower the guidance-giving value of

customs and practices till the latter gradually disappear from the society. So long as beliefs and customs remain cortical and dominant they colour and shape the attitude of the society to customary conduct, morality and law. Less dominant, consequently less vivid beliefs and rites may become associated with them till the whole may grow into a complex culture pattern. The first sign of disintegration of beliefs and customs is a detachment of functions of the less vivid ones, the gradual dropping off of those of them which have accreted to the original cortical beliefs and customs. Beliefs and customs exist and persist because they are parts of the apparatus by which a society maintains itself, its existence order and spontaneity.

The Koltas in Jaunsar Bawar are the traditional hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are bought and sold and are the agricultural serfs of the cis-Himalayan region. Mere racial difference cannot explain the hard lot of the Koltas, as it does not in other parts of the country. The Koltas are mortgaged for life for debts they owe to zemindars; these grow in volume, added to and passed on to generation after generation, till the octopus of indebtedness kills every semblance of liberty or free life. But can the Kolta repudiate his obligations? Can he deny, his *Mahajan,* his master and free himself. Does he leave his master, whose bondman he is by transferring himself to other centres where he can even earn better wages? The answer is NO. He dares not risk it, for does he not see every year how their gods, the sun and the moon, are hounded by their creditors, resulting in partial or total eclipses? These gods borrowed money from the Doms, and repudiated the debts; they have been cursed with leprosy, for the spots on their face are marks of this foul disease and every year the Doms hound them. The pious householder has to expiate for the sins of their gods by offering alms to the Brahmins. Such beliefs about eclipse are universal among all tribal people. How they originated may be difficult to trace today but their functions are socially significant. Debts are never disowned for fear of consequences people would abhor. Even the thought of repudiation is enough to depress a Kolta, he need not even be told that the gods are

displeased, even if he hears from his master, his creditor, the size of his debt he tries to liquidate it by service but usually ends in transferring the whole of it and more to his descendant and heir. In his case the beliefs about the consequences of repudiation are cortical, vivid and constantly illuminated before him.

Such, however, is not the case with the Rajput or the Brahmin, their masters whom the Koltas live for. Cases of repudiation are frequently decided by visiting the temple of *Mahasu*, at Hanol, for example, where the creditor accuses the debtor who is obliged to place the money before the God to be taken by the creditor in presence of the God, so that if there is any foul play, the person will suffer consequences as the God would direct, leprosy and death usually, incapacity and destitution if the offence is not of a grievous nature. Even gods are not enough to secure compliance with the customary obligations, such disputes today are dragged to the courts of law and the decisions of distant courts are eagerly awaited by both the debtor and the creditor, for luck, resourcefulness and ignorance are unknown factors which influence decisions in the palaces of justice. As in the case of taboo, at first powerful enough to avenge itself, gradually losing its innate force, has to be reinforced by divine sanction, by the power of gods and spirits, lastly upheld by social prescription of ostracism, the beliefs about the sanctity of obligations are first maintained by their vividness, their illumination. Gradually the development of personality and growth of knowledge diffuse the intensity of beliefs, and their sanction is derived from supernatural powers, gods and spirits, and oaths and ordeals reinforce obligations socially approved. When these fail to elicit compliance with customary conduct, social prescription or legal enactment assumes responsibility for conformity to traditional pattern of life and all that it stands for.

At every level of cultural development some sort of social security has been worked out by people. The precarious life of the hunter has been secured by customs and taboos, preventive, productive or protective so that the hunter might not be at the mercy of his game. The evolution of agriculture has secured better and more efficient control over food supply, releasing people from

constant tension of feelings occasioned by food shortage or the prospect of starvation. Security was found in the magical devices to produce rain, to augment the yield from the fields and the mimic dances depicting the processes of agriculture and in the various fertility rites practised by the tribal people even today.

The agricultural practices of primitive people everywhere are a pattern of magic, religion and economics deftly interknit which has secured the social life of the hunter-cum-agriculturists, the shifting agriculturists and even of the superior farmer who uses complex tools and implements. Success in agriculture depends not only on the proper distribution of the means of production, on the harmonious relations subsisting between the agriculturist and the nature powers, spirits and gods believed to preside over its different stages, but on innumerable beliefs and customs, positive and negative which circumscribe the activities of the farmer yet secure his crops and increases their yield. These beliefs and rites are cortical or subcortical as they are associated with the various stages connected with the sowing, growth, harvesting and distribution of the products. The importance of every phase of agriculture is expressed in the degree of sanctity attached to the beliefs and practices associated with it. The head hunting of the Nagas, the *yatra* of the Oraons, the *Maghe* festival of the Hos and the *Bedwart* of the Khasas are important magico-religious institutions which are meant to secure tribal society against scarcity of game, diminution of forest products and failure of crops.

The magical practices that were associated with Khond agriculture culminated in the human sacrifice which has now become obsolete due to contacts. The Khond beliefs about the efficacy of human sacrifice was so strong that they have not yet recovered from the effects of 'loss of nerves' resulting from its discontinuance. So long as the magical rites were considered potent enough to secure them and their food supply against unforeseen calamities, diseases, pests and even excessive precipitation, the confidence of the Khonds on their methods and techniques was not shaken. Even today when the Mundas want rains they ascend the top of hills and throw down stones of all sizes and descriptions so that the

rumbling of the stones falling would resemble the rumbling of thunder and they would expect rains to follow; or else they would burn leaves and faggots continuously for days and nights till the smoke darkens the sky producing rains as they pour from the clouds. The Khonds offered human sacrifice tied to a wooden elephant and they would chant hymns and sing songs in presence of an admiring and receptive crowd. At a signal from the priest the crowd in a delirious fury would rush at the poor victim, tear flesh from his body, and dance in ecstasy with the spoil which possesses the power of fertilising their fields or securing their food supply against supernatural calamities. As the tears roll down the cheeks of the man so would rains come, as the blood gushes forth from the wounds so also vegetation would sprout, and rains and vegetation both were abundant in consequence. The vividness with which human sacrifice and all beliefs connected with it were viewed by the Khonds could only have one lesson for them and that was the sanctity attached to the human sacrifice as an aid to their struggles for survival. The human sacrifice or head hunting could not be properly set down with other kinds of murder, as it was a form of self-abnegation, just 'as the sacrifice of a child in the Ganges could not be taken as murder for they are essentially desperate phenomena.'

Sir Henry Head suggests (*Aphasia*) that the higher centres of the nervous system exercise a control over the lower centres in such a way that any injury to the former will result in a lack of precision of functions controlled by the latter. Thus if a higher arc of the spinal cord be injured the movements of the legs and toes become less precise so that the goal aimed at cannot be reached. This type of control of the higher centres over the lower ones is called by Head as vigilance. Vigilance is a general biological function; consciousness according to Head, stands in the same relation to vigilance as the complex purposive reflexes to those of the low level ones. He suggests psychical and somatic vigilance for the terms, 'conscious' and 'unconscious'. The more differentiated an act the higher the degree of vigilance needed and the more easily can it be abolished by toxic influences and other conditions unfavourable to physiological activity. Vigilance is lowered and the specific mental aptitudes

die out as an electric lamp is extinguished when the voltage falls below the necessary level. The centres involved in the automatic processes which form an essential part of the conscious act, may continue to live on a lower vital level as under the influence of chloroform.

There is thus a hierarchy of vigilance scheme in the nervous system. The mind, as Head puts it, exercises the same kind of vigilance over the cortical centres as the higher centres do over the lower ones. This principle can be applied in all cases of individual behaviour. When attention is wavering, movements become indefinite. The vigilance scheme that can be called attentional, has ceased to control the lower functions. The same thing is true of memory. When memory fails the piano player's movements become indefinite and less precise. This principle can also be applied on a social scale.

Social behaviour is controlled by certain schemata of ideas and theories with respect to the economic pursuits, marital be-

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Head says, "When the spinal cord is divided or so grossly injured in man that conduction is distroyed, the lower extremities lie flaccid and atomic on the bed in any position into which they may be placed. The urine is retained, the patient has no power of evacuating the bowels, and at first the skin is dry. All deep reflexes are abolished, and scratching the sole of the foot may either produce no movement of the toes, or one that is feeble downwards.

Should the injury be acute and the patient young and otherwise healthy, particularly if he remains free from crystals, bed-sores or fever, the deep reflexes reappear as the period of spinal shock passes away. First the ankle-jerk, and then the knee-jerk can be obtained, gradually the planter reflex begins to assume a form characterised by an upward movement of the great toe. The field from which it can be evoked enlarges and finaliy, in successful cases the spinal cord becomes so excitable that stimulation anywhere below the level of the lesion may be followed by a characteristic upward movement of the toes. But this now forms a small portion only of the reaction to superficial excitation, ankle, knee and hip

haviour, 'food quest' or dress. To take an example, when the ideas and feelings, æsthetic, religious or merely habitual, break-down through an impact of other notions, the dress of the people appear to be a strange medley. There may be a tie and a hat, without the other garments matching with them. People may eat bacon without the poached egg. A primitive religion may be practised in a Christian Church. Thus in peoples among whom traditional ideas hold sway, the conduct appears to be not consistent with one another, but also possessing certain barbarous beauty of its own. Mixture of cultures breaks down the vigilance scheme which we may conveniently call social vigilance, and make behaviour less precise, less coherent and less useful.

Social vigilance in this sense is the result of a long practice of set habits, beliefs and sentiments that guide the normal life of a tribe or social group. Such coalescence occurs by a process of

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are flexed and the foot is withdrawn from the stimulus applied to the sole. Not infrequently the abdominal wall is thrown into contraction and every flexor muscle below the lesion may participate in an energetic spasmodic movement. Stimulation of a small area on the foot has evoked a widespread response from the whole extent of the spinal cord below the lesion (Riddoch, G. 119).

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These observations on man are in complete agreement with the animal experiments of Sherrington (Sherrington, C. S.) and his pupils. Suppose, for instance, that the spinal cord of a cat has been transected in the region of the medula oblongata; twenty minutes later prick the hind paw with a pin and no general reflex results, but the toes make an opening movement. Gradually, the response becomes more widespread, until the whole of the limb may be thrown into flexion and the opposite one extended by a stimulus of the same nature and intensity. Not only has the motor response become brisker and more intensive, but the skin area from which it can be evoked has greatly increased. Pinching the superficial structures over any part of the limb may now cause flexion, accompanied by extension of the opposite extremity.

use and disuse. The beliefs and sentiments that are not in conformity with the urgent needs of adaptation are discarded at least for the time being and are replaced by new ones. If the system of thoughts and sentiments prove useful for a long time, they continue to guide group life. When they are inadequate they are modified and new vigilance schema take their place. The criminal tribes, most of them start on their criminal expedition after the ceremonial worship and propitiation of their tribal gods particularly the goddess Kali or Kalka, the mother goddess, who is believed to protect their interests. This goddess is worshipped during the dark half of every month usually on the new moon night which is considered very auspicious as the darkness of the night provides the necessary cover to their planned crimes. The midnight worship of this goddess is a complex pattern of rites and rituals, beliefs and practices some of which are indigenous, others borrowed from alien cultures. The cult is associated with wine, sacrifices, inordinate sex license and revelry, dances, spirit possession, ecstasy, divination, priestcraft, distribution of booty, even the offer of human blood if it can stealthily be secured. The direction of crime, its execution, the victims of crime are usually planned and chosen in an atmosphere of temporary stimulation so that the cult of the *Kali* exercises a tremendous influence in crime culture. If the specific mental attitudes which favour the survival of such rites and practices die out or the beliefs regarding the sanctity of such religious worship are disintegrated anyhow, the vividness or illumination, the voltage, as it were, will fall below the necessary level and crime will lose its religious sanction and tribal mores and the crime code of the criminal tribes will automatically seek a new vigilance schema. Whether the latter would be an improvement on the former is not very important as the needs of ordered life must prescribe new expedients which will naturally be divorced from their habitual pattern of crime politics.

The polyandry of the Khasas derives its sanction from the joint family life necessary under conditions of hill economy. A matriarchal matrix might have secured the institution to the Khasas, but its continuance under present conditions is possible

because of the cortical beliefs connected with joint family. The laws of inheritance, the customary form of marriage, the conventional fatherhood, the desire for family solidarity, the double standard of morality recognised by the Khasas, all have contributed to the survival of joint family life and polyandry is a convenient form of marital adjustment in the cis-Himalayan region. Each of the elements detailed above that constitute the institution may have an independent origin but may be gradually integrated into the pattern of culture. Each, however, exercises some amount of control so that when disintegration of the institution sets in, each constituent element functions independently and exercises partial vigilance. Should the joint family disintegrate, should the customary laws of partition which secure the joint family be replaced by an individualised legal code regarding property, the institution of polyandry will sink to the subliminal level, or may eventually disappear from the Khasa society, as it has disappeared in neighbouring areas. Political interests may aid an institution to survive as for example the *reet* marriage in the Simla states which pours in large sums of money in the form of tax to the state coffers.

Culture, primitive or advanced, from this point of view is a vigilance schema built out of conscious and unconscious factors. When such schema forms a well-knit pattern so that we may not interfere with any aspect without interfering with the system as a whole, we call it a unitary culture pattern. When, however, we have several culture schema instead of one, some with respect to marriage, some with respect to food, others with the various material needs and requirements, we have a heterogeneous system. We should suspect in these cases a long process of trial and error, a process of building and rebuilding of vigilance. A unitary vigilance schema implicates either a stereotyped set of factors or the operation of a higher conscious and rational factor. Thus both the 'natural' and 'cultural' peoples may have a unitary vigilance schema. It is only among the peoples in the transitional stage who exhibit a heterogeneous vigilance schema. A detailed discussion on social vigilance is reserved for a later publication to follow.

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